



ROYAL COMMISSION  
ON  
LABOUR IN INDIA.

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EVIDENCE.

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Vol. V.—Part 2.

BENGAL

[Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars].

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## TERMS OF REFERENCE.

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

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

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

“ (a) Mines, quarries, and other works for the extraction of minerals from the earth.

“ (b) Industries in which articles are manufactured, altered, cleaned, repaired, ornamented, finished, adapted for sale, broken up or demolished, or in which materials are transformed ; including shipbuilding and the generation, transformation and transmission of electricity or motive power of any kind.

“ (c) Construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, alteration, or demolition of any building, railway, tramway, harbour, dock, pier, canal, inland waterway, road, tunnel, bridge, viaduct, sewer, drain, well, telegraphic or telephonic installation, electrical undertaking, gaswork, waterwork or other work of construction, as well as the preparation for or laying the foundations of any such work or structure.

“ (d) Transport of passengers or goods by road, rail, sea, or inland waterway, including the handling of goods at docks, quays, wharves or warehouses, but excluding transport by hand.”

\* \* \* \* \*

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

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## LIST OF SUBJECTS.

## I. Recruitment.

- (1) *Origin of Labour.*
  - (i) Extent of migration.
  - (ii) Causes of particular streams of migration.
  - (iii) Changes in recent years.
- (2) *Contact with villages.*
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  - (ii) Extent of permanent labour force.
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    - (b) Possibility of practical schemes.
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  - (iii) Composition and working of Assam Labour Board.
  - (iv) Defects of existing Act and system.
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    - (c) Other causes.
  - (iii) Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.
  - (iv) Unemployment Insurance.
  - (v) Application of International Conventions relating to unemployment.
- (8) *Labour "turnover."\**
  - (i) Average duration of employment.
  - (ii) Extent of casual employment.
  - (iii) Absenteeism.
    - (a) Extent, character and causes.
    - (b) Seasonal or otherwise.
    - (c) Time and wages lost.
- (9) *Apprentices Act, 1850.*  
Value of.

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

**II. Staff Organisation.**

- (10) *Details of organisation, administrative and departmental.*
- (11) *Selection of managing staff.*
- (12) *Recruitment and training of supervising staff, superior and subordinate.*
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  - (i) Extent and character of work given on contract.
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  - (ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
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  - (ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
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45	Mr. G. Gorrie .. ..	Manager, Caledonian Jute Mills Company, Limited.		
46	Mr. Krishna Chunder Ray Chaudhuri	President, Kankinarah Labour Union.	261-278	119-140, E.-1649.

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47	Mr. R. B. Laird, M.L.C.	Representatives of the Indian Jute Mills Association.	278—308	140—176, E.-1985.
48	Mr. A. N. Mackenzie			
49	Mr. W. D. Bruce- Watt			
50	Mr. J. A. Murray ..			
50a	Mr. J. D. Paterson..			
51	Mr. Williamson ..	Chief Inspector of Facto- ries, Bengal.	309—330	177—198, E.-2806.
52	Mr. R. P. Adams O.B.E., M.I.Mech.E.			
53	Mr. J. B. McBride, A.M.I. (Mech.) E.			
54	Mr. R. C. Parsons ..			
55	Mr. T. B. Glover ..			
56	Capt. W. O'Connor	Senior Certifying Sur- geon of Factories, Bengal.	330—335	199—213, E.-2970.
57	Dr. Chas. A. Bent- ley, M.B., D.P.H., D.T.M. & H., C.I.E.	Director of Public Health, Bengal.	335—348	
58	Mr. F. C. Griffin, M.I.C.E., M.I.E.	Chief Engineer, Public Health Department, Bengal.		
59	Dr. M. E. Sufi, B.A., L.R.C.P.&S., D.P.H.	Assistant Director of Public Health, Vaccina- tion and Vital Statistics, Bengal.		
60	Dr. G. L. Batra, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.	Assistant Director, Public Health for Industrial Hygiene, Bengal.		
61	Dr. B. C. Mukharji, M.B., D.P.H.	Inspector of Septic Tank Installations, Calcutta.		
62	Dr. A. C. Ray Chaudhury, D.P.H.	Diet Survey Officer, Public Health Department, Bengal.	..	213—219, E.-3215.
63	Mr. C. W. Gurner, I.C.S.	Secretary to the Govern- ment of Bengal, Local Self-Government Depart- ment.		

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64	Mr. H. J. Twynam, I.C.S.	Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department.	..	23—219, E.-3215.
65	Mr. R. N. Gilchrist, I.E.S.	Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Commerce and Marine Departments, Labour Intelligence Officer and Registrar of Trade Unions.	1—190	
66	Mr. A. T. Weston, M. Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.E.	Director of Industries, Bengal.	391—394	219—244, E.-3270.
67	Mr. J. A. Beale ..	Sub-Divisional Officer, Asansol.		
68	Khan Bahadur Tassaddak Ahmed.	Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division.		
69	Rai Sahib Sushil Kumar Ganguly	Officiating Registrar, Co-operative Societies.		
70	Mr. R. P. Adams, O.B.E., M.I. Mech. E.	Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
71	Mr. J. B. McBride, A. M. I. (Mech.) E.	Senior Inspector of Factories, Bengal.		
72	Sir Charles Stuart-Williams, Kt.	Chairman, Calcutta Port Commissioners.		
73	Mr. W. A. Burns ..	Traffic Manager, Calcutta Port.	348—356	245—260, E.-3599.
74	Commander Norcock.	Deputy Conservator, Calcutta Port.		
75	Mr. H. F. Darvell ..	Shipping Master, Calcutta.	Volume II, Part I, pages 328—334.	260—279, E.-3804.
76	Mr. E. C. Benthall	} Representatives of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.		
77	Mr. W. Gow ..		357—362	280—296, E.-4050.
78	Mr. D. K. Cunison			
79	Captain R. Liddle ..	Marine Superintendent, British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited.	362—365	296—309, E.-4255.

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80	Mr. R. Chakravarti (of the Mohini Mills, Limited, Kushtia, Bengal).	Representatives of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.	375—378	310—320, E. 4423.
81	Mr. U. M. Bose ..		365—375	
82	Mr. H. P. Ghose ..			
83	Mr. J. H. Sen Gupta			
84	Mr. L. M. Snelgrove	General Manager, The Oriental Gas Company, Limited, Calcutta and Howrah.	378—379	..
85	Mr. F. T. Homan ..	Agent, the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation, Limited, Calcutta.	380—381	..
86	Mr. C. W. Leeson ..	Rivers Steam Navigation Company, Limited, Calcutta.	382	..
87	Mr. J. Donald ..	Manager of Messrs. Sonakunda Baling Company, Limited, Naraingunge.	382—384	...
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90	Major-General G. Tate, I.M.S.	Surgeon General with the Government of Bengal.	412	..
91	Mr. M. Dalmiya ..	Secretary and General Manager, Kesoram Cotton Mills, Limited.	412—423	..
92	Indian Chamber of Commerce.	Calcutta. .. ..	423—425	..
93	Mr. J. P. Mandelia..	Secretary, the Birla Jute Manufacturing Company, Limited, Calcutta.	425—431	..
94	The Bengal Mariner's Union	Calcutta. .. ..	432—434	..
95	The Indian Quarter-Master's Union	Calcutta. .. ..	434—435	..
96	Mr. S. A. M. Shoosty	General Secretary, Bengal Labour Association.	435—436	..
97	Prof. N. Gangulee, C.I.E., B.Sc., Ph.D.	Khaira Professor of Agriculture, Calcutta University.	436—444	..

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1	Mr. K. P. Banerjee	Representatives of the Eastern Bengal Railway Indian Employees' Association.	510—530	314—331, K.-2970.
2	Mr. J. N. Gupta ..			
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5	Mr. Cameron ..	General Secretary, Anglo-Indian Association.		
6	Mr. Bastien ..	} of the E. B. Railway.		
7	Mr. Powell ..			
8	Mr. Rigg ..	} of the E. I. Railway.	618—634	332—343, K.-3174.
9	Mr. Lardner ..			
10	Mr. Martston ..			
11	Mr. Backman ..	} of the B. N. Railway.		
12	Mr. Wilson ..	of the E. I. Railway (O. and R. Section).		
13	Mr. Atkinson ..	Travelling Secretary, Anglo-Indian Association.		
14	Mr. P. H. Mafin, O.B.E., M.C.	Agent. ..		
15	Mr. I. St. C. Pringle	Deputy Agent. ..		
16	Mr. A. H. Joscelyne	Locomotive Superintendent.		
17	Dr. H. Suhrawardy	Chief Medical Officer.	1—358 (Joint Memo.)	343—372, K.-3287.
18	Mr. H. N. Parker ..	Officer on Special Duty.		
19	Mr. H. A. Outhwaite	Statistical Officer.		
20	Mr. V. P. Bhandarkar	Welfare Officer. ..		
21	Mr. D. Ghose ..	Assistant Traffic Superintendent.		

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22	Mr. Surendra Nath, M.A., LL.B.	Acting President.	461—477	373—388, K.-3570.
23	Mr. Hikmatullah, Bar-at-Law.	Chief Legal Adviser.		
24	Mr. H. S. Bhatnagar	General Secretary.		
25	Mr. K. N. Pandey	Asst. Station Master.		
26	Mr. G. L. Colvin, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.	Agent. ..		
27	Mr. F. E. Robertson	Chief Operating Superintendent.	1—358	389—425, K.-3788.
28	Mr. R. L. Ray ..	Chief Mechanical Engineer.		
29	Mr. A. V. Venables	Chief Engineer..		
30	Dr. A. K. H. Pollock	Chief Medical Officer.		
31	Mr. E. Cameron Ker	Deputy Chief Accounts Officer.		
32	Mr. A. O. Evans ..	Deputy Agent ..		
33	Mr. M. Robertson ..	Secretary to Agent.		
34	Mr. H. Lancaster ..	Manager, Giridih Mines.		
35	Mr. F. C. Badhwar	Employment Officer, Lillooah.		
36	Mr. G. S. Whitworth	Chief Mining Engineer (Railway Board).		
37	Mr. Santi Ram Mondal	Representatives of the East Indian Railway Labour Union, Lillooah.		
38	Mr. Ram Antar ..			
39	Mr. Atal Behary Santra			
40	Mr. S. N. Shaw ..			
41	Mr. Ismail ..			
42	Mr. Ali Mohammad			
43	Mr. K. D. Chatterjee.			
44	Mr. Hardin Shaha			

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46	Mr. J. C. Mitter ..	General Secretary, East Indian Railway Union, Khaganul.	489—497	..
47	Bengal North Western Railway-men's Association	Gorakhpur. .. ..	497—509	..
48	Mr. V. E. D. Jarrad	Agent. .. ..		
49	Dr. Mozumdar ..	Medical Department.		
50	Mr. Bazaz ..	Engineering Construction.		
51	Mr. Chakrabartty ..	Engineering Open Line.		
52	Mr. Khanna ..	Commercial Department.	1—358	431—458, K-4274.
53	Mr. Faroque ..	Transportation Department.		
54	Mr. Chowdhury ..	President, Urban Bank.		
55	Dr. A. Martin-Leake, V.C., F.R.C.S.	.. ..		
56	Mr. Kanahi Nath Muttu			
57	Mr. W. V. R. Naidu	Representatives of the Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union, Kharagpur.	532—546	459—487, K-4613.
58	Mr. P. Ramachandra Rao			
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**MINUTES OF EVIDENCE**  
TAKEN BEFORE THE  
**ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR**  
**IN INDIA.**

**BENGAL**

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)  
**SIXTY-SEVENTH MEETING**  
(PANEL No. II.)

**CALCUTTA**

Monday, 3rd February 1930.

P R E S E N T :

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal  
Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.

Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.

Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor*.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. *Joint Secretary*.

} *Assistant Commissioners.*

**Mrs. A. COTTLE, C.B.E., and Dr. (Miss) HEADWARDS,**  
**Representatives of the Bengal Presidency Council of Women.**

E-1. *The Chairman* : How is the welfare work which your Council undertakes related to the general work of the Council of Women? Is it a sub-department of the Council of Women?—(*Mrs. Cottle*) The welfare work mentioned in our memorandum is wholly undertaken by the Calcutta Red Cross. But the welfare department of the Red Cross is one of affiliated societies to the Bengal Council of Women.

E-2. Have the branches of welfare work which are described in the memorandum been worked out by your Red Cross Society, or does the initiative come from the industrial concerns, who invite your assistance in the work?—It has originated from the Red Cross. We have drawn the attention of industrial and other bodies to the fact that benefit would accrue to their employees if they took up such work and followed our advice.



E-3. With regard to finance, what is your relation with the welfare centres at the mills?—The welfare centres at the mills are at present self-supporting. The mills only come to us for advice or for assistance with regard to securing workers and on other points.

E-4. The control, both as to finance and as to management, rests entirely with the mills themselves?—Yes, at present, but one centre is being erected at two mills in connexion with which the Red Cross is going to make a grant towards the working expenses.

E-5. It is stated in the memorandum that "all these welfare centres are run under the auspices of the Bengal Branch, Red Cross, Health Welfare Department?"—They are under our auspices. We give them advice and help in any way we can.

E-6. As to the supply of workers, you speak of having approached the Council of Women when you were in need of voluntary workers?—Not in connexion with the industrial welfare centres. That has reference to the city welfare centres, of which we have five.

E-7. In the case of the mill centres, I take it that the workers are paid?—Yes.

E-8. You say that these welfare centres are conducted by qualified health visitors?—Yes. At the clinics which exist at present there are women who have been trained in England and who have got the requisite qualifications.

E-9. At the clinics in the mills or at those under your auspices?—At the clinics in the mills which are under our auspices. We have organized these clinics. We have instructed the mills as to the best way in which to build their welfare centres. The mills have always submitted the plans to us for our approval. The same thing applies to the equipment, the method of running, the kind of registers to keep, and so on. Also their health visitors come to us whenever they need advice.

E-10. Do you undertake any work for the training of health visitors?—Yes. We have a training school for health visitors in Calcutta which has been running for five years.

E-11. Do you find an adequate supply of Indian women coming forward to be trained in that work?—We have always had as many applicants as we can accommodate and as we can place out afterwards. We have only accommodation sufficient for five people.

E-12. We have become aware of the difficulty of getting trained and qualified health visitors in other places which we have visited. Is your work confined to the Presidency?—Yes. We find that we must so confine it for the purpose of supplying the necessary demands in Bengal. We have many applications from other parts of India for students to be trained at our school, but, as we want to supply the centres in our own province, it is rather hopeless to have people who cannot speak Bengali. We have had some splendid Indian women from the South of India, but after they are trained we find the money has been wasted, because we cannot place them in our clinics owing to their lack of knowledge of the local language. In some instances these women have been so eager to work with us in Bengal that they have studied Bengali. We have now two such women who are very capable indeed.

E-13. You say that the number you are able to train at any one time is not more than five?—That is so. If our financial resources were larger, we could take a bigger building and train considerably more people.

E-14. In the memorandum it is stated "women receive maternity benefit and are exempted from work for four weeks before and after confinement." From whom do they receive this payment?—That has reference to the industrial welfare clinic of Kankinnarah which was opened in 1926.

E-15. The mill pays the benefit?—Yes.

E-16. Does the same apply to the instruction of the indigenous *dais*?—Is that being done in the mill centres by the mills themselves?—Yes.

E-17. *Miss Power*: It has been suggested to us in some of the evidence that certain mill crèches which have been started have not been a success owing to caste prejudices and other difficulties. It would be interesting if we could be told why this has been so, and whether in addition there has

been any defect in the organization of the crèches?—We feel that the establishment of crèches is a most essential part of welfare work, but we have to go very carefully. We find that the women need educating up to the advantages of these things. The women are now used to the welfare centres; they are used to health visitors, and they are now recognizing the advantages which they obtain from attending these centres. Therefore we are now very seriously thinking of organizing crèches in these welfare centres; in fact, it is a part of the work which will be undertaken this year.

E-18. Would you be in favour of the compulsory inauguration of crèches in all mills where over 500 women are employed?—Certainly. I think it is a most important work.

E-19. Would you also be in favour of following the Bombay plan of having a woman officer (a Government official) whose concern it was to assist in the inauguration of these crèches and to advise the employers as to the best way in which they should be run?—I hesitate to give an opinion on that point. If our welfare workers are trained women and understand crèche work, I do not realize the difficulty of their organizing it themselves.

E-20. Dr. Headwards, what do you feel about the presence of infants and toddlers in the mills from the health point of view. Do you feel that they should be compulsorily excluded?—(Dr. Headwards) Yes. I think the effect of the noise and the dust and the possibility of the danger of accidents is too great to admit of them going into the mills.

E-21. Do you think, if there were compulsory crèches, it would be reasonable to allow employers a certain number of years' grace before they were prosecuted, for instance, for allowing these children to be in the mills?—I think that is very necessary. You want to have a certain period in which to educate the mothers up to the necessity for leaving their children in the crèches. I do not think you will be able to get them to do so immediately, even with the confidence which they have in the welfare worker. I certainly think that a period of time should elapse before there were any prosecutions undertaken in regard to this matter.

E-22. If there were crèches in all the larger mills, how long do you think it would be before the mothers could be educated up to leaving their infants and toddlers in the crèche?—I should say five years.

E-23. Do you know of any mill where these children have already been excluded?—Yes. The Reliance Mill in Kankinnarah will not allow children in the mill except in the sewing department.

E-24. If there were a movement for inaugurating compulsory crèches, would you be in favour of their being run by the municipalities, or would you be in favour of their being run by the mills?—I think they should be run by the mills. I also think—and here I disagree with Mrs. Cottle—that a group of crèches should be under the direct supervision of the health visitor appointed by the mill and that they should also be under the control of a woman doctor.

E-25. Should that woman doctor be a Government official?—My idea is that she should be an official appointed by a group of mills. If a group of mills in one area had welfare centres in each of their mills, I think that each mill should pay a certain proportion towards this woman doctor's salary. I think the group of mills should be responsible for the woman doctor.

E-26. On the subject of maternity benefit, do you think this also should be compulsory, or should it be left to gradual voluntary effort?—It should be compulsory.

E-27. Would you have the benefit paid in cash or in kind, or a combination of both?—I think payment in kind is the ideal, but it is impracticable at present. At present I think it should be paid in cash.

E-28. What length of time before and after child-birth, do you suggest, should be the obligatory period of absence?—It is two months in most of the mills and I think that is a fair period.

E-29. What do you think should be the qualifying period of employment?—Twelve months.

E-30. Do you think it would be possible for the system to be built up on a contributory basis?—That would be the ideal later on. I do not believe

in giving away too much for nothing. I think that, if a woman contributed, say a pice in the rupee, towards the benefit, she would appreciate it more; but I have not sufficient experience in the matter of wages to know exactly what it would mean to the woman to have to contribute something.

E-31. On the subject of children of the age of from 15 to 17 years, you know that there is not in this country any class of "young persons." A good deal of the evidence suggests that there is considerable abuse in respect of this class of child who has to jump straight from six hours to eleven hours work, very often without any medical examination to ascertain whether or not he is fit. There is also the difficulty that many children who look older than their years, and who are actually under age, are taken on as legally capable of working the full eleven hours. Would you suggest any form of medical examination of a child before it is moved from the six-hour working day to the eleven-hour working day?—Yes. I do not think that some of these children, when they reach the age of 15, are strong enough to go straight on to the longer shift. I think there should be some method by which these children should be examined from a preventive point of view at occasional intervals between 12 years of age and 15 years of age. If they are found fit at 15, then they might be given a shift between the six-hour and eleven-hour period.

E-32. Have you any views about the present working day, both for young children and for adults? Do you feel that the six-hour day is suitable for young children and that the eleven-hour day is not too long for the older children and adults?—I think the eleven-hour day is very long, but I would rather not give evidence on that point because it does not come within my province.

E-33. Would you be in favour of the appointment of women factory inspectors?—Yes, very definitely so, but they would want to have additional qualifications to the men factory inspectors. For instance, the men factory inspectors have to be engineers, whereas if women are appointed you would want to choose them more from a human and personality point of view.

E-34. *Miss Sorabji*: Mrs. Cottle, how many clinics in how many mills have you control of?—At present we have under our auspices two—the Kankinnarah Mill and the Reliance Mill.

E-35. How many of your workers are employed in those clinics?—There is a health visitor in charge of each clinic, and she has under her untrained workers such as *ayahs* or *dais*. These workers are paid by the mills.

E-36. Do you consider yourself responsible for their equipment?—Yes.

E-37. How many of the workers which are supplied by your Council are Indian women?—Both these Health Visitors to which I have just referred are Europeans.

E-38. Do they know Bengali?—No; they know Hindustani and Urdu.

E-39. Have they any experience of Indian customs, castes and conditions?—Yes, one of them was born in India, and was here until 1917 when she went home to take her welfare training and then returned. The other lady has had eight years' experience of welfare work in the Punjab.

E-40. Experience in mills?—No, not in mills.

E-41. How many trained Indian women have gone from your school to industrial areas in or outside Calcutta?—None.

E-42. In your opinion, is personal contact with the women and children whom you serve in your clinics essential to success?—Yes.

E-43. How would you propose to establish that contact?—In carrying out her daily duties the Health Visitor comes in constant contact with the people whom she serves.

E-44. Do you mean to say that an English or Indian worker can call upon an Indian woman?—Yes, they do so. They visit the women at their homes. Of course, they have to be very tactful to gain the confidence of the women, but I think in all cases they have done so. They visit the homes of the women every day after having met them in the mill clinic.

E-45. Then would you propose establishing this contact with the women through the clinic?—Yes.

E-46. Dr. Headwards, in relation to the answer which you gave just now about women factory inspectors, I want to discover whether the sort of work that might be useful in this connexion would be a sort of combination of duties. Would it, in your opinion, be wise to appoint a woman welfare worker or "an adviser to women and children" who would pave the way for the necessary personal contact, who would advise as to health and maternity and education, who would report to the authorities as to the genuineness of maternity benefit cases, and who would also see that the benefit was applied?—(*Dr. Headwards*) I think part of the duties you mention are primarily those of the health visitor. The type of woman I had in mind when I referred to a woman factory inspector was an industrial welfare worker, who would work in co-operation with the health visitor, and also act as a medium of information between the authorities and the workers, and, if necessary, the health visitor. I would like the two to work together.

E-47. What I want to consider is whether it might not be a better way of tying all this work together and getting continuous and reliable information, if there were a person whose duty it was not to attend to the physical needs of the women in their houses but who would simply be a collector of information and an establisher of contacts. Would it not be more advisable to keep the advisory part of the work separate from the actual practical work of the health visitor and the clinic attendant?—I think the one should supplement the other. One of the conditions on which our health visitors are appointed is that they do not go into, or interfere with the conditions of, the mill.

E-48. Do they go into the mill area?—They visit the *bustis* and the mill lines but they do not go into the factory itself. The proposed woman factory inspector or advisor would be a woman who would go into the mill.

E-49. Do you agree that there is an opening for a woman who was not a health visitor but who could make contact between the mill authorities and the other interests concerned?—Yes, I think that is a most important point.

E-50. If such a person were appointed, should it, in your opinion, be a Government appointment entirely, or should it be an appointment, the salary of which was paid partly by the mills and partly by Government, or should it be a social service society's appointment, with special liberty granted by Government to enter the mills and make report to Government?—I think it ought to be a society appointment at the moment because it is important to get the right type of woman and you would be more likely to get the right type of woman if the appointment came through an individual society.

E-51. But could not Government go to the individual society and ask for a suitable woman?—That is true.

E-52. If a person were appointed and paid by Government, do you think she would be less acceptable to the women workers than if she were nominally appointed by Government but really came from a philanthropic society?—I have not thought about that.

E-53. Mrs. Cottle, have you any arrangements at your centre for training workers in the subject of prevailing beliefs and superstitions about health and disease among Hindus and Muhammadans?—(*Mrs. Cottle*) Yes, that is one of the subjects in the syllabus.

E-54. Is there anybody who lectures on that subject?—Yes, we have one of the doctors from the Tropical School of Medicine.

E-55. We have it in evidence that there are women who come with men from areas outside Bengal, who are not their wives, and who live very often with these men, and who work under their protection at the mills. I will read you extracts from the evidence of the Assistant Director of Public Health and from the memorandum of the Government:—

"There is practically open prostitution near the workers' houses, and most of the workers do not bring their womenfolk for these reasons."

"There is a great disturbance of sex, as there are fewer women, and no privacy is possible in the present condition of housing. Among female workers one out of every four owns to being a prostitute."

Can you suggest a remedy?—It is very difficult to do so. It is a condition which exists. There is nothing done to prevent it. Caste prejudices prevent the men bringing their wives from their own homes. I am afraid I cannot give you an opinion as to how this can be stopped.

E-56. Can you suggest a remedy, Dr. Headwards?—(*Dr. Headwards*) The only thing I can suggest is that if at present the housing conditions are bad, better accommodation should be provided so that the men can bring their wives and have more privacy.

E-57. Have you any information why these women seek the protection of these men?—No.

E-58. If it is a fact that these women seek the protection of the men because there is an overwhelming proportion of men over women, would it not in your opinion help if lines for single women were opened, and a ring were formed round those lines, and it was said "These are the single women quarters". Do you not think that would protect these women?—I do not know, but I think it would be difficult.

E-59. Would you advise that these protected women, when they have children, should receive the maternity benefit?—I think all women should get maternity benefit.

E-60. *Mr. Tassie*: If a lot of mills decided to start clinics, how soon could you start them with suitable women?—(*Mrs. Cottle*) That is the difficulty. We have to have a special kind of health welfare worker for the mills. If we knew that the mills were going to start clinics, we should set about getting the best kind of women. For clinics in the mills it is best to provide women who have had a training at home, but at the same time they must be women who know something of India, the people and the language.

E-61. How long does the home training take?—From a year and a half to two years. When I go home this year I am approaching one of the training colleges to keep me in touch with women who have gone there from India, and who have a knowledge of India and the people, and to let me know when they are qualified to take up work.

E-62. At present you cannot train them out here?—Yes, we can train them, but we have not the class of people who feel that it is worth their while to be trained for welfare work. We are quite in the pioneer stage.

E-63. It would probably take you some time before you could staff all the clinics at all the mills, if the mills decided to establish them?—I have had three applications from Europeans to be trained this year at the training school, but the difficulty is that we have had no application from mills for these women, and, having trained these women, if there are no posts for them they are disappointed and go back to their old profession of midwives. If we knew that about a dozen mills were anxious to establish welfare centres, I am quite sure that by the time those welfare centres were built we should have the women ready for them.

E-64. If a welfare centre is established you would require also accommodation for the lady in charge of it—a flat or a house?—Yes, and if the work increased accommodation would be necessary for her assistant. I worked out a scheme in 1926 by which a medical woman should be responsible for a group of mills in a limited area—say six mills. She should be supplied with a residence within easy reach of the mills, together with furniture, each mill bearing its proportion of the cost of salary and expenses. She would devote her time to the mills, visiting them at least once a week in order to supervise the clinical work and the whole arrangements, and also attending to the ante-natal work, crèches, etc. We have at present four mills in the Kankinnarah district. If we could only get two other mills there we could begin our group, and have our medical woman responsible for that group of mills at once. If we could get a group of six mills, it would cost very little—not very much more than about Rs. 150 a year for equipment, and Rs. 100 a month for salary. If we could get that group, we could start at once, with immense benefit to the mills and to the efficiency of the workers in every respect.

E-65. *Mr. Ahmed*: You say that "The Bengal Provincial Branch, St. John Ambulance Association, carries out extensive propaganda by means of instruction to the employees of Mines, Railways, Docks, Tramways, etc., and the general public in first-aid and prevention of accidents". How do you come in contact with the people working in Mines, Railways, Docks, Tramways, etc.?—With regard to the Docks, we are at present instructing a class of about 22 men in first-aid, and we are in touch with the Docks management with regard to the provision of proper equipment.

E-66. Are you not in contact with the Dock Labourers' Union?—No, only with the Commissioner.

E-67. Do you think that is the best method of achieving success in your efforts in this direction?—I think we have achieved success with regard to our St. John Ambulance work.

E-68. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You say you have been training these helpers for five years?—Yes.

E-69. How long does the course take?—For the English course eight months; for the Vernacular course six months. The syllabus is abridged for the Vernacular course.

E-70. You have stated that only two of these health visitors are employed by the mills. What happened to the others?—These two were not our students; they had their training in England but our students supply the welfare centres in districts in Bengal.

E-71. Are any of your workers in industrial areas?—Not those who are trained by us.

E-72. You suggest that the maternity benefit should be paid in cash and not in kind, but at the same time you foresaw the difficulty that the woman might receive the cash and then go off to work in another mill. I take it you would only give cash subject to the control of the health visitors. Another point you made was that although you thought that if there was any sickness insurance benefit it should be contributory; you did not see how that would help at the beginning. Do you not think it would rather be difficult to give something for nothing in the beginning and then ask them to pay some share?—(*Dr. Headwards*) In Calcutta when we started we were too lavish and gave things for nothing. It was a means to an end. We had to attract the women to come. So we gave them medicine and milk free. After five years of work they now pay something for the milk—one pice. My suggestion was meant as an attraction for them to come in in the beginning.

E-73. Is there not rather a difference between your doing it and an industrial employer doing it? If a mill started giving something for nothing do you think that the worker would later on pay some share for receiving something? Would that not rather be difficult?—It would be rather difficult.

E-74. *The Chairman*: I gather that one of the difficulties of extending your work is that you are not sure that the women you train in large numbers will find employment as health visitors?—(*Mrs. Cottle*) That is one difficulty.

E-75. Supposing the Jute Mills Association as an Association was to develop the policy of welfare work throughout the industry would that give you courage to greatly expand your training?—That would help for the reason that if we can place our women in the mills there would be something for them to look forward to. In the mills they receive a much better pay; their prospects are better. The mills that we are connected with are very generous in dealing with health visitors. They give them a salary with monthly allowances and a bonus paid every six months. They give a six months' holiday and passage to and fro to England. During the holiday they give the pay minus the allowances. A good many women could be encouraged to take the training because the pay and outlook is more attractive.

E-76. You are speaking now of women trained in England?—Yes.

E-77. Is it not clear that if anything like general welfare work is done by women it must be a case of Indian women trained to work in India in the main?—Yes.

E-78. Supposing the Jute Mills Association looking at the industry as a whole were to adopt a general policy of doing welfare work would your Association feel itself able to supply the demand?—Not immediately but in the course of a short time?

E-79. Do you say that there should be Indian women for these posts?—I think the Senior Health Visitors of Mills should be European women either trained here or in England. The assistants could be Indians but they should also be trained.

E-80. Would your society welcome the co-operation of the industry as a whole if they were enabled to take a share with you in the control of the training of women whom they afterwards were going to employ?—I think it would be a great advantage to us and to them also.

E-81. You spoke of salaries to Health Visitors at Rs. 100 a month?—They command higher salaries than that. They get Rs. 150 a month with annual increments of Rs. 10.

E-82. Are those cases of Indian women?—That depends on the standard they pass. If they pass a grade in the English course, they may expect to receive Rs. 150 a month.

E-83. Is it your experience that certain attempts at welfare work had come to grief because the salaries paid were too low and the quality of women attracted was not sufficient for the work?—That is so. One of the mills wanted a Health Visitor on Rs. 40 a month.

E-84. Is it your considered view that women of high quality are required to make this kind of work a success?—Yes, they must be educated.

E-85. It is no good pretending that real welfare work is being done on salaries such as you have just described?—You cannot get women of ability to do it.

E-86. You cannot get the right sort of women?—That is so.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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**Mr. W. J. HERRIDGE, Manager, Calcutta Claims Bureau (also representing the Calcutta Accident Insurance Association, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Bombay Accident Insurance Association and the Madras Accident Insurance Association).**

E-87. *The Chairman:* Mr. Herridge, I understand that you are the Manager of the Calcutta Claims Bureau which deals with claims for workmen's compensation?—That is so.

E-88. You have shown in your memorandum the large number of insurance companies for whom you act in dealing with claims for workmen's compensation?—That is so. My office is like a central "Clearing Station". As soon as an accident happens, it is reported to the insurance company by the employer and the insurance company sends the papers to the Bureau which handles the claims from that time till it is finally settled.

E-89. You tell us that your Bureau was set up by most of the leading insurance companies in the Calcutta area which you now cover?—There are two companies with some volume of business still outside the Bureau. We cover approximately 85 per cent of the insurances effected in this area.

E-90. It is your opinion that the organization which you have established has led to much more rapid disposal of the cases than if they were dealt with individually by the various companies?—I do not think there is any doubt about that. Individual companies could not handle them in the same way in which we handle them; they could not have the consolidation of experience which we have and they could not move about with the same rapidity with which the representative of a special office can do.

E-91. Is it your opinion that the wider experience that is possible by concentrating work in a single office leads to less litigation?—Yes, we think so.

E-92. Can you tell us anything about the rates which are charged in India for Workmen's Compensation Insurance in some of the main industries—in jute and coal, for instance?—I have not the full details with me at present. Generally speaking, most of the larger industries are subject to what we call "Special Rates"; that is to say, if a particular employer has

an annual wages roll of Rs. 1,00,000 or over, we subject his risk to a "Special Rate" which is based entirely on past experience. It is adjusted year by year in the light of past experience. For concerns which have a wages roll of less than a lakh of rupees we have what we call "Book Rates." Those "Book Rates" are drawn up and controlled by the Accident Insurance Associations of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. All smaller concerns have to work to those "Book Rates" and there is no variation year by year.

E-93. Are the rates in all cases based on the wages list and not on production?—Yes. It is so many annas per Rs. 100 of the annual wages roll.

E-94. Do you deal with cases in the coal industry?—Yes. Most of the insurances in the Jharia and Raniganj coalfields are placed in Calcutta. These claims are also handled by us.

E-95. You are sure that the rates are not based on tonnage?—I am positive that they are based on the annual wages roll. That is the predominant feature of all Workmen's Compensation Insurance. It is so many shillings per hundred pounds in England and so many annas per Rs. 100 in India. We have closely followed English precedent in these matters.

E-96. In your memorandum you have dealt with the question of the possibility of extending the Act to other occupations and we shall take note of your suggestions in that respect. But there is one point which is not covered in your memorandum and that is the possibility of paying compensation in the case of fatal accidents and permanent total disability although there might have been alleged some disobedience on the part of the labourer?—That was not specifically mentioned as one of the subjects on which evidence would be taken. Therefore we confined our remarks to the specific questions raised in the list.

E-97. Have you any experience of the claims which have been barred in that way?—Yes, cases have arisen like that.

E-98. Would you care to give the Commission your opinion as to whether the English practice should be followed?—We are quite aware that the 1923 amendment of the English Act brought every accident within the terms "arising out of and in the course of" employment provided it occurred while the labourer was doing something in furtherance of, for the purpose of and in connection with, the employer's trade or business. We are quite aware that in England this principle is in vogue. Most probably there would be no great objection to the same principle being adopted in India in the case of the fatal and more serious accidents, i.e., accidents which result in permanent partial disablement of 50 per cent or more. We feel, however, it would be premature to introduce this provision for the minor accidents involving both temporary and permanent partial disablements.

E-99. My question only applied to death and permanent total disablement?—I think there would be no great objection to it because we know it would be following English precedent.

E-100. In your opinion, would that add seriously to the total amount of compensation?—It would not add seriously. On the other hand, it would reduce litigation to some extent although the cost of litigation is very small here because all the contested cases are conducted by our Bureau in the case of employers insured with our members and we do not have to pay any legal expenses in that connection.

E-101. *Mr. Clou:* Dealing with the payment of compensation to lascars you say that "it is within the rights of these companies to withhold payment of compensation in certain cases, especially in the case of death." Would you explain that?—I have seen a copy of the agreement entered into between the shipping companies and the lascars. It is an agreement between the shipping company and the actual lascar and not with the dependents of the lascar. As I read it, in the event of the death of the lascar the agreement immediately expires and is no longer of any consequence.

E-102. Is it not an agreement to pay compensation to the man or to his dependents if he is killed?—I do not think the agreement specifies payment of compensation to dependents; it only specifies payment of compensation to the lascar himself.



E-103. That is a difficulty which could be easily remedied?—It is at the moment a difficulty. Moreover, it is a moot point whether the dependents could enforce an agreement between the shipping company and the lascar.

E-104. Do you know of any case in which a shipping company has attempted to shift its responsibility on this ground?—I have not handled many of these claims, but I understand that in one or two cases shipping companies have questioned the authority of the Commissioner to handle these matters. For example, a dispute arose in regard to the amount of compensation payable in one case and the shipping company questioned the authority of the Commissioner to intervene.

E-105. In your analysis of the disposal of cases by your Bureau, you say: "Cases in which no compensation was due (disablement less than 10 days)—40 per cent." Does that include only cases falling within the waiting period?—Yes.

E-106. Under the next heading, which covers a good many subjects, what percentage roughly represents cases in which workmen filed no claim at all?—In the beginning it was rather a high percentage but it is not so at the present moment. I should think that in 1924-25 it was probably 15 per cent. Nowadays cases are few and far between where a workman does not file a claim owing to his returning to his village or being unaware of his rights.

E-107. By using the phrase, "workmen returning to their villages without notice" you do not mean cases where workmen's claims were defeated because they failed to give the prescribed notice?—No. That phrase covers cases where the workmen went back to the village and made no claim. Probably he was paid an instalment of half-monthly compensation or no compensation and after two or three weeks he returned to his village and the case was never re-opened.

E-108. In how many cases has the compensation been refunded to you because no dependents were found?—I have known only of two cases in Bengal since 1924 and probably there are a few more. Very few cases of that nature arise. But that is probably due to the fact that most of employers do not deposit compensation until they have heard that there are dependents.

E-109. Otherwise you think there would be a substantial number?—There would be a large number of deposits returned for this reason if compensation was deposited for every fatal accident. As we read section 8 of the Act, with its recent amendment, we do not think that compensation should be deposited as soon as a fatal accident occurs. We understand it to mean that the compensation *when payable* shall be deposited with the Commissioner. We maintain that it is not payable until some claim has been made, either orally or in writing on the employer by the dependents.

E-110. Do you mean claim or notice?—When the dependents come forward and ask verbally or in writing for compensation we, in the Bureau, immediately arrange to deposit the compensation.

E-111. You are aware of the proposal which has had a good deal of support that it should not be necessary for the employee to approach the employer?—We are in favour of the whole of section 22 being omitted so far as dependents are concerned. We have no objection to the dependents proceeding direct to the Commissioner. In the case of dependents the whole of section 22 may be omitted, but not for non-fatal accidents.

E-112. But that section relates both to fatal and non-fatal accidents?—In the case of fatal accidents we are prepared to go further and inform the Commissioner whether or not liability to pay compensation is admitted or not.

E-113. In your letter to the Bengal Government you suggest that the Commissioner might initiate proceedings in fatal accident cases. Do you not think there is considerable danger in that?—I do not think so.

E-114. The Commissioner would to some extent have to form an opinion on the case before he heard evidence?—In Bengal, the Commissioner has sometimes initiated proceedings himself. By that I mean that, if there is an accident anywhere, he immediately asks the employer over the telephone, or by some other means, whether he admits liability for that accident or not.

E-115. That is a very different thing to initiating proceedings which, I take it, would mean that he actually institutes the suit himself or urges the dependents to do so?—If, after the employer has sent a formal notice to the Commissioner of a fatal accident, it is followed up at an interval of a month or so by a statement whether liability is admitted or not, we should have no objection whatever to the Commissioner initiating proceedings after he has received this statement regarding liability.

E-116. Even in a case where the liability is contested?—Even in cases where the liability is contested.

E-117. Would you not be putting the Commissioner in a very difficult position in empowering him to invite the dependents to incur a considerable amount of expenditure in instituting a suit which might ultimately fail?—The proceedings under the Act are very short and simple and most dependents could institute a suit for a very nominal fee of about Rs. 5.

E-118. I notice you are against Inspectors of Factories and Mines taking part in this?—Yes.

E-119. I should have thought that this would be less objectionable than utilizing the Commissioner?—We feel that Inspectors of Factories and Mines ought not to interest themselves in payment of compensation. Their reports are valuable from a purely technical point of view and are regarded as impartial evidence. Frequently, Inspectors of Factories and Mines are asked to give evidence in compensation cases based on their inspection after the accidents. Their duty should be limited merely to the technical side of making inspections and they should not be saddled with the responsibility of urging the dependents to make claims or even initiating proceedings themselves.

E-120. It would be a little difficult for the Commissioner to avoid the suspicion of bias one way when he invites the dependents to make a claim, or of bias against the workmen in cases where *prima facie* he thinks there is no ground for instituting a suit?—I do not think there would be any very great difficulty in practice. In the Jharia coalfield Mr. Thadani has already done that. As soon as an accident occurs he in his capacity as additional Deputy Commissioner gets notice of it. He then sends a notice to the dependents, care of the employer informing them that they are at liberty to claim compensation if it is not paid by the employer.

E-121. We are aware of that. But in a contested case parties might feel a little doubt about the Commissioner's impartiality if the case had been started at his instigation?—If my suggestion were followed, the Commissioner would already have in his possession a copy of the employer's statement admitting or denying liability for compensation. I do not think there would be any great difficulty; in fact we are quite prepared to agree to the proposal as regards fatal accidents only.

E-122. Would a trade union be a better body as regards pursuing claims? Do you know anything as to how far they have done that here?—We find that the activities of trade unions are very spasmodic. Many of them seem to exist merely on paper. They have waves of prosperity and then die away again. Trade unions have not been active in Calcutta.

E-123. Do you know the reason why?—Probably because the unions themselves are not firmly established. They have no officials sufficiently capable at the moment of handling workmen's compensation claims.

E-124. You refer to the desirability of appointing a medical referee. Have you many cases in which the question has turned on a difference between the medical officers?—I cannot say we have had many, but there have been a number, not particularly in Bengal but quite a number in the Jharia coalfield. One of the medical officers of the Dhanbad Charitable Hospital has been called on numerous occasions in the capacity of a medical referee although, of course, he holds no official jurisdiction as such.

E-125. As a referee between two other medical officers?—Yes, it would be a good idea if some medical officer were appointed as such for each particular area. It would probably reduce litigation to a certain extent. I find there have been numerous claims in the Jharia coalfield where the extent of permanent disablement has had to be decided.

E-126. Would you make the finding of the referee binding on the Commissioner in respect of the point referred to?—As regards the extent

of disablement, yes. It is only a medical officer who will be in the best position to say what is the extent of disablement due to an injury. It is a medical question more than a legal question. I think it would be desirable if the Commissioner was guided by the views of medical officers in such matters.

E-127. Would you make, for example, the referees's decision binding where the two medical officers differed as to whether certain injuries had been caused by an accident or not?—Yes, that also could apply.

E-128. *Mr. Ahmed*: Mr. Herridge, you know that the seamen sign an agreement with the shipping companies before they go out to sea?—Yes.

E-129. Would it not be convenient to you and facilitate payment of compensation to dependents if a list of dependents of the seaman was specifically mentioned in the agreement?—It would facilitate matters, but at present I am not at all sure that the agreement is legally maintainable as between the shipping companies and the dependents of the seaman.

E-130. The seamen have some belongings with them and they might have to be distributed. If compensation was to be paid to the dependents would it not facilitate matters if a list of dependents was entered in the agreement itself?—I dare say it would.

E-131. You say that there are some international difficulties in the payment of compensation to dependents. What are they?—A very large number of these Indian seamen serve in ships registered in England and foreign countries where the Indian law with regard to compensation does not apply. But recently the shipping companies have agreed to pay compensation to the lascars on the lines of the Indian Act. They do that under the agreement with the Indian seamen themselves. But I do not think that the dependents would be able to enforce their claims in a court of law. I remember a case arose in Bengal here in which a particular shipping company, in spite of the agreement, questioned the jurisdiction of the Commissioner to dispute the amount deposited.

E-132. Suppose an accident occurred three miles off the Indian coast, where would the Indian seamen get his compensation?—I do not think he would be legally entitled to compensation.

E-133. Would it not be desirable that the conditions of service of these seamen were clearly stated so that insurance companies might insure them and pay them compensation?—Certainly we are prepared to insure them.

E-134. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You have stated that some of the trade unions in the jute industry are functioning spasmodically. Have not the Kankanarrah Labour Union representing the jute workers in Bengal sent you representatives and got things done by you?—Yes, probably on ten occasions in the last 5½ years.

E-135. Whenever there has been an occasion for the union to interfere has it not done so?—I find that the local pleaders are more active than representatives of the trade unions.

E-136. Did not Mr. Latafat Hussain of Kankanarrah Labour Union approach you a few days ago in connexion with workmen's compensation?—I have met that gentleman several times in my office.

E-137. Would it not be then wrong for you to say that so far as workmen's compensation was concerned the union had not functioned as they should have?—I still maintain that they function spasmodically. The trade union, to which you have referred, covers a very small area of Kankanarrah. I do not think they cover the other side of the River, or Howrah or Budge Budge. It does not cover the engineering workshops. It covers, as I understand, one or two mills only, and deals only with Muhammadan employees.

E-138. We have two general secretaries one of whom is a Hindu and he has been interesting himself in the case of Hindu claimants as well?—I have seen the gentleman myself on one or two occasions but by no means regularly.

E-139. Whenever there has been an occasion for us to intervene we have done so. In the light of that would you modify your statement?—In the last 5½ years I have seen them on 10 or 11 occasions. I consider that very infrequent.

E-140. Do you know of many cases where claims have been refused on the ground of wilful disobedience on the part of the victim of the accident?—Yes, I know that there have been cases of that nature.

E-141. In many of these cases in jute mills have you not found that it was the *sardar* or the supervisor who asked the worker to clean the machine while in motion or do such other dangerous things which were not authorised by the employers?—I cannot say I know that.

E-142. Otherwise are we to believe that these workmen who have been refused compensation on the ground of wilful disobedience were so callous of their safety that they wilfully disobeyed safety regulations and courted death or permanent disablement?—In a large number of cases I think they have wilfully disobeyed the rule.

E-143. *The Chairman* : I understood you to say in reply to me that from your experience you would rather favour an amendment of the Act which would bring in any claim in such cases?—Yes, I still say that we are quite prepared to favour such an amendment.

E-144. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri* : The labour union has investigated many such cases and found that ignorant workers have been ordered by the supervisors or the *sardars* to do a dangerous thing and that it was, more often than not, not due to wilful disobedience on the part of the worker.

*The Chairman* : I am aware of the difficulty; that is why I put that question in the very beginning.

E-145. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri* : You give statistics of claims disposed of. You have a column, "Filed as 'No claim'" which accounts for 20 per cent of the cases. Do all these cases come under the waiting period rule?—40 per cent of them come under the "Waiting period." No compensation was due in those cases. The larger employers especially the jute mill and colliery employers report to us even trivial accidents on a post card which we have prescribed for this purpose.

E-146. *The Chairman* : That is to say the insurance companies insist on that being done?—That is so. Although they would probably not report to the Factory and Mines Inspectors they report to us. As we have a special post card, it is a matter of a moment or two to fill it up and send it to us. Consequently it is recorded by us as an accident. Nothing happens unless the man is disabled for more than ten days in which case a detailed claim form is sent, upon which we make arrangements to pay compensation.

E-147. *Ray Chaudhuri* : Why do you say that it is not possible to adopt the minimum scales of compensation recommended by the International Labour Conference?—The recommendations are far-reaching and the time is not yet ripe for such legislation especially as regards lump-sum payments for death or permanent disablement. They have recommended 2/3 of the amount of pay which the man is likely to earn throughout the balance of his expectation of life. That is a recommendation which we feel is rather utopian.

E-148. Why do you say it is utopian when it has been recommended by a body of practical business men?—It is not yet adopted in any other big industrial country.

E-149. But your ground is that it is unsuitable to India?—It would be too expensive to the employer to pay that amount. It would almost double the present rates of compensation.

E-150. During the last five years what was the total number of claims paid for death or permanent disablement?—Since 1st July 1924 up to 31st December 1929 the total number of claims dealt with by our Bureau, I mean the number of accidents reported, is 21,684. Out of these, 848, or 4 per cent were fatal accidents and the balance, 20,836 or 96 per cent, were non-fatal accidents. The average cost of claims paid from 1st July 1924 to 31st December 1929 was Rs. 667-4-3 in the case of fatal accidents. That represent approximately thirty months' wages at the rate of Rs. 20 a month. The Act lays down thirty months' wages as the amount of compensation payable for fatal accidents.

E-151. What would be the cost per claim if the recommendation of the International Labour Conference was adopted?—I cannot say, because it would depend upon the age of the deceased at the time of death, which figures I have not got.

E-152. At the present rate you have paid about Rs. 4½ lakhs for 848 fatal accidents. Suppose the amount of compensation was doubled, it would come to Rs. 9 lakhs. And Rs. 9,00,000 spread over the whole of the industries insured with you would be a very small amount?—If you increased the compensation payable for fatal accidents you would have to increase the compensation payable for permanent and temporary disablements also. There would then be a general all round increase.

E-153. Have you figures regarding permanent disablement claims?—I have figures of average cost of permanent disablement cases, both permanent partial and permanent total combined. It is Rs. 285-15-11 per claim.

E-154. Taking your average costs of fatal accident claims and permanent disability claims and also the number of accidents during the last few years it would not materially increase your expenditure seriously if the rates of compensation were doubled?—We should have to double the premium if the compensation rates were doubled.

E-155. Assuming that the premium is 4 annas for Rs. 100 wages paid, by how much would it have to be increased if the rate of compensation for fatal accident cases was doubled?—I am afraid I cannot say. The question of costs does not really concern me. My Bureau has nothing to do with the underwriting side. It deals only with the settlement of claims when the insurance companies have written the business. Necessary increases in the premium would have to be made in conformity with any increases in the scales of compensation.

E-156. *Mr. Hussain*: Are there not some machines in the jute mills which cannot be cleaned when they are stopped?—I think all machines are supposed to be completely stopped before they are cleaned.

E-157. But there are some machines which cannot be cleaned when they are stopped?—For instance, there are machines called the 'Breaker cards.' They run for a little time after they are put off; their momentum still continues for a minute or two. But before they come to a standstill the workmen begin to clean them and are injured in doing so. I have known of cases of that kind. I understand that is prohibited also.

E-158. In that case if a person is injured while cleaning the machine, is he not entitled to compensation?—If he cleans the machine when it is just moving and before it has completely stopped, the employer would probably refuse to accept liability on the ground that the workmen had broken a rule. The workmen, I understand, cleans the machine before it has completely stopped in order to facilitate his work, but it is not permitted. It is easier to do it that way but it is not permitted.

E-159. Is it a fact that you proceed with your cases on the basis of the report given by the mill managers?—We proceed in the initial stages on that report; and, subsequently, if necessary we ourselves visit the mill or the factory and make enquiries.

E-160. Have you any experience of workers in jute mills being pressed by the *sardars* to clean the machines while they are running so that production may not suffer?—I have heard such allegations made in the court by workmen; I cannot say whether they are true or not.

E-161. Is it a fact that compensation will not be granted if the injured person is not in a position to cite witnesses?—If he cannot get witnesses he will not be able to substantiate his case. The same also applies to the employer. If the case comes on several months after the accident, in view of the migratory character of the workmen, it is not possible for the employer or the injured workmen to have the assistance of witnesses who were on the spot.

E-162. Do not the workers on the spot fear to give evidence against the employers?—I do not think there is any truth in that. Mr. Lethbridge usually holds his enquiry into contested cases in the jute mill itself so that, if the applicant wishes to call for any man as a witness, Mr. Lethbridge will order the manager to produce that man at the hearing in the mill.

E-163. Is it a fact that they only get compensation after 10 days?—That is as laid down in the Act. Nothing is payable for the first ten days.

E-164. *Miss Sorabji* : In your memorandum, you deal with the desirability of extending the provisions of the Act to other occupations. Do the gully pit boys who enter the manholes of sewers for the purpose of cleaning them come under the provisions of this Act?—I think they come already under schedule II, clause VIII, of the Act as persons who are employed 'in the upkeep of the sewer'.

E-165. *Mr. Clow* : Would that come under 'upkeep of the sewer' or of the sewage system?—I think so.

E-166. *The Chairman* : Has there been a case like that?—Not to my knowledge. If I were handling a claim in that connection I would bring it under the category of 'upkeep of the sewer'.

E-167. *Miss Sorabji* : I gather that the employers are sufficiently well informed of the liabilities under the Act through the Insurance Companies. Are you satisfied that the workmen also are equally well informed?—I cannot say they are equally well informed. I have reason to believe that employees in larger industrial centres do know that there is a Workmen's Compensation Act and that they are entitled to get compensation in the event of an accident. I am not sure of that as regards smaller isolated places.

E-168. I notice the phrase 'natural percolation' is used. Would not propaganda among these people who are unacquainted with these matters be a good idea?—Yes, I think it would be.

E-169. How do you suggest that this propaganda should be done?—By trade unions, if and where they exist.

E-170. Where no unions exist could not the local Commissioners publish vernacular pamphlets dealing with this matter?—Yes, that might be done.

E-171. Would you consider that there is a great opportunity for what I might call constructive propaganda in relation to all these matters?—The propaganda that is being done at present is largely what I might call destructive. Do you not think that a case might be made for constructive propaganda, and would you be prepared to suggest how that could be done?—I think it should be done. We have done what we can to educate the employer; of course, we cannot educate the employee. Therefore some steps may be taken to do that.

E-172. *The Chairman* : In your memorandum you refer to a suit claiming full wages, in addition to workmen's compensation, for the period of disablement, but you do not tell us what happened to the suit?—I personally handled this matter, and it is still *sub judice*. It is filed in the court of the Second Munsif, Sealdah, and no decision has yet been arrived at. There have been many postponements—I think there were at least ten—by the applicant on the ground that he is not ready, and there is also the general delay which takes place in the civil courts as opposed to the Workmen's Compensation Court. The case is still not decided; it is actually fixed for the 7th of this month.

E-173. Do I take it that the man who had the accident had already received his compensation under the Act?—I personally settled his claim. He was an employee of a local paper mill in Titaghar and he had lost the sight of his eye due to an accident. He was under treatment for about six or eight months before it was definitely known that his eye-sight was completely lost. As soon as it was known, and he had been examined by the Professor of Ophthalmology in the Medical College Hospital. I registered an agreement between him and his employer for payment of the lump sum compensation due for the loss of his eye-sight. He was paid some Rs. 690 and odd; he gave a receipt for it and that was complete. But two months later he instituted this suit before the Second Munsif in Sealdah, claiming the full wages due to him from the date of his accident in February 1928 until the lump sum settlement was made in September 1928. He had not been working during this period but he had been under treatment for his injury. He claimed to be paid the full wages due to him for that period on the ground that the relations of master and servant were still subsisting. We hope to be able to defend the claim on the analogy of a case in England, namely, *Ekott v. Liggins* (1902) (2 K.B., 84) in which it was laid down that a workman who has received or is receiving compensation cannot sue for any of his wages during the period of incapacity.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. M. H. B. LETHBRIDGE, Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, Bengal.**

E-174. *The Chairman* : I understand that you are the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation in the Presidency of Bengal?—Yes.

E-175. And you have held that post practically from the beginning of the Act?—Yes. I joined in October; the Act came into force in July; temporary arrangements were made for a few weeks.

E-176. Am I right that you went to England?—Yes; I read in Chambers with Mr. Duckworth, a barrister, for six months.

E-177. Therefore you have experience both of the English and of the Indian Acts?—Yes.

E-178. Will you tell me with what staff you cover this large area in the Presidency of Bengal? You deal with all the cases, I take it, of claims under the Act?—Yes; I have only four clerks.

E-179. You have no deputy?—No.

E-180. Do you deal with the whole matter in Calcutta or do you travel about and deal with the cases as they arise on the spot?—Whenever the question arises how the accident happened, and it is necessary to see the machine, then I always go to the scene of the accident. Apart from that I try cases in Calcutta. For example all jute mill cases involving only medical questions are tried by me in my court-room in Calcutta. But if any question arises rendering it advisable to go to the scene of the accident, then I go to the jute mill. I go once a month to the Asansol colliery area and dispose of the cases that come up there, and to other places as cases arise. I occasionally go to Dacca and to Chittagong, and once or twice to Darjeeling. In the case of Asansol there are many good contested claims, but in the case of Chittagong it is mostly distribution proceedings. I cannot go to Chittagong for such cases often because my work is too heavy, and the usual procedure in such cases is to get the deposition of the parties concerned and witnesses recorded by the Sub-divisional Officer and make an award on that. That is the only way of managing the work in an area of this size.

E-181. Have you found, in your five years' experience, any difficulty in administering the Act single-handed?—I do not think there has been any serious difficulty.

E-182. Is that because a large proportion of the claims are paid without any contest at all more or less automatically?—I think that is probably the reason. There is very little litigation, and a great many of the cases which are contested are compromised.

E-183. I notice you pay a tribute to the persons who drafted the Act, that in the case of India it has worked with much less litigation and with much greater smoothness than the corresponding Act has done in England. I suppose that is because the Act has been made much more simple than the English Act and is adapted purely to the conditions of India?—I think it is largely due to the arbitrary features of the Act. Many points are not open to dispute.

E-184. But in your view that has been an advantage to both the parties, the workman and the employer, although it may have been a disadvantage to the legal fraternity?—Of course, in the case of the workman, it is a mixed advantage, but decidedly an advantage on the balance.

E-185. We have your views in great detail put forward in a very interesting manner as to the extensions of the Act, which you think might take place, covering a large number of new classes of workmen who are at present not within the Act?—I think you are referring to the Government of Bengal's letter. I had no occasion to differ from it, but that part of the Government of Bengal's letter was not based on my personal report.

E-186. But supposing we had an extension such as is here indicated by the Government of Bengal, do you think that you would be still able through your existing office to carry out the administration of the Act, or would your office require to be strengthened?—I have not thought about that very much, but I think it is difficult to say without knowing the number of workmen who would come under the Act. I think a deputy would probably be required if very large numbers came under the Act.

E-187. I do not think we are informed here of the number of new persons who would be brought under the Act?—It is impossible to make an off-hand estimate, but those who are at present under the Act will probably be exposed to the greatest risk.

E-188. No doubt, they were first brought into the Act, but, on the other hand, as you bring in less organized industries and more scattered people, the administration will obviously cost more in proportion?—Yes; on the other hand, I should not say there would be a proportionate increase of claims.

E-189. Perhaps not. There is one question I particularly wanted to ask your opinion upon, and that is the question of the fatal accidents and accidents producing permanent total disablement. At present those cases are governed by the provision of wilful disobedience to orders?—There are three forms of misconduct disqualifying for payment of compensation.

E-190. In your opinion, will there be any danger in bringing that to correspond to the present law in England so that those cases should not necessarily be excluded from compensation?—Do you suggest only that those exceptions should not disqualify in case of fatal accidents and those producing permanent total disablement, or do you suggest that a new proviso on the lines of sub-section (2) of section 1 of the 1925 Act at Home should be introduced? If it is the latter, it will further complicate the matter. I take it that your question is only whether those forms of misconduct should not disqualify in the case of fatal accidents and permanent total disablement. I do not think it would be dangerous. From the experience I have had, I do not think it would lead to bad results.

E-191. You would not take any objection to amending the Act in that direction?—As a matter of fact, I had actually suggested it. Of course, there are objections, but I think the advantage would outweigh them. If there is a case for the exceptions at all then there must be a case to extend them to serious accidents as well, but I think the advantage of excluding those accidents would outweigh this.

E-192. *Mr. Clow*: Arising from what you have just been discussing, the English Act, as I understand it, differs really in three particulars. In the first place, instead of specific exceptions it refers to serious and wilful misconduct; in the second place, it provides that in certain cases the exception has no effect; and, in the third place, it actually modifies in certain cases the fundamental phrase "arising out of and in the course of employment" by a fresh sub-section?—It is rather a difficult sub-section; it was introduced in 1923.

E-193. Which precisely of these changes do you regard favourably from the point of view of the Indian Act?—I would bring it only into line with the 1906 Act and no further.

E-194. The second of the three points that I mentioned?—Yes, but I would certainly not change the wording of the exceptions; it is much better to have specific exceptions than to have vague phrases. I think that the exceptions should not apply in the case of death and permanent total disablement. I would also go one step further and say that it should include permanent partial disablement assessed at 50 per cent or more of permanent total.

E-195. As regards the Employers' Liability Act, you have given us a note on the subject of legislation on the lines of the British Act, 1880, in which you say "it is doubtful whether there is any pressing need for legislation on the subject". Apart from the question of urgency, do you think there is any need at all?—I have no personal experience. In my note I was really discussing other peoples' opinions in the matter. There is very little to go on. The only reason why I think that there is no pressing need for legislation is that this question has hardly come up in this country, as far as I can see.

E-196. The point is this. Even supposing the civil law were altered in the manner suggested, do you think the average worker would be inclined to take advantage of it? Does the workman at present file a civil suit for damages at all?—Not, so far as I know.

E-197. In your letter of 1st May 1929 to the Government of Bengal, you refer to the workmen employed in miscellaneous works, particularly in



docks. You say "The difficulty in this case is to frame a suitable definition". Have you anything further to help us to framing a suitable definition?—I am afraid I have not been able to help. The difficulty, of course, is to exclude all sorts of miscellaneous people; it would make the administration difficult.

E-198. You could include all persons employed within a certain area that is subject to, say, the port Commissioners; that would be too vague, I suppose?—All persons employed for that purpose within that area on loading and unloading or transport of goods. I do not know exactly what the area is.

E-199. Later on you say: "I agree that any wide extension of the definition of workman would be impracticable without a compulsory insurance". How would you answer the argument that this kind of liability should be a first charge on the industry and the question as to whether the employer will be able to pay the amount is immaterial? For example, why do you say "impracticable"? It is perfectly practicable surely to extend it to classes whose employers may not be able to pay; the only thing is that they may become bankrupt?—Legislation is not desirable that will not be able to achieve its object without making many bankrupts. Perhaps "impracticable" is not quite the right word.

E-200. You suggest an alteration in the scale of assumed wages which would have the effect of giving a man, whose wage was just over Rs. 12, about 66 per cent more than the man whose wage was just under 12?—The reason why I made that differentiation was that Rs. 12 is about the dividing line between the wages of women or youths and the wages of ordinary unskilled labourers.

E-201. Are you satisfied that this is true in every province?—I do not know about other provinces, but from one of the papers submitted to you I see that my figures are true for this province.

E-202. You agree that the minimum rates at present are too low?—Yes; I am very strongly of that opinion. The question as to how to remedy the defect is difficult, but I certainly think that the minimum rates are too low.

E-203. As regards the waiting-time, you suggest a reduction from ten days to seven, with no dating back. That, I understand, would increase the number of disabled claims by about 25 per cent?—I have heard that.

E-204. Any addition will consist entirely of persons who are disabled for more than seven and less than ten days?—Yes.

E-205. Do you think it is worthwhile doing this in view of the fact that the administrative cost might swallow up the whole of the compensation?—I do not see why persons who are disabled for just over a week should not get compensation.

E-206. In most cases it will be a small amount and hardly worth claiming?—Yes, but I think such persons should have the right of claiming compensation, if they wanted to.

E-207. What procedure do you follow with regard to distribution at present; when a number of dependants or relatives included within the definition of dependants appear before you, what is your next step?—I ask them whether there is any difference of opinion among them, and if there is not, I just take evidence of relationship with sufficient detail regarding dependency to give me an idea how the amount should be apportioned; then I proceed to make the award. But if there should be a contest, then I proceed as in a contested case.

E-208. Commonly is there much disagreement between dependants?—No; very rare.

E-209. When a widow and a child are dependants, do you award all the amount to the widow?—If there is an aged father, I nearly always give him some, unless he has an adult son to support him; otherwise, I give all the amount to the widow. I omit the case of a widowed mother who, of course, usually gets a share.

E-210. If there is a widow and a child, do you award the whole of the amount to the widow or a portion is awarded to the widow and a portion to the child?—It varies considerably; it depends upon the standing of the family, and whether I think the widow is capable of looking after the interests of the child. It is a very difficult question I find how to deal with

the lump sum in the case of a widow, because if I deposited it in the savings bank and withdraw it every month for sending remittances, the result will be that in a certain number of years the whole capital will be exhausted and there will be nothing left. The amount is not enough to yield an interest which would be sufficient for the expenses of the widow.

E-211. I notice you suggest in one place pensions for widows?—I said that I should like to see it, but that it would involve other changes which in my opinion are impracticable.

E-212. That would involve a substantial increase in the amount of compensation?—It also goes further; you have got to alter the whole scheme.

E-213. Is it not possible to purchase annuities with the amount available?—But it may be much too small. The amount of compensation is Rs. 457-8-0 for the group getting Rs. 15-4-0 wages. Even if the whole of that would go to the widow you could not purchase much of an annuity for Rs. 457-8-0.

E-214. As regards the question of liability of contractors, I am not quite clear what your proposal is to meet the difficulty. Is it merely the insertion of this explanation?—That and also a change in section 12 (2), namely, substituting for "the contractor" the words of the British Act, "any person who would have been liable to pay compensation to the workman independently of this section". That puts ultimately the liability on the direct employer.

E-215. You say: "Usually the contractor is remunerated on the basis of outturn, 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". What is the presumption that you refer to?—Perhaps I should have said "inference". If the proprietor controls the conditions of work of the workmen engaged by the contractor, he is, in law, the direct employer of these workmen.

E-216. Then you say at the end, as an alternative, "I do not see any necessity for giving the workman any election at all". You recognize that it is less desirable?—That is my proposal.

E-217. In actual practice whom does the workman sue?—Almost always the principal.

E-218. Mining and engineering are the most important trades concerned?—Yes; also railways. There have been several cases of railway contractors. Real independent sub-contractors (for example, there is a list of sub-contractors posted up on a notice board outside the big Legislative Council building) are in a very different position to the persons I am considering here.

E-219. Dealing with the possibility of claims not being presented by dependents, I take it you merely suggest that the employer should inform the Commissioner, but that he should take no action whatever on the notification?—I think the Commissioner should intimate the dependents.

E-220. In all cases, or only when he thinks there is a *prima facie* case?—If there was no *prima facie* case, of course, he would not do so.

E-221. If the Commissioner has got to discriminate between cases which he thinks are *prima facie* good and *prima facie* bad the danger is that if a case is contested his decision might not be regarded as quite impartial as it should be?—I think that is inseparable from the position of the Commissioner at present. The Government of India expect him to help the parties with advice.

E-222. As regards non-industrial diseases, I am not very clear what your proposal regarding compensation is?—Perhaps I should explain how I came to write that paragraph. I had been getting together some notes with a view to producing an annotated edition of the Act, and was struck by the difference between the English Act and the Indian Act in this respect. I thought this analysis would be useful, but I have no very definite proposal to make myself.

E-223. You suggest that compensation should be payable, as in England, for exposure disease. Take the case of an employee working in a malarial district who contracts malaria?—That is gradual; it must be sudden. There must be something that can be called an accident. I do not think it will apply in the case of malaria.

E-224. This morning Mr. Herridge who gave evidence before us suggested that the existing agreement in respect of lascars might not be held binding as between the employer and the dependents on the ground partly of the wording of the present form?—If the agreement is in question it will be for the civil court to decide, because the Commissioner's jurisdiction cannot be extended by statute.

E-225. As a judge, do you think that the view that dependents are not entitled to compensation would be tenable?—I think it is very arguable. It is a very distinct danger, because it has been held that dependents' right is quite a distinct right from the workman's right.

E-226. It could be overcome if they are mentioned as dependents specifically in the present form of agreement?—They will have to be a party somehow. I suppose the workman could stipulate that his dependents should be paid; I think that would be quite feasible.

E-227. How long elapses, as a rule, between the time of the accident and the time the claim is made?—It varies very greatly. There are cases of workmen coming after two years and claiming, showing reasonable cause for not having come before. I suppose two or three months can be taken as the average.

E-228. After it comes to you how long you take to give your decision?—On receiving the claim I usually fix a date, a fortnight later for submission of a written statement by the employer and a week after that for hearing; in other words, it takes between three weeks and a month for the hearing of the case. The majority of cases are decided either on the day of hearing or at the most on the first adjournment.

E-229. *Mr. Joshi* : While replying to Mr. Clow, on the question of "Employers' liability", you stated that very few cases have so far been made, and that the workers have not shown any inclination to make use of this liability. Do you think that if sections were introduced in the Workmen's Compensation Act that will give some information to the workers about what is due to them, cases may arise in larger numbers?—I do not think so. Very few of the workers know the actual wording of the sections. They get to know their rights after hearing that other people have got compensation.

E-230. True. As there is legislation for workmen's compensation, and they are gradually learning about its existence, it is quite possible that if there are sections in the Act itself, the workmen will gradually begin to see the difference in this country too and choose whichever course is better for them. To-day the law is not definitely stated anywhere. If it is definitely stated in an Act in which they are interested, it is quite possible that they may begin to make use of it. There is a difference you recognize that when the law is not properly stated, naturally the workmen do not understand, but if the law is definitely stated in an Act and codified, there is a greater possibility of their making use of it?—Certainly, but I do not think that it will be of very great value to them. I think it is very much better for them to take the compensation even if it is less.

E-231. *The Chairman* : You do not think, generally, a scheme of compulsory insurance could be administered in India?—No.

E-232. And it has been turned down in England several times?—Yes.

E-233. *Mr. Joshi* : What are the difficulties that you foresee?—I am afraid I have not gone very carefully into the question.

E-234. On the question of industrial diseases that are found in Indian industries, was any inquiry made?—I have never had an application for compensation or for inquiry about any industrial diseases except lead poisoning. There are only very few cases of that and those are from the Bengal Government Press. I have never had any application or inquiry about industrial diseases that were not scheduled.

E-235. So far as you are aware, you do not know of any inquiry made by the local Government as to which diseases are found in industries like mining?—No. I have not heard of any inquiry.

E-236. You are in favour of the rates of compensation for the poorly-paid people being increased?—Yes.

E-237. Why are you against the rates for other people being raised?—Do you think that the rates are adequate?—I have not expressed myself against raising those rates. What I have stated is this: "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. . . . If this is accepted the lump sums payable for death and permanent disablement will require to be proportionately enhanced". This is a very large increase all round. It is only "if it is not accepted, some special provision should be made for poorly-paid workmen".

E-238. As regards lascars, in the Bengal Government memorandum there are two methods: either he is excluded from the benefits of British legislation or some similar provision made here. Would it be possible to give the workman the choice between the two?—He has a choice at present. He can apply under the stipulation here and under the Act at home.

E-239. Under the Indian Act?—He is not under the Indian Act. He can take advantage of the stipulation.

E-240. The Bengal Government suggest that if he gets the benefits of the Indian Act he should be deprived of the benefits of the British Act?—I think that is a constitutional point.

E-241. There is no other difficulty except the constitutional difficulty?—If it is possible to legislate and bring them under the Indian Act definitely, I think that is the best solution.

E-242. *Miss Sorabji*: In dealing with question of attendance registers you suggest that the employer might keep a register of home addresses of his employees to facilitate reference in cases of workmen's compensation. Would you not include in it a list of dependents of the workmen also?—It is not practicable to do that.

E-243. *The Chairman*: I suppose dependents change frequently from time to time and there will be difficulty in keeping it up to date.

E-244. *Miss Sorabji*: Even a list of wife and children?—When children are over fifteen they are no longer in the list.

E-245. That is not my point. Suppose a man comes to work in an urban area leaving his relatives behind in the village. Would it not be of use to him if such a list were maintained?—It would be valuable if it could be maintained. But I feel that it is impracticable and employers are very strongly against it.

E-246. In regard to the payment of compensation to the widow what precautions would you take to see that the money reaches the right people?—It is invested. But if it is too small to be invested sometimes the widow asks for the whole sum to buy land. In such cases I refuse to pay the money unless I see the sale deed and the widow's interest is properly secured. I do that in some cases.

E-247. Have you considered the possibility of including in the Act a provision that some one should be appointed to advise these workmen and dependents about the possibilities under the Act?—I have not thought of that. Very often the best way of using the lump sum is to buy land; otherwise the capital will be spent soon. If the widow buys land with the money she can live on the proceeds of the land. In such cases what I wanted to do was to send the money to the sub-registrar instructing him to pay the money to the vendor after ascertaining that the minor's interest is secured. I made some enquiries to this end but found that the sub-registrar had no means of keeping large sums of money, and was not allowed to do so. But that difficulty could be overcome.

E-248. Could the Commissioner follow up every case like that?—The Commissioner cannot follow up every case.

E-249. Would not an outside person, on the analogy of the Lady Adviser to the Court of Wards, be of some use?—I do not think it would work. It is a very different thing to the Court of Wards. Here you have a much larger number of cases and people of an entirely different standing. I do not think it would be practicable.

E-250. Taking into consideration the characteristics of the Indian workman—his recklessness as to loss of life, the growing drug habit and his ignorance of machinery—should not something be done to prevent the consequences of serious and fatal accidents?—I think that the consequences of an accident to a workman are so great, even if he has got compensation he has to suffer so much in the case of serious accidents, that there would be quite a sufficient deterrent.

E-251. Would not propaganda on the lines of "safety first" propaganda in regard to the road be of some use?—I am not really in a position to say. I am sure the millowners have spread the knowledge of the rules as much as possible. The rules are posted in the mills.

E-252. But the illiterate workmen cannot read them?—Though they do not read them they know of them. One can tell that from the cases they put forward; they nearly always say that they did not disobey the rule, that they did not meddle with machinery in motion but that somebody else set it in motion and thereby caused the accident.

E-253. *The Chairman*: Propaganda, I take it, is not within your sphere?—Not within my sphere.

E-254. *Miss Sorabji*: There are diseases arising out of an accident; take, for instance, the case of the Glasgow Coal Company which paid compensation for rheumatism, a disease which arose out of an accident. But there are cases where compensation is not paid where the man has been careless in miscalculating the effect of the accident. Would you in such cases follow the English Act or would you follow your suggestion?—I would not allow compensation in any case which would be excluded under the English Act.

E-255. Then you would be more or less excluding carelessness and miscalculation. With regard to the extension of the Act to other occupations would you include the gully-pit boys who enter the manholes of the sewers to clean them out, under schedule II to section 8 and consider them as being employed "in the construction, inspection or upkeep of the underground sewer"?—They do not construct or inspect drains. They simply clear out the drains. They are counted among the sweeper castes.

E-256. Would you call them scavengers and put them under that section?—The only way to bring them in is to describe them as inspecting the drains.

E-257. I do not want to drag them in. I want to know if they are under the Act?—I could not say. I have never had an application from them.

E-258. Would you extend the Act so as to cover those people also?—I see Government recommends the inclusion of scavengers in certain circumstances.

E-259. *The Chairman*: We cannot ask you to give a judicial interpretation. Would you be in favour of clearing the matter up in an amended Act?—I should be glad if it was made clear.

*Miss Sorabji*: I simply asked your opinion in the matter because the last witness said that they come under the Act because they are concerned with the upkeep of the drains; and I want some amendment made in the amended Act to include these boys, if they are not already inside its protection.

E-260. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In your experience have you come across cases of workmen losing their lives while they go across the river in the company's boat to the jute mills on the other side? Have they been decided to be cases arising out of employment or not. We hear of a number of boats sinking every year and consequent loss of life?—The two worst cases which recently occurred were not contested. Liability depends on whether the workmen were compelled to use the means of transit provided.

E-261. The jute mills employ steam launches to tow boats that carry workmen to and from the workshop. The boats sink occasionally causing loss of life?—The question is, as I have said, whether the workmen were under proved necessity to use them.

E-262. In these cases the mills employ boats for business connected with their industry. Boat accidents occur and there is loss of life. Do you suggest to us any amendment of the Act to cover those cases?—It is difficult to say that because of these particular cases the Act should be amended. There are a larger number of drowning cases of workmen being brought across from one side of the river to the other to work in jute mills, and under the law as it stands the question depends upon whether there was "proved necessity" for them to use that means of transport, and in many cases it is possible for the employer to prove that there was some alternative possible means of transit, in which case the workman would not be entitled to compensation. I have not thought out the question as to whether or not an actual amendment in the law should be made on that ground. A large number of workmen are involved. It is a real question.

E-263. It is a question we ought to consider?—I think so.

E-264. That an amendment may be necessary on the point of "arising out of or in the course of employment"?—Yes. The law, as it follows from the English decisions, would not always cover these people.

E-265. You think there is a special case for consideration?—Yes.

E-266. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: I understand that a large number of claims are refused on the ground of wilful disobedience of some specified order?—Yes.

E-267. In a jute mill the supervisors or the *sardars* tell the workmen to clean the machines, and so forth. The cleaning of machines while the machines are in operation is generally prohibited, but when the order comes from the *sardars* it is taken as being just as much an order of the higher authorities. How do you distinguish between those cases?—I never remember a case in which the workman has been able to prove that the *sardar* gave him the order.

*The Chairman*: The witness has already said that he would favour an amendment of the Act which would disallow that counter-claim in the case of fatal accident—permanent disability—up to 50 per cent.

E-268. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Regarding the amount of compensation provided by the Act, do you not think some amendment is necessary in the case of the amount payable for fatal accidents?—I have suggested that the whole scale should be increased.

E-269. And the same for permanent disablement and any kind of accident?—Yes.

E-270. We have some figures from the Bureau officer showing that the cost of each fatal claim is about Rs. 667, and that there have been only 848 fatal accidents in the course of five years. Therefore any substantial increase in this scale would not be a material handicap on the industry, would it?—It would not appear to be, but I am not in a position to estimate that.

E-271. *Mr. Tassie*: Referring again to the matter of these drowning accidents, you said that if it could be shown that to go across the river was the only way, then the dependents of the drowned men would have a rightful claim to compensation?—Yes.

E-272. It is only where there is some other way of getting to the mills, say by walking—(the men probably take a boat because it is easier than walking)—that no claim can rest?—Yes.

E-273. Have there been many claims paid on account of these drowning accidents?—There were two accidents, each involving a considerable number of workmen, only this last year, and the claims were paid without any contest.

E-274. The employers have accepted their responsibility in most of these cases so far?—They have.

E-275. In other parts of India, in the tea districts and coal districts, there is not a whole-time officer similar to yourself. In Assam, for instance, there are district officers who fulfil your functions?—Yes.

E-276. Do you think it is difficult for a district officer to deal with claims promptly?—It is very difficult. I can only speak from correspondence I have had with them, but continually in some cases I have had the impression that they have not grasped some essential point of the Act or have not been able to give very much attention to the matter. It is a very real difficulty.

E-277. Do you think it would be more advantageous if these other provinces, where there is a large amount of industrial employment and where claims are possible, had a whole-time Commissioner?—I think it would be.

E-278. If the Act were extended to cover other types of employment, such as plantation labour, it would be almost necessary for places like Assam to have a whole-time Commissioner, would it not?—Yes.

E-279. All you cover in a tea garden is the factory labour?—Yes.

E-280. If you had the whole of the garden coolies to deal with as well, there would be a great deal more work to do, would there not?—Accidents are rare among the garden coolies, but there would be a good deal more work to do.

E-281. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In the course of your experience have you found that lawyers are more and more appearing on behalf of dependents in accident cases?—They are appearing now more than they used to.

E-282. In your opinion is that a good thing?—If a workman has a difficult case it is hard for him to put it before the Commissioner without a lawyer. It is difficult for the Commissioner to act as counsel for the workmen.

E-283. Have you heard of cases where the lawyers have pocketed, in the way of fees, practically the whole of the compensation money?—I know they sometimes take a very large percentage. In some cases they go on the principle of taking nothing if they lose and a large percentage if they win.

E-284. *Mr. Ahmed*: Would not that difficulty be got over if your court was located near the other courts where lawyers practise?—I do not think that is necessary. I think too many lawyers would be a bad thing in cases like these. It might lead to the lawyers getting hold of the dependents and appearing in cases where there is really no contest and in which they have nothing to do, simply in order to get some of the compensation money—telling the dependents that unless they engage their services they will not be able to appear before the Commissioner at all.

E-285. Are you not aware that there is a society of lawyers who do not charge anything for doing this sort of work for the parties?—It has not been brought to my notice. Occasionally a lawyer has told me that he is working without fee.

E-286. With regard to an Indian seaman who goes from here to Amsterdam, Copenhagen, for instance, and from there to Liverpool and from there to New York, and finally comes back to Bombay by a round-about route, what remedy has he in regard to putting in any claim for an accident which might have happened to him *en route*?—There is a special clause dealing with that. As regards the actual claim, if he could not appear before me because he was on the High Seas, that would be amply sufficient reason for admitting his claim though six months had expired.

E-287. Would it not be better to amend the law so that he can claim compensation when he arrives here?—He can. There is no difficulty.

E-288. The limitation clause does not apply to him?—No. Even in the case of death there is no difficulty, and in the case of the workman himself the Commissioner has ample discretion.

E-289. Do you exercise your discretion always in his favour?—I do not remember refusing it in a case of that sort.

E-290. The law does not protect him. It is only the discretion of the Commissioner?—I do not think there is any occasion for any amendment. The law as it stands gives him sufficient protection.

E-291. The law as it stands gives him no protection. It is only the discretion of the Commissioner which gives him protection. Do you not think the law itself should give him protection?—The law enables the Commissioner to use his discretion.

E-292. *The Chairman*: I suppose that any hard and fast enactment might turn out to be worse for the workman?—It is possible.

E-293. The discretion is really in favour of the workman?—I think that is probably so.

E-294. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In the case of a workman being seriously hurt, so that his illness lasted for a month for instance, would you favour the proposal that he should get his compensation dated right back to the first day, and not merely between the ten days and the month?—I would not object to that. It would dispose of the difficulty of malingering.

E-295. If he was going to be ill for a month it would be a serious case, would it not, and therefore there would not be the same danger of malingering?—I agree.

E-296. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Have you received a considerable amount of assistance from Trade Union leaders from the jute-mill side?—At one time I received very considerable assistance, but it has been falling off lately. Sometimes there is considerable activity, and then it falls off.

E-297. You have had some assistance from them?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

**BENGAL**

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

**SIXTY-EIGHTH MEETING**

CALCUTTA.

(JAGATDAL.)

Tuesday, 4th February 1930.

PRESENT:

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*  
 Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*,  
 Mr. A. G. CLOW, *O.I.E., I.C.S.*  
*C.B.E.*

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.  
 Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.  
 Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, *O.B.E.*,  
*I.M.S., Medical Assessor.*

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, *M.L.A.*

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, *Vice-President, Bengal* }  
*Chamber of Commerce.*

Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, *M.L.C.*Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, *M.L.C.*} *Assistant Commissioners.*Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, *Bar.-at-Law, Lady Assessor.*Mr. S. LALL, *I.C.S.*

Mr. A. DIBDIN.

} *Joint Secretaries.*

**TULSI, CHAMAR, and his wife TILASARI, Workers in the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, were examined and made the following statement.**

*Tulsi:* I come from Gorakhpur in the United Provinces. I have been working in this mill since one year. I have come with my wife and children. I have no land in my village. The supervisor told me that I could get employment in the mill and so I came here. I did not pay any money to the supervisor to get employment here. The supervisor does not belong to my village. I live in bazaar lines. I pay Rs. 1-8-0 a month as rent for the house. I am a sewer. My wife also works as a sewer. The child that my wife has in her arms was born since we came here. My wife did not get any payment when the child was born. My wife was away from work for four months. Though she wanted to come to work earlier she was not given work, and was turned away. After four months she was given work. I earn Rs. 4—5 a week while my wife earns from As. 8 to Rs. 3 according to the quantity of work done. We are indebted to the money-lender. How can we manage with three children if we do not borrow from the *mahajan*? I borrowed Rs. 100 while I was in my village, and since then I have repaid Rs. 40. I pay a monthly interest of As. 4 (4 *sic pice*?) per rupee. How can we go to the manager to ask for an advance? Before we came here we were agricultural labourers. We came here in October 1928, and the child is three months old. My wife had been working for a year when the baby was born. We would like to stay here and do not want to go back to our country. Myself and my wife together earn about Rs. 7 a week and we spend about Rs. 5 and save Rs. 2.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**HABIB, a woman worker in the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.**

I have come from Cowrah in Arrah district in Bihar and Orissa. I came here with my husband two years ago. No one brought me here. I was poor; all my folk came here and I also came. My husband is a line *sardar*. I have three daughters and two sons living; two of my children died. The child that I am carrying in my arms is one and a half years old, I did



not get any *khoraki* when this child was born. I did not go to work four weeks before, and four or five weeks after, the birth of the child. I worked in the mill for a year before the child's birth, but I did not get anything after the child was born. My husband used to get Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 a week but now he gets Rs. 10 or Rs. 11. I get Rs. 3-4-0 a week. We do not save anything. After meeting our expenses we send the balance to our old parents in our country; the balance may be anything from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 a month. As we cannot manage with what my husband gets I go to work. If we eat we cannot have clothes, and if we have clothes we cannot eat; that is our position.

(The witness withdrew.)

**NOOR MUHAMMAD**, a line-sardar in the weaving section of the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.

I have been working in this mill for the last 22 years. I came here of my own accord. I was obliged to leave my home because the amount that my father and four brothers earned was not sufficient to support the family. I come from Arrah in Bihar and Orissa. My father is a retired telegraph line-man and gets a small pension. We do small weaving work at home, but that is not enough to support the whole family. I get Rs. 11 a week, I do not get any bonus on production. I brought my wife to cook my food, but she fell ill and went home. I live alone in the *busti*. I send money home to my wife. I was in debt but not now. I send home Rs. 20 or Rs. 25 a month. I get my food cooked by somebody or other and pay them something. The strike that we had last year was due to a demand for higher wages. All the workers joined the strike and I also joined it. I am a member of the Kankinnarah Labour Union.

(The witness withdrew.)

**KALIL**, a weaver in the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.

I come from Ghazipur in the United Provinces. I have been working here as a weaver for the last three years. I earn Rs. 9 to Rs. 10 a week. My wife, brothers and parents are in my country. I send them a monthly remittance of Rs. 16 to Rs. 20. I go to my country once in eight or nine months at the harvest time. If I take leave I get back my work after return from leave; I get leave up to eight or ten weeks. I did not pay anything to the *sardar* for getting my employment. I have been hearing that *sardars* take Rs. 5 or Rs. 10, but so far as I am concerned I did not pay anything. The reason why I came to work in the jute mills is that I was hard up in my country, could not get food and was becoming indebted. I go to my country generally in February, partly for harvesting, partly for attending to the repairs of my cottage and partly to see my family. I live alone in Calcutta. Four or five of us are in one room and I pay As. 5 as rent a month. My uncle was doing weaving work in this mill, and when he went home he helped to get me a job here. When I want to go on leave to my home I get a pass from the manager; I have got to apply for leave through the *sardar*. I do not pay anything to the *sardar* when I return to work after the expiry of my leave.

(The witness withdrew.)

**SORJU**, a line-sardar in the spinning section of the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.

I come from Mungeli in Bihar and Orissa. I have been here since my boyhood, and am working in the mill for the last eight or nine years. My mother and wife are in my country while my brothers are here. I earn Rs. 9-7-8 a week. I send home Rs. 25 a month. I go home once in five or six years. I get leave for going home. I get my work after my return from leave. There is bribery in every department in the mills for job except in my department.

(The witness withdrew.)

**KARU, a spinner in the Anglo-India (Middle) Jute Mill Company, was examined and made the following statement.**

I come from Mungeli in Bihar and Orissa. I have been working here for the last ten years. I get Rs. 5-2-0 a week. I did not pay any *bakshish* to the *sardar* when I got my employment, nor do I pay him anything out of my wages. I have my wife, a daughter and a son here. I have no land in my country; I have only a thatched house. I have no cattle here. I had no accident here; I have the defect in my right eye ever since my childhood. I am not able to save anything now. I am indebted to the extent of Rs. 25. My wife does not work. I pay Rs. 1-4-0 as house-rent.

(The witness withdrew.)

**RAI SYAMA CHARAN BHATTACHARYA Bahadur,  
Vice-Chairman, Bhatpara Municipality.**

**Mr. F. O. GRIFFIN, Chief Engineer, Public Health Department.**

**Mr. K. C. BANERJI, Executive Engineer, Presidency Division.**

At the outset Mr. Griffin explained, in detail with the help of a map, the proposed drainage scheme for Bhatpara.

E-298. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Mr. Bhattacharya, what are you in the municipality?—I am the Vice-Chairman of the municipality. I have been on the municipal council for 30 years.

E-299. When was this municipality formed?—It was separated from Naihati in 1899. With the establishment of jute mills in this area this place has grown in importance. In 1891 the population of this municipal area was 11,764, in 1901 it was 21,464, in 1911 it was 50,414 and in 1921 it was 65,666—that is an increase of 450 per cent in 30 years. Since then four new jute mills have been started. The present population will be over 80,000 or in the neighbourhood of 85,000. The present area of the municipality is about 5½ square miles. It is 5 miles long and 1 to 1½ miles broad.

E-300. How many jute mills are there?—There are altogether fifteen mills. One is a paper mill, one generates electric power, one is a chrome tanning factory and the remaining twelve are jute mills which form one-fifth of the total number of jute mills now working in this province. The number of looms is 8,827; the number of labourers engaged in these mills is 50,728.

E-301. How many of these mills have *bustis* of their own?—Eleven out of the twelve jute mills have *bustis* of their own for the accommodation of their labourers with 7,370 rooms in them. These *bustis* may be described as mill villages, fitted with electric lights and having all the conveniences of life, with abundant water-supply, *pucca* drains, well-paved pathways and septic tank latrines with 1,123 seats in them. The sanitary arrangements of these *bustis* are excellent in every respect. But the case is different as regards private *bustis*.

E-302. How many of the workers actually live in these *bustis*?—I cannot give accurate figures, but I may say that the rooms are not sufficient for all the workers and that some of them live in private *bustis*.

E-303. Have you got a scheme for drainage and water-supply?—Yes. The congestion is very great in the neighbourhood of the mills. Up to 500 feet from the main road on either side it is very congested. Though there is vacant land beyond that nobody likes to go and live there. In order to encourage people to go and live in those places, the Town Improvement Scheme includes construction of broad and metalled roads and water-supply, besides electric light.

E-304. What will be the cost of your scheme and how do you propose to meet it?—The total cost of the Town Improvement Scheme which consists of sewage, water-supply and incidental town-planning schemes is Rs. 21,10,365. To meet this cost the Government of Bengal sanctioned a grant of Rs. 7,00,000 and the local mills have been generous enough to contribute Rs. 11,50,000 and the balance of Rs. 2,60,365 is to be met out of the municipal fund, and if necessary, by loan also.

E-305. Have you had any difficulty in acquiring lands for the purpose?—We have acquired only the exact width of the land that is necessary for the scheme, that is, for the drainage and the roads. There should be some more land for parks and open spaces.

E-306. Who prepared the scheme?—The Engineering department. (*Mr. Griffin*) A certain amount of land has been acquired for public parks also in addition to the road and drainage.

E-307. *The Chairman*: You have already acquired the land necessary for the scheme?—Only just the extent of land required for the scheme. The proper way of executing a scheme like this is to acquire a big width of land, make roads through it, develop it in all ways and then sell it. But the Bengal Municipal Act under which we are working does not give us power to acquire lands beyond what is actually necessary for the works themselves, that is, the roads and the sewers.

E-308. It does not give you power to acquire land for development and sale later on?—No.

E-309. Are there any general town-planning provisions in the Municipal Act?—No.

E-310. Would you explain to us exactly what alteration in the law, you think, is required to give you power to undertake a general scheme of improvement such as the one you contemplate?—(*Mr. Bhattacharya*) We should have power to acquire any land, make roads through them, develop them in all ways and then sell them. We want powers similar to those of the Calcutta Improvement Trust.

E-311. Have you no powers to buy land by private sale without resorting to the compulsory provisions of the Land Acquisition Act?—We can acquire land only for a public purpose. The extent of land is limited to what is actually required for the public purpose.

E-312. *Sir Alexander Murray*: When the late Kisori Lall Ghosai was alive, did he not offer you the land necessary for the road—about 50 or 100 feet?—Yes, he agreed to give the required land.

E-313. What happened afterwards?—His successor declined to give any land free of cost. We were thus compelled to reduce the width of the road to 50 feet.

E-314. And you have been compelled to acquire the land under the compulsory provisions of the Land Acquisition Act?—Yes.

E-315. How has the land appreciated in value since you began to acquire it?—The rent was Rs. 3 a *khatta* before, but now even though the roads have not been laid down and only the lines marked, the rent has risen to Rs. 10 a *khatta*.

E-316. *Mr. Clow*: When you pay compensation to the landowner for acquiring his land compulsorily, does the Land Acquisition Officer take into consideration the increased value of the rest of the landowner's land on account of the improvements you have effected?—No, he does not.

E-317. *The Chairman*: I take it that there are two things that you want by way of an alteration of the law. The first is: in determining the price to be paid for the land compulsorily acquired by you the Land Acquisition Officer must take into account the increase in the value of the remaining land of the particular landowner, part of whose property you are purchasing. That is the case in England, but you have no similar provision in India?—If that is done it would be quite fair to the parties concerned.

E-318. Then there is the second point. The definition of a public purpose in the Land Acquisition Act should be extended so as to cover the purchase of land for development and sale after development?—Yes.

E-319. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is it not possible for the municipality to condemn a *busti* as insanitary and force the owner of the *busti* to make the necessary improvements?—Under the Bengal Municipal Act the Municipal Commissioners can prepare a plan for the improvement of a *busti*. They should then ask two Civil Surgeons for inspection of the locality and approval of the scheme. They can then call upon the owner of the *busti* to make the necessary improvements. If he failed to do that the Municipal Commissioners could carry out the improvements themselves and recover the expense from the owner.

E-320. Have you attempted to put those provisions of the Municipal Act into force?—We did that in the case of one *busti* in front of the Kankinarah Mills about 15 years ago. We contemplate doing that with regard to other mill *bustis* also. We have had a long correspondence with the *zamindar* of the *bustis*; he would neither do the thing himself, nor allow the Commissioners to do it.

E-321. Have you any power to open municipal markets?—Yes, we have. We have got no markets now. We have secured a plot of land for building a market. We have not till now proceeded with that because we have not enough money to spare. The market would require Rs. 30,000. We are now concentrating our attention on the big scheme. Of course, the market is only a speculation after all.

E-322. *The Chairman*: With regard to the difficulty of acquiring land for development, this is not the first time we have heard of that difficulty. Has any one introduced a Bill in the Council to remove that difficulty?—Sir Surendranath Banerji who drafted the Calcutta Municipal Act also drafted the Municipal Act for the province as a whole. Since his death on account of obstruction they have not been able to put this Act through. That draft Bill contained provisions that would get over most of the difficulties that are now put forward by me.

E-323. As a result of the increase in value of the land have you any power to levy increased municipal rates on the landowners?—The rates are revised every fifth year. The next revision comes off on the first of April next. I have taken up the matter already.

E-324. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the definition of 'public purpose', assuredly construction of workmen's houses is a public purpose. Who is standing in the way of acquiring land for construction of workmen's houses?—We cannot acquire land for constructing workmen's houses.

E-325. Do you know that the Holland Commission recommended that?—But that has not been embodied in a statute.

E-326. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Even under the existing Act the municipality has powers to compel the owners to make the necessary improvements according to the standard *busti* plan, but they have not put those provisions into force?—No, we have not done that. But, as I said before, the municipality has no power to acquire lands for workmen's houses either under this Act or under any other Act.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

## BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

### SIXTY-NINTH MEETING

(PANEL No. II.)

CALCUTTA.

Wednesday, 5th February 1930.

P R E S E N T :

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

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*,  
K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal  
Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.

MAULVI LATAPAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.

Miss CORNELIA SOBABI, *Bar.-at-Law*, *Lady Assessor*.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary*.

} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. G. A. YOUNG, General Manager, Indian Iron and Steel  
Company, Limited.

E-327. *The Chairman*: You have come to help us to-day with evidence with regard to the two large industries which are described to us in one case as Burn & Co., Ltd., Howrah, and the other as the Indian Iron and Steel Company?—No. I am not concerned with Burn & Co., Ltd., Howrah; only with the Indian Iron and Steel Company as representing Burnpur and Gua Ore Mines.

E-328. Then you are not able to speak on the first memorandum submitted to us?—I cannot speak on that.

E-329. Will you tell the Commission what is the position that you hold with regard to the Indian Iron and Steel Company, Burnpur?—I am in the position of the general manager and resident at Hirapur Works. That is my official position.

E-330. What does the memorandum dated from Hirapur Works, exactly cover in the way of your undertaking, and how many men are employed?—The memorandum dated Hirapur Works, October 1929, covers the men employed at the works in the production of pig iron, coke manufacture and by-products. We have there on an average about 2,800 men, and we employ somewhere in the region of 750 women. The men can be divided into three classes: the skilled class, the semi-skilled or unskilled class, and the coolie class. The men under the skilled class are nearly all employed on maintenance work, that is, they are the fitter class and the engineering class. The semi-skilled or unskilled class are employed on operating machinery such as crane drivers, ram drivers and any other machinery which has to be driven, but these men have no mechanical training, they are only there as drivers. If any part of the machinery breaks down it is the job of the mechanical gang to put it in order. The coolie class are mainly employed in handling materials. The raw material side is almost entirely handled by contractors. The women are mainly employed in cleaning up around the plant, and in no case are they employed on actual operation work.

E-331. You refer on the first page of your memorandum to Burnpur and Hirapur; are those two distinct?—Burnpur is the town and Hirapur is the works.

E-332. And the "Indian Standard Wagon Company"; how is that related?—That is a different company under the same managing agency, but not under my control.

E-333. Then the memorandum we are dealing with is entirely the Iron and Steel Works which you have just described?—That is this particular memorandum, and I am also authorized to give evidence in connexion with the ore mines which supply iron ore for these works. That is a separate memorandum altogether.

E-334. In your memorandum you say that during August 1929 the number of hours lost due to absenteeism on account of sickness totals 7,400. Does that mean that in your register you keep a separate column for sickness absence as distinguished from other kinds of absence?—No, these figures were prepared for the information of the Commission and only deal with that particular month. We do not keep records separately in our muster roll. We simply prepared these figures in order to give an idea what the position was for that particular month.

E-335. We have been interested in what is called "absenteeism" and we find that different kinds of absences are all lumped together under one heading?—That is the case generally with our records. When a man is absent we do not record for what particular reason he is absent.

E-336. You do not record any difference in your register between absence with leave and absence without leave?—In regard to our labour there is no difference, but with regard to our permanent staff there is.

E-337. Then this figure is merely your own analysis of a single month?—Yes.

E-338. You state that the total absenteeism due to all causes is about 8½ per cent, but you do not tell us what proportion of that percentage is represented by sickness?—These figures were taken out while I was on leave. I returned to Hirapur Works on the 22nd November, but I took the opportunity of going into the figures which were given, and the true position is that the 8½ per cent which is given there is absenteeism on operation work only. Our labour is roughly divided into raw material handling and operation work.

E-339. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: No coolies are included?—No.

E-340. These are your skilled workers?—Yes, and semi-skilled. I took out the average for coolies employed on constructional work, and the average is 28 per cent in that particular department which we call our town engineering department.

E-341. *The Chairman*: The average absenteeism is 28 per cent?—Yes, that is among the coolie class.

E-342. On the same page you state that the absenteeism is fairly low on these works?—That refers to the operation works.

E-343. And you found it necessary to adopt a very strict attitude in dealing with absence without leave?—Yes, the reason for that is that our plant is a continuous process plant, and we have naturally to train men up to do specific jobs. There is a scarcity of labour, suitably trained, to do these jobs, and when we train these men we are put to considerable inconvenience if they do not turn up, and we favour, in promotion, men who are regular in attendance. That has the effect of bringing down absenteeism to a minimum.

E-344. With regard to the skilled men you find there is a response to a stricter discipline in the way of regular attendance?—Yes.

E-345. But on the other hand you mention a very high figure of absenteeism with regard to other labour?—Yes, the other labour is uneducated and the work on which they are employed is not important work in that the plant would not shut down if they did not turn out for their duty. They mainly clean up and handle materials from one point to another which in the case of necessity we can always do mechanically by cranes, so that we are not entirely dependent upon them.

E-346. You have not made a similar effort with regard to unskilled or coolie labour to get regularity of work?—We find it almost impossible because the coolie labour is drawn from surrounding villages and surrounding districts, whereas our skilled and semi-skilled labour are housed in our own town,

E-347. Further on, you tell us with regard to staff organization that workmen are trained, and as improvement is shown promotion is given and, as far as possible, when a vacancy occurs a man in a lower position fills the vacancy. Have you found a response from workers in that direction in ambition to rise in scale?—Yes. I make it a particular point to keep workers contented by giving them something to work for, and in all our departments we have arranged a regular scale of promotion. To give you an instance: in our coke-oven department we have actually working now a coke-oven foreman who came to us as a coolie. He is unable to read or write, and yet he carries out the duty of a foreman.

E-348. Therefore you would not hold with the proposition that illiteracy is a bar to promotion for a good workman?—I would say it is a bar in that where men are illiterate we have to provide educated men to work alongside them to do the clerical part of their work for them. All the records and all the instructions have to be written for them.

E-349. Again you tell us about your system of timekeeping which corresponds pretty closely to the method which prevails in most engineering works in England?—Yes, except that in England you are dealing with workmen who are educated, and therefore can put their time checks into an office, whereas we have to have a man really employed here to do that for them, that is, we have the timekeeper there to receive the time-check.

E-350. You make a reference to a labour superintendent. Would you mind telling the Commission exactly what are the functions of your labour superintendent?—The labour superintendent is in charge of all timekeeping, that is, all the muster rolls are under his charge in so far as booking of attendance goes and also the timekeepers in the various departments are directly under his control. He completes his muster rolls so far as attendance goes and he records the attendance and the rate of the man. The muster rolls are then sent to the accounts department, who is responsible for extensions and for the actual payment of money: so that the labour superintendent's duties are completed when he properly records the attendance and the rate at which the man is working in the works.

E-351. Has he anything to do with the engagement of labour or its promotion within the works?—The various departments send requisition for labour to the labour superintendent. He always has a certain number of men applying for work, and the system prevailing at present is that he gives a gate pass to the man applying for work, and the man then is allowed to enter the works and to proceed to the department requiring the services of a man of his qualifications. The department engages the man and sends him back with an engagement slip to the labour superintendent, who records the name of the new man on the register.

E-352. Has that system any effect in diminishing or abolishing bribery?—There are two systems of bribery. In large works where foremen have a number of men under them, where dishonesty is practised, it is the practice for those foremen deliberately to take bribes from these men, and if the men do not comply with the requests one might find that these men will be discharged. Then when the new man comes on, if he is the man engaged by the foreman, and if he is a dishonest foreman, he will take a bribe from the man he engages. I make it my particular duty to keep records of engagements and discharges in each department. These records are kept daily and they are placed before me every day, and I total them up weekly and I take averages out monthly and yearly, and whenever these records show any variation from the normal, I take it up immediately with the departmental manager concerned and he traces it down to the particular shift on which this engagement has been made. We generally keep a very close eye on dishonesty that may go on in that direction.

E-353. Do you consider that bribery prevails in your works as a consideration for employment?—No, I think the system I have introduced, and the fact that they know that I am carefully watching them, has kept it down to an absolute minimum.

E-354. At present your opinion is that there is no substantial evil in your works, due to the system that you have adopted?—Yes.

E-355. And the key of the situation is the labour superintendent?—No, the key of the situation is the fact that there is someone supervising it. They know that I am having these figures prepared, and occasionally when I make enquiries they know from which source they are coming. They come through me to the departmental manager and from him to the foreman, so that they are always kept uneasy as to whether they are getting away with any bribery that might be going on.

E-356. What sort of status does your labour superintendent hold and what salary is he paid?—Rs. 500 a month. He is a European. I might make it clear that this labour superintendent is only engaged in the actual work of recording timekeeping. He is not labour superintendent in the sense that a labour superintendent is at Home in charge of a labour bureau. We do not find it necessary to employ such an organization. We pay him a good salary and put a good man in the job so as not to make it worth his while to make money by various ways that might be open to him.

E-357. He has no concern with the general welfare?—No, except that a part of his duty is to receive instructions with regard to the allotment of quarters. When we allot quarters he is the man who actually sees that these particular quarters are allotted and occupied by the men to whom we allot them.

E-358. In your memorandum, with regard to land acquisition, you say "Our whole area including works and town is being acquired under Government land acquisition"; an acquisition of areas for quarters is, therefore, included in this. Does that mean that the Government is exercising its powers to acquire land for the purpose of your company?—Yes. The position roughly is this: that we went into this area as an industrial concern; we obtained certain leases from landlords in the districts. These leases only covered the landlords' rights and we had to acquire the surface rights in order to erect buildings and carry out our works. Our trouble commenced in endeavouring to acquire these surface rights, and we found that people did everything they possibly could in order to make money out of the company.

E-359. How is it that Government has taken action in this case to acquire land for your company, as I take it, both for industrial purposes and for housing purposes? We have had complaints from many other quarters that the Act is not available?—In our particular instance we are termed a Public Utility Company, and therefore it is covered by the Act as it is at present. We had to put up our reasons why we should be termed a Public Utility Company. These reasons were considered by the Collector in the ordinary course of going into our application, and the main reason that we put forward to show that we were a "Public Utility Company" was that we supplied electric power to the Indian Standard Wagon Company, and the Indian Standard Wagon Company had already been termed a "Public Utility Company"; therefore we said "if you shut us down, you shut down your Public Utility Company". We are in the position of suppliers of electric power. We are also under agreement to supply power to the Asansol Waterworks.

E-360. In your case it lay within the power of the Commissioner did you say?—Yes.

E-361. And who else?—It lay within the duty of Government. The application went through the Collector, who made his recommendations to the Commissioner, and the Commissioner passed our application to Government. Government considered what we put forward as reasonable grounds for terming our company a "public utility company" under the Act.

E-362. And then from that followed the extension from the industrial use to cover also the housing works?—Yes.

E-363. This is a case where Government has used its discretion to make the present Act work in the direction of providing land for housing of an industrial firm?—I would not say that; I would say that our town is a part of our works really, as we have to house our labour there. Therefore, the point is that Government considered we were a "public utility company", and so the whole of our land came under the scheme.

E-364. On the question of hours dealt with in your memorandum you tell us that a large proportion of your labour works on 8-hour shifts?—Yes.

E-365. And daily labour has holidays on Sunday; shift labour are let off one day in every 14 days?—Yes.

E-366. That complies with the present Act?—Yes.

E-367. Are you of the opinion that that one day in 14 is adequate?—Yes, I quite think so. It is the general system throughout the whole world.

E-368. To work 13 days out of 14?—In a continuous process plant such as ours, yes.

E-369. Dealing with the question of wages you tell us that you pay wages monthly on a daily rate, and that payments are made from the 10th to the 14th of the month following. Have you ever had applications from your workers to be paid at shorter intervals than a month?—No, we find this system of paying has worked admirably. Our system of paying is elaborate; it takes a good deal of supervision, and we find that we have very few complaints.

E-370. You have no opinion to offer to the Commission as to any change for a shorter period?—The opinion I would put forward is that in our particular case, to adopt a weekly payment for instance would mean that payments could not be made in one common centre; it would mean that payments would be going on at different points throughout the works at the same time, and I am perfectly convinced that it would be disliked.

E-371. Unless you divided it into departments and paid different departments on different days?—Payments are made in company's time and not on off-time, and the whole of our operation work would be continuously affected, whereas in this particular instance we are affected only three or four days in the month.

E-372. You have experience, no doubt, of English methods in a large works comparable to your own where wages are paid weekly?—Yes.

E-373. What is the difficulty you see in carrying out the same system here in India?—Mainly that workers at Home are educated and they can reason for themselves what the payments are. It would be a very hard job to deprive a British worker of his wages actually due, whereas unscrupulous people could get at uneducated Indian workers who are very often in the hands of money-lenders, not only official money-lenders, but other rogues in the districts who lend money with the idea of extracting large dues from them, and we, by having this system of paying, keep these people out of the area altogether, which it would be very hard to do if we had payments going on at different points. It would be impossible to supervise payments so thoroughly as we do at present.

E-374. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Do I understand that Government acquired land for you as being a public utility industry, and that the land required for the workmen's *chawls* was acquired as part of the industrial enterprise?—Yes.

E-375. With regard to the Land Acquisition Act, are Government the sole judge as to whether the land is required for a public purpose or not?—Government is the sole judge.



E-376. And Government exercise their discretion in acquiring the land not only for an industry but also for workmen's *chawls* on the ground that such was necessary in connexion with the industry?—Yes.

E-377. *Mr. Clow*: What intervals do you give to the shift labour employed in the Burnpur works?—It varies in different departments. In the case of the blast furnace department, the workmen 'cast' the furnace and as soon as that is finished they are allowed to sit back until the next operation, 'flushing' the furnace. When that operation is finished they are again allowed to rest.

E-378. There are no specified intervals?—No.

E-379. Is there any underground work in the ore mines?—It is all surface working.

E-380. You suggest that there should be greater restrictions on grog, opium and *ganja* shops. What restriction do you suggest?—We think that a better class of shopkeeper should be introduced who would be not so likely to exploit the labourers.

E-381. In your memorandum you state that you yourself exercise control over the shop buildings?—Yes, but the actual licences are granted by Government.

E-382. Is it not within your power to refuse to lease land for a grog shop?—The grog shop is established, and Government grant the licence. The actual licence-holder is chosen by Government.

E-383. Is the land on which the grog shop stands your land?—Yes.

E-384. So that when the lease expired it would be open to you to say that you were not going to lease it again if it were to be used for the purpose of a grog shop?—The labourers insist on having certain facilities. All we really intend to convey is that there should be every possible restriction put on the licence-holder so that he does not exploit the labourers. Labour will always have a certain amount of drink. The consideration is not to give it in quantities likely to do harm.

E-385. In other words, your firm is in favour of having grog shops?—No, we are not. We are in favour of having labour, and we cannot have labour without giving them these facilities.

E-386. You say "The company do not allow money lenders on the mines." Do you mean within the whole area?—Within the mines area.

E-387. But not where the workers live?—It is very hard to keep these people out. One of our rules is that money-lenders shall not be allowed within the area, but these people do come in.

E-388. You say that your company grants three weeks' leave per annum to skilled workers. Is that on full pay?—Yes.

E-389. You do not follow the same method at Burnpur?—No. The reason for adopting this method at the ore mines is that it is an unhealthy district. We are only now in the process of getting the district inhabitable. We are having to do a great deal of jungle clearing and having to provide a water-supply. We found that the water was contaminating the labour, and we have put in a water-supply from a spring on the hill side.

E-390. You do not give leave to the unskilled workers at the mines?—No. The permanent staff referred to here is really the maintenance and workshop staff. The others are miners. They are casual labour, coming and going as they please.

E-391. Is a large amount of work done on contract at Burnpur?—Very little of it is done by contract work. The only contract work is the handling, unloading and loading of all materials, and occasionally the handling of big iron into and out of stock.

E-392. What are the difficulties in the way of doing that work departmentally?—It is a question of facilities rather than difficulties. The contractor himself is a skilled man. Business in this country is very often carried out by the family. The contractor will very often bring into our area seven or eight really good supervisory staff which he can trust. We are quite content to pay our contract or a flat rate of so much per ton. We get a proper weighing and therefore we know that we are making a proper payment. If we tried to do such work in any other way than by contractors we should probably be defrauded in many ways.

E-393. On what period do the contractors pay wages?—They have a system whereby they advance money to labour. They keep the labour supplied either with funds or with food.

E-394. You have never advanced money to your own labour?—No, except under my sanction.

E-395. *Mr. Joshi*: You mention certain figures about absenteeism on account of sickness. How do you know whether a man is absent on account of sickness or for any other reason?—We have our own medical arrangements in the district. We have our own hospital and our own medical staff and the figure is arrived at by information supplied by the medical officer. If a man is not reported sick he is put down as being absent for some other reason.

E-396. You say 'each unit consists of one room'. What is the size of the room?—The cubicle content in the *khalasi* quarter is 1,113 cubic feet, and the size of the room is 10' X 10'.

E-397. You say that you provide latrines for senior labourers. How do you judge seniority?—By the position held in the works.

E-398. Why do you not think it necessary to provide separate latrines in the quarters of the work-people in lower positions?—One reason is that I do not think they would ever use them. We have the greatest possible difficulty in getting them to use public latrines.

E-399. Have you ever made an experiment of providing latrines in the quarters occupied by people of lower position?—No.

E-400. How many such quarters have you?—There are 172 of these particular labour quarters. We have 700 odd units.

E-401. If you had made an experiment in this connexion with 100 units, you would have gained practical experience as to the use or non-use of latrines, but as it is, now you are only able to draw on your imagination.—Not at all. We have the experience of what happens inside the works where the conditions are as they are in England. We have had to put guards on the area to make the people use the public latrines. I am talking now about the coolie class.

E-402. You have said nothing about sickness insurance. Do you not think you would get your labour more contented if you made some provision for sickness?—We have provision for looking after a man when he is sick. We provide all the medical attendance free.

E-403. I am referring to the maintenance of a man during sickness on the lines of health insurance in Great Britain.—I do not think it is applicable to our type of labour, which is continually changing. Provision might be made in the case of the permanent staff which is resident permanently on the spot.

E-404. How do you differentiate between permanent and casual labour? Suppose a man works for eight months in a year, then goes home for four months and then comes back again, and continues like that year after year?—I would call him a permanent man.

E-405. What proportion of your labour is permanent in that sense?—It is impossible for me to tell you, but it is a very small proportion.

E-406. What proportion of your workmen come fresh every year?—It is impossible for me to say.

E-407. I take it that in regard to the class of workers who work for eight months in the year, then go home for four months and then return year after year there would be no difficulty in applying legislation for sickness insurance, would there?—I think there would be the greatest possible difficulty. You say that they work for eight months and then go home, but the chances are that they may never come back again.

E-408. I am referring to the class of people who do return?—How can we assume that they will come back.

E-409. By experience.—Our experience is that they do not come back.

E-410. We have heard from a large number of employers that they do. With regard to that class of worker there should be no difficulty in applying legislation about sickness insurance?—As far as our particular works are concerned, it would be very difficult to trace the movements of those workers who are not permanent.

E-411. If this difficulty is somehow or other surmounted, would your firm propose legislation for providing sickness benefits on other grounds?—Our firm is only too pleased to do anything which will add to the welfare of the workers. Anything which we think would add to the better efficiency and service of our men we would adopt.

E-412. You say that a large proportion of your labour is shift labour. What is the exact proportion of those workers who work an eight-hour shift?—I cannot say. When we say 'the majority' we mean by far the largest proportion.

E-413. You further say that the shift labour is let off one day in every 14 days. What is the difficulty in letting it off once every week, except that of cost?—We do not consider it necessary.

E-414. Is not a weekly day of rest considered necessary for most people?—We adopt the practice of the trade throughout the whole of the world.

E-415. Is there any difficulty in the process itself, except that of cost?—There would be considerable difficulty in changing round the system. When you give a man rest you have to provide a substitute for him.

E-416. Therefore it is a question of cost?—We would also have to train men who would be capable of taking the position while the other man is away.

E-417. *The Chairman*: I take it your difficulty is that you would require an increased personnel for the same production?—That is right.

E-418. Therefore the difficulty which you suggest lies in increased cost and in the difficulty of training an additional number of men to keep your continuous process in operation?—Yes.

E-419. When you give the one day's rest in 14 days, are the works closed?—No. The men change shift.

E-420. It is a change over, but the process still goes on even on the fourteenth day.—Yes.

E-421. *Mr. Joshi*: What is the legal contract of employment for daily rated men?—It is a daily contract.

E-422. You can discharge a man any day you like?—Yes.

E-423. Then is it to be wondered at that there is such a large percentage of absenteeism as 28 on the part of those people whom you may discharge any day you like?—But the other men are employed on exactly the same basis.

E-424. Is all your labour employed on the basis that you can dismiss them any day you like?—Yes. I am omitting the staff.

E-425. Do you agree with me that if men are engaged on the basis that they can be discharged on any day the management likes, absenteeism is bound to be larger than if the men were engaged on a monthly contract?—No, I do not agree.—I have given the true reason for the absenteeism being high in the case of the Town Engineering Department, namely, that these are uneducated labourers who are recruited from the villages round about. They walk 6 or 7 miles to the works; they do work for a day or two days or three days, they get sufficient for their needs, and they then go off and remain away for a number of days until that money is exhausted, and then they come back again.

E-426. *The Chairman*: And presumably they have some work to do in their villages?—Yes, agricultural work.

E-427. *Mr. Joshi*: Have you sufficient work for all the people who come to your gates every day?—No.

E-428. Therefore some people are perhaps absent because there is no work for them?—If they do not turn up they may often find that there is someone else in their job.

E-429. Some proportion of absenteeism may be due to want of work?—Yes.

E-430. You state your view regarding the comparative efficiency of Indian and European workers. You know that there is a difference between the wages paid to Indian workers in India and those paid to European workers either in India or in Europe. Suppose one shilling is paid here in India, in Great Britain four shillings is paid.—I do not think your

figures are correct. I can give you many instances where, if you take into account all the amenities—that are provided, the workers here are getting just as good wages as they are in England.

E-431. Will you give me an instance?—The men I am referring to are skilled men. Take for instance an electrical fitter. He gets up to Rs. 2-10-0 a day.

E-432. What would be the wage paid in Great Britain for that job?—I should not think the wage would be more than £2 a week.

E-433. That is 40s. for six days?—Yes.

E-434. It comes to between 6 and 7s. a day, while you pay here Rs. 2-10-0 which comes to about 4s. Suppose you offer a wage of £2 here to any one who does this work, do you not think you will get a better class of labourer?—I do not think so, if by 'better class' you mean a man who is capable of doing more work.

E-435. Did you ever try?—We have tried.

E-436. For the same wages?—We have increased the wages for improving the class of work.

E-437. Did you improve the rates sufficiently high?—Yes. We have taken men who came from other parts on sufficiently high rates on recommendations from other sources, but we found that that did not improve the standard and therefore we kept to our original standard. But the point I would like to make in connexion with the comparison of wages is this; I say there is very little difference in the case of a skilled man. Here is a man who is drawing, say, 4s. a day. He is allowed free medical attendance, he is given free housing, the company has put in bazaars and controls the shop-keepers so that he may not be exploited, the company has put in roads and has made sanitary arrangements; the man has to pay absolutely no taxes at all. Whereas if you take a British workman he has to live far away from his works and has to pay travelling expenses to and fro; he has to pay municipal and educational taxes. If you take all these into consideration, our workman here is paid just as well as a British worker is paid at Home.

E-438. *Mr. Tassie*: He is paid a great deal better?—Yes.

E-439. *Miss Power*: You refer to the labour turnover in the case of unskilled and coolie labour. Have you ever made any effort at continuity of employment by arranging leave facilities during the cultivation season and guaranteeing the vacancy to the worker on his return?—We have never tried to make any such arrangement.

E-440. Do you think if you did that you would get a less high turnover amongst the unskilled workers?—Yes, but unfortunately the cultivation time and the time when we have very heavy work coincides, so that it is very difficult to get a sufficient source of labour to supply the number who have gone on to cultivation. We think that the tendency nowadays is for people to continue if they like the conditions and the conditions are such that they can arrange with their families to do cultivation while they continue to do industrial work; so that what we are endeavouring to do is to make their conditions as good as possible so that they may settle down in the area and be continuous workers.

E-441. You want your unskilled coolies, if you can, to be as continuous as your skilled workers?—We do, and that is our aim, because ours is a continuous process plant, and people who know the work can do the work much more efficiently than new men.

E-442. Again you say: "All labour are free to approach their departmental managers if they wish." Do they, in practice, do that?—Yes.

E-443. Does a complaint ever get above a *sardar* or a foreman?—What I have endeavoured to do in my works organization is to make the departmental manager responsible for his own labour; in other words, he must get to know every man who is employed under him. I encourage the departmental manager to settle all kinds of disputes rather than that they should be taken to the court. We have a court only two or three miles away from our works, and disputes are very often taken there, and work-people are encouraged to take their disputes there by pleaders who want to make money out of them. So that my whole effort is to try and make the departmental manager take an interest in the workman himself; and in cases where the workman is not satisfied he can always appeal to me, and I always take the case myself.

E-444. You want to make the departmental manager an intermediary in their private disputes as well as in their complaints in connexion with their work?—Yes, because they work under him and if he takes an interest in the matter everything would be all right.

E-445. Do you find very great variation in the number of complaints dealt with by different departmental managers?—It depends on the class of labour; we have our greatest trouble with the lower caste labour; that is, in the case of private disputes, they are always very anxious to show that they have a caste, and they are always bringing disputes from caste prejudice and asking for a settlement; very often for the very reason of just trying to display that they have actually a caste. So that in departments where there is a big proportion of that type of labour you will naturally have more disputes.

E-446. It depends also, does it not, on the personality of the departmental manager?—Undoubtedly it does. By encouraging departmental managers to settle these disputes the workers become known to the managers and the managers become known to the workers; the managers more or less act in the position of an honorary magistrate.

E-447. On the question of education you emphasize more than once that you cannot expect any great increase in efficiency without an increase in the educational facilities. In your memorandum you deal with the facilities available. What number of workers' children attend the Mary Fairhurst M.E. School?—A very small proportion. There are six pupils out of 34.

E-448. Are those the children of clerks?—They are the children of the work-people, and the 34 represent the children of the educated *baboo* classes.

E-449. The number of children of school-going age must be far higher than 34, considering the large number of employees you have?—I might explain here that you see that we make a reference to a primary school. That primary school effort was really directed by myself to overcome what I thought was a great difficulty in the educational system in our area. To establish a middle English school first, I think, was a mistake, because it means that the children must be educated up to a certain standard before they are admitted to the school. Therefore while we did not intend to exclude the workers' children, the workers were not able to educate their children up to that standard whereas the clerks were. As a result the number of children from the clerical staff is very much higher than from the workers, so that I have petitioned for a primary school to be established which would act as a feeder to this school.

E-450. Is the proposed primary school to be a company school or a municipal school?—It would be an aided school; Government would pay half the capital cost and half the maintenance charges.

E-451. Do you propose to do any propaganda amongst your workers or offer any form of inducement to persuade the skilled workers to send their children to school?—Yes, I have done it personally. We have also done it through the departmental managers and foremen. I have personally tried to get my *mistri* type of man to send his children to be educated because I consider that he makes a better mechanic than the type that we get from the universities and colleges.

E-452. As regards the hours of labour, is a third meal taken in that midday break, or do your workers take only two meals, one before and one after work?—They take rest and also a meal.

E-453. Where do they take that meal? Have they a canteen or a dining shed?—They usually go to the bazaar which is not more than 150 yards from the works.

E-454. There are no dining facilities?—Not inside the workshop.

E-455. Have you considered that at all?—It is not necessary.

E-456. Dealing with acquaintance of work-people with factory legislation you say: "We do not think that labour as a whole are acquainted with the provisions." Have you undertaken any propaganda among the workers to make them acquainted with the laws that govern their conditions of work?—Only in so far that we have posted notices in the vernacular; but the uneducated worker knows nothing about the Act, and I do not think he would even appreciate the meaning of what you might tell him.

E-457. Turning to the question of women, excluding contractors' labour, are not about 20 per cent of your labour women, since you say that there are 2,800 men and 750 women?—Yes.

E-458. What are those women engaged on?—We have a tremendous amount of dust about our plant which is detrimental to the machinery. They are employed in cleaning up these areas; they are also employed in loading clay which we use for luting up coke oven doors.

E-459. Are the women you have recruited the wives of the men employed by you, or do they present themselves independently?—They are independent as far as our records are concerned; very often they are the wives of coolies working in the same department. The majority of the women who are actually employed in the works have come from the surrounding villages.

E-460. Do they work the same hours as the men?—No. We are obliged by the Act to lay them off for a day in a week.

E-461. Apart from that, do they work the same hours as the men?—They work from 7 to 3 in some departments.

E-462. You say you have no crèche. Are the children allowed on the premises?—No children are allowed in our works; that is very strictly enforced. Our work is very dangerous, and we have always considered that they must leave their children at home, and we strictly enforce that rule. I might also say that we do not employ any boys. The boys that we have are all over 16 years of age.

E-463. You say that you have given no maternity benefit. Do you know what is the length of the absence of these women during child-birth?—No. They are casual labour; they only come for two or three days and go away. They are not continuous labour and they are not living in our area; they are living in the village areas.

E-464. Does your company desire to have a more continuous female labour force?—No.

E-465. Speaking on the subject of mines you say that you are absolutely depending upon the women workers for carrying ore. I do not find that you give any maternity benefit before or after child-birth. Has your firm ever considered this matter?—In the mines there is a prejudice to carrying anything and very few of the ordinary coolies will carry anything in the shape of a basket on their heads. Therefore they bring their wives to do that work. There again, in the ore mines, they are only casual labour; they come and go; they work for a week and sometimes less.

E-466. Have you ever kept a record of the length of the time that these women work?—No particular record is kept.

E-467. Do you not think that you would get a more continuous service if you gave them certain benefits such as payment during child-birth?—I do not think so. I think the type of the labour is such that they will not be continuous workers until they become educated and until they get away from their land. The land is their mainstay; they get their food from their land and they cultivate it.

E-468. Are the men reasonably regular?—The men are exactly in the same position as women.

E-469. I presume that many of these women who must be the wives of the men workers, are as regular as the men employees?—Yes.

E-470. *Miss Sorabji*: In your memorandum you say: "There are no particular welfare officers, as the whole of the town is under our direct supervision." As a matter of fact, is any welfare work actually done by yourselves?—It depends on what you call welfare work. We look after the needs of the people in providing medical attendance, providing good food-stuff and providing proper sanitation, and the results which we have obtained in the past, I think, speak for our very good efforts in that direction. We have had no cholera case in our district for seven years, and in the last four years we have had only six or eight cases of smallpox, which were imported cases. While epidemics have been raging in the surrounding villages within a short distance from our works we have been absolutely free. So we are doing welfare work in that direction.

E-471. Not in the direction for instance of clinics for children?—No. We support religious institutions. We pay certain monthly subscription to the mosque which is in the town; they provide education in that mosque. We also have a *patwala* in the bazaar which we subscribe to.

E-472. You have no health centres for women and children?—No; but we provide them with free medical attendance.

E-473. You have no hospital?—We have a hospital.

E-474. Do you find that women go to the hospital on their own initiative?—Yes.

E-475. Would you be prepared to employ a woman welfare worker if such were available?—I do not think it is necessary.

E-476. *Maulvi Jatafat Hussain*: On the question of contractors, will you tell us what sort of control you exercise over them? Are they responsible for their own duties?—They are responsible for their own duties, which are supervised by the departmental manager.

E-477. Can you tell us what sort of attitude is adopted by the contractor in the case of absentees?—No, I have no knowledge.

E-478. Can you say how the contractors deal with their work-people when they come back after their long absence?—If there is no work for them, I think they are sent back.

E-479. On the question of wages, have you any knowledge of the rates that these contractors pay to their workers?—I think that they are paying roughly the same rates as we are paying. If they pay less we would naturally expect that some of their labour would come to us, and if they were paying more we would expect some of our labour to go to them.

E-480. Have you any experience as to the difference between your rate and the rate paid by the contractor?—I think the rate is practically same.

E-481. You say: "The whole of the loading, unloading and general handling of raw materials is given out on contract." In the case of injuries who is responsible for paying compensation to the injured worker?—When the Workmen's Compensation Act came into force, we offered to take the responsibility from the contractor; that is, we insured ourselves, and we asked the contractor if he would share in that insurance. In the case of one contractor he accepted, while in the case of another he objected.

E-482. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Was it not contemplated by your management to start works committees?—No.

E-483. Did your sister company, the Indian Standard Wagon Company, start works committees?—That I cannot say.

E-484. Has your management ever thought of starting works committees?—No. What we did contemplate was starting a municipality board for the running of the town.

E-485. These works committees are a sort of joint machinery for settling minor disputes and for looking after the welfare work of the labour. You know that they were started in England and are known as Whitley Councils, named after our Chairman?—We have done nothing in that direction. We do not think it necessary under present conditions.

E-486. What do you mean by 'present conditions'? You mean political conditions?—No. Under present conditions our work-people are perfectly contented. If they are left alone we are quite certain that they will remain contented, but if there is interference from outside they will not remain contented.

E-487. But the works committees do not imply any outside interference; in fact, they will eliminate such interference?—My point is that our work-people are contented under our present scheme, and we have had absolutely no trouble. During the East Indian Railway strike and the Tata strike, I know that emissaries were sent to our works and meetings were held. The reply that our men gave to these emissaries was "We will wait and see if you get something as a result of the strike; if you get anything then we will also strike."

E-488. I am not referring to outside interference at all, I am referring to the very small grievances of workmen that can be dealt with by a works committee. In view of the fact that you have a very large number of employees, it is very difficult to manage unless you have a consultative machinery?—I have already explained that I personally take an interest in making each departmental manager act in the capacity of settler of these disputes. We have actually had cases where the Magistrate from the Asansol Court has sent cases back to our departmental manager to settle amicably with the parties, and he has done so and the Court has been entirely satisfied.

E-489. For example, how can the management come to know that there is bribery and corruption going on unless you have got a machinery to ascertain the various points of discontent of the workers?—I claim that we have that machinery in force now. The workers are encouraged to go to their departmental managers and if they are not satisfied with the decision of these managers they are encouraged to come to me as some have done.

E-490. May I suggest that a fresh attempt be made to enquire about the working of joint works committees and to start these committees in your workshops?—We will consider.

E-491. Have you got a regular system of training the children of the *non-badralok* class?—We have a number of apprentices of that class and we encourage them to come forward.

E-492. On the question of indebtedness of your employees, did you ever make an attempt to start a co-operative credit society?—Yes, I personally was instrumental in making an attempt to start co-operative societies. We have it in force in several of our departments, and the higher officials thought that instead of a number of societies there should be one society, but I strongly objected to that on the ground that if you had one big main society you would have to go in for outsiders to carry on the work, and there was a possible chance of money being taken away; whereas in the small way in which we have it working now in some departments the men are all known, their needs are known and the society is run by themselves. For instance, we have it in force in the chemist department, in the drawing office department, in the accounts department and in the stores department.

E-493. Did the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengal, communicate his advice to you to start a co-operative society?—He did.

E-494. Did you respond to it?—Yes, we did follow it in many departments, but so far as the labour was concerned it was not a feasible proposition.

E-495. Have you ever thought of starting a co-operative stores shop?—We have.

E-496. Have you got one running now?—We have a dairy farm.

E-497. You have not got one for the supply of food-stuffs?—We have tried to do that and we found that the labour and also the shop-keepers at present in the bazaar were very much against it. We have altered our system of bazaar arrangements. Previously shop-keepers were allowed to come into the bazaar to build their own shops. We had great difficulty in getting rid of these people if required. Recently we have built two new shops which have been given out on registered lease; if the shop-keepers do not comply with the rules of the lease we have power to turn them out.

E-498. How can you control the prices of food-stuffs?—They are based entirely on published Calcutta prices plus one anna.

E-499. But can any one rely on the published Calcutta retail prices?—I think they are published in the Calcutta Gazette.

E-500. You pay your workers monthly wages, do you not?—Yes.

E-501. Have you ever thought of making weekly payments?—We consider that the present system is the best. As I have explained to the Chairman, we consider it the best from the point of view of being able to control payments.

E-502. Have you ascertained the fact that the weekly payment is conducive to economy in that the shop-keepers will not be required to charge higher prices for the supply of food-stuffs because the workers will be able to make payments once a week?—I do not admit that.

E-503. *Mr. Tassie*: You say that most of your labour comes from the country round about your works?—Yes, the casual labour.

E-504. The other labour comes from a distance?—Yes.

E-505. Do you find that there is a tendency as years go on for the labour to give up connexion with their country and become more permanent and absolutely industrial workers?—We have found that by giving them better conditions their tendency is to bring their families and settle down.

E-506. You are encouraging them to become industrial workers and to cut off their connexion from their land because from your point of view that is the best thing to do?—We do not encourage them to give up their land; we encourage them to be thrifty and to continue cultivation so that when they are old they may go and settle down on their land.



E-507. You encourage them to keep in touch with their country?—The leave facilities that we give, enable them to go to their country. If our permanent workers want leave, say, for two months we very often give them leave and permit them to go.

E-508. *The Chairman*: You have a system of recognized leave?—It is recognized in so far as that they do not get any privileges except that their job is open for them when they come back.

E-509. It is not treated as leaving their work if they go to their country with your permission?—No.

E-510. *Mr. Tassie*: On the question of training the children of the *mistri* class, do you find that when they are educated they are inclined not to take to their fathers' job?—We have found considerable difficulty in that direction. We find that the tendency for a *mistri's* son, when he is educated, is to become a contractor or a *baboo*, and we discourage that as much as possible. I have instances where I have actually taken these boys, against their fathers' advice, into the workshops and they have turned out to be good skilled workers; these boys with a little amount of education and with the natural ability which they inherit from their parents turn out to be our best workers.

E-511. But the tendency of the educated boys of that class, unless some such steps were taken, would be to go into the *baboo* class which would reduce the number of your mechanical workers?—Yes.

E-512. As regards bribes, is it not a fact that the labour take it for granted that there must be a certain amount of bribery, because it is the custom, and that so long as it is moderate they see no harm in it?—That is so. We keep it down to the absolute minimum.

E-513. You do not think the labourers would object as long as you keep it at a reasonable degree, and that if it were moderate you will not find anybody to report even if you wanted them to?—Quite so.

E-514. As regards the payment of wages, the system you have adopted of making payments through the Cash Section is a guard against the labourers being cheated by foremen and people like that?—Yes.

E-515. Unless you have an organization such as you have you feel that a good portion of the amount might not reach the hands of the labourer at all?—We have found that where we had to do work in a hurry, and people could not come to the office for receiving payment, money has gone in a wrong direction.

E-516. Of course, with the European labour the case is different because a European labourer can protect himself while an Indian labourer cannot?—That is so.

E-517. That is why this intricate system of accounting and paying is necessary in the works in India?—We separated the system purposely in order that there might be no combination.

E-518. *Mr. Ahmed*: I think your only objection to weekly payment is that you will have to engage more people for disbursement of pay because you will be paying four times a month; otherwise you are ready and willing to pay your workers every week?—My point was that it will interfere with the work. Our plant being a continuous process plant it is difficult for us to arrange for these people to be absent from their work more frequently than is absolutely necessary.

E-519. Can you find any method by means of which you can, without interfering with the work, make weekly payments?—I do not think it is possible without interfering with the work.

E-520. Have you any knowledge of instances of firms in this country who make weekly payments?—No.

E-521. Have you any knowledge of payment in Lancashire or in England?—I have knowledge of payment in England.

E-522. Would you agree to follow that system here?—If you can give me the British workmen then I might be able to get a scheme whereby it would be workable.

E-523. On the question of co-operative societies, will you tell us whether these societies advance money to your workers at a low rate of interest?—I have already said that the co-operative societies are open only to the educated classes and not to the workers.

E-524. Is it not a fact that generally your workers are indebted?—Yes.

E-525. Have you taken any steps to help them with advances in order that they may clear off their debts?—What we have done is to discourage money-lenders coming into our place.

E-526. *The Chairman*: Mr. Ahmed's point is whether you have any co-operative credit society?—No.

E-527. *Mr. Ahmed*: Will you be in favour of starting a co-operative credit society which will be to the benefit of your workers?—I would favour it if it were workable, but I do not think it is workable with our uneducated labour.

E-528. On the question of rest interval, you said that the workers go to the bazaar for taking rest and their meal. Do you not think that it would be better if you could give them a room in the workshop itself where they can take rest?—I do not think they would use it, because the company has provided houses next door to the works, and the people are at liberty to go to their homes.

E-529. But in the case of casual labour would it not be advisable to provide for them a rest room in the workshop?—I do not think that they would use it because they have to get their food from the bazaar.

E-530. Can you not make provision for supplying food at a small payment?—If it were necessary we would have done it, but we have not considered it necessary.

E-531. With regard to casual labourers you said that they come from the villages and are not quite familiar with the work. Is it not a fact that they work continuously for 10, 20 or 30 years except that they do not work for two or three months in a year?—These people are residents in the surrounding villages and they come to us whenever they want to make money.

E-532. How is it you say that they are not efficient even though they work for such a long period as 10 or 20 years?—They do not come for years; they are only casual labour; they work for a day or two days and then go back.

E-533. Do you mean to say that they only work for two days and go away?—They keep changing. They are not permanent. They may go for employment on railway construction works, in brick-making works or in quarry works.

E-534. When they come to you for work they learn something, is it not?—These people are only employed in loading work; they are not employed on any operation work.

E-535. Do you mean to say that these people are agriculturists and cannot do any work which an industrial labourer would do?—Their mainstay is agriculture; they are agricultural people.

E-536. How do you know that they are agricultural people? Do you mean to say that all the Indians are cultivators and there is no industrial worker in India?—I know that these people are agricultural workers, and they are casual labourers, because of the district they come from, and also they are known to us.

*Mr. Ahmed*: Known to you because they worked previously?

E-537. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In your memorandum you say: "Full advantage is taken of all accommodation available" and that all quarters are provided rent free. In the case of workers to whom you do not supply quarters, do they get an allowance?—We take care of the whole of our permanent labourers.

E-538. They all have quarters?—Yes. We do not provide for casual labourers. What was really intended by that sentence was that there was a certain amount of competition in getting family quarters as against bachelor quarters.

E-539. Can you tell us how many beds has your hospital got?—I should think we have got about 40—two wards of 20 beds each.

E-540. How many in-patients would you have in a year both on account of sickness and accidents?—I think the average number would be about six or seven at a time in the hospital.

E-541. Out of 40 beds you have never had more than six or seven beds occupied?—No.

E-542. Is that because the workers do not like going to a hospital?—Our work is of a very dangerous nature, and we are liable to get accidents, and therefore we have provided sufficient accommodation.

E-543. You keep these 40 beds for accident cases?—Yes.

E-544. You do not keep these for illness?—Illness is really attended to in their own homes, but cases of acute fever where people are really bad and want proper nursing and attention are brought to the hospital.

E-545. We went round your allied works in Howrah and found that they have some canteens for the use of their workers. I was wondering why their workers would like such canteens while your workers would not. Is there a difference in the class of workers?—I think the main reason is that the majority of our workers have houses on the spot and they go to their homes for food; in Howrah they have no accommodation near to the works; their people are scattered over a wide area. I would like to mention that we have now made provision for canteen arrangements. We used to have trouble with temporary stall-holders coming into the works and selling sweetmeats and keeping our men off their work. Now we have provided a big shop which is outside the work gates and we are giving our men facilities to go out and buy things.

E-546. It is leased, is it not?—Yes, rented.

E-547. You say: "Quality of food in the bazaar is under our regular supervision and control." How is that supervision carried out?—The whole of the town is under my direct control.

E-548. But you personally cannot run the bazaar?—The officers running that particular branch are personally supervised by me.

E-549. What I really want to know is what machinery you have for this purpose?—We have the medical side; they look after the whole of the sanitary arrangements. We have a town engineer who looks after the whole of the water-supply and the building part of the town. We have a *zamindari* manager who looks after the land questions connected with the bazaar, and the labour superintendent is responsible for the allotment of the quarters in the town.

E-550. It is really the *zamindari* manager who controls the bazaar?—The leases are signed by the company on the advice of the *zamindari* manager.

E-551. We have had evidence put before us that although Indian labour, both skilled and unskilled, is definitely inferior to European western labour, yet, expressed in cost of efficiency, Indian skilled labour is in general slightly more efficient than European western labour, while unskilled labour similarly expressed is definitely more efficient. Would you agree with that statement?—No.

E-552. The idea is that the loss that you make in your work efficiency is made up by the low wages that are paid?—I do not think so.

E-553. You have not found that your cost per ton in labour is less than in western countries?—No; we have found it to be more in some cases.

E-554. Would you say the same thing in the case of unskilled labour?—No. From an economic point of view it sometimes pays one to employ unskilled labour as against mechanical handling.

E-555. You might agree that in the case of unskilled labour it might be advantageous?—Yes. I will give you an instance. We employ men on lifting raw materials from stock; for that labour we pay the contractor a flat rate per ton. The tonnage we have to pick up varies from time to time and therefore we have not installed any mechanical handling plant. We could have installed an expensive plant which would deal with our requirements, but that mechanical plant might be lying idle for the greater portion of the year; we would thus have to bear a heavy interest charge.

E-556. You have that advantage over the west?—Yes.

E-557. In the case of skilled labour you do not agree?—No.

E-558. *The Chairman*: I am not quite clear to what you referred when you were speaking of the town. Is that town on your own property; did

you acquire the *zamindari* rights over the whole area?—The town is entirely our own property, and that is the land which is being acquired by Government now.

E-559. Was the town there before you began your work?—It was paddy fields.

E-560. It is a town practically of your own people?—Yes, of employees on our works or the Indian Standard Wagon Company which is a sister company, and of people engaged in the supply of food-stuffs to the labourers.

E-561. And that is the reason why you supervise the bazaar, as also the sanitary and medical arrangements throughout the town?—Yes; and also we consider it to our interest to have our labour contented and well looked after from the point of view of health and efficiency.

E-562. And also on medical grounds, I presume, because by that means you reduce the incidence of cholera and other diseases?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Lt.-Col. B. H. BROWN, Superintendent, Ishapore Rifle Factory; Mr. R. T. DUNDERDALE, Superintendent, Metal and Steel Factory; Mr. A. W. CONNOLLY, Works Manager, Rifle Factory; Mr. R. C. FRAIN, Works Manager, Metal and Steel Factory; Lt.-Col. E. W. SEWELL, I.M.S., Medical Officer to Factories and Estate; and Mr. K. K. CHAKARAVARTY, Labour Bureau Supervisor, Rifle Factory.**

E-563. *The Chairman*: For the purpose of record perhaps you will remind me of the number of men that are on the average employed in the Rifle Factory and in the Metal and Steel Factory in 1929?—(*Colonel Brown*) The average number of men on the roll is 3,569 in the Rifle Factory. (*Mr. Dunderdale*) With regard to the Metal and Steel Factory, about 1,700 men.

E-564. You tell us, with regard to the character of your labour at the Rifle Factory, that about 45 per cent comes from local villages?—(*Colonel Brown*) About 40 per cent from local villages.

E-565. And from other districts of Bengal, you have 14 per cent?—Yes.

E-566. And then you have a number from Bihar, the United Provinces, Punjab, Orissa and other provinces?—Yes.

E-567. We are particularly interested in what you tell us in your memorandum, of the successful institution in your factory of a labour bureau since the year 1920. You tell us that it has been successful in stopping the promotion of the undeserving, and in giving a chance for promotion to the deserving, and that abuses in recruitment have ceased. Can you tell us a little more about your experience since you established this labour bureau? Particularly, I take it, you refer to the elimination of bribery?—There is one way of seeing whether bribery is going on. We keep a record of the turnover of labour; as soon as we see that the turnover in a particular section is going up we at once look for bribery, as it is usually the cause of discharge of or taking on labour, but beyond a few odds and ends of accusations which have proved untrue since I have been in the factory, there is only one case I have come across of bribery in three years.

E-568. We have been told in many places that bribery is ineradicable in Indian conditions. From what you tell us here you appear to have achieved a success?—Bribery has not come to my notice, and if it were there I should have probably found out some cases. We have a welfare committee who would very soon know about it and probably tell me.

E-569. It would come to our ears through the welfare committee?—I expect so; most things do.

E-570. But I take it that the essential point lies in the appointment of a labour bureau with a really capable and efficient labour superintendent?— I think it depends practically entirely on the character of the labour employment manager who runs the labour bureau, and who must be an Indian.

E-571. As to the possibility of practical schemes, you recommend the introduction of a labour bureau in each mill or factory with a man of good education and personality. That is, what you mean is a man who is responsible for the engagement of labour and who goes straight to the head of the mill or factory without having to go through any *sardars* or overmen, and who is in constant touch with the supreme authority, as you call it, in the factory?—Yes. All labour bureau cases come to me direct through the labour employment manager. He sees to all these cases of discharge or taking men on. They send down to the labour bureau and say "I want an A-grade fitter", or "a B-grade turner", and they supply them, and if he wants to discharge him he sends him to the labour bureau with a note saying "I want this man discharged". He is usually given two more chances before he is finally discharged, and I discharge him.

E-572. Does the labour employment manager see you once a week or once a day?—He is generally in my office two or three times a day.

E-573. So that there is the closest contact by that method between you and the whole labour force?—Yes.

E-574. You lay stress in your memorandum on his being a man of good education and personality. May I ask where you found a man of the requisite qualifications, and what were the qualifications? We understand that the supply of such men is not very large at present?—(Mr. Chakravarty) I think in selecting a man who would run the whole show, academic qualification should be the first consideration, and engineering qualification the second; because I think a man with a higher academical qualification will be beyond all petty temptations which are quite possible in holding such a post. After passing the M.A. examination at Calcutta University, I joined the factory when the apprenticeship scheme was started and I joined the evening classes in order to get myself acquainted with the engineering side of the matter. When this scheme of recruitment was first started some men were astonished to find that they could get free access to the head of the department. It was very difficult at first to convince the men that there was no necessity for them to pay bribes. The system was introduced of allowing all the workmen to lodge complaints direct instead of through the head of the section. Every man is at liberty to report to the employment manager direct for any advice, either at tiffin time or after 4-30 p.m. If it is within the power of the head of the section to deal with the matter, he does so, but if it is something beyond his power the employment manager reports to the supreme head for the necessary action.

E-575. Am I right in stating that you first of all gained a university qualification; then you turned your mind to industrial work; you took employment in this factory and you obtained practical experience of machinery; then when the labour bureau was initiated you were appointed as employment manager?—Yes.

E-576. You make the suggestion that there should be such a labour bureau and such an officer in each mill or factory. If the demand arose, do you think the Universities of India would be capable of meeting the demand for the supply of suitable men?—(Mr. Connolly) Provided that the men in charge of the mill or factory were competent to realize that they had the proper type of men. The University authorities themselves could provide the material, but they would not know whether that material was suitable.

E-577. You think there would be a supply, but it would need to be sifted?—Yes, it would need to be very carefully sifted.

E-578. Does the employment manager keep any record of the number of small grievances which come to him and how they are dealt with?—(Mr. Chakravarty) Every complaint is recorded and filed.

E-579. Do the workmen come freely to you with all their troubles?—Yes, and not only in regard to factory affairs, but also in regard to their family troubles. Sometimes a wife submits a petition saying that her husband was sending her no money. We cannot legally force the husband to do so, but I find that if I talk to the husband about the matter, telling him that he is under an obligation to send the money, he authorises me to send it. They also consult me about private quarrels, which they do not want to take to Court.

E-580. I understand that they send very large remittances through you?—Yes. (Colonel Brown) In 1922 they sent Rs. 2,025; in 1929 they sent Rs. 47,120.

E-581. How many languages of the people do you speak?—(Mr. Chakravarty) I speak Hindi, Bengalee, English and a little Urdu.

E-582. Sir Victor Sassoon: How is money actually remitted?—(Colonel Brown) By money order.

E-583. You merely do what the man could do himself if he went to the post office?—Yes.

E-584. The Chairman: Do you also write letters for the workmen to their relatives in the country?—(Mr. Chakravarty) No.

E-585. I suppose you also have some duties in connexion with housing?—Yes.

E-586. I do not know how you carry out single-handed all these duties which are tabled in the memorandum?—(Colonel Brown) He is not single-handed. He has a staff of five. Here is a list of his staff. (Handing in list.)

E-587. You give under six columns the duties carried out by the labour bureau; the second column is headed "Village Administration". What does the employment manager do in the way of village administration?—(Colonel Brown) There are a lot of durwans there whose duty it is to keep order. There is also a conservancy staff to keep the place clean. Although this section is under the labour bureau there is a supervisor in charge. The allotment of quarters comes directly under the labour bureau.

E-588. The employment manager is the chief officer dealing with all the subjects which are detailed under this head?—Yes.

E-589. Will you please tell us something about your welfare committee?—The welfare committee consists of thirty members. Every shop is represented. They elect their own representatives. There is a president, a well-educated Indian, Mr. Dutta. The committee meets on the first Saturday in every month, and any questions which are likely to cause trouble are referred to it, when the committee seeks the views of the men and makes recommendations. For instance we are building a canteen for mid-day meals. The plans were submitted to the welfare committee in order that we might have its views on the arrangements made for the different castes. The welfare committee is most useful in that way.

E-590. Does your employment manager sit on the welfare committee?—Only when invited.

E-591. I gather from your paper that you have in your works a system of recognized leave absence. How is that arranged?—The monthly-paid men are allowed 30 days leave in the year on full pay. The ordinary labourer under certain circumstances can be granted leave with pay, as for instance if he is segregated on account of disease.

E-592. I am thinking of the man who wishes to go back to his country home for the harvest?—He can always get leave, but he does not get any pay.

E-593. When they apply for leave, and leave is given to them, are their places kept open for them when they come back?—Yes, they are not actually struck off the rolls until we have written to them and have received no reply for three months.

E-594. They are not treated as absentees when they go home for harvest?—No.

E-595. Therefore a man who went regularly home to his village each year for a number of years would be counted as one of your permanent workers?—Yes; he would be marked up as "absent with leave" instead of "absent without leave".

E-596. You do distinguish in your registers between "absence with leave" and "absence without leave"?—Yes, and also absence for sickness.

E-597. Do you have a separate column for absence for sickness?—Yes.

E-598. Do you follow that up with any increment for regularity of service in the case of men coming back year by year?—There is a rule on the subject that the service increment will be given automatically in twelve months for such men only whose absence from all causes does not exceed fifteen days in the year, and in eighteen months, in cases of sickness, not

exceeding twenty days; the men who are absent more than twenty days will not be eligible for the increment. Long leave is sanctioned in the case of men whose record of service justifies such consideration, and such leave will not count as absence in the award of increment. Long leave will not normally be sanctioned in less than eleven months service.

E-599. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Supposing a man wants two months leave for harvest every year. Would he fail to get his increment then?—In such case he would not get his increment.

E-600. *The Chairman*: You tell us that your co-operative society was started in 1921. I gather that also comes within the sphere of the employment manager?—The co-operative society has its own committee of management, and its own secretary.

E-601. You tell us that the institution of that co-operative society has freed the workmen from the money-lender?—Yes.

E-602. You say that the money-lenders who used to be found outside the factory gates, especially on pay days, have now disappeared; it almost seems to be too complete a success to be real?—I have not seen a money-lender there for six months.

E-603. May we put it as high as this: that you have almost got rid of the money-lender trouble as far as your workmen are concerned?—(*Mr. Connolly*) So far as the *Kabulis* are concerned. Colonel Lenfesty knew that these *Kabulis* were hiding round the corner; he hunted them out, and if he found a workman owed money to them he "vetted" the *Kabulis'* claim and said "We will finish up this debt once and for all". The debt was liquidated, and then he said to the *Kabuli* "Now clear out, and do not come in these lines any more; you are on Government land here, and if you come again we will hand you over to the police."

E-604. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Could we have a return of the amount of loans outstanding since you started your co-operative society, the amount of their debts and the amount which the sureties have to find?—(*Mr. Chakravarty*) We took a census in 1920 of the total debt of all the workmen, and we found it amounted to six lakhs.

E-605. *The Chairman*: What does your provident society show in the way of total loans at the present time?—Rs. 1,36,760.

E-606. Dealing with industrial efficiency of workers you tell us that the efficiency has increased since 1920 by 27 per cent. How do you support that?—(*Colonel Brown*) The average earnings per month in 1920 were Rs. 26.1; in 1928 they were Rs. 32.1. That is without any alteration in the piece-work rate. That is per man.

E-607. Is that attributable wholly to the personal efficiency of the workers?—No, not wholly; some of it might be attributed to the management.

E-608. Has the rate been altered?—No, not radically.

E-609. Or speeded?—No.

E-610. The piece rates have remained the same, but the earnings per man have increased since 1920 by no less than 27 per cent?—Yes.

E-611. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Do you mean to say that since 1920 you have not increased the rate for piece-work?—The piece-work rates were revised in 1920. Since then we have not altered them.

E-612. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Yesterday the Commission saw some of your new houses which are for the better class of operatives. Can you let us know what is the cost per quarter, what rent you charge and what the economic rent would be to give a return of 5 per cent?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) I have here all the particulars of these quarters.

Type of quarters.	North land.		
	N.	P.	Q.
Final layout .. .. .	46	115	180
Actually built .. .. .	4	10	70
Cost per quarter, built in blocks .. .. .	5,660	4,741	2,150
Cost of land per quarter .. .. .	1,060	880	440
Cost of roads and drains per quarter .. .. .	580	450	225
Cost of sewage disposal per quarter .. .. .	430	430	439
Cost of road lighting per quarter .. .. .	90	90	90
Cost of water-supply installation per quarter (includes tube wells)	148	148	148
Total ..	7,968	6,739	3,483

*Est. Land.*

Type of quarters.	N	P	Q	R	S
Peace requirement .. .. .	..	..	..	172	344
War requirement .. .. .	29	86	36	237	1,297
Total requirement .. .. .	29	86	36	409	1,641
Cost per quarter, built in blocks .. .. .	5,630	4,741	2,160	1,600	1,000
Cost of land per quarter .. .. .	695	571	293	133	90
Cost of roads and drains per quarter .. .. .	97	97	97	97	97
Cost of sewage disposal per quarter .. .. .	65	65	65	65	65
Cost of road lighting per quarter .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..
Cost of water-supply installation per quarter.	130	130	130	130	130
Total ..	6,647	5,604	2,725	1,925	1,362

*Rents.*

Quarters.	Rent per month.		
	Rs.	A.	P.
N. .. .. .	11	4	0
P. .. .. .	5	10	0
Q. .. .. .	2	8	0
R. .. .. .	1	9	0
S. .. .. .	2	0	0
Zanana (female) (old lines) .. .. .	(from 2 men Rs. 1 each)		
	1	4	0
Single (old lines) .. .. .	1	0	0

E-613. Can you work out, including depreciation, what would be the economic rent to give a return of 5 per cent?—I will get that worked out.

E-614. With regard to the comparative efficiency between Indian labour and European labour, is your labour cost per rifle or per unit less than the cost for a similar article at Home?—Our figure is Rs. 64-11-0 per rifle in 1927-28. I will try to get out a comparative statement and send it in.

E-615. In your canteen arrangements, do you supply cooked food?—(Colonel Brown) The canteen is being built at present, but we intend to supply cooked food for which the workman will have to pay. There will be three kitchens—one for Brahmans, one for non-Brahmans and one for Muhammadans.

E-616. Is your co-operative society one single society or is it a number of small societies?—It is one society only.

E-617. Do you choose as guarantors those who come from the same district as the borrower?—Not necessarily. Any one who has shares of a certain amount can come forward and guarantee a loan.

E-618. Does the borrower find any difficulty in finding guarantors?—Some of them do. They can mortgage land or jewellery.

E-619. Could we have the number of refusals for loans per year?—Yes. I will send that in.

E-620. Do you supply raw materials for food in the way of rice or other stores?—(Mr. Connolly) We supply rice, flour, ghee, mustard oil, etc.

E-621. Do you find that your workers patronize your co-operative stores for foodstuffs rather than patronize the dealers in the bazaar? We have been told that workers patronize private dealers either because they get their foodstuffs in the form in which they like it, or that they get more credit from the bazaar shopkeeper?—(Mr. Chakravarti) We have not experienced that sort of thing.

E-622. In your organization for production, are you overstuffed? Could you produce more, if necessary, with the same labour force?—(Mr. Connolly) We are permitted to do that in mass production rifle manufacture. We manufacture a large number of components, and we are permitted, under Colonel Brown's administrative orders, to produce more of one component than another. As time goes on, we can balance them up.

E-623. You make to stock, in other words?—Yes.



E-624. If you got an increased demand, would you be able to increase the output from 67,000 to a higher figure without taking on extra men; that is to say, could the present staff, by getting more money, increase the production?—(Colonel Brown) Our limit is 67,000.

E-625. If you had to produce more rifles, would you have to take on more staff?—(Mr. Connolly) Yes. Above the 70,000 mark—assuming a 25 per cent systematic overtime.

E-626. I understand that there is a likelihood in the near future of the present type of rifle being altered?—That is the case at Home, but India has said that she will not adopt it until it has been tried out.

E-627. If the new type were decided on for India, would you have temporarily to reduce your production largely, while you were reorganizing your factory?—Yes.

E-628. Would that mean that you would have to discharge a large number of men, or put them on short time?—We would have to discharge them, because there would not be the machines on which they could work. They would return to the land or get jobs elsewhere as coolies. We should have to keep the skilled craftsmen, even if there was no work for them.

E-629. Are those skilled craftsmen at present paid by time or piece-work?—Piece-work.

E-630. Then you would have to turn them on to time?—Yes.

E-631. Mr. Ahmed: Does your daily-paid labour get any leave or holiday with pay?—(Colonel Brown) No. They only get leave with pay, if they are segregated on account of disease or when going up to Shillong for anti-rabic treatment or accidents.

E-632. Do these people, who have been working in the factory for years, get any pension or gratuity?—They get a gratuity out of the fine fund, if they have more than five years' service, which sometimes amounts to as much as six months' pay. There is no pension. The question of a provident fund has been referred by the Master-General, Ordnance, to the Government of India, and there is some hope of its going through.

E-633. Why do you pay on a daily system instead of per month?—(Mr. Connolly) Because otherwise India would have to pay a very much higher price for a rifle. You have to train men specially to realize that they are under a duty to give a proper return for a monthly salary. I am absolutely certain that no group of illiterate men has yet reached the stage when they will give the proper return which they should give to their country for monthly wages. That applies not only to India but all other countries in the world.

E-634. Are you against the workers in your factory forming a trade union?—(Colonel Brown) That is a matter of Government policy.

E-635. Do you employ teachers to educate the children of your workers?—We have a primary school with 240 boys; a technical school with 85 boys; a boy-artisan school with 60 boys; and Mr. Dunderdale has an infant school with 50 infants.

E-636. Mr. Tassie: Does your labour manager deal with all cases of complaints?—If they are small complaints and he can settle them with the foreman, they do not come to me; but a workman can always insist on coming to me if he wants to.

E-637. Did your European foreman co-operate at the very beginning with your labour officer?—(Mr. Connolly) At first every body both European and Indian opposed the scheme. It was something strange and they feared the unknown; but having got familiar with it, I do not think any Indian or European would care to see it abolished.

E-638. But you had trouble at first?—Yes.

E-639. On your welfare committee the lowest paid man is represented, more so than the highly paid staff?—(Colonel Brown) Yes.

E-640. Would you say that your labour is superior to the jute mill labour?—(Mr. Connolly) I think the machinist is of about the same class, but the craftsman is unquestionably a better class. You do not have to employ a man who can work to 1/1000th of an inch in the jute mills.

E-641. Do you find that when the boys leave school, they go into the factory to do manual work, or do you find that they prefer to go into clerical life?—(*Colonel Brown*) They are all wanting now to do manual work, because they are beginning to realize that there are no vacancies for them as clerks and that they can get better jobs as practical men.

E-642. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: What is the constitution of your works committee; how are the members elected?—They are elected by the different shops in the factory. Each shop elects one or two members according to the number in that shop.

E-643. How often do you hold meetings of this committee?—There are no regular meetings, but generally a meeting is held on the first Saturday in the month. In addition to that, meetings are held on special occasions.

E-644. Is there a secretary whose duty it is to note down grievances of different workmen and prepare an agenda thereon?—Yes.

E-645. Have you any of the minutes of the committee here?—No, they are not here.

E-646. I take it that disputes and questions of holidays, recreations, etc., have not been discussed in this committee?—Yes. Anything on which they are capable of advising I refer to them.

E-647. Do you debar the question of wages being discussed in the committee?—If there was any grievance it would be brought forward. There is nothing to prevent it.

E-648. I take it that no serious effort has been made to institute proper Whitley councils among the workmen?—No.

E-649. Did you receive the report of the Bengal Government as far back as 1921 recommending workshops such as yours to start these Whitley councils?—(*Mr. Connolly*) I did not happen to be the superintendent of the factory, and I could not have received such a report.

E-650. With regard to the strike in 1921, did the workers not actually forward to you a copy of their grievances in writing, and did you not hear that the chief cause of the strike was the question of wages, the workers wanting a 20 per cent increase in wages?—No, I did not hear that that was the chief cause of the strike. I was not one of those who were behind the scene.

E-651. Did the workers not actually submit to you their grievances in writing?—They did not send their grievances to me. I was not the superintendent of the rifle factory.

E-652. How did that strike collapse? Were not the workmen starved into submission?—(*Colonel Brown*) I have not the details.

E-653. *Miss Power*: Is there any compulsion with regard to the attendance of children at your primary school?—No. The number of children attending the day and night schools is about 240.

E-654. What sort of propaganda have you carried out in order to induce the parents to send their children to school?—They are ready enough to send them without any propaganda.

E-655. Has it anything to do with the security of tenure of your work—people in their jobs?—No. Whether they thought their tenure was secure or not they would take the opportunity of sending their children to school.

E-656. We have been told elsewhere that there is great reluctance on the part of parents to send their children to school?—I think that must be due to their being suspicious of something which they do not understand.

E-657. I take it that these pupils who go to your school are all boys?—Yes.

E-658. Has any effort been made to educate the girls?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) The infant school takes girls as well as boys. When they leave the infant school the girls apparently cease to take any further interest in schooling, or else they are dragged off to do household occupations.

E-659. *Mr. Clow*: There is a very large percentage of Bengalis in the one factory and a small percentage in the other. Is that due to the differing types of work?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) Yes. The local Bengali has not the physique to stand in front of a furnace or melting platform.

E-660. Are the employees in the steel factory equally ready to send their children to school?—I do not think the ones who melt and who work on the furnaces have any objection, but they are not so interested as the people

employed in our heavy repair shops and in our tool room, that is, fitters and turners. In fact the people in my factory have some difficulty in getting their children into Col. Brown's school, because all the vacancies are taken up. The consequence is that we have not so many people in that school as Col. Brown's factory has. If there were more school accommodation there would be even more children going to school from our factory.

E-661. *Miss Power*: Why can your factory not have a school of its own?—It is chiefly a question of money and convenience. The present school occupies all the vacant space available. It could not be enlarged at present as a physical proposition.

E-662. *The Chairman*: On the point of the willingness of boys to attend school, I take it that these boys are not of an age when they could be earning money in your factory?—Some of them are.

E-663. You do find that even some who could be earning money go to school because their parents desire them to do so?—Yes, especially in the case of the more skilled men.

E-664. *Miss Power*: Is it preponderatingly from among the Bengalis that the pupils come?—Yes.

E-665. *Mr. Clow*: Did you pay compensation for accidents before the Workmen's Compensation Act came into force?—(*Colonel Brown*) We could always give a grant out of the fine fund.

E-666. Did not the Government regulations provide for the grant of compensation before the Workmen's Compensation Act was passed?—Before the Workmen's Compensation Act the Civil Service Regulations governed the matter.

E-667. The reason I am asking the question is that yours is the first memorandum in which we have had the statement that employees were attempting self-mutilation in order to secure compensation?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) We found that in our factory. It is dying out now. The workmen discovered that it was more painful and less paying than they thought.

E-668. What was the nature of the mutilation?—They used to put their finger into the press for making small arms, cartridge-cases, and allowed the punch to come down on it.

E-669. But a mere puncture would not cause disablement?—It would carry off the top articulation of the finger and crush the bone.

E-670. Have you had a number of cases of that sort?—Several.

E-671. *The Chairman*: Then they were not so ignorant that they did not know of the legislation?—They were getting the hang of it. They did not realize that the compensation for that sort of injury would be so small as it was—(*Colonel Brown*) The compensation was paid under section 291 of the Civil Service Regulations.

E-672. *Mr. Clow*: That did not cover all the employees?—Where they were not covered we gave them something out of the fine fund.

E-673. Your fine fund seems to provide for a good deal. What is the amount of it?—(*Mr. Dunderdale*) My fine fund runs to about Rs. 4,000 a year.

E-674. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What is the cost of production of a rifle in your factory?—(*Colonel Brown*) The cost in 1927-28 was Rs. 6,411, including everything, all overhead charges and even part of the salaries of the Headquarter Staff at Simla.

E-675. What is the cost of the same rifle imported into India from abroad?—Rs. 92 in 1927-28.

E-676. That is to say, your factory produces rifles of the same quality and of the same calibre at about 25 per cent less than the imported article?—Yes.

E-677. In answer to the Chairman your labour officer stated that at one time a census of the debts of the workmen was taken, and that it came to 6 lakhs of rupees. When was that census taken?—(*Mr. Chakravarty*) In 1920.

E-678. Has any similar census been taken subsequently?—(*Colonel Brown*) No.

E-679. Why? It would throw a great deal of light on the effect of the various measures which have been taken in the meantime for the benefit of

labour if it could be shown that the total amount of debt is considerably less than 6 lakhs?—It has not been done, but it would be worth doing from that point of view.

E-680. *The Chairman*: Would it be practicable for you to take a corresponding census after these nine years which would show the extent to which your labour bureau, including your co-operative society, had been successful in reducing the indebtedness of your people?—Yes, we can do that.

E-681. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You say that now that the apprentice and boy artisan schemes are in force there are facilities for young Indians to get training and gradual promotion to supervising appointments. When was this scheme of apprenticeship introduced?—In 1921.

E-682. What is the total number of apprentices who have passed out trained?—Forty-seven in four years.

E-683. What has become of them?—They are nearly all in the factory.

E-684. Can you let us have, in the form of a statement, the total number of apprentices who have passed out trained, and what has become of them?—Yes.

E-685. You refer to gang piece-work. Will you explain what you mean by that?—In a gang there are so many men on one operation. Take the body of a rifle. There are 26 points on which that is paid for after certain operations. There are some 300 or more operations altogether, but up to a certain point they are done by a gang of fifteen men. The number that are passed are paid for at a certain rate to the whole of the gang. At the end of the month you have got the attendance of the gang, and each man is rated at a certain day rate. From the day work rate and the time he has attended you find out what they would all have earned on day work. The rest of the money which is paid for that piece-work is profit—so much per cent on the total, and that is allocated to each man in proportion to what he has earned on day work.

E-686. The man whose daily wage is Re. 1, and the man whose daily wage is annas 14, and the man whose daily wage is 18 annas share in the profit on that principle?—In that proportion.

E-687. The profit is not uniformly divided amongst the fifteen men?—No, because one man is more skilled than another, and therefore he reserves more profit.

E-688. Is there no friction amongst them when they work in a gang: do they do their best to produce more so that their share of the profit might be larger; is that the spirit in which they work?—If a man in a gang did not work, the rest of the gang would soon tell the foreman, because they would be losing money, and the foreman would either make the man work or if he refuses to work he would be sent up for discharge.

E-689. His place in the gang would be filled by somebody else?—Yes.

E-690. Do many cases of that kind occur?—Very few.

E-691. As a general rule do they all work unitedly in order to show better results and earn more money?—That is so.

E-692. *The Chairman*: Do you fine your late comers?—Yes. Everybody who comes late is fined.

E-693. We have been told in some places that you cannot get the Indian worker to come to work except when he is pleased to do so: but clearly you have a system of discipline which seems to disprove that statement; what is the amount of your fine for lateness?—One-eighth of the day's pay.

E-694. For how many minutes late?—They are fined that amount if they are half a minute late.

E-695. What proportion on an average turn up late?—40 out of 3,600.

E-696. That shows that, by your system, you have established a punctuality which is rather remarkable and which shows that it is not impossible to teach the Indian workman the benefits of coming punctually to his work?—Lateness is recorded on their attendance cards which are kept with their records of service. Every workman who shows a full year's attendance with no lateness gets one share in the co-operative society, value Rs. 10, free. That is given to them out of the fine fund.

E-697. In addition to a fine for being late you give a bonus for good attendance and regularity?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**BENGAL**  
(Excluding Coalfields and the Doors)

**SEVENTIETH MEETING**

(PANEL No. I.)

**CALCUTTA.**

**Thursday, 6th February 1930.**

PRESENT :

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, O.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, O.B.E.,  
I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Major H. W. WAGSTAFF, M.C., R.E.

Lt.-Col. H. A. J. GIDNEY.

Mr. J. K. CHATTERJEE.

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary*.

} *Assistant Commissioners.*

**Mr. G. R. DAIN, Agent, The Calcutta Tramways Company, Ltd.**

E-698. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is your experience?—I was at a public school in England and I took the Science and Engineering Triposes at Cambridge. I then served on the East Indian Railway from 1906 to 1926. I inaugurated and was in charge of the whole scheme of the Government of India for training and teaching railway servants. I was Principal of the Railway College at Chandausi subsequently removed to Dehra Dun and five subsidiary schools throughout India. I have been 24 years in this country except that I was away during the war.

E-699. Who engages your labour?—The head of the department. Monthly staff and labourers are taken on by the works manager.

E-700. Who dismisses them?—In the case of the traffic department, that is done by the traffic manager himself; no one else can do it. It is referred to me in a great many cases. In the case of the engineering department, the lower paid staff would be dismissed by the works manager while the senior staff would be dismissed by the Chief Engineer.

E-701. Has any individual workman a right of appeal?—Every workman in the whole organization has a right of appeal to me.

E-702. Do you get many appeals?—I get on an average one or two a day, including workmen's compensation claims.

E-703. Do you often reverse the decision of the traffic manager?—I have twice asked him to reverse his own decision which amounts to the same thing.

E-704. You give preference to men who are relatives and friends of existing employees?—Yes; it is the only way we can do it. There is no educational qualification. The main cause of dismissal or leaving the traffic department is cheating. Among the conductors cheating is almost continuous, the main method being to take half the price for a journey and issue no ticket. That is done especially early in the morning when the inspectors are fewer and late at night after many of the inspectors have gone off. I should be inclined to think there is a certain amount of cheating in the middle of the day; probably the only time when it does not happen is during rush hours.

E-705. Why do you give the traffic men holidays with pay while you do not give them to the engineering people who stay with you longer?—The conditions of the engineering staff are exactly the same as in all other engineering firms in Calcutta. It is recognized that the work of the tramway drivers and conductors is infinitely harder. It is an 8 hours a day as nearly as we can make it so, but it is a very hard and trying day. I am

afraid that is why they leave us more than they should. I offered the men to break the eight-hour shift into two shifts of four hours each. I took a referendum of the whole staff but out of the 2,000 men driving and conducting I had about 12 names in favour of splitting the shift.

E-706. *Mr. Cliff*: How many tram depots have you?—We have four main depots and four subsidiary depots.

E-707. Do your men live close to the depots?—The majority do; they live in what I consider to be disgraceful conditions.

E-708. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You do not provide any housing and they have to live in the insanitary *bustis*?—Yes.

E-709. You admit it would be an advantage if you provide housing?—Yes. I do not think it is a good policy for us to provide housing but from my own point of view I would like to provide housing. The reason why I cannot urge the Board to do so is that the company is coming to the end of its contract; at the end of this year our contract with the Corporation lapses and the Corporation have the right to purchase the tramway undertaking at 25 times the average net annual earnings, on a 4 per cent basis. After the end of this year, they have a right every seven years to purchase our undertaking on that basis. That being so, it is impossible for me to raise capital.

E-710. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you sought to alter this?—I have; two years ago I implored the Corporation to give me a long term of years so that I can raise money and build quarters. I do not believe in building quarters but I am prepared to do so. I said to the Corporation, with the approval of the Board, that if they would give us a long term of years which would enable us to set up a sinking fund and get new capital (which it would be easy to obtain), I would not only construct new lines but we would also share profits with them.

E-711. What reply did you get?—I have had no reply after two years' waiting. The present position is that after the end of this year we shall move into the 7-year periods. That means that our undertaking is stultified because I can raise no capital. We can pay our dividend and put to reserve a reasonable amount for depreciation but we can do nothing in the way of expansion. This state of things prevents the expansion of communications in Calcutta. The 30th June is the last day on which the Corporation can give the company notice that they intend to exercise their right of purchase at the end of this year. We are in exactly the same position as Lord Ashfield is in London. Another thing which prevents expansion is indiscriminate licensing of omnibuses and consequent duplication of services on routes in Calcutta. The police say that there are 750 omnibuses running in Calcutta but if you take a census you will find that there are 450 omnibuses on the road including 87 which are run by my concern. The remaining 360 odd omnibuses have 300 separate owners. It is a disgraceful state of affairs which has been brought about by the police indiscriminately licensing omnibuses on any route on which the tramways are rendering adequate service. For instance, on the Chitpore route we serve a narrow road by running a two-minute service, but the licensing authorities superimposed another two-minute omnibus service. The result is that none of us are making money on that route. I would willingly run many non-paying routes which ought to have been opened a long while ago. I maintained non-paying routes for a long time in Calcutta until the cream of our traffic was taken off the paying routes. Calcutta has become more and more congested because no new routes are being driven out to outlying areas.

E-712. Do the police issue licences?—Yes.

E-713. Who controls the police?—I think they come under the Home Member of Government.

E-714. I think the areas of which you are speaking are outside the area of the Calcutta Improvement Trust?—Yes; the area of the Calcutta Improvement Trust is practically the same as the area of the municipality; that area is disgracefully limited. The Improvement Trust have made great improvements in their area but they have done nothing towards taking up land outside and providing it with drainage and roads so that people may settle there and live in their own way. It is not desirable that people should be housed in *chawls* as they are in Bombay, because

that is not the way they want to live. Land and roads should be provided outside and drained; then the people should be left to build their own huts or capitalists should build and let houses.

E-715. Has the municipality the power to acquire land in those areas?—They certainly have power within the municipal area and Government have power to acquire land anywhere.

E-716. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many workmen's houses have the Improvement Trust built in connexion with their developments?—I think they have built three sets of *chawls* near Central Avenue.

E-717. *Mr. Cliff*: Is the land available at a reasonable price now?—Land three or four miles out, particularly on the Howrah side, can be purchased cheaply. Calcutta has been developed only on one side of the river. London would have done the same with only London Bridge. Of course more bridges will have to be built.

E-718. Have any schemes for transport been put before the Improvement Trust or Government?—Yes, there are two schemes, one on the north and one on the south. These schemes were put forward by the Tramway Committee about four years ago.

E-719. Why were they not adopted?—I presume because the whole of the transport arrangements of Calcutta are in such a state of chaos.

E-720. Have you as a company considered acquiring land and allowing your workers to build their own houses?—We have land on which we could build houses for them, but I am strongly opposed to building *chawls*. If we had capital I would prefer to obtain land outside and advance money to the people, as we do now, to enable them to build their own houses on their own land.

E-721. What standard of regularity of attendance do you require of your traffic employees in order to entitle them to 14 days' leave?—288 days' work in the year; we are lenient with regard to that; if a man has a good record we do not bother about absence for a day or two.

E-722. Do you dismiss a good many traffic men for cheating?—It is very bad; in fact it is disgraceful. I consider these cases very carefully; I have the accused man before me and I am careful to have his statement correctly translated. Sometimes I spend three hours with a man before I dismiss him.

E-723. Have you any power to prosecute passengers for evading payment of fares?—Yes, it is under the Tramways Act, not under the Indian Penal Code.

E-724. Do you ever prosecute your conductors and passengers?—We sometimes prosecute passengers; we practically never prosecute our own men; we defend our own men, but we never prosecute them.

E-725. In Calcutta what effect do you think the disturbance of family life has?—As far as we know there is very little venereal disease among our men. We have two highly qualified doctors. What venereal disease there is is mainly among the local Mussalmans; there is not much among the up-country Hindus.

E-726. *Colonel Russell*: Can you give us figures as to that?—I think I could collect a figure.

E-726-a. *Mr. Cliff*: Can inspectors read and write?—Yes.

E-727. Is your co-operative credit bank open to all employees?—The provident fund limit is wages of Rs. 20 a month, but any man can come and get an advance if the committee are satisfied with him as a borrower.

E-728. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why do you give an advance if you have no security?—If a man has three or four years' service we may look at his provident fund and see how much he has got there, but we have no real call on the provident fund. The real criterion is service.

E-729. *Mr. Cliff*: If you roster a man for six days' work and he works five out of the six days, does he have to go on working for six days before he gets a rest day?—The number of days he works is divided by six and one day is added for every six. It is left to the man's choice as to how he takes his rest. If he works for thirty days, a day is added to his pay for every sixth day.

E-730. It appears that 76 per cent of your drivers and conductors do not get more than Rs. 26 per month?—That would be so, owing to their short service.

E-731. 93 per cent do not get more than Rs. 28?—Yes.

E-732. Why are you not able to get a more permanent and stable traffic staff?—I should say it is entirely because they are an agricultural people who come from Bihar, and they will go home at certain times of the year whatever happens; even if they have five years' service and their provident fund is at stake they will go.

E-733. *Sir Alexander Murray*: If they all go home at the same time of the year, who carries on the tramways?—At certain times of the year we have a very difficult time; our services are short, and it is all we can do to keep going. April and October are the worst times.

E-734. *Mr. Cliff*: As a traffic operator I suppose you are not satisfied with that state of things?—I am not, but I have to take what I can get.

E-735. And I suppose the public are not satisfied if they get short service?—We have not let the public down so far.

E-736. Is there no new field from which you can build up a more regular force?—I might advertise, but if I advertised for 30 conductors I should get about 1,000 applicants.

E-737. I am wondering why you are content to go on from year to year with the staff which, in the main, does less than five years' service?—I am not content. Eighteen months ago I set up a provident fund; that may improve things, and it is in fact improving things to a certain extent.

E-738. The period of increment seems to be 16 years. If you shorten that period, would not that attract more stable labour?—It has already been shortened to some extent; it is better now than it was two years ago.

E-739. It actually takes 16 years to get the maximum?—There is nothing to prevent promotion to inspector in that time.

E-740. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many inspectors have you?—One hundred and forty-six. Our difficulty is that we are struggling for existence in the teeth of unbridled competition encouraged by the Commissioner of Police. I do not think it is an inefficient service; in the middle of the day we carry a passenger ten miles for one anna, and at any time of the day we carry a passenger three miles for one anna.

E-741. *Mr. Cliff*: What do the omnibuses charge?—They charge what they like. They have no fixed rates, and there is no control of them.

E-742. Apparently your omnibus workers work seven days a week while your tramway traffic staff only works six days a week?—That is so with regard to some of them; they do not get the advantages that the conductors and drivers of trams get.

E-743. Will you let us know the number of persons fined last year and the total amount of the fines?—Yes.

E-744. What have you to say as to delay in payment of wages?—The Commission might watch men being paid; every coin is rung on the ground, and it frequently takes 4 to 5 minutes to pay a man. To pay 100 men in this country takes four hours sometimes.

E-745. *Sir Alexander Murray*: No, I will undertake in a jute mill to pay 1,000 men inside an hour?—It cannot be done in Government service. The clerical work in this country in preparing pay-sheets is very slow. On the Great Western Railway, which is one of the most efficient railways in England, 400 clerks run the head office, while here on the East Indian Railway there are over 3,000 clerks doing the same work, and it is done at half the speed. At a railway booking-office it would take you four to five minutes to get a ticket here whereas at Waterloo station in London an ordinary boy of 16 will hand out four tickets a minute and give change.

E-746. It apparently takes you 15 days after the end of the month to make up your books and pay your workers; when do you begin paying them?—We begin on the 15th of the month and it takes two to three days.

E-747. But does it take 15 days to make up the books?—There are deductions to work out, and many other things; it is just as bad on the railways.



E-748. With regard to the comparative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers and the extent to which comparisons are effected by standards of living and climate, what have you to say?—It seems to me to be a question of climate. Under western civilization we build up our supervising and upper staff from the lower grades. It is the same in society; but this country seems to be stratified, and there is difficulty in the men from below rising; for that reason we have never built up a foreman class. If that is a social order brought about by climatic conditions we cannot alter it. If it is merely a social state of affairs brought about by other considerations, then to my mind primary education is the only thing that can correct the present state of affairs. We must educate from below. We began in the wrong way; we began to educate the middle class in order to produce clerks to keep our businesses going, instead of educating at the bottom and enabling people to rise.

E-749. Is your traffic day in Calcutta a 16 hours' day?—Sixteen and 16½ hours.

E-750. You have apparently an 8-hour roster, but you say that the actual time worked including overtime is nine to ten hours a day?—Owing to traffic delays half an hour will often be lost from roll call to paying in. Every day we miss trips owing to congestion on the roads, mainly as the result of bullock carts.

E-751. *Colonel Russell*: With regard to work of boards of health in special areas, what was the difficulty of which you speak?—It was a private quarrel, and I was not in it. I was quite prepared to build the latrine if it was wanted near the High Courts where we have a tram circle.

E-752. That is the sort of place where you require a convenience?—There is one there, but it is some way away. I was quite prepared to bear my share of the cost of putting up a new convenience, but the Public Works Department and the Corporation entered into a quarrel about the site. I stood aside waiting for the result, but nothing happened.

E-753. How long has this quarrel been going on?—Two years; I am inclined to think it has died a natural death.

E-754. Has the possibility of putting in an underground latrine ever been considered?—I should think it would be impossible because of drainage difficulties; we have considered putting in underground transformers, but we could not do it.

E-755. You say that the Indian worker is a bad timekeeper owing to his poor physique. Have you ever examined the question of what food the ordinary tramway man eats?—Yes. I know pretty well what he lives on. We have little depots at which he can buy food cheaply; they are run by a contractor, but are controlled by us.

E-756. Is it to be inferred from what you say that the Indian tramway man does not eat enough?—I am staggered at the little he lives on.

E-757. Is that because he will not buy any more or because he cannot buy any more?—It is because he will not buy any more. All the people who live up-country remit money home.

E-758. So that in order to remit money home they practically starve themselves?—They seem to be able to do a lot of work on extraordinarily little food.

E-759. You say he is a bad timekeeper. Is that a bad effect produced by this low diet?—Yes.

E-760. That statement is not supported by your sickness rate which is not very heavy?—It is about 1.5 per cent.

E-761. Is the low sickness rate related to the short service period that these people do before they return to their villages?—I should think that is probably so.

E-762. Do you think a man goes back to his village after 8 or 9 months work and uses the period while he is in his village to recuperate?—I should imagine so. Generally sickness and worry are the things that take them back to their villages; a little worry from the village in the way of reports about their land and their relations, combined with unfitness, will take them back to their villages more than anything else.

E-763. That is in addition to their harvesting?—Yes.

E-764. As a company do you make any effort to supply these men with refreshments on duty?—We have our refreshment places at the depots at which they can buy food.

E-765. But do you supply tea or hot drinks to the men when they are on duty?—Tea can be bought at the depots from the contractor, and we control the prices.

E-766. You do not supply any refreshments during the running period?—No.

E-767. Do you think that might be of use?—It is extraordinarily difficult to feed Indians.

E-768. I am referring to refreshments such as hot tea in monsoon weather and on occasions of that kind?—I do not quite know how one could do it on the run; the only place at which we could do it would be at the centre of all our big runs. I take great care of the water supply; all our water is good.

E-769. *Mr. Cliff*: You have quoted Lord Ashfield; he sent coffee out to all his busmen in the severe winter of last year?—Our tanks are underground and that ensures the water being cool. They can get cool water at all our depots and at the Esplanade in the middle of the run.

E-770. *Mr. Birla*: What is your capital?—£1,539,500.

E-771. The company was registered in London?—Yes.

E-772. I suppose the management is being directed from London though you have your local board here?—We have a Dominion share register here and an Advisory Committee.

E-773. But your Board is composed of Englishmen who are in England and who direct the management from England?—Yes; the capital was raised in England.

E-774. May I take it that almost all the capital has been provided by non-Indians?—About £85,000 of the capital is held in India. It is a fluctuating figure.

E-775. Do you think that leads to prejudice, Indians looking on the concern as a non-Indian concern and not caring to invest their money in a concern over the management of which they have no control?—I think the fact that we are an English company does prejudice us, but that does not affect the Indian who is investing his money because the Indian is a very big investor in English concerns.

E-776. How far do you think it would be helpful if your company was registered in India with a local board, and if opportunities were given to Indians to invest their money in it?—Indians can invest their money in it as freely as they like. I have never noticed that Indians are prejudiced against investing their money in our concern; in fact I have never noticed any reluctance on the part of Indians to invest their money in anything they think sound.

E-777. The Corporation is thinking of taking over the concern and they have appointed a committee to go into it?—Yes. I believe they had appointed the committee about 2½ years ago.

E-778. If the concern could be purchased at a reasonable price do you think the attitude of the Corporation is that they would like to take over the management?—I cannot answer that question; it is more or less a political question on which I am not qualified to speak.

E-779. What dividends have you been paying during the last few years?—The average would be nearly 6½ per cent.

E-780. Do you not think the pay of your Indian conductors and drivers is very low and does not enable them to obtain a sufficiently generous diet? I suppose you will agree that Rs. 25 a month for a conductor or driver is not very high pay?—They spend a small proportion of that on their diet; they send away a considerable portion of their pay to their villages. If it is worth their while to come to Calcutta I presume they must be living on less in their villages.

E-781. But the environment in the villages is quite different, and the cost of living is not so high as in a large town like Calcutta. Is it a fact that they are living in a sort of vicious circle? Until you give them higher wages they cannot provide themselves with a generous diet, and until they

have more nourishment you cannot expect from them more efficient work; while you feel that until they give more efficient work you cannot give them higher wages?—I think so. I fancy they require a certain amount to live on, but it is not very much.

E-782. You have compared the efficiency of the Indian worker with that of the non-Indian worker, but do you think the efficiency of the Indian worker will increase by itself without your taking any special measures?—I think it will improve with education. We must also remember that one can never expect such virile workers in the temperatures that we have here as at Home where the temperatures are so much lower. I myself have felt the climate terribly.

E-783. The climate in the Punjab and in other parts of North India is hotter than that of Calcutta, but yet men from the Punjab can do more work than the men of Bengal and Bihar and Orissa?—It is drier and healthier in the Punjab.

E-784. Do you not think it has something to do with the diet?—It might to some extent; I am not enough of a doctor to know.

E-785. You think education might improve efficiency?—I think it undoubtedly will.

E-786. But where are you to find the money for education?—I think a good deal might be found from what is now being spent on Calcutta University in turning out an entirely useless type of clerk who is unemployable.

E-787. Would you stop the present higher education?—Yes.

E-788. Is your company prepared to spend money on the education of the children of your workmen?—Surely education is a matter for Government, and taxation.

E-789. Do you know there are many employers in this part of the country who spend money on the education of the children of their workers?—Yes, many railways have spent money on the education of the children of their workers, but it is a policy to which they have been driven.

E-790. If you think education will improve the efficiency of your workers, do you not think it would be a sound investment for you to educate the children?—Not individually; it is for Government to say what has to be spent and how education is to be provided for.

E-791. Then you are not prepared to spend any money on education?—No, I will spend what Government will tell me to spend. In other words I will pay the taxes I am ordered to pay them.

E-792. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In your memorandum you compare the skill of a British fitter on about £5 to £6 a week with his equivalent out here. I take it that both the people that you are comparing are doing the same work?—The same kind of work.

E-793. How do you reckon that the work done by the British fitter is 33½ per cent better than that of the Indian fitter?—First of all there is a slightly higher finish in the work of a British fitter. I say that having known them both intimately. Secondly, the British fitter, turner or machine hand, requires a great deal less supervision; you can give him a drawing and leave him to do the job, while very often you cannot do that here with quite experienced fitters.

E-794. How do you come to this exact figure of 33½ per cent?—It is a round figure; I will call it a third.

E-795. Is it just guess-work?—It is an opinion based on 25 years' experience. I am not dealing here with quantity alone, but with quality and quantity.

E-796. Have you any British fitters here in the workshop?—We have foremen who have been fitters.

E-797. They are not actually doing a fitter's work?—No. I myself am a useful fitter.

E-798. What is a fitter's work?—A fitter is a person who puts together the parts of a machine and builds it up.

E-799. Have you ever considered whether an Indian fitter turns out as much work in 8 hours as a British fitter?—No, it is less.

E-800. How much less?—That is an extraordinarily difficult question to answer, but I should say the Indian fitter does three-fourths or perhaps less than three-fourths what a British fitter does. I have worked in an English works and I have had Indian employees.

E-801. What are the comparative wages paid to an Indian fitter and a British fitter?—A really first-class machine hand or fitter at Home three years ago got 2s. 1d. an hour while an Indian gets Rs. 60 a month.

E-802. In your memorandum you give the wages of fitters here as from Rs. 16 to Rs. 67?—Yes, the man receiving Rs. 16 is not a fitter; he is a labourer; he is probably an apprentice.

E-803. What would be the average?—Rs. 55.

E-804. How many hours work does an Indian fitter do?—8½ hours a day, 48 hours a week.

E-805. That is about £1 a week?—Yes.

E-806. So that the wages are £1 and £6?—Yes, or £5.

E-807. So that the English fitter receives five times as much wages as the Indian fitter?—Yes.

E-808. While the efficiency of the Indian fitter is one-third less, on your statement, than that of the English fitter?—The efficiency is one-third, so that it may be taken as being one-third of £5.

E-809. You refer to a fidelity deposit; what is meant by that?—It is a small guarantee against fraud; we make a small deduction which accumulates and becomes a deposit which is their own property on which they get interest.

E-810. Would you be agreeable to limiting the fine to a definite percentage which you would not be able to exceed?—One's ordinary humanity does that, but I would not be in favour of touching the present fining system because the only result would be a bigger turnover of labour.

E-811. Would you be in favour of legislation limiting by a percentage the amount of fine that could be levied?—I am against the principle; the fining is not vindictive. It is a very unpleasant method of dealing with more unpleasant trouble. The alternative in nine cases out of ten is dismissal; it means dismissing a poor fellow who has come from up-country to earn a living. We fine him frequently where we really ought to dismiss him.

E-812. Before you dismiss a man or fine him, is any chance given to the man?—Chance after chance. Every man has a card upon which everything about him is written, and generally he is not discharged or dismissed until we have used both sides of that card and sometimes both sides of two cards. He is then finally cautioned again and again. It is a long drawn-out process.

E-813. Have you a trade union?—There is a registered body, but I would not give it the name of "Union". I wish I had a strong union. Shih Nath Banerjee was the President. He is in prison. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt is the President of the union for the time being.

(Witness handed in a document.)

E-814. Where did this document come from?—From one of the conductors who happened to be present at a meeting of the union.

E-815. Is that a regular system which you employ of having reports of these meetings?—No, it just happened.

E-816. *Mr. Birla*: What reason have you for thinking that this report which has been supplied to you is correct?—Curiously enough it came from two sources.

E-817. It is quite possible that those who provided you with this information wanted to prejudice you against the union?—They would not get any advantage by doing so. I am not prejudiced against the union; I should welcome a strong union. *Mr. P. K. Sanyal*, Secretary of the Calcutta Tramway Workers' Union, at the last meeting said that the object of calling this meeting was to inform employees that there are very few members of this union, and if they did not join the union it would be dissolved. The Secretary has to submit a report annually to Government, and in that report the Secretary has to submit false information, otherwise the union will be dissolved. That was said at the meeting held on the 29th December last.

E-818. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is that another report from the same source?—It is not from the same source.

E-819. How did you get this report?—People do not bring them to me; there is very close touch between our men and the inspectors and between them and the European staff.

E-820. Is it the regular custom for you to get these confidential reports of the meetings of these workers?—These meetings are held in open squares.

E-821. Are these reports taken from the press?—They are taken from people who are present in a public place.

E-822. Do they submit this information under your instructions?—Reports frequently come from men I employ to keep me informed about how various competitors are working, etc. They are in our pay, but have no instructions.

E-823. Of their own accord?—Yes.

E-824. Do you ever consult the union in regard to the correctness of these reports that you get?—I never consult the union over anything.

E-825. If you do not consult the union how do you expect the union to flourish?—There is only one way in which I can make the union flourish; that would be by running it myself, but that would be suspect.

E-826. But it is much more suspect if you get these confidential reports. You declare your policy to be that you want a strong union; do you not think the first step to take would be to get in touch with the union and listen to its collective statements?—Not at all. I will take a parallel. We have a games and amusement committee. When I first joined the company three years ago the company subscribed pretty liberally towards it from the company's funds, but it died a natural death. The only way in which I can carry on my games and amusements is by running them myself, or through my officers. We now have a very strong football league. We won the office cup this year. We have two extraordinarily good dramatic societies which are well worth going to see at any time; I run those through departments. I would run a union, but it would be suspect.

E-827. I do not want you to run the union, but I ask you to deal with the union?—I have a registered union, but it is a union in nothing else but name.

E-828. Have you had any strikes on the tramways?—No; we have had a *hartal* or two, but that is not a strike.

E-829. What is the difference between a *hartal* and a strike?—There is no trade dispute involved in a *hartal*. In the last *hartal* there were two killed and 30 wounded.

E-830. But the vernacular for a strike is a "*hartal*"?—It occurred on the arrival of the Simon Commission on the 3rd of February 1928.

E-831. What happened?—We had the usual rioting in Calcutta.

E-832. How long did the *hartal* last?—Our men turned out and we were stoned by the general public; I had a couple of pieces of iron weighing about 4 lb. each thrown into my car, but I do not call that a strike.

E-833. How long did that last?—12 hours.

E-834. When did you last have a trade dispute and a strike?—I think the last one was in 1921.

E-835. Would you be in favour of a system of weekly payment of wages?—Yes.

E-836. Has it been your definite policy not to recruit Indians on the technical side?—I am a businessman, and I have to pay a dividend; I do not look at anything but the quality of the service offered. We have Indians holding technical posts. We have selected managing and senior technical staff at Home because we have not been able to obtain such men in this country. If I could get them in this country I would.

E-837. Have you made any attempts to obtain them in this country?—I do not know what you mean by "attempts".

E-838. Have you advertised these posts in India?—I do not think vacancies have occurred in the senior posts during the 2½ years I have been here. All my experience has been on the railways.

E-839. What house rents do the traffic staff pay for their quarters?—I know very little about that; most of them live in messes of 10 or 12. I suppose they pay Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 a month for board and lodging, but I do not know; it is very hard to find out.

E-840. Is there any chance of getting on with the housing scheme?—That remains with the Corporation; if they give me a chance of raising capital I will spend it. We can raise capital very easily; our present debentures are well covered.

E-841. What do you mean when you say that you consider that among your people industrial fatigue does not exist to an extent which affects their efficiency, because their outlook is so different from European peoples?—I am referring to the referendum which I took among the men as to whether they would prefer to work a straight 8 hours or break it into two parts; the result of that referendum seemed to me to indicate that boredom did not exist to a great extent among them.

(Witness withdrew.)

## BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Doors)

### SEVENTIETH MEETING

(PANEL No. II.)

CALCUTTA.

Thursday, 6th February 1930.

P R E S E N T :

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*  
K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. J. A. TASSIR, Vice-President  
Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDURI, M.L.C.  
Maulvi LATAPAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Assistant Commissioners.

Miss CORNELIA SOBABI, *Bar-at-Law*, *Lady Assessor*.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary*.

Mr. PROHLAD CHANDRA ROY, Vice-President of the Press Employees' Association, Calcutta, and Mr. INDU BHUSAN SARCAR, Organizing Secretary.

E-842. *The Chairman*: You have stated in your memorandum that your Association began in 1906. How many members have you at present?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) About 3,000.

E-843. Are those members mainly in the Government of India Press and in the Government of Bengal Press, or are they distributed between those presses and private presses?—Most of our members are in Government Presses. Some are in private presses.

E-844. Are all your 3,000 members in Calcutta?—Yes.

E-845. Your Association is not an All-India Association, but a Bengal Association?—Yes.

E-846. You state that there are 40,000 people in Calcutta working in the different presses. That seems a very large number of workers to be engaged in one single industry. From where do you get your figure of

40,000?—There was a question put in the Council in 1925; Mr. Daud in his speech on the necessity of franchise for labour gave out the number of people employed in the presses as 50,000 and the number 40,000 as given by us is a guess from that.

E-847. I take it that your Association numbers 3,000 members out of 40,000 workers who might be members of your Association if you had them all in?—The difficulty of getting members from those who work in private presses is that their employers are against the idea, and therefore the employees are afraid of joining the union. Take for instance the case of Sj. Nalin Kumar Basu who was once the secretary of this Association. As soon as he joined the staff of the "Statesman" in Chowringhee he was forced to resign his secretaryship of this Association and with him all the people of the "Statesmen" who were at that time members of the Association left the Association.

E-848. Did the 3,000 members now in your union pay their subscription for 1929?—Yes.

E-849. Is your membership increasing or decreasing?—Increasing.

E-850. By how much did it increase last year? By about 1,000.

E-851. We have in front of us a considerable memorandum which you at first sent in, and also several other papers which came in later. Are you responsible for all these various sub-memoranda?—Yes.

E-852. Then we may take it that these are all part of the Association's case, although they are in the names of individuals in some cases? I see that you make a complaint that in some private presses there is no provision for drinking water and inadequate provision for latrines. You also speak of lack of adequate supervision by the Inspector of Factories. Are you aware that some of these private presses do not come under the Indian Factories Act?—Yes, but those which do come under the Act also suffer from all these disadvantages.

E-853. Why do you not give information to the Chief Inspector of Factories when it comes to your knowledge that the Factories Act is not being complied with?—We did bring it to the notice of the Inspector of Factories, but unfortunately he took insufficient action.

E-854. Has the Inspector of Factories, having received a complaint from you, asked you to meet him at the place, and you have not attended?—On one occasion I was told on the 'phone by Mr. Ray Chaudhuri, M.L.C., that the Factory Inspector would be visiting St. Andrew's Press at Radha-bazaar and that I should go there. I went and remained standing outside. The Factory Inspector, a European, did come to visit the press, as I came to know later, but neither he knew me as the representative of the Association nor I him as the Inspector of Factories. But of this visit I can say this that the Inspector confined his queries to the managers of the press but did not deign to ask any question to the employees themselves. I say this on the authority of the employees who wrote to say this. And here is that letter of the employees (letter shown to the President).

E-855. Did you fail to turn up at the appointed time?—There have been no such occasions.

E-856. When you send a complaint to the Inspector of Factories, are you careful to satisfy yourself that the complaint is a true one before you send it?—Yes. We enquire into the matter carefully and then we submit our complaints.

E-857. You refer to workmen's compensation, and you say it is difficult to get the compensation to which men are entitled after they have had an accident. How many cases of workmen's compensation did your Association take up last year?—Five cases, every one of which we lost. We did not take them up with the Compensation Commissioner, but with the employers, and we got nothing from the employers.

E-858. Why did you not take up the cases with the Commissioner?—These were fatal accidents and we could not trace the dependents. Therefore we dropped the cases.

E-859. If you could not trace the dependents, for whom were you trying to get the compensation?—The men before they actually died were in hospital owing to the injury, and it was at that time we took up the matter. When the man died we dropped it.

E-860. You say that your Association has applied for registration under the Trade Union Act. When was the application made?—Last August. There was some delay, but now our Association has been registered as a trade union.

E-861. Dealing with the question of fines you say that in the Government of India Press there is a compassionate fund with the object of helping the employees in time of distress. You add that the workers in the Bengal Government Press have asked for a similar fund, but that up to now it has been "a cry in the wilderness." How are the fines used?—They are credited to the Bengal Government revenue.

E-862. Dealing with rates of payment you say "The rates fixed in the handbook have not been revised since 1875, when the cost of living was at least 300 per cent, cheaper than at the present time." I suppose you mean that it was one-third of what it is now?—(Mr. Roy) There has been a 40 per cent increase since July 1920. It is a fact that before 1920 the last rate was fixed in 1875.

E-863. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Fixed by whom?—By Government. This refers to the Government Press.

E-864. *The Chairman*: You make reference to a promise of the Government of India that the workers in the Government of India Press should have a provident fund similar to that in the State Railways, and you State that nothing has been done?—We represented this matter to the Government of India, and we were informed that it had been referred to the Secretary of State. It is under consideration and we are suffering from this delay.

E-865. You suggest that the private presses are much worse than the Government Presses. You are aware that a number of these small presses are not at present included under the Factories Act?—(Mr. Sarcar) We are only dealing with those presses that are under the Factories Act.

E-866. You say, referring to a particular press which you name, "The binders say that they have received only five months' pay during last year"?—(Mr. Roy) We are satisfied that that is the fact. Almost all of the binders there have not received pay for five months. The same applies to compositors and distributors.

E-867. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Have they worked there those five months?—Yes.

E-868. *The Chairman*: How does it come about that they go on working there under those conditions?—They receive their pay in dribs and drabs—Rs. 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 at a time; they do not leave, because they fear that if they do, they will lose the balance of what is owing to them.

E-869. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How much is outstanding when the advances are deducted?—On the average there is a balance due from the employer of three months' pay. The men were told by the employer that if they did not choose to accept this instalment method of payment they could leave.

E-870. Surely the union could sue for them?—The union is too poor to go to law. Even if the union took the case to court the employer would bring in a big lawyer with a reputation to fight the case and the chances are that we might lose it. These employees whose pay is in arrears submitted a petition to the Governor-General, but no step was taken.

E-871. How does the Governor-General come into it?—Because these particular printing presses are Government contractors.

E-872. *Mr. Clow*: You refer to the works committee in the Government of India Press and say that the result "Has been a growing misunderstanding between the employers and the employed", but in the next line you complain that the Government of Bengal has not set up a works committee. If the result has been a growing misunderstanding between employers and employed, what is the advantage of having a works committee?—Originally there was a misunderstanding, but that has now disappeared.

E-873. Do you know of any private press in which the conditions of pay and of leave are as good as those in the Government Presses?—There is one such private press, the Sri Gouranga.

E-874. How much leave is given in that press?—They give leave on Hindu and Muhammadan festival days.



E-875. I am not talking of holidays, but of leave?—There is no specific rule, but that press does occasionally give leave with pay. That is the only press of which we know where such a condition obtains.

E-876. *Mr. Joshi*: It appears from your memorandum that 10 per cent of the men in the presses suffer from lead-poisoning. If there is such a large number of cases of lead-poisoning why have not your Association taken up the matter before it has been necessary to take the men to the hospital?—Before we can take the case before the Compensation Commissioner, medical officers have to examine the case. The Compensation Commissioner does not accept the testimony of a private practitioner, but only of a Government Medical Officer, and we find great difficulty in getting Government Medical Officers to examine these cases.

E-877. Under the Workmen's Compensation Act any properly qualified registered private doctor can give a certificate. Has there been a case in which the workmen's Compensation Commissioner has refused to accept a certificate from a private qualified registered medical practitioner?—No, there has been no case of that kind where the Compensation Commissioner has refused to recognize such a certificate. We have been under the impression that the medical testimony must come from a Government Medical Officer. And there is reason for our having such an impression. Abinash Chandra Ray, an employee in the Bengal Government Press, was declared to have contracted lead-poisoning by the Civil Surgeon of Burdwan. The authorities of the Bengal Government have, however, sent him to the Calcutta Medical College to be examined again, presumably not being satisfied with the report of the Burdwan Civil Surgeon. And the upshot was that the man, after six months, was told that his was no case of lead-poisoning.

E-878. You state "Though lino-operators are placed on a graded pay yet a reduction from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 is made every month from the pay of the operators for shortage of their outturn". What is the meaning of that?—Government fixed 5,000 ens on which they based the pay. Those who work less than 5,000 ens get their pay reduced from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15.

E-879. What is the total pay out of which that Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 is deducted?—If the pay is Rs. 80 the Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 is deducted from that, and if the pay is Rs. 90 or Rs. 100 it is Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 which is still deducted.

E-880. You say something about regular employment and state that if a man is not present for 90 per cent of working days, he does not get leave. Again, you say later on that a man must be present for all the working days of the year?—That grievance has been removed.

E-881. You also make some complaint about the supply of drinking water?—That grievance has been removed.

E-882. You make a complaint about questions being asked in the Legislative Council to which no answers were given. Is it not necessary that questions asked in the Council should be replied to?—Yes.

E-883. There is a complaint made in one of the sub-memoranda that in the confidential section only Anglo-Indians and Native Christians are employed. Was this brought to the notice of the Council?—Yes.

E-884. What was the reply?—This matter was made the subject of several interpellations in the Council, but Government never gave a satisfactory reply.

E-885. Did your union write to Government?—Yes. The union brought it to the notice of Government, but nothing was done.

E-886. Did Government send any reply?—The Secretary waited on Mr. Marr, one of the members of the Government, about this matter, but he could not get any satisfactory reply.

E-887. How many people are employed in that section?—About 15, all of whom are Anglo-Indians and Native Christians.

E-888. Then you make a complaint about the authorities of the Calcutta Corporation Press being against the enrolment of the employees as members of your Association. Did you bring that to the notice of the Calcutta Corporation?—I personally saw the Chief Executive Officer, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor about the matter, but I could not get any satisfactory answer.

E-889. Did you write to the Mayor of Calcutta?—The Mayor gave instructions to the Chief Executive Officer not to penalize any one for joining the Association, but no action was taken.

E-890. With regard to hours of work would you prefer to have legislation fixing an eight hour day?—Yes.

E-891. Would the piece-workers like such legislation?—They are working eight hours now, and they have no complaints to make.

E-892. Would you like to have some kind of legislation for unemployment insurance, and would you be prepared to make some contribution towards an unemployment insurance fund?—We have no objection whatever to contribute; in fact we would welcome it.

E-893. Would you have any objection to a sickness insurance fund and an old age pension fund?—No, no objection whatever.

E-894. Did you ask the Government of India to hold an enquiry into this matter of lead-poisoning?—We passed a resolution at an open meeting calling the attention of the Government to this matter and inviting an enquiry. We sent up those resolutions to the Government, but no action was taken.

E-895. *Miss Power*: Dealing with the question of an employment bureau, do you suggest that it should be compulsory on the employers, as well as on the employees, to both offer employment and register for employment through that bureau?—Yes. We want such a bureau and such a register, provided we are represented on that bureau.

E-896. Do you suggest such a bureau for Calcutta only?—No, for the whole of Bengal.

E-897. Your organizing Secretary in his memorandum states that men work 15 and 16 hours a day in order to get the overtime allowance. Do the number of hours which a man has to work before he is entitled to overtime pay vary in the different private and newspaper presses?—At what stage does the overtime allowance begin?—After 8 hours.

E-898. What is the overtime rate?—In the Government Presses the overtime allowance is at the rate of 25 per cent increase over the normal wages for the first two hours, and 50 per cent for the following two hours, but the second payment is not operative because it would then become against the Factories Act.

E-899. You are talking about Government Presses. I am talking about newspaper and private presses?—In newspaper presses there is no extra allowance for overtime work. The normal rate is paid for extra hours.

E-900. Is it the same in private presses?—Yes.

E-901. But in reply to my first question you said that there was no overtime payment in private and newspaper presses, but only in Government Presses?

*The Chairman*: There is no extra rate.

E-902. *Miss Power*: In private presses are arrangements made for the workers who deal with lead type to wash their hands?—There is a water basin, but no soap or towel.

E-903. *Miss Sorabji*: On the question of workmen's compensation, you suggest that the employers might do something to make the workmen acquainted with their rights and the protection provided for them under the Act. What do you think the employers could do in that direction?—We suggest that leaflets in vernaculars should be printed and a copy given to each of the employees.

E-904. But we have been told that most of the workmen are illiterate?—If they are illiterate their fellow workers who are literate will explain to them.

E-905. Is that the only suggestion you can make?—The employers might arrange for holding meetings at which the workers may be addressed in the matter.

E-906. You would suggest that the employers might appoint some one to tell the workmen about their rights?—Yes.

E-907. You say that sufficient effort is not made to trace dependents. What could be done to trace the dependents of persons who are entitled to compensation under the Act?—A register containing the names of the dependents must be kept.

E-908. The employers should keep a register of the dependents whose names are supplied by the workmen when they are taken into service?—Yes.

E-909. In cases where the dependents, the wife and the children, for instance, do not accompany the workman to this part of the country, what would you suggest?—As I said, full information about the dependents of the workman should be ascertained from the workman and entered in a register.

E-910. To check this, would you approve of information being collected by the Tahsildar or the circle officer of the district from which the workmen come?—Yes.

E-911. You talk of the difficulty of the workmen suing. Have you heard of the Legal Aid Society which has lately been established at the High Court? This society would not only give advice but would also supply a poor man with counsel without any fees?—We have never heard of the existence of this society.

E-912. On the question of education you say in your memorandum: "The employers make no provision for the educational facilities of the workers in their presses". Why cannot the children of employees go to municipal schools in the districts?—No doubt there are sufficient number of Corporation Schools in Calcutta but not in all localities.

E-913. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Your difficulty in the Government Presses is the difficulty about piece-work?—Yes. We do not want piece-work.

E-914. Why do you not approve of piece-work?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) Because the wages fall off with the advancement of age. The second reason is that the work allotted to us does not help up to earn enough. Thirdly, the piece-workers do not get the same privileges as monthly salaried servants in that they do not get the benefit of leave with salary; if they do not work on holidays they do not get pay.

E-915. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Can they not make the same amount in the same number of working days?—Their wages vary according to the amount of work allotted to them. They are not sure whether they would be able to earn sufficient for any particular month or not, whereas the salaried hands are sure of what they would get.

E-916. Your difficulty is that you do not get enough work?—Yes.

E-917. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You know that in the Government of India Press they have instituted a works committee?—Yes.

E-918. And that works committee is functioning well?—Yes.

E-919. *The Chairman*: Is there any one here who is a representative on that works committee?—(*Mr. Roy*) I am on that committee.

E-920. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: What are the functions of the works committee?—The grievances of individual workers are discussed at the meetings of the works committee, and that is a great advantage to the workers. The question of promotion of workers is also discussed; if there is any partiality or favouritism shown by any supervisor, that matter is brought before the works committee and remedied.

E-921. *The Chairman*: Is it the general opinion of the workers in the Government Press that the works committee has been a success?—Yes; it has been a great success.

E-922. If that is so, I am rather surprised at what you say in your memorandum in this connexion?—There was originally a misunderstanding but that misunderstanding is removed. If the manager has got enough good-will towards the works committee, it functions well, but if he has not that good-will, it does not function well. That good-will was absent at the time of the formation of the works committee, but now under the present management the good-will is there and the works committee works well.

E-923. Then I take it that we may strike out from the memorandum these words which are very misleading: "The result has been a growing

misunderstanding between the employers and the employed"?—At the time of sending this memorandum there was friction going on, but since then it has stopped because the manager has changed and a new manager has come.

E-924. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You remember that as a result of my resolution in the Council the Government appointed an enquiry committee under the chairmanship of Mr. McAlpin, and one of the recommendations of that committee was the institution of works committees?—Yes.

E-925. In spite of the recommendation of that committee the Government of Bengal have taken no steps to institute works committees?—No.

E-926. You also remember that in reply to my question in the Council as to the reason why the Government did not give effect to that recommendation, the Government replied that they were making inquiries with regard to the working of the works committee of the Government of India Press and that they would think of starting it in their press later on?—Yes.

E-927. *The Chairman*: Before we leave that point, I think I am right in saying that there has not been a change of manager in the Government of India Press but that the manager was on leave and has returned?—Yes, he has returned. When the officiating manager was working, that misunderstanding occurred, but now that the permanent manager has come back there is no more of that misunderstanding.

E-928. That clears up the matter. I think it would be better to strike out this sentence from the memorandum: "The result has been a growing misunderstanding between the employers and the employed"?—Yes, we agree.

E-929. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: On the question of lead-poisoning, I think you remember that I took up some of these cases myself with Government?—Yes.

E-930. I think you also remember that I told you that on certain occasions Government was not satisfied with the medical report, because there is a variation of opinion among medical men due to the fact that lead-poisoning cases being a new thing the medical men have not acquired a sufficient knowledge of these cases?—That is so.

E-931. *The Chairman*: Did the union allege a case of death from lead-poisoning which afterwards was proved to be a death from bronchitis?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) Originally it was a lead-poisoning case, but it developed into bronchitis; no doubt, the immediate cause of the death was bronchitis, but all the time the patient was suffering from lead-poisoning.

E-932. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In the private presses the pay is insufficient and the workers have to work longer hours?—Yes.

E-933. You know that people are very anxious to get into the Government of Bengal or the Government of India Press because the conditions there are better than in the private presses?—Yes.

E-934. Can you suggest any remedy for improving the conditions in private presses?—If a Minimum Wage Act or a Trade Board Act is passed then there is a chance of remedying the grievances.

E-935. You know that the factory inspection department lacks in officers?—Yes, there are some Factory Inspectors who are good and some who are not good; some Factory Inspectors become friendly with the employers and they take sides with the employers, while some others do not.

E-936. Can you cite any case where a Factory Inspector became friendly with the employer and did not do his duty?—In the case of the Fine Arts Cottage we suspect that the Factory Inspector who went to inspect the press was rather friendly to the employer and therefore did not prosecute him although there were enough grounds for prosecution. As a result of our interpellation in the Council as to why the Factory Inspector was not inspecting private presses, we supplied the Factory Inspector with the names of the presses which should be inspected. I approached the Factory Inspector and suggested the name of a Factory Inspector who should be sent to inspect a particular press. That Inspector was sent for inspection and the result was that a prosecution was eventually launched.

E-937. *The Chairman*: The case that was last mentioned of a particular press, is that not a case where the Factory Inspector invited the union

to help and they failed to turn up to keep the appointment?—Some of our men did go to the appointed place, but for some reason or other, probably due to some misunderstanding, the Factory Inspector said that he did not find anybody there.

E-938. You should be careful about your allegations. Will you tell us if this is a letter, produced by you in evidence, from Mr. Gilchrist, Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal, which ends: "I am to add that the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal, will be glad to accompany Mr. K. C. Ray Chaudhuri to the factory if it is desired such a course to be pursued"?

*Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: I happened to be ill at that time.

*The witness*: Mr. Ray Chaudhuri was informed but he was ill and the Chief Inspector of Factories as well as Mr. Gilchrist were informed accordingly by the Association.

*Sir Victor Sassoon*: Were you not informed of this letter, Mr. Ray Chaudhuri?

*Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: No. You, Mr. Sarcar, told me that 17 persons died of poisoning by working in the Bengal Drawing Press, because a lot of acid is used in that press.

E-939. Could you give me the names of those persons?—I can give a few that I remember. Kabirudin Beg, Ramzan Ali, Oliyulla, Padacharan and Shyamchander.

E-940. Did you approach the Government in that connection?—No.

E-941. You do not allege that these people died by working in the press?—Not exactly. We are under-paid, we get phthisis and kala-azar and we die.

E-942. *The Chairman*: Was there any claim for compensation?—No.

E-943. *Mr. Tassie*: Mr. Sarcar, I notice that in two years you have changed your job in three presses. You say you first joined Messrs. Lall Chand & Sons., as a printer in 1911. Subsequently you resigned your post and joined Messrs. Newmans'. You resigned there also in 1912 and then joined the Bengal Government Press. There you say you found the employees being treated like cats and dogs. You resigned from that press also and joined the Government of India Press. Later on you joined the "Forward" Press, managed by Desabhandu Chittaranjan Das, and you say that the atmosphere there also was irritable to you and you resigned from that press. Does it not strike you that there might be something wrong with yourself when there are five different people you cannot get on with?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) You cannot appreciate our difficulties because you have never worked as a press employee. Piece system was introduced in the Bengal Government Press in 1878 and the employees both in the confidential section and the general sections were on the same footing then and at that time Indians were taken in the confidential section. But in 1911 the rate in the confidential section was increased by 50 per cent and from that time that section has been a close preserve for the Anglo-Indians and the Native-Christians where simple Indians may not enter when even in the C.I.D. Department Indians are taken and given honourable posts. This is, Sir, a treatment which no self-respecting Indian should tolerate and that is the long and short of my leaving the Bengal Government Press.

E-944. Is it not strange that you could not get on even in the Forward Press managed by Mr. Das?—So long as Mr. Das was alive we were well looked after, but after his death we were very badly treated, and therefore I left it.

E-945. *The Chairman*: You are now the organizing Secretary of the union?—Yes.

E-946. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you find that as an organizing Secretary you can get on quite well and that you are not ill-treated?—I get on quite well because I am working among my brethren and colleagues. The printing presses in this country are so badly managed that any one with an ounce of self-respect could not get on. For instance, the paper that was started by Sir Surendranath Banerji and now conducted by Mr. R. S. Sarma gives the worst treatment to its workers.

E-947. Will you tell us what pay you get from your Association?—I get Ra. 50 a month as allowance.

E-948. What is the maximum amount that you earned while you were working in the press?—While I was a head-printer of the *Forward* I was getting Rs. 125 a month. I now get an additional income of Rs. 35 a month from the Indian Journalists' Association of which I am one of the organizers. I am quite contented with what I get because I need not fear of ill-treatment or oppression.

E-949. You are the boss?—I follow the decision of the Committee.

E-950. I understand that your Association has 3,000 members?—Yes.

E-951. What subscription do your members pay to the Association?—There are two grades; some pay 2 annas and some 4 annas.

E-952. Do they pay that?—Most of them pay.

E-953. So there is an income of about Rs. 1,000 a month?—Most of our members pay 2 annas; our income may be about Rs. 500.

E-954. Are your accounts audited by an auditor?—Yes, they are audited by a Government auditor.

E-955. You said that you could not afford to employ lawyers to fight cases. Surely with an income of Rs. 500 a month you could employ them?—Half of that amount goes towards meeting the cost of establishment, room rent, printing and so on. If a case is a complicated one, or a big one, and if we engage a lawyer we will have to pay him a very heavy fee, which we will not be in a position to pay. Moreover, we do not want to fritter away our money on litigation.

E-956. On the question of making your members acquainted with the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act and tracing dependents, do the union not think that they might spend a little of their funds in dealing with that matter?—At one time we did attempt to distribute hand-bills relating to the rights of workmen under the Workmen's Compensation Act to our members, but in many cases the distributors were turned out by the *durwans* of the presses.

E-957. *Mr. Ahmed*: Will you give us the names of those persons who were dismissed because of their joining your union?—Rasik Chandra Badras of Edinbara Press.

E-958. He was actually discharged for joining your union?—Yes. Abdul Gani of Messrs. Thacker Spink and Company and Jugalchandra Pal of S. C. Banerjee & Co.

E-959. *The Chairman*: How do you know that it was for joining the union and not for bad work that they were dismissed?—Because the employers while dismissing them told them "We discharge you; you better now go to the union and get your sustenance from the union." The Superintendent of Government Press, Bengal, also discharged a few and told the same thing. There was a debate in the Council over this matter, but nothing came out of it.

E-960. *Mr. Ahmed*: With regard to the five injured persons who died in the hospital, is it not a fact that as soon as an injured person goes to the hospital, his name and address and also the names and addresses of his dependents are taken down?—In these cases they were unconscious.

E-961. The beat constable must have taken them to the hospital?—No.

E-962. You took them?—Their fellow workers.

E-963. From which place did you take these injured persons to the hospital?—From the press.

E-964. Did you enquire from the manager of the press the names of these men and the names of their dependents if he happened to know them?—No. We know of an instance where we enquired of the dependents of an employee and told by the authorities that it was no business of ours to make such enquiries.

E-965. On the question of wages, you say in your memorandum: "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." What do you think is a living wage for a man, his wife and two children?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) Rs. 60 a month.

E-966. Will you furnish us details as to how you arrive at that figure?—When I said Rs. 60 I had in mind a skilled labourer. If you take into account the cost of food, house-rent, education of children, clothing, medicine and so on, it will come to more than Rs. 60.

E-967. What is the average income of a skilled labourer?—A little over Rs. 40.

E-968. What is the condition of these labourers; are they much indebted?—It is a matter of every day incident that *Kabulis* come at the gates and drive them about, and they borrow money from the office *durwans*.

E-969. What is the rate of interest that is generally paid?—One to two annas per rupee per month.

E-970. What remedy would you suggest for getting them out of the clutches of the money-lenders?—The only remedy is to increase their wages.

E-971. You want that the wages should be increased to Rs. 60?—That is so.

E-972. From the memorandum submitted by Mr. Prohlad Chandra Roy, we find that his family expenses are more than what his earnings are; he says he earns Rs. 135 while he spends Rs. 180?—(*Mr. Roy*) I am obliged to spend so much, and therefore I am to incur debts to keep things going.

E-973. Suppose the cost of education for the workers' children is wholly or partly to be borne by the employers, it will at least to some extent give you relief, is it not?—Certainly.

E-974. Do the workers, who work in private presses for 20, 30 or 40 years, get any pension?—No. There is pension only in the Government presses.

E-975. Would you be in favour of the Government enforcing by legislation on all the employers the necessity of treating their workers in the same way as the Government does in regard to their employees?—Yes, certainly; it will be a great help to us.

E-976. *The Chairman*: Will it also be a great help if you close down half the number of presses?—No it will not; in that case, unemployment will increase.

E-977. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Mr. Sarcar, speaking about private presses, you say in your memorandum that 25 per cent of the workers "fall victims to the dreadful lead-poisoning disease". Where did you get that figure from?—(*Mr. Sarcar*) It is only an approximate figure.

E-978. One of your friends in his memorandum says that it is only 10 per cent?—He refers only to the Government of India Press, while my remark refers to all the presses in general.

E-979. You have no figures; it is merely a guess?—Yes.

E-980. I should like a little explanation of the remark you make in your main memorandum; you say: "The authorities of this press (that is, of Messrs. Karim Bux Brothers) are said to have shifted the timing of the period of work of the employees who wanted to join the Press Employees' Association in such a way that they may not be able to join in any union activities." What do you exactly mean by that?—We generally hold our meetings on Saturdays just after 5 in the evening, and this press made these employees work after 5 on Saturdays so that they would not join the union.

E-981. You say: "It is very unfair to the men if the time allowed them for their meals or tiffin be a source of loss to them." Do you know of any industry or trade where a man who is on piece-work is paid his wages for the period in which he takes his meals?—No.

E-982. With regard to your remarks about the lino-operators, what is the task for which they are paid the standard wage? Is it 5,000 ens?—Yes.

E-983. Is it true that some men do as much as 7,000 ens?—There is only one man in the Government of India Press who can give 7,000 ens.

E-984. How many can give 6,000 ens?—There is no one who can give 6,000 corrected ens, except the one in the Government of India Press.

E-985. Then your point, I take it, is that 5,000 is too high a standard?—5,000 corrected ens is too high a standard. In Simla and Delhi presses they adopt the system of 5,000 uncorrected ens; it is only in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, that they insist on 5,000 corrected ens?—

E-986. You would not object to 5,000 uncorrected ens?—That would be, no doubt, an improvement upon the present state of things. But it must be remembered that the work of these men depend on various other things which are beyond the control of the workers, e.g., variety of work, regular supply of gas, defects in the machinery and old age, etc.

E-987. You would think it would be fair that, whatever fair standard was fixed, if men constantly produced less than that amount, instead of giving them a smaller wage they should be turned out and more competent men put in their places?—In that case some inquiry should be made either to alter the standard, or to find out the real causes as to why a man cannot turn out that fair standard.

E-988. Mr. Prohlah Chandra Roy in his memorandum says: “. . . the compositors are the first-class workers in the industrial section but they are paid as third-class labourers, and their average earnings in the Government of India Press, Calcutta, are only Rs. 56-8-0 per month.” Do you hold that a third-class labourer would get as much as Rs. 56-8-0 a month?—(Mr. Roy) By ‘third-class labourers’ I mean those who are not sufficiently educated and those whose standard of living is not high.

E-989. Do you maintain that in Calcutta the average third-class labourer in other industries makes as much as Rs. 56-8-0 a month?—Yes; for instance, motor-drivers and lorry-drivers get more than that.

E-990. But surely they are skilled men?—I meant skilled workers.

E-991. From the memorandum submitted by the compositors, distributors and binders employed in the East Indian Railway Press, we find that they object to piece-work because they say that on piece-system they are naturally fast workers whereas if they are paid by time they are apt to be slow. Does that mean that you want to stop piece-work so that the labourers could be slower workers than they are to-day?—What is meant is that a piece-worker has to work very hard and gets himself exhausted in order to earn sufficient money.

E-992. You consider that efficiency is too high under present conditions among piece-workers, and you want to lower the rate of efficiency?—Yes, we want to reduce their excessive labour which will increase and not lower their efficiency.

E-993. It is stated in the same memorandum: “No increment is granted to those who are compelled to absent themselves even on medical grounds for more than 60 days in a year.” How many days’ leave you think you should get in a year?—Barring Government holidays, there should be at least one month’s leave per year.

E-994. How many days does that come to?—There are 42 holidays.

E-995. You want 124 days, including 52 Sundays?—Some holidays may fall on Sundays.

E-996. Roughly speaking, you think you ought to have 120 days in a year?—Yes; that is what they get in Government offices.

E-997. You get 52 days under the Factories Act, and 42 Government holidays, is it not?—Yes.

E-998. That makes 94 days. I am not clear about the figure 60. Does it mean that if you get 42 holidays you should be allowed to have 42 holidays plus 18 days?—Yes.

E-999. What you really want is 30 days instead of 18 days outside the Government holidays?—Yes.

E-1000. In the memorandum submitted by revisers and copy-holders of the Bengal Government Press, Alipore, they complain about the novel fancy of the Superintendent towards sports. Do you object to sports among men?—(Mr. Sarcar) We object to contribute towards the sports fund.

E-1001. Do you think that you should be paid wages while you play sports?—No; what we mean is that we should not be compelled to pay for the sports fund.



E-1002. Are you compelled?—Yes.

E-1003. Sports fund is a deduction made from pay?—Yes.

E-1004. You said that you had no objection to make payments towards a sickness fund or old-age pension fund; at the same time you complained that you were not earning enough. How can you afford to pay for these funds if you are not earning enough?—We are willing to sacrifice from our wages a certain amount as contribution towards these funds.

E-1005. Even though you have not got enough now?—Yes. We are willing to contribute because it will be for our own protection.

E-1006. You ask for a press workers employment bureau and you want one of your representatives to be on that bureau. What do you mean by that?—Unless we are represented there, it is possible that favouritism might be shown and wrong men taken in.

E-1007. Do you mean that you must decide who should be taken in?—Yes, jointly with the employers.

E-1008. Will you not allow an employer to choose the employees he wants?—Suppose there are two men, of whom one is unemployed for six months and another for two months. The union would naturally recommend the man who was sitting idle for six months.

E-1009. In other words, you want the union to decide who is to be employed?—We want to follow the rules that apply to the London Compositors Union, where they maintain a register in which names of persons seeking employment are entered, and appointments offered in that order.

E-1010. Why should not the union tell its members the terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act?—We have experienced this difficulty that if we took an active part in propaganda or in publishing leaflets for distribution to our members, we would be causing annoyance to the employers.

E-1011. It seems very strange because in every industry we have been to, the Commissioner who looks after the workmen's compensation often helps and informs the people of what their rights are. Why should it be peculiar to this industry? Has any employer objected to the men knowing the terms of the Act?—They do not object, but there is a reasonable suspicion.

E-1012. Have you ever tried to teach your members?—We are doing it.

E-1013. Has any employer objected to that?—The only isolated instance when the employer of a press objected was when we wanted to distribute handbills to our members inside the press. He said that he did not like to see any union activities inside the press.

E-1014. Is there any reason why a member of the union the moment that he has an accident should not go to the employer and ask what his rights are, without a handbill?—No.

E-1015. *The Chairman:* We have received a memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of the Press Employees' Association. Does this also represent the views of your Association?—Yes.

E-1016. He suggests that "The press employees must have at least one member in the Legislative Council elected from among themselves." Does the Association subscribe to that view?—Yes; we want a special electorate for the press employees.

E-1017. Should there be a special electorate for every kind of industry?—Yes.

E-1018. So that you would have one for the press, one for the taxi-drivers, one for the lorry-drivers, one for the sweepers and so on?—If the Bengal Chamber of Commerce which consists of only a few employers can have a separate electorate, why should we not have one for ourselves especially in view of the fact that our number is very large. I would suggest that there should be one representative on the Council for every 10,000 workers.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**BENGAL**  
(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)  
**SEVENTY-FIRST MEETING**  
**CALCUTTA**

Friday, 7th February 1930.

PRESENT :

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*  
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*,  
K.C.S.I., C.I.E.  
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.  
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.  
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.  
Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.  
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER,  
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,  
I.M.S., *Medical Assessor*.

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.	}	<i>Assistant Commissioners.</i>
Mr. SEW KISSAN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.		
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C. Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.		
Mr. S. LALL, I.O.S. Mr. A. DIBDIN.	}	<i>Joint Secretaries.</i>

(At the Titaghur No. II Mill.)

Mr. R. N. NEISH, Manager, Titaghur No. II Jute Mill.

E-1019. *The Chairman*: Will you tell us how many people you employ here?—7,036.

E-1020. And how many of those are men?—Seventy per cent.

E-1021. And how many are women?—Twenty-five per cent are women and the remaining five per cent are half-timers.

E-1022. Here you work on the multiple-shift system, starting at 5-30 a.m. and finishing at 7 o'clock, that is, for 13½ hours?—Yes; the engine runs the whole time.

E-1023. What is the maximum and minimum hours within those shifts that the individuals work?—The maximum for men is 11 hours and the minimum is 8½ to 9 hours. For instance, the weavers and winders work for 11 hours, the half-timers work for 6 hours only, and the *mistries* for 8 hours.

E-1024. Has this mill always been on the multiple-shift system?—Yes.

E-1025. How long have you yourself been the manager here?—Roughly for about 17 years.

E-1026. Have you had experience in any other mill?—Not in India.

E-1027. Do you consider that you get as good quality of work here on the multiple-shift system as you would on the single-shift system?—I think so. Some time ago when there was a rumour about our going in for the single-shift system, all our people were against it; they did not want to go on to the single-shift system. In the present system they get more interval which helps them very much to attend to their needs.

E-1028. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: There are fewer men in the single-shift system than in the multiple-shift system, and therefore the production per head is more in the former than in the latter?—I think the production per loom on a multiple-shift system is more than on a single-shift system.

E-1029. I am talking of the production per head. A weaver on the single-shift system works for 60 hours and earns more than a worker on the multiple-shift system; he has the opportunity to earn more?—Our weavers who are on the multiple-shift system earn enough. We have 25 per cent extra weavers.

E-1030. My point is there is opportunity for a weaver in the single-shift system to earn more. In the single-shift system the number of yards per weaver is more than in yours?—How can it be? For instance, for working four looms we have five men; the fifth man is a *badli*. These four looms work all the 13½ hours, and the weaver is paid for full-time though he does not work all the time.

E-1031. How many hours does a weaver work?—He works 11 hours a day, but he is paid for 13½ hours.

E-1032. You are paying to the weaver for what the *badli* does?—Yes, it comes to that.

E-1033. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In your opinion, it is good for the labour to have double-shifts?—I think so. If you introduce the single-shift system in this district, you will be making 20,000 people idle at once, and with the present unemployment in the country I think it would be very improper to take such a step.

E-1034. Apart from the fact that the double-shift system is suitable for the local labour as it suits their convenience best, the real attraction of this system is its shorter working hours; in other words, the workers would prefer shorter working hours and take less wages?—It suits the workers much better; they are more contented with the multiple-shift system than with the single-shift system.

E-1035. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does your spinner under the multiple-shift system get less per week than the spinner under the single-shift system?—If the spinner on the single-shift system works 11 hours as against 9½ in our case he will naturally get more money.

E-1036. Therefore the spinner under the single-shift system would be earning more than the spinner under the double-shift system?—But he is working more hours.

E-1037. Yes, but you give him the opportunity to work more while he does not get that opportunity under the multiple-shift system?—But still they do not like the single-shift system.

E-1038. They prefer shorter hours?—Yes, because it suits their conditions of life and the mode of living far better than it would under the single-shift system.

E-1039. *The Chairman*: Opinions might differ, but that is your experience?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

**PRAKASH (from Mirzapur), a boy worker in the Titagur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.**

I came to work this morning at 9 o'clock; I will go home at 11-30 and come again at 1 and work till 4-30 p.m. I do not go to school. My father and mother are in my village in the United Provinces. My brother is working in the Standard Mill; I got my job through my brother. I live with my brother. I earn Rs. 1-14-0 a week, out of which I keep a few pice for my pocket expenses and give the balance to my brother. I am working in this mill since eight months; I have not worked in any other mill. I do not find the work hard; I like the work. I am a shifter. My age is 15 years. When I grow up I would prefer to be a spinner rather than a weaver because the handling of looms requires a lot of experience. Before I came here I was looking after the cattle in my village.

(The witness withdrew.)

**MANGRUL (from Patna), a boy worker in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.**

I came to work this morning at 9 o'clock and will leave for home at 11-30. I live with my father and mother who are in the lines. I have been working in this mill for the last six months. I did not work in any other mill before I joined this mill. I came from my village eight or nine months ago. I earn Rs. 1-14-0 a week. I have not been fined so far. I have not been ill recently. Formerly I was well fleshed, but I am now weak as I do not get enough food. I give my earnings to my parents. My father does not go to work as he is an old man of 70 years.

(The witness withdrew.)

**BABUNIYA (from Arrah, Bihar and Orissa), a woman worker in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.**

I am a bobbin winder. I am working for the last 12 years. I came here with my husband. I am a Muhammadan. I have four children of whom one is pretty grown up and is in my village; the other three are with me here. All my children were born here. I did not get any maternity benefit when the children were born. I was away from work for 12 weeks when a child was born. I did not get any pay from the company during this period. My husband works here as an ordinary weaver and earns Rs. 5-7-6 a week. I earn Rs. 3 a week. We go to our village once in two years. We have no land or any other property. If there was a room here for the children and some one is employed by the management to look after the children, I would be willing to leave my children in that room instead of taking them with me into the mills when I am working. I did not lose any of my children. I leave my home at 5 in the morning to come to work in the mill, and go home at 9-30; I come again to work at 11. I do not get sufficient time to do proper cooking. If I am a little late in coming to work the *baboos* reprimand me. I feed my children after 9-30 when I go home. My husband is not on the same shift as I am; he goes at 8 and comes back at 9. As I cannot be at home to serve meals to my husband he takes it himself; it becomes cold by the time he takes it. I have never worked in any other mill. When I was first entertained I had to pay Rs. 4 *bakshish* to the *sardar* who appointed me. Each time I return back from the village I have to pay the same amount as *bakshish* to the *sardar*. I also pay him 2 annas every week. My husband paid Rs. 6 when he was first appointed. He pays 4 annas a week to the *sardar*. If we refuse to pay to the *sardars* we will not get work. Every worker pays a similar amount to the *sardar*. If I absent myself for four weeks on account of pregnancy and go to work after that period, the *sardar* will have to be paid his *bakshish* again.

(The witness withdrew.)

**MUNIYA (from Benares), a Muhammadan woman worker in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.**

I have worked in the jute mills for 12 or 13 years. I have never worked in a single-shift, but I have friends who work on the single-shift in other mills. The single-shift system is better because we get enough time to go home and prepare our meals. The time that I get under the double-shift system is sufficient but it is irregular. At the time of my first entertainment I had to pay the *sardar* Rs. 4 as *bakshish*; and I pay 2 annas to him every week.

(The witness withdrew.)

**JUMRATH (from Chapra district), a weaver in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.**

I have been working in this mill for the last 12 years. I am an ordinary weaver. I did not pay any *bakshish* to the *sardar* at the time of employment. I secured my employment through one of my village men who was working in the mill, and I do not know whether he paid any *bakshish* to the *sardar* on my behalf. I earn Rs. 5-9-3 a week and Re. 0-10-0 *khoraki*. I have not worked in any other mill. I had to leave my village as I had lots of difficulties and had not enough to eat. After coming here I learnt the work.

(The witness withdrew.)

**HARILAL (from Monghyr), a spinner in the Titaghur No. II Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.**

I have been working here for the last six years. I am by caste a Dusadh. I brought my wife here, and she died here. I did not pay any *bakshish* for getting my job; other people might be paying *bakshish* to the *sardar*. I am living in the *busti* with my brother-in-law. When there is a big surplus labour then we have to pay bribes to the *sardar* to get employment, but when there is shortage of labour we get in somehow or other. I came in when labour was short. I earn Rs. 2-14-0 a week including 6 annas *khoraki*. I come to work at 5-30 in the morning and work till 10; then I go home and come again at 2 p.m. and work till 6 in the evening. We are paid our salary every Friday.

(The witness withdrew.)

**(At the Standard Mills, Titaghur)**

**GAURI, woman worker, was examined and made the following statement.**

I came here from Ganjam district when I was a little child. My father and my mother were dead and I came here with my aunt. I work in the jute department. I throw the jute on to the carding machine. I come to the mill at 5-30 in the morning, work till 9 o'clock, go home and eat my food and return to the mill at 10 o'clock. I then work till 3 o'clock, go home, eat my food and return at 5 o'clock. I then work till 7 o'clock, go home, take my food and sleep and then return to the mill next morning at 5-30 as usual. (She then produced a C-shaped token bearing the number 180.) I work on the C shift. If I feed the jute breaker machine I get Rs. 2-8-0 for four days; if I take delivery of the slivers I get Rs. 2-6-0 for four days. If I work five days I get Rs. 3-2-0. My husband is a jute cutter in the batching department. He works four days and gets Rs. 3-2-0. If he works five days he gets Rs. 3-12-0. I have my husband's relations in Ganjam but we do not send any money to them. There is another brother there who looks after them and that is why we do not send any money. I live on the mill lines paying a rent of 2 annas a week. When I came here as a little child I worked for one year in another mill. In the other mill also the shift is exactly the same as in this mill. I like to work on this system of shifts. Everybody else is working on this kind of shift. I prepare my rice in the morning before I go to the mill and eat it at 9 o'clock. My husband comes at 8 and goes back at 9 o'clock. We start together at 5 o'clock in the morning to reach the mill at 5-30. At 1 o'clock my husband eats the food I cooked in the morning. When I go back at 3 o'clock I cook the rice which we eat at night. I took leave once last year and went back to Ganjam because my brother died. With the wages we get we eat and clothe ourselves and save 8 annas to Re. 1 every week. We keep this amount so that it may serve us in times of illness. We also sometimes buy clothes with that money. I do not put that money in a savings bank but I spend it. For instance my husband was ill and he had to go to my country and that is how the money is spent. One of the ornaments I am wearing cost Rs. 5 to Rs. 6.

My husband gave me only one; the rest were given to me by my brother. I had fever a year ago. I did not go to the doctor because I was too weak and unable to move, nor did the doctor come and see me. Some of the Madrasi people go to the doctor, others do not. I paid Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 to a man who came to my house and treated me. He is a man of my caste, but he is not a qualified doctor.

(The witness withdrew.)

**MUTHIALU, woman worker, was examined and made the following statement.**

I come from Ganjam. I cook my food at dawn and go to the mill at 5-30 in the morning, work till 6-30, return home, take my food and go back to the mill at 8 o'clock. I then work till 1 o'clock, return home, take my food and go back to the mill at 2 o'clock. I work till 7 o'clock, then go home, cook my food and eat it. My eyes have not been all right for the past few days. I did not go to the doctor. I put in my eyes the medicine other people give me. I once went to a lady doctor in the other mill with my daughter. She was expecting a baby and was in the seventh month of her pregnancy. The lady doctor wrote something and told us to go to the Sahib at the mill. He read this paper and tore it. We did not know what to do. We had to work. My daughter went back to work. One day when she was passing under the coconut tree she got frightened and fainted. That night she was in great pain. We sent for a *dai* and she examined her and found that the child was dead. Then she was treated and gradually she got better. She then went back to work. The *sardar* told me that my daughter would get money for the time she was absent on account of child-birth. We went to the doctor. He wrote something on a piece of paper and said that my daughter would get money for five weeks. She got money for two weeks only and did not get any money for the remaining three weeks.

Some people go to the doctor and they may get well. If they do not get well they get very much worse.

(The witness withdrew.)

**LACHANAO, boy worker, was examined and made the following statement.**

I work as a shifter in the spinning department of the Standard Jute Mill. This is my token bearing number R398. I started work in this mill about a year ago. My father and mother have been working here for five years. I have been doing this very work all this time. I come at 9 o'clock and go away at 11 o'clock. I come back at 12 and go away at 4. I do not work anywhere else after I finish this work. If I work four days I get Rs. 1-12-0. If I work five days I get Rs. 2-3-0. I have always been getting these wages. When I was a small boy there was a man in the lines who used to teach me and I learnt a little there. I live in the Standard Mill lines. My father and mother have been working in this mill all along. When I was a little boy I had a little sister who fell ill and died. My family was badly in need of money, so I came to work. I heard from my father that there was work in the mill and I came to the mill and saw the *sardar*. He took me to the office. I put my thumb-impression there on a paper and from that day I started working here. I did not pay anything to the *sardar*. He is not a relation of my father. He is a man from upcountry whereas I am a Madrasi. I did not pay anything to the *sardar* to get a job. I am now 14 years old. I learnt something from the teacher on the lines for four or five months. I gave up learning three years ago. After I gave up learning and before I joined the mill I was doing odd jobs for the Bengalee shop-keepers in the bazaar and earned a little money. I like to go and read provided this does not interfere with my work. (The boy was able to write a few vernacular alphabets and the Arabic numerals). I am looking forward to become a spinner in the spinning department. If I learn weaving I will become a weaver. At present I am a little boy and I have to do whatever is given to me.

(The witness withdrew.)

**ABDUL HAKIM, worker in the Standard Jute Mill, was examined and made the following statement.**

I come from Darbhanga. I have been here 20 years. I live in the lines. I have not brought my family here; they are in Darbhanga. I am now 32 years old. All the time I have been working in the mill here my family was in Darbhanga. I go there every year and stay for three or four months. People of my district do not bring their families to these industrial areas here. If I brought my family my people would laugh at me. I have got some lands at Darbhanga. I have my wife and two children there. I have also two brothers. My wife looks after the children. She is a *purda* lady. I earn Rs. 8 one week and Rs. 9 another week. I am a broad loom weaver. I send home Rs. 20 a month; sometimes I borrow some money here and send Rs. 40. I take the loan from the *sardar*. I take Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 at a time. I pay him no interest. I owe him no money now. I am a family friend of the *sardar*. I get work in the weaving department every day. Only the new men will have to wait for some days before they get work. I am not played off on any day. The *sardar* comes from another district in Behar; he has brought his family here and lives with them. Nowadays some of our people are bringing their families with them. I do not want to be a *sardar*. I pay Rs. 2 a week to another man and he cooks my food for me. Sometimes the crops in my country get damaged and I have to send money to my family to live on. On those occasions I have to borrow money.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. MIHBUBUL HUQ, President, and Mr. AFTAB ALLY, General Secretary, Indian Seamen's Union.**

E-1040. *The Chairman*: You have stated in the covering letter to your memorandum that the seafarers' section, which you describe as the main section of your union, has a present strength of 15,981 members. Are those members all registered in Calcutta?—(*Mr. Huq*) Yes.

E-1041. They are seamen taking service from the Port of Calcutta?—Yes.

E-1042. In addition to this main section I take it that there are other sections of your union?—(*Mr. Ally*) Yes. We have three sections—the seafarers' section, the waterside workers' section and the inland waterways workers' section. In all our membership is 18,151.

E-1043. We have had a memorandum submitted to us from the Bengal Mariners' Union. Is that a separate union from yours?—(*Mr. Huq*) Yes; I am a President of the Bengal Mariners' Union.

E-1044. But in other respects it is an independent union?—Yes.

E-1045. Is there any proposal to amalgamate these two unions?—The matter is under negotiation.

E-1046. At present we may treat them as separate unions?—Yes.

E-1047. *Mr. Ahmed*: When was your union formed?—(*Mr. Ally*) In 1908. The Indian Seamen's Union and the National Seamen's Union of India were amalgamated on the 27th August 1927.

E-1048. What is the numerical strength of your membership?—At present about 18,000.

E-1049. What is the exact number of Indian seamen which is now available for service in the Port of Calcutta?—According to the information supplied to us by the Shipping Office it is about 140,000 seamen.

E-1050. How many of that number are now employed?—According to the Shipping Office's figure about 53,000 including the coastal vessels.

E-1051. How is the number of 53,000 divided?—50,000 are employed on the high seas and 3,000 in coastal vessels.

E-1052. When you say "Coastal vessels" what ports do you include?—(*Mr. Huq*) From Calcutta to Rangoon, from Calcutta to Bombay and from Calcutta to Colombo.

E-1053. Out of 140,000 available seamen only 53,000 are working. The remainder are unemployed all the time?—Yes, that is so. (*Mr. Ally*) These figures were given to us by the Shipping Office, but we believe that about 100,000 Indian seamen are always kept unemployed.

E-1054. How many Indian seamen are always seeking employment in the town of Calcutta?—About 20,000.

E-1055. *The Chairman*: The rest having gone to their country in the meantime?—(*Mr. Huq*) Sometimes they go there, but they do not stay there for long.

E-1056. In addition to that 20,000 there will be some others in other ports like Chittagong and Rangoon who are seeking employment?—Yes.

E-1057. *Mr. Ahmed*: What were the recommendations submitted by the Clow Committee?—The Clow Committee reported that abuses existed in the present system of recruitment through licensed shipping brokers and ghat serangs. The committee suggested the abolition of that system and the establishment in its place of an employment bureau on which there should be representatives of Government, the shipowners and the seamen, with advisory committees attached to it.

E-1058. What happened after the submission of that report?—We were informed that the Shipping Master of Calcutta would be in charge of the recruitment bureau, and that recruitment would be started through that bureau; but up till now not a single seaman has been so recruited.

E-1059. What is the name of the special recruitment officer?—Captain Darvell.

E-1060. I think he was appointed recruiting officer for the Port of Calcutta in 1924?—Yes.

E-1061. What has he been doing since then? Has he been recruiting in accordance with the Clow Committee's report?—(*Mr. Ally*) In August 1924 the Government of Bengal informed our union of the appointment of Captain Darvell as officer-in-charge of the Seamen's Recruiting Bureau, and they also told us that he was going to act in another capacity, viz., as shipping master.

E-1062. He is both shipping master and recruitment officer?—Yes; not a single seaman he has recruited, nor has a recruitment bureau come into existence so far. We have submitted prayer after prayer to Government, but nothing has happened.

E-1063. Will you submit to the Commission the resolutions which you have forwarded to the Government of India on this matter?—Yes, we will submit copies of all the resolutions which we have passed in recent years.

E-1064. You describe in your memorandum your grievances with regard to the abuses practised under the brokerage system. Why do you want to abolish this system?—(*Mr. Huq*) Because by this pernicious system the seamen are fleeced; they are made to pay in an indirect way about 25 per cent of their wages to intermediaries—the licensed shipping brokers. By such a system seamen are kept unemployed for years. They do not get any chance of employment, while those who are in a position to give bribes to the heart's desire of these brokers are given preference for jobs on board a ship.

E-1065. Referring to the inland waterways workers, what hours do they work?—For 13 and 14 hours a day.

E-1066. What hours do the seamen engaged by the Port Commissioners work?—They are also subject to a lot of hardships.

E-1067. Do seamen get any holiday with pay?—(*Mr. Ally*) Holidays are unknown to seamen.

E-1068. Do they get any pension or gratuity?—(*Mr. Huq*) No, nothing of the sort.

E-1069. Do seamen working for the P. & O. Company get any pension?—(*Mr. Ally*) Sometimes old seamen, on making an application, get a few rupees a month, but we do not call that a pension system.

E-1070. Do these seamen work for a long time?—Yes, some of them have worked for thirty years. It depends upon the sweet will of the employers whether they get anything when they retire. (*Mr. Huq*) A pension is given to the serangs employed by the Clan Line.



E-1071. Do the shipping companies supply their seamen with housing accommodation?—(Mr. Ally) No.

E-1072. Do they supply them with any club or any recreation ground or any sailors' home?—No.

E-1073. Sir Alexander Murray tells me that they do supply a sailors' home?—That is only for Europeans; Indian seamen are not allowed to enter the doors of that sailors' home.

E-1074. Have you read what Colonel Harnett said in London?—(Mr. Huq) Yes, he said that greater facilities are going to be given to seamen in the matter of recreation and the treatment of venereal diseases, and that next autumn a club will be opened for them, but all these things are only meant for white seamen and not for the poor Indian lascar.

E-1075. These things are to be provided for Europeans only?—Yes.

E-1076. Mr. Clow: Are there any other unions on this side of India which include seamen?—The Indian Seamen's Union is the only recognized union, and it is registered under the Trade Union Act.

E-1077. Is the Quartermasters' Union affiliated to your union?—It is a branch of our union.

E-1078. From your report I see that it was agreed by the executive councils of both unions that when the Indian Seamen's Union was registered the Quartermasters' Union was to be merged in it. Has that merger taken place?—Not yet. The president of that union is still away in Geneva.

E-1079. You estimate the number of seamen available for employment at 2½ lakhs, and the number of seamen that can be employed at any time at half a lakh. You have also suggested more than once that seamen should be employed on a roster system?—Yes, so that each seaman may get some share of the work. At present some seamen get work year after year, whereas other deserving seamen come away disappointed from the Shipping Office day after day.

E-1080. If there was a roster system, and if there are five men for every one job, that would mean that the average seamen would only be employed for one-fifth of his time?—Yes, but he would get his turn some time or another.

E-1081. He would be employed for one year and unemployed for four years?—Yes.

E-1082. Do you think that would be a satisfactory system?—Yes. It would mean that every seaman would not be kept unemployed indefinitely.

E-1083. But a man cannot live for five years on one year's earnings?—(Mr. Ally) We think that if a roster system were introduced matters would be adjusted by the supply and demand, especially if old seamen were retired and the recruitment of new men was immediately stopped.

E-1084. Unless the number of seamen available were substantially reduced the effect of a roster system would be practically to starve all the seamen because they would not be employed with sufficient frequency to enable them to get an adequate income?—(Mr. Huq) Under a roster system each seaman would have the satisfaction of knowing that he would get into work at some time or another; he would not be kept indefinitely out of employment.

E-1085. If every seaman is to be employed for one year only out of five he will not be able to live. One year's earning will not keep him for four years' idleness?—An alternative suggestion is that old seamen should be pensioned off and fresh recruitment should be stopped.

E-1086. Is it not better that few men should be employed and that their employment should be as continuous as possible rather than that the available employment should be spread over a very large number?—Yes, but as matters stand that is not possible. Those who have been seamen all their lives cannot give up their profession at once.

E-1087. Am I right in supposing that one of your reasons for insisting on the roster system is that you want to devise something automatic which will check bribery?—Quite so.

E-1088. Do you think that bribery has decreased since 1922 when the Recruitment Committee reported?—Not in the least. The report of that committee is a dead letter. Bribery is still rampant.

E-1089. Do you think the same amounts are still being taken from the seamen?—Yes, and bigger amounts.

E-1090. You have stated that the seamen are paying money to the brokers and *ghat serangs*. Are they paying it to the brokers and *ghat serangs* directly or are they paying it to the serangs?—They pay in different ways. When they present their promissory notes a big commission is extorted from them.

E-1091. That is a discount?—Yes.

E-1092. I am not talking of the discount on the promissory notes. I am talking of what was formerly known among seamen as the increase?—(Mr. *Ally*) Only in the deck department do they call it an increase.

E-1093. Is that still being paid to the same extent?—Yes.

E-1094. What has your union done in the last few years to check that?—When seamen join the union they cannot remain long in it because they are victimized and black-listed; that is one of the primary reasons why the union can never be a really strong body.

E-1095. Are not there men in your union who have been in employment for a number of years?—The majority of our members are now always employed because unemployed members cannot keep up their subscription.

E-1096. Everybody cannot be victimized if they remain in employment?—They are always victimized when it is found out that they belong to the union. They are victimized not only by the employers, but by the serangs, because they think that if the union's activities are not checked it might become too strong for them.

E-1097. Has not the Quartermasters' Union been able to stop bribery to some extent?—To a small extent. Besides only 1,700 men are concerned in the Quartermasters' Union.

E-1098. Why cannot you copy their methods?—Until there is a system of direct recruitment and registration of seamen through an employment bureau with advisory committees attached thereto, it will be impossible to check bribery.

E-1099. *The Chairman*: Have you ever decided that your 18,000 members should all agree never again to give a bribe to a serang?—We always ask our members not to do so, but after remaining out of employment for months and months they cannot help paying a bribe in order to get employment. When we have seen them dying of starvation we have asked them to go and pay the bribe in order to save their lives, because it is better to pay a bribe than die.

E-1100. You told us that your 18,000 members are continuously employed?—I said that some of our members automatically lose their membership after remaining unemployed for years and years. When they join a ship they become members, but when they are unemployed they cannot pay their subscriptions, and so they lose their membership.

E-1101. Do you not think that a firm decision on the part of your 18,000 members to have no more to do with this pernicious system would do good?—We did take action in connexion with one particular broker, and we kept him out of business. He made things so intolerable that we decided to boycott him, and we have kept him out of business altogether in spite of the fact that he is holding a Government licence.

E-1102. That shows the power you have?—But we do not want to take that sort of action. We want to try to settle things in a different way.

E-1103. I take it that your 18,000 members being mostly more or less continuously employed, must be some of the best men that go to sea?—Yes.

E-1104. And that if they took a firm action, as you have successfully done in one case, they might be successful in other cases as well, and you might be able to purify the service by your own efforts?—In the particular case to which I have just referred, the Harrison Line tried to get a crew from Bombay; we kept the ship idle for five days. After those five days they decided to take a crew from Calcutta because they could not get a crew from Bombay.

E-1105. Then they took that crew without any bribes?—Yes. We have also refused to accept these promissory notes, and now they are paying in cash. (Mr. *Hug*) The same old system of recruitment through licensed

shipping brokers still exists. In this particular instance the matter became so intolerable to the seamen that we decided to resort to determined action. but what is the fruit of it really?—The case is hanging over us.

E-1106. *Mr. Clow*: If you can take firm action when matters get intolerable, why are you not able to pursue that policy generally?—The difficulty is that all the men who are continuously employed do not stay in Calcutta. If we go on doing drastic things the difficulty may arise that the union will find its existence jeopardized, because it is the interests of these licensed shipping brokers which are involved, and they will resort to all sorts of tactics and devices.

E-1107. Why do you suggest that articles should always be signed in the shipping office and not on the ship?—(*Mr. Ally*) If the articles were signed in the ship the crew might be persuaded to give bribes, but if the articles are signed in the shipping office other people will be there and bribery cannot take place.

E-1108. Is a representative of the union not allowed on the ship at the time of signing on?—He is not expelled from the ship, but the ship is not a proper place for the signing on of men.

E-1109. You state in your memorandum "If the company wants, it can discharge men without assigning any reason, and at any port, without payment of wages for the unexpired period". Surely that is not correct?—Yes, it is.

E-1110. If there is an agreement for twelve months is the company at liberty at any moment to discharge a man at any port?—Can a seaman be discharged at any time during the currency of the articles for no reason?—Yes.

E-1111. You refer to sick and injured seamen, and one of your demands is a free passage to home ports for all seamen left in foreign ports due to sickness. Has he not any title to a free passage at present?—We had a case recently of a man who was taken sick in a foreign port. He was put on to another ship, to return home, and the officers of that ship forced him to work, with the result that when he arrived in port his condition became worse. We want such men to be brought home without having to work.

E-1112. But supposing he becomes fit on the way home?—If he becomes fit then he must work.

E-1113. You suggest that there should be regulations on the sale of alcohol. What regulations do you suggest?—There should be no grog shops allowed near places where seamen live; nor should any person be allowed to go on board a ship in order to supply the seamen with narcotics or alcohol.

E-1114. Are persons allowed on ships to supply alcohol?—Sometimes persons go on board and supply it surreptitiously.

E-1115. With regard to International Labour Conventions you state "The time has come for the Government of India to change its angle of vision and to ratify the conventions and to accept the recommendations which are passed." The memorandum of the Indian Chamber of Commerce says "My committee are surprised to notice the promptness with which the Government of India desire to take action for the ratification of conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Conference." Can you reconcile those two statements?—(*Mr. Hug*) They are like poles asunder. We want co-operation between labour and employers.

E-1116. You recognize that ratification or non-ratification of conventions is done with the consent of the Assembly?—Yes, but sometimes non-ratification is passed hurriedly as was recently the case in the Legislative Assembly with regard to the convention regarding the minimum wage. It was done in a very hurried manner and at the same time the proper representatives of the people were not there. What we gain in Geneva is invariably lost at Delhi. What is the use of having a thing done in the international forum where delegates from various parts of the world go to legislate for recommendations when they are not given effect to in India.

E-1117. In the case of the minimum wage convention was not the discussion specially postponed because it came up in a thin house?—There was an amendment, which was accepted, because this Labour Commission was sent to investigate the conditions of labour here. With regard to other conventions they are not at all given effect to.

E-1118. This is a point on which you do not agree with the Indian Chamber of Commerce?—No.

E-1119. *Mr. Joshi*: Which conventions have the Government ratified and which conventions have they not ratified as regards seamen?—They have only ratified the convention dealing with the employment of boys as stokers, and also the convention dealing with the medical examination of children.

E-1120. They have not ratified the other conventions?—No.

E-1121. *Mr. Clow* asked you whether you knew that these decisions were taken by Government with the consent of the Assembly. Are you aware that in the Legislative Assembly the Government of India have got a large number of votes at their disposal? Are you also aware that every time Government desires to carry a point they call on this block of votes to support them?—That is so. So far as labour is concerned labour is almost entirely unrepresented both in the local legislatures as well as in the central legislature.

E-1122. With regard to recruitment, does not Captain Darvell keep any list of serangs?—(*Mr. Ally*) He has only recently made out a list—when the Commission started its enquiry at Karachi, or a couple of weeks before that. Captain Darvell was appointed in the year 1924 and it is only recently that he has kept a list.

E-1123. You ask for the supervision of such institutions as taverns, lodging houses, etc. Do you want that supervision exercised by municipality or by Government?—By persons representing the Government as well as the union, and the employers if they like.

E-1124. You want a joint machinery for supervising the housing accommodation?—Yes.

E-1125. Then you ask for supervision of boatmen plying between the ships and the shore. Do they come under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act?—(*Mr. Hug*) Yes.

E-1126. You want the Indian Merchant Shipping Act to apply even to these small boats?—Yes. They are an annexe to the ocean-going vessels in a sense.

E-1127. Then you deal with the question of a seaman being allowed to allot part of his wages to his relatives or family?—(*Mr. Ally*) Yes that is very important.

E-1128. Section 53 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act says "A seaman may require that a stipulation be inserted in the agreement for the allotment by means of an allotment note of any part of his wages in favour either of a relative or member of his family". This section allows a seaman to allot one-third of his wages. Your point is that instead of one-third he should be allowed to allot three-fourths?—Yes.

*The Chairman*: Does that provision limit his allotment to one-third?—Can he not, under the existing law, allot one-half?

*Mr. Joshi*: The provision says "not exceeding one-third".

E-1129. Do you want that proportion altered to three-fourths?—This is an optional clause. It is not given effect to. A seaman finds difficulty in making the allotment because the signings on are done so hurriedly in the ship that he cannot make proper arrangements.

E-1130. *The Chairman*: Your point is that in practice the section is not properly applied?—Quite so.

E-1131. You are aware that in the English ports great attention is paid to that point?—(*Mr. Hug*) Yes, but in Indian ports no attention is paid to it. No facilities are given to the seamen for allotments.

E-1132. Has your union taken up this point with the shipowners?—(*Mr. Ally*) Yes. It was included in our fourteen demands; they did not take any notice of it.

E-1133. *Mr. Joshi*: You ask for proper accommodation for seamen. What sort of accommodation is given to seamen at present on board ship?—It is very bad indeed, like cages.

E-1134. Is there a difference made, as regards accommodation, between a European seaman and an Indian seaman?—Yes. The difference is as great as that between day and night.

E-1135. Are you aware that section 90 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act makes a difference between the accommodation as regards superficial area given to British seamen and Indian seamen? Is the stature of the Indian seaman different from that of the European seaman, so that the latter requires more superficial area?—(Mr. Huq) No. This is an invidious distinction which is made in this section, and we want to have it done away with. There should not be any distinction made between the Indian seamen and the European seamen as regards superficial area.

E-1136. Is there any difference made in the rations?—(Mr. Ally) Yes, there is a great difference. The food which is given to Indian seamen is not fit for any human being.

E-1137. Do most of your members eat meat?—Yes.

E-1138. They would like to get as good food as is given to European seamen?—Yes. They are given dry fish five days a week. (Mr. Huq) We claim equality in the quality of food.

E-1139. You also ask that beds and pillows should be provided for Indian seamen. Are not beds provided at present?—No.

E-1140. Would your members agree to pay some small contribution towards a sickness insurance scheme?—(Mr. Ally) They would, but our demand is that there should be a national fund to be contributed to by the employers alone.

E-1141. Your first demand is that it should be a non-contributory scheme?—We would contribute provided our wages were raised.

E-1142. Supposing you are given a choice between no scheme and a contributory scheme, would you agree to a contributory scheme? Would you also agree to a contributory pension scheme?—No. Why should we contribute towards a pension scheme?

E-1143. Suppose you are given a choice between no pension and a pension by means of a contributory scheme, to which also the employers and Government would contribute?—(Mr. Huq) We should like to know the proportions.

E-1144. I suggest that it should be a fair proportion—say, one-third?—We are prepared to contribute a very small fraction in order to get a pension.

E-1145. By section 30 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act it is necessary that the articles of agreement should be explained in a language understood by the seaman. Is that always done?—(Mr. Ally) No. I was present a few days ago when the articles were read over to a crew, and the whole of the document of this size (showing a printed article of agreement) was read over in five minutes. How can such a document be explained in five minutes?

E-1146. Your point is that the articles of agreement are not properly explained to the men?—Never.

E-1147. You are aware that sometimes the discharge certificate contains a clause about the quality of work. Do you approve of that?—(Mr. Huq) We do not, because it creates ill-feeling between a master and a crew and it also makes it difficult for the man to get further employment.

E-1148. With regard to advances, did I understand you to say that the system by which the broker used to take commission has been stopped?—It has been recently stopped.

E-1149. I want to know exactly what practice has been stopped. How much advance is given?—A month's advance.

E-1150. Does the broker always give the full month's advance?—He does now, but previously he gave half in promissory notes and half in cash.

E-1151. Did he charge any interest?—Yes. On these promissory notes the seamen were paying 6½ per cent interest.

E-1152. Both those practices have been stopped now?—Yes.

E-1153. Did your union make any efforts to see that Captain Darvell carried out his duties in the office to which he was appointed?—(Mr. Ally) We addressed him many times. We also passed resolutions which were communicated to Captain Darvell but we were never listened to.

E-1154. The Chairman: Did you have consultations with Captain Darvell?—Yes.

E-1155. *Mr. Joshi*: Do the British Indian Steam Navigation Company ever recruit their seamen through brokers or do they recruit direct?—They do not call him a broker; they call him a *ghat serang*, but he is just the same as a broker. There is no difference except in name.

E-1156. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do they recruit through *ghat serangs*?—The only difference between the two is this: in the one case they pay a commission of 5 per cent to the broker, whereas in the other case they pay a salary. But essentially there is no difference in the system of recruitment.

E-1157. *Mr. Joshi*: Government makes a difference between the method of the British India Steam Navigation Company and the other method. In your experience do you find any difference between the two as regards corruption and bribery?—So far as the seamen and the union are concerned we do not find any difference.

E-1158. Did you bring any case of corruption to the notice of the British India Steam Navigation Company?—We have brought our grievances to their notice and negotiations are still going on. After the boycott we addressed a letter to the company with regard to these corrupt practices. The company wanted the seamen concerned to give evidence before them and prove the existence of the alleged practices. We asked them to give an undertaking that they would not victimize the men who would give evidence. No such undertaking was given and we have not been able to send up our witnesses.

E-1159. *The Chairman*: You have had negotiations with the company only by means of letters; have you ever sought for an interview?—I had an interview also with Captain Liddle, the Marine Superintendent.

E-1160. They also received you and discussed the matter with you?—Yes, they received me and discussed the matter with me.

E-1161. *Mr. Tassie*: You say in your memorandum that your union has at present 15,981 members. But I see from the subscriptions that you have received during the past eight years your membership is only as follows:—

1922	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,556
1923	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,638
1924	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	72
1925	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	334
1926	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	134
1927	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,100
1928	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,100
1929	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	250

That gives an average of about 1,400 a year. The largest number is 3,556. How do you say in your memorandum that you have 15,981 members?—When our union was registered in August 1929 we had 9,981 members and now we have 15,981 members.

E-1162. But the total subscription you collected up to 31st March 1929 was only Rs. 175 representing a membership of 250 only?—We have stated in our report that the majority of our members are in arrears of their subscription.

E-1163. Are they in arrears for eight years?—That is the case with the majority of the 9,981 members on our rolls at the time of registration. Formerly though members did not pay their subscription they could not be removed from the roll. There was no time limit. Now we have changed the rule and if a person does not pay his subscription within two years his name will be struck off.

E-1164. How does a man become a member of your union? Does he pay an entrance fee or a subscription before he becomes a member?—We have membership cards on the model of the National Union of Seamen in Great Britain. A man who wants to become a member has to fill that card and affix the necessary stamps. We keep a copy of that card in the office and also enter in a register the amounts paid by him. He has to pay his subscription before he joins the union.

E-1165. How much is the subscription?—We have three scales: As. 8, Re. 1 and Rs. 2. We have changed our rules recently and they have been approved by the general body of the seamen.

E-1166. Meanwhile you have been quite happy to go on with an average of 1,400 people paying their subscriptions while you have been saying that you have a membership of about 16,000?—All the new members enlisted between April last year and now have paid their subscriptions.

E-1167. Dealing with recruitment you say that now and then "mushroom unions spring up being engineered and financed by ingenious persons interested in maintaining the pernicious system of recruitment through licensed brokers". Did not your present secretary once start a union when he came back from America?—But that was not a union of this type. He was a seaman himself. The seamen did not like the way in which the old union was run and they appealed to him to start another union. (*Mr. Huq*) Then better sense prevailed and amalgamation took place automatically. When there was a rivalry between an organized union and a mushroom union or a bogus union the latter had to give way.

E-1168. You say they are mushroom unions. Did you not send an appeal to the various shipping companies saying that unless they supported your union you feared that all the seamen would desert your union and go to the other union which had communistic ideas? Was that the mushroom union you were making an appeal about?—(*Mr. Alley*) We know nothing about that at the moment.

E-1169. But somebody has been sending that in your name?—We might have sent it, but we cannot say one way or the other without seeing the paper referred to.

*Mr. Tassie*: Dealing with the waterside workers' section of your union you say that that body was involved in a twenty-two days' strike within a couple of months of its formation and that the strike was withdrawn on the assurance of the Port Commissioners that their various minimum demands would be considered. As a matter of fact what happened was that the men were told that if they returned to work the Chairman would consider their rates of pay and if he found that they were lower than those paid by other employers for similar work he would recommend that the rate should be increased. But he never said anything about considering the minimum demands.

*Mr. Cliff*: Was the Chairman's offer made in writing?

*Mr. Tassie*: It must have been in writing.

E-1170. *Mr. Cliff*: Did you receive a communication in writing from the Chairman?—Yes, we did.

E-1171. Have you a copy of that here?—No.

E-1172. You might send it in?—Yes, I will do so. But it is a fact that we withdrew our strike on the assurance of the Chairman of the Port Commissioners that he would consider our minimum demands. Of course he has considered the minimum demands of a minor section of our workers and granted them small increments, but so far as the majority is concerned he has done nothing for them. He wanted to know the strength of our union, but we had communicated to him this information even before he asked for it. When the waterside workers' union was amalgamated with us their 2,000 members became our members also.

E-1173. One of your minimum demands is one month's privilege leave without prejudice to fundamental and medical leave. Do you not know that many of the workers enjoy a full month's leave with pay?—Some do, but we want that privilege for all. At present it covers only a handful of workers.

E-1174. But they can all get it if they want it?—At present only a handful of workers in particular grades, such as the serangs and so on, get leave. But we want the privilege to be extended to people of all grades.

*Mr. Cliff*: Do I understand Mr. Tassie to say that they can all get this benefit if they want it?

*Mr. Tassie*: They can all get it at any time without pay but after a certain number of years service they can get it with pay.

E-1175. As regards provident fund is it not a fact that all the workers not entitled to a pension can join the provident fund if they want to do so?—No, some of the workers are not given this facility. We want these facilities for all the workers.

E-1176. But is it not a fact that the men who do not get provident fund get a pension?—The trouble is this. Certain men get provident fund and certain others get pension. A few people get privilege leave. They say that all the people get all these privileges and for all outward appearance they show that they are affording all the facilities to all the workers and that they are treating them nicely and sympathetically. But actually that is not the case.

E-1177. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Are there any workers who do not get either a pension or a provident fund?—Many. The majority of them get nothing.

E-1178. *Mr. Tassie*: Do the waterside workers not get either pension or provident fund?—Yes, they get pension. The point is this. A few years ago the men had a choice between pension and provident fund. At that time the union was not active and the men were misled into choosing pension. At present some people have the benefit of provident fund. Others cannot get it even if they want it.

E-1179. *Mr. Cliff*: Do you cater for all the workers on the waterside?—Yes, for all the dockers engaged in the water front, in the quays and jetties.

E-1180. Are there a number of men employed by contractors on the waterside?—Yes, there are. But they are not entitled to any of the privileges from the Port Trust.

E-1181. With regard to the employees of the Port Trust in whatever capacity they are employed, are they eligible to a pension on the one hand or entitled to become members of a provident fund?—No, the Port Trust does not recognize workers employed by stevedores.

E-1182. They are men employed by the stevedores; they are not directly employed by the Port Trust. Is there any section of the workers employed by the Port Trust directly who cannot either be members of a provident fund or be entitled to pension?—The workers directly employed by the Port Trust get either pension or provident fund. But the workers want provident fund and not pension.

E-1183. *The Chairman*: You have admitted that all those directly employed by the Port Trust come either under the pension scheme or the provident fund scheme. But they would like to come under the provident fund scheme and not the pension scheme?—That is so.

E-1184. *Mr. Tassie*: You say that one of your minimum demands is that arrangements must be made for payment of compensation to workers for injuries received by accident in course of their employment as provided in the Workmen's Compensation Act. Can you give any instance in which compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act has not been paid by the Port Commissioners?—We do not say that the Port Commissioners do not pay compensation, but the workers find it extraordinarily difficult to recover the compensation due to them. In one case where a man lost his thumb I had to undergo considerable difficulty before I got his compensation. He was awarded Rs. 115.

E-1185. *The Chairman*: What improvement in the law or the administration of the law would you recommend to the Commission?—We want that the union or the worker concerned should have the right of approaching the Commissioner for workmen's compensation directly without approaching the employers first and wasting a lot of time. We must be able to file our case with the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner directly and get our compensation from him.

E-1186. *Mr. Tassie*: In your memorandum you also ask for a "formal recognition of the union by the Port Trust". On the 21st October last the Chairman of the Port Trust wrote to you asking for information regarding the constitution of your union and the extent to which it represented the Port Trust staff. If you were anxious about recognition why did you not reply to his letter?—We supplied the Chairman with a copy of our rules and our annual report and asked him for an interview. Since he did not grant an interview we thought that it was better to organize the men more firmly.

E-1187. You did not answer that letter?—The letter was not answered.

E-1188. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the establishment of an employment bureau you have to face the contention of the shipping employers who say that it is possible to get crews together only through serangs and tindals.



What is the opinion of your union as to whether crews can be got without the aid of serangs and tindals?—There are 20,000 men waiting for employment in the port. Many of them wait in the shipping office from 10 to 5 every day. Without the help of serangs and tindals we can get men easily even for 10 ships a day. (*Mr. Hug*) It would be a pleasant task for the union to arrange for the men as quickly as possible.

E-1189. For instance Captain Liddle in his memorandum says that "the men themselves do not want it" and "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". Seeing that you make a demand for the establishment of an employment bureau how will you meet the position of the shipping employers with regard to the obtaining of effective crews?—(*Mr. Ally*) Even with an employment bureau they will be getting the same seamen they are getting now. The only difference is: now they are getting through brokers and serangs, under that system they will be employed direct. So far as the men remain the same I do not see where the question of effectiveness comes in.

E-1190. *The Chairman*: Do you mean that you will get the same crews—friends of each other, men from the same country or village to serve together?—In 90 per cent of the ships there is some trouble or other when it reaches the home ports of the seamen on account of bribery and so on. It is always contended that the serangs take their relatives. Of course that is true in a few cases. But that is no reason why we should not establish a public employment bureau.

E-1191. You ask to be represented on an advisory committee for recruitment of seamen. Would it be your endeavour then to see that harmonious crews were made up of a number of disjointed individuals?—Yes.

E-1192. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: It might happen that the next man on the roster was not from the same village or country as the rest. In such cases how would it be possible to gather a harmonious crew?—We do not intend that the roster should be strictly followed in such cases.

E-1193. *The Chairman*: You may keep to the roster as nearly as possible. At the same time you would recognize the need for harmony?—Yes, that is essential.

E-1194. *Mr. Cliff*: Does the union see any practical difficulty with regard to the obtaining of disciplined crews through an agency such as you suggest?—There will be no difficulty at all. Even now there are some people employed who have had no experience at all. They simply pay some money to the serangs and get appointed. Under the system we suggest the ship will be manned by the most efficient crew, for there will be no room for bribery and only the most efficient men will be taken.

E-1195. You agree that it is essential to have harmony?—Yes, we agree.

E-1196. The point you have to face up to is whether employment through this agency would yield effective and disciplined crews?—Under the present system the brokers engage the serangs and the serangs have to take the men who would work under them. Certain serangs have one or two relatives and they take them. All the serangs have not got relatives to be employed as seamen. Even if a recruitment committee was appointed the serangs might be given the privilege of taking one or two of their relatives as seamen. But so far as efficiency is concerned under the proposed method the most efficient crew will be employed. From the discipline point of view also the public employment bureau will be a better method.

E-1197. Is there any office in Calcutta where there is an open muster of seamen from which they are employed?—Serangs and quartermasters are sometimes selected in this way but not the seamen.

E-1198. We are told that unions argue that brokers and ghat serangs accept bribes and generally exploit the seamen. Have you urged that as a union?—That is what we have been saying. That is a fact.

E-1199. Have you ever made representations to the British India Steam Navigation Company in regard to this question?—Yes, we have done so.

E-1200. Have you had cases that have been enquired into?—There was recently one case and we reported it to the company. We have been asked to send the man concerned and we have had no report of it.

E-1201. Have you made any representations before that?—I have already said that we made representations on this question and we were asked to produce the men to give evidence. We asked for an undertaking not to victimize the men concerned. Since no such undertaking was forthcoming we did not send our men.

E-1202. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I take it that you have sent up only one case. Have you sent up more than one?—The one case that we have sent up is not a case of bribery. It is a case in which an officer is concerned. So far as cases of bribery and corruption are concerned unless we get a clear undertaking not to victimize the men we are not going to send our men merely to be victimized.

E-1203. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to workmen's compensation I am told that the Commissioner for workmen's compensation summoned a meeting of shipping representatives with a view to discussing the question as to the amount that should be allowed for the cash value of the lascars' board and lodging. Has the Commissioner for compensation consulted your union on this question?—The amount was fixed in consultation with us. But we are not complaining about that. What we want is that there should not be a long delay in the payment of compensation. We should not be compelled to approach the employers first.

E-1204. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Have you instituted any enquiries with regard to the indebtedness of the lascars?—(*Mr. Hug*) They are very heavily indebted because they have to stay in lodgings for a very long time waiting to be employed. In order to alleviate their indebtedness we contemplate starting a Labour Bank, a sort of Mutual Benefit Bank. We have the rules ready and when it is put in operation we hope to alleviate the financial difficulties of the seamen to some extent.

E-1205. Have you approached any of the shipping employers to help you in this matter?—We contemplate doing that very soon.

E-1206. Is indebtedness among seamen a very serious matter?—It is a life and death problem. They are always in the clutches of the *Kabuli* money-lenders who take exorbitant rates of interest from them.

E-1207. Have you heard of any shipping company which has started a co-operative credit society for the benefit of lascars?—No, not to my knowledge.

E-1208. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In the memorandum submitted by the Indian Quartermasters' Union they say: "Unfortunately the Calcutta Corporation instead of helping, try to exact taxes as much as they can from the union". What taxes do the Calcutta Corporation levy on the union?—I do not agree with that statement.

E-1209. In your memorandum you definitely say that "the British India Steam Navigation Company engages seamen direct through their Ghat Serangs". In his memorandum Captain Liddle says that the seamen are engaged through serangs and that "the ghat serangs have no influence in the matter of choice and in no way interfere with selections"?—Captain Liddle is perhaps referring to the engine crew. It is true to a certain extent with regard to the engine crew. There the *ghat* serangs of the engine department have nothing to do with the selection of serangs. But it is not the case with the saloon crew. Unless the seaman pays the *ghat* serang he cannot even appear for selection.

E-1210. With regard to wages would it help the seamen if their wages were raised by one-third?—Unless some methods are found for saving their pay I do not see how any increase will help them. They should have facility of employment.

E-1211. In your memorandum you say that seamen have to pay in an indirect form 25 per cent of their total wages merely for the purpose of being recruited through Government Licensed Shipping Brokers. Is that an accurate figure?—Yes, they have to pay 25 per cent.

E-1212. It is not exaggerated and you say that out of their total wages they pay 25 per cent?—It comes to that, putting all the things together.

E-1213. If you stopped bribing it would increase the pay by 33½ per cent?—Yes, it would. Certainly.

E-1214. And that would make big difference?—Yes.

E-1215. You say in your memorandum that Indian seamen are exploited by white shipowners in every possible way. Do you make a differentiation

between Indian shipowners and British shipowners?—We do not mean thereby that only the British shipowners are exploiting. So far as the treatment of seamen is concerned there is not much difference between Indian companies and British companies.

E-1216. You do not say that one class of shipowners treat worse than others?—No. (*Mr. Huq*) As regards the scale of wages there is a great difference.

E-1217. You do not make any difference between Indian-owned ships and British-owned ships?—(*Mr. Ally*) No.

E-1218. You are only making a difference between Indian seamen and British seamen?—Yes.

E-1219. If you had your way and if the Indian seamen were put on exactly the same terms as the English seamen, do you think that they would employ as many Indian seamen as they are employing to-day?—(*Mr. Huq*) They are employing Indian seamen because they can be got at a cheaper rate.

E-1220. If you put the Indian seamen on exactly the same rates as the white seaman you would expect more unemployment than you have to-day?—Our point is that we must get our wages proportionately, adequately and justly. We do not want to come up to their level so far as wages are concerned, but we do not like the great disproportion.

E-1221. What you really mean is that you want something approaching their terms?—Yes.

E-1222. You say your seamen are very uneducated, but you refer to something which I have never heard of. You say: "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". What particular Act is that?—We only make a comparison to the conditions which prevailed when galley-slaves were employed.

E-1223. You say that provision should be made for crèches. Do you suggest that you should have crèches on board ships?—We really refer to the ports. (*Mr. Ally*) We would like to have on board ships as well if that were practicable.

E-1224. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In answer to previous questions you said that the number of unemployed seamen was very large and that so many as 20,000 constantly remained on the unemployed list in Calcutta. Is that a fact?—(*Mr. Huq*) Yes.

E-1225. If such a large number of unemployed remain on the list, how do they maintain themselves during the period of their unemployment?—(*Mr. Ally*) They borrow from the money-lenders and pay their dues after they get employment.

E-1226. You have stated that the wages of seamen are very inadequate. If they are inadequate how do they manage to effect sufficient savings to pay the debts incurred during their unemployment period?—That is the reason why most of the seamen can never free themselves from indebtedness when once they incur debts.

E-1227. Why do they not seek employment outside their line during the period of unemployment?—They are seamen by nature.

E-1228. They loaf about and do nothing?—They do harbour work sometimes but not always.

E-1229. If they keep on constantly in debt how is it that the money-lenders continue to lend them money?—Because the money-lenders charge As. 2 per rupee as interest.

E-1230. But if their wages are inadequate how are they able to make any savings even to pay the interest?—They do not make any saving. From their inadequate wages they try to pay something towards the interest: I know of an instance where a man borrowed money twenty years ago and is still paying interest.

E-1231. You say that you want public employment agencies with the co-operation of an advisory committee to carry on recruitment. If the number of unemployed seamen is so large, how will the selection be made? Would it not provide the temptation to bribe the employers or the members of the advisory committee in order to get employment? Many of them would, no

doubt, try to get in somehow or other?—The seamen will have a hand in the formation of the advisory committee, and if they find that any member or any officer has taken bribes they can remove him.

E-1232. There is bound to be very keen competition to get employment when the number of unemployed is so large, is it not?—Then it will be very keen competition, but now it is worse competition. (*Mr. Huq*) There will, no doubt, be competition among efficient hands, and the seamen will have greater confidence in an advisory committee consisting of representatives of different interests than they have in the present system.

E-1233. Has the union considered the question of effectively reducing the number of men seeking employment in order to bring the position to a healthy condition?—The union has given its deep consideration to this question and suggest that all old men should be pensioned off and that no fresh recruitment should be made until all those who are on the waiting list get employment.

E-1234. What would be the number of those who would require to be pensioned off, according to your scheme?—It is not possible to give any figure.

E-1235. It will be a fairly large number?—Yes.

E-1236. What will be the amount of pension and who will pay it?—Of course, the employers will have to pay.

E-1237. What will the amount come to? I want the union to consider some practical scheme by which this difficulty can be overcome?—If it is not possible to give pensions, the union would suggest that at least new recruitment should be stopped.

E-1238. Even if new recruits are not taken, how can you expect to have so much demand as to absorb the thousands of unemployed qualified seamen who are already on the waiting list?—We look to the Commission to find a solution.

E-1239. You said that you are in favour, as every body would naturally be, of sickness insurance and various other contributory schemes to which Mr. Joshi referred. Your whole case is that the seamen are not paid adequately and that they are heavily indebted, but in spite of that fact you are still in favour of contributing to these benefits. Where will you get the money?—We qualified our reply by saying, provided some increment is granted to us.

E-1240. That is to say you wish to contribute by charging that extra amount to the employer as additional salary?—Yes.

E-1241. *Mr. Birla*: Did you say that many of your members do not pay subscriptions regularly to your union?—A few old members did not.

E-1242. Does it mean that the members have not got sympathy towards the union, or is it because they are very low paid and have not got sufficient money to contribute towards the funds of the union?—They have got sympathy. Because their pay is very low they are not in a position to pay. Sometimes most of them remain unemployed and therefore they cannot pay the subscriptions regularly. It also happens that they pay up the arrears when they get a job.

E-1243. Is there any other explanation except the financial consideration? Supposing you had more sympathy from the employers and your members felt that much could be done by the union on account of the closer co-operation between the employers and the employees, probably they might be more attracted towards the union than they are at present?—(*Mr. Ally*) If the employers take a sympathetic view of the demands of the union and the grievances of the seamen, we have, no doubt, that things could be much improved.

E-1244. In that case probably you will be able to attract more members?—Yes.

E-1245. Do you think, to some extent, the same thing could be said about the prevalence of corruption; that is to say, if you are strong enough and work in co-operation with the employers you could fight more easily against the prevailing corruption?—Yes; we on our part are ready to offer our full co-operation.

E-1246. On the question of sickness insurance, did you consider the matter at a meeting of your union, or does the view expressed represent your own

personal views?—Our memorandum was discussed at a meeting of the executive committee of the union. Most of our advisers who are present with us to-day are members of the executive committee, and what we have stated here can be taken to be the considered opinion of the union as a whole.

E-1247. You think they would be prepared to contribute towards such a scheme?—Yes, with the provisos to which I have already made a reference.

E-1248. Have you got any practical proposition in your mind as to how this scheme could be administered in case it was introduced?—Our immediate problem is recruitment; we want to live first. (*Mr. Hug*) We want sickness insurance benefits.

E-1249. Is that simply a vague idea, or whether you have carefully considered the whole question in all its administrative aspects?—We have not got any detailed scheme to put before you, but all the same we feel its absence very much.

E-1250. You have not got any practical proposal to put before us?—We have not got a cut and dried scheme ready at present, but we do require it very urgently.

E-1251. While putting forward various suggestions under "welfare work", you mention "regulation of the sale of alcohol including measures for the closing of taverns near the dock areas". Do you suggest that there is very serious drink evil among seamen?—Where there is a grog shop near about the place where the seamen congregate and live, there is every likelihood of the seamen getting themselves addicted to drink.

E-1252. Do you think it is very injurious to the health and the morality of seamen?—Yes, to a great extent.

E-1253. Am I to understand that you are in favour of total prohibition near the dock areas?—(*Mr. Ally*) Some of the Goanese seamen have represented to me, after this memorandum was prepared, that if they do not take liquor once a while it will not be possible for them to carry on the work of unlimited hours. So far as the saloon crew are concerned they are required to work practically day and night. (*Mr. Hug*) That remark applies only to the Goanese workers and not to all the workers.

E-1254. You think that it is not injurious to health to have drink occasionally?—(*Mr. Ally*) Provided it is taken in moderation.

E-1255. But in any case you want to regulate it?—Yes. There may not be total prohibition, but in any case the drink ought to be regulated.

E-1256. You mentioned to Sir Victor Sassoon that you do not find much difference between an Indian and an European employer. Is that your opinion?—We might or might not have found any difference, but we do not want to draw any difference here.

E-1257. I want to draw your attention to a remark made in the book which you have provided us, namely, "History and Developments of the Indian Seamen's Union". You say at one place that "Messrs. K. Ahmed and M. Daud were examined at length by the committee. They urged the reservation of the coasting trade of India to Indian shipowners, and favoured the grant of navigation bounties only to Indian-owned vessels; and vessels receiving navigation bounties must take on board a number of Indian apprentices". Then on page 75 of the book, referring to the interview you had with Mr. Erulkar of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., you say: "The union understands that more is expected from the Scindia Steam Navigation Company for the Indian seamen. We pray a long life for the company"?—That was the view that was perhaps taken by the officials of the union at the time of writing this book, but so far as the present administration of the union is concerned we do not subscribe to that view, and we do not make any distinction between an Indian employer and an European employer.

E-1258. In Indian-owned ships do you find the same racial discrimination about food?—Yes, the engineers and other officers are supplied with better food than that supplied to the seamen.

E-1259. Do you find the same racial discrimination between Indian and European lascars in Indian-owned ships?—Yes. The chief engineer and the other officers are supplied with better food than that supplied to the engine crew.

E-1260. Do they make any discrimination between employees of the same status on the basis of their race or colour?—The other companies do not also make any discrimination so far as the particular status of the workers is concerned.

E-1261. *Mr. Joshi*: Are there any Indian-owned ships in which both Indian and European seamen are employed?—No. Generally, all the ships are officered by Europeans and manned by Indians.

E-1262. *Mr. Birla*: Do you mean to say that you want the same treatment as is being given to engineers and officers?—Both the engineers and the seamen require food, and why should there be a difference in food?

E-1263. Do you also want the same salary?—That is a question of ability and work, but so far as food is concerned why should there be any difference between the food given to the officers and that given to the seamen.

E-1264. Do you confine your remarks only to food or to all the treatment, such as accommodation, recreation, working hours, wages and so forth?—Except wages, we want equal treatment in all matters connected with health and comforts of human beings.

E-1265. You want the same accommodation and recreation?—Yes.

E-1266. *Mr. Sen Kissin Bhattar*: Did your union approach either Government or the employers regarding the seamen's grievances, which you have just narrated, in the matter of hospital accommodation?—We have passed resolutions and have sent them both to Government and to the employers.

E-1267. Did you get any reply from Government?—I think we got a reply that the matter will be considered, or is receiving attention.

E-1268. As this question of hospital accommodation is a most important one did you ever try hard with Government with a view to arriving at an agreement, apart from merely sending them copies of resolutions?—So far as Government is concerned, we have not.

E-1269. Did you ever approach the employers?—Yes, we have been approaching them all along. By 'approach' I do not mean that we go and see them direct. As a matter of fact, only two or three months back perhaps we would not have been even received by the employers, but that attitude has changed now. We sent our communications to the Liners' Conference which is a representative organization of the shipowners here or their representatives, and we never received any reply; I do not think that in the course of these ten years the union has ever received a reply from the Liners' Conference although the union has addressed them perhaps more than a thousand times.

E-1270. Did your communications refer to the medical treatment?—They referred not only to our grievance in the matter of medical treatment but also to other grievances. The Liners' Conference has been repeatedly addressed, but we got no reply.

E-1271. In your supplementary memorandum you say: "We do not get any holidays on the occasions of such important festivals as *Bakrid*, *Id* and *Muharram*". Do I understand that you have to work on all these days?—Yes.

E-1272. What is the average pay of the seamen?—Rs. 23 to Rs. 24.

E-1273. On the question of sickness insurance and other beneficial schemes, you said that you would throw the burden on the employers?—Yes; when we get sick as a result of working for unlimited hours, I think our employers ought to pay us compensation.

E-1274. *The Chairman*: From what you have told us it would appear to be your view that since the Bureau was instituted in Calcutta, which, at any rate, was part, if not the whole, of the recommendations of the Clow Committee, no improvement whatever has taken place?—When the communication of the appointment of the Bureau was made known to us we expected some improvement, but subsequently we found out that it was only a communication and nothing else. (*Mr. Hug*) To our knowledge, the Bureau has not yet come into existence. (*Mr. Alliy*) We do not admit that the Bureau exists to-day.

E-1275. Then you referred to something which has taken place just in the last few weeks or months; what was that?—When things became intolerable we represented to the Shipping Master and to the Principal Mercantile Officer. The Government of India have now taken over the charge of

merchant shipping affairs in their own hands and have placed them under a district officer known as the Principal Mercantile Officer for Calcutta district.

E-1276. I understand that you told us that in 1924 an officer was appointed by Government. It is five years or more since that appointment was made. Do you mean to tell us that that gentleman has been doing nothing?—He was appointed in two capacities—as the shipping master and the officer-in-charge of recruitment. So far as recruiting is concerned he has done nothing.

E-1277. I understand that you distinctly say that as far as recruitment is concerned he has taken no steps and that there is no improvement?—That is so.

E-1278. *Mr. Clow*: He has prepared no registers—(*Mr. Hug*) If he has prepared any he has not shown to us. We do not know anything about the existence of this Bureau except an official communication made in 1924.

E-1279. *The Chairman*: Then you did tell us that you had had some personal conferences with this officer. What did you talk about then if not about recruitment of seamen?—(*Mr. Alby*) So far as recruitment was concerned he said that he would not be able to do anything. We discussed with him grievances like bribery. We caught a few cases of official bribery and wanted to prove them before the Shipping Master. In one case we caught a broker taking Rs. 24 from three new trimmers, and we took the case to the Shipping Master. The case was enquired into, and when we proved it, we were told both by the Shipping Master and the Principal Officer to go to the court. As you know, it is not very easy to prove these cases in an ordinary court of law, and because of this we went to the Shipping Master who, under the Merchant Shipping Act, can report the matter to the Government of India and take official action.

E-1280. I am thinking for the moment of the question of improvement of recruiting methods which was at least one of the objects of the appointment of this officer. This officer receives you freely, I gather, from what you told us, to discuss matters that concern the seamen?—But not with regard to recruitment. He has told us definitely that he is not able to do anything so far as recruitment is concerned.

E-1281. When we were listening to the seamen's representatives in Bombay we understood that one of their great grievances was that too many Calcutta seamen were being enlisted to the detriment of Bombay seamen; they told us that Bombay seamen were being left unemployed because too many Calcutta seamen were being engaged, and I think they mentioned some cases of Calcutta crews being sent to Bombay. Do you agree with that view?—To a certain extent they are correct. When they communicated to us we wanted to discuss the matter with them, and we are still prepared to discuss the matter. (*Mr. Hug*) We do not subscribe to that view because we think that it is only parochial to confine seamen to the port of engagement. There are many Calcutta seamen in Bombay because the Calcutta seamen are paid less than the Bombay seamen. From the scale of pay which we have given in our memorandum it will be seen that the Calcutta seamen are very much less paid than the Bombay seamen. It is only to the benefit of the shipowners that Calcutta men are taken, not for the sake of Calcutta men alone. But if there is some amicable settlement, well and good.

E-1282. But you, as you say, do not take a parochial view. You think that Calcutta seamen should sail the seas the world over?—Yes. The same thing would apply to Bombay seamen as well. What we want is that there should be an open field.

E-1283. *Mr. Ahmed*: What do you think would be the cost of living of a seaman, his wife and two children?—It will not be less than Rs. 60 a month.

E-1284. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do the seamen generally keep their wives and children in Calcutta or in upcountry?—In upcountry.

E-1285. *Mr. Ahmed*: You should give us particulars about the cost of articles of consumption, cost of clothing and other requirements?—(*Mr. Alby*) As they live in a joint family it is not possible to give such particulars.

E-1286. *The Chairman*: Have you ever examined in detail the question of the cost of living of your seamen?—(*Mr. Huq*) I have consulted the seamen who live with their families, and they have given this figure of Rs. 60. This Rs. 60 is only for food expenses and does not include medical and clothing expenses.

E-1287. *Mr. Ahmed*: Will you furnish us particulars in a day or two?—We will try.

E-1288. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You do appreciate that you would have to differentiate the districts in which the families of seamen live because the cost of living varies in each district?—Yes.

E-1289. *Mr. Joshi*: Are the wages paid promptly after the discharge?—(*Mr. Ally*) Some times they are not paid, and the seamen are made to wait for two weeks even.

E-1290. Does not the Merchant Shipping Act provide for payment within six days after the discharge?—Yes, but sometimes the seamen go without taking wages for two weeks even.

E-1291. In that case do they not get extra pay for the waiting period as provided in the Act?—No; the extra pay is not given.

E-1292. Did you make any case of payment after the period provided for in the Indian Merchant Shipping Act?—No, but under the Act it can be done.

E-1293. *The Chairman*: You could bring a case in the court from which you could be sure of getting a conviction?—Not conviction, but we could recover the wages. But it would cost money.

*Mr. Joshi*: They are shy of litigation.

E-1294. *Mr. Tassie*: A statement was made that the reason why Calcutta crews are taken in Bombay was because the Calcutta men are paid lower wages than the Bombay men. For the information of the Commission I might inform that at the time of the last strike of lascars consultations went on between Bombay and Calcutta, and the wages fixed are practically the same for Calcutta and Bombay. As a matter of fact, the real reason why Calcutta crews are taken in Bombay goes back to the war. Are you aware that during the war we could not get Bombay lascars to go into the danger zone?—(*Mr. Huq*) Men were not available from Bombay side and therefore Calcutta men were taken. The Calcutta seamen were never afraid of going to the danger zone.

E-1295. So that during the war all Bombay ships had to be provided with lascars from Calcutta if they were going to the danger zone?—Yes, most of them.

E-1296. Was it not because of that that at least one steamer company said that in future they would always take Calcutta men whether they could get men from Bombay or not?—(*Mr. Ally*) I am informed by the Bombay crew that they had some trouble with the officials in certain Clan ships and from that time the Clan companies have begun to take their crew from Calcutta. I should have been very glad if Calcutta crew were being taken in recognition of their services rendered during the war.

E-1297. On the question of engagement of crews, have you not noticed that since 1919 the Clan Lines, when they want to engage crews, put up a notice board outside their office that crews are required and that serangs and lascars go there and are selected by one of the Europeans in the office?—In the Clan Lines, only the serang and the quartermaster are selected; the crew is not selected.

E-1298. Are you aware that the Clan Lines keep a roster now?—What the selecting officer does is this: When the serang has selected a crew and produce the men before him, he says 'all right'.

E-1299. Is it not a fact that he goes down and examines the *nallis* of most of the men?—Yes, but that does not help the situation in any way.

E-1300. What do you suggest he should do?—We have already suggested that only an employment bureau working in co-operation with an advisory committee can ease the situation.

E-1301. Why do you think that the Clan Line or any other company keeping its own roster cannot improve the situation while an employment



bureau can?—That is our experience. I know of instances where the serangs of Clan Lines (James Finlay, Ltd.) have paid Rs. 200 and more as bribes for getting employment. I am willing to prove it if necessary.

E-1302. Why did you not bring such cases to the notice of the company?—They have not replied to any one of our letters. If the General Secretary of the Union addresses a letter to the firm, the firm sends a reply addressed to him by name and not as Secretary of the Union. When they want to make this difference in addressing him by name and not as an official of the union, it is clear that they do not want to recognize the union. If such is the case how can you expect the officials of the union to go to the firm for asking them to look into this case or that case.

E-1303. On the question of extra men being taken in by the companies, is it not a fact that for a year or more it is not possible for a new man to get a *nalli* unless he brings a letter from the Chief Officer of a steamer that he will employ him?—Yes, but that practice, I think, was followed correctly only for some time, and is not now strictly observed.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

## BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

### SEVENTY-SECOND MEETING

CALCUTTA

Saturday, 8th February 1930.

P R E S E N T :

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bart.*

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*, K.C.S.I.,  
C.I.E.

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLEFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE PORR POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.

I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal  
Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. SEN KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-  
President, Indian Chamber of Com-  
merce.

Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.

Miss CORNELIA SOHABJI, *Bar.-at-Law*, *Lady Assessor*.

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

Mr. A. DIBDIN.

} *Assistant Commissioners.*

} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. L. MITCHELL (accompanied by Sir GEORGE GODFREY and Mr. E. C. BENTHALL), Representative of Messrs. Bird & Co., Calcutta, for their Labour Department.

E-1304. *The Chairman*: What is the scope of the work of your firm; you have told us in your memorandum with reference to the workers employed by you that in Calcutta the maximum number may be taken as 12,000, but I think that your operations extend a good deal beyond Calcutta?—Yes, we supply all the railways and steamer services in Bengal excluding the Eastern Bengal Railway.

E-1305. Your operations do not extend outside Bengal?—No.

E-1306. I think you are the principal firm engaged in this kind of enterprise of supplying labour for multifarious purposes?—Yes.

E-1307. Are there any other firms engaged in the same business?—There are a few engaged in it in a very small way.

E-1308. May I say that you do 80 per cent of the work of this kind?—For railways and docks I should say that is so.

E-1309. Therefore you are able to speak to us better than any one else whom we could call on this question of the engagement of labour for large operations by the contracting system through *sardars*?—Yes.

E-1310. I take it from your memorandum that you are convinced that this system of operation is more economical and more efficient than direct recruitment?—Yes, provided there is that personal touch with the labour.

E-1311. Although your labourers are collected, organized and paid through the *sardars* you, as a firm, retain a real control over their conditions?—Absolutely. The firm's policy in connexion with its labour department is to insist on a personal touch at all their agencies; that personal touch enables the coolie at any time to interview his agent on even the smallest grievance. It prevents any misappropriation of the coolie's earnings by the *sardars* and the staff. Each coolie knows every evening exactly what his earnings have been for that day, but if he considers he has not received satisfaction locally, it is easy for him to interview any one at the head office including the partners of the firm. It is this knowledge which accounts for the implicit faith which our labour has in us.

E-1312. I take it that your system has been developed because the *sardars* are the persons who know the labourers in their village life, and they can bring them together for the purpose of working on the undertakings for which you are responsible?—Yes, that is the reason for having *sardars*. They are really merely gangers. We use them in most cases to pay the labour; that is to say the earnings of a gang on a piece-work system are handed to the *sardar*, but each individual coolie knows exactly what his earnings are. If he thinks he has not got his fair share it is easy for him to have the matter rectified. But that system of payment through *sardars* does not represent the whole of our methods. We have several systems suited to the different classes of labour. For instance, there is the system adopted at the coal jetties which is unique. By that system we actually pay for the contents of coal per basket in cash before the operation is completed. There are many systems of payment. In the case of monthly and daily paid labour the men are actually paid individually.

E-1313. Your *sardars* are really recruiters of labour for your purposes?—And they carry out the operations under our direction when the labour has been recruited.

E-1314. They are recruiters first, and then they are overseers in the case of the workers in their gangs?—Yes.

E-1315. You tell us with some confidence that under your system there are no exactions by the *sardars*?—Positively not.

E-1316. How are you convinced of that?—On account of this personal touch. I myself know each *sardar* by sight; I probably see him at least once a week—except those upcountry. In the agencies we have highly paid managers who have been with us for over 25 years. Nearly all our senior assistants have a record of very long service, and they are in constant touch with the individual coolie.

E-1317. Have you ever had to get rid of a *sardar* for any delinquency?—Yes. We had to discharge one on the 15th of this month. A coolie complained that he had not been paid for the previous month. He should have been paid in the first week. He complained during the second week. The *sardar* actually paid him that night, but nevertheless that *sardar* was dismissed.

E-1318. By strict supervision of your *sardars* and by strict attention to any complaints which reach you, you manage to secure that you only employ those *sardars* on whom you can rely?—Absolutely.

E-1319. *Mr. Cliff*: Was the coolie to whom you were referring just now a monthly rated man?—He was on a daily wage, but paid monthly.

E-1320. *The Chairman*: You tell us that you provide houses for about 80 per cent of those employed in Calcutta. That, I take it, is a force which does not fluctuate to any great extent?—It is a seasonal fluctuation,

which again also depends on the number of men required for work. The accommodation is not always full. It depends entirely on the amount of work which is being done.

E-1321. Supposing you are called upon to undertake some new job up-country where there is no housing accommodation for the people; take, for instance, the case of a new railway being constructed. Is there any condition in your contract as to the housing conditions of the number of people brought in to do that work?—In connexion with railways, when there is a question of opening a new transshipment station, all contracts with railways outside of Calcutta carry a clause that the railway must provide accommodation for the labour. That is the first thing that is done.

E-1322. That is to say, you require the undertaking for whom you are working to provide, in advance, adequate housing for the people whom you are taking to do that work?—Yes.

E-1323. It would be interesting if we could see a copy of a clause of that kind. Will you send it to us?—Yes.

E-1324. In the matter of education we are interested to see that some provision is made by you for free primary education for the children of workers employed at the coal berths. You state that there is an attendance of 58 pupils; that the classes are very popular, and that arrangements are being made to enlarge the school premises in order to increase the attendance?—Since this memorandum was sent in we have actually built a new school house and the attendance has increased to over 100.

E-1325. Whose children are those who attend the school?—They are the children of the workers at the coal dock.

E-1326. They are the children of the up-country workers who have been recruited by the *sardars* and brought into Calcutta to work?—Yes.

E-1327. You have found a demand from the parents of those children for education which has led you substantially to increase your school accommodation?—Yes.

E-1328. Then your opinion would not coincide with some which has been put before us to the effect that in the case of illiterate workers collected from up-country there is no desire either on the part of the parents or on the part of the children for education?—I would not say that; I think there is a demand on the part of the children, but the workers themselves do not seem to appreciate over education.

E-1329. Nevertheless they send their children to school?—Yes, it is a very useful method of keeping the children out of the way while the parents are at work.

E-1330. Whatever the motive, the children come so readily to school that you have had to increase the accommodation?—Yes.

E-1331. Therefore, there is no rooted objection to education?—No, there is not.

E-1332. *Mr. Cliff*: This is a mission school to which you make a contribution I understand?—Yes.

E-1333. Where is it situated?—In the coal berths in Calcutta.

E-1334. *The Chairman*: With regard to workmen's compensation how is it worked under the *sardar* system? Are you insured for the risks?—We are not insured for all our labour. We are insured for 77 per cent and we carry a separate fund ourselves for 23 per cent.

E-1335. Does a claim for compensation lie against you or against the *sardar*?—Against us.

E-1336. The *sardar* is not a contractor in the sense that he is responsible for workmen's compensation?—No, we are entirely responsible.

E-1337. *Mr. Cliff*: You say that the maximum number of your workers may be taken as 12,000. Is that the daily maximum?—That figure refers to permanent labour under the piece-work or monthly system. Besides that there are casuals.

E-1338. When you say "permanent" you mean men who are either paid monthly or paid through the *sardars* weekly?—Paid for piece-work, yes.

E-1339. Does that mean, with regard to your permanent men, that you have 12,000 men employed daily regularly?—Yes.

E-1340. As far as this number is concerned you have 12,000 men who are employed daily. There is nothing casual about that?—There is nothing casual about that.

E-1341. What is the proportion of casual men?—Another 2,000.

E-1342. How do the 12,000 permanent men book on for work?—The system varies with each contract. Taking cargo at the docks, at 3 o'clock every afternoon the *sardars* are allotted to their various sheds or cranes as the case may be for the following day. In the case of coal certain wagons are allotted to each *sardar* according to the strength of his gang.

E-1344. With regard to the permanent staff who are employed daily can it be taken that the men are employed daily on the hours stated in your memorandum?—Yes, but being piece-workers they are not tied down to those hours.

E-1345. What is the proportion between day and night?—Night work is less than half. With most vessels at the docks night work is not at all popular.

E-1346. You give an interval during the day. Do you give an interval during the night?—There is no definite interval at night.

E-1347. Do you pay overtime before 5 o'clock?—Not before 5 o'clock, but after 5.

E-1348. Is it an 11-hour working day then?—It is a 9-hour day.

E-1349. Is it a 7-day week?—There is practically no work done on Sundays except in very urgent cases.

E-1350. Do you pay added rates for overtime to the men employed by the *sardars* who are not monthly rated men?—No, except for night work, which is 50 per cent extra.

E-1351. You have a rate for coal trimmers; does that apply to any one else?—Except for coal trimming there is no daily paid or monthly paid labour which works at night.

E-1352. You say that the monthly workers employed on the handling of general merchandise are paid at the rate of 9 annas per day with an additional rate for overtime. Can it be taken that these monthly rate men paid at 9 annas per day are paid for each day in the month?—Yes.

E-1353. Are they paid on every Sunday even if they do not work?—They are paid a single wage for Sunday if they do not work and a double wage if they do.

E-1354. That is to say at the rate of 9 annas a day?—Yes.

E-1355. You say that the firm assists the *sardars* when recruiting with advances for railway fares, etc.; how is that money paid back?—From the earnings of the gang.

E-1356. How is it deducted?—We aim at recovering it in ten weeks, but if the earnings do not justify a deduction in any one week or a longer period, the deduction is not made. Consequently it may be three months or perhaps a little longer before the whole advance is recovered.

E-1357. You say "As regards labour turn-over the majority of the men work under the same *sardar* for years, returning regularly to their homes at cultivation or harvest times". That makes it appear as if you have a regular labour force?—Yes, I should say 80 per cent of the men come back year after year.

E-1358. What proportion do the men who are paid monthly bear to the total force?—About 600.

E-1359. If you have a regular labour force, would there be any difficulty about making some provision for insurance against sickness?—If a man has been ill for some time he is always assisted by us in some way or another according to his needs. Usually the first thing he asks is to be sent home.

E-1360. I see you do make provision for sickness for men earning over Rs. 25, but apparently the great bulk of your labour earns under Rs. 25?—It varies; I should say that the average piece-work earning is between Rs. 20 and Rs. 25.

E-1361. With regard to the great bulk of your labour earning under Rs. 25 is there any real practical difficulty in instituting sickness insurance so that they can have provision made for them during times of sickness?—Not if it was done in a way suited to Indian labour.

E-1362. If you can make provision for clerks who are earning more than Rs. 25 a month why is there any difficulty about making such provision for the whole of your force?—They generally want to go home when they get ill, and I am afraid any insurance provision against sickness would not stop that desire.

E-1363. If a man is employed in Calcutta and he cannot earn any wages while he is sick, I suppose he naturally wants to go to some place where he is sure to be cared for, but that situation might be altered if he knew he had provision made for him against sickness?

E-1364. *The Chairman*: Is it the difficulty that it would mean keeping men in Calcutta instead of their being allowed to return to their country in order to recuperate?—That was in my mind, and also the fact that one could not be certain for how long they were really ill.

E-1365. You mean that they might be drawing sickness pay even after they were well and there would be no check on that?—Quite so.

E-1366. If there was an adequate medical system in the villages which could constitute a check on malingering then perhaps your objection would be removed?—I think so.

E-1367. *Mr. Cliff*: You say that a *sardar* in Calcutta can earn Rs. 10 or more weekly, and that a coolie can earn from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7. Is the difference in those two payments determined between the *sardar* and his gang?—The *sardar*, if he does not work, in some cases gets an equal share with the coolie. If he works, he gets two shares—one extra share for keeping the accounts for the gang. In cases of very large gangs the *sardars* draw 6 pies in the rupee. That is what gives that increased average.

E-1368. If a *sardar* does not work does that mean he only gets Rs. 6 to Rs. 7?—Yes.

E-1369. Have you many cases of that kind?—About 50 per cent.

E-1370. You say that at the rates the average for a monthly-paid labourer is about Rs. 20 a month. I understand you to say that you do not pay overtime until after 5 p.m. That seems to indicate that there is a good deal of overtime work?—If the men are called out on Sundays, even for a few hours, it means a double day's wage, and the same applies to any holiday.

E-1371. But you say that generally the men do not work on Sundays?—If anybody works on Sunday it is these monthly-paid men.

E-1372. How are the wages paid?—As I have said there are many systems of payment. The monthly-paid labour is paid in the first week of the following month.

E-1373. Who pays them?—The cashier under supervision.

E-1374. With regard to your staff which is employed under *sardars*, who pays them?—The cashier.

E-1375. He pays each man?—No, he pays the *sardars*.

E-1376. Do the *sardars* pay the money to each man in their gangs?—Yes.

E-1377. Do they keep regular wage-books?—Yes.

E-1378. Are those wage-books regularly inspected by you?—Not by me, but by the local agents.

E-1379. Are they always checked up by the agent?—They are fairly regularly checked. The *sardar* keeps the book.

E-1380. I am wondering whether you as the employing firm always check these registers?—The local supervision checks them regularly, or it is supposed to do. I think it is done fairly regularly, but the coolie knows each evening exactly what his earnings have been for the day. He gets that from our supervisory staff which on the previous day made the booking.

E-1381. Does the supervisory staff give the man a ticket?—No, the man is told verbally. The gang is called together and it is told "This is the amount you did during the day, and this is the amount due to you."

E-1382. Are you able to follow that method outright through your employees?—Yes.

E-1383. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: The supervising staff say to the gang "This is what you have done as a gang"?—Yes, as a gang.

E-1384. *Mr. Cliff*: You state "The above earnings and wages are an increase of approximately 50 per cent on those prevailing before and during the war period". Has there been any change in the contract rates for labour during that period?—Yes.

E-1385. Have they been reduced since 1920?—In a few cases.

E-1386. Have wages been reduced?—No.

E-1387. Has there been any change in the rates you pay to *sardars* since 1920?—Since 1920 there has been a 50 per cent increase. That followed just after the war.

E-1388. Has there been any change in the rates you pay to *sardars* since that period?—Not generally, but there has been an increase in the case of pig iron.

E-1389. Does that reflect itself in the earnings of the gang?—Yes.

E-1390. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You say that the managers keep in touch with the coolies. Do you mean by that that the managers know personally all the coolies?—They know at least 80 per cent of their men by name and by seeing them every day.

E-1391. Do the managers talk to the coolies?—Yes, they do. The senior men themselves are in direct touch, and consequently every one below them are even more in touch.

E-1392. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How many senior men are there?—One at each dock.

E-1393. How many men are there to each dock?—3,000 at one, and 4,000 at another.

E-1394. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: If a workman has any grievance would he go to the *sardar* or to the manager?—He would go to the manager.

E-1395. Would the grievance be immediately and personally investigated by the managers?—Yes, immediately.

E-1396. You said that the hours of night work are from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. Is it usual for people working at night to do ten hours' work?—Those are the hours which we are bound to work if required to do so, but as I have said the people for whom we work do not like night work, and in consequence night work is very small.

E-1397. For how many nights in the year do your workers work the full ten hours?—Almost every night excluding Sundays and holidays, some men are working the full ten hours, without any interval.

E-1398. Is not that rather hard?—Being piece-workers they take time off. It is not the same men every night.

E-1399. You say you have 12,000 men. Does each one of them work for one or two or half a dozen nights in the year?—No; the labour which works at night is entirely different from the labour which works during the day, and the number of men who work at night is very small.

E-1400. *Mr. Cliff*: Does that mean that you stop loading a ship at 5 p.m.?—Yes.

E-1401. Does that apply to bunkering and trimming?—No, the coaling might go on.

E-1402. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You said just now that the hours of work do not matter very much with workers who are on piece-work. Does that mean that they can work for more than ten hours if they want to?—No, we do not allow that on account of the loss of efficiency. What I meant to say was that there is nothing to prevent a man during those particular working hours from going off if he wants to.

E-1403. If their earnings depend upon the amount of work they do is there not a temptation to work longer hours and earn more money?—There is a temptation.

E-1404. Do you allow your men to work longer than ten hours?—No, we do not on account of the loss of efficiency.

E-1405. You say that fines are only resorted to in the case of gross misdemeanours and that the *sardars* are responsible for any loss or damage to goods caused by deliberate carelessness or negligence of the men. How many instances occur of *sardars* being fined for such carelessness and negligence?—Very few.

E-1406. The total amount of fines imposed does not come to much?—No.

E-1407. You say that monthly-paid labour is allowed one month's leave a year. Is that with full pay?—Yes.

E-1408. You go on to say: "But men working under *sardars* make their leave arrangements with the *sardars* 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." That is to say, men employed under the *sardars* take leave without pay?—Yes.

E-1409. What grounds have you for saying that they can save enough to carry them over during the leave period? The amount of earnings which you have indicated does not seem to be sufficiently high to enable them to make any savings?—They do save.

E-1410. Do they save anything out of Rs. 20 a month?—Yes.

E-1411. The cost of living must be considerably less?—I can give a few instances of family budgets. Here is one of a family of four whose budget works out to Rs. 17-8-0.

E-1412. We have been told that in Calcutta the family budget for a man, his wife and two children works out to Rs. 60?—It depends.

E-1413. *The Chairman*: Have you carried out any enquiry in regard to the family budgets of workmen in different districts?—Yes.

E-1414. It would be interesting if you could put that into the Commission?—I will do so.

E-1415. Was the investigation carried out by a special officer?—Not particularly. I made enquiries myself. It is partly my knowledge and the knowledge of managers. Here is the family budget of a man of a higher caste who lives rather better. His family budget comes to Rs. 32-8-0, the earnings of himself and his wife being from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per head.

E-1416. The joint earnings of the man and wife are Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 you say?—No, they are individual earnings. The joint earnings would come to Rs. 50 to Rs. 60. In the case of a bachelor or a grass widower the monthly budget will come to about Rs. 15. There is usually a remittance of Rs. 10 sent home every month.

E-1417. *The Chairman*: Would you include all these in the note you are going to send the Commission?—Yes.

E-1418. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In your memorandum you say that the coolie's "level of efficiency does not change." Does it not improve although he has been working at the job for a long period?—It is just a question of stamina. Beyond the first week which a new coolie takes to learn to handle the goods his efficiency remains the same.

E-1419. Have you noticed any difference in efficiency between a piece-worker and a monthly-paid worker?—Yes, the piece-worker is more efficient than the monthly-paid worker.

E-1420. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum dealing with staff organisation, you say that "Many *sardars* are literate but it is seldom one wishes to relinquish his gang and take up a salaried post of supervisor." Why is that?—They earn more as *sardars*. A supervisor at the docks would probably get less than a *sardar* who had sufficient education to do the supervisor's work.

E-1421. *Mr. Joshi*: I take it you are working at the Kidderpore Docks?—Yes.

E-1422. Are there any regulations for the safety of workers while loading and unloading ships?—Yes, there are.

E-1423. What are they? Can we see a copy of them?—I cannot say off-hand what they are. There are regulations made by the Port Commissioners and there are also other regulations made by the Railways under the Railways Act. They are public documents.

E-1424. Have you seen the convention adopted by the International Labour Conference last year regarding the safety of workers while loading and unloading ships?—I do not remember.

E-1425. You would not mind if safety regulations were made by Government?—No, I would not. I understand that the convention you spoke of was gone into by the partners last year while I was on leave, and approved.

E-1426. Here is a newspaper which makes some remarks regarding the conditions of work at one of your lime-stone quarries. It says that the workers there have to work from 6 o'clock in the morning till 6 in the evening for 5 annas a day. The women get 10 pice a day. They go to work from distances varying from eight to ten miles. If they are late by 10 minutes their wages are cut off. They are housed in the coolie lines which have corrugated iron-roofs and each person has only 4 feet by 6 feet accommodation. I want to know whether this represents the state of things there accurately?—(Sir George Godfrey) We cannot say without enquiring into it whether it is true or not. Moreover all our lime-stone quarries are worked on contract. The coolies are very probably the contractor's coolies.

E-1427. If the quarries are worked on contract you are not responsible for the conditions at all?—On the contrary we have a very fine set of houses. It is perfectly true that most of them have corrugated iron-roofs, but the walls are of stone and they are whitewashed and kept absolutely clean so that the coolies living in them are so fond of them that they come back to them again and again. If I may say so, I would not attach much importance to newspaper statements like this.

E-1428. Does your company undertake the construction of buildings and bridges?—(Mr. Mitchell) Yes, they do.

E-1429. Do you observe any safety regulations in connection with the erection of scaffoldings and use of machinery?—(Sir George Godfrey) So far as I am aware outside the limit of the Calcutta Corporation there are no regulations which control the erection of scaffoldings.

E-1430. Would you have any objection if such regulations were made for the safety of workers engaged in the construction of buildings and bridges?—We would have no objection at all.

E-1431. Do you take Government contracts?—Yes.

E-1432. Would there be any difficulty if Government put in a clause for fair wages and working conditions in all the contracts which they give to private companies?—(Mr. Mitchell) As far as my experience of Government contracts goes they supervise very closely.

E-1433. Would there be any difficulty in putting a definite clause in every contract?—I see none at all.

E-1434. Miss Power: In your memorandum you say: "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." What number out of the 4,000 at the coal berths are women?—About a thousand.

E-1435. Are they all wives and relations of men working there, or are some of them recruited direct by *sardars*?—They are nearly all of them wives and relations of men working there.

E-1436. What precisely do they do; are they carrying coal in baskets?—Yes, they are carrying coal in baskets.

E-1437. Do men do that work as well?—Yes.

E-1438. Are they paid on piece-work?—Yes.

E-1439. Do the women get the same rate as men?—Yes, they get the same rate.

E-1440. How much on an average would a woman earn a week?—It depends on the physique of the woman.



E-1441. What will she earn on an average?—The lowest in physique will earn from Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 per month and the highest in physique between Rs. 25 and Rs. 30.

E-1442. Can they normally get a full month's work if they want it?—Yes.

E-1443. They are fairly regularly employed?—Yes.

E-1444. Do the children work with the women?—We do not allow the children.

E-1445. How do you prevent them from working?—We have one of our managers to supervise the work always.

E-1446. You can say quite definitely that there are no children working?—There are no children working.

E-1447. What happens to the small children when the women are working?—Are they brought down to the coal berths with the women?—Women with infant children do not usually work.

E-1448. That has been contrary to our experience in other places. You are quite sure in your case that there are no infants brought to the coal berths?—There are individual cases, yes. But usually some arrangement is made among themselves to look after the infant if the mother is forced to go and work.

E-1449. You feel that there is no necessity to make some arrangement to put them in some place away from coal dust?—I have never found any necessity. If that necessity ever became urgent we would probably do something in the matter.

E-1450. If these women regularly work with you, have you considered any financial arrangement for them during child-birth?—We assist them in the way of loans and advances. We have no standard.

E-1451. You do not give them any maternity benefit even though they have been employed with you for a considerable time?—No.

E-1452. Would you consider the grant of such a benefit to women who have been employed with you for over a year?—There is some difficulty there. Usually when the child is expected the woman prefers to go to her village. There would be just the same trouble here as with sickness insurance.

E-1453. How much do they avail themselves of the loan facilities which you give?—They take about Rs. 10.

E-1454. How frequently do they take it?—I cannot say. There must be one or two cases every month.

E-1455. Do you not feel that a woman who has been employed by you for 12 months or more who leaves work on account of child-birth should have some maternity benefit, irrespective of whether she chooses to go home for her confinement?—Yes, we could pay a share of the benefit if we were sure that it would not be misused. There is that to be considered.

E-1456. In what way could the money be misused if it were proved that the woman was leaving work temporarily on account of child-birth?—It is difficult to prove.

E-1457. Even if the benefit were administered by your own doctor?—That would be all right.

E-1458. You would attach some sort of restriction to the expenditure of that money?—Yes.

E-1459. On your own showing you give these women medical facilities in connection with child-birth only if they apply to you?—Yes. There is one thing which you have to consider. There are caste prejudices and things like that and we do not want to interfere with them. We try and avoid interference with their customs.

E-1460. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is there any caste prejudice against receiving wages for no work?—I do not mean that, I mean medical attention.

E-1461. *Miss Sorabji*: Who allocates your rent free houses to the workers? Does the *sardar* do it?—The manager does it.

E-1462. You say that maternity cases are attended to by municipal *dais* if request is made. By whom has the request to be made?—By the husband or other relatives.

E-1463. Are you satisfied that your workers know the provision as to pay during sickness?—Yes.

E-1464. Are you satisfied that your workers are fully aware of the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act and other industrial legislation intended for their benefit?—Yes. We see that they do not fail to make claims whenever an accident occurs. Each accident is reported and an enquiry is held. The workers attend that enquiry and hear what is said. Eventually when the compensation is paid they come to know of it. The provisions of this Act are well known to them.

E-1465. You trust to what has been called elsewhere "natural percolation"?—Yes.

E-1466. At present the workers are made acquainted with these matters mostly from the destructive end, i.e., by people who point out to them that they are badly treated, etc.—persons who carry on agitation and foment strikes. Would it not be better to deal with the situation constructively? Would you be prepared to co-operate with social service workers like the Council of Women for instance in preparing a scheme for acquainting the workers with the benefits of industrial legislation?—I think it would be a good thing. We have got close personal touch with our workers and it is unnecessary with us. But we do not object to it.

E-1467. Would you be prepared to co-operate?—Yes.

E-1468. *Maulvi Latifat Hussain*: Have you come across *sardars* taking bribes from the workers at the time of appointment?—No such thing is possible with us.

E-1469. When all kinds of workers are available here why do you send *sardars* to recruit workers from upcountry?—Because we do not get here workers suited to our requirements.

E-1470. I think every kind of worker is available here?—I wish they were.

E-1471. For how many workers have you paid workmen's compensation last year?—Fifteen.

E-1472. You say that your workers do not want a co-operative society. How do you know they do not want it?—We do not say they do not want it. We lend money to them without interest and therefore they have no need for a co-operative society.

E-1473. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Do you feel any shortage of labour at any time of the year?—Yes, between March and June during the harvest time.

E-1474. What do you do to fill up the gap?—We send *sardars* recruiting.

E-1475. Do you advance them money with or without interest?—Without interest.

E-1476. Do you advance any money to your workers without interest?—Yes, we do.

E-1477. Have you had any difficulty in getting your men treated in Government hospitals?—Not usually. In one case one of my workmen was discharged even before he was thoroughly cured. I took that case as far as the highest authority and I think the position is satisfactory now.

E-1478. In your opinion the hospital accommodation available near the works is quite sufficient?—We have not found it insufficient.

E-1479. Did your workers ever approach you for aid in connexion with any welfare work?—No, there is one thing which they like, and that is the cinema.

E-1480. How many accidents had you in your works?—15 last year. One was a fatal accident, one resulted in permanent disablement and 13 in temporary disablement.

E-1481. If a sickness insurance scheme came into force would you be prepared to insure your workers free of charge?—I cannot say unless I know of the scheme.

E-1482. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are you perfectly certain that the *sardar* does not take any commission from the workers when he pays them their wages?—Not beyond the recognized figures I have already given.

E-1483. That is what you allow him. Are you sure that he does not take an extra pie here and an extra pie there?—I am quite certain.

E-1484. How is it that yours is the only concern employing contract labour where the *sardar* does not take any commission?—That is due to personal contact with the workers.

E-1485. You pay the *sardar* and he pays the men individually?—Yes.

E-1486. You cannot possibly say what actually each man has done?—I can say what each gang has done. Each evening a clerk goes round and explains to the gang the amount of work done by them as a gang. The clerk tells them the amount of work done by them and the wages earned by each. For instance if he says that each man has earned as. 14 for the day the man has to remember this as. 14 for a matter of ten days.

E-1487. Suppose the *sardar* says to one man that he has been away that day and that somebody did his work for him. Would that be checked?—The system is such that every man goes to work.

E-1488. If that is the case why is it that some men are so suspicious that they want to be paid for every basket?—It is not a question of suspicion. It is a question of the convenience of the particular class of labour.

E-1489. You are doing a lot of dock work?—Yes.

E-1490. You have a permanent labour force of 12,000 and a casual labour force of 2,000. Therefore out of 14,000 men employed on the docks you have got only 2,000 casual labourers?—All those are not on dock work. Only 7,000 are permanent labourers on dock work.

E-1491. You want 7,000 permanent labourers for dock work?—Yes.

How many casual labourers do you want?—In addition to the 7,000 we want 2,000 casual labourers.

E-1492. You get a much better proportion than in any other port in the world. Do the 7,000 work every day on the docks even on those days when you have no ships or only a few ships in port?—I do not remember any time during the past few years when there were only a few ships in port.

E-1493. Your port is just like any other port in the world and there must be a rush time and a slack time and necessarily your labour force must vary. I want to know whether it varies only as 7 to 9?—It varies with the traffic. We anticipate that and stop recruiting for a certain period before the slack season.

E-1494. When the traffic is bad you might only have 3,000 for instance?—Yes.

E-1495. Therefore some of your permanent labour force is casual?—In that respect, yes.

E-1496. They have not got work all the time?—By “permanent” I mean that they are always.

E-1497. *Mr. Cliff*: You said at the beginning that you had an actual daily working strength of 7,000 and that you had to plus it only by 2,000 in the busy season. I know of no port in the world where the conditions approximate to the conditions which you have outlined?—I had before my mind my experience of the past three or four years.

E-1498. If the conditions you have outlined obtained in your port you would have no difficulty in guaranteeing a minimum weekly wage, not the slightest. It is a strange port?—I do not quite follow that.

E-1499. Let us see what would be the picture of the working of your dock labour force. You say you have got a labour force of 12,000 men 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. These men are engaged in loading and unloading cargo and coal bunkering and coal trimming. You say you have reached a standard where these 7,000 men are doing work every day and that you have only to plus it by 2,000 for the busy season. Can you show from the wages books that you have a minimum daily working strength of 7,000 and that you have to plus it by 2,000 only?—We have no figures regarding the actual number of persons to whom the wages have been paid. We have only figures of

the number of gangs employed. We have no definite record of the number of men employed. I took some gangs at random and made enquiries as to the number of men employed in each gang in order to give you a few instances.

E-1500. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Suppose you have to do to-day only 50 per cent of the work you did yesterday, then either the men would only be working half the time to-day or only half the number of men would be employed?—The rates which we pay are sufficient to cover any temporary variation of work. The earnings I have given there are averages over a long period including the idle time.

E-1501. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You say in your memorandum that housing is provided for about 80 per cent of your manual workers in Calcutta. Have you had any difficulty in acquiring land for constructing houses?—We acquire land through our principals and build houses for our workers. The total cost was Rs. 5,00,000.

E-1502. How much per head per annum does the interest on capital outlay and cost of upkeep come to?—I have no figures.

E-1503. You have no such thing as sub-contracting?—No.

E-1504. Do you have the same piece rates both for loading and unloading coal?—We have two rates. The permanent and regular men are paid at the rate of 3½ annas per ton.

E-1505. That includes the share of the *sardar*?—Yes.

E-1506. The casual labour engaged in unloading from the train and loading in the ship is paid at the rate of 5·3 annas per ton.

E-1507. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I gather that if it were possible you would be prepared to give sickness benefit?—Yes, it would depend on the scheme.

E-1508. In the case of a contractor he would simply pass the charge on to the employer?—He would eventually.

E-1509. In your memorandum, you say that the working hours are from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. during day and from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. during night with midday intervals for meals of one hour in Calcutta and two hours upcountry. Do I understand that the workers at night do not have one hour off at night?—No, they do not have an hour off at night.

E-1510. Have you figures of average output and relative standards of work done by day and night?—They vary considerably.

E-1511. They do not work hard at night?—They work much less hard at night. The night work is unpopular with the men.

E-1512. On this question of the number of workers employed you say that you have 4,000 men at the Kidderpore coal berths. Have you any figures to show that practically every day there are ships being loaded and unloaded at the docks and coal being piled?—The Port Commissioners publish a statement every year. That statement is available.

E-1513. Can we get that from the Port Commissioners?—Yes.

E-1514. Will it be possible to get figures regarding the regularity with which the coal berths are occupied, the amount of coal that is being brought down and or stacked or shipped?—They have a regular monthly report on this question.

E-1515. You have 4,000 men at the coal berths and only 3,000 men at the docks. Do you handle more coal than other goods?—In the case of other goods they are actually lifted on to the ships by the cranes and the carriage is short, but in the case of coal it is carried from the wagon right on to the ship and consequently it necessitates more men.

E-1516. The figures you have given are only approximate and you have no actual figures?—We have no definite census of our labourers.

E-1517. *Mr. Ahmed*: You recruit your labour from outside Bengal?—Yes.

E-1518. Is it not because that the local labour is not available for the rates you pay—9 annas a day?—The local labour is not suited to the particular class of work we handle.

E-1519. Do other people doing similar work like you recruit labour from upcountry?—Yes.

E-1520. I am a proprietor myself and I have engaged the local labour for all classes of work. Is it not because you get cheaper labour from upcountry that you recruit them from there?—No, the only reason is that the local labour is not suitable for the class of work handled by us.

E-1521. Out of the 9 annas you pay the *sardar* takes half an anna. Is it half an anna for 9 annas or half an anna for Re. 1?—The *sardar* is paid the earnings of his whole gang and out of the earnings of his gang he takes half anna in the rupee as his commission.

E-1522. What rates did you pay before the strike of 1918-19?—We paid 6 annas then and we pay 50 per cent more now, i.e., 9 annas for that particular class of labour.

E-1523. And you have not increased it for the past ten years?—Since 1920 we have not increased it.

E-1524. You say that a co-operative credit society is not needed for your labourers because you yourself lend money without interest. To whom do you lend money without interest?—To anybody who is actually known to the local manager.

E-1525. Not to any of those 12,000 workers you engage?—To any one of those 12,000 workers who is known to be a regular worker and is in temporary difficulties for want of money.

E-1526. How many have taken such loans?—Many.

E-1527. What is the amount of loans you have given?—I have got here figures of loans including the amounts advanced at the time of recruitment.

E-1528. I do not want figures regarding the advances you made at the time of recruitment. I want to know the amount of loans you have given to people who have been working with you for a long period. Could you give us figures regarding such loans for the last one or two years?—At the coal berths last year we gave loans and advances amounting to Rs. 25,000. As regards loans made to the workers I have no separate figures. It will take some time to separate the two but I shall supply the figures later on.

E-1529. What is the rate of your piece work?—It varies with the commodities. For bags it varies from 3.875 annas to 4.25 annas per ton; for bales of hides it is 5 annas a ton, for pig iron it is 6.45 annas a ton.

E-1530. *Sir Vistor Sassoon*: Besides the *sardar* is there anybody else who gets a share of the earnings?—If the *sardar* also works he gets two shares, one share for his work and one share as his commission. If he does not work he gets one share only. In some big gangs there is a *munshi* or tindal employed by the *sardar* and he pays them out of his share of 6 pies in the rupee.

E-1531. *The Chairman*: I want to ask you one question with regard to the night work which you say is a very small proportion of your loading work. On the question of an hour's break during night are you aware of a recent case where a break was instituted and the men objected to it and it had to be abolished?—I cannot remember.

E-1532. Have you had any experience of the kind yourself?—No, there has been no demand for a break in the night on the other hand.

E-1533. You think that the worker prefers to take his break as he pleases while doing piece work?—That is the actual practice.

E-1534. With regard to bribery, are you confident that there is no bribe exacted from your men by your *sardars*?—I am absolutely confident.

E-1535. Does that lead to the conclusion that where the supervising authorities take sufficient interest in this question and the men know that a complaint against an individual *sardar* will lead to the dismissal of the *sardar*, the men are in a position to get rid of bribery?—That has been our experience right through.

E-1536. In your case it is dependent on two things; first on the will and the supervision of the managers and secondly on the readiness of the workers to bring before the managers any attempt at extortion. You have told us of a recent case where you had dismissed a *sardar* on the matter being brought to your notice by an actual worker. That would seem to

show that if you have the two things together, the will on the part of the employer and the courage on the part of the worker it is possible to get rid of bribery?—Absolutely. Of course the courage on the part of the worker has to be built up. It has to be supported strongly by the employer.

E-1537. My point is that it depends on these two things and with these two factors it is possible to eliminate corruption?—Yes, that has been my experience.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

## BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

### SEVENTY-THIRD MEETING

CALCUTTA

Monday, 10th February 1930.

PRESENT:

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, <i>Bart.</i>	Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, <i>Kt.</i> , K.C.S.I., C.I.E.	Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, <i>Kt.</i> , C.B.E.	Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. ( <i>Medical Assessor</i> ).
Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.	
Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.	} <i>Assistant Commissioners.</i>
Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice- President, Indian Chamber of Com- merce.	
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.	
Miss CORNELIA SORANI, Bar.-at-Law, <i>Lady Assessor.</i>	
Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., <i>Joint Secretary.</i>	

(At the Burma Shell Oil Installations, Budge Budge.)

Mr. J. SMITH, Assistant Manager of Burma Shell Installations,  
Budge Budge.

Mr. J. R. FARQUARSON, Manager, Calcutta branch of the  
Burma Shell Oil Company.

E-1538. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Mr. Smith, how long have you been manager here?—(*Mr. Smith*) I have been acting manager for about nine or ten months; the manager is sick.

E-1539. What staff have you here?—About 2,400 of our own employees; in addition, there are contractors' men on loading work and that sort of thing who would number about 400 or 500 per day.

E-1540. Are your men on piece-work or time work?—The only men we have on piece-work are those working the squeezing machine, which requires a certain amount of quick work: they consist of about 40 men. We know what a set of machines is capable of doing, and we get an output of approximately that amount. In each department we have an assistant who is a European or Anglo-Indian; we have *sardars*, senior men who have been in our employment some time, and who have had a certain amount of control over the men. On the average there are about 150 or 200 men under each

assistant. In each department there are about two *sardars* over 100 or 150 men. We pay wages monthly. We have a covenanted European assistant at all times supervising the actual paying out of the wages. The wages are put in envelopes which are handed by the European assistant to the workmen; they are just plain envelopes. When a man receives his envelope he opens it and checks the amount in front of the assistant. The checking of course, takes longer; it takes about six hours to pay 2,000 men. Each assistant is probably responsible for paying 400 men. The work of paying out is divided up; the men are not lined up all at one time.

E-1541. How do you pay your contractors?—The contractor's bill is submitted to our Calcutta office. We check all the details of the bill. We do not control men in the employment of the contractor except through the contractor. We have absolutely nothing to do with the contractor's labour. It is almost entirely coolie labour.

E-1542. During the strike what were the main points raised by the men?—They wanted an increase of wages of 50 per cent. They demanded settlement of the strike at Tatanagar. (*Mr. Farquarson*) They wanted recognition of their union. The union was registered last week and we have only just got particulars of it.

E-1543. Are you prepared to recognize it?—Yes, if it is representative. The president is Subhash Chandra Bose, the vice-president is Ashami; they were both here during the strike. The secretary is a shopkeeper in the bazaar here while the treasurer is a man in a rice-mill. They have submitted to us 25 names of members of the committee which we only got last week. We are now tracing the names in order to see whether they are actually our men or not. Twenty of the 25 are or were Burma Shell Employees, but as far as I know only nine are at present in our employ; the others either did not come back or were not taken back at the end of the strike.

E-1544. Do you propose to recognize that union?—We have not come to a decision yet; we should like to have a list of the members of the union.

E-1545. I understand you do not propose to recognize the union until you know who its members are?—Yes. We want to know what number of men are represented.

E-1546. Do you want the individual names?—Yes.

E-1546-a. The men would be frightened to have their names shown.—If we could be satisfied by some other means, it might not be necessary.

E-1546-b. If you were satisfied that the Union represented the majority of your men, would you recognize it?—If a very large number of our men are represented on the union, and we think the union is reasonable, and will conform to rules which are reasonable rules, we will recognise them. We definitely must have rules as to how they are to submit their complaints and their complaints must be representative.

E-1547. As long as you know the number of men I suppose you do not propose to scrutinize the names of the members?—Not necessarily, if we can be otherwise satisfied. We have not asked for anything so far; we have just checked up the committee to see if the committee is a real one.

E-1548. As long as they represent oil workers and as long as there is a sufficient percentage of oil workers on their committee you do not insist on all the committee being oil workers, do you?—So far we have insisted upon nothing. Actually all the committee are put down as oil workers except the executive staff, none of whom are oil workers.

E-1549. You propose to accept a non-oil working executive staff?—I do not think we have got as far as that yet. We have only got the list of names. The whole lot are people who ran this strike and refused to register the union. We have come to no decision. We could only get particulars from the Labour department last week and we have not yet checked up the names of the people to see whether they are in our employment or not.

E-1550. There is the Committee?—Yes.

E-1551. What else do they demand?—They asked for a 50 per cent increase in wages and we gave them a 5 per cent increase. It is the same as the jute mills gave their people.

E-1552. Did the strike affect all the oil companies here?—Yes. They also wanted good drinking water and we agreed that they were entitled to that. We have made arrangements to satisfy that demand.

E-1553. You agree that their criticism was justified there?—(Mr. Smith) Yes, in one or two instances their grievances were justified, but in this sense they were not justified, they did not give us an opportunity of rectifying anything which might be the subject of legitimate grievance. I agree that their demand with regard to drinking water was a justifiable grievance. We have taken steps to remedy it. When we have completed the drinking water arrangements there will be eight complete drinking water centres for the men which will be more than adequate.

E-1554. Col. Russell: Do you propose to cool the water during the hot weather?—(Mr. Farquarson) The position with regard to drinking water is difficult; we have already spent about Rs. 20,000 in sinking tube wells but the water has been found to be unfit for drinking and now we are sinking another tube well. We have to barge all the drinking water from Calcutta. Calcutta does not like to part with it. We have relied on the Budge Budge Municipal supply of water for the men which is the same water as they drink in their homes; that is the water about which they have complained. That is the first complaint we have had with regard to the water. We detailed a certain number of men to fetch this water and the complaint was that they were not fetching the right water.

E-1555. Sir Victor Sassoon: What other points did they raise?—(Mr. Smith) They demanded compensation in the event of accident, but that was a foolish demand. I showed them the Workmen's Compensation Act; as a matter of fact we are paying them better compensation than the Workmen's Compensation Act provides; we pay them during the first ten days. They also asked for a system of gratuities on retirement, but that had been granted long before the strike. It had been our practice for years. (Mr. Farquarson) As far as we could make out the demands were written by men who had no idea of the conditions here at all; they asked for workmen's compensation, gratuities and provident fund all of which they had already got. They also asked for free medical attention which they had already had for years.

E-1556. Have you much absenteeism?—(Mr. Smith) There is a fairly high percentage of absenteeism.

E-1557. You say 5½ per cent in your written evidence, but you have a certain number of men spare, have you not?—In every department, though they may not be referred to as spare men, we know we have about 10 per cent more men than are actually required for the work.

E-1558. Do you mean that out of that 10 per cent only 5½ per cent are absent?—5½ per cent is the total absenteeism. In the soldering room, for instance, men are not working all the time from 8 to 5.

E-1559. That 10 per cent is really to relieve other people during the day?—Yes.

E-1560. They are not to take the place of men who are completely absent?—No.

E-1561. Have you any record analysing your absenteeism showing who have gone back to their fields, who are away for illness or other reasons?—The figures that we submitted recently to the Commission are the only figures we have. We do not keep complete records as they do in the jute mills.

E-1562. How do you know if a man is present or not?—We know that from our time-keeping department; a man comes in the morning, collects a ticket and is marked as being present. There is a clock where he stamps that ticket.

E-1563. You have a proper system of checking in and checking out?—Yes.

E-1564. Mr. Clow: Where does your labour come from mainly?—Our skilled labour for the main part comes from Budge Budge. There is a big percentage of upcountry labour, a lot of which comes from Cuttack. We have I think about 30 per cent upcountry labour; we do not bring the men from upcountry; there is a floating population of men in Budge Budge that come from uncountry and those men are available.

E-1565. You do not send out *sardars* to bring them from upcountry?—We tell the *sardar* from time to time we require more men and he brings them. He may bring them from upcountry but as far as we are concerned they are men who may be living in his coolie lines or actually in the village.

E-1566. How long did your strike last?—Three months.



E-1567. In your opinion why was it so prolonged?—It would be difficult to say. They having started the strike, we certainly took up an attitude which was reasonable but at the same time it was probably a strong attitude in this sense that we refused to concede anything or discuss anything with them until they came back to work because they had been rather unfair to us in going out so suddenly. There were a few trade union people present who were stimulating interest all the time and I should say they were responsible for keeping the men out longer than the men wanted to remain out.

E-1568. To what extent do you employ contractors?—We do not employ contractors actually in the factory except in regard to soldering and with the amalgamation which is now taking place that will cease automatically; we shall no longer have a contractor. The men you saw soldering are directly employed by us. The other contractors' men are those who work in the railway siding loading tins.

E-1569. *Miss Power*: Do you allow money-lenders to come on the premises?—No; we generally stop people from coming in but when wages are being paid you can generally see *Kabulis* hanging around outside.

E-1570. Have you taken any survey of the amount of indebtedness of your employees?—No. In a general way we know that quite a number of our men are very seriously in debt.

E-1571. Do you offer them any loans at any time?—No. It has not been our practice to do so up to the present.

E-1572. Is drunkenness noticeable on Mondays or Tuesdays?—After *poojas* after any holiday and immediately after pay day.

E-1573. Where do they get the liquor?—They get toddy from the ordinary liquor shops round the place.

E-1574. With regard to this welfare officer who has come from another company, has he a free hand to make a survey and report to you?—(*Mr. Farquarson*) He has been given a free hand; he has now gone back to Rangoon and has put up his recommendations as to what we should do for the welfare of labour.

E-1575. Is it your intention to set up some form of welfare work?—It is definitely our intention to set up a labour department which will be in direct touch with the labour; labour will have direct access to the man in charge in order to put forward any complaints or grievances.

E-1576. Is it likely to organize works committees or anything of that kind?—The report has not yet been submitted, but I do not think it will.

E-1577. *Col. Russell*: You do not house any of your employees?—No, our labour lives within a radius of 5 or 6 miles off here. It would be rather difficult to acquire land for housing; as far as I am aware there is no land available at present for housing even if we considered the question.

E-1578. Is this installation in the Budge Budge Municipal area?—Yes.

E-1579. Are you not entitled to the municipal supply of water? I suppose you pay rates?—We pay rates and we take water from municipal tanks, but whether we are legally entitled to it I am not sure. The question which arose was not with regard to the quality of the water from these tanks, but it was said that the labour we employed to bring it were not bringing it from the proper source.

E-1580. Where do they bring it from?—Distances varying from 200 to 300 yards from here. There are no pipes. The municipal water is contained in these surface tanks and there is no arrangement for distribution of water in Budge Budge. The municipal supply comes from these tanks which are filled in certain periods of the year, with river and rain water.

E-1581. It is not a protected water-supply?—No, it is only surface tanks. All the drinking water is brought in barges from Calcutta. We have a barge capable of carrying 25 tons a day and it does about 25 trips per month to Calcutta. Altogether about 700 tons of drinking water is brought down every month. The water we got from the tube wells we sank gave everybody indigestion.

E-1582. I see from your dispensary books that there are a considerable number of cases of what is called indigestion. Who makes the diagnosis?—In most instances it may be the municipal doctor who attends here twice a day for two hours in the day.

E-1583. I take it these entries are made by the compounder?—They will have been entered up by the compounder; I could not say whether the doctor scrutinizes every case. The compounder in some cases makes the diagnosis.

E-1584. Then we cannot rely upon these?—No, I agree. The doctor who comes in twice a day is our company's doctor for the staff and he is also the municipal hospital doctor.

E-1585. The whole of your treatment appears to be done by the compounders?—Yes, for the most part as far as this dispensary is concerned.

E-1586. We saw a process in which soldering baths were in use; a certain amount of fumes must be coming off?—No doubt, there are fumes coming off but it is our belief that the shed is sufficiently ventilated not to make it dangerous.

E-1587. Have you ever seen any cases of lead poisoning or anything like that?—No.

E-1588. And the doctor has not reported any cases?—No. I do not recollect in the course of eight or ten years in this place any cases of lead poisoning. I myself have spent a good deal of time in soldering sheds and I cannot say I have ever felt the fumes particularly.

E-1589. Are your staff male adults?—We do not employ women at all and we only employ about 10 or 15 boys who are at least 18 years of age so that practically speaking they are adults.

E-1590. Have you any system of training these young men?—No.

E-1591. You told us that during the strike you found it rather difficult to replace the labour engaged on the soldering process?—We have no system of training; we depend upon getting men from outside who are capable of doing the work.

E-1592. You import skilled men?—Yes. We have a workshop in which we make dyes for places all over India and in that workshop we do a certain amount of training; we employ boys who are more or less apprentices on As. 8 to As. 10 and increase the pay until they reach the stage of earning a fitter's or machine-man's wages.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**S. C. DASS, Oil-worker was examined and made the following statement.**

I live at Budge Budge. I have no land. I do soldering work. I learnt to do that work in these works. I came here 11 years ago and worked as an acid boy. Gradually by watching other people I learnt to do the work which I do, and then I asked to be allowed to go to that department. I rent a house for which I pay Rs. 4 a month; it has two rooms, one kitchen, one living room; I live there with my mother and my wife. My father is dead. That is the whole of my family. My pay is Re. 1 a day and my average earnings per month are about Rs. 20. I spend Rs. 18 on food alone. My income is exactly what I spend. If I work harder and get more overtime work I might buy a few clothes; otherwise I have not enough money to buy clothes. Sometimes we get overtime here and when I work overtime my monthly wage amounts to about Rs. 26, but I cannot always get overtime. At present we are doing full work; previously in this factory there was not sufficient work and in consequence we did not work every day. I borrow money from a Punjabee and am in debt to the extent of Rs. 30. When I was sick I borrowed Rs. 30; I am regularly paying interest but have not been able to repay the principal. I pay Rs. 2-13-0 a month which is equivalent to Re. 0-1-6 in the rupee. When I was ill I was confined to bed for one month and for two months I got no work. What income I have got is always spent. If the work is all right and there is overtime I can earn Rs. 24 per month and can maintain myself, my mother and my wife. My wife does not work; in Bengal our wives do not work. During the strike I went on strike in sympathy with the others, but I was not taking an active part in the strike, and I do not know what were the main questions on which the strike occurred; all I know is that they went on strike because they wanted an increase in pay and a supply of drinking water. Water was being supplied

from a tank which is here. I do not say this but other workers say that though at this time of the year there is not much to complain of, in the summer the water is brackish and it is very difficult to get water. My house is near the works. I come here in the morning after taking a little tea; then at 12-30 I walk home, have my breakfast and return here at 1 o'clock. We cannot eat very much; we always have to starve because of the very poor pay we get. I think it would be better if we had a rest interval of one hour in the middle of the day.

E-1593. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You were asked whether you wanted an hour in the middle of the day and you said you preferred half an hour?—I was not asked that question and it was the other men who replied.

E-1594. Would you prefer to have an hour in the middle of the day and work half an hour longer at the end of the day, or would you prefer to take half an hour in the middle of the day and finish work half an hour sooner?—I refuse to answer the question.

E-1595. Which would you prefer personally?—I will reply to the question, although many men will complain of my doing so. I live near here and therefore I prefer to take a rest of one hour in the middle of the day and go home later; but the majority of the people who have to go five or six miles from here would like to leave earlier, that is to say, at 5 o'clock. They come after their breakfast in the morning and take their dinner at night; they bring wheat and rice with them and eat it in the middle of the day.

E-1596. Do any of the other people have to pay the *sardar* when they have first come to work here? (A *sardar* who had been present had left the room)—I refuse to answer the question. (*In answer to Colonel Russell*) I was ill for a month; I suffered from liver trouble and my stomach was not in good order; I was not properly digesting what I was eating. I was too weak to come to the dispensary and I did not get any medicine. No doctor came to see me from the company; I was treated by another doctor. There is a new market at Budge Budge where there is a man who called on me for three days. I had to pay Rs. 6 for the doctor's fees and Rs. 3 for injections; in three days it cost me Rs. 9. I was very weak but I sent word through my *sardar* and the company granted me leave. The company only gives medicines in case of cuts and wounds.

E-1597. *Colonel Russell*: There are a lot of men on the dispensary books which I have seen this morning who are getting medicines?—Yes, they give the medicines provided the man goes there but I was too weak to go. After working here till 5 o'clock I go to a grocer's shop nearby where I work after 5 o'clock. For doing that if I am in need of any money at any time the man who owns the shop lends me Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 free of interest. If he goes out to do any business he asks me to weigh the rice and put it in bags. I do not get any money for doing that, but if I require a loan of Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 I get it from him free of interest. I also buy from him rice but no rice is given me free. I get it on credit. I do not get my rice cheap. He sells at the rate of Rs. 7 for a maund to everybody and he charges me the same rate. I am very tired at the end of the day after my work and it is against my will that I work at the grocer's shop.

(The witness withdrew.)

**Mr. J. SMITH, Assistant Manager of the Burma Shell Installation,  
Budge Budge (re-called for further examination).**

E-1598. *Colonel Russell*: This man who has just been before us said he had been ill for one month and was too weak to go to the dispensary for medicine. Have you any arrangement by which your doctor goes to see the men if they are too weak to come?—No. We generally advise them to go to the municipal hospital, but we find it very difficult to induce them to go there; they prefer their local attendant with his quack methods.

E-1599. Are you considering any scheme by which men might be given medical attendance in such circumstances?—Yes; that is part of this welfare scheme that we are now considering. There have been various schemes

submitted from the Bombay and Karachi branches running into a few lakhs of rupees which would include that. At present we have no such arrangement, but if our attention is drawn to a case we may arrange for the doctor to go.

(The witness withdrew.)

**(At the Caledonian Jute Mills Company, Limited.)**

**Mr. J. SIME, Managing Director, Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co. and  
Mr. G. GORRIE, Manager, Caledonian Jute Mills Company, Ltd.**

E-1600. *The Chairman:* Mr. Sime, I understand that you have very long experience of the jute mill industry. How long does it cover?—*(Mr. Sime)* It covers a very long period. I have been working in the jute mills all my life. I was born in Dundee where my grandfather was owning jute mills.

E-1601. You yourself had experience in Dundee before you came out here?—Yes.

E-1602. When did you come to India?—In 1903.

E-1603. Then you have 27 years' experience here. Has it all been in connexion with this mill?—No. This mill was only built in 1914. Before I became the works manager of this mill in 1916 I was working in the Budge Budge Jute Mill as manager.

E-1604. Has all your experience in the jute mills been concerned with the split-shift system, or have you had any experience of the single-shift system?—We had mills working in single-shift system in 1910 when the trade was very bad. It is a little cheaper to work on the single-shift.

E-1605. When did you change over to the split-shift system?—When the trade was good.

E-1606. And you have been on the split-shift system ever since running your machinery for 13½ hours a day, starting at 5-30 in the morning and finishing at 7 o'clock in the evening?—Yes.

E-1607. Have you any opinion to give us, generally speaking, as to the hours of labour in the jute industry?—I am of opinion that it is wrong to bring women and children to work at 5-30, and send them home after 7 p.m.

E-1608. Supposing the hours were limited for women and children between 6 and 6, how would that affect your shift system?—If trade was very bad the shift-system would disappear. Here there is a limitation of adult labour, but there is no limitation of adult labour, I think, at Home.

E-1609. The effect of limiting woman's labour, as you know, in the textile industries at home was automatically to limit man's labour except in small cases of overtime where a particular department run by the men could work independently. It would have the same effect here, I imagine?—I am a little doubtful. Certainly, it would not have the same effect if the mills were making money.

E-1610. How is that?—They will discontinue the use of women and children.

E-1611. They would have men entirely in the spinning and in the preparatory processes?—If the mills were making money they would.

E-1612. But still your main point is that the present day is too long to bring women and children away from their homes?—Yes. I think more attention should be paid to their home life. I may be wrong, but I think they should have some time in their own homes. In the old days when we were working without electric lights there was not so much discontent as there is to-day.

E-1613. You were limited by daylight?—Yes.

E-1614. Do you have any system at all of maternity benefit for women at the time of child-birth?—*(Mr. Gorrie)* Yes, Rs. 2-4-0 a week up to a maximum period of seven weeks.

E-1615. I understand that the institution of maternity benefits was part of the settlement of the strike of last year, and I suppose you held yourself bound by the signature of the Jute Mills Association. True, it was only agreed that they would favourably consider the institution of maternity benefits, but have you got any written rules on which to go?—Yes.

E-1616. Was any suggestion sent out by the Association following the settlement as to the lines, or was it left entirely to each individual mill or groups of mills?—I do not know; we got instructions from the head office of our agents.

E-1617. I am rather anxious to know what exactly happened in pursuance of the terms of the settlement of the strike, whether there was a uniform policy with regard to maternity benefit; for instance, does it depend upon a woman having worked six or twelve months in the mill prior to the birth of the child?—We have limited the period to six months.

(A copy of the rules of maternity benefit scheme was handed in.)

E-1618. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is this universal in all jute mills?—Yes, I think so.

E-1619. *Mr. Tassie*: Your Association do not lay down rules for all the mills; each group decides for itself?—Yes. A woman employed six months before child-birth gets the maternity benefit.

E-1620. I think some mills have restricted the period of previous employment to one year?—May be. (*Mr. Sime*) Here we do not have much migration of labour; there is not much change; the majority of the hands are local people.

E-1621. *The Chairman*: Have you ever considered keeping the babies out of the mill and providing a crèche with an attendant so that they may not be in the midst of machinery and dust?—We have certain rules to go by. As a matter of fact, children over five, I think, are not allowed inside the mills.

E-1622. I am referring to the infants who are under five; the mothers do bring them in?—Yes, in some cases. We have not considered the question of the provision of a crèche.

E-1623. You have got plenty of room here if you should decide to provide a crèche; nearly all your mills here have plenty of area within the compound?—Yes, we can easily do that.

E-1624. What are your medical arrangements here? Have you a full-time doctor?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) Yes. We have also a dispensary here.

E-1625. Is he an Indian doctor?—Yes.

E-1626. Besides dispensing medicines to those who go to him in the dispensary, has he anything to do with inspecting the mill lines?—That comes under his charge.

E-1627. Does he do that daily?—He is supposed to inspect the lines. The engineer is the man in charge of sanitary arrangements.

E-1628. And the doctor goes looking out for hidden cases of illness?—Yes.

E-1629. Do you have epidemics here? How do you stand in respect of cholera in recent years?—(*Mr. Sime*) There has not been any epidemic here in recent years. We find that the local Bengalis are much cleaner than the upcountry men, so much so that sometimes the Bengali labourer will not bathe in the same tank with the Hindustani labourer.

E-1630. *Mr. Tassie*: Does your doctor also attend to your people living in the *bustis*?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) If cases are reported we send our doctor.

E-1631. *The Chairman*: You are not troubled, I gather, having so much local labour, with the annual migration during harvest that takes place with the upcountry people?—A certain number of Bengali labourers go away to attend to their fields at the harvest time, from the end of October till about the beginning of February; they are mostly weavers.

E-1632. *Sir Alexander Murray*: That is to say, your Bengali weavers of whom you have a good few, go to attend to their crops at the sowing time and the harvesting time?—Yes.

E-1633. Where do you get your *badlis* from?—It is not sufficient to cause any disturbance to the mill. The only time we are rather short of labour is about the month of December. But even then it is not so bad as to

cause trouble. (*Mr. Sime*) The real truth is that there is surplus labour in the double shift. There are more hands than there should be, and we know that all are not working. We also know that the *sardars* and others get a share on account of this surplus labour.

E-1634. You take that for an accepted fact?—Yes.

E-1634-a. But is not the share of the *sardars* considerably more under your split-shift system than it would be under a single-shift? Do they not have a greater chance of showing favouritism in the matter of allocation of jobs?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) Yes, but the company is paying for the surplus labour; it does not in any way affect the workers. As long as the workers are not harassed there is no necessity for our interference.

E-1635. You have actually 25 per cent more labour than is required to run the show?—I think it will be 10 per cent.

E-1636. You may have 10 per cent of the names on your books who actually do not exist as far as working is concerned and that money goes somewhere?—Yes; it is divided amongst the *baboos* and the *sardars*, and the man who is doing two men's job.

E-1637. You have never considered the possibility of making an effort to get rid of that?—(*Mr. Sime*) We have considered it but we think it is not possible to get rid of it entirely. For instance, I once told a *baboo* "You have plenty of hands to keep the mills going, but do not be too greedy."

E-1638. Have you ever dismissed any one for overgreediness?—Yes, we have, in some cases.

E-1639. Do the workers themselves ever complain?—(*Mr. Gorrie*) Generally not.

E-1640. I take it that the *sardars* are unanimous in favour of the split-shift system?—Surely they are. The Bengalis themselves are in favour of the system because they get a long break in the middle of the day. For instance, some of them have to go down to Budge Budge for their meals. If there is no break of 3½ hours in the middle of the day, they cannot go home for food.

E-1641. If the *sardars* are unanimously in favour of the split-shift system, the workers would hardly have any independent vote on the matter, would they?—I do not know. This did not prove to be the case during the general strike.

E-1642. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Who pays the wages to your workers?—(*Mr. Sime*) A European assistant.

E-1643. Will you tell us what was the cause of your last strike?—I think the jute mills up the river are to be blamed. They only paid two pice more for working for five days instead of for four days. But so far as we were concerned it became purely a political business.

E-1644. Do you say that up the river the mills only paid two pice more for working for five days?—Some of them did.

E-1645. Are you speaking of the single-shift?—No; I am speaking of the double-shift.

E-1646. You mean to say that they tried to get the workers to go on to a five-day working without making allowance for *khorki*?—So we hear.

E-1647. You do not know definitely?—I was not here then.

E-1648. You have no personal knowledge?—No.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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**Mr. KRISHNA CHUNDER RAY CHAUDHURI, President of the Kankinarah Labour Union.**

E-1649. *The Chairman*: What is the present membership of your union?—It is just a little over 1,000.

E-1650. Does the membership vary?—During a period of strike it increases, and during a period of no strike it decreases.

E-1651. What was the number of your members in the last return?—The number was 776.

E-1652. What amount does that represent in subscriptions for the same year?—We had an opening balance of Rs. 410 and we received as subscriptions Rs. 228-12-0.

E-1653. What is the area covered by your union?—We primarily cover the municipal area of Bhatpara with about 12 or 13 mills.

E-1654. There are 50,000 mill hands in that area, I understand?—Yes.

E-1655. So your union has a membership of 1,000 out of those 50,000 mill hands in that area?—Yes.

E-1656. As to your executive committee how far is that composed of actual workers in the mill?—With the exception of myself and two others the rest are all present mill hands.

E-1657. You yourself, I think, have not had actual experience inside the jute mills?—No.

E-1658. Is the secretary an actual worker in the mill?—There are two secretaries who are not workers.

E-1659. What is the size of your executive committee?—Sixteen.

E-1660. I take it then that the executive committee is the real working body of the union?—Yes.

E-1661. Dealing with the question of bribery and the alleged exactions of the *sardars*, exactly what steps has your union taken, and with what success, to abolish or diminish this system?—For the first two or three years of the existence of our union we concentrated on that one point alone, that is, to stamp out bribery and corruption, and what we did was to get the weavers of certain mills to send a petition with their thumb impressions. In this particular case there were about 260 weavers who put their thumb impressions on a petition addressed to the manager of a particular mill complaining of exactions made by the *sardar* of that mill in that area.

E-1662. Have you in any single mill been successful in stopping bribery?—Yes, we have been very successful in Megna Jute Mill where there was a strike by the weavers because they could not tolerate the exactions of the *sardar*.

E-1663. And are you convinced that in that mill there is now no such system?—What the manager did was to send for the *sardar* in the presence of the weavers and ask the weavers to confront the *sardar*, and when he was satisfied that the weavers' allegations were well founded, he dismissed the *sardar*, and he went so far as to give a chance to the weavers to select their own headman, and he accepted the selection made by the weavers.

E-1664. Would you say that where there is sufficient courage on the part of the workmen to resist this system, combined with the good will on the part of the employers, it is possible to wipe it out entirely?—To some extent, with this exception, that sometimes one or two of the supervising staff are in league with the *sardar*. In that case it is difficult to do anything.

E-1665. I am assuming the good will of the manager, the head of the mill, and the determination on the part of the workers. Do you think that given those two things it is then possible entirely to wipe out this system?—It will not be possible to entirely wipe it out, but it is possible to reduce it to a very appreciable extent.

E-1666. *Mr. Cliff*: Are you speaking of all classes of labour or just the *sardars* over the weavers?—The bribery is more rampant in the weaving section than in the other section.

E-1667. *The Chairman*: Do you have any *sardars* in your union?—Yes, one of our vice-presidents is a *sardar*.

E-1668. You make some reference to the contact of the workers with their village homes, and you speak in terms of appreciation of the fact of very frequent contact with their village homes and their periodical resort to pastoral occupations. That would appear as if you approve of the custom of the workmen taking a periodical holiday in their villages?—Yes.

E-1669. Then you are not an advocate of the jute mill worker becoming a complete industrialist?—Not by any means.

E-1670. Because your preceding statement might have been doubtful wherein you refer to Indian labour "when and if it settles down in different mill centres"?—We cannot resist it; they might settle down some day.

E-1671. You believe it is a good thing for the workers to keep their contact with their villages?—Yes.

E-1672. *Miss Power*: But later on you say you wish "to discourage long absence in village homes"?—I mean long absences.

E-1673. *The Chairman*: You wish to see that the workers who return for one or two months a year to their village homes and then come back again to the same mill should be treated as continuous workers and not as new comers?—Yes.

E-1674. *Mr. Cliff*: Does that mean that you desire the workers to have annual leave?—Yes, if they did not get it by voluntary arrangement some steps might be taken to give them one or two months leave because they are pastoral people and happier at home and come back fit.

E-1675. *The Chairman*: Your point is that it should be recognized system of leave and not treated as absenteeism?—Yes.

E-1676. That is to say, the proper leave should be asked for and given in case of desire to return for a reasonable period to the village?—Yes.

E-1677. You make a reference to a suggestion of joint works committees as being possible and suitable in the jute industry. Has your union ever put before a particular mill or group of mills a definite proposal to co-operate in the formation of joint works committees?—Yes.

E-1678. Have you ever tried to induce a particular mill or group of mills to make an experiment in this system with your co-operation?—I wrote to the President of the Indian Jute Mill Association.

E-1679. I am asking whether in a limited definite sphere you have ever tried, within the area where your membership is strongest, to put a definite proposal forward?—We tried that in the Anglo-India Jute Mill, which is the nearest to us.

E-1680. What was the reply of the authorities?—They did not give serious thought to it. They said "it is a good thing." I think if the Jute Mills Association give their members a mandate they might give it a trial.

E-1681. I understand the Jute Mills Association never gives a mandate?—No.

E-1682. Therefore, I am putting this question in a limited and definite form—whether you have ever asked a particular group of mills who might be willing to make an experiment to co-operate with you in that direction?—We tried it with the Anglo-India Jute Mill, but could not succeed because we found that they had no experience of works committees, and secondly, that they did not seem to appreciate it.

E-1683. I thought you said just now that they received the suggestion rather favourably?—They received it favourably just because they found that Government spent a lot of time over it in drafting a scheme of works' committees. They expressed some sort of satisfaction, but they never meant to take any serious steps about it.

E-1684. You would not expect that a thing of that kind would come into being over a whole industry all at once?—No; we wanted to make experiments in one or two mills and the rest might follow. That was our idea.

E-1685. Dealing with the question of housing you say "Fortunately most of the women mill workers have the sense to go home to their agricultural villages when they are going to give birth to babies." Have you any estimate or figure that you can give to us? Would you put it at 50 per cent or 70 per cent?—I cannot give you any figures, but that is the general information we have.

E-1686. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: When you say "most", you mean over 50 per cent?—I cannot say anything definite.

E-1687. *The Chairman*: Referring to what you call "bad *bustis*" you say "Often they are owned by the *sardars* in the mill, sometimes they are owned by the company". Can you give me an instance where one of these bad *bustis* is owned by the company?—I do not think I meant that any bad *bustis* are owned by any mills,



E-1688. It reads that way?—This is purely a quotation from Mr. Thomas Johnston; the whole of that is a quotation.

E-1689. You do not vouch for that?—No.

E-1690. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: May we take it that none of these *bustis* are owned by a mill?—Not that I know of.

E-1691. *The Chairman*: Dealing with the question of hours, you make some reference to the vexed question of single or multiple shifts. May I ask you directly whether or not your union is an advocate of the one or the other system of single or multiple shifts?—Our union is really an advocate of shorter hours, and if a double shift permits of shorter hours we prefer a double shift; from our point of view our union advocates reduction of the present working hours.

E-1692. You propose to us that the hours should be reduced to 9 hours per day?—Yes. If that were done we would certainly prefer a single shift.

E-1693. There is another rather doubtful paragraph in your memorandum which would imply that you regretted the decrease of the number of children in the mill, but perhaps I am right in saying that you only mean while there is no provision for education?—Yes, exactly, or while there is no provision for any other occupation.

E-1694. You do not as such deprecate the gradual diminution of the number of children in the mills?—No.

E-1695. Referring to the question of industrial trade combinations you tell us that there are not more than two unions of the employed including this union. Are you quite sure about that?—There is another one, but of the same name, so, if you take that into consideration, there would be three; besides ourselves there is a body who have got the same name with two different executives, but they exist more or less on paper, having no membership.

E-1696. Do you co-operate with those two other bodies?—I am rather sorry we do not.

E-1697. Dealing with the question of what you call "constitutional trade unionism" as distinct from, I think, you would say, political trade unionism, may I take it that your view of the functions of a trade union is to deal with practical points step by step, affecting the interests of the workers?—Yes.

E-1698. Not to issue manifestoes with 14 or more than 14 points at a single time?—No.

E-1699. You finally tell us that in your view it is essential that there should be a wholtime labour officer in Bengal with an adequate staff to carry on the administration of a labour department?—Yes.

E-1700. Tell us exactly what you have in view when you make that recommendation?—I have in view something like the Labour Bureau of Bombay with officers specialized in collecting labour statistics, and preparing family budgets. What I am specially interested in is the preparation of family budgets and preparation of a cost of living index.

E-1701. Would you limit it to that or would you recommend that such officer should be like a Minister of Labour in England—a person who brings parties together when a dispute is likely to arise?—Yes, if we can develop that bureau to that extent certainly I would welcome somebody who would arbitrate or act as a sort of peacemaker when there is any industrial dispute.

E-1702. Not to arbitrate. You cannot well have a Government officer to arbitrate. You are, no doubt, aware of the way that the Minister of Labour in England acts. It is conciliation rather than arbitration?—What I really meant was conciliation. I think a Minister of Labour would best fulfil the purposes of conciliation.

E-1703. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You state "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." Is it your intention that legislation should create boards whose business it would be to fix different wages for each industry?—Yes, different wages for different industries according to the needs of that industry, and according to the standard of living of the workmen employed in that industry.

E-1704. Suppose there are two industries in one centre. In Calcutta there are more than two industries, but I will take as an instance jute and cotton. Would you have the same wages in both those industries, or would you have different wages?—It would all depend on the living conditions of the workers.

E-1705. But in Calcutta there would be uniformity in the cost of living?—Perhaps in the City of Calcutta itself, but not in the suburbs. In the suburbs different conditions obtain, for instance, the rents are less.

E-1706. Your point is that it does not matter as long as the two industries are in the same centre? You think that with the same cost of living practically the two industries could find labour content to work on different scales of wages?—In different industries there may be a slightly different standard of living. For instance, the standard of living of taxi-drivers is higher than that of the engineering workers employed in Burn & Co., Ltd., of Howrah.

E-1707. I should like you to bear in mind only the two industries I have mentioned, which work practically on the same lines, and which get their supply of labour from the same class. What would happen if the labour engaged in the jute industry got more than the labour engaged in the cotton industry?—I would prefer an enquiry by a Trade Board into each industry separately.

E-1708. Do you think that different standards of wages would be workable; that is to say, would people in one industry work contentedly at lower wages than those paid in a sister industry in the same centre?—It depends on so many things. Generally speaking, I would say no; but I would say yes with certain qualifications.

E-1709. Is it your point that the standard of living of workers in sister industries like cotton and jute is different?—It is not markedly different.

E-1710. Your view is that the minimum wage should be uniform in those particular cases?—Yes.

E-1711. If the jute industry were flourishing and the cotton industry were depressed, would you still apply the same standard of wages to the cotton industry, and run the risk of causing unemployment by closing the cotton-factories?—But the minimum cost of living should not depend on any diminution of prosperity of a particular industry. The fixation of a minimum wage should have no bearing on the depression or prosperity of an industry.

E-1712. Your argument is that minimum wages may differ in the same centre in regard to different industries?—If the two different industries have workmen having different standards of living; not otherwise.

E-1713. *Miss Power*: Would you not be prepared, as is the case of Trade Boards in England, for an industry to have a Trade Board established to take into consideration the capacity of an industry to pay?—Yes. In the early Acts there was a section dealing with the capacity of an industry to pay, but later on, so far as Australia was concerned, that section disappeared. In the last Act of Australia there is no mention about the capacity of an industry to pay, but there was in the beginning.

E-1714. Do you not think it would be better to start with a minimum wage slightly below the agreed cost-of-living figure, where the previous wages had been extremely low, and to work that minimum up by slow degrees, rather than run the risk of killing an industry by giving a minimum which that industry was not in a position to pay at the particular moment?—That will not tend to raise the standard of living.

E-1715. You are ignoring the whole history of minimum wage legislation in England when you say that?—I said that in the beginning there were provisions of that sort about the capacity of the industry to pay.

E-1716. It was taken into consideration in fixing the minimum wage?—Yes.

E-1717. You are not prepared to take that into consideration when fixing minimum wages in India?—I would rather have a Board even with the limitation you suggest than no Board at all.

E-1718. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In regard to efficiency, can you tell us why the workmen in Europe and America are able to work more efficiently than workmen in India?—The Indian workman is not able to work so

efficiently as the European workman firstly because of his lack of education, secondly because of his poor physique due to poor dietary, thirdly because of climatic conditions and fourthly because of his low standard of living, including housing.

E-1719. Do you think if the standard of living was raised Indian workmen would be able to work equally as well as workmen in other parts of the world?—If the standard of both living and education was raised. We have found in certain industries—in the coal industry for example—that the Indian coal miner mines almost as much coal as a Belgian coal miner per year (118 tons as against 130 tons). In certain industries the output per head, for piece-work for the same number of hours, has been equal to that in other countries.

E-1720. In cases where Indian workmen are put on piece-work, are they able to give the same production as workmen in other parts of the world in spite of their lower standard of living, their lack of education and the other things you have mentioned?—I am studying that point. In certain industries we find that for the same number of hours on piece-work the production of an Indian worker is almost equal to the production of a European worker. I say that given a certain amount of education, a certain amount of training as an apprentice—because at present an Indian workman has not the advantage which a foreign workman has of undergoing a training before he becomes a full-fledged workman—and a good standard of living, I have not the least doubt that he will be able to work just as efficiently as any other man.

E-1721. Your position is that where a workman is put on piece-work, in spite of all the drawbacks you have enumerated, he is able to work more efficiently than when he is on daily or monthly wages?—Yes, on piece-work where there is a premium bonus system he is. It is only natural. I put my whole heart into my work when I know I am getting more money. It is a psychological factor.

E-1722. On piece-work there is an incentive for a workman to earn more money. On monthly wages, there being no such incentive of getting more money, his work is not efficient?—I admit it.

E-1723. You say "The *sardars* have to pay very high prices to the superior officers for their jobs." Does this mean that corruption goes right through to the top?—In one or two cases we find it so.

E-1724. You cannot generalize on one or two cases. Are you prepared to give any proofs to the Commission?—In a particular case of which I heard in my experience of over ten years in labour work a *sardar* had to pay Rs. 3,000 to the manager to get his *sardarship*.

E-1725. If that is so you cannot find fault with the *sardars* for taking bribes from the workmen?—Quite so. It is not however universal.

E-1726. Is it common?—It is prevalent to some extent. Some of the supervising staff are in collusion with the *sardars*.

E-1727. What would you do to remedy it?—Dismiss the *sardars* who take bribes.

E-1728. That is a matter for the management and not for the Commission. It is the function of the management to deal with their officers?—Sometimes they do, and sometimes they do not.

E-1729. Is it the experience of your union that such practice prevails on a large scale?—I would not say it obtains on a large scale, but it does obtain to some extent.

E-1730. *Mr. Clow*: There is an extract from one of your annual reports which you have quoted in your memorandum. From what year's report was that taken?—From the 1926 report.

E-1731. You go on to say that "This was the state of affairs when the union began to function in 1921 and things have materially improved in 1928-29." Does this quotation refer to the state of affairs in 1926 or in 1921?—It refers to the state of affairs in all the years before 1926.

E-1732. Again you refer to the efforts of your union in the matter of the prosecution of the offenders in open court. Prosecution for what?—There was one case in which one of the *sardars* was accused of bribery. We took the matter up to the management and they asked us to prove it.

We proved the case, but the weavers who took the matter to us were dismissed. Not only were they dismissed, but they were assaulted. We advised the men to bring a charge of assault and incidentally raise the question of corruption. The case was heard by the Sub-Deputy Magistrate of Barrackpore and the *sardar* was acquitted in spite of convincing evidence because three members of the managing staff gave evidence to prove *alibi*.

E-1733. It was not a prosecution for extortion?—No, but incidentally we brought this question of extortion and evidence of bribery was adduced.

E-1734. In your experience what is the ordinary amount that a *sardar* collects from those under him?—Rs. 5 to Rs. 15 when he gives jobs. After that he takes As. 2 to As. 4 a week from each worker under him.

E-1735. You give in your memorandum what appears to be family budgets. Apparently the first one relates to a Moslem weaver living alone?—Yes.

E-1736. Does he actually spend Rs. 6-11-9 a week; in other words, is it an ideal or actual budget?—The figures were compiled by my friend Mr. Ramaprasad partly by enquiring from the men themselves and partly from the accounts of the shop-keepers.

E-1737. You suggest that the ordinary weaver spends on himself alone Rs. 7 a week?—Perhaps he is an able-bodied man and he spends much on his food per week.

E-1738. Similarly a Hindu vegetarian spinner spends about Rs. 6 a week on himself?—Yes.

E-1739. Is that on an average?—Yes, on an average. We have taken the case of a few able-bodied spinners and weavers.

E-1740. You suggest that wages should be based on cost of living?—Yes. The standard of living of a *sardar* is different from the standard of living of a weaver, and the standard of living of a weaver is different from that of a spinner.

E-1741. But surely the standard of living depends on the wages that the man gets?—Yes.

E-1742. Then you seem to be arguing in a circle if you go round and pick people spending Rs. 10 and say that the wage should be raised to Rs. 10?—Suppose a man is reduced from a *sardar's* job to a *line sardar's* job, he would not reduce his standard of living to which he has been accustomed when getting higher wages. In the figures I have given the items relating to food are actual expenses of the men per week. But as regards clothing I have given the average cost per week.

E-1743. Is it a fact that the dismissal of a *sardar* for misbehaviour or anything else is not infrequently followed by a strike?—So far as Bhatpara is concerned I have heard of only one case during the past five or six years.

E-1744. *Mr. Birla*: You say that the membership of your union varies from time to time and that during the time of strike the membership increases. What was the experience of your union during the last strike? Did the membership increase?—The last strike was a peculiar strike. It was more or less a general strike. We had no time to invite new members. The number remained the same.

E-1745. Your union was not in favour of the strike?—No, not a bit.

E-1746. Still you could not influence your members to get to work?—There was a good deal of intimidation and picketing going on and although our members were willing to work, it was impossible for them to go to work.

E-1747. Who started this intimidation?—A particular set of men in a particular group of *bust* carried on this intimidation because they had a grudge against some of our union leaders.

E-1748. In your memorandum you say that although under the double shift system the worker gets Re. 1 less than under the single shift system he prefers to work in double shift because he has to work shorter hours?—Yes..

E-1749. Do you think that if the working hours were reduced from 10 to 9 the workers would be prepared to accept less wages than they now get under the single shift system?—They will be prepared to accept any reasonable reduction in their wages.

E-1750. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: By "reasonable" do you mean "proportionate"?—Not proportionate.

E-1751. *Mr. Birla*: Even though it will give them a smaller wage they would like to work shorter hours?—Yes, the local Bengali village labour will like to work shorter hours. You find these people in Budge Budge and Bowrea. But the imported labour can work longer hours compared with the local labour.

E-1752. You are in favour of nine-hour single shift?—Yes.

E-1753. Do you want the working hours for women and children to be reduced as suggested by the Government of Bengal?—I suggest that the number of hours should be six for women and five for children. The women cannot work the same number of hours as men because they have domestic work to do besides the mill work.

E-1754. In your memorandum you suggest that the industry should set apart Rs. 3½ crores for increased wages to the workers, half a crore for sickness insurance and another half a crore for welfare work, on the assumption that the prosperity of the last few years would continue?—Yes. Out of profits half a crore for housing and half a crore for cheap credit and stores. This year may be an exceptional year, but the experience of the last eight or ten years shows that the same prosperity will continue. If by chance the prosperity does not continue you can reduce the welfare budget. You may set apart a percentage of the profits for welfare work.

E-1755. I hope you realise that one crore is not a small sum. You cannot rely on the prosperity of the last few years to continue for ever. If you undertook such a huge and extravagant scheme you might have to stop the whole thing all of a sudden?—I do not think that jute will have such a bad time as that. I do not insist that such a large sum should be spent every year. A budget might be framed and if in any year the profits are not so large as they are this year the amount might be reduced to some extent.

E-1756. In your memorandum you say that almost all the managers are recruited outside India. Is it due to lack of aptitude of the Bengalis for this kind of industrial work or is it due to racial considerations?—The jute industry is more or less under the control of British managing agents and naturally they prefer to bring their own kith and kin. Moreover up to now no training has been given to Indians in this branch of industry.

E-1757. You want them to be trained as they are trained in Bombay?—Yes.

E-1758. Even after training how can you compel the employers to give a job to a particular man?—I do not suggest that they should be compelled to do it, but economic laws will operate in the direction of affording employment to trained Indians. The same thing will happen here as has happened in the case of Indian electrical and mechanical engineers who have all found good employment after thorough training.

E-1759. With regard to *bustis* it has been suggested that the workers prefer to live in the *bustis* instead of going to *pucca* built houses. What has been your experience?—It is true to some extent because in the mill lines they do not enjoy the same amount of freedom as in outside *bustis*. Especially those living with their families prefer to live in outside *bustis* rather than in the mill lines.

E-1760. *Mr. Joshi*: In your memorandum you compare certain conditions existing in Bombay with those in Calcutta and say that in Bombay they have labour troubles and foreign competition. Why do you not expect labour troubles in the jute industry? Is it because the conditions are good here?—Compared with Bombay the conditions are good here.

E-1761. In what respect—wages?—Yes, wages compared with the cost of living.

E-1762. Have you figures to prove that?—I have figures of the cost of living in Bombay, and it is certainly higher than that of Calcutta.

E-1763. I do not want to go into that question unless you have figures to prove the statement. Do you consider that the conditions generally in the jute industry are good and therefore you do not expect labour troubles?—No. We have had strikes, in fact, we had one of the biggest strikes in the jute industry last year. But they are not so bad strikes as in Bombay. There is another point here that labour is not perhaps so organized as in Bombay.

E-1764. You do not expect labour troubles not because the conditions are good but because there are other factors?—Yes, there are other factors.

E-1765. In your memorandum you say that trade unionism will not take root for many years to come. Why do you say that?—This is essentially a Western institution and it has been transplanted on an Eastern soil. It has not taken root yet. It is due to the ignorance of the workers of the benefits of trade unionism. I am speaking from my experience of Bengal.

E-1766. You are speaking of Bengal and not of India as a whole?—Of Bengal in particular and of India in general. There is also another factor, namely, the ill-feeling of the various labour leaders towards one another.

E-1767. If good leaders were forthcoming, do you think that trade unionism will take root in India in a short time?—I do not subscribe to that view entirely. My experience of the last ten years shows that we should follow a different course to that followed in the West. I think the plan followed in the textile mills of Ahmedabad will be a successful one.

E-1768. You think that with good leaders trade unionism on the model of Ahmedabad will take root in this country in a short time?—Yes.

E-1769. In your memorandum you describe the housing conditions and refer to single rooms without light or water. Do you think that the housing in the jute area is good?—It is very bad indeed.

E-1770. Are you satisfied with the housing provided by the owners?—To a certain extent I am satisfied with the housing provided by the owners. But there is room for improvement.

E-1771. Do you consider single room tenements, 10 feet by 8 feet, satisfactory?—Yes, provided there is a verandah. These single room tenements were intended for single workers, but unfortunately they are occupied by two or three workers.

E-1772. Under the circumstances I take it that it is not satisfactory?—From that point of view, not.

E-1773. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you consider that a single room, 10 feet by 8 feet, is decent accommodation for a single worker?—Considering the general standard of accommodation to which they are accustomed it is not bad—provided there is a verandah.

E-1774. *Mr. Joshi*: You would prefer a single shift of nine hours to a multiple shift of nine hours?—Yes.

E-1775. You would like to have five hours a day for children?—Yes.

E-1776. Will it not be difficult to arrange for five hours for half-timers when you have nine hours a day?—I gave only an approximate figure. It should be four and a half hours.

E-1777. In your memorandum you refer to certain legislation in Australia and suggest that certain strikes should be made illegal. You want that to be done to protect the illiterate workers from being exploited by those who are not by any means trade unionists?—Yes.

E-1778. By making strikes illegal you do not want the strikers to be punished?—Not by any means.

E-1779. You do not want the whole strike to be made illegal?—I want the fomenters and the instigators to be punished.

E-1780. But not the strike to be made illegal. Would you prosecute the workers if they themselves went on strike?—No.

E-1781. You have referred to certain legislation in Australia declaring certain strikes illegal. Do you know of another legislation in Australia fixing minimum wages for workers?—Yes.

E-1782. Then there is legislation providing unemployment benefit, sickness benefit and old age pensions. Do you not think that all this legislation

should be there, not merely the legislation declaring certain strikes illegal?—At the present moment I want that there should be some legislation to punish people who foment lightning strikes which have no basis in economic causes. These strikes do a tremendous amount of harm to the workers and not to those who foment them.

E-1783. *Divan Chaman Lall*: When did you have strikes in the jute mills which were not based on economic causes?—It was the case in one of the strikes in Bowrea.

E-1784. *Mr. Joshi*: The Australian legislation which makes strikes illegal is not of the type which you are proposing for India. You do not want the strike to be made illegal?—We only want the instigators to be punished.

E-1785. If a good man instigated a strike for good reasons would you punish him?—I would not make strikes illegal except in public utility services.

E-1786. If a man instigated a strike purely out of mischief you would have him punished?—Yes.

E-1787. Would you also prefer to have other beneficial legislation that exists in Australia in addition to the one declaring certain strikes illegal?—Yes, I would prefer to have the Trade Board Act which is of urgent necessity.

E-1788. Would you like to have sickness insurance?—Yes.

E-1789. If a law was passed imposing a certain contribution on the workers for sickness insurance, would they agree to pay, or would they go on strike, revolt and go out of the jute industry altogether?—They would not do that if the contribution was small and if they were acquainted with the benefits of the scheme by means of propaganda.

E-1790. *Miss Power*: I think you said there were three unions of jute workers?—Yes.

E-1791. Have those unions ever got together and presented a united programme to the Indian Jute Association?—No, not that I know of.

E-1792. Your union has been asking for a 9-hour day. You say that they would be prepared for a corresponding reduction in wages?—I said that they would be prepared for a reasonable reduction in wages.

E-1793. If another union asked for an 8-hour day and an increase in wages, what action is the Indian Jute Association to take?—That is more than I can tell you.

E-1794. Do you not think it would be a sensible thing to present them with a united programme even if you cannot unite your workers in one union?—We are perfectly willing to meet together and discuss matters, but, somehow or other, there seems to be a fundamental difference between our programmes.

E-1795. In other words you are a house divided against itself?—In fact we have given a little undue prominence to the other union which exists only on paper.

E-1796. In your memorandum you refer to the exploitation of child labour by the timekeeper and the *sardar*. I think we know enough by this time about the exploitation by *sardars*. What do you mean by exploitation by time-keepers?—The *sardar* and the timekeeper collude in exploiting the child.

E-1797. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you mean that a child is marked present when it does not exist?—No.

E-1798. *Miss Power*: Do you refer to bribery or double employment of children?—By an understanding between the *sardar* and the time-keeper the child is employed for half a day in one mill and for another half a day in another mill.

E-1799. How does it benefit the *sardar* or the timekeeper?—The mother of the child gives something to the *sardar* in order to get the child employed in two shifts in different mills.

E-1800. You suggest differential hours for men and women—nine hours for men and six hours for women. Would you not be restricting the avenues

of employment for women by thus further decreasing their hours? You do not suggest that the wage earned by the man is a family wage?—No, it is not.

E-1801. You also say that the workers will be prepared for a reduction in their wages if the number of hours of work is reduced. Would it not be a dangerous thing to have these differential hours for men and women thus further depleting the income of the family?—I have not considered the economic aspect of the question. I looked at it from the point of view of the domestic work that the women have to do, especially the married women.

E-1802. Until it is established in India as an economic principle that the wage paid to the man should be a family wage, would there not be difficulty if you imperilled restricting the employment of women by their hours of work which would mean that the family might have to subsist on a smaller income?—I have not given serious thought to this aspect of the question.

E-1803. Have you consulted any of the women on the question of reducing their hours?—I consulted a few and they said they would prefer less hours with the same wages.

E-1804. With regard to maternity benefit do you think that it should cover all industries or the jute industry only?—It should cover all industries employing women.

E-1805. Should it be contributory or non-contributory on the part of the women?—It should be non-contributory on the part of the women.

E-1806. Why are you not in favour of the women contributing?—Because in that case they would not contribute.

E-1807. Do you suggest that the payment should be made in cash or in the shape of medical facilities?—In cash.

E-1808. In your memorandum you refer to the provision of baby clinics; do you mean crèches?—I mean crèches, not baby clinics.

E-1809. Do you think that the maternity benefit scheme should be run by the employers or by the municipality?—It is better that it is run by the employers themselves. The municipality might make a contribution to the employers.

E-1810. In your memorandum you say that "there are two or three primary schools in the locality run on most unsatisfactory lines." Are these municipal schools?—The municipality spends a handsome sum of Rs. 1,258 as an aid to these three schools. The teachers are ill-paid and the accommodation is poor and insanitary. If you visited the school you would be shocked to see the conditions.

E-1811. Until the inauguration of universal primary education, do you think that the employers are under any special obligation to provide educational facilities for their workers' children?—That is what Mr. Gokhale advocated in Bombay. I would like the millowners to do this, if possible.

E-1812. You would like them to do it, but do you think that they are under an obligation to do it?—Considering the prosperity of the industry I think they should spend some money on the primary education of the workers' children.

E-1813. You do not think that there would be any difficulty in getting these children to attend these schools if they were available?—There will be no difficulty at all. Did you not see them attending school at the Angus Mills and in other places?

E-1814. Coming to the question of teachers, we have been told that it is no good opening crèches because the women will not leave their babies there owing to caste distinction and other difficulties. Do you agree with this view?—There is a prejudice like that but it will easily disappear by a little propaganda and education.

E-1815. You do not think that it is an insuperable difficulty?—No, certainly not.

E-1816. *Miss Sorabji*: In your memorandum you say: "Neither is there any system whatsoever of apprenticeship. The Apprentices Act, 1850, has no application to the jute mills." Do you mean that the Act is a dead letter or that it has no application?—It is a dead letter and I have not heard of it except in connexion with this questionnaire.



E-1817. It does not mean that it has no application to the jute mills. Do some companies not have their own apprentice system?—Not the jute companies. The electrical and mechanical engineering companies have it.

E-1818. In answer to a question you said that the standard of living of the workers should be raised. Is it not very difficult to raise it? How would you compel the worker to raise his standard of living?—If you offered him better facilities in the shape of better food, clothing and housing and higher wages he would naturally increase his standard of living. On the other hand if you make him live in insanitary *bustis* and eat the adulterated food sold in the bazaar how will he raise his standard of living?

E-1819. In other words you would induce the worker to raise his standard of living, you cannot compel him to do that?—Yes.

E-1820. I should have used the word "induce" rather than "compel". How do you account for the fact that when workers attain a higher standard of living they are apt to revert to a lower standard of living when they return to their villages?—I admit there is that tendency; they prefer very poor housing at a low rent rather than a decent housing at high rent.

E-1821. Do you think the workers require education as to the meaning and purpose of trade unionism?—Yes, but they will require primary education first.

E-1822. Who, do you think, should undertake the responsibility of enquiring into family budgets?—We invited the co-operation of the mill authorities, the Government and the Co-operative Credit Societies department to institute economic enquiries, but they took no action for a long time. After receiving the questionnaire of this Commission the Co-operative Credit Societies department deputed an inspector to the mill area and he is making some enquiries. I think this work should be undertaken by those who are accustomed to such work, for example, the economic societies in Calcutta, Lucknow and Bombay.

E-1823. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: What are your views about works committees?—I think there should be compulsory legislation if possible for the introduction of works committees in all large industrial undertakings.

E-1824. What do you suggest with regard to workers' housing in industrial areas?—The Bengal Municipal Act should be amended on the lines of the Calcutta Municipal Act, sections 4, 68, which says: "The corporation may acquire any land and buildings, whether situated in Calcutta or not, for the purpose of opening out any congested or unhealthy area or of otherwise improving any portion of Calcutta, for the purpose of erecting sanitary dwellings for the working and poorer classes." In the Calcutta Corporation we instituted a special committee for the housing of the working classes and this is their report (handing same to the Commission).

E-1825. Are you Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation Housing Committee for the housing of the poor and working classes?—Yes.

E-1826. What has the Calcutta Corporation done for housing the working classes?—The committee has decided to erect some sanitary dwellings for the Calcutta Corporation municipal workers near Ballygunge station and another few blocks of buildings in Kidderpore area.

E-1827. What would it cost to house 4,000 hands in a jute mill area?—I think Rs. 50 for land and Rs. 100 for housing, that is to say, Rs. 150 per worker. One hundred and fifty square feet of land is sufficient for a single person, and at a price of Rs. 20,000 an acre it would cost about Rs. 50. Housing for 4,000 workers could be provided at an expenditure of six lakhs of rupees. In that calculation I have reserved 50 square feet out of every 200 feet for open spaces. That would be the cost of a room in a block.

E-1828. *The Chairman*: Would you be prepared to undertake a contract on those figures?—Yes; if I get an order to build 4,000 rooms I would do it for Rs. 100 per room.

E-1829. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Does that include drainage and water-supply?—Yes, everything.

E-1830. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: What amendment do you desire in the Workmen's Compensation Act?—I desire amendments with regard to the meaning of the words "in the course of employment" and with regard to wilful disobedience to some express order. Several cases have been

brought to my notice which illustrate the need for those amendments. A man employed at a jute factory was killed by a train while he was going out to a water closet. Such a case should be brought within the course of employment. A man lost his fingers while fastening a belting to a pulley, and his claim was resisted on the ground that an express order had been given to him not to do anything of that kind. In both these cases compensation was eventually paid as a matter of favour without the case going to court.

E-1831. What are the working hours in Government factories at Ishapur, Jamalpur and other places?—At the Ishapur Rifle Factory there are 43½ hours a week; in another factory they are 8½ hours a day minus one hour for tiffin; in the East Indian Railway Workshops at Jamalpur they are 45 hours a week, while at Lillooah they are 42½ hours a week.

E-1832. Do you propose that the millowners should provide for the education of part-timers?—Yes, if possible.

E-1833. Do you advocate the creation of trade boards to fix minimum wages in different industries?—Yes.

E-1834. Did you go to Geneva as a labour delegate?—Yes.

E-1835. What is your opinion of the work of the International Labour Conferences?—Their conventions and recommendations are very good, but unfortunately they are not all adopted in India.

E-1836. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Your union is located at Kankinarah, where there are twelve jute mills and a population of 50,000?—Yes.

E-1837. How many members have your union?—About 1,000 at the present time.

E-1838. That is 2 per cent of the total labour force of the jute mills in the district?—Yes. Do you want to hear the reasons?

E-1839. No. Your union has been recognized by the managing agents of the mills?—Yes.

E-1840. Do you agree with the opinion of Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., which you quote in your memorandum with regard to housing?—I agree to this extent that I think it should be an obligation on the millowners to provide housing.

E-1841. Do you know that the majority of the jute mills have provided well-built coolie lines for their workers at nominal rents?—Not more than one-fourth or one-third of the workers are so housed.

E-1842. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Can the managing agents get all the land they want for that purpose?—In our particular area I think land is available.

E-1843. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: You say in your memorandum: "The effect of 60 hours on jute mill hands is unsatisfactory"?—I mean that they are overworked.

E-1844. Do you not know that the labourers are very glad to get the extra half day's pay?—If they were, they would not have gone on strike when the proposed increase of hours was announced; the workers said they would rather not have the extra pay if they could remain on 54 hours.

E-1845. *Mr. Birla*: Then why did you oppose the strike?—Because we could have settled the small differences by negotiation.

E-1846. You did not oppose the introduction of 60 hours, did you?—We did; we held a large conference and sent in our resolutions; we canvassed the mill agents and begged them not to adopt the 60 hours' programme without consulting labour.

E-1847. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: You say that the weekly cost of living of a spinner is Rs. 6-3-3; what is the average earning?—Rs. 5.

E-1848. Then how can he live at the rate of Rs. 6-3-3?—Eighty per cent of them are indebted to the extent of Rs. 40.

E-1849. What rise in wages was there between 1919 and 1929?—Between 25 and 40 per cent. There was some increase between 1918 and 1920; there has been very little increase since 1920.

E-1850. Do you know that according to the figures obtained by the Indian Jute Mills Association the money sent by the workers to their homes has increased between 1914 and 1929 by roughly 275 per cent in your district?—That is taking the total remittances sent from any area. Our calculations show that the average worker does not send more than Rs. 50 per annum. The whole of the remittances sent from any particular post office are not sent by jute workers.

E-1851. Three lakhs of workers are employed in the industry and over two crores of rupees are being sent annually through the post office?—Yes, and that gives approximately the figure of Rs. 60 per head. Taking into consideration that that figure includes many other remittances. I have taken Rs. 50 as being the average remittance of a jute worker.

E-1852. It means that the average jute worker is saving Rs. 5 per month?—No; a large number of them are incurring debts in order to keep their families going in their villages.

E-1853. *The Chairman*: Do you tell us that every year he is getting more and more into debt?—Yes. Some of them are paying at least Rs. 3 every month as interest on debts. May I refer you to the Government report submitted by the inspector of co-operative credit societies with regard to that area.

E-1854. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: What is the average income of a jute mill worker?—About Rs. 5 a week.

E-1855. What is the average expenditure of a jute mill worker?—It should be Rs. 7 a week.

E-1856. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Does it cost a worker Re. 1 a day to live?—No; I am referring to a worker, his wife and three children.

E-1857. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: In your memorandum you say that the Indian Jute Mills Association is one of the strongest organizations in India and is in a position to dictate its own terms to labour. What do you mean by that?—They are so strong financially that they can keep their mills shut for six months.

E-1858. Do you not know that the jute mills in Bengal pay higher wages than any other industry?—The Government factories at Ishapore and the railway companies pay better wages than you do.

E-1859. Do you know that jute mills provide better housing facilities than any other private industry in Bengal?—Yes. Of course every private industry is not so prosperous.

E-1860. *Mr. Tassie*: Under welfare work in your memorandum you refer to the benefits organized by the "union". Is that your union?—No; it is the Ahmedabad Union.

E-1861. When you advocate taking recruitment out of the hands of the *sardars* and putting it under the control of employment agencies, do you say that because you think there would be less bribery?—Yes, certainly there would be less.

E-1862. Do you mean that if a man is a *sardar* he will take bribes, but that the same man when he becomes a trade union official will not take bribes?—He would then be responsible to somebody whereas now he has no responsibility.

E-1863. You say that jute is cheaply bought because the cultivators are too weak to bargain. Where did you get that from?—From the Jute Co-operative Sale Society. Jute growers cannot hold their stocks and are obliged to sell to middlemen who can hold it.

E-1864. Then it is not bought so cheap by the millowners if the middlemen hold it. In view of what you say as to Mr. Goswami, M.L.A., how is it that you cannot get him to improve his property?—He did what he did because we started an agitation.

E-1865. Am I to take it that he bribed you with a gift of land?—It is not bribery, he thought it would be a good thing to start a school. It is the business of the municipality to enforce its laws with regard to sanitation. When the municipality approached him under the Municipal Act requesting him to get these *bustis* improved, he said that while the land

belonged to him the huts did not belong to him; but the municipality have power to deal with the owner of the huts or the owner of the land. He is an absentee landlord and does not know what is happening there.

E-1866. When you advocate education what do you mean by education?—I mean reading, writing and arithmetic and technical education.

E-1867. You are not afraid that if the workers become educated they will become too superior to be millhands?—There is that tendency. But they now find that all other avenues of employment are blocked and therefore they are obliged to go to the mills. In the past educated people have objected to doing manual work, but a change of mentality is now taking place which is due to necessity.

E-1868. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You refer to the report of Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., and Mr. Sime. They say in their report: "The profits in the jute industry in India are enormous and the wages and living conditions of the workers are miserable". Do you agree with that statement?—Compared with the prosperity of the industry, yes.

E-1869. They also say that the low wages and semi-serf conditions are of course an inducement to British and foreign capitalist adventurers to extend and develop as far as possible the industry of the Hooghly?—The surplus profits of a few mills have built up the whole industry as we know it.

E-1870. What did your union and the other unions recommend with regard to hours of labour during the time of the strike?—We have always recommended 48 hours and the adoption of the Washington Conventions; that is our recommendation now.

E-1871. In the beginning of your memorandum you refer to the workers not being discontented because they return to their villages?—There is comparative discontent, but this contact with the village home takes a lot of their discontent away because it is a sort of compensation.

E-1872. You refer to resolutions having been passed with regard to dismissals, bribery, fines, etc. Would that indicate discontent?—Certain people who have suffered from those are discontented.

E-1873. You refer to their condition of helplessness?—Yes, helplessness in regard to collective bargaining.

E-1874. You refer to uncordial relations between the staff and the rank and file. That does not indicate a state of contentment?—Their consciousness has grown a little lately.

E-1875. You speak of an increasing bitterness?—It is not general discontent; perhaps a dozen out of 500 would like to be better treated; but the rest do not care about it.

E-1876. Do you mean that 488 out of every 500 do not care about better wages, better housing, dismissals and fines?—No, I do not say that. I was referring to the relations between the staff and rank and file.

E-1877. That leads to discontent?—Yes. I cannot say they are contented with the present state of affairs but they are not conscious.

E-1878. They are not satisfied with their present conditions?—Yes.

E-1879. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You are speaking of 12 miles in Kankinarah?—Yes.

E-1880. In which mills are the relations between the workers and the staff uncordial?—The Alliance and Megna and Kankinarah.

E-1881. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Am I to take it generally that this statement of yours as to the workers not being discontented has to be qualified?—It depends on what interpretation you put to it.

E-1882. I am merely putting the interpretation which you or any ordinary man would put upon your own statement?—Is any man contented with his present condition?

E-1883. Am I to take it that the workers in the jute mills are not contented with their present conditions?—Yes, I would say so; they are not very much contented.

E-1884. Apart from the fact that periodically the jute workers return to the villages, is there not more or less a permanent labour force?—They are not a permanent labour force; they are of a migratory nature; they frequently desire to go home.

E-1885. *Mr. Cliff*: Will you accept the employers' statement that 90 per cent of the workers are entirely dependent upon the jute mills for employment, having no other occupation to which they can readily turn apart from cultivation in their villages?—Yes, I accept that.

E-1886. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: To how many of the members of your union have you explained the meaning of the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act?—We have explained it to a large number of them, but it is a question whether they understand.

E-1887. Did you ever take a vote of the general body of your members as to whether they were or were not in favour of the Trade Disputes Act?—No.

E-1888. You are the first labour representative who has come before the Labour Commission and expressed an opinion in favour of the penal clauses, sections 15 and 16 of the Trade Disputes Act?—I have never expressed any opinion on the Trade Disputes Act.

E-1889. You have referred to Australian legislation?—I have said there ought to be legislation of that character, but that does not mean I am in favour of the penal clauses in the Trade Disputes Act at the present time.

E-1890. Am I to take it you are not in favour of them?—I am not.

E-1891. *Mr. Cliff*: In answer to a question by Mr. Chaman Lall a few minutes ago you used the phrase 'Comparative discontent'. We have been to Howrah and to Bhatpara. Do you think that the people in the *bustis* there are contented?—They are not contented with the housing conditions there by any means.

E-1892. If they are not contented does your union wish that these *bustis* be removed?—We have been at it for a long time and it was through our agitation that Government sanctioned Rs. 700,000 for improving these *bustis*.

E-1893. *Sir Alexander Murray*: But I see that the amount was sanctioned long before your union moved in the matter? In the petition you presented to Sir Stanley Jackson you said that the amount had been sanctioned?—Yes.

E-1894. Therefore it was not through the efforts made by your union?—But long before Sir Stanley Jackson went there we had been interviewing Ministers and officials of Government on this question and finally Sir Stanley Jackson's Government sanctioned the amount.

E-1895. *Mr. Cliff*: You co-operated with the Jute Association, the Government and the municipality for its abolition?—Yes.

E-1896. Do you regard your union as a genuine combination of workers?—It is the first trade union in the mill area to preach and spread genuine trade unionism.

E-1897. I see that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce replying to the Government in 1922 said that genuine combinations of workers formed with the object of advancing the prosperity of the workers would be welcomed by all employers of labour. When was your union formed?—Our union was in its infancy in 1921 and in 1922 it made slow progress.

E-1898. When was your union recognized by the employers here in Calcutta?—About 1927 or 1928.

E-1899. In your memorandum dealing with jute mill strike you refer to a meeting which was held by your union on the 12th March 1929 at which two resolutions were passed which are recorded in your memorandum. You go on to say that "Some of the managing agents courteously acknowledged the receipt of the above but none of them were willing to discuss the change from 54 to 60 hours and consequent change in wages." Is it true that there was not one managing agent who was willing to discuss that question with the union?—Not at that time. We have the reply of the managing agents or the Jute Mills Association and I shall send it on to you.

E-1900. I understand that the change was made on 1st July?—Yes.

E-1901. Did you approach the managing agents of each of the mills mentioned here before the 1st of July?—Before the 1st July we approached some of the mills. After the 1st of July we approached the Alliance and Alexandra Jute Mills managed by Messrs. Begg Dunlop & Co.

E-1902. Were the managers of the Alliance and three other mills approached by you?—Yes, they said that they were considering the matter and would let us know their decision soon.

E-1903. Did you have further discussion with the managing agents?—Discussion continued day after day.

E-1904. You say that the managing agents of the Alliance and other mills decided on July 22nd to satisfy the weavers' demands. Was any offer made before that date?—They were considering the matter in consultation with other managing agents. They thought it was better to decide the question as a body.

E-1905. Was the offer made on the 22nd in addition to the one made prior to the 1st of July?—The first offer was made on the 22nd July.

E-1906. Is it within your knowledge that certain firms had actually paid right from the 1st of July?—They have all paid with retrospective effect.

E-1907. I am told by the employers that an employee has a right of appeal to the managing agents. With regard to the men working in the jute mills how is this right exercised?—When a man is dismissed by the staff manager he first appeals to the manager. If that is of no use he then gets somebody to write out a petition in English and sends it on to the managing agents, who as a rule send that back to the manager for report. But except in extraordinary cases the managing agents always side with the manager.

E-1908. Does it happen very frequently that the workers send a petition written in English to the managing agents?—Yes, they do.

E-1909. Does it happen very frequently that the workers get a reply from the managing agents in English?—I do not know of anybody receiving a reply from the managing agents, excepting Messrs. Duncan Brothers, Managing Agents of Anglo-India Jute Mills in Bhatpara.

E-1910. In your experience do you know of one decision which has been reversed by the managing agents?—None of us here know of any such case. I will make enquiries and send you the information.

E-1911. Do you agree with the employers that unemployment is very prevalent in certain jute mill areas?—Yes, there is very great unemployment in Bowra across Budge Budge. Four thousand people are idle on account of this change in shifts.

E-1912. How long have they been idle?—Since January 1929.

E-1913. How many mills have changed shifts?—Three mills, namely, Old, New and North in Bowra. They had something like 10,000 employees and they were obliged to reduce the number to 8,000. The mill-hands begged the authorities not to go on to the single-shift, but the authorities would not take any notice of it. As a result of this there was a big strike which lasted from July to December 1928.

E-1914. Did they reduce the number of employees from 10,000 to 6,000?—No, they reduced it to 8,000. As there was strike they were obliged to take 2,000 men from upcountry.

E-1915. 2,000 strikers were replaced and 2,000 were reduced owing to the change from the multiple-shift to the single-shift?—Yes.

E-1916. *Mr. Cliff*: Can you tell the Commission where these unemployed in the area which you have just mentioned are getting the money wherewith to live?—If an unemployed man happens to be a Bengali and belongs to a local village, his troubles are not as great as those of an unemployed up-country man. He becomes a casual agricultural labourer. The unemployed up-country men when thrown out of employ live in the *bustis* on credit. The *sardar* or somebody provides them with accommodation and does not take any rent until they get a job. Some of them put up with their relatives who may be working in the mills, and some of them return home with great disappointment.

E-1917. *Mr. Ahmed*: If the workers are properly educated and trained, it would increase their efficiency, is it not?—Yes.

E-1918. If the wages of the workers are increased and arrangements for free education of their children are made, it would help them a great deal, is it not?—Yes.

E-1919. With regard to housing, Mr. Bhattar was telling us that the houses provided for the workers are in a good condition, but as a matter of fact we found them very bad, is it not?—In most mills, the housing condition outside is very bad.

E-1920. I take it you would agree that the employers, without depending upon the Municipality to improve the condition of housing, should spend a little of their money in this behalf?—Yes, if they can acquire the land.

E-1921. *Sir Alexander Murray*: But can they acquire the land?—It is possible that some landlords might place difficulties in the way.

E-1922. *Mr. Ahmed*: In the majority of cases land is available?—It is available at a fancy price..

E-1923. When the employers are making good profits they can easily afford to pay such fancy prices?—If they think that it is absolutely necessary for the extension of the mill they will acquire it at any price, but if it is required for housing they may not like to pay very high prices.

E-1924. *The Chairman*: Is it true that at some places the land has been sold at £1,000 an acre?—Yes.

E-1925. *Mr. Ahmed*: I think you said that no leave with pay is given to these workers?—That is so.

E-1926. I think you also said that there should be a recognized system by which they should be given leave for a month or 15 days in a year?—What I said was that when they return from leave they should be sure of getting their job.

E-1927. You know that Government servants get a month's leave for a year's service, and it is reasonable to claim the same privileges for industrial workers as well?—Yes.

E-1928. I take it that the millhands do not get any pension or gratuity at the end of their long service?—As far as I know, only three mills of which Messrs. Begg Dunlop & Co. are the managing agents pay a little pension to some of their millhands.

E-1929. I take it that if pension or gratuity is given, they will be very efficient workers?—That will increase their attachment for work.

E-1930. To put it in a nutshell, if the standard of living of the workers is increased, if housing conditions are improved, if free education is given to their children and if they are allowed leave with pay, they will be far more efficient workers than they are to-day, which will be an advantage both from the point of view of the workers as well as the employers?—Yes.

E-1931. We always hear the employers telling us that if an increase is given in the wages, they will have to close down their mills. I take it that you do not agree with this view and that you are in favour of fixing a minimum living wage?—I am for fixing a minimum living wage.

E-1932. What was the reason for the jute mill strike of last year?—It was partly economic, partly socio-economic and partly political; it was a mixture of three.

E-1933. Is there any strike now going on?—Not in our side. There is a strike in Champdani Jute Mill, near Angus Jute Works.

E-1934. What is the reason for the strike?—The reason is that some of the workmen of that mill are under the impression that they are not getting the same wages as the workmen of their sister mill in another district are getting.

E-1935. I think there was a strike last year in your jurisdiction and it was amicably settled as a result of reconciliation between the employers and the employed. I suppose that if similar methods are adopted with regard to the present strike, it is possible to put a stop to it, is it not?—The present strike is still under our investigation.

E-1936. Is it not a fact that Dr. Miss Prabhavathi Das Gupta took a leading part in the settlement of the scavengers' strike in Calcutta last year and the year before last and that she was successful?—To some extent she was successful.

E-1937. As a result of the strike the Municipality had to pay a small increment to the scavengers, and the matter was settled to the satisfaction of both the parties?—No doubt a small increment was given, but the scavengers are not satisfied.

E-1938. In respect of the last year's strike in your area an increment was sanctioned and the strike amicably settled. I take it that in the case of Champdani Jute Mills strike if higher wages are paid, there is every likelihood of the strike being settled?—We do not really know the exact nature of their grievances.

E-1939. But you have already said that the reason of the strike is due to discontentment about wages—That is what we are told by some, but, as I said, we are investigating the matter. For example, when the men in Bally Jute Co., went on strike, the reason given by them was that they were not getting the same wages as were being paid in another mill. But when we began to make inquiries we found that there was a difference in one department in their favour while in another the difference was against them. When we struck an average we found that the difference was not much. Unless we make detailed enquiries we cannot express any definite opinion about the present strike.

E-1940. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In answer to one of the questions you said that you thought the mills ought to use their vacant sites for building workmen's houses?—Some of the vacant lands that I have seen appear to me to be more than their requirements for extension of the mills; for example, the land in front of Anglo-Jute Mills Co.

E-1941. For instance, there is vacant site near the Titaghur Jute Mill; there is also some vacant space in Kankinarah Mills and the same is the case with the Reliance Jute Mills. You suggest that these sites, instead of being utilized for extension of the mills, which would give more employment to the workers, should be used for housing the present workers?—As far as practicable, because housing is as much important as the extension of the mill.

E-1942. You are, therefore, prepared to see the mill industry close down as regards future extension?—I would be the last person to advocate that. But what I say is it is better to utilize a portion of the acquired land lying vacant for years for housing.

E-1943. The other day we saw at Bhatpala a number of insanitary *bustis* situated opposite the mills. You have three nominees of your union on the Municipality. Will you tell us what they have done to cause improved conditions?—Two Commissioners are here and they say that the funds at the disposal of the Municipality are not sufficient to enable them to do much improvement in respect of those *bustis*.

E-1944. Have they served a notice on the owner for compulsory improvement of the *busti*?—The Vice-Chairman of the Municipality has already answered that question when you asked him at the inspection of the Anglo-India Jute Mill.

E-1945. But I want you to answer because you have your representatives on the Municipality. I understand that the roads in that *busti* and the drains actually belong to the *zamindar*—The *pucca* roads belong to the Municipality while the *kacha* roads belong to the *zamindar*. The Municipality wrote a letter to the representatives of the *zamindar* whether they will be prepared to allow them to acquire those *kacha* roads included in the sewage scheme, but they have received a reply that the *zamindar* will allow only certain portions to be acquired but not all.

E-1946. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it true that certain improvements were made in that area and the *zamindar* requested that those improvements should be taken away?—Yes; on one particular road the Municipality had placed certain building materials, and the representatives of the *zamindar* said "We do not want these; you better take them away".

E-1947. Which *zamindar* was that?—Mr. Goswami. But this was said by his representatives.

E-1948. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You refer to a better class of *sardars*. Do they also take bribes?—By 'better class' we mean head *sardars*. They also take bribes.



E-1949. Why do the *sardars* take bribes?—The *sardars* take bribes because as you know, *dasturi* is quite common in this country.

E-1950. Why do workmen give bribes?—Out of sheer helplessness to get a job.

E-1951. We have been told that bribery is more common in the double-shift than in the single-shift mills. If as a result of a change from the double-shift to the single-shift, a lot of workmen are thrown out of employment, is the bribery likely to increase or to decrease?—Of course, it will increase when the number of unemployed is more.

E-1952. In reply to one of the questions you said that you were in favour of nine hours a day, while in answer to another question you said that you would advocate 48 hours a week?—While I was asked to make my suggestion with regard to the maximum number of working hours a day, I said that it should be nine. When I was asked to suggest the maximum weekly number of working hours, I said that it should be 48.

E-1953. As a practical man representing the workers, what is your suggestion now that the jute mill industry should do in the way of working hours?—I would advocate 48 hours a week.

E-1954. Have you any idea why the mills increased the working hours from 54 to 60 lately?—They did it to cope with the demand of the trade and to discourage building of new mills.

E-1955. If you reduce the working hours to 48 what would be the effect?—The effect would be that some new mills might be started, but that will not affect the general prosperity of the industry. More workers will be employed. There will be less unemployment.

E-1956. The women, you think, should only work six hours a day?—I am specially referring to those women who have a certain amount of domestic work to perform.

E-1957. What hours do the women at Dundee or in any other part of the jute world work?—I am not quite sure, but I think they work for eight hours.

E-1958. Why do you then want women to work only six hours here?—I believe that in Dundee you have a less number of married women working than here in Bengal.

E-1959. Do you know what the proportion is?—No. But I have seen in the mills at Manchester that the women workers when they get themselves married try to settle themselves and stop going to work. I have not seen the conditions in Scotland.

E-1960. Have you ever communicated with the factory inspector when you found anything done which was contrary to the Act?—As a matter of fact, we have no complaints against any mill regarding breaches of the Factory Act.

E-1961. You have never found it necessary to write to the factory inspector?—We have occasionally written to him on different matters.

E-1962. Have you had any occasion to write to the Jute Mills Association?—Yes. We had occasion also to write to them during the last strike, and before the strike.

E-1963. Do they reply to your letters?—Yes.

E-1964. You spoke about the possibility of children working in different mills. That would apply both to single-shift and to double-shift?—It would apply more to the single-shift.

E-1965. If you get an order for 1,000 houses to be built at Kankinarah at Rs. 100 each, would you undertake to do that?—I did not specify the materials, nor the roofing, but I think if rooms are built in blocks Rs. 100 will be sufficient for each room.

E-1966. And what would be the cost of the land?—Rs. 50.

E-1967. You could acquire land for Rs. 50?—Rupees 50 for 150 square feet.

E-1968. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: What will be the size of each room?—10 feet x 8 feet, with a veranda of 9 feet x 6 feet; we can build, say, 20 rooms in each block.

*Mr. Sew Kissan Bhattar*: I do not think you can build such a room even for Rs. 340.

E-1969. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: If you were able to get your way and have a 9-hour day for men and a 6-hour day for women, how would you propose to arrange the work in the mill so that the women should only work a 6-hour day and the men only a 9-hour day?—The half-timers in the mills work six hours whereas the workmen work 11 hours.

E-1970. Is it not true to say that there are two shifts of half-timers of six hours?—There will have to be two shifts of women.

E-1971. So that the mill machinery would be going for 12 hours for the women and only nine hours for the men?—No, that would be absurd; it is a matter which could be settled by arranging suitable shifts—taking the number of hours per week and not per day.

E-1972. Then you would have to have multiple shifts. How are you going to have a single shift in a day with part of your labour force working for nine hours and part of your labour force working for six hours?—The second shift of women would relieve the first shift of women after six hours for three hours.

E-1973. Therefore you would have one shift of women working six hours and another shift of women working three hours. Would the women who were working three hours get half the pay of the women working six hours?—Yes.

E-1974. Would they be satisfied?—That is a different matter.

E-1975. With regard to the question of bribery, do you think that the senior officials of the managing staff of the mills, even though doing their best, would be able to succeed in stopping bribery as between the *sardar* and the employees?—No.

E-1976. Even if they carried out the same method as is carried out by Messrs. Burn & Company? You will remember that the witness from Burn & Company said that not one pie in the shape of bribes was paid in his firm?—I very much doubt that that is so. However strong the supervision may be, unless there is a willingness on the part of the workers to stop it, it will be impossible to stop it.

E-1977. Where there are cases of unemployment there is a natural tendency for the worker to try to get employment by giving bribes?—Yes, it is a question of self-preservation.

E-1978. You say that there was a difference of opinion among the trade union leaders in Calcutta and you differentiate in that respect between Calcutta and Bombay. Do you maintain that there is no difference of opinion among labour leaders in Bombay?—There is much more acute difference than here.

E-1979. So that in that respect Calcutta is under no disadvantage as compared to Bombay?—The difference has developed only recently. In Bombay that difference did not exist four years ago.

E-1980. There is no difference between the two cities now in that respect?—No.

E-1981. *The Chairman*: Returning once more to the question of bribery do you think that if each of the large mills had a labour employment officer whose duty it was to engage the labour and generally to watch the interests of the labour, and who was paid a really adequate salary and whose sole responsibility was to the manager or even to the managing agents, that would be one way in which bribery might be abolished in the mills?—Yes. They have abolished bribery in the Ludlow Mill, one of the American mills. They have such an officer as you suggest, and since his appointment bribery has decreased a great deal.

*Mr. Cliff*: I was told that, even if such a system were instituted, there would be a very great likelihood of men being unfairly dismissed.

E-1982. *The Chairman*: I take it the point is that the *sardars* might get their own back by way of unfair dismissals, but I am assuming that the labour employment officer, besides engaging the labour as it was required, would also have something to say about the question of dismissals, and would, therefore, be in a position to prevent *sardars* making a fresh exaction by means of threatening dismissal?—This particular officer I refer to not only

has the power, in consultation with the manager, to engage men, but he also has the power in consultation with the officer and manager to dismiss men; the *sardar* has no power at all in that connection.

E-1983. In that case the *sardar* becomes what he ought to be, viz., a technical supervisor, seeing that the looms and spindles are in running order, and attending to the discipline of the workers under his immediate control? Yes.

E-1984. Has that system been accompanied at the same time by any improvement in the pay of the *sardars* in order to compensate them for this irregular remuneration?—I will let you know.

(The witness withdrew.)

## BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

### SEVENTY-FOURTH MEETING

CALCUTTA.

Tuesday, 11th February 1930.

#### P R E S E N T :

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, <i>Bart.</i>	Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.
Sir ABRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, <i>Kt.</i> , K.C.S.I., C.I.E.	Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, <i>Kt.</i> , C.B.E.	DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. ( <i>Medical Assessor</i> ).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.	} <i>Assistant Commissioners.</i>
Mr. SEW KISSEN BHATTAR, Senior Vice- President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.	
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.	
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.	

Miss CORNELIA SOBANJI, Bar.-at-Law, *Lady Assessor*.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.	} <i>Joint Secretaries.</i>
Mr. A. DIBDIN.	

Mr. R. B. LAIRD, M.L.C., *Chairman*, Mr. A. N. MACKENZIE, Mr. W. D. BRUCE-WATT, Mr. J. A. MURRAY, Mr. J. D. PATERSON and Mr. WILLIAMSON, *Representatives of the Indian Jute Mills Association.*

E-1985. *The Chairman*: I understand Mr. Mackenzie is a member of the Executive Committee?—(*Mr. Laird*) He was last year, but he is not now.

E-1986. Mr. Bruce-Watt, Mr. Murray, Mr. Paterson and Mr. Williamson, I understand, are mill managers. Which of these gentlemen are managers of mills where the multiple shift system is in operation?—Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Paterson are on the single shift; Mr. Murray and Mr. Williamson have both systems.

E-1987. Of what does the 5 per cent of the industry which is not represented by your Association consist?—One American mill and four or five Indian-managed mills built quite recently.

E-1988. When you say that one of the objects of your Association is "generally to promote and direct the interests of those engaged in the industry in all matters relating to it", does that include the interests of the work-people whom you employ?—No, I do not think that was meant; I think it is only in connexion with trade.

E-1989. Then does it follow that up to now your Association has had no constructive and combined policy with regard to the welfare of the workers engaged in your industry?—That is the case.

E-1990. Up to now that has been left entirely to individual mills or groups of mills under particular managing agents?—Yes.

E-1991. Your industry, as I see it, is perhaps more favourably situated than any other industry in India for combined action on all matters relating to the industry?—Yes.

E-1992. I think you are all working within 20 miles of Calcutta?—About 30 miles.

E-1993. You all have your connexion with Calcutta; you are favourably situated for frequent meetings to discuss policy?—Yes; all the head officers are in Calcutta and mill salesmen travel up and down from all the mills every day to Calcutta.

E-1994. And do you achieve unanimity when it is a question of trade defence?—As a general rule, but not always.

E-1995. Particularly when it is a question of restricting production, or would you rather put it, apportioning production to the needs of the market?—Exactly: regulating supply and demand.

E-1996. In the settlement of the recent strike you did agree to recommend to the members of your Association one single matter included in what we might call welfare, namely, maternity benefit?—Yes.

E-1997. So that to that extent you have broken away from your previous policy of being a purely defensive and commercial association?—Yes.

E-1998. Now do you think it is possible for your association to take a step forward and consider the industry as an industry with the purpose of making it the pride of India and an example to the world?—Yes, I think so.

E-1999. And would you be prepared to recommend to your Association that they should not in future confine themselves to purely defensive and restrictive matters but that they might consider combining in an effort to deal with the interests of the workers in the industry; I do not mean any restriction of liberty of initiative and so on, but at any rate arrive at a minimum standard in matters of that kind for the credit of the industry as a whole?—Yes, in matters of welfare I think the association would be quite prepared to make recommendations.

E-2000. In the settlement of the recent strike when you agreed to recommend to your constituent members the putting into operation of schemes of maternity benefit, did you go any further than that; did you draw up a minimum scheme and recommend it to your individual agencies or firms?—We drew up no scheme at all but I understand all the mills have put it into operation; we did not suggest any particular rate which should be paid.

E-2001. With the result that they may vary very greatly?—I would not say very greatly; they may vary to a small extent.

E-2002. Have the whole of your constituent members put maternity benefit into operation?—I understand so.

E-2002-a. But is that a matter of report to your Association?—No.

E-2003. Has your Association ever considered a combined effort as an industry to get rid of this bribery which seems to be a blot on the industry?—No.

E-2004. Do you think that is something which your Association might study and in regard to which you might help one another in a real effort to get rid of that blot, or do you yourself accept it as a thing that never

will be altered?—It will be very difficult to eliminate it altogether. We do try to limit it as far as possible, but we require co-operation. Our employees will pay the bribes. We try to get them to come to the offices and report cases. We do investigate cases but as long as the employees accept it and pay the money to the *sardars* it is very difficult for us to cope with it.

E-2005. But you have never made an effort as an Association to consider plans to diminish if not abolish it?—No; I am sure the Association has taken no action in that respect.

E-2006. Has your Association ever produced a constructive policy with regard to housing?—That is left wholly to the individual groups of mills.

E-2007. I imagine you would admit that there are a great many blots on the housing system in your industry?—Yes, they are gradually being improved as new houses are being built.

E-2008. Up to the present your Association has not taken that as one of the matters involved in the general interests of those engaged in the industry?—No, it has taken no action whatever.

E-2009. With regard to the question of the single shift and the multiple shift, as an Association you are obliged to adopt an attitude of impartiality, I imagine?—50 per cent are single and 50 per cent are double; it seems to be a matter of opinion as to which is the best method of working in particular districts.

E-2010. Therefore we cannot ask you as an Association to express an opinion one way or the other?—I think not.

E-2011. I understand Mr. Murray has experience of both systems?—(Mr. Murray) Yes.

E-2012. Have you a mill which in the last five years has changed from multiple to single shift?—Yes.

E-2013. Was that one mill or more?—One mill only.

E-2014. From your actual experience in that mill, do you agree with the suggestion that the change involves throwing out of work 25 per cent of the workers employed?—In that particular case it did not; the reduction in the total labour force was certainly under 10 per cent.

E-2015. Was your production reduced by the change?—It was very much increased. There were other factors operating at the same time, so that it is very difficult to allot the proportion.

E-2016. Was the quality better or worse after the change?—There was no appreciable change.

E-2017. In your view does the single shift offer any advantages in control of the *sardars* and diminution of their power to make exactions?—Yes; on this particular occasion it practically cut out the very vicious *sardari* system and rendered it impotent; it put the *sardars* in the position of being technical overseers.

E-2018. Before the change in what way was what you describe as the vicious *sardari* system so powerful?—They dismissed labour and engaged fresh hands just at their pleasure and each new man who was signed on had to pay for the job he got.

E-2019. Then has the effect been that you as a manager have much more supervision and control over the engagement of labour?—Yes; we know our labour better.

E-2020. And your control also over unfair dismissals is greater?—Yes.

E-2021. What was the position with regard to the content or discontent of the workers with the change after it had been made?—On making the change there was a little trouble but after they had all settled down they seemed to be very content. There was an appreciable improvement from the health point of view.

E-2022. I understand Mr. Williamson also has had recent experience of the change; you are managing mills on both systems?—(Mr. Williamson) Yes.

E-2023. Will you give me your answer to the same question, first of all as to the number of persons thrown out of work?—That depends altogether

on the kind of shift system. In many cases we have put in a 50 per cent system; that means that we carry 50 per cent of our weaving hands on a 33½ per cent system, in which case we work on a A B C system of permanent hands with a 33½ per cent system of relieving hands. If we want to change a 50 per cent system mill to a single shift mill we put more hands on the streets than would be the case where we work 33½ per cent. I should say that where we have made the change the people thrown out were in the neighbourhood of 20 per cent.

E-2024. Are you sure that you are not dealing with a number of fictitious names which were on the books under the multiple shift system?—I have no reason to think so.

E-2025. You do not say it is impossible?—I certainly will not say it is impossible.

E-2026. In your case how was the production affected by the change?—The production was stagnant for, I should say, 2½ months, but once they settled down, production did show a slight improvement.

E-2027. What was the effect as to quality?—I should say there was no difference with regard to quality. There are so many factors which come into the calculation in that respect.

E-2028. To what extent do you think it is possible that you are dealing with a number of fictitious names on the books which were there under the multiple shift system?—I should say in the neighbourhood of 7½ per cent.

E-2029. Would you agree that the change has given the management more power and the *sardars* less power over the workers?—It undoubtedly has given the management better control over their labour in so far as they can keep individual employees on individual machines and it gives not only the manager but the European staff as a whole a better chance of knowing the labour.

E-2030. What is your opinion as to the contentment of the workers after they had settled down to the new system?—On the single shift system in one particular mill to which I refer which has been changed over in the last five years, they appear to be quite contented.

E-2031. In your memorandum you refer to a case where there has been a change back to multiple shift from single shift; do you know of any other case in which that has been done?—(Mr. Laird) No. That was one of Mr. Williamson's mills.

E-2032. Were there any special reasons in that case for the change back?—(Mr. Williamson) One particular reason is this, that under the multiple shift system, and particular in the place where that mill was, we draw labour from Akla and Diamond Harbour. Under the single shift system the workers have very little time to spend with their people at home at week-ends; whereas under the multiple shift system when work is finished they go to their homes and have more time to spend with their people at home.

E-2033. They like the longer week-end?—It suits the particular concern.

E-2034. What is the district?—The district in this case is Budhatolley; it is a *cul de sac* place.

E-2035. You tell us Mr. Laird, that the houses in these private *bustis*, many of which we have seen, are owned mostly by *sardars* employed in the mills?—(Mr. Laird) Yes.

E-2036. Do you agree that that is a very bad system?—I think it is a very bad system.

E-2037. It gives the *sardar* an additional power to make exactions or show favouritism to labour?—Yes; I think it is bad in both respects.

E-2038. Has your Association ever addressed itself to that point which you say is very undesirable?—No.

E-2039. Miss Power: Is it a fact that the capacity of the *sardars* to buy houses must have arisen from the extensive bribery system? It is a very unusual thing for foremen to be in a position to become house owners for large bodies of workers or do you think they could do it out of their wages

alone?—Yes, I think so. These particular *busti* lines have been in the districts from generation to generation; they are very badly and cheaply built.

E-2040. *The Chairman*: But still you stand by your statement that they are mostly owned by the *sardars* employed in the mills?—Yes.

E-2041. And no effort has been made to get rid of that system?—Not by the Association.

E-2042. You tell us that in a certain case there are health centres and baby clinics and there is a tendency to expand in that direction?—Yes.

E-2043. Am I to take it that there again there is no concerted policy on the part of the Association?—No.

E-2044. Even in the form of recommendation or in the form of letting the whole know what certain pioneers have done and are doing?—The Association do not do that; they do not let them know.

E-2045. In your memorandum you make a serious assertion with regard to half-timers being twice employed, and you say that is in some cases actually encouraged by the *sardars*?—Yes, but that is being eliminated very quickly. To-day there are only 5 per cent of children employed in the total mills; they are gradually being driven out and full-timers are being employed. It is a very small matter and under the multiple shift system I do not think it can happen to any extent.

E-2046. You draw our attention to a serious abuse, but your Association has had no concerted policy for removing that abuse?—No.

E-2047. You have left it to the Factory Inspector and to the individual employer?—Yes.

E-2048. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is the only check as to attendance after the men are at their machines?—(*Mr. Murray*) That is right.

E-2049. Tokens are not taken at the gate and put on their machines?—No. The check is taken after the workman is at the machine.

E-2050. The *baboo* walks round the machines and puts down the number of people he happens to see working at the machines or probably the *sardar* tells him are present?—He is supposed to check up each worker individually.

E-2051. But I take it the *sardar* tells him who is there and he takes the word of the *sardar* to a great extent?—That may happen.

E-2052. Under the multiple shift system it must entail a number of visits round the mill because each shift has to be checked for attendance?—That is right.

E-2053. The token I have seen have stamped on them merely the letter indicating the shift but no number indicating the individual?—They always have a number as well as the shift letter. (*Mr. Laird and Mr. Williamson*) That is so with regard to our mills. (*Mr. Murray*) The number on the token should agree with the number in the muster book.

E-2054. Is it usual to have numbers on the tokens?—Yes, always.

E-2055. It is not always so, because yesterday I visited a mill where there was merely the letter on the token and no number?—I have not come across any like that.

E-2056. You will admit that it must be very difficult for the management to be sure that the attendance books that come before them are accurate?—It is difficult.

E-2057. Have you got labour waiting at your gate hoping to be taken on to replace men who are sick?—There is generally a certain number.

E-2058. Who picks the men?—The *sardar* picks them.

E-2059. Does the management know who is being picked until the man is found at the machine?—No; the man is put on by a *sardar*, except in weaving where the European assistant probably chooses his own hands. Spare weavers come inside the mill and go round every morning.

E-2060. The spare weavers are engaged in the shed?—Yes.

E-2061. Are all the employees engaged inside the shed?—Generally.

E-2062. So that inside your shed every morning you have men who are on your muster roll and men who are hoping to get on it?—That is so.

E-2063. You said in changing from the multiple to the single shift system your displacement of labour was under 10 per cent; that would probably be due to the fact that there were previously a lot of names on your register which were only existent on pay days?—Yes, that is probable.

E-2064. Then surely your cost of production must have gone down quite a lot when you went on to the single shift system?—It did; I should put the reduction at about 10 per cent.

E-2065. Your European staff, except perhaps in regard to weaving, has really no check on the attendance book?—The European assistants also check up the names.

E-2066. When I attempted to check up the names in a mill yesterday I could not see any reason why a couple of *sardars* could not go round and pass the tokens on to people who would pretend to be somebody else. Your European assistants cannot possibly know by name all the various individuals on the spinning frames?—They cannot.

E-2067. Whilst you were checking up, if they were dummy names, the *sardars* might have the tokens in his pocket and somebody could come up from a distant loom and produce the token?—That is possible.

E-2068. Periodic raids by the European assistants would not check that much?—If you check the whole department at times then it is possible to check it. One system which has been tried is on pay day making each worker put his hand into a bucket of dye so that the same man cannot come twice.

E-2069. But that would not prevent a *sardar* bringing in a couple of friends on pay day to take the pay of somebody who has never been there during the day but who has been marked as attending?—We cannot stop that.

E-2070. As far as I can see, your only hope of reducing bribery and corruption is the single shift system?—It helps considerably.

E-2071. The *sardars* would naturally prefer the multiple shift system, I suppose?—I think they would.

E-2072. Have any *sardars* expressed any preference for the single shift system?—(Mr. Williamson) Not to my knowledge.

E-2073. The figures as to which men are absent on leave and sickness cannot be accurate if your attendance figures are not accurate?—No, they cannot be.

E-2074. We cannot take any absentee figures from jute mills as being accurate because you do not know whether a particular man is there or not?—(Mr. Paterson) I challenge that. Every one who goes on leave for any reason whatever in our mill is given a pass signed by a European and the man brings it himself to the European to sign.

E-2075. Is that only when he goes away for a long period?—No, for one day or half a day.

E-2076. Then if any man happens to be absent in the morning because he is ill, does he send a friend to get that pass for him because he is ill and cannot turn up for work?—He may send word. In nine cases out of ten they come and ask for leave even when they are ill.

E-2077. How do you know that all the men who are marked in your register as present are in fact present?—One has to trust one's European staff.

E-2078. And the European staff have to trust the *baboos* and *sardars*?—To a certain extent. But it is their duty to supervise the *baboos* and *sardars* and when a man has been in one department of a mill for a few years he knows the majority of his labour by sight if not by name.

E-2079. Then you do not think the *baboos* and *sardars* between themselves mark men as present who are not present?—Certainly they do to some extent; it may certainly happen. One cannot guarantee that it will be 100 per cent correct.

E-2080. How many spare men do you keep in your mill?—Approximately 10 per cent, but the mill has a single shift system.



E-2081. I did not know that. I was complaining about the figures under the multiple shift system; it is admitted that there is more control under the single shift system?—I was on the multiple shift system for many years, and even then every individual who went on leave had a pass, whether it was long leave or short leave.

E-2082. Your control was so good then that it is no better now under a single shift?—No; I do not claim that at all.

E-2083. Have you more control now that you have single shifts?—Yes.

E-2084. And probably less bribery?—Yes.

E-2085. Therefore there is less reason why a *sardar* should want to put down a man as present if he is absent?—They have not got the same opportunity under the single shift system.

E-2086. In your memorandum you say that "the committee are not aware of the existence of any works committees in connexion with the mills in the membership of the Association, all disputes being settled amicably." Further on you describe some trouble you had, and I notice that the only way you appeared to be able to deal with the local trade union was by the Government acting as an intermediary?—(Mr. Laird) Yes.

E-2087. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Your objection to dealing with this union was because it was unregistered?—Yes.

*Mr. Cliff*: Does that mean that as an association they recognized registered unions?

*Sir Alexander Murray*: Yes, it does.

E-2088. You had no reason to believe that the woman who was the leader had any control over the workers?—No reason whatever.

E-2089. I take it, *Mr. Murray*, that you are speaking of your experience of the reliance?—(Mr. Murray) Yes.

E-2090. When you went to the reliance it was working very badly?—Yes.

E-2091. Did production rise as a result of your going there?—It did.

E-2092. How much do you attribute to a change of the shift system and how much to better management?—I attribute a part to better management and a part also to being under a single shift.

E-2092-a. When you came to Howrah, you did not adopt the single shift system but your production rose?—Yes; but I still think the single shift system is better.

E-2093. You went to the reliance as a new manager?—Yes.

E-2094. Therefore you cannot say whether the figures were right or wrong when you went there?—I cannot say.

E-2095. If you dismissed a lot of hands from a mill and worked on the single shift system, would not the result of that be that more hands would be seeking employment?—For the time being.

E-2096. Therefore the *sardars* would have a bigger chance of bribery if there are more men waiting for employment?—That might be so for a time.

E-2097. *Mr. Bruce-Watt*, do you agree with what *Mr. Murray* has said as to the relative merits of single and double shifts?—(Mr. Bruce-Watt) No.

E-2098. How long have you been manager of a double shift mill?—About 25 years.

E-2099. Has it been your experience that your registers can be properly kept?—They can and they are.

E-2100. How many times has the Factory Inspector come and found that your registers were not properly kept?—I should think about four or five times in the early days but not now-a-days.

E-2101. How many visits do you get from Factory Inspectors in the course of a year?—I should think two to three.

E-2102. I notice you say in your memorandum that the Jute Mills Association object to legislation that would compel multiple shift mills to go on to a single shift?—(Mr. Laird) Yes.

E-2103. You are writing that as an association?—Yes. We are equally divided on the point.

E-2104. You contradict the Factory Inspector when he says his staff found it impossible to check registers?—Emphatically.

E-2105. On what do you base that statement?—On our own mills, which comprise 10 per cent of the trade, we have no prosecutions. When the Factory Inspector finds that it is possible in our mills to check the registers I think he will admit that his statement is incorrect.

E-2106. *Mr. Cliff*: Does the whole of the membership of the Jute Association say what you say?—They scrutinized this memorandum before it was sent in and agreed with it.

E-2107. *Sir Alexander Murray*: One of the objections to the system of working is the long spread-over from 5-30 a.m. to 7 p.m. What hours do the jute mills at Home work?—At Forfar, which is about 15 miles from Dundee, the spread-over is 66 hours including meals and 55½ hours excluding meals. That means that in Forfar the spread-over is longer and the actual working week is longer. It is a 6 days week.

E-2108. It means that the spread-over is 11 hours per day?—Yes; it is in some cases longer than is the case here, on the multiple shift system. In Dundee the spread-over is the same but they do not work the same hours per day; it depends upon the volume of trade.

E-2109. Under the Act at Home they can work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. or from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.?—Yes; that is for men, women and children.

E-2110. In Forfar what are the hours of work?—They are now actually working 9 hours per day excluding meals. From Monday to Friday they work from 6 to 9; 10 to 1 and 2 to 5.

E-2111. If you were a worker in a mill would you prefer to start at 5-30 a.m. in Calcutta, or 6 a.m. in Forfar?—5-30 in Calcutta.

E-2112. At Forfar how many breaks do they have?—Two breaks of an hour each; in Dundee they have only one break.

E-2113. So that really the jute industry in the vicinity of Dundee is pretty much the same as the jute industry is here?—Yes.

E-2114. How do the working conditions in the jute mills here compare with the conditions in the Forfar and Dundee mills?—I should say it is much easier here; people at Home come into a mill are locked in and remain there for that period. In Calcutta they come and go as they like.

E-2115. What is the comparison, speaking of the conditions generally of the mills?—There is no comparison with Home mills; it is all in favour of Calcutta.

E-2116. How much of the industry do you six gentlemen represent?—50-54 per cent of the total looms.

E-2117. Do all the workers in your mills wear tokens?—Every one of them in the double shift mills; it is not necessary in the single shift mills.

E-2118. Why did you lengthen your hours from 54 to 60?—It was due to the instinct of self-preservation because our trade was departing to the Continent of Europe.

E-2119. What justification have you for saying that trade was departing?—I cut this statement out from the *Times Trade Supplement*, written by the Ghent correspondent: "Jute manufacturers here are beginning to feel anxious as the number of jute weaving mills has increased from 13 to 14 since the War, while that of the spinning mills has been doubled in Belgium."

E-2120. What are the wages paid for average spinners and weavers on the Continent of Europe?—In this statement, which I have, it says 15s. in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

E-2121. You say that the efficiency of one worker at Home is equal to that of two workers here?—Yes.

E-2122. How would you compare the labour cost here with that at Home?—I should say it is much about the same taking into account the efficiency.

E-2123. *Mr. Cliff*: The Government of Bengal tell us that half the jute mills in Bengal have changed from the multiple shift to the single shift

system of working within the last few years?—It is not within the last few years; it is a considerable number of years. I should say that the great majority of mills have changed over since 1921.

E-2124. You give us a record of the voting of your Association on this question. Was this the form of question which was voted on: "The multiple shift system should be made illegal"?—Yes; that was put up by Government.

E-2125. Did you actually have 45·17 of your Association in favour of making it illegal?—Those are the actual returns from all individual mills.

E-2126. So that 45 per cent of your Association voted in favour of this being declared illegal?—Yes, and 52 voted against.

E-2127. The Government in their memorandum say: "Regulation of hours unaccompanied by control of the shifts has proved a failure except in single shift mills." In view of that statement from the Government, does your Association propose to leave the matter just where you have left it in this memorandum?—Yes.

E-2128. What opinion has your Association formed as to the proper time for a jute mill worker to take his meal?—We have formed no opinion. They have worked in this way for many years and they arrange meal times according to their hours off.

E-2129. Does that mean that the jute mill worker with regard to his meal relief must accommodate himself to the machinery of the Jute Mills Association?—No; I think we arrange our shifts more to accommodate the worker.

E-2130. Then at what time of the day do you suggest the jute mill worker should take his meal?—I am afraid I cannot enter into that question; I do not know enough about the workers. Many of the workers take their meals before they come to the works.

E-2131. *The Chairman*: Before 5-30 in the morning?—Yes.

E-2132. *Mr. Cliff*: They finish at 7 in the evening?—No; some of them break off at 9 o'clock.

E-2133. If you take your long shifts they finish at 7 in the evening?—No. The shift differs in various mills. There is the shift which finishes at 3 o'clock, for instance.

E-2134. What was in the mind of the jute mill employer when he was fixing the meal time of the worker?—So far as I recollect we tried to fix the shifts to suit the meal times of the workers.

E-2135. I see that a man coming in at 5-30 a.m. is booked off for a meal at 6-30 to 7-30; in another case the worker is booked off between 9 and 10 and another worker is booked off at 10 o'clock. There is such a variation in the time that people are booked off that I have had great difficulty in discovering from this graph what is the proper meal time for the worker?—I cannot say any more about it. If you are talking of the weavers they do not leave the compound.

E-2136. I have winders, beamers and sewers coming in at 5-30 and being relieved. A man who is described as an "A" shift worker comes in at 5-30 and is relieved at 6-30. A man who is described as a "B" shift worker is coming in at the same time and being relieved at 8. A man who is described as a "C" shift worker is coming in at the same hour and being relieved at 9-30. I find that a person described as a "D" shift worker does not get a meal until 11 o'clock. There are four cases of people coming in at the same time. Between 6-30 and 11 what are you suggesting is their suitable meal time? Is it a fact that these multiple shifts were framed in the interests of the industry?—That is my opinion.

E-2137. The Government say: "The Local Government also considers that the time has arrived when the possibility of reducing maximum hours both weekly and daily should be taken up." I gather from your memorandum that you prefer that no action should be taken at all?—Yes; the hours should remain as they are at present.

E-2138. *The Chairman*: Did your Association take the same line when they were last reduced by the Factory Act; did you oppose the reduction?—I do not remember.

E-2139. *Mr. Cliff*: I see that the Chairman at the annual meeting in 1927 declares: "We are the only textile industry in the world, outside

Japan and China, and possibly Russia, in which the operatives start work at 5-30 a.m. and with intervals of rest stop work at 7 p.m." Is that a fact?—Very strong exception was taken to the speech. I think that was the view of one particular man.

E-2140. Is it true?—I have no idea whether it is true or not.

E-2141. Is yours the only industry in India that starts and stops its machinery at the extreme hours permitted by the law?—I do not know that either. I think there are certain concerns which work 24 hours a day.

E-2142. Are you the only industry that operates to the extreme limits prescribed by law?—I could not tell you.

E-2143. You know what the Government say with regard to the reduction of the maximum hours. Can you give any indication as to what period your Association believe should elapse before a review is taken under the Washington Conventions?—I can only refer to what the Association say here that they consider the hours under the present system are the most suitable, and I have nothing more to say.

E-2144. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: In the wages figures you have given of a multiple shift system mill I notice there are roughly 4,000 workers who get a wage of less than Rs. 4 a week?—Yes.

E-2145. There are 1,090 workers who get for four days Rs. 5-15-0 and for five days Rs. 7-4-9?—Yes.

E-2146. What is the average absenteeism per head during the course of a year?—Of course it varies very much in the different departments. I have no actual figures with regard to that.

E-2147. Would it be correct to say for sickness four weeks and for absence in the village four weeks?—I have no exact figures but these have been submitted to Government by the Association.

E-2148. If the worker on an average works for 44 weeks a year at Rs. 3-8-0 a week, it works out at Rs. 154 per year. Do you think that is an adequate wage for a worker to bring up a family?—It appears to be; I mean they do it and they save money besides.

E-2149. The Angus Company have sent in a memorandum in which they quote Mr. Jacks' statement that to keep a family in comfort a minimum income of Rs. 365 a year is necessary; below comfort Rs. 233, above want Rs. 166, in want Rs. 115. So that according to those figures there are 4,000 people who are in the category of "in want"?—You are speaking about families whereas the figures given in our memorandum deal with individual workers.

E-2150. I am taking the earnings of a worker who has a family and who is the sole bread-winner. Are you pleading that your industry cannot afford to pay a decent living wage?—I maintain we do pay decent living wages.

E-2151. Do you consider this to be a decent living wage?—It all depends how they live. It has proved itself to be a living wage because the people stay there and work.

E-2152. Is that your definition of a living wage?—It is a very complicated question altogether. It is a question of the family life; very often you get four in a family working in the mill.

E-2153. Supposing the figure of Rs. 365 given by Mr. Jacks is approximately correct, would you consider Rs. 154 a year adequate for a person who has a family to keep with no other member of the family working?—I should say no.

E-2154. You would not consider it an adequate living wage?—No.

E-2155. Why do you say that unemployment insurance is scarcely a practical proposition at the present stage?—That is chiefly because the labour is migratory.

E-2156. In your memorandum you say 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". Is 90 per cent of your labour force more or less permanently employed in the mills?—They go and come back. I think the statement made here is correct.

E-2157. They do come back?—Of course they may not come back to the same mill.

E-2158. But they come back to the jute mill area?—Undoubtedly.

E-2159. That being so, what is the difficulty?—Because there is always plenty of labour.

E-2160. Unemployment insurance is a necessity where there is plenty of labour and not enough jobs; otherwise there would be no necessity for unemployment insurance?—I do not think unemployment insurance is a practical proposition in this country.

E-2161. Have you ever tried to work out a scheme?—Never. I cannot see how it could be worked.

E-2162. Has this matter ever been discussed by the Jute Mills Association?—Never.

E-2163. How did they come to the conclusion that it is not a practical proposition without discussing it?—They have simply gone into it with the knowledge they have of their own labour. The labour is constantly migrating.

E-2164. *The Chairman*: I presume you understand that where such insurance takes place it is spread over a large number of industries in order to get a basis of insurance; it is not peculiar to a single industry?—I see. I understand that it must apply generally. We should as a rule be in favour of discussing the matter and if any reasonable proposition is put forward we should try to introduce it, but we do not think it is practicable.

E-2165. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you agree that there is a considerable amount of unemployment?—There is a great deal of unemployment in the jute mill industry at the present time.

E-2166. If there were a system of public employment agencies, do you think it would help to take the worker out of the clutches of the *sardars*?—It might help to some extent, but we should still have *sardars*; you cannot do without *sardars*.

E-2167. It is suggested that where a worker goes to his village for a month when he comes back it is difficult for him to get a job unless he bribes the *sardars*?—Yes, I agree.

E-2168. Would not public employment agencies get the worker out of the clutches of the *sardars* as far as the question of employment is concerned?—I do not think so. The *sardars* would still be there and the employee would still have to deal with the *sardars* over and above an employment bureau.

E-2169. And if the *sardars* had nothing to do with the employment?—Then it is for the employees to refuse to pay money to the *sardars*.

E-2170. If the employment is through a public employment agency and the public employment agency deals direct with your employment officer, as far as employment is concerned the *sardar* would not come in?—If you can persuade the worker not to bribe the *sardar*.

E-2171. *Colonel Russell*: I think Mr. Murray said that an improvement in health was noticeable among the workers after the change to the single shift system. How long was the period before you noticed a change in health?—(*Mr. Murray*) Two years after we changed over.

E-2172. In your memorandum you say: "In many districts the worker elects to remain in a congested unhealthy *busti* instead of taking advantage of the sanitary quarters provided by the mill-owners." What is the reason for that?—(*Mr. Laird*) That is our experience. I do not know what the reason is. We very often have a number of our rooms in our lines vacant and empty when the *sardari bustis* are full.

E-2173. Is it a question of rent, because you also say: "It is very seldom that the lines are unoccupied to any extent"?—Yes, they are occasionally and the *sardars'* lines are always full.

E-2174. *The Chairman*: Is it because the *sardar* says "I will not employ you unless you say you will occupy my house"?—There may be something in that.

E-2175. *Colonel Russell*: Again you say: "The general health condition of workers is on the whole very good"; then later you say "Generally speaking, the physique of the workers is fairly good"; but when you are dealing

with the industrial efficiency of the workers you say "The physique of the workers, on the whole, can hardly be described as satisfactory." There seems to be considerable discrepancy there?—Yes, there is.

E-2176. Which of those statements is correct: "Very good," "Fairly good" or "Not satisfactory"?—Fairly good, I would say.

E-2177. You say that the dispensaries are under the charge of a qualified doctor with one or two assistants. Is it not often the case that the dispensary is left in charge of an untrained compounder?—I have no experience of that.

E-2178. How often does the company's doctor pay periodic visits?—I can only speak for my own firm; once a week.

E-2179. Who is in charge for the other six days?—A qualified Indian doctor.

E-2180. Is he there all the time?—Yes. He stays on the premises.

E-2181. When we visited the Angus Mills the other day we found there were seven doctors, including one woman doctor, employed for 6,180 jute workers. Can you suggest why in one case such a large staff is necessary and in other cases it is not considered to be necessary?—Because the Angus Mill has gone in for very intensive welfare work.

E-2182. Does the Association approve of intensive welfare work or not?—Yes, decidedly so.

E-2183. When a worker is too ill to attend the mill dispensary does the mill doctor go to the man's house?—Yes. I am speaking only of my own firm.

E-2184. May I ask some of your colleagues? Is it the general custom for the doctor to visit sick individuals at their homes who are unable to attend the mill dispensaries?—(Mr. Williamson) So far as my firm is concerned, whenever application is made a doctor does attend at the worker's home.

E-2185. Is it the policy of the Association to encourage the employment of lady medical officers?—(Mr. Laird) Undoubtedly.

E-2186. And also the provision of health visitors and *dais* for midwifery cases?—Yes. We do that in Titaghur and Bhatpara.

E-2187. Is it the idea to extend that scheme to other mills?—It is being extended now.

E-2188. Is there any difficulty in getting women doctors and trained health visitors?—Yes, great difficulty.

E-2189. Is there any place in Calcutta where individuals are being trained as health visitors?—I do not think so; we get ours from the Chelmsford League at Delhi.

E-2190. Are they satisfactory?—Quite satisfactory. One has been with us for five years.

E-2191. You do not think it is impossible to obtain trained health visitors?—It is quite possible, but it will take a little time.

E-2192. You refer to an arrangement come to between the Jute Mill Association and the Director of Public Health. Has the Association consulted the Public Health Department with regard to proposals of water-supplies, sewage schemes and so on?—Government have taken full control in the case of Titaghur and Bhatpara; we provide the money and they spend it.

E-2193. You say "In practically all mills there are bathing ghats on the river front." I understood that the river front was used for the building of bungalows?—Not in front of the mill. The ghats are in front of the mill proper.

E-2194. With regard to the work of Boards of Health, in certain instances I understand that the Municipal Councils, which have control over the health of certain mill areas, have a considerable number of mill managers and assistant mill managers. They act as Municipal Councillors. Have they used all the powers which they possess under the Municipal Act to get private *bustis* demolished and rebuilt?—Speaking for my own firm we have used all the powers we could to purchase land, but we have got no satisfaction.

E-2195. Apart from the question of the purchase of land, is it not possible, under the Municipal Act, to take legal measures against individuals who offend in these respects?—It is very difficult indeed. (*Mr. Watt*) Because you cannot get the landowners to move at all.

E-2196. *The Chairman*: Has your Association ever drafted an amendment of the law to meet your difficulties in the acquisition of land?—(*Mr. Laird*) Not to my knowledge.

E-2197. You have not put into practical form what you need. Could you do that and let the Commission have it? Have you a legal adviser attached to your Association?—Yes.

E-2198. Could you not get him to put in legal form an amendment of the law which, in the opinion of your Association, is necessary to enable you to deal with these black spots in the neighbourhood of your mills?—I will see what can be done.

E-2199. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Even where the landowner objects, are there no powers in the municipality to force the provision of sanitary conditions in a certain *busti*?—(*Mr. Watt*) Yes, there are, but certain pieces of land are owned by several co-sharers, and you simply cannot bind them all down to pay the cost of the improvement.

E-2200. *Colonel Russell*: In England and in certain parts of India there are Town Planning Acts which can very effectively control conditions such as you describe. Has the question of a Town Planning Act ever been considered by your Association?—Not in my time.

E-2201. There would be no objection to considering it?—None whatever.

E-2202. *Mr. Tassie*: With regard to bribery, do you think that bribery complaints are sometimes made against a particular person in order to discredit him, so that someone else will get his job?—That does happen.

E-2203. With regard to *sardars* owning houses, is it not a fact that the first thing that that class of Indian does, when he saves money, is to buy land and houses?—Yes. That is his ideal—to become a *zamindar* in a small way.

E-2204. *Mr. Cliff*: In town?—In the mill areas.

E-2205. *Mr. Tassie*: As regards meal times, is it not a fact that the Indian takes his chief meal in the evening? He takes one in the morning and his midday meal is usually parched gram which he carries in his loin cloth and eats at any odd moment?—Yes.

E-2206. Is it not a fact that in a mill when a worker feels hungry he leaves his work to the *badli* and goes off and has a meal?—There are instances of that.

E-2207. Therefore, if there were fixed meal times, it is possible that the workmen would not keep to them, but would take their meals when it suited them?—Yes.

E-2208. With reference to the question of workers avoiding mill lines, do you not think that arises from the fact that the workers object to the sanitary regulations imposed in the mill lines—about keeping their houses clean and so forth?—In some cases they have probably more freedom outside.

E-2209. Is it not a fact also that in the mill lines restrictions are sometimes placed on the number of people allowed to live in a room?—Yes.

E-2210. *Mr. Chaman Lall* referred to the lowest paid grade of workman and worked it out that a man in such a grade earns Rs. 3-8-0 a week or Rs. 154 a year. Is it not probable that the men in that grade are young men with no families?—A good many of them must be young men, but some must be over 20 years old.

E-2211. Referring to the book written by *Mr. J. C. Jack* entitled "Economic life of Bengal district", I see that for the population as a whole the cost of living in comfort per head is Rs. 65 per year. Therefore if a man is getting Rs. 154 per year he is fairly well off if he has only got himself to look after?—Yes.

E-2212. Taking the best paid man, a *sardar*, on Rs. 20 a week, or Rs. 860 a year, he also is fairly well off if, according to *Mr. Jack's* figures, the cost of a family living in comfort is Rs. 365 a year?—Yes.

E-2213. So that on these figures the mill hands are very well paid as compared with the people in agricultural districts to which Mr. Jack referred?—That is my contention.

E-2214. You have given some evidence about the position of the Dundee Mills. To what extent do the Dundee millowners provide housing for their operatives?—They do not provide it at all.

E-2215. Do they provide education?—No.

E-2216. Do they provide doctors and dispensaries?—No. They may provide a few dispensaries.

E-2217. Is it possible that more than two people live in one room in Dundee?—Yes.

E-2218. With regard to leave, how many months in a year can a Dundee operative afford to leave his work and go to the country to cultivate his land or to enjoy himself?—He probably gets away for a fortnight a year.

E-2219. Therefore if you compare the conditions in Dundee with the conditions here it looks as if the Indian employee is a good deal better off than the Dundee operative?—It certainly looks like it.

E-2220. *Colonel Russell*: Do you think the housing conditions in Dundee are satisfactory?—No.

E-2221. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: With reference to recruitment do I understand that when there is a vacancy the *sardar* brings a man along and he is generally accepted?—Yes.

E-2222. Can a man be dismissed on the *sardar's* complaint?—Only after investigation by the manager.

E-2223. Considering that there is much odium attached to the present recruiting system, would not you prefer to have a *bona fide* outside recruiting agency and to employ your men through that body?—No.

E-2224. In order to remove the suspicion of corruption and bribery would not you prefer to have an independent employment officer?—I am afraid that there will be bribery there too.

E-2225. Was not one of the biggest strikes which occurred in Bengal in a jute mill, the strike at Fort Gloster Jute Mill?—Yes.

E-2226. Was not one of the main reasons of the prolongation of that strike the fact that people were unwilling to work a single shift?—Yes.

E-2227. Is it not a fact that on account of the change of shift 2,000 workmen lost their jobs and another 2,000 were replaced by upcountry men as it was very difficult for the local people to work a single shift?—I do not know the exact conditions at Fort Gloster.

E-2228. You said that the relations between the European and Indian staff and the rank and file are very harmonious. Are you aware that within the last 12 months there have been frequent assaults on the European staff by the workmen in many mills which I could name?—I have heard of those.

E-2229. Does that imply harmonious relationship between the staff and the workmen?—That was a very exceptional state of affairs; it was immediately after the strike, and it was caused by political agitators more than anything else.

E-2230. With reference to your Association's opinion about works committees, are you aware of the fact that Mr. Winterbotham, the President of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, in his evidence before the Commission, has emphatically said that his Chamber would welcome the introduction of the works committees. He said: "In 1921 the Chamber associated themselves with the Bengal Chamber urging *inter alia* that early steps should be taken to test the possibility of developing in India a system of works joint-committees. The Chamber is strongly of the opinion that these attempts should be renewed, and persisted in. We unreservedly support the principle underlying works committees". He points out that his Chamber were invited to discuss the matter by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in 1921. It was the Bengal Chamber of Commerce which initiated it?—We are quite willing to try it.



E-2231. You say that there are no facilities for the acquisition of land for workers' houses. The Commission has received a memorandum from the Anglo-India Jute Mill in which it is said that up to the present that firm has found no difficulty in acquiring land. Facilities do not exist everywhere for acquiring land, but facilities do exist in certain districts?—In Titaghur district where we have 8,000 looms going, we have been trying to buy land between two certain streets in order to complete a housing scheme. We have offered up to £2,700 an acre for the land, but we cannot buy it. One man has a house in the middle, and he says he will not sell it unless he gets a lakh of rupees for it.

E-2232. But in other districts land is available? In the memorandum submitted by the Angus Mill they say it costs them Rs. 6,20,000 for housing 4,000 workers, clerks, *baboo*s, doctors and every body concerned. They point out that they can buy land at Rs. 10,000 per acre including what the landlord wants for his right, what the tenant wants on eviction and every thing. That is Rs. 10,000 for three bighas or 60 cottahs. It comes to Rs. 150 a cottah, which is 720 square feet. The requirement for an individual worker is about 150 square feet. Allowing another 50 square feet for open spaces, it means that 200 square feet of land will be quite sufficient for one person, including open spaces, verandahs, and rooms. Do you think these calculations are correct?—They are absolutely correct. The Angus Mills are buying land at Rs. 3,000 a bigha. We are quite prepared to do the same.

E-2233. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: You say in your memorandum: "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." Will you explain what are the reasons which make you prefer the multiple shift system?—For example, in Titaghur you have 80,000 men employed in the mills which are on the multiple shift. If these mills were to go on to the single shift you would immediately throw 20,000 out of employment. Our chief concern is to conserve our labour force and to prevent unemployment. In Titaghur, since 1913 there have been no extensions of any description, while in the mills at Bhatpara there are many extensions. If there are extensions, the labour which will be let free by the mills going on to the single shift can be absorbed by the new mills, but where there are no extensions there is bound to be unemployment. The other day in Titaghur when there was a likelihood of the mills changing over to the single shift the workers came to the authorities and protested against the change.

E-2234. Is it not a fact that the double shift is against the interests of the shareholders of the company?—I do not agree that it is.

E-2235. Do you not agree that you get a better production in working single shift and also that the physique of the workers is better?—I do not agree that you get a better production; I also do not agree that the physique of the workers on single shift is better, because they work longer hours.

E-2236. May I know what Mr. Paterson thinks about it? Will he tell us whether after he changed from double shift to single shift he got better production or not?—(*Mr. Paterson*) Better production.

E-2237. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is that better production per loom per hour?—Yes.

E-2238. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: What is the average wage of a jute mill worker in the districts in which you have experience, say, in Titaghur and Samnuggur?—(*Mr. Laird*) The average is about Rs. 15 a month. It is for time workers only and does not include piece-workers.

E-2239. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is that the average for men, women and children?—Yes.

E-2240. Have you figures separately for men, women and children?—Yes. The lowest for men is Rs. 12-10-6; the lowest for women is about Rs. 10 and for half-time shifters it is Rs. 8-7-0.

E-2241. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Do you know that the jute mill industry pays more wages to its workers than other industries which are near about the jute mills?—I do not know what wages are paid by other industries.

E-2242. Turning to the question of bribery, do you not consider that it could be checked effectively by the establishment of proper trade unions?—We are sympathetic towards the formation of properly constituted trade unions.

E-2243. Are you in favour of stopping the *sardari* system altogether and appointing a labour intelligence officer in the mill whose duty it will be to recruit labour? The labour may be under the supervision and check of the *sardars* but the *sardars* should have no power as far as recruitment and dismissal are concerned?—I do not think you can ever stop the *sardari* system. For example, in Titaghur No. II mill which you visited, where they have 7,036 workers there are 276 *sardars*. These *sardars* are recruited from the rank and file, and they are very efficient men. I am now talking of efficiency and not about bribery, which is a different question altogether to tackle. I do not think we can do without *sardars*.

E-2244. *The Chairman*: The *sardar* is an overseer?—Yes.

E-2245. You do not expect it as an unalterable thing that the *sardar* should also make exactions for offering employment?—No. We may get over that.

E-2246. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You can restrict your *sardars* to the technical side of the work only as distinct from the recruitment side?—Yes.

E-2247. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: It was complained by the labour union that the workers are obliged to borrow money at a high rate of interest. Can you suggest any remedy whereby the labourers could get loans at a reasonable rate of interest?—I think it is a question which is now before the Banking Enquiry Committee.

E-2248. *The Chairman*: Has any mill or a group of mills experimented with a co-operative credit society?—Not to my knowledge.

E-2249. *Maulvi Latifat Hussain*: Is it not a fact that when leave is granted to the workers, whether for any festival or for any other purpose, they are not given any pay?—That is so.

E-2250. Does the mill pay half or full wages during the sickness of a worker?—It is a matter for the manager's discretion; sometimes he gives them half pay and sometimes full pay.

E-2251. Do you not think that some form of sickness insurance is better?—It is still to be tried.

E-2252. Is it not a fact that the mills are unwilling to settle the demands of their workers until the workers go on a strike?—It is not at all a fact. We do consider all their grievances.

E-2253. Then why the workers are going into the hands of the so-called strike leaders?—That I do not know.

E-2254. Do you know the reason why the workers at Champdani have recently gone on strike?—I have no idea.

E-2255. You do not take any notice of that?—That is a matter that concerns the Agents of the Champdani Jute Company.

E-2256. In view of the fact that the poor workers are starving, will you not be prepared to settle the matter through a joint committee representative of the workers and the employers?—As I said, that is the concern of the managing agents of that particular mill.

E-2257. Will you tell us why the mill manager or the departmental officers are not keeping an unemployment register, especially in the weaving department, which will be one of the methods to stop bribery?—I cannot answer that.

E-2258. Is it not a fact that at present in the jute mill areas you have money-lenders doing business and there are stores of several kinds run by private persons?—Yes; this has been going on for many many years.

E-2259. In your memorandum you give a statement showing the total amount of money orders issued by the post offices serving the Calcutta Jute Mills. Do you mean to say that all the amount given here is sent only by workers and that it does not include the amount sent by businessmen and others living in the jute mill area?—We do not say that all the amount is sent by the workers, but we think it represents chiefly the money sent by the workers.

E-2260. *Diwan Chamal Lall*: It is not an index of what the workers actually send?—No.

E-2261. *Mr. Birla*: You discussed the question of the multiple shift in your Association when the proposal was put forward by the Government of Bengal, and I find that so far as this question was concerned, opinion was divided—half were in favour and half were against?—Approximately, yes.

E-2262. May I enquire if your Association also took the trouble of consulting the workers whom the matter concerns as vitally as it concerns the employer?—No, not as an Association. We have consulted our workers at different places and find that they wish to remain on the double shift system.

E-2263. You mean the workers favour the double shift?—Yes, in certain districts.

E-2264. Did you consult the *sardars* or the actual workers?—We did not consult anybody. As a matter of fact when the workers heard that there was a likelihood of the single shift system being introduced in Titaghur they approached us to protest against the change.

E-2265. *The Chairman*: Who approached you, the *sardars* or the workers? Who was the spokesman?—Both the workers and the *sardars* approached us. The *sardar* was probably the spokesman.

E-2266. *Mr. Birla*: You will agree with me that the workers generally being under the thumb of the *sardars* cannot express a free opinion unless you take special care to consult only the workers, excluding the *sardars*?—That is true.

E-2267. And therefore you cannot say what the real opinion of the workers was?—As regards single and multiple shifts, we did not take the opinion of the workers; we took the opinion of each member of the Indian Jute Mills Association.

E-2268. Do you not think this tendency on your part of deliberately shunning consultation with the workers is leading to serious harm so far as the industry is concerned?—I do not think so.

E-2269. Do you not think it was manifested in the last strike that unknown men who had nothing to do with the workers were able to influence the workers while the employers could not influence the workers even on reasonable points?—I grant that we should move closely with our workers. We are trying our best to do that, but it must be a slow process.

E-2270. You have admitted in your memorandum that while the relations are harmonious they are not intimate. Do you not think it is very essential in the interest of the industry that we should have more intimacy with our workers?—Yes.

E-2271. If you want to cultivate more intimacy, do you not think you should have works committees and well-organized unions?—We are in favour of unions which are well organized, properly constituted and representative of the employees, but we do not want political organizations such as we had in front of us recently.

E-2272. Do you not think that the establishment of works committees on which you practically express no opinion would be helpful in getting well-organized unions?—Yes.

E-2273. On the question of works committees I find that you do not express any opinion. Do you not think that this is a question which might be seriously considered by the Association?—(*Mr. Laird*) We have no experience, but we would be quite prepared to consider the matter.

E-2274. You would like to consider it favourably?—Yes.

E-2275. It is an established fact, so far as the question of the multiple shift is concerned, that under this system the workers get lower wages, that from the point of view of the mills it is not economical, that there is less check on the workers, that it is inefficient and that corruption prevails. The only argument which I have heard in favour of this system is that if you change from the double shift to the single shift you will have to dismiss a large number of workers. Is there any other argument in favour of this system?—The workers like it. They have two days off and three days off in alternate weeks as against 1½ days in the case of single shift workers.

E-2276. So far as the liking or the disliking of the workers is concerned I am afraid you cannot speak because you have not consulted the workers?—I have consulted 10 per cent of the trade and they strongly protested against going on to the single shift.

E-2277. May I put it that you consulted the workers only through the *sardars*; you did not take the real opinion of the workers?—I think we know the real opinion of the workers. (*Mr. Bruce-Watt*) There are some mills which have gone on to the single shift in our area. If our workers also wanted to go on to the single shift, surely they would have asked for it.

E-2278. I think that cannot be taken as the criterion of the opinion of the workers because, as you know, they are under the thumb of the *sardar*?—To a certain extent only they are, not in all cases.

E-2279. Do you mean that in the mills which have changed from the double shift to the single shift the workers are discontented?—No, because those mills are in certain localities. A certain locality may like the single shift while another locality may like the multiple shift.

E-2280. Which is the locality which you think would like the multiple shift?—The locality where I am in charge.

E-2281. You mean the Barrackpore side?—No; the other side of the river.

E-2282. On the Titaghur side there are mills working on the single shift?—None in Titaghur.

E-2283. Not in Titaghur, but near Titaghur?—No; they are far from Titaghur.

E-2284. Is there any special reason why particular residents of a district like the single shift while others do not?—(*Mr. Laird*) As I have already said, the labour in Titaghur is against the single-shift.

E-2285. That is due to the fear of unemployment?—Because the workers themselves prefer to work on the multiple shift.

E-2286. So far as the question of unemployment is concerned, you will agree that the trade has been expanding every year?—Not for some years.

E-2287. If you take the figures of exports you will find that the trade has been practically expanding every year. A number of new mills have come into the field, and it is quite possible that the looms might have increased since the last census. But looking from the figures of production it appears that the trade has been expanding, and if the trade goes on expanding like that, it is quite reasonable to expect that in the course of time the excess labour which might be thrown out would be absorbed. On the question of further reduction in working hours you say that you are strongly against it?—The Association simply say that they consider the present working hours to be satisfactory. I cannot say anything beyond that.

E-2288. You are neither in favour nor against a further reduction?—The Association think that the present working hours are quite suitable.

E-2289. You make a statement in your memorandum that on account of a reduction in working hours in the past, efficiency has increased. Have you any reason to expect that if the working hours are further reduced there will be a further increase in the efficiency?—Might.

E-2290. Have you made any special effort towards the increase of the efficiency of the workers?—As regards living they get houses; they get water; we have sewage schemes.

E-2291. But you will agree that that is not enough. Suppose you start some sort of a technical institute and train your weavers and spinners, do you think that might increase the efficiency of your workers?—I do not think so.

E-2292. You make a statement in your memorandum that the efficiency of the Indian worker in the jute trade is decidedly inferior to the European worker?—Yes.

E-2293. Have you ever tried to give him more number of looms or to persuade him to do that?—No.

E-2294. In cotton mills a weaver in some cases minds three to four looms, but in the jute mills I do not know of any case where a weaver has worked on more than one loom. I think he can work two looms if he wanted; it is not physically impossible?—I think it is physically impossible.

E-2295. Is it not a fact that in Dundee they work more than one loom?—It is entirely a different climate and much better working.

E-2296. Why is it that while men in Dundee can work more than one loom, in Calcutta they cannot work more than one loom? What is this inefficiency due to? Is it due to lack of education or vitality or climate?—Generally the weaver in this country does not want to work more than one loom. Climate is another chief point.

E-2297. But you have never tried to persuade the worker to work more than one loom?—Never.

E-2298. Do you think he would welcome the establishment of a training institute in Calcutta like the Victoria Technical Institute they have in Bombay?—I imagine so; yes.

E-2299. You make a statement at one place in your memorandum that the workers have a preference for the *bustis* over which you have got no control?—Only certain classes of workers.

E-2300. Is it because the workers are under the thumb of the *sardar* and do not want to displease him by not living in the *bustis*?—That may be, but certain classes prefer the *bustis* because they can have more freedom there.

E-2301. Do you mean to say that they specially prefer *bustis* to the *pucca* built houses provided by the mills?—In some cases they certainly do.

E-2302. And the reason may be due to their being under the influence of the *sardar*?—Partly.

E-2303. You say in your memorandum that crèches would not be welcomed. Do you not think it is rather an unkind remark to make because you have never tried crèches at all?—We have tried in one or two places. We are willing to try them again.

E-2304. *Mr. Clow*: But you say in your memorandum: " . . . no experiments with crèches have in the past been undertaken."—After writing this memorandum we discovered that experiments have been undertaken in two different mills.

E-2305. *Mr. Birla*: You say that the experiment failed?—The women do not like to be separated from their children. We might be able to enforce that, but I think it should be gradual.

E-2306. In the cotton industry they have established crèches in many places and they have been successful?—If you go too hurriedly it is possible that you might force the women out of the mill altogether; they are only 17 per cent employed now.

E-2307. *The Chairman*: Do you not think that you might get more women if they knew that they could leave their children in a safe place instead of taking them inside the mill where there is machinery and dust?—Yes, provided we could get the women to do that.

E-2308. Is it not possible for your Association, now that you have expressed your opinion, to have a sub-committee to investigate these various questions?—Yes. I think you should not experiment this thing at the mills straight away. My own opinion is that it should be tactfully done, otherwise you will drive out the women force.

E-2309. We have heard that over and over again; it does require the initiative, patience and persistent good-will of the employer?—Yes. Our experience in Titaghur is that we started a clinic in 1923 and it was about three years, I think, before we got anything like an appreciable number of women to agree to make use of it; now they come more freely.

E-2310. Are not millowners willing to help one another with their experience?—Yes, they are.

E-2311. *Miss Sorabji*: On the question of the effects of disturbance of sex ratio you say: "The Association has no definite information on this point." Do you recognize the importance of the reference to sex ratio as

affecting the question of recruitment, that is, as affecting family life and as affecting the health of your workers?—It must be very important. Any information I could get on that point I would welcome.

E-2312. Have you made any investigation on the subject of the unattached, that is the non-wife, woman worker?—No.

E-2313. And no units of your Association have made such an investigation to your knowledge?—No.

E-2314. Has your Association any figures to give us as to the number of such women in the mills under your control?—No, I do not think so.

E-2315. Would you say that these women attach themselves to individual men in order to get protection? Where women are greatly in a minority among thousands of men, this is bound to take place?—Yes; I suppose that must happen to some extent.

E-2316. Would the provision of lines for single women solve the question and help to cure the evil to some extent?—It is a very difficult question. I have no experience in this connexion.

E-2317. If the reason why these women attach themselves to men is that they must have some protection as they live among a large number of men. I want to know whether it would not help to cure the situation if single women could live in quarters apart from the men?—I find it very difficult to answer.

E-2318. Let me give you an analogy. We have hostels for girls in Colleges. You have not considered the question?—No.

E-2319. Are you prepared to investigate the question from that angle and to take steps to give this suggestion a chance?—I am taking a note of it and shall put before the Association for consideration.

E-2320. This question, I take it, might profitably be referred to the sub-committee that was suggested by the Chairman?—Yes.

E-2321. *Miss Power*: Dealing with industrial disputes, you give us the terms of the settlement arranged with the assistance of Government between your Association and the Jute Workers' Union. Could we know what steps the Association took to see that its constituent members implemented that undertaking?—I can say that all our members implemented that undertaking.

E-2322. Has the union been informed by the Association of the action taken?—We have never recognized this union and will not do so until they register themselves.

E-2323. But I take it that if you made a settlement with the Government as an intermediary you recognized this union to that extent?—We only dealt with the Government.

E-2324. Have you informed the Government as to the extent to which these terms of settlement have been implemented?—Yes.

E-2325. But you did not feel that you were called upon to inform the union?—Until they get themselves registered we cannot deal with them.

E-2326. Dealing with industrial efficiency from rather a different angle from that of technical education you say: "Dietary, so far as the jute mill workers are concerned, has no direct effect on production." A little further on you say: "Industrial fatigue has not been experienced in any way so far as the jute industry in Bengal is concerned"; and that despite the long hours and your own admission that "during the hot weather months the work is extremely trying in the jute mills." Both of these statements are a negation of the experience gained as a result of extensive research in the field of industrial fatigue in Europe. Probably you realize that because you say at the end: "It is difficult to say what methods should be adopted for securing increased efficiency", that is to say, the efficiency of the workers. Has it ever occurred to your Association, which is a very wealthy one, that it might be worth your while to employ to assist you in that matter some of these highly qualified people who have specialized in research in the field of industrial fatigue?—We find that the efficiency is improving year by year.

E-2327. You are satisfied with the rate of increase of improvement?—Yes, we are satisfied.

E-2328. You do not want to increase the rapidity of that efficiency?— I think it is increasing rapidly.

E-2329. *Mr. Clow*: But you say that in recent years there has been little or no improvement either in quantity or quality of work produced?— If you go back to 15 or 20 years ago you will find that there was an improvement in the quality and the quantity of work produced, but in recent years we find that it has not improved.

E-2330. *Miss Power*: You adhere to the statement that "dietary has no effect upon production" and that "there is no industrial fatigue in the jute industry"?—I think that is substantially correct.

E-2331. On the question of education you make no recommendations of any sort. You merely say that an investigation was undertaken by a certain official whose report would be found incorporated with that of Government?— I understand that that report has been placed before the Royal Commission.

E-2332. Now the question has been put before the public by Government more than once since 1921 in connexion with both primary and technical education of children. Yet there is nothing in the report to indicate that your Association has any policy whatsoever as regards the education of the workers?—I might perhaps explain what our Association thinks. We think that education in Bengal is being run on wrong lines. In Madras 38 per cent of the total is spent on primary education, Bombay spends 52 per cent while Bengal spends only 17 per cent. We do not think it is the duty of the employers to educate the workers, but we are very sympathetic towards this question and are prepared to co-operate with Government in any scheme that is put forward.

E-2333. The Governor of this province, I believe, two days ago in a public speech said that the need of primary education for money presents an incontestable claim?—The figures that I just quoted were taken from that speech only. I have read the speech very carefully and I agree with it entirely.

E-2334. I take it that you are the richest Association in Bengal?—The Association itself is not rich, but many of the mills are.

E-2335. Has the industry as an industry indicated to Government that it would be prepared to give substantial financial assistance in the way of primary education?—It is up to the Government to approach us. We still maintain that it is not our duty to educate our labour. It is for Government to put a proposition in front of us for our sympathetic consideration.

E-2336. You are waiting for Government to give you a direct invitation to assist them in the cost of primary education?—Yes. As I said, we are prepared to sympathetically consider any scheme; but beyond that I cannot commit myself.

E-2337. The Governor has indicated only two days ago that the crux as regards primary education is the question of money?—I repeat that it is not up to the jute mills to educate their labour. They would co-operate with Government in helping them as much as possible.

E-2338. Passing on to another question which has been raised more than once, namely, the question of the reduction of hours. Government is in favour of it and the workers through their union are also in favour of it. Is the statement in which you say: "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 connexion will be taken at the present time", a statement representative of the unanimous views of the managers and the managing agents, or are members of the Association divided on that issue as they are on double and single shifts?—I think it is the unanimous opinion of the Association that the present working hours are most suitable.

E-2339. I suppose in view of that answer it would not be fair for me to ask whether we could hear the views of the other members present. You feel that you are speaking on behalf of all the jute mills who are members of the Association?—Yes. I can commit myself no further than that.

E-2340. Dealing with the question of maternity benefits you say that a definite recommendation was put forward and the mills generally have adopted some form of payment. In view of that acknowledgment, would

your association object to legislation which would make the conditions uniform as between your mills and those mills which are outside your Association?—I do not think there would be any objection, but we ourselves are doing it and we therefore think that legislation is not necessary.

E-2341. Can you say if there is any uniformity?—Very much. Here is a copy of our rules.

(A copy of the rules was handed in.)

E-2342. That, I take it, has been communicated to the Government intermediary in the strike?—Yes.

E-2343. On the question of crèches which Mr. Birla raised just now, you appear to indicate that you have not felt that you could press that matter because the view generally taken by the members of the Jute Mills Association is that a system of crèches would not be welcomed by the workers. But you give us two very interesting instances of experiments in the way of welfare. You say: "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." Further you say: "Recent reports 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." Is there any reason why you should distinguish between the response expected from women workers, if they are properly approached by qualified women, as regards crèches and as regards other forms of welfare, such as health centres and baby clinics?—It will take a long time for crèches to become popular.

E-2344. That is a question of patient education as it has been in the case of Bombay?—Yes; as you know, the question of caste differences come in.

E-2345. Yes, but do you not know that Bombay has gradually overcome these difficulties and has triumphed in the end even though for the first two or three years the crèches were not wholly successful?—If we put a no-caste woman in charge, I think we might overcome that difficulty. We are quite willing to make a start.

E-2346. Might I ask whether your Association would be prepared to lay down a policy for its members as regards the inauguration of crèches in charge of skilled workers?—We are prepared to consider the question of the introduction of crèches.

E-2347. Would you be in favour of any form of legislation which would make the conditions uniform?—We ought to be allowed to experiment it ourselves.

E-2348. Would you not approve of legislation even in an industry which is dependent upon the employment of women during their child bearing years?—Our women labour is disappearing gradually.

E-2349. But our information is that it has increased?—We have 17 per cent of women labour; out of 331,000 workers we only have 53,000 women.

E-2350. *Mr. Clow*: Are you absolutely sure that the number has decreased?—I would not like to be definite about that, but I think it has decreased.

E-2351. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you say: "The employees have a right of appeal to the managing agents." Has any worker ever been known to appeal to a managing agent?—Yes.

E-2352. How does he do that?—By a letter.

E-2353. He sends a letter direct to the managing agents and not through the manager?—No; very often direct to the managing agents.

E-2354. That is very interesting. Could you tell us what sort of complaints are usually made in this way?—The usual complaint is that he has been wrongfully dismissed.

E-2355. What is the procedure adopted by the managing agent; does he refer it back to the manager?—There is an assistant in the managing agent's office who travels up and down to the mills every day. When I get one of these letters I give it to the salesman, that is, to the assistant, who takes it with him and discusses with the manager and finds out all the facts of the case and tells me the result. I then pass final orders.



E-2356. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Has any appeal succeeded?—We find that the manager as a rule is correct.

E-2357. Was there any occasion where the man was found to be correct?—I cannot tell you.

E-2358. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum dealing with methods of recruitment you say that "labour is in good supply all the year round." You will remember that in olden days there was almost a chronic complaint of shortage of labour particularly in certain seasons of the year?—Yes.

E-2359. When did the change occur?—I can almost tell you the exact date—since October 1914.

E-2360. To what do you attribute that?—You will remember that in the past conditions were so bad that many looms had to stand idle in hot weather months?—Wages have increased, of course.

E-2361. Has production gone down?—Production has not gone down. When labour first came to this Province they preferred to work on the railways and on the land. I think probably when they discovered that a little more money was available inside the jute mills they transferred their activities to the jute mills and also brought their friends and relations and settled down in the district more or less.

E-2362. Do you think that the limitation of hours introduced in 1912 had something to do with it?—I do not think so.

E-2363. It rendered the mills more attractive?—It might have had something to do with it, but not very much.

E-2364. Especially in view of the belief held in certain quarters that the jute worker prefers shorter hours even though he gets reduced wages?—This might have applied in the olden days when the hours were unduly long. But the fact remains that since 1914 labour has never been scarce.

E-2365. As regards working the double shift you told us that one reason for maintaining double shifts was your desire to avoid throwing people out of employment. From the commercial point of view what are the reasons which induce those mills which are retaining the double shift to do so?—They want to conserve labour. It is not a commercial proposition at all. It costs us more per ton on double shift than on single shift. Our working costs are higher on a double shift.

E-2366. You want to conserve labour with a view to possible future developments?—We might have to work more hours with the existing mills. We may start new mills at some future date. Therefore we want to have the labour at our disposal.

E-2367. How are the managing agents remunerated? Are they remunerated as a rule on profits or on output?—Some of the oldest concerns—there are very few of them—remunerate the managing agents on sales. But the majority of the concerns pay their managing agents on profits.

E-2368. Has that change taken place recently?—I do not think so. I think the question of remuneration on sales refers to the pioneers of the industry here.

E-2369. I notice from Mr. Foley's report in 1906 that the remuneration then depended on outturn?—That was on sales.

E-2370. In your memorandum dealing with the incidence of accidents in factories you say that "in the majority of cases the workers make the most of the slightest injuries in the hope of getting some compensation"—Yes.

E-2371. But actually your proportion of slight injuries is very far below the figures which one would expect from experience in all other countries of the world?—Nowadays the workmen know the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act and even the slightest accidents are reported.

E-2372. But your percentage of slight accidents is phenomenally low?—It only refers to one particular mill. I could not get the figures for other mills.

E-2373. The number of slight accidents even in that one mill is about equal to the number of serious accidents. That is entirely contradictory to experience elsewhere. It suggests that a large number of slight accidents are not reported?—You will observe that in 1929 the percentage has increased very greatly as people began to understand the Workmen's Compensation Act.

E-2374. That is a development in the last year?—The workers have got a full knowledge of the provisions of the Act.

E-2375. Dealing with the question of contractors you say: "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;" and so on?—That is our opinion.

E-2376. That will mean that any employer by placing a contractor between him and the workmen will be able to escape liability altogether?—Yes, but we assume that the contractor will insure his workers.

E-2377. But surely that would be an obvious loophole for an employer who wanted to evade liability altogether unless in your contract with the contractor you stipulate that the contractor must insure?—(Mr. Laird) As far as the jute mills are concerned contract work is very little.

E-2378. I know, but I am merely saying that a provision like this is a dangerous thing—to ask the contractors to pay?—Certainly.

E-2379. Suppose the hours were limited by statute to ten hours a day without any further limitation, what would be the effect on the mills? Would they abolish the half holiday, for instance, and go on to 6 days of ten hours each?—I think they very likely would.

E-2380. You do not have the practice, I understand, in jute mills of handing over to the weaver any cuts that he has spoiled?—No.

E-2381. What do you do in a case like that?—It is used for outside wrapping of bales.

E-2382. Do you fine the weaver?—If the cut is badly spoiled then he is fined.

E-2383. Not as a general rule?—Not for small faults.

E-2384. We have been told by various cotton mill owners that it is quite impossible to maintain discipline on any other system than this. It would be interesting to know how you get over the same difficulty?—I do not think there are cases of cuts being badly spoiled; I think they are very few indeed.

E-2385. It is more difficult to spoil a cut in a jute mill?—Yes, it is much coarser than cotton.

E-2386. You never had such a system in jute mills?—No.

E-2387. Will you be opposed to a system of standardisation of jute mill wages? Has that ever been considered?—We do not think it is feasible from many points of view. Conditions are different in different centres. One mill provides housing accommodation for all their workers whereas another mill provides none whatever. One mill provides good water, another mill provides no water.

E-2388. Take the piece workers. Will it be possible in their case?—For the same reasons, no. I do not say it is impossible, but I do not think it would be feasible on account of the varying conditions in different mills.

E-2389. Mr. Murray: You said that the single shift working eliminated to a large extent the power of the *sardar*?—(Mr. Murray) Yes.

E-2390. How does that come about?—Simply because the European assistant in charge gets to know his workers and it is impossible for the *sardar* to dismiss or take on workers as he pleases.

E-2391. In the case of double shift working you have only got a percentage more?—But they are changing over all the time throughout the day.

E-2392. To get to know the workers here also does not seem to be an insuperable thing?—The assistant goes out and comes back and finds new faces on the same machine. It is not possible to know the workers so easily.

E-2393. Is not the power of the *sardar* in the ordinary mill due to the fact that he is or that the worker believes he is in a position to engage a man or dismiss him as he pleases?—He cannot do that in a single shift mill.

E-2394. Why should he do that in a double shift mill?—It is more difficult to check the workers in a double shift mill.

E-2395. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: I should like to pursue the subject of single shift and double shift for a little while. It has been stated that there are many advantages to the industry in the single shift system in the way of greater production, smaller number of men, greater supervision and less chance of corruption. But still 50 per cent of the mills are working on double shift. Why is that? The only one reason that has been given is that you do not wish to displace the labour that you have employed for working a double shift system and you want a reserve?—(*Mr. Laird*) It is true up to a point. We also say that we are convinced that our labour like it in those particular districts.

E-2396. You will agree that the managing agents are the trustees for the shareholders?—Yes.

E-2397. If that is so, are the managing agents justified in working a system which is obviously to the disadvantage of the industry?—We have got to consider our labour as well as our shareholders.

E-2398. You want to be paying your labour for an indefinite period of time before you may expand. There is no definite time within which you would extend your factory and in the meantime you keep on paying labour which you do not require for efficient working. Do you think that is discharging your duties as trustees?—We do require that labour for efficient working.

E-2399. You have repeatedly told us that you can eliminate 10 to 20 per cent of your workmen if you work on a single shift system. Therefore you are paying 10 to 20 per cent more men in the off-chance that at some future date you will expand your mills and require the services of these men?—I am afraid that is not the only reason.

E-2400. What are the other reasons?—50 per cent of the mills do not agree that single shift working is the correct way to work a mill.

E-2401. It has been actually admitted by managers who have tried both the systems that the single shift system is more advantageous?—There are rumours of more mills going on to a multiple shift from a single shift.

E-2402. In your memorandum you say:—

“ Our trouble so far has been the total absence of *bona fide* grievances on the part of the workers, and . . . unless negotiations are possible as between employers and employees, the misunderstandings are bound to obtain.”

Has your Association taken any measures to adopt any machinery for negotiations between employers and employees?—The managers are accessible to all labour. I refer there to exceptional circumstances when all the workers went out without formulating their grievances. They simply stopped work and left the mill.

E-2403. Have you got any means for collective negotiation between the employers and the employees?—We encourage the workers to come to us if they have *bona fide* grievances.

E-2404. Is there any organization among your workmen to speak collectively for all?—There is no union. Our trouble is the total absence of *bona fide* grievances on the part of workmen.

E-2405. I am asking whether there are opportunities for workmen for collective negotiation with the employers. There are none, I presume?—There are none.

E-2406. With regard to the last strike it is stated in your memorandum "the great majority are willing to work if intimidation is stopped and protection provided". Have you any constructive suggestions to put forward to meet this point?—The protection we wanted in this case was police protection. The workers wanted to resume work, but they were intimidated.

E-2407. Do you think that Government can maintain adequate police force to meet such contingencies?—At any rate they could have provided more than they gave us in this particular case. In addition to that Government should prohibit the meeting of members of unregistered unions in jute mill areas.

E-2408. Did not the Bengal Government prohibit meetings here?—That was only in certain districts. As far as I can see it depends on the Magistrate of the particular district.

E-2409. Is it your opinion that a minority of workers intimidated the majority of workers and prevented them from working?—Yes.

E-2410. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Have they a right to persuade others not to work?—I do not think so.

E-2411. Have you a right to prevent a man from being employed in any mill or refusing him employment?—If he wants to work and if there is work we give him.

E-2412. You can refuse to employ him?—We can refuse to employ him.

E-2413. Similarly has not the worker got the right to persuade another worker not to work?—It is not a question of persuasion at all.

*The Chairman*: The whole question is whether it is peaceful persuasion.

*The witness (Mr. Laird)*: It is an entirely different thing from preventing people from going to work and assaulting men and threatening women with molestation.

E-2414. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Has your Association any constructive suggestion to meet the situation when a minority of workers intimidate the majority and prevent them from going to work?—All that we have done is a little counter propaganda. Beyond that we have no constructive suggestion to offer as an Association.

E-2415. *The Chairman*: Mr. Laird, I will only pursue a single subject at the present stage. You have been good enough in reply to many of my colleagues to indicate your willingness as an Association to go into a number of suggestions for the welfare of your work-people?—Yes.

E-2416. In some cases you expressed doubts as to the attitude of the workers themselves and I gather from your memorandum that when the unhappy events of last year took place you were really unaware of the minds of your workers?—Absolutely.

E-2417. And it came to you as a surprise that the change to 60 hours raised so many difficulties?—Very great surprise.

E-2418. Is it possible for the manager of a mill where such a large number of workers of different races and creeds are employed to have a real intimate knowledge of the minds of the workers?—Undoubtedly it is possible.

E-2419. Along with all the technical work that he has to carry out?—I think so, yes.

E-2420. When you engage your managers do you require them to learn the language or languages of the people within a certain period?—I do not think we have done that all the time. They get a bonus of a lump sum if they pass certain Government examinations in the local languages. They generally come as under-managers and before they become managers they learn the language of the workers.

E-2421. In connection with a number of these things that go to make up the welfare of the workers and particularly in the question of the alleged exaction of the *sardars* you have told us that a great deal goes on without your knowledge?—Yes.

E-2422. Do you not think that it would pay you well to have a labour employment officer whose special duty should be moving about amongst the people both inside the works and perhaps more outside in the lines and the *bustis*, understand what they were thinking and feeling and to have direct daily access to the manager without any intermediary, so that the

manager may be perfectly apprised of the thoughts and feelings of the workers so that he may meet them before they develop into trouble?—A good deal would depend on who the employment officer was. He would certainly need to be a European.

E-2423. It would greatly depend on his personality. Such men do exist, not confined to any one race. A great deal would depend on the salary paid to him?—A very great deal.

E-2424. Would you be prepared to agree that attention to the personnel and securing of contentment of the personnel is pretty nearly as important as the quality of your raw material or the fitness of your machinery?—At once, undoubtedly.

E-2425. In that case a man who is able to achieve such results would, looking from a purely commercial point of view, be well worth the salary which would presumably secure the man of the qualities we are considering?—There is no question about that.

E-2426. If the men were available in sufficient numbers?—Yes.

E-2427. Then again the supply of the men would in all probability depend on the openings that there were for them?—Yes.

E-2428. Do you not think that it would be possible in India, if there was a demand from all industrial undertakings employing say over 1,000 or 2,000 workers for such an officer, that steps would be taken to meet that demand and provide men of sufficient quality?—I think it would be well worth while. As I said a very great deal depends on the type of man and I still think that he should be a European.

E-2429. There is a feeling that so many of these things that are sometimes attempted as experiments by employers of good will do not succeed?—Because there has not been the means to let the workers feel that it was their own job and that it was not something thrown at them from above. The necessary consultation and discussion among the men themselves have not taken place beforehand. You have stated that the Indian is very conservative and liable to be suspicious of everything new however good the intentions may be?—Very suspicious.

E-2430. Do you think that it is at least an avenue worth exploring in order to achieve more contentment and well being for the workers not only in their little grievances inside the works but outside in their daily life?—Undoubtedly yes.

E-2431. Would not such things as a co-operative credit society within the mills to get them out of the hands of the money-lenders depend on the spade work of such an officer in gradually convincing the people that it was for their good and that it was not anything they need be suspicious about?—He will have a great deal to do in such matters.

E-2432. Are you aware that in your own neighbourhood we are told that there are at least two cases where such an attempt has been made and resulted in success?—I have heard of one, but I am very sceptical about it.

E-2433. There is one which we have not seen—the one in a jute mill to which you are referring. I would not say anything about it. There is the case of the Government Rifle Factory which is close up against the jute mills where we are told this experiment has resulted in success. All I want to put to you at the present stage is that possibly some of you might experiment in that direction?—I am very glad that this particular experiment has been successful. If it is correct we shall try that. But as I say I am very sceptical about it.

E-2434. At any rate you are not content to go along in a sort of jealous isolation mill by mill and not learn from one another whether by successes or failures?—This particular mill is not in our association.

E-2435. So I understand. That is not to say necessarily they are unwilling to allow their successes to be examined by others. Is it?—Any information which I have personally tried to get from this mill has been refused.

E-2436. Anyhow you are prepared yourself or your association to explore the possibilities of that idea?—We will give very serious consideration to that idea.

E-2437. You can quite see how it will help you in dealing with genuine trade unionism. It would help you on the other hand to deal with non-genuine trade unionism?—Yes.

E-2438. At least when a time came when you felt any change was necessary you would have the means of knowing the real feelings of the workers not simply after they have gone out on strike?—Yes.

E-2439. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I think it is admitted that men working on single shift earn more wages than men working on multiple shifts?—No.

E-2440. Does a weaver on the single shift make no more than a weaver on the multiple shift taking into consideration the extra hours apart from the question of extra efficiency?—Not a penny more.

E-2441. But he works more hours?—Yes, a weaver on the single shift works more hours.

E-2442. Yet he earns the same amount of money as one on the double shift?—Yes, that has been my experience.

E-2443. You pay the men working on multiple shifts for shorter time on piece-work?—Yes.

E-2444. Would you expect an individual weaver to make no more money if he worked longer hours?—I do not think he can make any more money.

E-2445. How do you explain that? Is he not on piece work?—Because in a multiple shift there are daily weavers at the rate of one weaver for four looms. He keeps the looms going for 1½ hours out of 6 hours. The relieving hand is a daily worker whereas the weaver gets paid for every yard of cloth that comes out of the loom.

E-2446. You think that he gets paid for the same amount of production on the multiple shift working as he would on the single shift working for longer hours?—That is my contention.

E-2447. Is that the information of those who are on single shifts?—(*Mr. Murray*) That only applies to daily weavers.

E-2448. Let us take a spinner. He is on time work. He works more hours on a single shift than on a multiple shift?—Yes.

E-2449. Is he paid more for working longer hours?—Yes.

E-2450. Therefore a time worker gets more money if he works longer hours. If as *Divan Chaman Lall* maintained the wages were so low how would you account for the fact that they refuse to go on single shift when they could earn more money?—They are earning a little less but they like shorter hours.

E-2451. They cannot be so terribly hungry if they preferred to get less by working shorter hours. The wage that they get must be a subsistence wage?—I quite agree.

E-2452. Is it your point that they must be getting a subsistence wage or else they would be prepared to work harder?—Yes.

E-2453. *Divan Chaman Lall*: Have you seen the report of the Government of Bengal on the indebtedness of your jute workers which shows that they are in a chronic state of indebtedness? It does not mean therefore that they are getting a subsistence wage?—It only affects a certain percentage of our workers.

E-2454. It refers to 80 per cent of your workers. I think?—I think only about 18 per cent of our workers are indebted to any great extent.

E-2455. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Your cost per ton is lower on a single shift than on a multiple shift?—Yes.

E-2456. In spite of that you have a multiple shift because you think it is more beneficial to labour?—Yes.

E-2457. You can raise the wages of labour without increasing the cost of production by changing over from multiple shift to single shift?—Yes.

E-2458. If your only view is to benefit labour why should you not raise wages by changing over from multiple shifts to single shift as long as your cost per ton does not increase?—It also depends on the district in which the mill is situated and the class of labour working there. We want also to conserve our labour for any future expansion of mills.

E-2459. Perhaps one of the reasons why you would like to continue multiple shifts is not because you are thinking so much of keeping your labour for any future expansion of mills but because you have foreseen the possibility of greater production out of your existing mills?—It was also at the back of my mind.

E-2460. That possibility has perhaps influenced you more than the expansion of new mills later on?—It may be so.

E-2461. With regard to crèches I understood you to say that one of the difficulties was that your women workers did not like leaving their children outside and they wanted to take them in with them?—Yes.

E-2462. We were told the other day by the representatives of Messrs. Bird & Co., that in the case of coal labour none of the women took their children with them there. How is it that women who are working on coal should be prepared to leave their children outside whereas a similar class of labour, namely, the women jute workers, are not prepared to leave their children outside the mills?—In the case of women carrying coal they cannot take their children with them, but in the case of women jute workers they can take their children with them.

E-2463. It is more convenient in one case and inconvenient in the other. If you made a rule that women should not bring them into the mill and should leave them in the crèches to be provided by you why should you be afraid of losing your women labour?—16 per cent of our labour force are women and they are working with their husbands and children in the mill. If you made a rule like that you would be disturbing their family life.

E-2464. Is not the position exactly the same at the coal berths?—It is impossible for them to take the children to the coal berths.

E-2465. What about their family life? They are also working there with their husbands. I am suggesting that it is not likely that you interfere with family life in one instance and do not interfere with it in another. If you made a rule and enforced it that no children should be brought into the mill and that they should be left in the crèches, how would you lose your women labour?—I do not think there can be a proper comparison between a jute mill and a coal berth.

E-2466. Are they different class of people? They are all working in Calcutta?—I do not know what the coal people are.

E-2467. With regard to payment of compensation to workmen under the Workmen's Compensation Act would you have any objection in the case of a workman who was sufficiently seriously injured that it would not be possible for him to go back to work for a month to pay compensation dating back to the first day of the accident?—We would have no objection to that whatever.

E-2468. *Sir Alexander Murran*: Before 1912 when the Factories Act of that year came into force the mills were working 15 hours a day or 90 hours a week. The machinery was running 90 hours. Under the 1912 Act the hours were reduced to 81 per week. At that time some of the mills went on single shift and have remained so ever since?—I think three mills, Lansdowne, Union North and Union South did that.

E-2469. Since then hardly one year elapsed when the mills did not change from four days to five days a week or five days to six days a week and so on at different intervals?—Yes.

E-2470. In some years there were three changes?—Yes.

E-2471. It was never suggested then that the mills should change from single shift for some months to double shift for some months and *vice versa*, but they kept on working whatever shifts they were on no matter whether they were working four days or five days or six days a week?—That was so.

E-2472. Will you explain on what basis you paid the bonus to your workers when you came down from six days a week to five days a week and from five days to four days a week?—Taking the standard fabric of 40 Hessian, on a six-day week we paid 2 annas for the first 9 cuts and 3 annas for the 10th cut; on a five-day week we paid 2 annas for the first 8 cuts and 3 annas for the 9th cut. When we came down to four days we paid 2 annas for the first 6 cuts and 3 annas for the 7th cut,

E-2473. Between the years 1900 and 1921 I notice from the statement you have given you have changed your system sometimes twice or three times a year?—Yes.

E-2474. And there was no trouble of any description during all those changes?—None whatever.

E-2475. In 1929 when you made the last change the weavers had been drawing bonus on the basis of a stent of 6 cuts for 4 days?—Yes.

E-2476. Therefore when you went up to five days it was but natural that the stent should be put to 8 cuts for five days?—Yes.

E-2477. If it was so simple as that about what did the strike arise?—It started at one group of mills. This particular mill took the benefit of half a cut instead of distributing it to the workers. The workers complained to the mill authorities and they put it right at once. But the Bengal Jute Workers' Union for some reason or other brought about a strike.

E-2478. Are you speaking on correct information, for the information I got from that mill in the vicinity of which we were the other day was that the workers objected to changing the stent from 9 cuts in 54 hours to 10 cuts in 60 hours which was not more than a proportionate increase?—I do not think that was the point.

E-2479. At any rate the settlement that was arrived at through the intervention of Government was on the basis that the number of cuts for five days should be the same as the number for four days?—Yes. They also got a proportionate increase in *khoraki*.

E-2480. In your memorandum you give figures of the amounts of remittance sent from the post office at Titaghur where there has been no extension of jute mills since 1910 and where the population has likewise remained more or less stationary?—In 1913 Kennison No. II was opened.

E-2481. The figures show that the amount of remittance varies in the different years?—Yes.

E-2482. A perusal of those figures in connexion with the figures regarding the number of days worked per week in the different years shows that every time you increased the number of days worked per week the amount of remittance increased. For instance the amounts of remittance in 1915 and 1916 when you worked six days a week were greater than those in years when you worked four days and five days a week?—Yes.

E-2483. That would seem to show that there is a direct gain to the workers in working six days a week?—I think it must follow.

E-2484. Reference has been made to the right of appeal to the managing agents. How long have you been acting as a managing agent yourself?—Four years just now. Previous to that I was connected with the mill from 1908 to 1926.

E-2485. You were connected with the mill for 18 years before you became a managing agent. What was your daily routine in those days?—I was a salesman most of the time. I used to go to the mill in the evening, stay there overnight, attend the mill in the morning between 5-30 and 10-30 a.m. and then come back to the office at Calcutta.

E-2486. I think it is almost a universal practice in all the mills and makes it possible for the managing agent to keep in close touch with what goes on in the mill?—Yes, very close touch indeed.

E-2487. Were the workers permitted to talk to you on any matter they liked?—Yes.

E-2488. Do salesmen generally know the language of the workers?—With one or two exceptions salesmen generally have a very good knowledge of the language of the workers.

E-2489. Mr. Williamson, how many years were you an assistant manager before you became manager?—(Mr. Williamson) Nine years. I came out as assistant manager.

E-2490. Therefore you had plenty of opportunities to learn the language of your workers before responsibility actually rested upon you?—Plenty. I have never had anything interpreted to me yet.

E-2491. Mr. Cliff: Would your Association have welcomed intervention in the last dispute?—No, certainly not.



E-2492. Did you not approach Government?—No, Government, approached us.

E-2493. The Government say that, first of all, your Chairman, and later on a representative of the managing agents, approached the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Police Department?—Yes, we asked for police protection.

E-2494. The Government say: "In spite of the action taken by district and subdivisional authorities to prevent illegal intimidation, the workers in the mills concerned would not go back. Indeed the strike spread. Once it began to spread it developed so rapidly that the issue of intimidation was submerged." Do you agree with that?—Absolutely.

E-2495. The Government in defence of their action say: "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." Surely the Government were justified in intervening under those circumstances?—I suppose they were, but we held the opinion that the Government should not have intervened between the strikers and ourselves.

E-2496. Surely your Association is not going to protest against what was their obvious duty of intervening when they were faced with a situation like that?—It is a question of principle. We think we should have been given more time to try to settle the matter ourselves. The position was undoubtedly very serious, and Government was probably justified in doing what they did, but we objected to it. We objected to the terms of settlement.

E-2497. If you thought that the Government were justified in doing what they did, how can you object to their doing what appeared to them to be their duty?—It was a question of peace then.

E-2498. That was the way of obtaining peace, according to the Government?—What we objected to were the terms of settlement. Our workers went back having got something for which they never asked.

E-2499. We were told yesterday in evidence that there was a meeting of the workers on the 12th March; that they sent resolutions to the Government, and that they also sent resolutions to the managing agents of the local mills?—Yes.

E-2500. The resolution which was quoted yesterday was as follows: "In view of the misunderstanding likely to arise over the adoption of a 60-hour week in the jute industry from the 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 workers." We are told that that was sent to some of the managing agents. The resolution was acknowledged, but none of the managing agents were willing to discuss the change from 54 to 60 hours, and the consequent change in wages. Is that true?—So far as I know it is not true. That can only refer to one group of mills.

E-2501. It is the particular group where the union was actually operating?—I do not know anything about that.

E-2502. If a trade union calls attention to a matter nearly three months previously and asks for a discussion and the agents of the particular mills to which the resolution was sent refuse to discuss it, can that course of action on the part of the agents be defended?—No, certainly not.

E-2503. The final sentence of the terms of reference to this Royal Commission, which terms were sent to your Association, places upon the Commission the duty of making recommendations. Dealing with part of the terms which deals with the relations between employers and employed, may I ask in what way your Association suggests that it can help this Commission to arrive at a proper recommendation?—By recommending that we get into close touch with our labour through welfare work.

E-2504. You think it should be by closer contact between the management and the workers and that there should be an extension of the welfare work which has been taken up in certain mills?—Yes.

E-2505. Speaking generally with regard to the terms of reference have you any other suggestions with which you can aid the Commission in order that they may make recommendations?—I shall need time to think over it.

E-2506. I have been reading very carefully your memorandum and as far as I can see it seems to suggest merely a policy of inaction. I fail

to find any help from it?—I am afraid there has been a certain amount of apathy over the whole matter, but I will put up your suggestion to the committee and to members and see what we can put forward.

E-2507. The Chairman has put to you many points which, you have said, your Association will willingly consider. With a view to assist the Commission will your Association consider these points and let us have their advice?—It is not a matter for the committee. It is a matter of getting an expression of opinion from all members, which we will take steps to do.

E-2508. *The Chairman*: Or of getting authority from the whole of your members for your executive to deal with certain matters?—I do not think we can do that, but we can put up recommendations from the committee for the consideration of members which I do not think will be turned down.

E-2509. *Mr. Cliff*: I gather from your memorandum that you have objection to standardization of wages?—Decidedly so. We do not think it is feasible.

E-2510. It seems to me on reading the record of the recent dispute that the fact that you have not standardized wages for equal conditions has apparently caused trouble. May I make this suggestion to you? The standardization of wages does not necessarily mean a uniform wage right throughout the industry, but a standardized wage might cover the points which you put up as difficulties. Would it not be better for your Association to give consideration to the question of wages being standardized relating to the particular conditions which obtain in different localities?—I think that now in different localities the wages are practically the same.

*Mr. Cliff*: Probably there is a rough attempt, but if you are going to satisfy the work-people it does appear that it would be well to have a regular agreement covering the whole of the wages.

E-2511. It seems to me, with regard to the rules of your Association, that a generous interpretation would cover the consideration of all the points which have been put in front of you to-day?—I do not think they were meant to cover them.

E-2512. They were not meant to, but they were laid down in 1902, and this is 1930. Dealing with the question of bribery is it not possible to stamp out bribery by collective action on the part of your Association?—It is very difficult.

E-2513. Is there going to be a real radical beginning in the matter without collective action on the part of your Association?—The mills are starting in that direction now. I do not think they will ever stamp out bribery altogether, but I think it will be reduced to a minimum very soon.

E-2514. I can quite imagine that individual mills might sustain loss in trying to stamp it out. Could there not be a policy of insurance with your Association in order to meet any deficit that might be incurred in the matter?—No.

E-2515. The trouble I see with your Association is that with regard to questions affecting work-people there is real difficulty in getting you to take collective action?—We never have taken collective action.

E-2516. *The Chairman*: You have suggested to-day that you will consider the possibility of taking collective action?—Yes, in matters pertaining to welfare, but in regard to wages and bribery, I can see endless difficulty. There will have to be individual action to begin with.

E-2517. *Mr. Cliff*: I will leave it that you promise to consider the matter as an Association?—I will bring it up before the committee.

E-2518. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Here is a statement made by Mr. Ray Chaudhuri: "In 1925 the reserve funds which have come out of profits amounted to 22 crores, and when reserve funds and profits are added together the total gain to the shareholders in the ten years 1915-1924 reached the enormous total of £300 millions sterling or 90 per cent per annum on the capital . . . A profit of £300 millions taken from 300,000 workers in ten years means £1,000 per head. That means £100 a year from each worker, and as the average wage is about £12-10-0 per head, it means that the average annual profit is eight times the wages bill." Is that a correct statement?—I have not any idea whether it is correct or not. All these statements must change with the conditions of trade.

E-2519. The statement refers to a period of ten years 1915-1925?—Those were very prosperous years.

E-2520. Whether they were prosperous or not, is the statement correct?—I cannot say whether it is or not.

E-2521. Have you seen this report?—I have not.

E-2522. Can you tell us what is the proportion of overhead charges as compared with the labour wages bill?—It is about 55 per cent.

E-2523. Can you send us a statement showing actually how you work out that figure?—I will send it later on.

E-2524. Will you look at this statement giving the number of mills, looms, number of workers, block account, reserve fund and profits from 1920 to 1928 (handing statement to witness); is that a correct statement?—How can I answer that?

E-2525. Will you give me the total capital sunk in the industry divided up according to your preference shares, ordinary shares and debenture capital?—I have the figures here. Ordinary capital £10,108,485; preference £4,822,850; debentures £2,410,650; reserve and other funds including depreciation, £29,425,022.

E-2526. *Mr. Cliff*: What does the reserve represent?—Money set aside.

E-2527. Does it represent physical assets?—Yes.

*Diwan Chaman Lall*: Does it include block account?—Yes. Profit and loss carried forward, £957,605; total £47,724,612. That does not include the Angus Mill or Hastings or Ludlow or some newer flotations.

E-2528. Would it not be easy for you to give us the total profits from 1920 to 1928?—You can get them more easily from the "Capital".

E-2529. I was only trying to save time?—You will get it quicker from the "Capital" than you would from us. The Association does not deal with these figures at all.

E-2530. *Mr. Clow*: Does the "Capital" give the figures of the profits of the companies registered in England?—Yes.

E-2531. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Have you included in those figures the depreciation written off from the profits?—Yes.

E-2532. Referring to the question of indebtedness, what was the figure which you gave the Commission about indebtedness?—I do not think we gave the Commission any figure. We gave a figure to the Banking Enquiry Commission.

E-2533. What was the figure?—It was that about 20 per cent of the labour were indebted.

E-2534. Here is a report of the Inspector of Co-operative Societies, Calcutta, on special duty; he says; "Over 80 per cent of the labourers are indebted." That is for the Titaghur area. "The average debt of one labourer would be about Rs. 40. There are, however, instances of a single man's debt being Rs. 200 or over." Then he says with regard to Bhatpara area that about 80 per cent of the mill operatives are indebted, their average debt being also between Rs. 20 and Rs. 40 per head. He says further: "I doubt if a single labourer will be solvent enough to remit a farthing home if he fails to get loans and procure necessaries on credit"?—I do not agree with that.

E-2535. He says: "It is really inconceivable that a poor labourer who earns Rs. 5 on the average per week should be at all in a position to remit any portion home from his saving. These illiterate, heedless, and irresponsible men are able to send money home because they get loans, at whatever interest it might be, and get things on credit of whatever quality and price these might be"?—I do not think that is a statement of fact at all.

E-2536. Have you made any private enquiries into this matter?—We have talked to our workers. We know what they remit. I am certain that the figure of 80 per cent is far too high.

E-2537. You have made no special enquiry?—We have not the facilities for doing so.

E-2538. Can you tell me what your Association intends to do in regard to the terms of reference of this Royal Commission; what does your Association intend to do in order to improve the standard of living of the workers?—We intend to give effect, as far as possible, to the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

E-2539. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you know that the Trade Disputes Bill was passed only a few months ago?—Yes.

E-2540. Do you approve of it?—Yes.

E-2541. And will you loyally abide by its provisions?—We have no option in the matter.

E-2542. Do you welcome negotiation as a means of settling differences and misunderstandings between employers and employed; are you willing that some machinery should be set up for doing so?—We prefer to do it ourselves if possible.

E-2543. Have you not tried many times to do it, but failed?—Never before.

E-2544. This particular case to which you refer is the only instance in which you have failed?—Yes.

E-2545. Since you are prepared loyally to carry out the provisions of the Trade Disputes Bill are you prepared to accept also the principle of negotiation in any disputes which may arise between employers and employed?—We have no option in the matter. The Bill is in existence.

E-2546. Would you recognize a trade union?—Most certainly, if it is registered. We have no option there either.

E-2547. *Mr. Ahmed*: You are in touch with what is done by the International Labour Office at Geneva, are you not?—I am afraid I am not.

E-2548. Do you as head of your Association not keep managers of mills informed as to up-to-date legislation in the matter of labour?—I am afraid not.

E-2549. Are you in favour of educating workers?—Undoubtedly.

E-2550. What steps has your Association taken in the matter?—I do not think it is a question for the Association. It is a question for Government.

E-2551. *Colonel Russell*: Are maternity benefits now being paid in some form or another, in most mills?—Yes.

E-2552. You say that the report of birth of a child is made to the *sardar*. Would it not be better if the report of a birth was made to a lady medical officer? Do you think it reasonable that a woman worker should report the birth of a child to a *sardar*?—I do not think in actual practice the woman does so; the birth is generally reported by her husband or a relative.

E-2553. What is meant by the sentence: "In the event of any trouble or doubt the mill doctor will make enquiries?" I understand that the mill doctor only visits once a week?—It is the European doctor who visits once a week. The Indian doctor is there all the time.

E-2554. What is the trouble or doubt to which you refer?—The report of the birth may not be true.

E-2555. How can a man find that out; would it not be easier for a woman doctor to find it out?—I think Indians can find it out accurately. What other way is there of doing it? We had a case recently where the same woman applied for maternity benefit twice within three months.

E-2556. May you not get over the difficulty by employing a lady doctor or a trained health visitor? In describing the system of payment what do you mean by the "The 5th payment being a special payment?"—A woman is supposed to get four payments, and if she is still unwell there may be a 5th or a 6th payment.

E-2557. When we were taking evidence at one of your mills the other day a woman worker told us that during her 12 years' service in the mill she had had three children, and that on each occasion, when she returned to the mill, she had to pay Rs. 4 to the *sardars*?—I think that woman was speaking the truth.

E-2558. I understand that you would approve of the establishment of crèches in mills?—Yes.

E-2559. In your memorandum you describe the activities of the health centre and clinic at Titaghur. If you were developing welfare work of this kind you would have to obtain trained women workers with salaries on the scale you have quoted. Generally are members of your Association prepared to extend this form of welfare?—Yes, they are extending it.

E-2560. *Mr. Tassie*: On the question of whether the mills are prepared to spend money on education, does it strike you that if the millhands became educated they would cease to be millhands and join the large number of educated unemployed?—It strikes me forcibly that that is what would happen.

E-2561. Is it not the idea of the mills, first of all, to improve the health conditions before spending money on education?—I think primary education should be extended on the same lines as in other provinces.

E-2562. By Government?—Yes.

E-2563. Have the mills not spent a great deal of money on health schemes and sewage schemes?—Certain members of the Association have contributed Rs. 30,44,000 for municipal improvement schemes in various districts, and other schemes are under consideration.

E-2564. Do you find that you are assisted by the local authorities in these schemes?—That has not been our experience so far as Titaghur is concerned. (*Mr. Williamson*) We had a considerable amount of trouble because the local municipality objected to our running the effluent into the river. The plant was delivered and has been on site for about four years. It was decided to put the effluent on to the land. Land was acquired by certain interested parties with the ultimate intention of its being sold to us, but we could not buy it at the figure we were prepared to pay.

E-2565. *Colonel Russell*: Does not the local Government interfere in cases like that?—We had a conference with the public health authorities but they would not move in the matter. The local municipality would not sanction the scheme.

E-2566. *Mr. Tassie*: Cannot the local Government insist on a scheme of that sort being put through?—I have no idea what the powers of the local authority in that connection are. (*Mr. Laird*) In Titaghur the Government acquired the land for the sewage farm.

E-2567. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In your memorandum you give figures as to remittances from Titaghur in 1928. You give the number of jute mill workers as 45,000 and the amount of remittances as 7½ lakhs; and it comes to Rs. 16 per head per annum?—Yes, but I do not think it all comes from the jute mills.

E-2568. Then it would be less than Rs. 16 per head per annum which would be 5 annas per week.

E-2569. *The Chairman*: I suppose some of them take money with them when they go on their annual leave?—Yes; they take it and they send it.

E-2570. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Among your clerks at your head offices you have co-operative credit societies?—No, we do not.

E-2571. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Would you be prepared to advance loans at low rates of interest to a properly constituted co-operative credit society under Government control in your own mills?—That is a matter for consideration; I cannot reply to that offhand.

E-2572. You know that millhands are fleeced by shop-keepers; they are given adulterated food at very high prices?—Yes.

E-2573. If the Union places before individual mills such as yours—not the Indian Jute Mills Association—a good scheme for a co-operative stores would you be prepared to help it by giving advances at low rates of interest?—I think we would consider that very favourably.

E-2574. If the Union puts before you a scheme of co-operative housing on land near your mill and under the supervision of the co-operative housing society, would you help that?—Personally, I would say no; we are prepared to build our own houses.

E-2575. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: How many Government aided hospitals are there from Titaghur to Naihati, which is an area of 14 miles, where the majority of the jute mills are situated?—Not more than two or three.

E-2576. Do you consider that is adequate?—No, I think it is inadequate.

E-2577. Have you ever addressed Government on this subject with a view to the provision of more hospitals in districts such as Naihati and Titaghur where there is a great demand for them?—Not that I can recollect.

E-2578. Are there any Government aided schools for the children of the workers in the district extending from Titaghur to Naihati?—Yes, there are schools.

E-2579. Do you think the unemployment which you tell us at present exists is due to the change from the double shift to the single shift system, or is it due to there being plenty of labour?—It is generally due to there being plenty of labour.

E-2580. You do not think it is due to the change from the multiple to the single shift system?—Not now.

E-2581. In the course of the strike were any grievances submitted?—No.

E-2582. Then the strike must have been due merely to intimidation?—There were some grievances which were put right; there were irregularities such as are bound to happen with the change of working hours; we adjusted those irregularities.

E-2583. *Miss Sorabji*: My information is that workers with slight injuries due to accident make those injuries worse by the application of mud or cow-dung and by removing the dressings which they have been given at the dispensaries. Then when blood poisoning sets in the *Baboo* may get into trouble for entering the injury as slight. My information is that the tendency now therefore is to enter all injuries as serious so as to be on the safe side. Is that within your knowledge; it must affect the record of accidents?—To a very small extent I think.

E-2584. You have heard of the practice?—I have heard of it, yes.

E-2585. What is your experience of workers in regard to safety in using machinery?—They are not particularly careful, but that has been counteracted to a great extent by very elaborate fencing on the part of the Factory Inspection Department and it is becoming more elaborate as time goes on.

E-2586. Is the known indifference to death and the belief in fatalism of Hindus and Mussalmans likely to make Indian workers less careful than English workers?—I think they are on the whole more careless.

E-2587. If the grounds of defence to claims in regard to permanent total or permanent partial disablement under section 3 of the Workmen's Compensation Act were removed, would that not tend to aggravate carelessness?—I think it would.

E-2588. That being so, do you wish these grounds of defence to be retained in the Act or removed?—Retained.

E-2589. With regard to welfare work among women I gather you approve of a labour officer such as was described to you by the Chairman this afternoon?—Yes.

E-2590. Would you not also advise the employment of a woman labour officer to get into personal contact with the women, to persuade them to accept all the benefits that you are providing for them, to send their children to crèches and to see generally that everything possible was done for them, all such ancillary work being based on the establishment of more effective contact?—We agree we must have a woman in charge of the crèche.

E-2591. That is the woman executive officer who must be there looking after the children all the time, but would you not like to tie all your welfare work together, so to speak, by the employment of one woman officer who would go from house to house, be in personal contact with the women and persuade them to accept the good things you have to offer?—I think it will be necessary to see how things work with the man officer; the employment of a woman officer would probably come sooner or later if the work of the man officer was a success.

E-2592. But the man officer would be working on a rather different basis?—There are very few women; at the present time they are only 17 per cent of the workers.

E-2593. However good may be the things you have to offer people, you have to make them want those things before they will accept them?—Yes. I think it is a question for consideration.

E-2594. Do you think groups of mills would be likely to combine both as to the services of such an officer and as to the services of a good whole time woman doctor?—I do not think they would combine; I think it would have to be done individually.

E-2595. If it were done collectively you could have a whole time supervising officer?—I think you will want a whole time officer for each particular mill.

E-2596. *Miss Power*: Have you any suggestions as to how you could help the administration to overcome the difficulty of preventing the double employment of children?—I think it is gradually solving itself. The children are being driven out of the mills so quickly that in a year's time I do not think there will be any double employment of children. The only children who are employed are half-time shifters in the spinning department; the mills are concentrating on getting full-time shifters and children are disappearing very quickly.

E-2597. Is it the policy of the Association to eliminate children altogether?—It is the policy of the Factory Inspector; he tries to get us to eliminate children. I think probably it is a pity. There are only 17,000 children in the whole of the trade now.

E-2598. When a child reaches the age of 15 he becomes under the Act an adult and his hours jump from 6 to 11; that is a very big increase. The Senior Certifying Surgeon says: "In my opinion persons between the ages of 11 and 17 years employed in textile factories need official supervision and some degree of protection. I have observed a large number of young persons obviously unfitted for full time work actually working but I am unable to prevent it". Do you think it would be possible with the medical facilities at your disposal to arrange for children of 15 to have a medical examination to see whether they are physically fit to go on to full time employment and thus prevent a child going straight from half time to full time working when his physical equipment is obviously unsuited to it?—I should think it would be possible.

E-2599. Could your Association give that matter consideration?—Yes. Of course there are very few of them and I think it is a matter for the Certifying Surgeons.

E-2600. The Certifying Surgeon has not necessarily the powers to do it, but you could do it voluntarily through your own medical officers?—Yes.

E-2601. It would probably mean your keeping a child a little longer on half time if his physique was obviously backward?—Yes. Probably he would not be willing to stay on half time.

E-2602. Has any mill ever tried a production bonus scheme?—We have production bonus schemes, but they do not apply to the workers generally. For instance, all weavers and winders have a production bonus.

E-2603. How long has that been in operation?—As long as I can remember.

E-2604. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In your memorandum you say: "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 Re. 1 per room per month or as low as 4 annas per room per month". Do you know what rent the *sardar* charges for similar accommodation in his *busti*?—About the same; there is very little difference.

E-2605. Is the distance between the mill and the *sardars' chawls* very great or is it about the same distance as your lines?—A little further as a rule but not appreciably.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**BENGAL**  
(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)  
**SEVENTY-FIFTH MEETING**  
**CALCUTTA**  
Thursday, 13th February 1930.

PRESENT :

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

<p>Sir VICTOR SASSOON, <i>Bart.</i> Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, <i>Kt.</i>, K.O.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, <i>Kt.</i>, C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.</p>		<p>Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. DIWAN CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Miss B. M. LE POER POWRE. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., <i>Medical Assessor</i>.</p>
<p>Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice- President, Indian Chamber of Commerce. Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDURI, M.L.C. Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.</p>	}	<p><i>Assistant Commissioners.</i></p>
<p>Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, <i>Lady Assessor</i>. Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. Mr. A. DIBDIN.</p>	}	<p><i>Joint Secretaries.</i></p>

**Mr. R. P. ADAMS, Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal.**  
**Mr. J. B. McBRIDE, Senior Inspector of Factories.**  
**Mr. R. C. PARSONS, Inspector of Factories, Bengal.**  
**Mr. T. B. GLOVER, Inspector of Factories, Bengal.**  
**Captain W. O'CONNOR, Senior Whole Time Certifying  
Surgeon of Factories, Bengal.**

E-2606. *The Chairman*: What is the length of your experience, Mr. Adams?—(*Mr. Adams*) I have had 17 years' experience as Chief Inspector of Factories.

E-2607. *Mr. Clow*: Dealing with the question of unregistered factories you say "The majority of these factories are badly situated and they are structurally not designed for the housing of machinery and employees," but you go on to say that the difficulty is "that compulsory fencing and structural alterations would probably precipitate liquidation"?—Not compulsory fencing.

E-2608. You say: "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"?—What I mean is structural alterations.

E-2609. Is that an argument for refusing to bring these factories within the scope of the Act?—There is no useful purpose as far as I can see for doing so.

E-2610. Do you mean to say that, if structurally the walls of a factory are unsafe for carrying machinery, that is an argument for not bringing them under the Act?—It is not a question of being unsafe.

E-2611. It is in some cases. There was an instance of a house which fell down at Amritsar?—There may be a few such cases, but it is not generally the case.

E-2612. You state: "No case regarding the abuse of the fining system has ever been reported to this department". Do you think it is likely that it would be reported?—No.

E-2613. You have no powers to deal with it even if it were reported?—No.



E-2614. You deal with the very important subject of the inadequacy of the fines secured in factory prosecutions and the delays in procedure. Do you know whether in any case the Local Government have moved the High Court or any superior court to enhance fines?—No, in no case have they done so.

E-2615. Have you suggested that?—No.

E-2616. Do you not think it would be worth trying?—The question of inadequacy of fines has been sent up to Government on one or two occasions.

E-2617. If you were able to persuade the High Court that the fine was inadequate, and if they were to enhance it and give their views, might it not act as a lead to magistrates throughout the country?—Possibly it might; it has done so in Bombay.

E-2618. Do you think there would be any advantage in having a special magistrate for factory prosecutions—say in the Hooghly area?—Certainly.

E-2619. Would it be useful to have a section in the Act saying that on a second conviction there should be a minimum fine of so much, unless the magistrate thinks there is a special reason to the contrary?—Yes.

E-2620. I want to turn to your direct suggestions in connexion with the Factory Act. You give a general review of the position in which you think that the Indian Factories Act has not been evolved. You are probably aware of the history of Indian Factories legislation?—Yes.

E-2621. You remember that we began with the question of children in 1881. We went on to deal with the question of women in 1891. Then very bitter experience showed us the necessity of protecting an adult male labourer who was then working 14½ or 15 hours a day; steps were taken in that direction in 1911. The earlier Acts made a distinction between textile and non-textile factories; that distinction was abolished in 1921. There were amendments made in 1923 and 1926; on the latter occasion there was a conference in which you participated.—In face of all that do you think it is accurate to say that the Act has not been evolved and to suggest, as you do here, that it is a tame copy of English law?—Totally no.

E-2622. That is what you say?—No, I do not say it has been totally evolved.

E-2623. You say: "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. The Act, foreign in form, has been imposed on workers and establishments not parties to this evolution, and so the present position resolves itself into an attempt at enforcing something in advance of Indian industrial conditions."—The whole scheme was originally English. India started off with the 1881 Act which was practically modelled on the lines of the English Act of 1878.

E-2624. That dealt only with children. There was a radical departure from English procedure in introducing the principle of limitation of hours for adult males in textile factories.—So far as I can see the suggestions which follow seem to suggest that India should follow England more than she is doing at present, and not go further away from English practice.—All I can say is that you want to go a long way away from the amendments which were introduced in 1922.

E-2625. Which cannot be enforced?—I am talking of 1922 amendments. Most of the amendments of the 1922 Act cannot be enforced.

E-2626. Tell us them?—Sections 26, 27, 28, so far as the adult male labour is concerned: section 35 dealing with registers, and section 25 dealing with children working in two factories in one day.

E-2627. Let us take, first, section 25 dealing with children working in two factories. Do you say it is impossible to prevent that?—Yes.

E-2628. But they seem to have been successful elsewhere?—The conditions in other provinces are not the same as they are in this province.

E-2629. What is your remedy?—It is difficult to find one. Educate the children.

E-2630. Do you seriously suggest that children must be allowed to be employed without any restriction in two factories in one day unless every body is educated?—No, I do not say we should allow that. What I say is that we cannot prevent it.

E-2631. We are dealing now with the amendments of the Act. You say that that amendment should not have been made. As a matter of fact I do not think it was brought in in 1922. It was earlier, was it not?—Possibly it was.

E-2632. What do you suggest in its place?—You find fault with the section?—I do not find so much fault with that particular section; the sections I find fault with are the section which I have particularly noted in my written evidence. I do not think section 25 is mentioned in my written evidence.

E-2633. No, but, I asked you for the sections just now and you mentioned section 25. Let us turn to section 26. You suggest abolishing the register so far as adult male workers are concerned. Suppose that is done. How do you propose to enforce the weekly limit of hours?—We propose that factories should fix standard working hours, and that all work done outside those standard hours should be registered in an overtime register.

E-2634. Take the fairly numerous classes of factories which are working on continuous processes for 24 hours a day. How do you propose to enforce the weekly limit if you have no register of hours during which the workers are employed?—We propose a register with the hours laid down in it, not an attendance register.

E-2635. But you do propose the specific hours within which workers are to be employed?—Standard working hours, not specified hours.

E-2636. Take the case of a flour mill working three shifts of eight hours; what do you propose in that case?—There will be a register. The register will contain the names of the persons employed. They are working in eight-hour shifts. A shift is for one period of from 8 o'clock to 4 o'clock, B shift is another period from 4 o'clock to 12 o'clock and so on.

E-2637. Then you are specifying the shifts?—Yes, but not overtime hours.

E-2638. How will you know to which shift a man belongs?—His name is in the register.

E-2639. Then you are specifying the shifts?—That is a register of persons and not an attendance register. Section 26 lays down specified hours for the employment of each person employed in the factory. That is all. What we are asking for now is an attendance register of employees under normal working hours.

E-2640. I am not asking you what you are wanting; I am asking what is the section to which you object. I will come to section 35 later on. I am dealing with section 26 at present.—We want to specify normal working hours. Section 26 specifies the actual working hours including overtime.

E-2641. No; it says: "Shall fix the specified hours for the employment of each person employed in the factory".—"And no person shall work during those hours."

E-2642. Outside those hours?—Beyond those hours.

E-2643. That is what you are doing when you are saying "We must know who is employed between 8 o'clock and 4 o'clock, between 4 o'clock and 12 o'clock" and so on.—What about the people who work outside the hours of the factory?

E-2644. What do you mean by "outside the hours of the factory"?—I mean if there is a factory working from eight in the morning till five in the evening—persons employed before and after those hours.

E-2645. Let us deal with the case of continuous process factories—factories working 24 hours a day. Take another instance. Suppose you have no register of hours during which a man is being employed; how are you to satisfy yourself that he is getting the prescribed intervals?—Because his normal hours are specified, and he works during those hours only.

E-2646. But the interval need not be given to every employee at the same time?—The normal working hours and the rest hours must be noted in the register.

E-2647. How do you know which persons are enjoying each particular rest period?—The register tells us that.

E-2648. My point is that without section 26 you would not have that?—You would have that in compliance with section 35.

E-2649. Section 35 is another section which you say is unworkable. I am dealing with section 26 at present. Let us go on to section 28, another section which you say is unworkable. You propose to abolish the daily limit for men?—Yes.

E-2650. I am not dealing at present with whether it is desirable or not on general grounds. I do not understand why, if it is workable to enforce a daily limit for women, it is not possible to do it for men?—Because women are never allowed to work outside the normal hours of a factory.

E-2651. Taking section 35, surely you had in mind mainly those factories in which the working days are short ones, like engineering works?—No, all factories.

E-2652. *The Chairman*: May I take it, Mr. Adams, that your objection to section 35 arises out of your strong view against the multiple shift system?—No, my objection concerns all factories.

E-2653. *Mr. Clow*: You say: "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." You remember taking part in discussions which were held in 1924 on the control of temperature, and you recollect the proposal put before the Assembly afterwards and the rejection by the select committee and the subsequent discussion with the Local Government?—Yes.

E-2654. Is it not a little hard to suggest that the question has been entirely overlooked?—In the Act.

E-2655. What do you mean by saying there has been "a too strict adherence to European conditions" in this connexion? After all the British Act does provide for control of temperature?—Yes, but the climatic conditions are quite different at Home from what they are here.

E-2656. You say in this respect, in omitting a reference to temperature, that there has been "a too strict adherence to European conditions"?—At Home the requirements are exactly opposite to what they are here.

E-2657. I do not quite see how the present form of the Act indicates too strict an adherence to European conditions in respect of temperature; the Act says nothing about it?—The Act should include a provision in order to enable us to control the temperature.

E-2658. In other words you move a little nearer towards European conditions?—Is it coming nearer really? I suppose it is in a way.

E-2659. I think your proposal is coming a little nearer. Your proposal, which I think on the whole is a sound one, is that the Chief Inspector or Inspector should be empowered "to enforce simple structural alterations or other simple improvements in factories where the temperature is obviously excessive and irremediable by simple means". The word "simple" occurs three times; who is going to be the judge of whether it is simple or not?—The Inspector of the Factories.

E-2660. Is that not rather a dangerous power to give him? My opinion of "simple" might differ from the opinion of many of my colleagues?—We have never abused our powers up till now.

E-2661. Surely the employer is entitled to say "What safeguards have I against being required to incur expenditure which is unreasonable in the circumstances"? Would you allow an appeal to the Local Government against the Inspector's orders?—Certainly.

E-2662. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What do you mean by the distinction you draw in Appendix M to your memorandum between English and Indian labour?—The workers in India have had no say in framing the Factories Act.

E-2663. Has the effect been that the law has been much in advance of the times?—Yes.

E-2664. What has been the actual effect of that on the industries?—Difficulty in administration, that the Act cannot be enforced in regard to control of working hours of labour particularly.

E-2665. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you mean that the labour will not help you?—Yes. We never get any assistance from labour; we usually get opposition in regard to enforcing working hours.

E-2666. *The Chairman*: I think Mr. Adams' point is that in India up to the present there has not been sufficient organisation on the part of the

workers in taking a large share in seeing that the law is observed; and it has therefore rested wholly on his department, which is not sufficiently staffed, to deal with such complicated law?—That is quite correct. We have never succeeded in getting a worker into court to give evidence on our behalf. We have had complaints from workers in regard to overworking, we have discovered that excess hours have been worked; we have taken the case into court and then the same workers have come into court and supported the manager of the factory.

E-2667. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Is it not due to the fact that the workers are always afraid of getting the sack?—That may be so.

E-2668. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What do you mean when you recommend a definition of "Managing Agent" in the Act?—We want the managing agents so defined that we shall know whom we can prosecute in addition to the manager in the factory; in other words we want to know who is the occupier of the factory as well as the manager.

E-2669. Are not the names of the managing agents' firms very well known?—We cannot prosecute a firm of managing agents; we cannot prosecute, for instance, Bird & Co.; we have to name a partner or some one in the firm who is responsible for running the factory in respect of which one wishes to prosecute.

E-2670. *The Chairman*: Your point is that if the real authority within a factory resides in a person in a managing agent's office, he should take legal responsibility and not be able to put the responsibility on the manager?—Yes, that is the point.

E-2671. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You have also stated that factory legislation in England is based on a spirit of compromise between the employers and employed?—Yes.

E-2672. In making your suggestions with regard to the amendment of the Factories Act have you taken into consideration that spirit of compromise which should prevail between employers and employees?—Yes, of course.

E-2673. Do you think that the effect of this further amendment will be salutary from the point of view of both employers and employees?—What I think is that if regulations are introduced on similar lines to those which are introduced at Home, Government will have the opinions of the industries concerned, regulations will be framed to suit industries or groups of industries and the persons concerned in those industries will be consulted in the framing of those regulations. These regulations would include all the main provisions of the Act and would abolish numerous exemptions which the Inspectors themselves have now to frame or advise Government upon.

E-2674. Have you considered the cumulative effect of all the amendments which you propose both on the efficiency of labour and the cost of production?—Yes.

E-2675. In Appendix H you point out that between 1920-21 and 1928 the number of children employed has decreased from 30,000 to 18,000. Do you think the effect of these recommendations having regard to cost of production would be such as to cause ultimately the elimination of child and woman labour from factories?—No.

E-2676. Why has this substantial reduction already taken place since the present Factories Act dealing with child labour was enacted?—Because mills have been trying to keep the children out of their factories in order to avoid prosecutions.

E-2677. In the past the husband, wife and grown-up children worked and their combined wages enabled the family to keep going, but if as the result of your recommendations women and children are no longer employed the whole burden of maintaining the family may be placed on the wages of the husband. If that is so, the workers will require higher wages and will be likely to strike if higher wages are not paid because the male adult worker will then have to earn sufficient to maintain his wife and children. Could the industry afford it? Have you considered the cumulative effect of all these measures on the industry and on labour?—Because children of employable age are being driven out of the factory it does not necessarily follow that the women will also be thrown out of employment.

E-2678. Will not the further factory legislation which you propose with regard to the employment of women have a similar effect to that produced by the Factories Act of 1922 in regard to the employment of children?—No.

E-2679. Do you propose that in any further legislation that may be undertaken consideration should be given to this aspect of the question?—Certainly.

E-2680. Are managers transferring their own guilt in breaking the Factories Act on to the shoulders of subordinates?—Yes, that is almost universal now; in practically all cases the manager transfers his guilt to a subordinate.

E-2681. And the law at present is powerless to bring home the guilt to the real party?—Yes, we have not succeeded in showing that the manager himself is responsible; in all cases we have taken up he has been able without much difficulty to transfer his guilt to a subordinate, which of course means a small fine.

E-2682. *Mr. Joshi*: In Calcutta where a number of people are seeking employment, partly owing to the mills changing from the multiple shift to the single shift system, would it not be to the convenience of the workers to have a public employment agency with an office in a central place communicating with employers, finding out which mills have vacancies and giving that information to workers seeking employment?—I do not think so, because if there are any vacancies anywhere in the industrial area the workers get to know about it without any employment agency. In addition to that, so long as these people are being employed by *sardars* there is no hope of their getting employment except through the *sardars*.

E-2683. But perhaps the *sardar* system exists because there is no public employment agency; if there were a public employment agency the worker would be able to approach the manager directly?—The corruption which obtains amongst the *sardars* would probably grow up in an employment agency.

E-2684. With reference to what you say as to maternity benefits, why should the ignorance of the workers cause them to be averse to taking wages at the time of confinement?—They are not averse to taking wages, but they are averse to going to a clinic.

E-2685. If the Maternity Act took the form of providing clinics and similar benefits in kind the people would be averse, but if the maternity benefit were given in cash the people would like it?—Yes; as soon as they realized the benefits they undoubtedly would.

E-2686. With regard to accidents you say that "in most cases the Indian workers themselves or their colleagues were largely responsible for the accidents or they were victims of circumstances which could not be foreseen". Do you make this statement as the result of enquiries which you yourself have made or have you taken this statement from the employers?—We make our own enquiries.

E-2687. Do you investigate every accident?—Not every accident, but all serious and fatal accidents. We do not investigate all the slight accidents. If there are any accidents, even if they are slight, when the Inspector visits the factory it is his duty to enquire into them. It is the duty of the Inspector to enquire into all accidents.

E-2688. Have you sufficient Inspectors to enquire into every accident that takes place?—Not immediately.

E-2689. Whenever an Inspector goes to inspect a factory he enquires into accidents?—Yes, and when the report of an accident comes in, the Inspector is in a position to judge at once as to whether it is necessary to enquire into it or not.

E-2690. What percentage of accidents are investigated by your Inspectors at some time or other?—Practically all the serious and fatal accidents are investigated.

E-2691. But the statement which I have quoted does not refer only to serious accidents?—A large number of accidents are small cuts and bruises; you would not expect an Inspector to be sent to a factory to enquire into things of that kind.

E-2692. Referring to Appendix K, when you give exemptions in respect of preparatory or complementary work, do you make it a point to lay down certain conditions which will compensate the worker?—Yes. The compensation varies in different processes. In all cases compensation is given to the worker; in every case conditions are arranged according to the class of work. We have no exemptions for preparatory or complementary work.

E-2693. You propose 55 hours' work per week; would not 54 hours be more convenient, giving 10 hours a day and 4 hours on Saturday, while in other cases there could be six days of nine hours?—It is merely a suggestion; I could agree to 54. The idea of suggesting ten hours for five days and five hours on Saturday was that the five hours for children would work in with the ten hours for women.

E-2694. *Miss Power*: With regard to prosecutions, do you think the smallness of the fine of which you complain has anything to do with the employer being able to pass the guilt on to a subordinate?—In many cases.

E-2695. If there were a clause in the Act which made it possible to prosecute both the subordinate who might be directly responsible and the manager as the person who must ultimately take the responsibility for his subordinate officer's actions, do you think you would be able to get higher fines?—Yes.

E-2696. You realise that is already done in certain industrial legislation in England?—Yes.

E-2697. Would you also suggest a minimum fine for a second offence as a way of getting over the difficulty of inadequate fines?—Yes.

E-2698. What sort of minimum would you suggest? You have to take into consideration both the large and small units; you could hardly distinguish between the two in that legislation?—It is difficult to say. Fines might be imposed in proportion to the numbers of persons employed; for instance, there might be a minimum fine for every 100 persons employed.

E-2699. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: You would not do it on the basis of the character of the offence?—I do not think so.

E-2700. Would it be on the basis of the number employed, leaving out of consideration the character of the offence?—Both should be considered.

E-2701. *Mr. Clow*: If 200 persons are being employed illegally, it is possible to bring into court 200 cases?—It is possible.

E-2702. *Miss Power*: Do you not do that?—We have tried to bring a number of cases, but we have never succeeded. The Magistrates take so little interest in the working of the Act that they will impose an absurd fine. Although we have sent up as many as 30 or more names the fines imposed are often less than could be imposed for one case.

E-2703. But could you not do what we frequently do in England: lay informations in respect of a large number of workers, take one typical case and deal with that and then have the fines spread over the number of informations laid?—No.

E-2704. You never do that?—No.

E-2705. We visited a factory with you the other day in respect of which you informed us that there had been as many as eight prosecutions, but we found that the employer held and had continuously held for some years public contracts. Do you think it would be possible to have a clause in the Factories Act making it impossible for anybody who had been prosecuted more than, say, twice, to hold a public contract?—Yes. I do not attach much importance to that, but there is no objection to it.

E-2706. Is that very common?—No; that is the only case that has come to my notice.

E-2707. Your memorandum implies that you are not very sympathetic to the extension of the Act to unregulated places although both the Certifying Surgeon and the Director of Industries are very strongly in favour of it. Would you be in favour of it with regard to places employing twenty or more persons where no power machinery is installed?—Yes.

E-2708. Provided that you could exercise the same sympathetic administration that you have done in respect of new legislation in the past?—Yes.

E-2709. *Mr. Clow*: Would it ease your difficulties if in extending the Act to that kind of factory only certain sections of the Act and not the whole Act were applied?—Yes, that is what I mean by regulations.

E-2710. *Miss Power*: Can you let us know the number of infractions under the different clauses of the Act and the number of prosecutions instituted?—In one particular district the number of infractions detected last year was something over 8,000; they were practically all employment infractions.

E-2711. Who determines whether there shall be a prosecution; does that lie with the individual inspector or with you?—It is sanctioned by me.

E-2712. You determine whether there shall be a prosecution or not?—Yes; that is a departmental order; the inspector has full powers.

E-2713. *The Chairman*: I presume those were infractions discovered by your inspectors?—Yes.

E-2714. How many prosecutions followed from the detection of those 8,000 infractions?—34 cases. Each case may involve more than one person.

E-2715. The 8,000 infractions were with regard to individual persons?—Yes.

E-2716. Then the two things do not quite correspond?—No. One case cannot include more than three persons because you can only take up three persons in one case.

E-2717. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In that list of 8,000 were there many cases of more than three?—Yes; we sometimes send up 10 or 20 or 30 persons as one case. That is only dealt with as one case and the maximum fine for that is Rs. 500.

E-2718. To take an extreme case: if a factory employing 8,000 workers was working at 8 o'clock when it ought to have stopped at 7 o'clock that would be 8,000 infractions?—Yes, if the inspector had time to take down the 8,000 names on his particular visit. These 8,000 infractions are infractions which have been noted by the inspector and as to which he has collected sufficient evidence in his opinion to take the case to court.

E-2719. *Miss Power*: With regard to recruitment of inspectors, have you any difficulty in getting the type of inspector you want for this work?—We have had difficulty in the past.

E-2720. Do you anticipate any difficulty in the future if you have to increase the staff?—I do not think so.

E-2721. You imply in your memorandum that it is possible to have direct recruitment to the inspector's grade?—Yes.

E-2722. Does the possible block in the promotion of an assistant inspector affect the type of man you can get as assistant?—No; up-to-date assistant inspectors have not quite the same qualifications as are possessed by inspectors.

E-2723. Does that mean that a large number of assistant inspectors, if there were such, would be unable to become inspectors after a considerable length of service?—No, it does not mean that. One of our assistant inspectors who was appointed about four years ago has already been promoted to the grade of inspector.

E-2724. Is there any reason why you should appoint as assistant inspectors people with lower qualifications than are required in the grade to which they may justly look for their promotion?—It is the policy of Government to Indianize the staff and we take in Indians as assistant inspectors; they do not possess the qualifications that we require for the senior grade, but after they have been trained in the department, if they are considered suitable, they are open to promotion.

E-2725. Quite apart from the question of Indianizing the service, why do you appoint Indians with lower qualifications? Is it not possible to get Indian assistant inspectors who have the necessary qualifications?—No, we cannot get them with the necessary practical training.

E-2726. *Mr. Joshi*: What are the general qualifications for the position of inspector?—They must be trained engineers, having served the full apprenticeship as an engineer; they must possess some academic qualifications and have had subsequent experience in practical engineering.

E-2727. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Do you mean to say you cannot get an Indian with practical experience of engineering or with the necessary academic qualifications?—We have advertised twice within the last year or so and we have had none.

E-2728. *Mr. Joshi*: Do you state in your advertisement that you want men with engineering experience?—Yes; the qualifications are stated in detail.

E-2729. *Miss Power*: With regard to the people you appoint, who do not possess that engineering experience, are they blocked for the rest of their career and do they have to remain permanently assistant inspectors?—No; we have already promoted one man who came in as an assistant.

E-2730. Without the engineering qualification?—He had a certain amount of engineering training; he had had two years' apprenticeship.

E-2731. You say it is impossible for managers or inspectors to detect the double employment of children. At Ahmedabad we were told by the inspector that he had broken the back of the double employment problem in the cotton mills of Ahmedabad. One of the reasons which he gave was the additional assistance given to the inspector by the clause enabling him to prosecute the parent. What difference is there between the parent in Calcutta and the parent in Ahmedabad which makes it impossible for you to use that clause here?—In Bengal the parent never exists. He is either dead or you cannot find him. It is also difficult to prove connivance. We have never had a case.

E-2732. *The Chairman*: You have never tried a case?—We have tried to get evidence against parents or against the manager or any one whom we considered might be responsible.

E-2733. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Must the parent's connivance be proved?—Yes.

E-2734. *Miss Sorabji*: From what you have said in regard to maternity benefit, I gather you do not mean that the woman worker is averse to taking the money but that she has yet to be persuaded to make use of the provisions which would alone make the benefit effective?—That is quite right.

E-2735. That is the use of *dais* and of anti-natal and post-natal care?—Yes.

E-2736. What does a Factory Inspector ordinarily do under the Factories Act?—Assuming he knows nothing about the factory, the first thing he does is to satisfy himself as to the working hours; then he would look into sanitary matters, lighting, fencing of machinery, safety of buildings, maintenance of employment registers, records as to how the people had been employed in the past months or weeks, as to whether they had been working in excess of the hours permitted, if children are employed, as to whether they are granted certificates and as to whether they are working in accordance with the hours permitted.

E-2737. Do you consider that women inspectors would serve a useful purpose in factories?—I do not think so in India.

E-2738. Would you not agree that in factories you want a somewhat different woman officer from the usual Factory Inspector; that you want a woman officer to serve the interests of women and children particularly, not necessarily to look after the provisions with regard to safety and other matters?—Yes, I suggest that if any ladies are appointed they should be attached to the Public Health Department and their duties should be confined to welfare work.

E-2739. Would you suggest some one who could help to keep children out of the mills, to see to the working of the regulations in so far as they affect women and children, who would explain the necessity of safety precautions, help to check the register of all dependants under the Workmen's Compensation Act, and would generally help to make industrial legislation more effective in regard to women and children?—There is no possible hope of a woman inspector or a male inspector regulating labour in jute mills under the existing system. I would not advise any increase in expenditure under the present circumstances. I think it is a matter which should be taken up when the Act is amended, if it is amended.

E-2740. It was suggested that it was through the fault of the employers that the Apprentices Act had become a dead letter. I suppose under the Act as it stands there is nothing to prevent applications being made to any employers by guardians or orphan children, or in respect of children in charitable institutions, asking that the section of the Apprentices Act, which provides for employment, should be applied?—I do not know anything about the Apprentices Act.

E-2741. *Mr. Sew Kissen Bhattar*: Why do you propose that the multiple shift should be made illegal?—Because you cannot regulate the labour with an overlapping shift system.



E-2742. But we have been told by a very experienced manager that he can do so?—I do not believe he could ever do it.

E-2743. In Appendix M, you say that "the managing agents usurp the functions of the manager in many ways". What are the many ways?—The managing agents dictate the system under which the manager has to employ his labour.

E-2744. Do you not think it is sufficient to prosecute a manager and that the managing agents should not be dragged into it?—No.

E-2745. Then why not prosecute the whole of the staff?—I would prosecute the whole of the managing agents if I could, but I never get a chance to do so.

E-2746. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In view of the present housing conditions of the workers, do you not think the Factories Act should be so amended as to empower inspectors to enquire into the sanitary conditions to which the workers are subject outside the factories?—That is a matter which is in the hands of the municipalities. We should require powers to compel municipalities to carry out our recommendations; they will not do so at the present time.

E-2747. You are concerned with the health of the workers?—Yes.

E-2748. The health of the worker may be protected while he is in the factory, but for 14 hours a day he is outside the factory and is living under extremely insanitary conditions?—It would be very good if it could be worked in conjunction with the municipalities.

E-2749. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you mean that the Factory Inspector should have power to go into the worker's private house and tell him his house is not built in the proper way?—I suppose *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri* is referring to drainage and that sort of thing.

*Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Yes.

E-2750. *The Chairman*: Would you not then be overlapping the work of the Sanitary Inspector?—Yes.

E-2751. Is it not better for each man to stick to his last?—Certainly.

E-2752. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: The housing of the workers should be regarded as part of the industrial concern. You have suggested in your memorandum that people who arrive at the factory at 5-30 must leave their homes very early?—Yes.

E-2753. Do you know that in the south of Calcutta a large number of Bengalis live in their own cottages three or four miles from the factory and if they are to be at the factory at 5-30 they cannot possibly take any meal before they start?—Yes. I believe that is so.

E-2754. Having to walk three or five miles to the factory they have to get up at 3-30?—That is part of my complaint.

E-2755. Is that a reason for continuing the double shift system?—I do not see why that should be so.

E-2756. Under the double shift system some of them start at 9 o'clock?—I should change those hours. Why should they not start at 6 in the morning or 6-30 instead of 5-30, and why should they not stop at 6 or 6-30 in the evening?

E-2757. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do not some of these people prefer multiple shifts because it means a shorter week?—I very much doubt that; I think the managing agents prefer that.

E-2758. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Twenty-two per cent of the labour is local labour, many of whom have to walk 3 to 6 miles to the factory; do you not think it is to suit their convenience that the double shift system is maintained?—I am absolutely certain it is not.

E-2759. *Mr. Tassie*: You referred to the fact that you have difficulty in getting the labour to assist you in carrying out the provisions of the Act; do you not think that this difficulty and many of your other difficulties in carrying out the Act are due to the fact that most of the factory legislation in India is a slavish copy of western legislation and that Indian conditions have not been sufficiently seriously considered?—Yes. It is a question of regulations.

E-2760. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: How many European and Indian inspectors have you in your department?—Five European inspectors, one Indian inspector and three Indian assistant inspectors.

E-2761. What work do the inspectors and assistant inspectors do?—The inspector has full powers under the Act; the assistant inspector has full powers with the exception of one or two sections, particularly sections 18A and 19A.

E-2762. Apart from the fact that the inspector has full powers while the assistant inspector has not full powers, the work is the same?—Yes, except that the inspector is responsible.

E-2763. The only difference is the difference of responsibility?—Yes.

E-2764. Have you ever appointed an Indian direct to be inspector?—No.

E-2765. Have you appointed Europeans directly as inspectors?—Yes.

E-2766. Do any of those Europeans whom you appoint directly as inspectors pass an examination in any of the vernaculars?—Yes, all of them.

E-2767. Why do you not promote from amongst the assistant inspectors who are Indians?—We have done so and we do so.

E-2768. You have done so in one instance?—Yes.

E-2769. How many years has it taken you to promote one?—I think he was about two years in the department before he was appointed.

E-2770. That is the only case?—All the others are more junior; he was the first appointed. That is the only case.

E-2771. You say in your memorandum that the worker is completely employed in the business of keeping his job. May not that be one of the reasons why you are not able to get the worker to come and give evidence when you institute a prosecution?—That is the reason.

E-2772. Have you any objection to the hours of work per day being reduced to eight?—You do not want to kill the goose that lays the golden egg; you have got to go gradually.

E-2773. Do you seriously mean to imply that the goose that lays the golden egg would be killed if the hours per day were reduced from ten to eight?—Not in the jute mills.

E-2774. *The Chairman*: Do you think it will be possible to have one law for one industry and another law for another industry?—That is precisely the difficulty I have in mind. The fundamental conditions to be laid down in the Act would apply to all industries, but there might be separate regulations applying to separate industries.

E-2775. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: With regard to hours of work what is your experience of the cotton industry?—We have about 16 cotton mills in this province and we find no difficulty with regard to them; they all work the single shift.

E-2776. Would it not increase the efficiency of the worker if you laid down a daily limit of eight hours for the cotton mills?—I do not know.

E-2777. If a worker has to walk two or three miles from his *busti* to the factory and then work ten hours in the factory it gives him no time for home life or recreation?—Yes.

E-2778. Would it not be better to give him some time for recreation and home life, thereby possibly increasing his efficiency both as a citizen and as a worker?—It may be desirable, but you have to take the industry into account and consider whether the industry can stand it or not. These workers of whom Mr. Chaudhuri spoke who have to come from long distances are the workers in a few mills in a particular area.

E-2779. Apart from the question of whether the industry can afford to pay, from your point of view as Chief Inspector of Factories, would it not be better for the worker to have leisure and home life?—Of course.

E-2780. Would it not be better if his hours of work could be reduced to eight hours?—Of course.

E-2781. *The Chairman*: I suppose you would qualify that by a proviso that it did not throw the industry out of business?—Yes. I was asked by Mr. Chaman Lall to leave aside the question of industry altogether.

E-2782. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: On the question of fines you say: "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" (you are referring not only to children but to all the labourers,

I take it?—Yes) “and that fines do not exceed 5 per cent of the employees’ wages 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.” Have you any objection to this system being legalized; that is to say, restricting the fines to a certain percentage of the wages?—There is no object in doing it. It is not abused and is not likely to be abused.

E-2783. The difficulty is this: Sometimes you hitch yourself on to industries throughout India in your replies and sometimes you restrict yourself to the jute industry. You say that the jute industry here is working on that basis and therefore legislation is not necessary. But there are other industries. If the jute industry is working on that basis, what objection have you to its legalization?—I have not confined my remarks entirely to the jute industry.

E-2784. I suppose there were instances, or instances might arise, in which particular jute mills did not work up to these specifications. Would it not be desirable to have legislation?—The workers themselves would prevent any abuse of the fining system.

E-2785. Suppose the workers are not powerful enough to prevent it?—My experience tells me that they are.

E-2786. They are obviously not powerful enough to get their wages increased?—I think they have had them increased.

E-2787. Once in how many years?—I think there has been an increase of 20 to 30 per cent since the war. In lots of industries it goes up nearly as high as 60 per cent.

E-2788. What is the average?—I cannot tell you.

E-2789. Will it be 20 to 30 per cent?—At least 20 to 30 per cent.

E-2790. That is the position since the war?—Yes.

E-2791. It does not show that the workers are powerful enough because where an industry is in a position to quadruple their wages they have not been able to get that done. What I am driving at is this: Granted all the factors that you suggest, would it not be desirable, if you agree that it is a good thing, to have legislation? After all you are depending upon the good-will of the employer and upon the fear of a strike. The conditions to-day have changed. In former times there was definitely a shortage of labour, but there is no shortage of labour now. Therefore the bargaining power of the workers has minimized. Instead of depending upon the good-will of the employer, would you not, if you think it is a desirable thing, agree that it would be better to have legislation?—If the evils become rampant then legislation will of course be necessary, but my experience is that there is no necessity for legislation in that direction.

E-2792. *Mr. Cliff*: You are proposing that the present Factories Act should be extended to wharves, jetties, docks, railway sidings, warehouses, quays, and buildings under construction?—Yes, by regulations.

E-2793. By regulations under the Act to be made by the Provincial Government?—No, by the Governor-General in Council.

E-2794. With regard to the extension of the Act to other factories, I take it that one of the reasons you urge in your memorandum against the extension is that you fear that the firms will go into liquidation?—If you apply the Act according to the letter of the law, a very big majority would have to go into liquidation.

E-2795. But you would not assure to the workers in those cases the same security that you want to assure to the employer?—I do not think that there is the slightest hope at present.

E-2796. Is it your view that it is not possible to extend the Factories Act to any small factories other than those I have just read out?—It is possible to extend the Act, but it will not do any good by extending it. Not only that; there is the question of workmen’s compensation for these places.

E-2797. Because of the financial inability of the people to run these factories you say you should not extend the workmen’s compensation?—The workmen’s compensation would be extended automatically.

E-2798. But you are objecting to it?—I am not objecting to it. My point was that it is possible that these people may have to go into liquidation for paying compensation to the workers.

E-2799. I want to ask a question arising out of your experience. Have you got any suggestion that you can put to the Commission regarding making known to the work-people their rights under the Acts which have already been passed?—The abstracts are posted in the factories. I believe they are more or less useless from that point of view.

E-2800. Have you any suggestion to make whereby the rights could be got over to the work-people themselves?—Education.

E-2801. Have factory Inspectors, in your knowledge, ever sought to make known to the work-people themselves by any method other than those abstracts?—Workers are frequently questioned by Inspectors as to the hours they work and matters of that kind. Of course, the Inspector does not go out of his way in going into the factory and start lecturing to the persons employed there. I do not think they would listen to him even if he did it.

E-2802. Is it within your knowledge that the managers have ever taken steps in that direction?—No.

E-2803. In your memorandum you say: "Where workers live at a distance from the mill, no matter what the shift system, the extreme hours of departure for work and return encroach on the home life and deprive the families concerned of time for leisure, common association and improvement." Is that one of the reasons why you propose a limitation of 55 hours?—Yes. I hope that is one of the reasons which would enforce these mills to go on to a single shift; and the single shift necessitates a long break in the middle of the day for all workers.

E-2804. Is one of the other reasons the fact that a great number of industries are at the moment not working more than 55 hours a week?—That is so.

E-2805. You propose, along with the reduction of hours, that the control of shifts should be left to the making of rules and the decision of the Factory Inspector; is that right?—Yes.

E-2806. Talking of shifts you say definitely that it is impossible to operate the Factories Act in respect of multiple shifts?—We propose that the local Government at least should have the power to regulate the shifts.

E-2807. Have you got any suggestions to put before the Commission as to how the regulation of shifts should be made and how they should be controlled?—If I have anything to do with the recommendations I should certainly ask Government to accept no shift which overlaps.

E-2808. If there should be no case of overlapping that would mean that the split system should be abolished?—That is right.

E-2809. But you might make such a regulation that a shift might commence at 6 a.m. and be booked off at 10 a.m. and then a new crew to come along and work till 2 when the 10 o'clock people would come again and work till 6 and so on?—I would not favour that.

E-2810. You would have a system of split shift?—No.

E-2811. Your objection to the multiple shift is then that it is mainly a question of enforcement of the Factories Act?—My complaint is mainly based on the question of the enforcement of the Act.

E-2812. What about the convenience of the work-people if your suggested remedy allows such a condition of affairs as I have outlined?—The existing system has not, in my opinion, been arranged to suit the convenience of the worker.

E-2813. The difficulty I see about your suggestion is that the mills may start at 5-30 and go on till 7 as at present, and it is possible to arrange a very arduous system of split shifts and yet have no overlapping?—I think economically it would not be possible.

E-2814. Suppose for a moment you take a 16-hour day?—But women and children cannot work between 16-hours owing to the restriction of the morning and evening limits.

E-2815. You suggested earlier that there should be no register with regard to adult male labour?—There should be a register, but it must be a register of workers and not an attendance register.

E-2816. I agree. It means posting of a notice with regard to the shifts to be worked?—Yes; that is quite right.

E-2817. If you take a 16-hour day, as far as male labour is concerned, you can have split shifts which pay no regard to the convenience of the work-people and yet would be within the solution that you put forward?—Yes. We ask for control of shifts, and no system would be accepted unless we were in a position to regulate the hours of labour as laid down under the Act.

E-2818. That means that you are proposing to regulate the maximum mill time?—Not necessarily.

E-2819. Then are you putting up to the Commission that not only should you control the hours but that you should actually control the periods of work in a split shift?—No; the period of work is controlled by the number of hours a person is allowed to work without being given a rest.

E-2820. It does that, but as far as I can see it still leaves out the question of comfort of the work-people. You should suggest that Government by rules and regulations shall actually limit and determine the number of hours that may be worked in any period in the split shift, or else you have got to leave it free. How do you propose to cover that?—I do not quite follow.

E-2821. The difficulty I have with the millowners' association is that they are speaking of the comfort of the work-people and they put in all kinds of meal time, and I have a difficulty to reconcile the fact as stated with their provision. They start at 5-30 and work till 8-30, that is, three-hours' work. There is no reason, under your scheme, why a worker should not be booked off at 9-30 for an hour and then brought in at 10-30 and then booked off again at 2-30?—The reason is that it would be uneconomical to bring in a fresh squad of workers to the factory to work for that one hour in the morning that you are allowing the other squad of workers to go out.

(*Mr. Cliff*) I am afraid that argument applies to the multiple shift as it stands at the moment.

E-2822. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: The multiple shift is uneconomical?—Certainly it is.

E-2823. *Mr. Cliff*: We have got at the moment a recorded vote as to whether the multiple shift system should be declared illegal, and as many as 45 per cent of the members of the millowners' association have decided by vote that they are in favour of its being made illegal. But with regard to the solution that you are putting in front of us, I could see no suggested control to prevent those men being brought in at the finishing hour even for one-hour's work?—We ask for control of shifts. We assume that no one will put up for sanction a system of shift which is not economical; and if a system of shift is arranged which is economical, then it would be more likely to be satisfactory provided it was not overlapping.

E-2824. The millowners' association at the moment, or at least several mills, are pursuing that uneconomic proposition. It seems to be that you are proceeding on the assumption that there would be straight shifts with the exception of a break for meals; is that so?—That is right.

E-2825. *Mr. Ahmed*: You will admit, I take it, that you will be able to discharge your duties better if you are in touch with the trade unions?—No. I should be able to discharge my duties better if I kept myself aloof from the trade unions. Because, so far as I stand, they only give me a lot of trouble and worry, sending in malicious complaints which we have to enquire into, regarding working hours and non-payment of wages, and all matters of that kind.

E-2826. The question of working hours forms part of your duty, is it not?—Yes, but we can carry out our duty without getting complaints from trade unions.

E-2827. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: I thought you said that you wanted co-operation of the workers?—Yes. We would welcome if the complaints were genuine and if the workers would assist us in carrying out our duties.

E-2828. *The Chairman*: Your complaint is that they are not sufficiently sifted and tested before they reach you?—Yes.

E-2829. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: They are not justified?—No.

E-2830. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: It would be an advantage if they were genuine?—Yes.

E-2831. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Did you have any malicious complaints from the Kankinarah Union?—No. There was one gentleman of Kankinarah Labour Union that made a complaint, and it was the only one from the Labour Union on which we got a prosecution.

E-2832. *Mr. Ahmed*: When there was the last strike did you not have any talk with the workers?—I did not go there.

E-2833. Where were you then?—In Calcutta."

E-2834. As Factory Inspector you have to enquire into the complaints made by the workers, is it not?—It all depends upon what the complaint is. So far as I know, the complaint in this particular case to which you have made a reference related to the question of wages and had nothing to do with the hours of employment.

E-2835. May I know whether you helped Government with a view to making a settlement of the strike which had something to do with the hours of work?—Personally I did nothing.

E-2836. Government did not ask you to offer your help, is it?—They did not ask for my assistance at all.

E-2837. Did you submit a report to Government with regard to the strike?—You would have noticed that my annual reports have something to say about strikes.

E-2838. I am not referring to your annual reports. When the house is burnt down it serves no useful purpose to report after one year of the occurrence how it was burnt down. I want to know whether you make a report to Government at the time when the fire rises?—The fire in most cases does not concern us.

E-2839. So you did nothing in this case?—Nothing.

(*The Chairman*): The duty of the Factory Inspector is only to administer the factory law.

E-2840. *Mr. Ahmed*: You have already said that you know the union people?—Some of them.

E-2841. Did they tell you anything?—I did not see them. They are in Kankinarah, I am in Calcutta.

E-2842. Did none of your five assistants go to the strike area?—I think one of them went to the place; I am not quite sure.

E-2843. Did you not read in the newspapers that there was a strike?—I do know that there was a strike.

E-2844. But you did not take any action in the matter?—No.

E-2845. *The Chairman*: You kept to your own duties?—Yes.

E-2846. *Mr. Ahmed*: You know that there is a strike going on at present in a Champdani mill?—Yes.

E-2847. What have you done as far as that strike is concerned?—Nothing.

E-2848. I suppose your assistants also have done nothing?—The Inspector in the district tells me that he has enquired into the causes of that strike.

E-2849. What are the causes, will you tell us?—The strike is alleged to be due to a difference in the rates of wages paid in that mill and the Wellington Mill under the same managing agents.

E-2850. Can you say what wages they get and what they are claiming for?—I do not know.

E-2851. *Mr. Ahmed*: Will you tell us what is the general condition of the workers, especially with regard to their indebtedness?—I cannot tell you.

E-2852. Is it not a fact that the housing condition of the workers is very bad?—Are you speaking of the housing provided by the mills, or the houses in the *bustis* outside the mill area?

E-2853. I want your opinion on both?—The mill accommodation as a rule is good; and outside it is unsatisfactory in most cases.

E-2854. Did you report to Government about the unsatisfactory condition of these houses?—No; it is not part of my duty to look into the housing conditions outside the mill premises.

E-2855. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it your duty to look into the housing conditions inside the mill area?—No; but we do it.

E-2856. *Mr. Ahmed*: When you go to the mills, do you enquire from the workers whether they received any injury, and if so whether they got sufficient compensation?—If the matter is brought to our notice we enquire into it.

E-2857. I understand that a letter was written to you in September last that about twenty men were suffering from lead poisoning. May I know whether you received that letter?—I think so; it might probably be on the file in my office.

E-2858. I am told that twenty persons were suffering from lead poisoning and some of them died?—I think I received a complaint that 60 per cent of the workers in the press to which you are referring were suffering from lead poisoning.

E-2859. Will you please tell the Commission whether you made any enquiries in the matter, and if so with what result?—I asked the Certifying Surgeon, who is a doctor, to visit the factory and to advise me as to whether there were persons suffering from lead poisoning or not. He informed me that there was no lead poisoning except in one case which was a little bit doubtful.

E-2860. Have you got a copy of the report of the Certifying Surgeon?—I have not got it here.

E-2861. Will you kindly send it to the Commission later on as also copies of correspondence that passed between you and others on the subject?—Yes.

E-2862. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say in your memorandum that the only way in which the jute mill employees can be controlled is by controlling the working hours of the mill. What do you actually mean by that?—If the mill works for 11 hours, the worker cannot work beyond that; in other words, the working hours of the mill regulate the working hours of the worker.

E-2863. Supposing we eliminate all the women and children from the mills and we are only using adult male labour, and supposing the mills decide to work two shifts of 8-hours, would you object to that?—No. But you have got to give them rest periods.

E-2864. Naturally. Therefore you are not in earnest when you say that the only way of controlling the workers is by controlling the working hours of the mill?—I am in earnest about that. It is a special case when you are talking of adult labour going into straight shifts of that kind; that is a case in which you have more or less control.

E-2865. You do not suggest, at any rate so far as male labour is concerned, that there should be any limit put on the working hours of the mill provided that the shifts meet with your approval?—That is so.

E-2866. If it were possible to work, for instance, three 8-hour shifts, there is no reason why the mill should not run for 24 hours?—There is no objection to that.

E-2867. As an example, let us take the Angus Mill. It has 1,200 looms; under the single-shift system it requires 6,000 workers. Suppose we are going to work two shifts of 8-hours each, we would require 12,000 workers, or let us say we would require from 11,000 to 12,000. How would you propose to regulate the hours within which the individual men should be employed; that is to say, how would you make sure that somebody was not working both on the day shift and on the night shift?—It is very easy to check it.

E-2868. I am not asking whether it is easy to check it or not. I want to know how you would propose to deal with the double shift system. Suppose Tom works by day and Harry works by night, how would you make sure that Tom is not also working by night and Harry is not also working by day?—I could not tell you definitely, but I do not think that is a sort of thing that is likely to arise.

E-2869. I think it is a very likely thing to happen. Where the tendency is to eliminate women and children, the likelihood is that we will be reduced to male labour. I am only putting it to you how you would regulate the employment of a day shift and a night shift; I want to know how you would prevent a man working both in the day shift and in the night shift?—The mills themselves could prevent that because they would be in a position to know their labour which they are not under the present circumstances.

E-2870. You think that the manager would really know all the 12,000 workers by name?—I think the manager and his assistants know, under the present single-shift system, a considerable number of them.

E-2871. We are not speaking of the single shift?—It is practically a single shift.

E-2872. Will you tell us whether you think that an employment register is necessary?—Yes an employment register, but not an attendance register.

E-2873. I cannot follow the distinction myself?—An employment register is a register showing the names of all persons employed in a factory and the normal hours during which they work each day. That is all; nothing else. An attendance register is the same thing with attendance marked for every time that the worker comes and goes out of the mill.

E-2874. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Supposing the management indirectly encourage a worker to work double shifts, how could a Factory Inspector detect it?—Only by checking the name in the register.

E-2875. *The Chairman*: You propose to abolish the double shift?—Yes.

E-2876. And therefore you would be lessening your own check?—Yes. We think that under the existing circumstances the managers or their assistants do not know their labour, and however willing they are to regulate their labour according to the Factories Act they are unable to do it.

E-2877. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What I would like you to answer, if you would, is this: Assuming we have two eight-hour shifts, which is not an unlikely assumption, I want to know what you would do, from your experience of factory inspectorship, to ensure that a day shift man would not be working on the night shift either in the same mill or in another mill?—It would be possible.

E-2878. Would it necessitate an employment register or an attendance register?—An employment register.

E-2879. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would you not need an attendance register as well?—We propose that the attendance register should take the shape of overtime register and should only record the work done outside the normal hours at the factory. Our point is that at the moment these registers are all faulty.

E-2880. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I want to know whether you have an adequate factory inspection staff to make sure that the people employed in the morning shifts are not working in the night shifts?—Our staff is already adequate for that purpose; at least I think so.

E-2881. Do you not think that it will be necessary to have employment registers?—Yes.

E-2882. If your staff is adequate, how is it that you had only 23 prosecutions for these seven years for failing to maintain proper employment registers?—I cannot get convictions.

E-2883. You tried and you gave it in despair?—Yes. I started again at the beginning of this year just for the benefit of the Royal Commission; otherwise I should have been more or less quiet in regard to that.

E-2884. Coming to the question of multiple shift system with which you deal in your memorandum, we find that the spread-over for time-workers in A and C shifts is ten hours. Do you know what is the actual spread-over under the Factory Act at Home?—I do not know.

E-2885. Do you know when they start and when they stop work at Home?—I do not know.

E-2886. You can take it from me that in Forfarshire they come to work in the morning at 6 and go at 5 in the evening; that is to say, there is a spread-over of 11 hours, which is longer than the spread-over of the workers in A and C shifts here?—Yes.

E-2887. Coming to the question of variations between different places you find that at Home some people prefer to work with two breaks in the day and some prefer only one break. I am sure you will concede the same thing to the workers here as well?—I do not suppose you suggest that the habits and conditions of the people here are the same as those of the people at Home.



E-2888. That is why we have been working a different system here?—The reason why you work this system is because you want to get the maximum out of the machinery and plant in a mill. I have never believed that this system is so arranged in order to suit the requirements of the worker.

E-2889. Is it not advisable to get the maximum output out of the machinery as long as you conform to the Factories Act? The hours are no longer than those prescribed under the Act?—That is only on paper. It is all theoretical, nothing in practice.

E-2890. You suggest that the mills should start at 6 o'clock in the morning and close at 6-30 in the evening?—That is a mere suggestion of mine.

E-2891. A mere suggestion from the Chief Inspector of Factories is entitled to great weight?—I think it is quite a good one.

E-2892. Do you suggest that half an hour later in the morning and half an hour earlier in the evening makes difference between heaven and hell so far as these workers are concerned?—Not only that, they will be working on single shift. The spread-over will be only 12½ hours with an interval of 2½ hours for rest in the middle of the day.

E-2893. You suggest that the managing agents and the managers ought to be prosecuted jointly or separately for any breach of the regulations. I entirely agree with you in that suggestion. But would you not agree that the manager, the *baboo*, the *sardar* and other people who are responsible for the working of the mill on the spot should also be prosecuted?—It is for the Factory Inspector to decide who is responsible. If he decides that the time *baboo* or the *sardar* is responsible he will prosecute them.

E-2894. We have had a lot of evidence to the effect that the *baboos* and the *sardars* are always in the habit of doing things in a way which the managers disapprove. We are told these things in connexion with allegations of bribery.

E-2895. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Who pays the fines imposed on the *sardars*?—The managing agents.

E-2896. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you any proof of that? Or is it merely your opinion?—It is my opinion.

E-2897. Do you not think it a reasonable proposition that any illegal employment of the workers by the *baboos* and the *sardars* should be brought home to them by prosecution?—Certainly.

E-2898. Do you not think that they ought to be prosecuted just as much as the managers and the managing agents?—Certainly.

E-2899. Your suggestion is that the manager, the *baboo* and the *sardar* should all be held responsible?—No, the Inspector decides as to who is responsible.

E-2900. Then what do you have the magistrate for?—He decides whether he is guilty or not.

E-2901. But you have already decided who is guilty?—If we decided who was guilty or not and the magistrate imposed fines according to our decision we would not have had any worry with the administration of the Factories Act.

E-2902. By your decision as to who is responsible do you not indicate to the magistrate in what direction he should proceed?—If the magistrate finds that the man we prosecute is not guilty he is not fined.

E-2903. Would you not be in favour of all the three being prosecuted and fined jointly or separately as the case may be?—No.

E-2904. *The Chairman*: Is it your point that the managing agent if he is the person who issues the orders in the mill, as well as the manager and the *sardar* should be prosecuted jointly?—No, my point is that the managing agent and the manager should be held jointly responsible. The managing agent should not be allowed to transfer his guilt to the manager because the managing agent is responsible in the main for the system under which the mill works. It should be left to the Inspector to decide as to who is responsible and whether the managing agent is responsible or not. If the manager was illegally employing labour although the mill was working under a correct system then the Inspector would not proceed against the managing agent; he would proceed against the manager.

E-2905. *Sir Alexander Murray*: On the question of double employment of children I notice that both the managing agents and the Factory Inspector agree for once that there is double employment of children, but they say that it is a fact which cannot be proved. Why do you say it is a fact when you cannot prove it?—Circumstantial evidence will convince you of it.

E-2906. Since 1921 you have reduced the number of boys and girls employed in mills from 30,000 to 19,000. Are there not sufficient number of boys and girls running about unemployed without anything good to do?—I do not myself consider that it is a good thing to drive children out of factories. I would rather see all of them employed. But we have to resort to prosecutions in order to convince Government and possibly the Royal Commission that the Factories Act is not workable in these mills.

E-2907. Mr. Chaman Lal asked you about the increase in wages since the war. I have just referred to a statement by the mills which says that the increase since the war ended—there was an increase before the end of the war—was 50 per cent?—That is probably correct.

E-2908. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I understand that the difference of personnel between a multiple shift mill and the same mill working single shift is something like 22 or 25 per cent?—Theoretically, yes.

E-2909. According to the register?—According to the register.

E-2910. But it is said that owing to a number of names being put down in a register of multiple shift who are not actual workers, when you turn over from the multiple shift to the single shift the percentage of personnel thrown out of employment is much less; and we were told by a witness yesterday that it was under 10 per cent?—Yes.

E-2911. On the other hand a witness speaking for the multiple shift said it was not so?—I know that it is a considerably less than 10 per cent. That is the information I have got. I have no figures to prove it. I cannot tell you exactly how much. All I can tell you is this. In 1926 seven mills in the Bhatpara area changed over from the multiple to the single shift. But within a few weeks there was shortage of labour in the same area.

E-2912. *Mr. Clow*: At what time of the year was it?—In April. If 22 per cent of the labourers had been thrown out of seven mills there should not have been a shortage.

E-2913. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Did not many workers go home when they were thrown out of employment?—Yes, but this was not the only district that changed over.

E-2914. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Did that shortage last after the monsoon was over?—No.

E-2915. Was there a big surplus?—I do not remember. Probably there was. I could not tell you. Although these seven mills changed over to the single shift the multiple shift mills working in that area said that they got hardly any labour from the other mills which had gone over to the single shift in spite of the fact that they were in need of labour. In other words if these people actually existed they must have disappeared without going to other mills to work.

E-2916. On the question of attendance registers and employment registers, surely you do not expect a Factory Inspector to know everybody by sight?—No.

E-2917. Even if you had two eight-hour shifts you could not expect a Factory Inspector merely by getting a list with Tom on one side and Dick on the other side to go into the factory suddenly and say, "You are Tom who was in the previous shift. How did you come to work in this shift also?" Surely the Inspector would have to rely on the management?—Yes.

E-2918. The point probably in your double single shift is that the management will be in a better position to check the attendance and clear the mill between the shifts and make the men take tokens with different numbers and so on?—Yes.

E-2919. And also make it difficult for men with borrowed tokens to come in?—Yes. That is the point.

E-2920. Even then some might slip in?—Quite.

E-2921. Could a manager know his 3,000 workmen by name?—No, that is not possible.

E-2922. We were told the other day that a manager knew them by name not only by sight?—No; that is not possible.

E-2923. The reason why you prefer a single shift is that the managers in the mills will be in a better position to check the attendance?—There is no checking of attendance in the case of single shift mills.

E-2924. In the cotton mills they check the attendance register in order to pay wages?—That is quite a separate thing. That is the wage sheet. If the mills wanted to keep a register for the payment of wages that has nothing to do with the Factory Inspector.

E-2925. By checking for payment of wages we can know whether the man has worked once or twice in a day?—Quite.

E-2926. Would not the danger then be that a man who has worked the day shift in one mill might go to the night shift in another mill?—Yes.

E-2927. Could he not work in mill A under one name and mill B, under another name? How could you make sure that it did not happen?—I do not think it would happen.

*The Chairman*: Mr. Adams proposes that the daily limit for men could be swept away. A man can work 16 or 20 hours even if he chooses?—The witness (*Mr. Adams*): But not the weekly limit.

E-2928. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Even that it is very difficult to know. Your point is probably that the employer would not have a man for working a night shift if he knew he had already worked a day shift?—Quite.

E-2929. That would probably act as a check?—Yes.

E-2930. *The Chairman*: You suggest that the maximum limit of hours for women should be reduced from 11 to 10?—Yes.

E-2931. And the maximum for half-timer children should be reduced from 6 to 5?—Yes.

E-2932. You suggest also that the working of the mill should be limited to between 6 o'clock in the morning and 6-30 in the evening with an interval of 2½ hours in the middle of the day?—That is so far as woman and child labour is concerned.

E-2933. I have already observed that you propose to have no restriction on the hours that a man may work during the day?—Yes.

E-2934. In your view is that long rest of 2½ hours really to the advantage of the workers? Would it not be to their advantage to shorten that two hours and finish at 6 o'clock?—No. The general opinion is that the workers like a long period in the middle of the day, because they have to prepare their food and take their food.

E-2935. You think that they prefer that to finishing their work earlier in the evening?—Yes.

E-2936. In addition to your bold suggestion, if I may say so, of entirely abolishing the usual limit of hours for the men in the day you say that the greater part of the Factories Act should be left to regulations by the local Government?—By the Governor-General in Council.

E-2937. Based mainly on the advice of the Chief Inspector of Factories?—Not at all. Each industry would be dealt with by a representative committee appointed by the Government of India to frame regulations embodying the main provisions of the Act to suit the industry or group of industries.

E-2938. Do you not think that the amount of lobbying that would arise in a system of that kind would be serious?—As matters stand at present we draw up a list of exemptions for certain classes of labour in the factories and ask the local Government to accept them. The Government accepts them and when we put them into force we get continuous complaints that those exemptions are not workable. If on the other hand the industry itself had consented to those exemptions there would be no difficulty afterwards. There would be no room for complaint.

E-2939. Do you think that labour at present is sufficiently strong in India to take its proper share in these consultations?—No.

E-2940. Then it would come to this: It would be in the main the employers' interests and commercial interests along with Government who would decide the matter?—That is right.

E-2941. Labour would not be a third party as it might be in other countries?—Quite.

E-2942. Is it not a serious difficulty?—I believe I have a good enough opinion of the factory owners to think that they would carefully guard the interests of labour. In any case even if that is not the case you have got the Factory Inspectors and Government to do that.

E-2943. Then you might have different set of regulations and rules affecting the jute industry as distinct from cotton for instance?—Probably as distinct from other industries cotton and jute will be grouped in one category of textile industry.

E-2944. Probably, but not if you were consulting people industry by industry?—I think they would be because the conditions in both the industries are more or less the same. Probably you will find it very difficult to get over the jute people.

E-2945. *Miss Power*: Do the regulations under the Factories Act apply to the question of dust in tea garden factories?—(*Mr. Glover*): No, they do not.

E-2946. In what way do you suggest that the Act should be amended?—At present we are quite aware that conditions in factories on tea plantations are not satisfactory as far as dust regulations are concerned. We are more or less co-operating with the tea garden agents in producing suitable mechanical means for the elimination of dust.

E-2947. You have adequate authority to get them installed?—Yes, the Act covers that. On this question we have not had sufficient experience and it is my intention to study the problem in home factories.

E-2948. Is there any difficulty in maintaining an employment register in tea factories?—There is considerable amount of difficulty because the form of the register is not suitable owing to the peculiar nature of the tea industry which requires people to go in and come out at frequent intervals during the day.

E-2949. Have you any suggestion to get over the difficulty?—I have no suggestion for any feasible form of register which can be maintained in a tea factory.

E-2950. Do you think it necessary to have such a register?—I do not think it is necessary. We can safely say that the average number of hours worked in a tea factory never exceeds 30 a week. At the peak output it will probably necessitate exceeding 60, but that is only for one or two weeks in the year.

E-2951. *Mr. Adams*, in Appendix M to your memorandum you say: "The framing of these separate regulations should be the work of bodies representative of the various industries throughout India." I take it you advocate a system where the Factories Act would cover merely the general or more simple regulations and where you would have what are called in Great Britain "Statutory rules and orders" covering the peculiar conditions affecting individual industries?—(*Mr. Adams*): Exactly.

E-2952. *Mr. Chow*: In Appendix M to your memorandum dealing with section 21 (1) (a) (ii) of the Factories Act you say: "As the section stands, however, it appears that both half-hour rests must be given before the seventh-hour of work commences." That is a point you will remember that was raised about 1923 and the section as it now stands was introduced to meet that point. To me it is not clear how the revised section you suggest differs in any essential from the one that exists at present?—We intended to make it clear but there is still the same difficulty in its application. We have referred the question to Bombay also. We are continually getting difficulties in the administration of that section.

E-2953. The section, as it stands, runs thus: "At the request of the employees concerned, periods of rest at intervals not exceeding five hours, of not less than half an hour each, the total duration of the periods of rest each day not being less than one hour for each period of six hours. . . ." How does your amendment improve the position?—Suppose a factory worked nine hours a day, how would you arrange the two half-hour rests.

E-2954. It is perfectly open to them to arrange in any way they like provided there was no more than five hours continuous work?—But Government ruled that it should be before the seventh hour of work commences.

E-2955. Was that ruling given subsequent to the amendment?—Yes.

E-2956. But it was because of that opinion given by the lawyers that this amendment was introduced?—This is the ruling of the local Government.

E-2957. In Appendix M to your memorandum you make certain remarks about the register of workers and say that the Factories department put forward certain essentials, that "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." Who did not accept that?—The Indian Jute Mills Association did not accept that.

E-2958. It was not the local Government that refused to accept it?—No.

E-2959. Do you agree that it is desirable as far as possible to encourage the employment of women in jute mills?—I think so.

E-2960. Especially from the point of view of sex disparity in the mill population?—No, I am thinking more from the point of view of the need of employment for these women.

E-2961. If you made more stringent regulations in regard to the employment of women than that of men would it not tend to discourage the employment of women?—Certainly. But I do not want to discourage the employment of women. What I want is to employ them under proper conditions.

E-2962. Would not retaining a daily limit for women and abolishing it for men tend to discourage the employment of women?—No, I do not think so.

E-2963. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In reply to the Chairman you said that labour was not sufficiently strong and organized to take its part as a third party in framing industrial regulations. Are you aware that labour representatives played their parts in the drafting of the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Trade Unions Act, and the Trade Disputes Act and that many of the suggestions made by labour representatives have made those Acts what they are?—But the representatives are not labourers themselves.

E-2964. But they were representatives whom Government thought worth consulting in connection with all legislative measures concerning labour?—That may be so.

E-2965. *Mr. Joshi*: In reply to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola you said that labour legislation in India was in advance of the time. Do you know that the important part of factory legislation fixing an 11-hour day and a 60-hour week was the outcome of the hard struggle of the workers in Bombay who had to go on strike to secure their elementary rights?—I do not think that the conditions in Bombay are the same as the conditions in Bengal.

E-2966. My point is that it was not something given to the workers without their asking for it; that it was the outcome of their hard struggle at Bombay, Ahmedabad and Cawnpore?—Had not wages a lot to do with those strikes.

E-2967. The strike was partly for wages and partly for hours. The hours were reduced in Bombay. The Bombay millowners agitated that the hours everywhere else should be the same and legislation came. But legislation was never ahead of the time as you have just suggested?—What about Bengal?—Did Bengal struggle for it?

E-2968. The Bombay millowners agitated and the Government yielded to their agitation and fixed the hours on a uniform scale all round. You will agree with me that this legislation was not in advance of the time?—As far as Bengal is concerned it would be.

E-2969. At any rate Government yielded only after the agitation of the millowners, but not before.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

1. Dr. CHAS. A. BENTLEY, C.I.E., M.B., D.P.H., D.T.M. & H., Director of Public Health.
2. Mr. F. C. GRIFFIN, M.I.C.E., M.I.E. (Ind.), Chief Engineer, Public Health Department, Bengal.
3. Dr. M. E. SUFI, B.A., L.R.C.P. & S., D.P.H., Assistant Director of Public Health, Vaccination and Vital Statistics.
4. Dr. G. L. BATRA, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Assistant Director of Public Health for Industrial Hygiene.
- Dr. B. C. MUKHARJI, M.B., D.P.H., Inspector of Septic Tank Installations.
6. Dr. A. C. RAY CHAUDEHURY, D.P.H., Diet Survey Officer.

E-2970. *Colonel Russell*: Referring to the question of housing, do you maintain any standard plans in your office by which you might be able to give advice to millowners or industrial employers for building houses for their employees?—I have no actual standard plans, but I have been favoured by some of the railway companies and many of the jute mills and others with actual copies of the plans of the houses that they have erected.

E-2971. They did not consult the Public Health Department as to the suitability, and so on, of what they proposed to erect?—No, they come under the Bengal Municipal Act and the powers under that Act regulating housing. They have to conform to the rules issued under that Act.

E-2972. Are the rules under the local Municipal Act suitable for that purpose?—They are a guide.

E-2973. Taking the tables showing the amount of floor space available, in the first column, for instance, in some cases the floor space per house is as low as 67, and in the last column the average total area available per worker is as low as 28 or 29. Do you think that it is a reasonable standard?—These data, which have been prepared from information kindly provided by the jute mills, have been worked out in my office merely as an approximation.

E-2974. What is your opinion as to the suitability of these areas?—It may be said that the greater the space that can be given to anybody the better.

E-2975. I take it that when the variation is so great as between 29 and 62, there is no real standard?—I do not think, as a matter of fact, in the rules that any figure is actually laid down. In the rules under the Calcutta Municipal Act, habitable rooms must be 10' x 10' or 96 square feet and 10 feet high, as far as I remember.

E-2976. Although municipal councils have the power to deal with these areas, they do not take any action in actual fact?—I cannot say that many of them have their own Health Officers and Sanitary Inspectors who deal with these matters. In many cases some of these mill quarters have been erected many years. How far action was taken to regulate building in the past it is impossible to say; I do not even know the date of the erection of the quarters mentioned in my note.

E-2977. Are the conditions improving?—Certainly.

E-2978. The Commission has had before it various statements with regard to the difficulty of acquiring land for additional housing accommodation under the Acquisition of Land Act; have you any information to give the Commission on that point?—No, it does not concern my department.

E-2979. You are not acquainted with the difficulties?—No, all I can say is that I have heard difficulties expressed.

E-2980. What difficulties?—I have heard it is very difficult in certain places to acquire land; and in some congested areas it is easy to understand this.

E-2981. The difficulty is not covered by any section of the Municipal Act? Would you look with favour on the framing of a Town Planning Act for Bengal?—I certainly think that anything that can safeguard the development of towns would be advantageous. This, of course is my private opinion.

E-2982. Have you ever made any enquiry into industrial housing in Bengal?—We collected, with the acquiescence of a number of jute mills, the data from which these tables have been prepared.

E-2983. That was made the subject of a special enquiry?—Yes, a certain amount of data was collected.

E-2984. You have no industrial hygiene department?—Not at present. We had one for six months.

E-2985. What happened to that?—It was a time of retrenchment, and the provincial resources did not enable Government to continue it.

E-2986. I take it you would favour its resuscitation?—Undoubtedly.

E-2987. It would be an advantage to the industrial population in Calcutta and the surrounding industrial towns to have an industrial hygiene department?—It would certainly give us an opportunity for collecting the data that is necessary.

E-2988. Are your district health officers and municipal health officers *ex-officio* Inspectors of Factories?—No.

E-2989. Do you not think it would be an advantage if they were?—Probably it would. That again is my personal opinion.

E-2990. *The Chairman*: Are your assistants constantly moving about in the industrial areas outside Calcutta?—They have to move when they make their municipal inspections; we have not a large number of officers; there are 116 municipalities which have to be inspected. There are also the rural areas. Recently we have established nearly 600 health units in rural areas, all of which have had to be initiated, and the few officers I have have also been engaged in inspecting these areas.

E-2991. *Colonel Russell*: I come to Mr. Griffin's note in the memorandum. He has apparently had a certain amount of trouble with sanitary works in various places. What was the trouble with the Titaghur Sewage Works. Mr. Griffin?—The acquisition of land.

E-2992. Or was it any other point?—There was no other point. It is not exactly a difficulty. We have acquired the land required for the actual scheme, but the scheme would have been better if we had been able to acquire more land than was actually required for the widths of the road. If we had been able to acquire extra land, the scheme would have been much more profitable.

E-2993. We have had evidence at Naihati that the sewage scheme had been held up because of the difficulty of getting land for the sewage farm?—A scheme has never been started at Naihati.

E-2994. What was that due to; the difficulty of getting land?—No.

E-2995. I understood the position was this: that the municipality would not allow the sewage to be run into the river, the mills wanted land for a sewage farm and they have not been able to acquire the land? Is that not the case?—No.

E-2996. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Where is the place where they had the whole plant lying there for four years?—It has nothing to do with my department.

E-2997. *Colonel Russell*: You do not know whether that is the case?—It is no part of my department.

E-2998. Can you not interfere in a case like that in order to put matters right?—I do not know anything about these particular matters; it must be in the hands of the mill. It has nothing to do with my department.

E-2999. I understand that you have had considerable success with septic tank latrines in the mill areas?—(*Dr. Bentley*) Yes.

E-3000. We have been told again and again that workers in India will not use latrines even if you build them. What do you say to that?—I think you ought to visit the industrial areas provided with septic tank latrines and see how popular they have become.

E-3001. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are there open fields in the near neighbourhood?—Here and there in a few areas. I can speak of Bansberiah where there is a good deal of open land; nevertheless the septic tank latrines there are exceedingly popular with the people.

E-3002. *Colonel Russell*: As a matter of fact I have seen one or two that were being overused?—That is one of the difficulties. There is generally a tendency, we find, for the people outside the mills, if they can gain access to a septic tank latrine, to crowd into it. In one particular case we found that a septic tank latrine was being badly overworked. The matter was reported to the manager; he complained that it was because the people coming from outside his mills used it, and he could not keep them out. He made every effort to do so; he kept the gate through which they came closed. As a result he had a strike in his mill. The workers and their friends in the bazaar, when they found that they could not gain access to this septic tank latrine, struck.

E-3003. You refer to various sections under the Municipal Act dealing with drainage, insanitary houses and so on. Can you give us an idea how often sections 242 and 244 are acted upon by Municipal Commissioners?—No, it would be impossible without special enquiry.

E-3004. In section 245 you describe the method by which the Act compels you to take action with regard to an insanitary area. Are you satisfied with the method detailed in this section? A report by 'competent persons' has to be made and then it is to be inspected by two medical officers. I understand that sometimes you get a general practitioner to inspect the area?—That has happened in the case of Howrah. That is the wording of the Act. The Act dates from 1885, and there have been proposals for the amendment of that Act.

E-3005. Would it not be better to have a Public Health Act?—I think every sanitarian wishes to have a Public Health Act.

E-3006. Have you ever drafted one?—I have assisted in the drafting of a Bill.

E-3007. What has happened to it?—The Bill has not been submitted to the Legislative Council.

E-3008. Is it proposed to bring it in the Council?—That is a question I think you must ask the Secretary to Government who was appearing before the Commission.

E-3009. With regard to registration of births and deaths, you notice under the heading of "Mill towns", the death rate is 20.6 whereas the Calcutta rate is 33.5. Do you think these figures are accurate?—I have stated above that there are a great number of omissions in the case of all municipalities, and not merely industrial municipalities. You may say practically that it is only Calcutta and Howrah, Dacca and a very few of the larger municipalities in which there is a presumption to accuracy.

E-3010. You would not be prepared to draw any deductions from a comparison of those figures?—No, you can only compare them from year to year for the same place.

E-3011. What is the practice in Bengal about the registration of still-births?—It differs in the rural areas and in the municipalities; in the rural areas the *chowkidars* report the births and deaths; they record them in *hatchitas*.

E-3012. What we want to know really is how you register still-births?—In the rural areas the still-births are recorded in the death *hatchita*, and there is a special column in the actual record in which these reports are copied.

E-3013. So they do not appear either as births or deaths?—In this book they appear among the deaths.

E-3014. But not in your return?—No.

E-3015. They are quite separate?—Yes, there is a possibility in compiling that here and there there may be errors; but without investigation it would be difficult to say that.

E-3016. *The Chairman*: Did I understand you to say that in some cases still-births were registered as deaths and not as births?—No, I said there may possibly be errors in compiling.



E-3017. If I understand you, there is one practice in Calcutta and another in the rural areas?—In the municipal areas the relations are obliged to register at the Municipal office, or either at the Birth Registration office or at the burning ghat or the burial ground as the case may be.

E-3018. My point is this: has not the Government of Bengal issued any order to establish uniformity throughout the Presidency as to whether a still-birth is to be counted in the births or in the deaths, or to be kept quite separate and put in another column?—It is supposed to be kept separate. What I say is that there is a possibility of an error occurring subsequently during compilation.

E-3019. You now say there is a rule which governs the whole Presidency?—Yes, that has been definitely issued, and it is stated in the forms; it is actually stated in Bengali in the *chowkidar's hatchita*.

E-3020. Have all your Health Officers and Sanitary Inspectors got definite instructions on this point? Do they inspect the registers and see they are kept in the proper way?—Yes, but there is only a limited staff, and they have many other duties to perform.

E-3021. *Colonel Russell*: You have given us details of a diet survey of industrial labour. How long did that survey take, and how was it done?—Some selected data relating to workers were collected in the course of a general survey of dietary, not merely among workers. Having a certain amount of data with regard to workers, I asked the officer in charge of that survey to submit that for the information of the Commission.

E-3022. What staff was employed in doing this work?—Dr. Ray Chaudhuri and two medical graduates.

E-3023. What experience did they have in collecting family budgets?—Before they started this work they had no experience. They have been at work two years.

E-3024. How long did they take to carry out the survey?—The survey of dietary has been going on very nearly two years.

E-3025. Who has been supplying the money?—This has been supplied by the Indian Research Fund Association.

E-3026. It was a private enquiry?—Yes.

E-3027. At what cost?—I think this probably cost about Rs. 30,000 for the two years.

E-3028. With three officers?—Yes.

E-3029. You have not any woman assistant?—No.

E-3030. How did Dr. Ray Chaudhuri and the medical graduates make their investigation?—(*Dr. Ray Chaudhuri*): What we did in the mill areas generally was this: 10, 15 or 20 men mess together; they buy their rations for 15 days. We collected the data from the man who keeps accounts of the prices and quantities of their rations; we got the number of men under him and their ages. Those below 14 but above 10 we counted as three-fourths of a man, and on that we calculated how much food they take every day.

E-3031. What was the total number of individuals?—724.

E-3032. Did you have to reject any cases that were considered to be inaccurate?—No, we did it in the presence of the manager himself or assistant manager. We got their pay and then also the amount of foodstuffs that they bought for 14 days; from that we calculated for one month. We then found the amount of money that they spent for their food, and we took the average price of the different foodstuffs. We also have opportunities of seeing the foodstuffs which they actually eat. We went there during their midday meals.

E-3033. If you look at the columns under "Oorias, jute mills" you will see there that the calories amount to 3,868?—Yes.

E-3034. That is a very high figure?—Only eight people were examined in that group. That is a figure which cannot be relied upon.

E-3035. Under jute mills you have 2,700; then 3,500, and the last one is 4,286. Which would you say was most reliable?—All these figures are reliable.

E-3036. Dr. Bentley, what do you say with regard to these diets and the amount of calories in each: you accept them, I take it?—(Dr. Bentley) Yes, these are crude figures. Sometimes observers usually deduct 10 per cent, but these are the crude figures that have been ascertained.

E-3037. Do they represent fairly the diet of workers in the Calcutta area?—Yes. It is amazing what some of the upcountry men take. Such a large amount of pulses raises the number of calories.

E-3038. And the enormous amount of protein, 111 grams?—Yes.

E-3039. You are quite satisfied that that is correct?—Yes, for certain classes of workers.

E-3040. Are the two figures of average income and average expenditure on food equally reliable?—I cannot say.

E-3041. I am rather pressing for an opinion on this point because I want to draw your attention to two memoranda which had been sent in by Dr. Batra, one on the housing and health conditions of jute mills marked B, and another on housing and health conditions in collieries, and in both of which he says that the diet is not satisfactory?—It depends entirely on the standard one sets. It is a question of the particular type of people. You will see that in this statement there is a vast difference between calories consumed by a Bengali in the first column and again in the fourth column; and again in the last column there is a tremendous variation here.

E-3042. But Dr. Batra gives various details here. I want to ask Dr. Batra this question: in his memorandum dealing with jute mills he gives details of diet. Are these the same as we find in Dr. Chaudhuri's survey?—No.

E-3043. How did he get these figures?—(Dr. Batra) I asked these questions of some of the workers at the Clive Jute Mill.

E-3044. How many?—About 12.

E-3045. So you took your figures from about 12 men?—Yes, of different classes.

E-3046. There is one question about venereal diseases. Have you any figures showing the rate of venereal diseases?—No.

E-3047. In one industrial centre in India we have been told that venereal disease exists to the extent of 50 per cent of the population. What do you say is the Calcutta figure?—I do not think it is anything like that. I have no actual data.

E-3048. I notice also in the same connexion the percentage of still-births in Howrah is relatively high. I suppose if you get a high still-birth rate it means there is a considerable amount of venereal diseases?—It is generally assumed to be that.

*Sir Alexander Murray:* Howrah is the lowest of any of the areas in Bengal.

E-3049. *Colonel Russel:* 1.9 is your registered still-birth?—(Dr. Batra) That is calculated on the population.

E-3050. The figure is given as 0.2. How do you explain those two figures?—(Dr. Bentley) That is Howrah district, not Howrah town.

E-3051. It is lower than any other area in Bengal?—The Howrah district is. You will notice among these districts there are considerable discrepancies, whereas in some districts in Eastern Bengal the highest is 7.1 per cent of live-births; yet you find in the figures quoted from the Asansol Mining Settlement it is only 1 per cent; that, I think, is purely and simply a question of non-recording. It depends to a great extent, in rural areas, on the method that is used in disposing of the actual dead bodies of children born dead. In Calcutta and in Howrah these are all disposed of at the burning ghats, and that is why they are recorded accurately. Among Hindus in many rural areas a still-born child is not burnt, but is buried, and in many cases probably there may not be any actual record kept.

E-3052. *Sir Alexander Murray:* But the outlying districts are all higher?—Except that you find in some districts, mostly in Western Bengal, they are lower. It is rather interesting that many of these districts with low figures are largely inhabited by Hindus.

E-3053. *Colonel Russel:* You have in Bengal in two areas, Asansol and Jalpaiguri, Boards of Health?—There is not one in Jalpaiguri yet.

E-3054. We came across there a Bill which had been drafted but which had not been enacted. With regard to the Jalpaiguri Bill, which seemed to me to contain a considerable number of valuable proposals, why was it never passed?—I cannot say. There was some local opposition, and as far as I recollect the Bill never even got as far as the Legislative Council.

E-3055. Could you tell us what the local opposition was?—Some of the local people opposed it.

E-3056. From what point of view?—I believe at different times it was opposed from different points of view. At one time one section of the community opposed it, and then at another time another section of the community opposed it. Certain provisions were disagreed with; there was not unanimity, and there were certain rather difficult points to arrange.

E-3057. Was the opposition from local boards' areas which might be included in the Board of Health area?—I could not say that. This is a matter which concerns the Administrative department, and the Legislative department does not directly concern the Director of Public Health, and I only hear these things indirectly.

E-3058. Do you think that the Asansol Board of Health has functioned reasonably well?—I think on the whole there has been an improvement since that legislation has been in operation.

E-3059. With regard to the composition of these Boards of Health can you give us any suggestions as to how they should be composed?—That really does not concern a technical officer like myself. We are concerned with technical matters. This is an administrative matter and involves questions of policy.

E-3060. I suppose you have a personal opinion with regard to the composition of the Board of Health?—I prefer an administrative body rather than a body composed of supposed experts.

E-3061. Would you have a medical officer on the Board at all?—No; I think I would have him working under the Board. That is my private opinion.

E-3062. In the Asansol and Jharia areas there was a certain amount of difficulty with regard to the control of outside *bustis* and huts; would you have such places included in a tea garden area or a coalfield area in order that such dangerous spots might be reasonably controlled?—In the Jalpaiguri district there are *khas mahal* bazaars adjoining which there are *bustis* and there are villages which lie between the tea gardens. As far as I am aware the Asansol area was rounded off as far as possible to include all the collieries and the villages in between, because it is very difficult to deal with an isolated spot here and there; it is reasonable to have a compact area.

E-3063. Was that the reason for some of the opposition?—I could not say. The Bill was under discussion for a considerable time and I know there were objections from many sources. If I had to manage an area as a Health Officer I should find it very difficult if between the areas with which I was concerned there were areas which I could not command.

E-3064. Particularly if you had to deal with epidemics such as cholera and malaria?—Yes.

E-3065. If you had a properly run Board of Health, I take it you would be able to control cholera as effectively as it has been controlled in Asansol?—Yes.

E-3066. Has the Bengal Government any policy with regard to the training of midwives and *dais*?—Yes, for some years there has been a special grant for the purpose of assisting local authorities and certain voluntary institutions to run classes for the training of indigenous *dais*.

E-3067. What has happened to those who have been trained?—They have been at work in the Province; there are several thousands altogether.

E-3068. Then you think this training has raised the standard?—I certainly think so.

E-3069. So that it is a policy which might be developed still further?—It has certainly been accepted and it has been very popular.

E-3070. We have been told that in some of the mill areas it has been found to be almost impossible to get trained midwives, *dais* and health visitors?—I have spoken of the training of indigenous *dais*; the midwives

are trained in hospitals, mostly in Calcutta ; there are a few mission hospitals in the rural areas and a few *zenana* hospitals in which training is given.

E-3071. The training which these *dais* have had has not made the women workers shy of them?—Not as far as I am aware.

E-3072. Have you a training school for health visitors in Bengal?—Yes ; it is not run by Government. Mrs. Cottle is the Secretary. It is run by a voluntary organization, largely supported by the Red Cross ; I think it has been running since 1925 or 1926.

E-3073. Are these women who have been trained employed?—I think most of those who have been trained are employed except those who have got married.

E-3074. Is there any difficulty in recruiting a suitable class of women for this work?—Yes, it is not very easy to get them. I believe there is another school in which training is given in the vernacular in connexion with the Chitaranjan Hospital or Seva Sadan in Russa Road. I believe they are training health visitors there for employment in villages but not for employment in the industrial areas.

E-3075. Does your department deal with child welfare work?—It is concerned with it. We have an officer who is employed in connexion with the medical inspection of school children and he also devotes a certain amount of time to this question of child welfare.

E-3076. Has the Public Health Department any proposal for the employment of a Lady Assistant Director or Lady Medical officers to do this work?—In connexion with the medical inspection of schools a lady doctor was employed at one time.

E-3077. Would the appointment of an Assistant Director to do nothing but this child welfare and maternity work recommend itself to you?—It would. One of our difficulties is finance because this Province is very badly off.

E-3078. You already have a male assistant doing this work?—Yes, but he devotes what time he can to the supervision and the administrative work in connexion with these classes for training *dais*, he has nothing to do with the actual running of the classes.

E-3079. Would it be better to have a lady assitant taking full charge?—It would undoubtedly be an advantage.

E-3080. Have you had any grants from Government for this child welfare work?—In connexion with this training of *dais* a grant is given. In connexion also with child welfare and what was called "Baby Week" but which is now called "Health Week" grants are given and also for actual child welfare clinics, which exist in a few places. There are a certain number of child welfare clinics in Calcutta.

E-3081. We have seen two baby clinics at work in certain mill areas ; does the Government give any grant for them?—No, I do not think so.

E-3082. But they give grants for others?—Some of them.

E-3083. What is the reason for that differentiation?—I do not think any grant has been applied for.

E-3084. If they did apply would you support their application?—My own view would be that you cannot have too many of these clinics if you can get them established.

E-3085. Have you ever given any advice to those who wish to have these clinics?—Yes, two doctors came to me only the other day representing a number of people in the south of Calcutta, who were anxious to establish clinics. I gave them what little advice I could and asked them to see Mrs. Cottle who could give them still more advice.

E-3086. In the Bengal evidence it is stated that general welfare work such as is conducted in the factories in Europe is practically non-existent. Is there any Government department that deals with this?—Anything concerning health work is ordinarily dealt with by the Public Health Department. But there is a great deal of voluntary work going on, of which we have not much knowledge.

E-3087. You have no special officer co-ordinating all these voluntary associations and trying to bring them into the same line?—No, there is no special officer for that.

E-3088. May I suggest it would be a good plan to have a Lady Assistant Director who could do all that kind of work?—All these things depend very largely upon finance.

E-3089. I take it your officers are constantly inspecting Municipalities from the public health point of view?—Yes, at intervals.

E-3090. Can you explain how better progress might be made in an industrial area such as Howrah?—There again it is largely a question of finance.

E-3091. The Howrah municipal budget is a very considerable one?—Yes, but I think anybody who knows Howrah can appreciate that it would be a very difficult thing to carry out a mass improvement without, for example, a sewerage scheme. That again cannot be easily carried out without an alteration in many cases of the alignment of the streets. It really entails a general improvement. Recently action has been proposed with regard to the improvement of Howrah which has been under discussion by Government; I think the Secretary to Government could give more definite information on this point.

E-3092. I take it you are not satisfied with the way in which Howrah has been allowed to develop as to housing, drainage and general sanitation?—I do not think anybody could be very pleased with Howrah as it stands.

E-3093. Then do you not think it is a case in which a Town Planning Act might be of very considerable use?—It would undoubtedly solve a number of difficulties.

E-3094. What does your Sanitary Board do?—It examines schemes mainly connected with municipal improvement, water-supply and drainage and makes recommendations to Government in respect of grants-in-aid to those schemes.

E-3095. Do you think you ought to have a local Government department under a proper Public Health Act?—That involves a question of policy and I can only give my private opinion. I think every sanitarian would like to see such an organization.

E-3096. You are purely an advisory officer?—Yes.

E-3097. No Director of Public Health in India is an executive officer?—That is so.

E-3098. How long did Dr. Batra investigate conditions in the Asansol Mine area?—(Dr. Batra): I have been to the collieries before but this time I was there five or six days.

E-3099. Did you find any evidence of industrial disease in the colliery areas? There was a considerable amount of cholera which they have successfully stamped out.—Yes.

E-3100. You say there were very few men, women and children who can be called physically fit for a hard day's work in the mining area. How many did you examine?—About 50. I was there about eight years ago and I now find they have very much deteriorated, specially the *Santhals*.

E-3101. In 1922 you made an investigation in the Calcutta printing presses with regard to lead poisoning and you stated quite definitely that 80 per cent of the workers have blue-coloured gums. I suppose you know that may be due to pyorrhoea?—Yes.

E-3102. You say that you yourself and your child have this blue line and you cannot explain it, but you draw the conclusion that the blue gums of the compositors are due to lead poisoning?—They had other symptoms. The enquiry was not combined with laboratory work so that we could not rely upon it.

E-3103. Any conclusion that you have drawn with regard to lead poisoning is simply a general casual conclusion?—Absolutely.

E-3104. You did not find any definite instances of lead poisoning?—No.

E-3105. You mention as another industrial disease a particular kind of rash among the jute workers?—When they come to the jute works they get that rash in the beginning but it disappears after a time and they become

immune. It is found specially among the sorters ; it is itchy and troublesome ; they told me that if they applied turmeric all over the body it gives relief.

E-3106. You are definitely of opinion that this is an industrial disease?—I have not seen it in cotton or any other similar industry.

E-3107. What do you think as to the possibility of introducing a scheme of sickness insurance among industrial workers in Bengal?—(*Dr. Bentley*) I think it is a matter for experiment by an insurance company ; valuable data might be collected in that way. It is very difficult to express an opinion either way when you have no data. I have not had an opportunity of studying the question in the way I consider necessary.

E-3108. *The Chairman*: You have no actuarial knowledge of this subject?—No, not as regards India.

E-3109. We have been told it is the custom for women in industrial areas to go home to their own country when child-birth is approaching?—I believe that is so.

E-3110. We have been told that more than half the women do so?—I could not say what the proportion is. (*Dr. Batra*) In the jute area about 40 or 50 per cent will go home.

E-3111. If children are born in the villages, are they brought back to the industrial area and die in the industrial area that would vitiate the figures as to infant mortality?—(*Dr. Bentley*) I would not care to express a definite opinion on that matter because I have not the figures. A number of towns have a relatively low average infantile mortality, for instance, Asansol is 149, Kotrung 139, Serampore 128, Champdani 144, Bally 145, Uttarpara 126, but Titaghur is 220. The figures of infantile mortality must be affected by women going back to their villages when child-birth is approaching.

E-3112. *Mr. Cliff*: And in addition in municipal areas are not the figures subject to gross errors owing to the large number of omissions?—That is so.

E-3113. *The Chairman*: In another Province we found that the vaccination officers have vaccinated more babies than have been registered?—About 15 years ago the same thing happened in one of our rural districts where the vaccinators recorded about three times as many vaccinations as they had actually done.

E-3114. *Mr. Cliff*: Did the Government of Bengal consult you in regard to sickness insurance?—I could not say ; I believe the question came up for consideration while I was away on leave.

E-3115. In your view is it possible to provide medical facilities in the Province generally?—I certainly think there should be possibilities of that ; we are getting an increasing number of medical men trained ; a great difficulty at the moment is to arrange that they may get a living in the rural areas.

E-3116. *Colonel Russell*: If a sick workman returned to his own village, would it be possible for him to get medical facilities in the village?—Many of them come from other Provinces and I can tell you nothing about the other Provinces.

E-3117. *Mr. Cliff*: Is it possible to provide the medical facilities that are requisite for any scheme of sickness insurance?—It would undoubtedly be possible to provide medical men, but the difficulty would be to pay for the scheme. I know very little about the working of an insurance scheme,

E-3118. If medical facilities are provided in your view would they be acceptable?—My experience is that where medical facilities are provided now they are largely utilized. I think I could take you to certain mill dispensaries which are utilized not merely by the mill workers but by thousands of people from outside.

E-3119. If your department has answered the question which the Government of Bengal put on this point, might the Commission have the benefit of the answers?—I think you must ask the Secretary to Government for that.

E-3120. *Dr. Batra* says that in the jute mills there is not adequate arrangement for taking off dust, and this is specially important as mostly women are employed ; usually these women bring in their young children who toddle about and live in that dust-laden atmosphere during the working hours of the mills. Have you spent much time in jute mills?—(*Dr. Batra*) Yes.

E-3121. Is this the general experience?—Yes.

E-3122. Have any recommendations been made by your department with regard to this state of affairs?—I send my notes to the Director of Public Health ; it is for him to recommend action and bring it to the notice of the manager.

E-3123. Has your department made any communication to the Jute Association or has it been the subject of a special memorandum to Government?—Not as far as I know.

E-3124. You say with regard to the housing provided by the mills that very often the rooms are dark and in none of them can sunlight penetrate through ; regarding ventilation, it is unsatisfactory, being back to back houses, the only openings in the rooms being the doors, and if there are windows they are kept shut. Is that the general condition which you find in mill *bustis*?—Yes.

E-3125. You suggest the ordinary *bustis* are worse than the mill *bustis*?—Yes.

E-3126. You say the conditions prevailing in the workers' native village or town are better. Have you experience of that?—Yes, I know the villages ; conditions in the villages are better because they get more sunlight, and they get milk, fresh vegetables ; they are not living in congested areas ; in the villages the people spend most of their time outside except at nights ; the worker has his women there to clean the house whereas in the mill areas he is busy all day earning his living and has no time to clean the house. The village houses are separate houses with a little compound. They are not back to back. The ventilation in some cases is better and in some cases is not better.

E-3127. *Miss Power*: Is it still lawful in mill lines or *bustis* to build back to back houses in a town?—(*Dr. Bentley*) In Bengal the building rules do not prohibit back to back houses. The Bengal Municipal Act dates back to 1884 and has not been amended in respect of matters of that kind for a long period.

E-3128. *Mr. Cliff*: You think the practice of the workers going to their native villages for three months should be encouraged and made obligatory?—(*Dr. Batra*) Of course it is an utopian idea, but it would be to the advantage of the employers and employees because the worker keeps in better health if he goes to his village. People who live here for a long time deteriorate physically. That is because the workers here do not get fresh air and sunlight, fresh vegetables and milk which they get in their own villages. Food is very poor here ; a worker cannot get a pound of milk for less than 4 annas or 5 annas and that may not be pure.

E-3129. *Colonel Russel*: Do you say that the ordinary villager and his children get a satisfactory supply of milk in the villages?—Compared with here, yes.

E-3130. I am not comparing it with here. Is the milk supply in rural areas satisfactory?—Certainly ; I will not say it is the ideal, but it is better as compared with the conditions in the town where the workers live in *bustis*. When the workers go back to their villages they recoup their health.

E-3131. *Mr. Cliff*: Is your point really this that you would advocate periodic leave?—Yes, that is what I mean.

E-3132. How do you propose that the workman should live during the period of leave ; do you mean he should live out of his savings?—I do not mean that ; I mean that the employers should bear that burden. Where workers cannot make both ends meet here, are in debt and cannot afford to go back to their villages they go on getting worse and worse as far as illness is concerned and deteriorate physically ; if the worker gets back to his village it is to his advantage and to his employer's advantage.

E-3133. You think that annual leave with pay is a good thing?—I should think so and it would not cost any more than they are paying now for illness and absence from work.

E-3134. Were your figures as to diet and prices of diet very carefully compiled?—It was done by asking these people in the presence of the manager who went round with me. It was done at Clive Jute Mill, only one mill.

E-3135. Was the manager a European?—Yes.

E-3136. Does he know the habits of these people in regard to food?—The mill doctor was also there ; he is an Indian and knows their habits ; he has been there for three or four years.

E-3137. How long did this enquiry take?—It took me three weeks to go round these mills ; I dealt with different mill areas and found that the figures obtained in these areas tallied.

E-3138. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How long did it take you to take the Clive figures with the manager?—I spent about four hours at that particular place.

E-3139. *Colonel Russell*: Did you make any comparison of your figures with the other doctors' figures?—No, these were taken much later.

E-3140. They are rather antagonistic?—It is quite possible ; he took very much longer time than I did.

E-3141. You mean his figures are more accurate?—Quite likely.

E-3142. *Mr. Cliff*: In the special investigation which you made did you find much indication of tuberculosis?—I have collected data from some Municipalities. In some places they kept the figures and at others they did not. Some mills have tuberculosis while others have not. It is rather difficult to collect data because when people get ill they go away home.

E-3143. You have no reliable information?—No.

E-3144. Where did you get the figures from as to the grog shop?—From the grog shop which is mentioned in my statement.

E-3145. Are they the figures of an ordinary average month?—I could not say.

E-3146. Did you take these figures from the account book in the shop?—No ; we took them from the man who sells the liquor who is in charge ; he gave us the figures from his memory ; he did not give them from his accounts.

E-3147. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: With regard to housing you say that the average total area available per worker comes to between 40 and 62 square feet. Do you say that is a reasonable floor space?—(*Dr. Bentley*) I do not say it is ideal. But that average in many cases exceeds the average laid down for lodging houses in Great Britain.

E-3148. Have you ever read the Workmen's Housing Act of Great Britain?—Yes.

E-3149. Do you know that there is a schedule in that Act which provides the space for each individual worker?—I could not tell you off-hand.

E-3150. Do you think the floor space which you mention in your memorandum is sufficient in view of the climatic conditions in India?—I should certainly like to see a much larger area given. In Bombay I have seen the Improvement Trust single storey *chawls* supposed to be let out for a man and wife. I have visited these *chawls* in the very early morning and have found the whole floor of the verandah and house occupied by innumerable lodgers so that there was not even stepping room. That is the sort of thing which it is very difficult to prevent.

E-3151. After your experience of the housing conditions in *bustis* and other industrial areas, do you think that there is a necessity for legislation on workmen's housing in this country?—I think probably legislation would be an advantage. That is my own private opinion.

E-3152. Talking of industrial hygiene, did you ever think of the necessity of appointing any industrial hygiene officers in Bengal?—One was actually appointed.

E-3153. What happened to him?—He was retrenched.

E-3154. Did you not make any further proposal that such an officer is absolutely essential, considering the vast industrial area that you have to deal with from sanitary point of view?—The original proposal that I made was accepted and then financial stringency forced Government to curtail its expenditure.

E-3155. We have boards of health in the mine area. Would you recommend that there should be boards of health for the jute mill area and that there should be a levy on the production of jute for this purpose just as there is a levy on the production of coal?—That is a question of policy, and one on which it is very difficult for me to express an opinion here.



E-3156. Dr. Chaudhury, you have given in your statement the quantities of diet that a worker consumes per day. If you total the principal items like wheat, rice, *dal*, etc., it comes to 13 *chataks*. Do you think that 13 *chataks* are enough for an able-bodied upcountry workman who works in the jute mill for 11 hours a day?—(Dr. Chaudhury) It is not the number of *chataks* that counts, but the caloric value that he gets out of these articles. You will find that the Corporation sweepers and Hindustani coolies have increased their figure of caloric value by taking 2 *chataks* of gram a day. The price is less, the volume is less, but the food value, that is the amount of heat that is got out of that is great.

E-3157. Would it surprise you to hear that from the enquiries that the Calcutta Corporation has made from some of the sweepers and other workers, it is clear that a least 1 seer in the shape of rice, *dal*, *ata*, etc., is required to keep a strong healthy working man going?—I will never go by *chataks*; I will go only by the calories that the worker will get out of it.

E-3158. Dr. Bentley, do you not think that the sanitary conditions in Bengal warrant the appointment of a minister of health?—The Health department is under the local self-government department and the local self-government and several other departments come under the ministry of local self-government.

E-3159. Therefore neither the minister nor the single secretary in charge of that department can do full justice to such an important matter as public health of Bengal and specially the public health of industrial areas?—Public health, as a State function, is so closely associated with local self-government that you cannot separate it. In fact, I have always considered that public health is a function of local self-government. In that sense we have actually at the present time a minister of public health.

E-3160. In the portfolio of the minister there are about twelve departments and public health is one of them, and therefore it is very difficult for the minister or his secretary to do full justice to the question of public health?—Public health is the main function of the local self-government department.

E-3161. By 'local self-government' we understand municipalities and district boards?—If I may point out, in England these things were all managed by the President of the Local Government Board until that portfolio was handed over to the minister of public health. It was merely a change in title. The President of the Local Government Board was practically a minister of public health although he was not called by that name before.

E-3162. Mr. Ahmed: You admit that education has a potent influence in improving the public health?—I have not expressed any opinion on that.

E-3163. Will you kindly refer to page 3 of your book "Dynamics of Public Health" where you say that education has a potent influence in improving the public health?—That deals with the history in Great Britain. Education is advantageous for all progress.

E-3164. I am merely quoting your own words. You admit that education has a potent influence in improving the public health, is it not?—That has been the experience of the world generally.

E-3165. Compulsory education is therefore absolutely necessary?—That is another matter. I am not concerned with education at all. I have my own private opinion as to the value of education in connexion with public health, but I am not officially concerned with education.

E-3166. You would admit, would you not, that education is absolutely necessary for the industrial workers and the masses if you want to improve the sanitation and health of the workers generally?—It is a very great advantage.

E-3167. On page 22 of the same book you say that the health of the people in Bengal is deplorable?—Relatively speaking, yes.

E-3168. I think you know that the Government of India spend only 4½ per cent of their revenue on education, health and sanitation?—I do not know what the figures are.

E-3169. You have suggested that you want more money to spend on education?—I have nothing to do with education.

E-3170. But money is wanted for health and sanitation and therefore it is essential to know how we could get the money?—Yes, but I do not know how money can be raised.

E-3171. During your inspection of the mill areas in which the industrial workers live, it must have struck you, did it not, that there is not sufficient provision made by the employers for the recreation of the workers, playgrounds and other amenities, and I think you will agree with me that such provision should be made by the employers?—I have not actually considered that matter. There are many amenities of life that I would like to see improved, but it is a very very difficult thing to express an opinion on what should be done or can be done.

E-3172. But you will agree that it will be a very good thing if the employers make provision for recreation of their workers in the shape of playgrounds and other amenities of life, would you not?—Yes, it would be an excellent thing if they made such provisions.

E-3173. I take it that you would have seen crèches in some of the factories which you have visited?—No; I have done very little visiting of factories.

E-3174. I suppose you would have read in newspapers sometime ago that the working-class women were in the habit of dosing their babies with opium at the time of going to work?—I have seen such statement.

E-3175. If crèches were provided in all the mills, I suppose that difficulty will be removed?—It might assist that.

E-3176. You are in favour of it, is it not?—Certainly; I think anybody would approve that.

E-3177. You know that the babies of these poor working-class people do not get a sufficient quantity of milk because the wages paid to the work-people are not at all sufficient to meet this expense. If a living wage is given to them, I suppose you will agree with me that there will be a decided improvement in the condition of health of the babies and the next generation among the working-classes will be much healthier and efficient?—It might be; I cannot say that I have sufficient information to express a definite opinion. I can only say, as a general rule, the better the nourishment the better the health.

E-3178. And I suppose milk is essential for good nourishment?—For children, yes.

E-3179. If the work-people are provided with better housing accommodation, I take it that that will improve a great deal the health of these people?—Better housing is generally associated with improvement of health.

E-3180. *Miss Sorabji*: I take it that you would agree that in order to bring about a widespread consciousness amongst the people in regard to the improvement of health and so forth, some propaganda should be done?—Propaganda is fruitful.

E-3181. In order to secure that, do your health officers do regular and specific propaganda by means of lectures and demonstrations both in rural as well as in urban areas?—There is a good deal of that done.

E-3182. What training is required for these officers?—The health officers go through a definite curriculum laid down by the University for their diploma in public health.

E-3183. All your public health officers have taken the public health diploma?—The district health officers, and nowadays nearly all the other health officers pass through a definite training and take the diploma in public health of the University of Calcutta.

E-3184. Are the officers, who do propaganda work in the rural and urban areas, trained officers?—Besides the health officers there are a number of Sanitary Inspectors. Those who are employed by my own department have all had some training.

E-3185. How many of these people do propaganda work in the villages?—There are a number of voluntary organizations that are doing propaganda work; the local authorities, that is, the District Boards are also doing propaganda work; in some cases, the Municipalities are doing propaganda. Besides that we have a small staff connected with my own department.

E-3186. What is the strength of your staff that you can use for propaganda?—I have two lecturers and two assistants.

E-3187. Would you consider your staff to be adequate?—I would like to see a larger staff.

E-3188. You will agree that in some respects there is a greater need for propaganda among women than among men?—Yes, because women have to do with the bringing up of the children.

E-3189. Have you any women public health officers?—There are no women at the present moment attached to the Public Health Department of Bengal.

E-3190. Are you prepared to make a proposal to Government to employ women public health officers who can look after the general condition of women and suggest improvements in various directions?—If Government ask my opinion I am prepared to give it.

E-3191. In favour of the employment of such women officers?—I am prepared to give my opinion if Government ask for it.

E-3192. Would that opinion be a recommendation for employment of such women health officers?—Until the question is asked, I cannot say what my reply would be.

E-3193. But I want to know what your opinion is in the matter?—On general principle, as a sanitarian, I am in favour of the employment of women health workers.

E-3194. Would you go further and agree that there is scope also for the employment of a senior woman health officer, who may be a personal assistant to yourself, to check the statistics which we hear are not properly collected and to recommend to you what cannot come under your personal observation in the villages?—There is ample work for a very great increase of staff, both male and female.

E-3195. And, in this direction, particularly for a woman?—There are certain classes of work for which women are undoubtedly specially suitable.

E-3196. Have you ever seen boys in Calcutta streets going down the manholes to clean them out?—I have seen that occasionally.

E-3197. The mud in the sewage which they take out is likely to be fatal to them under certain conditions?—I doubt whether the mud would be fatal to them.

E-3198. Tetanus, if they had their skin broken?—There is a possibility, but I have no data to express a definite opinion on that.

E-3199. If it were found to be dangerous, have you any suggestions to make for the protection of those small boys?—I have not actually considered the question.

E-3200. Would those small boys be under the direct observation of your Sanitary Inspectors?—I have nothing whatsoever to do with Calcutta. Calcutta is under the Calcutta Corporation, and the Calcutta health department.

E-3201. You do not take any cognizance of this at all?—This is all governed by the Calcutta Municipal Act, and I do not think you will find any reference to the Director of Public Health in the Calcutta Municipal Act.

E-3202. You have Sanitary Inspectors under you?—No; they are employed by local authorities.

E-3203. You never see them at all?—All the executive work vests in the local authorities.

E-3204. You would not know what their duties were?—No, except for the rules and by report and inspection.

E-3205. Your officers inspect them?—They inspect the work of the Municipalities.

E-3206. Then they would inspect the Sanitary Inspectors employed by the Municipalities?—They inspect the work of the Municipalities only at long intervals.

E-3207. How would the work which these Sanitary Inspectors do, come under your cognizance?—The work may come under my cognizance as a result of reports by my officers who inspect the Municipalities, but these Inspectors are not under my control.

E-3208. They are not under your personal observation?—No.

E-3209. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: Do you think that the Municipalities in mill areas of, say, Bhatpara, Titaghur and Champdani, have sufficient power under the Act to compel the owners to improve the *bustis*?—They have power. I do not know to what extent those powers have been utilized.

E-3210. Who prepared the statement as regards the diet of the industrial labour in India?—(Dr. Chaudhuri) I prepared it.

E-3211. Where did you get the figure from to show that a Hindustani jute mill worker takes one-fifth *chatak* of meat every day?—It does not mean that every day he takes one-fifth *chatak* of meat. We took his consumption for a fortnight and gave the average per day.

E-3212. Dr. Bentley, will you tell us whether you are going to appoint a special officer to enquire into the conditions of health of industrial workers in Bengal?—(Dr. Bentley) I cannot reply to that because it is a matter for Government to decide.

E-3213. Do you not think that it should be the duty of the public health department to investigate into the question of food and housing of the workers?—It is one of the duties of health officers to investigate into food and housing.

E-3214. Has your department submitted a report on the insanitary condition of the *bustis* situated outside the mill area?—It is not the function of my department; it is the function of the local authorities.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

## BENGAL

(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)

### SEVENTY-SIXTH MEETING

CALCUTTA

Friday, 14th February 1930.

#### PRESENT:

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

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, *Bar.*  
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, *Kt.*,  
K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, *Kt.*, C.B.E.  
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.  
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.,  
Mr. G. D. BIRLA, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.  
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.  
Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A.  
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.  
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E.,  
I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal  
Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior  
Vice-President, Indian Chamber  
of Commerce.

Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.  
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.

Miss CORNELIA SORABI, *Bar-at-Law*, *Lady Assessor*.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.  
Mr. A. DIBDIN.

} *Assistant Commissioners.*

} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. C. W. GURNEE, I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of Bengal  
in the Local Self-Government Department,

and

Mr. H. J. TWYNAM, I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of Bengal  
in the Revenue Department.

E-3215. *The Chairman*: We have seen some of these *bustis* which are overcrowded, not drained and obviously insanitary. We have not yet clearly understood whether the continued existence of those conditions is due to a defect in the law or to a defect in the administration?—(Mr. Gurnee) It is necessary to differentiate between the position in Calcutta and in Municipalities outside Calcutta. In Calcutta there is an up-to-date Act under which,

so far as the law goes, it seems to me to be possible to take the necessary action for clearing *bustis* and reconstruction. In the Bengal Municipal Act, which applies to all Municipalities outside Calcutta, there are a number of provisions governing the construction and regulation of *bustis* by which, if they were carefully applied a good deal of the insanitary *bustis* which have been inspected could be eliminated. But for various reasons it is admitted that the Municipalities outside Calcutta do not apply these conditions as stringently as they might, and the conditions themselves which were framed 40 years ago, have not been revised up to the standard established in the Calcutta Municipal Act. The Government of Bengal had a Bengal Municipal Bill, which was to follow the Calcutta Municipal Bill and was brought up-to-date on much the same lines as the Calcutta Municipal Bill. That was put before the Legislature in 1925, it was rejected on the First Reading and there the matter rests.

E-3216. Is it true to say that it was not thrown out on its merits?—It is difficult for me to discuss the party politics of five years ago, but I think we may say that the reason which predominated with Council in throwing it out was not so much a study of its intrinsic conditions as a feeling that it strengthened the control of Government over local bodies; that was the argument put forward in the single short speech which preceded its rejection.

E-3217. Has there been any attempt to reintroduce it, since 1925?—All I can say is it has not been re-introduced. A Public Health Bill has not been brought forward; it was not considered more urgent than the Bengal Municipal Amendment Bill in 1925. That was the order of legislation in the mind of the Ministry in 1925 and it has not been reversed since so far as I know.

E-3218. It appears to be suggested in some quarters that the acquisition by a mill company of land in order to improve the housing both of their own people and in the neighbourhood does not come within the terms of section 40 of the Land Acquisition Act. Has that point ever been decided?—(Mr. Twynan) There have been acquisitions in the past for that purpose, but the cases are very rare. There was a case in 1916 when land was acquired for housing labour for the Burma Oil Company at Chittagong, but then it was certified that the activities of the Burma Oil Company served a public purpose. There have been other cases since in which the Legal Advisors of Government have stated that they did not consider that the conditions were such as to fulfil the definition in the Act; so that it really depends on the circumstances of each particular case. For instance there was an application from a co-operative housing society for the acquisition of land to put up dwellings. In that particular case the Legal Advisors of Government said they did not consider it would come under the definition laid down in section 40, because it was scarcely a public purpose, the scope of the society being too restricted. There was another case in which a company applied for land for the housing of 100 labourers, and in that case also the Legal Remembrancer held that as only 100 labourers were involved it could not be said to be a public purpose. There is some obscurity with regard to the legal position.

E-3219. The words are "likely to prove useful to the public"—It depends on whether by "public" is meant the whole body of the public or a section of the public. The Government of India suggested that the Act should be amended in that sense to make it perfectly clear that it should apply to acquisitions for housing purposes. This Government replied that they thought that amendment would be desirable but that in view of the pitfalls which might arise if the Land Acquisition Act were subject to general amendment, they would recommend nothing should be done because at present no court has definitely pronounced that anybody but the local Government is the sole judge of whether the proposed acquisition fulfils a public purpose or not. There is a judicial decision in the famous case of *Ezra versus Secretary of State* in which it is laid down that the local Government is the sole judge of what constitutes a public purpose, either for acquisition on its own behalf or for a company.

E-3220. Have you in mind the actual terms of the amendment to this paragraph B of section 40 which was then under consideration?—No, it simply says that it should be amended so as to make it perfectly clear that the section should apply to acquisition of land for housing purposes; it did not get as far as the actual wording.

E-3221. Is it your opinion that an amendment of the law to make it absolutely clear that it should include housing is desirable?—I should say it

is desirable. The only reason why it was not proceeded with was that it was thought that the whole Land Acquisition Act might have come into the melting pot with rather disastrous results.

E-3222. But surely such a thing is known in India as a one-clause Bill to deal with a quite limited matter on which there is a large consensus of opinion without ripping up the whole framework of an Act?—Yes, that is so. The opinion of the local Government was re-invited on other matters also, and the local Government replied that they thought it would be very undesirable to throw the whole Act into the melting pot, but if a single clause Bill could be introduced it certainly would be desirable.

E-3223. Then you would think it a useful thing to have as promptly as possible a one clause Bill clearing up that point?—Yes.

E-3224. And making it quite clear that the housing of the people, whether by the local body or by any industrial concern which employs the bulk of the people in the neighbourhood should be possible under this Act?—That is a question of principle, but certainly I think it should be done.

E-3225. You are not aware of any one having put in legal terms the exact amendment to paragraph B of section 40 of the Land Acquisition Act, limited to that one point?—I am not aware of any formal drafting of a Bill to explain the section more clearly. I have consulted the Second Land Acquisition Collector, and the Land Acquisition Deputy Collector of the 24 Parganas; I myself was Land Acquisition Deputy Collector of the 24 Parganas; I thought the Act as it stands probably does permit of the acquisition of land for housing purposes in case in which the local Government considers a public purpose is fulfilled; but in view of the fact that legal difficulties have been raised in the past I still think an amendment of the Act would be desirable so as to forestall any possible difficulties in the civil courts.

E-3226. The legal advisers to Government have given contrary opinions and that makes it difficult to proceed administratively without the amendment?—Yes.

E-3227. Sections 245 and 246 of the Bengal Municipal Act, 1884, appear at first sight to give adequate powers to lay an obligation on the owners of these insanitary *bustis* to carry out certain works within a fixed period?—(Mr. Gurner) I had that in mind when I spoke of antiquated but partially adequate powers. A number of administrative difficulties would arise if it were attempted to exercise those powers, but the powers are there.

E-3228. In the event of owners and occupiers being unwilling to proceed with the improvement whilst some other party was willing to proceed, if those powers were exercised would it not have the effect of reducing the purchase price to a price which represented the value of the property with the obligation laid on it and not as at present the rack rent capitalized plus 15 per cent?—That is a new and very difficult question. I should say that the land acquisition price would have to be the market value of the land.

E-3229. Where the owner of the land wanted a price above the land acquisition rate, as the result of this procedure he would be prepared to sell at the land acquisition rate; that is to say, putting this obligation on a particular area would prevent extortion in the form of demanding more than the Land Acquisition Act value; if the existing owner, the *zamindar* or his sub-tenants, were unwilling themselves to carry out the obligations but preferred to sell, they would sell subject to the obligation which would then go along with the land?—The obligation would not go along with the land; the obligation would have to be created again when the ownership changed hands; that is one of the difficulties of the Act, that while the proceedings are going on the property may change hands and proceedings have to be taken all over again. The obligation lies on the owner. When the owner receives notice he may dispose of the property either genuinely or by some subterfuge and then the proceedings have to be taken all over again.

E-3230. Then that would appear to be a defect of the law in that the obligation is not a continuing one?—It is going rather far to say it is a defect. I take it that it has been the general principle of requisition powers in Bengal that the requisition must be served on the owner and when the property changes hands you must renew proceedings against the new owner.

E-3231. The existing powers just referred to are not freely used by local municipal authorities?—They certainly are not freely used and they are difficult to use. I have explained one difficulty; another difficulty arises out

of the joint ownership and all the numerous legal difficulties that arise when you begin to take proceedings against an owner in this country. That is a matter of which I have had personal experience in the Corporation where we have complete powers for the improvement of *bustis* but the actual working of those powers is a slow and tedious process.

E-3232. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Where the owner is a ground landlord who lets the land, for instance, to a *sardar* who builds these *bustis*, if you say you are going to improve the property, it would be impossible to recover the cost from the *sardar*?—Exactly; by the time the proceedings were completed he would probably be in another mill on the other side of the river.

E-3233. He probably would not have the money to pay?—I assume that in theory you could institute proceedings and get a decree against his pay, but in practice it would be quite impossible to proceed against a *sardar*. That is one of many difficulties.

E-3234. *Sir Alexander Murray*: The local Government have put in force the power to acquire land for industrial purposes in Bengal, have not they?—(*Mr. Twynam*) Yes.

E-3235. For ordinary industrial purposes and not for a company described as a public utility company?—After the war during the boom the local Government was invited to say whether it was desirable to use the Land Acquisition Act for the purpose of acquiring land for industrial development, not only where the company directly served the public needs but where it indirectly served the public needs. During the war the Indian Iron and Steel Company, for instance, acquired land for housing purposes and there it was definitely said that the company was doing war work and was serving a public purpose. The local Government readily agreed to that, which shows that the circumstances of each case must be considered. Then the principle was extended a little further; for instance, land was acquired for the Raishahi Tanneries. Since the boom died down there have been very few applications; the test probably would be whether it served a public purpose or not.

E-3236. Then you suggest that if there were a war and the jute mills were supplying sand bags, if they applied for land to build workmen's houses they would be entitled to get it?—Yes.

E-3237. But because there is not a war on and the mills are anxious to get land to improve the conditions under which their workers live, you feel that is not a public purpose?—You must not put that into my mouth; on the contrary I think the Act as it stands permits of the acquisition of land; but I am not a lawyer, so that in face of legal opinion to the contrary I can only report what the legal advisers say.

E-3238. The Holland Commission made definite recommendations in its industrial report; have you as a Government ever taken any action directly or indirectly on that report?—The Industrial Commission, I think, recommended the acquisition of land for industrial purposes, but no modification has been made in the Act. The Government of Bengal in 1922 with regard to the compulsory acquisition of land for industrial purposes said they considered that the application of the Act for general industrial purposes would have to be very carefully watched because, quite obviously, there might be indirect interest brought to bear to secure that the Land Acquisition Act should be used for the purposes of industrial concerns in which the public had really no interest. They were against the extension of the Act for purely industrial purposes, but this was said: "The Minister is of opinion that there is a stronger case for the compulsory acquisition of land for housing industrial labour than for the development of industries. The Governor in Council accepts this opinion and agrees with the Government of India that in the absence of special legislation for the housing of industrial labour the addition proposed by them is desirable". That was the addition I have mentioned.

E-3239. It has gone to sleep since 1922?—Yes.

E-3240. Would your Government favour legislation subject to certain safeguards to enable land to be acquired for the housing of workers engaged in industries such as jute and cotton mills and iron works?—I cannot answer for the Government; your question raises a question of principle on which it is hardly for me to speak.

E-3241. Has the possibility of introducing an Improvement Trust been considered?—(*Mr. Gurner*) Yes, that is one of the proposals which is now being actively considered with regard to Howrah. It is quite obvious that no radical improvement can be made in the sanitary conditions of Howrah until there is an Improvement Trust working on lines analogous to those of the Calcutta Improvement Trust.

E-3242. What has the Improvement Trust in Calcutta done to provide facilities for workmen to live away from the congested areas?—The Calcutta Improvement Trust has powers for re-housing workmen disturbed by its operations. At the beginning of its operations it made certain experiments in housing which proved, for one reason or another, to be rather a failure. I think one can quite definitely say now that one does not regard the Calcutta Improvement Trust as primarily, or even secondarily, a housing body; it is a body for the purpose of urban improvement. So far as its housing activities are concerned they are entirely subsidiary to its work of urban improvement. We must dismiss the idea of its being a body responsible for the housing of labour as such or for the housing of the poorer classes on any large scale.

E-3243. In view of that experience and the very congested condition of Howrah are you making special arrangements in the New Howrah Improvement Bill whereby housing facilities will be provided for the industrial workers there?—The Bill itself is a very long way off; it has not yet been framed; that will be one of the questions of principle to be examined when the Bill comes to be framed. It is at present contemplated that the Bill for the improvement of Howrah would be analogous to the Calcutta Improvement Act; it would not, therefore, necessarily provide for the housing of labour or of the poorer classes as one of its primary functions. Whether the Bill would be extended to cover that function I could not say.

E-3244. Do you not think, in the special circumstances of Howrah, that ought to be the primary purpose of the Improvement Bill?—You raise a large question; our experience is that a body working for urban improvement such as the Calcutta Improvement Trust has a function before it which will occupy all its time and all its activities. So far as one can see, to place on that body also the onus of housing labour and the working classes would confuse its purpose and possibly extend its activities beyond anything reasonably within its capacity.

E-3245. Before you could make roads or open up squares in Howrah you would have to displace hundreds if not thousands of work-pepole?—Yes; I think the Bill would comprehend as an accessory to its improvement work the re-housing of the poorer classes displaced by its operations.

E-3246. Surely the purpose of setting up an Improvement Trust in Howrah is to open up the town and displace the working population?—I am afraid it is something much more humble than that; the primary reason for an Improvement Trust in Howrah is to put a sewer underneath the street; that alone would consume all the money the Trust is likely to be able to raise for many years to come.

E-3247. Then when you say there is going to be an Improvement Trust in Howrah, that is simply a red herring across the trail?—Not at all; the mere sewerage of the town will at once immensely improve conditions. The position of affairs being as it is, the sewer cannot be put down except by an Improvement Trust.

E-3248. The conditions in the congested *bustis* of Titaghur are known to us; I understand you to say that under the Bengal Municipal Act notices can be served on the owners and occupiers of the huts?—The relevant sections of the Bengal Municipal Act have already been referred to. I quite agree they fall far short of the work that needs to be done, but a certain amount could be done under the sections as they stand at present which is not in fact done.

E-3249. Would the new town-planning clauses in the draft Bengal Municipal Act meet all that we have in view as regards giving facilities for condemning insanitary areas and acquiring the land?—No; I am afraid now I must take you to another of these Bills which the department has in various stages of preparation. It actually has a Town Planning Bill which would cover exactly the difficulties you are now thinking of.

E-3250. You have a Public Health Bill, a draft Municipal Bill and a Town Planning Bill?—Yes.



E-3251. When is there a possibility of these being put into effect?—That is a question which I am not in a position to answer. I suggest that a permanent secretary at Home would not have been asked two years ago when the English Local Government Bill would be brought before Parliament.

E-3252. *Mr. Joshi*: If you are making provision for the acquisition of land for private companies for the purpose of housing the working classes, are you thinking of making provision that the land shall be resumed by Government if it ceases to be used for the housing of the working classes?—(*Mr. Twynam*) No, we are not thinking of doing that at the moment. It is there; one of the conditions laid down is that it is to be used for the specific purpose for which it is acquired. It depends how many years elapse.

E-3253. But if it is not used for that purpose, does the Government take power to resume the land?—I think the power exists because there is a clause that it is only to be used for the specific purpose for which it has been acquired.

E-3254. *Mr. Cliff*: I understand under the Bengal Municipal Act you already possess statutory powers of a limited character; have those powers been fully exercised in respect of Howrah?—(*Mr. Gurner*) The powers which we already possess rest not with Government, but with the municipality concerned, and it is for the Commission who have visited Howrah to draw their own conclusions as to whether the existing powers have been fully exercised.

E-3255. Have you any powers of control over the municipality?—Government have certain powers of control over municipalities.

E-3256. Have the powers which you possess been fully exercised by Government?—I shall have to take a definite instance; I think, it is probably true to say that Government have taken no action to compel the Howrah Municipality to clear any particular *busti*.

E-3257. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Government have certain powers of compelling a municipality to put into effect municipal powers for improving the conditions of the municipality?—Now we are coming back to evidence which I gave a year ago to the Simon Commission. The powers exercised by Government over local bodies are extremely inadequate and cumbrous. Certainly the powers, such as they are, which Government possess, have not been applied to compel a municipality to clear any particular *busti* and they probably would not work for that purpose.

E-3258. *Mr. Cliff*: Under which Minister do these powers come?—The Minister of Local Self-Government.

E-3259. *Mr. Ahmed*: Is it not a fact that before the plans of a mill are sanctioned application must be made to the Chairman of the municipality or Government?—No, that is not necessarily so as far as every municipality is concerned. It would depend where the mill is situated.

E-3260. The sanction of the municipality in whose area it is proposed to set up the mill must be obtained?—That is a legal point as to which there is some uncertainty, whether the powers possessed by municipalities to control building, when they have such powers, would apply to a purely industrial building; they might be applied. I am not sure whether it is correct to say that the mill would in certain municipalities have to apply for sanction of the municipality, but it might have to comply with certain by-laws, which is very much the same thing.

E-3261. *The Chairman*: That would be solely with regard to the structure?—Yes.

E-3262. It would have nothing to do with the surrounding land which might be used for building houses?—As I understood Mr. Ahmed, he was suggesting that the municipality might refuse its sanction on the ground that there was not sufficient accommodation for labour, but I do not think they could do so.

E-3263. *Mr. Ahmed*: Are you aware that the Calcutta Municipality does not allow any mill to be constructed within its boundaries and that generally they insist upon the mill being constructed at a distance from the town?—I cannot speak as to the practice of the Calcutta Municipality.

*Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: As Commissioner of the Calcutta Corporation may I say that there is no such law; they can only approve of plans of a factory according to the standard plan; they cannot prohibit the building of a factory.

E-3264. *Mr. Ahmed*: Before any persons make up their mind to construct a mill it is for them to make sure that they can acquire land for housing in the neighbourhood at a reasonable price. I suppose you are aware that the workshops of the British India Steam Navigation Company, Bird and Company and the Port Commissioners and others are all situated far away from the town of Calcutta, and that they provide steam launches and other conveyances for the workers to go and come back daily?—I am not competent to say anything about the situation of factories round Calcutta.

E-3265. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You served as a Deputy Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation for some years?—Yes, some years ago.

E-3266. You remember that prior to 1923 the Act had no special clauses relating to the housing of the working classes?—Yes.

E-3267. The new Act empowers the Calcutta Corporation to acquire land for building houses for the working classes?—For the purpose of erecting sanitary dwellings for the working and poorer classes.

E-3268. Are you aware that the Calcutta Corporation appointed a special committee for the housing of the working classes?—I believe so in 1925.

E-3269. Are you aware that after enquiring into the various aspects of the question the special committee have decided to put up workmen's dwellings in two districts of Calcutta?—Yes, I believe the Committee reported in that sense. Whether it has been confirmed by the Corporation I cannot say; one can hardly speak of a decision until the recommendation is actually adopted by the municipal body itself.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. R. N. GILCHRIST, M.A., I.E.S., Deputy Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Commerce and Marine Departments, Labour Intelligence Officer and Registrar of Trade Unions.**

**Mr. A. T. WESTON, M.Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.E. (India), Director of Industries, Bengal.**

**Mr. J. A. BEALE, Subdivisional Officer, Asansol.**

**Khan Bahadur TASADDAK AHMED, Second Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division.**

**Rai Sahib SUSHIL KUMAR GANGULY, Officiating Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengal.**

**Mr. R. P. ADAMS, O.B.E., M.I.Mech.E., Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal.**

**Mr. J. B. McBRIDE, Senior Inspector of Factories, Bengal.**

E-3270. *The Chairman*: Was the proposal to establish a labour bureau in this Presidency dropped on the prevailing plea of lack of funds or was there any other reason for it?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) It was dropped because of lack of funds. The bureau was never established, but my post of Labour Intelligence officer was created with a view to the creation of a future labour bureau. Almost as soon as I took over the post, the Bengal Retrenchment Committee reported, and, being the newest post, it was one of the first to be recommended for abolition, so that the labour bureau never came into being at all. The Labour Intelligence officer continued to exist, but his duties were changed to other types of work.

E-3271. Has recent experience in Bengal convinced you that it was a mistake to abandon that proposal?—Yes; the Government of Bengal recognize that it is necessary to have a labour bureau and a labour office, whatever the name may be, and the labour bureau would have come into being, I suppose, soon after 1922, had it not been for the financial position.

E-3272. I suppose it is fair to say that the industrial interests of Bengal are second to those of no other province?—Yes, Bengal is the chief industrial province in India so far as the number of factory employees is concerned.

E-3273. And yet Bengal lags behind some other provinces in that respect?—It is purely and simply a matter of finance; there is no question of principle; Bengal would like to have such an office, but they have not got the money. The Government of Bengal have tried to improve the position by adding to the factory inspection department and utilizing its staff to a certain extent as an intelligence bureau. That is recognized not to be very satisfactory because the inspectors have plenty of work to do otherwise. The question of the future organization will depend partly on the recommendations of this Commission but the Government of Bengal have already considered the general lines on which the organization should proceed.

E-3274. Taking all these things into consideration, and considering the great industrial interests of Bengal, might the establishment of such a bureau be an economy and not an expense?—It is a matter for Government to decide.

E-3275. I notice that you had in existence in Bengal a conciliation panel?—Yes.

E-3276. But after the passage of the Trade Disputes Act that was dropped?—Yes.

E-3277. Did that conciliation panel do any useful work during its existence?—It never functioned. I have mentioned in the memorandum that there were a few instances in which applications were made, but they were very few. One or two special bodies were appointed for special disputes. The panel was formed year after year, we used to appoint the personnel of the panel about April or May and publish it in the Gazette; no case arose which Government considered it necessary to refer to the panel. The panel was merely a list of names from which conciliators might be chosen for any particular dispute.

E-3278. You said that in some cases there were "special bodies"; were they chosen from this panel or not?—No; that was before the panel was actually brought into being.

E-3279. Why was this panel dropped on the passage of the Trade Disputes Act?—Because the panel was established under a resolution of the Government of Bengal; it had no special status at all; it was an informal body and the Trade Disputes Act brought in definite machinery.

E-3280. But do you not think there is a place for such a panel quite apart from the more cumbersome and formal machinery of a court under the Trade Disputes Act?—That might be so; the panel has not been reconstituted, but the actual machinery under which the panel was appointed from year to year still exists; it is merely a matter of publishing the names. The panel was primarily constituted for public utility services. The Government of Bengal have adhered to the policy hitherto that in private disputes they should not intervene or use any machinery at all unless both parties ask them to intervene. The public utility of the panel was really superseded by the public utility sections of the Trade Disputes Act.

E-3281. But there are many places where there is such a panel which is open, if both parties are agreeable to use it, without any Government interference?—Yes; that could be done, I suppose, under the existing machinery although the panel has not actually been renominated.

E-3282. Do you support the suggestion which has been put before us that the time is ripe for a move in the direction of reducing hours per week from 60 to 55, and per day to 10?—Yes, that is the official view of the Government of Bengal.

E-3283. We have had a suggestion that in addition to that the daily limit, as far as men are concerned, should be removed; does that coincide

with the view of the Government of Bengal?—No; the Government of Bengal definitely recommend that the daily limit should be continued and reduced from 11 to 10.

E-3284. I think the Government of Bengal support the control of shifts and that control is presumably within these limits of which we have just spoken?—Yes.

E-3285. Supposing those alterations be carried out, the reduction of the week to 55, and the day to a maximum of 10 hours, for what reason does the Government of Bengal desire to have a control over shifts within those limits?—In order to ensure the observance of the principles of Chapter IV of the Act.

E-3286. That is for administrative reasons?—Yes.

E-3287. To have a control over the registration and inspection of the register?—Yes.

E-3288. There is no reason for the control of the shift within those hours except the convenience of inspection?—It is not for the convenience of inspection; it is to make inspection effective.

E-3289. *Mr. Cliff*: What industries have you in mind with regard to abolition of a daily limit?—The industries which work the shorter hours, which are the "heavy" industries here. It was a suggestion made recently by the Chief Inspector of Factories, and it seems worthy of examination in order to see whether industries which do work shorter hours could work a little more freely than they do at present under a daily maximum.

E-3290. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are you referring to industries in which the weekly hours are shorter than the present maximum?—Yes, it applies to both weekly and daily hours.

E-3291. Then what is the point of allowing them to work as long as they like daily, which is the suggestion here?—We should have to have a guarantee that they would not work more than a certain number of hours per week. The suggestion to remove the daily limit has not been very carefully examined by the Government of Bengal; it was more a suggestion thrown out for the consideration of the Commission with a view to ascertaining whether there was any likelihood of finding a solution to some of the difficulties which have been encountered in connexion with those industries. It is not a proposal which the Government of Bengal have considered in principle to any great extent.

E-3292. *Mr. Cliff*: The answer to the Chairman stands?—Yes, so far as the Government of Bengal is concerned, on the main issue. If the Commission having regard to the evidence obtained in other parts of India finds that that suggestion is worthy of consideration, then the Government of Bengal would be glad to have its views.

E-3293. *The Chairman*: But, no doubt, you appreciate that to go back on the question of daily limit might reintroduce some of the very troubles that that limit was intended to avoid?—Yes.

E-3294. You have submitted to us a paper by Mr. J. M. Mitra dealing with the indebtedness of jute workers?—Mr. Mitra has been seriously ill and has had to go on leave, but his officiating successor, Rai Sahib Sushilkumar Ganguly, is here.

E-3295. The suggestions made in this memorandum are remarkable and hardly coincide with other information that we have; for instance, it is said "It is reported that as many as 75 to 90 per cent of the labourers are in debt". What is meant by that; does that cover cases where they are in debt on their monthly food accounts to the *bania*?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) Yes, I understand that that is the case.

E-3296. In that sense we are all in debt unless we paid up our bills last night?—These are cumulative debts that go on from month to month.

E-3297. I see it speaks of loans to the extent of four weeks' wages. We are told the labourer is accustomed to pay his accounts once a month and not sooner?—But these are permanent actual debts, a loan or money having been taken from a *bania*.

E-3298. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You do not regard him as being in debt if he is merely receiving credit from his supplier?—No, this refers to actual sums which have been lent, and on which he is paying interest.

E-3299. *The Chairman*: It is said that enquiries have been made from amongst the labourers of several jute mills. How were these facts ascertained?—Several inspectors were deputed to study the conditions with a view to the formation of co-operative societies and from the study they made by observing a few types as well as by a general survey they came to these conclusions.

E-3300. Were the enquiries made in the post office?—Yes; one of the inspectors who made the enquiry is here.

E-3301. Has the report made by this gentleman been submitted to the Commission?—He is one of several officers. (*Mr. Gilchrist*) I have not those reports.

E-3302. Over what area was this enquiry conducted?—Various areas, Kankinarah and various other areas round about Calcutta.

E-3303. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Co-operative Inspectors came to our labour union and asked our co-operation in enquiring into indebtedness. We have been giving assistance in getting this information and the Inspector kindly gave us a draft report which he was going to submit to Government.

E-3304. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Then the reports are based on information supplied by the Kankinarah Labour Union?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) No, that is not the fact.

E-3305. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: Is there any objection to the department handing over this departmental report?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) I do not know.

E-3306. *The Chairman*: If there is a document perhaps I might be permitted to see it?—Yes. I am not connected with that department, but I will convey your request to the department.

E-3307. The report also says that it is a significant fact that this class of people annually remit several lakhs of rupees to their homes?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) Yes, there are workers who live on credit, and there are other workers who lend money, for instance, the *sardars*, the *Kabulis*, *Mahajans* or *Marwaris*. The post office can only say that so much money is remitted; it cannot distinguish between the classes of people who remit it. I understand that these figures are collected by enquiry at the post office. The actual labourer has got to remit some money home for the maintenance of his family, and he may at the same time be in debt.

E-3308. You say that these remittances are mostly for the maintenance of their relations to meet cultivation expenses of the fields in their native villages, and sometimes for the purchase of land; I suppose that statement must be balanced against the statement that 75 to 90 per cent are in debt?—Yes, to a certain extent.

E-3309. In your opinion has the system of weekly payments which is prevalent in the jute mills any influence in increasing or decreasing indebtedness to the money-lender?—I do not think it has.

E-3310. Therefore, in your opinion, the weekly system of payment does not increase the power of the money-lender over the individual?—No; in any case if the money-lender knew there was a fixed date for payment he would be there and would get his dues.

E-3311. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would it be possible that some of these remittances which have been sent might have been from borrowed money?—It is possible that workmen borrow money in order to remit home.

E-3312. On the question of weekly payment, in your view the question whether the worker is paid weekly or monthly does not affect his indebtedness. Why do you say that the worker is going to be more or less in debt if he is paid monthly or weekly?—Even if he was paid monthly he would get accommodation from the shop-keepers for the remaining three weeks.

E-3313. I am not talking of credit at all. Would he be more in debt if paid monthly or weekly?—I do not think otherwise it affects him at all.

E-3314. Let us take the question of interest. Take the case of a man who is not able to pay his interest every week. You say that the money-lender insists on weekly payments because wages are paid weekly?—Yes.

E-3315. If the man does not pay his interest at the end of the week the money-lender adds the interest on to the principal at the end of the week, does he not?—I do not think that is exactly the system under which money is lent. For instance, if he takes a loan of Re. 1 he pays it in nine instalments of As. 2 each.

E-3316. Let us take the case of a man who has borrowed a large sum of Rs. 100 for marriage or other purposes. He has got to pay so much per week for several weeks. If he does not pay the instalment for a week does not the money-lender add the interest on to the loan and charge interest on the compounded amount for the next week?—Yes, he does.

E-3317. Would the rate of interest then be the same as it would be to anybody else who is paid monthly and who pays his instalments monthly—usually one or two annas in the rupee per month?—The rate would be about the same.

E-3318. Therefore a man who was paid weekly would be a loser because if he did not pay his instalments every week the money-lender would go on compounding the amount every week instead of every month?—That is so.

E-3319. Is that one reason why some workers do not prefer the weekly to the monthly payment, because if they are paid weekly the money-lenders insist on weekly repayments whereas if they are paid monthly the money-lenders will take monthly instalments?—That may be so.

E-3320. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you know of this from personal knowledge?—No.

E-3321. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: With regard to the question of late payment of wages we were in a printing press the other day where some of the hands alleged that they had not been paid three or four months. When we asked them why they did not go to court they said they did not feel that the court would help them to get their arrears because the owner would win his case with the help of an expensive and able barrister. In your memorandum dealing with this question you say that "prompt recovery should be provided by some form of summary procedure and fines should be provided for offences". That would deal, would it not, with the case of a firm that was several months in arrears in payment of wages?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) Yes, I take it it would.

E-3322. Would it be possible for the local Legislative Council to bring forward a short Act providing for some form of summary procedure in cases like this?—I should not like to give an opinion off-hand without consulting the legal advisers of Government. It is rather a complicated question affecting the jurisdiction of courts and also at the same time dealing with the welfare of labour. I think under the Devolution Rules the local legislature can take this matter into consideration with the previous sanction of the Government of India.

*Mr. Clow*: It can be done with the previous sanction of the Government of India.

E-3323. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: A provision like the one I suggest might be helpful in dealing with firms who are three or four months in arrears of wages?—One or two allegations of that kind have been made but no definite cases have come to our direct notice. We reported to the Government of India that this question of late payment of wages was not a serious one in Bengal, but that it should be dealt with if abuses occurred.

E-3324. Your factory inspectors complain that the fines which are levied are not large enough and therefore they do not act as a deterrent. Can you as a Government approach the courts and do something to suggest to the Magistrates that they should levy fines more in conformity with the gravity of the offences?—Government can inform the District Magistrates of the view of the Chief Inspector of Factories that the penalties are too small. Beyond that they cannot take any action and the remedy seems to lie in other directions.

E-3325. Are you quite sure that it is not the High Court but Government which is the proper authority to give these suggestions to the Magistrates?—I think Government is in a position to do that.

E-3326. *Mr. Cliff*: Has that been done in any case? We have been in a province where they said that it had been done?—In one or two cases

Government drew the attention of the executive officers of a division to the fact that the penalties were not in accordance with the seriousness of the offences.

E-3327. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What was the result?—There was only a slight improvement.

E-3328. Have you taken up any case to the High Court asking for enhanced penalty?—No. This question has arisen recently on a complaint made by the Chief Inspector of Factories. The matter will have to be taken into consideration in consultation with the legal advisers of Government.

E-3329. With regard to the question of the advisability and possibility of statutory establishment of minimum wages we have heard from a number of Governments that they do not consider that the time is ripe nor the conditions suitable for the establishment of minimum wages. You have put your objections in more detail and as I understand your point of view you find difficulties in following the procedure which has been carried out at Home. You start by saying that difficulties would arise in connexion with the picking out of industries in which the wages are "exceptionally low" and end by saying that there is a danger that fixation of minimum wages may be used to stifle competition in big firms. Is there any particular industry in your province where you would say the wages were particularly low?—I cannot answer that question because we have not sufficient material at our disposal.

E-3330. You have no industry which stands out as a sweated industry?—I would not say that any one industry stands out as a sweated industry in the province of Bengal. The tenor of the letter of Government is to the effect that until we have complete machinery to decide what sweating is and how much sweating there is, if it exists at all, we cannot very well start taking up the question of minimum wages.

E-3331. You really do not know at the moment whether the need for minimum wages exists in this province?—Not on the ground of "exceptionally low" wages.

E-3332. That is the point and you have no information on the point. If you wanted to get that information how would you get that?—We should have to start a labour intelligence officer with staff on a large scale to find out the facts.

E-3333. It would be a wage census?—Yes, a wage census covering industries big and small, home industries and agriculture also.

E-3334. Therefore before dealing with the question of establishment of minimum wages a great deal of spade work would have to be done?—Yes, a tremendous amount of spade work would have to be done.

E-3335. *Mr. Cliff*: On what do you base that statement that a tremendous amount of work will have to be done?—Simply because we have not the information that is necessary.

E-3336. Do you suggest that there was any such Government enquiry in England before the conditions in sweated industries were brought to the notice of the country?—Not necessarily enquiries by Government. There were private enquiries in England which we have not had here. There was agitation going on in England for 20 years.

E-3337. I appreciate your difficulty, but it is quite different to say that before a minimum wage legislation should take place there should be an elaborate Government enquiry?—There must be enquiries of some sort, not necessarily a Government enquiry.

E-3338. Take the minimum wage of the miners in England. Was there a Government enquiry before that was established?—But the facts of the case were well known.

*Mr. Cliff*: I agree. But that is a different matter.

E-3339. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to the question of indebtedness of the labourers we have two statements before us, one put in by Mr. Mitra and the other one which you have been good enough to give us. From your personal knowledge of the labourers among whom you have been moving about for years do you agree with the statement that 75 to 90 per cent of them are in debt? My impression is that it is an over-estimate. But I have no definite data either to contradict or to confirm it.

E-3340. Do you think that the investigation might have been influenced by the fact that the officer went there for the purpose of finding out whether it was good to start a co-operative society in the mill areas?—It might have been, but I am not quite sure of the intensity with which the enquiries were carried out and I do not know the size of the sample which was used.

E-3341. There is a great variation here between the different mills situated in the same area?—That is one thing that struck me also; there is a variation not only in the indebtedness but in the rates of interest also.

E-3342. Take the three mills side by side in Titaghur. On the one side you have the Empire Mill where he says that the indebtedness is 20 per cent. On the other side you have the Standard Mill where the indebtedness is put at 60 per cent. Alongside that you have the Titaghur Mill where the indebtedness is only 25 per cent. These workers work under the same conditions in adjoining mills where the wages are much the same and yet you find that great variation in the figures?—I understand these figures were compiled from the returns supplied by the jute mill authorities and it is difficult to understand how there could be such a huge variation in contiguous areas where one would expect almost uniform conditions.

E-3343. Take the case of the Angus Company. The report says that the average percentage of employees indebted is 90 per cent. It makes a remark that the rate of the *Kabuli* money-lenders is 325 to 650 per cent per annum. But the investigator could not get any information with regard to the average amount of loan taken by an employee and the average period after which the loan was paid off. How would it be possible to compile the other information without getting information regarding the average loan taken by the employees?—I have not myself studied the statement which was compiled for the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee. I did not know that this enquiry into indebtedness was going on till four or five days ago. I thought that the information would be useful to the Commission and sent the pamphlet round.

E-3344. Do you not think that information regarding the average amount of loan taken by an employee is the first thing to get at before you can ascertain the percentage of employees indebted?—Yes.

E-3345. In your memorandum dealing with the question of the limitation of hours in factories you give a long list of irregularities in the employment of labour in jute mills using the multiple shift system. When you have all this information about the mills using the multiple shift system would it be possible for you to give us a list of similar irregularities in mills working the single shift system and the number of visits paid by the Factory Inspectors to single shift mills and double shift mills?—Yes.

E-3346. Dealing with wages you give a comparison between the average monthly wages in single and double shift mills. There is a big difference between the wages paid in Titaghur and the wages paid in Kankinarah and in other places. What were the areas of single and double shift mills from which these figures were drawn?—I understand and I think the Chief Inspector of Factories will be able to confirm my statement, that the various Factory Inspectors sent their wage returns for their respective divisions. An attempt was made in the Factories department office to compile them and they found a great deal of discrepancy and could not get them to agree. As a result after long consideration and the working out of details this estimate was prepared. It was carefully explained in the report that the statement was not a wage census taken from all the mills and that it did not describe the wages of individual mills. It was simply an attempt to give a general idea of what is paid to the workers of a jute mill.

E-3347. Seeing that it is not an average I should like to know the particular mills from which these figures were drawn?—(Mr. Adams) It was an average of all the mills in the Barrackpore area and other selected mills south of Barrackpore.

E-3348. Could you send us a note giving the figures you have taken from all the mills that have been taken into consideration in arriving at this general figure?—(Mr. Gilchrist) Yes.

E-3349. In your memorandum you speak of a Government official, presumably yourself, specifically directed to take part in the settlement of the last jute mill strike. Who asked you to intervene and how did you come to



intervene?—The whole story is set out without any dubiety in my notes. There was no question of some one asking Government to intervene unless an expression of the will of the Bengal Legislative Council amounted to asking Government to intervene. The circumstances and the magnitude of the strike called for action on the part of Government.

E-3350. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Did it start as a personal action on your part?—No, far from it. Government knew that I was intervening in the dispute.

E-3351. It was a personal action started by you although Government knew about it. You were trying to help?—No. If you read the history of the dispute you will find that in the negotiations prior to the settlement the representatives of the employers and the workers were interviewed by members of the Government.

E-3352. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Did you merely act as a post office or did you try to influence either party to the negotiations?—Once I came in as a negotiator I tried my best to influence each party.

E-3353. On the question of stents did you indicate to either party that it amounted to rate cutting?—I did not indicate to either of the parties that it amounted to rate cutting. But the workers' point regarding the stents was conceded before the strike broke out. The strike broke out in the Begg Dunlop group of mills, and the management of that group of mills restored the old stent even before the strike broke out. They consented to retain the 54 hours' stent after they changed to 60 hours. If you read Mr. Lamb's speech to the Bengal Legislative Council that will be made clear. But the 54 hours' stent was not conceded by all the jute mills.

E-3354. And your influence was used afterwards to make them concede it?—I should like to give any further information you may require on this matter *in camera*.

E-3355. Dealing with the question of the relations between Central and Provincial Governments on matters of labour legislation and administration you say that sometimes Provincial Governments are not given sufficient time to consider references made to them by the Government of India and that there is not sufficient interchange of ideas between the Central and Provincial Governments. In this connexion you make a reference to the local Government having intervened in a railway strike. What is the actual point of that reference? Take the case of a strike in a printing press under the control of the Government of India: could you intervene in that?—No, we cannot.

E-3356. What is your suggestion in such cases?—The local Government should have the power to set up a board of conciliation or a court of enquiry.

E-3357. Take the case of a strike on the East Indian Railway here. Do you suggest that it should not be the Government of India through their Railway Board that should decide whether they should set up a court of enquiry or board of conciliation but the local Governments. In the case of railways might there not be difficulty?—I can foresee the difficulty, but the local Government also have difficulties to contend with.

E-3358. You recognize there is a difference between a localized industry however big it may be and a concern like the railways which runs from one end of India to another?—I quite recognize that. But I am speaking primarily of disputes in central services and railways which may be localized in a particular place. I am thinking of the strike in Lilloah which affected Bengal only.

E-3359. But one can never say that a dispute in a concern like the railways will be localized for two days on end?—I do recognize that difficulty.

E-3360. But you still insist that it is the local Government that should set up a tribunal and not the Government of India?—The local Government have considered the question carefully and that is their view with regard to localized disputes.

E-3361. Take an actual case where a dispute starts at Lilloah. You want to set up a local Government enquiry. Then within three days it spreads to Jamalpur, three days later to Moradabad and in another three days to Lahore. Do you suggest that different local Governments all along the line should set up their own courts of enquiry?—No, that is not suggested.

E-3362. If you followed the principle it should be so?—I only said that the local Government should have powers. This does not necessarily exclude the jurisdiction of the Government of India in cases likely to lead to all India strikes.

E-3363. *Mr. Cliff*: Would it meet the position of the Provincial Governments if the Central Government provided a machinery of enquiry to cover all the central services?—That might meet the difficulty, but it would depend on the machinery.

E-3364. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you think that people having lands in their homes will borrow money from *Kabulis* at exorbitant rates of interest when they can mortgage their lands and get money at cheap rates?—As I said before I have not studied this document from the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee myself. I saw this only three or four days ago and sent it round to the Commission thinking that it might be useful.

E-3365. From your personal knowledge can you say that the workers remit this borrowed money for cultivation expenses?—I have no personal knowledge.

E-3366. I take it therefore that 75 to 90 per cent of the workers are in debt because they cannot maintain themselves and their families on the wages given to them?—We have no information to determine what are the requirements of a standard family of a workman in Bengal. His indebtedness may be due to a multiplicity of circumstances one of which may be improvidence.

E-3367. Do you think that 75 to 90 per cent of the workers are improvident?—Some might be improvident and others may have special family reasons for getting into debt. It is difficult to apportion percentages.

E-3368. Was not the last strike in the jute mills due to the fact that the hours of work were increased without a corresponding increase in wages?—That was not quite the case.

E-3369. *Mr. Cliff*: In your memorandum dealing with minimum wages you have had occasion to remark: "nor even has there been occasion to appoint local commissions of enquiry into abuses in individual industries." That seems to be one of the reasons adduced in this elaborate document against minimum wage legislation?—Yes, the general tenor of the paragraph is that the reasons for the establishment of minimum wage have not been up to now apparent.

E-3370. But there may have been conditions which are not disclosed?—I quite agree.

E-3371. Take the position of this Commission which is making an enquiry. Is it the argument of the Government of Bengal that if the Commission's enquiry disclosed conditions which in the opinion of the Commission required minimum wage legislation, such legislation should not be undertaken?—That is a possibility which the Government of Bengal have not yet considered.

E-3372. Your document on minimum wages suggests a great many financial commitments. You say:

"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."

At the conclusion of that paragraph you say:

"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."

It is a declaration which is often repeated in the memorandum?—It is a declaration which one has to make under the existing financial conditions.

E-3373. Will you forgive me for saying that the Government of Bengal appear to have erected a hypothetical structure which is comprehensive and expensive and then demolished on the ground of cost? Is not that the position set out in this document?—I scarcely think this document has conceded that in principle minimum wage should be established in Bengal, but even were the principle conceded, a system cannot be established because the Government of Bengal cannot afford it.

E-3374. There seem to be two grounds running through this document: one is there has been no disclosure of abuses and the other is the comprehensiveness and the expensiveness of the creation of a minimum wage fixing

machinery. Therefore the arguments is that there should be no minimum wage legislation?—It is not an absolute argument. The position might conceivably arise in Bengal or in any Province in India when the question of a minimum wage machinery might have to be taken up. But it is not one of those questions which the Government of Bengal will be prepared to consider until they have fully equipped the more essential offices under their control, namely, the Factories Office and the Labour Intelligence Office.

E-3375. You remember the provisions in the Assam Labour Act. Do you suggest that there was an enquiry by a comprehensive machinery of the kind you suggest?—So far as I know there was very little enquiry except the ordinary enquiries that might have been made in the districts. But a long road has been travelled since that section was introduced in the Assam Labour and Emigration Act.

E-3376. I notice that the Government of India through the Railway Board have been addressing themselves to the question of ill-paid labour and they are endeavouring to apply some kind of minimum wage. Does the Government of Bengal suggest that it is impossible on the part of the Railway Board?—It all depends on how it is done. I do not say it is impossible if you spend enough money and have the necessary machinery to make the preliminary enquiry which must be a thorough one.

E-3377. Without the elaborate machinery which the Government of Bengal prescribe the Government of India through their Railway Board are actually taking decisions?—The Government of India and the Railway Board have an elaborate machinery already which no local Government are likely to have.

E-3378. Does the Government of Bengal express any opinion whether it is possible for the Railway Board to fix minimum wages?—We have no information.

E-3379. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Would it be possible for any employer to fix minimum wages?—It is possible for any employer individually to put a minimum on to anything he likes, but it is a very different thing to prescribe minimum wages by law.

E-3380. Would you pay attention again to the action of the Government of India with regard to tea labour in Ceylon?—The Government of India mentioned this point in their letter to local Government on this subject. But beyond having read the section of the Act which says that a man taken to Ceylon shall be paid such and such a rate I have no knowledge of how the section works.

E-3381. You have no knowledge of how it was decided upon?—No. The Government of Bengal have no information.

E-3382. You have no opinion to offer whatsoever? Take the case of the workers in the mines. There are mines in Bengal where the workers are prevented from earning their daily rates of wages due to lack of supply of tubs or on the other hand due to bad working places. Does this memorandum submitted by the Government of Bengal stipulate that minimum earnings should not be fixed for miners in the mining industry?—That is a question to be examined with particular reference to the mining industry. If the particular instances to which you refer, are brought to the notice of Government they will examine them.

E-3383. This Commission have made certain enquiries and have had certain evidence brought before them. Do I take it that the Government of Bengal express the opinion in this memorandum against the possibility of this Commission recommending a minimum wage?—In no manner whatsoever have the Government of Bengal attempted to prejudice what the Commission is going to find.

*Sir Victor Sassoon*: After reading this memorandum we are very interested to hear that.

E-3384. *Mr. Clow*: Was not this document of the Government of Bengal prepared long before the Commission was thought of?—Yes, it was written in 1928 in connexion with the Geneva convention regarding minimum wages.

E-3385. *Mr. Cliff*: But the Government of Bengal received a communication from the Secretaries of this Commission asking their views with regard to minimum wages and the advisability and possibility of their statutory establishment. Has the Government of Bengal any constructive suggestions

to offer on this point of the establishment of a minimum wage fixing machinery?—The Government of Bengal have no constructive suggestions to offer.

E-3386. This document says: "The original dispute was a perfectly genuine one." Does that mean that it was a dispute on an industrial matter?—In my opinion, yes.

E-3387. This confidential document is one of Government. That is the opinion of Government?—The document is signed by my name. It was sent to the Commission by Government as a document written by a Government officer. I would not go so far as to say that the Government of Bengal commit themselves to every view that is expressed in this document. Towards the end you will find that there are a number of suggestions made regarding the amendment of the Trade Disputes Act, and the Government of Bengal have not considered these in detail.

E-3388. These are suggestions which the writer of the document has put forward which the Government of Bengal have not necessarily endorsed?—That is so.

E-3389. The document declares that the strike was very orderly. Is that the opinion of the people responsible for the preservation of peace?—Yes; I should think that would represent the views of the authorities except in one or two instances.

E-3390. Speaking of the Jute Mills Association, it says: "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." First of all, have the Government of Bengal any considered suggestions to put in front of this Commission with regard to the settlement of disputes?—Apart from the evidence which has been given on individual items, I am not quite sure to what you refer.

E-3391. The Government of Bengal, as I understand it, had to intervene in this dispute particularly on the ground of preservation of law and order?—Yes.

E-3392. My point is has the Government of Bengal got any suggestions with regard to meeting a situation which might recur again?—There are several suggestions. One is that the industry should get together with the labour representatives. Another is that it should look to the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act, which came into effect just before the big strike broke out.

E-3393. Take the first suggestion: Has the Government of Bengal addressed a communication to the Jute Mills Association and to the union to put forward the suggestion that you are making now to the Commission?—No communications have been made to that effect either to the Jute Mills Association or to any of the unions. There is more than one union.

E-3394. Can you answer as to whether the Government of Bengal, having gone through a dispute of this character and in view of their declaration, are not of the opinion that they should address a communication to these parties?—That I am not in a position to answer.

E-3395. Is there any one who can answer that?—I would require notice of that question.

E-3396. When I asked whether there was any one who could answer I wanted to know whether there was the Secretary present here who could answer it?—It has to be considered by the Government of Bengal.

E-3397. It is said: "The *sardars* are the real masters of the men. His life, indeed, at every turn is coloured with *sardarism*." Has the Government of Bengal any suggestion to put in front of the Commission whereby the power of the *sardar* might be broken?—They have no single suggestion. A better control of labour through the labour provisions of the Factories Act according to the ideas which have been put forward by the Government of Bengal in their memorandum might help. I should say that the Government of Bengal have not definitely considered this question. I personally have considered it a good deal, and I think that much of the responsibility must be put on the employee himself; the same thing applies to bribery.

E-3398. You do make one suggestion that properly chosen welfare officers can do much towards fostering good relations between employers and workers?—That is my own suggestion. The Government of Bengal have not considered it officially. I personally have much faith in it.

E-3399. What I am concerned about is this: If a Government goes through a dispute of this character and is seized with the importance of proper measures being taken in order to prevent a recurrence, and then you as a representative of the Government make some suggestions (this document has been to the Government), I am concerned to know what action the Government wants to take. Is it that there will be no action taken until another dispute occurs?—I do not think any action will be particularly necessary, because the Committee of the Jute Mills Association has learnt a lesson, as well as the Government and every one connected with the industry.

E-3400. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is the lesson?—Learnt the lesson of what Mr. Cliff is talking about, which is the difficulty of the employers getting together with the labour.

E-3401. *Mr. Cliff*: May I ask whether you have any knowledge as to whether the Association having learnt the lesson which you suggest is putting forward any constructive proposals?—I have no knowledge yet except that they are taking a number of steps in regard to the settlement; but as to whether they are taking any steps with regard to the employment of welfare officers, I do not know. This suggestion has not been put before them indeed; it has not been put before any one. So far, it has been mentioned only in this confidential document.

E-3402. It is said: "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." Have you any suggestion personally or speaking on behalf of the Government to put in front of this Commission, whether when a dispute is apprehended and before there is an open rupture, the Government might not use through its officer its good offices in trying to secure a settlement?—The normal method is for the parties concerned to talk the matter over and to try to settle it amongst themselves.

E-3403. What I see running through the memorandum is that the services of Government officers, presumably District Magistrates, in a number of cases have been availed of?—The number is small.

E-3404. In the last strike good use was made of a Government servant after the strike occurred?—There may be a difference of opinion as to this.

E-3405. I will not put any adjectives to it at all. Use was made of a Government servant and through that use a settlement was brought about?—Yes.

E-3406. That was after the strike occurred. What I am concerned about is the period before the strike occurs. Is there any proposal of the Government of Bengal to try to keep in close touch with the parties which might be discussing the matter before a strike actually occurs?—The Government of Bengal keeps in close touch with the developments, but not with the parties; this is in pursuance of the policy, which has been stated in this document, of non-interference in private disputes.

E-3407. The Government of Bengal of course must keep in touch from the view of the preservation of law and order, but the Government surely cannot have any knowledge of these discussions unless they receive reports?—As a rule, if there are negotiations going on between parties Government will come to know.

E-3408. I want to ask whether the Government of Bengal have considered utilizing the services of an officer—may be a special officer—for the prevention of strikes and lock-outs?—Not in private disputes. The policy of the Government of Bengal, which is the only policy that has been declared, is to keep out of private disputes.

E-3409. Arising out of your experience in the last dispute is it your view that the services of an intermediary appointed by Government would be of service?—It depends upon the strike. If your question is whether it would be advisable to have a Government officer who would go to various centres in order to search out causes and settle disputes, then I should say that

it would be a policy which would require very careful consideration on the part of the Government. The existence of such an officer might be a very troublesome thing for industry.

E-3410. You are personally, I think, well aware of the policy pursued by the Ministry of Labour in England?—Yes; I have some knowledge of what the conciliation officers do in England.

E-3411. Do you see any practical objection to such a system being adopted in India?—The two cases are scarcely comparable, because there the conciliation officers are dealing with a very well-established machinery. The two parties are as clear and as distinct as day light; the parties have negotiated with each other regularly, in all probability, for years. Here, to appoint an officer like the Home conciliation officers would, in a great majority of cases, be tantamount to the employer being on one side and the Government officer on the other for the reason that the Government officer would practically have to represent the other side which in a great majority of cases is entirely unorganized.

E-3412. Is there any objection to the workers in this country having such a form of protection?—It is a matter in which Government have not formulated any policy but from my own point of view I would say that there is a distinct objection to it.

E-3413. Why would you say that there is an objection to it?—Because the Government officer might become the centre of a large amount of artificial trouble. The function of the Government as I read it is to hold the balance between the parties and not to weigh the balance by giving an officer to help one side.

E-3414. When is the balance even?—It is very difficult to say in individual disputes. I have many cases on my records where the balance is weighted against the employer as much as against the employee.

E-3415. But the service of this officer is for both sides; he is to assist both sides, not only to assist one?—I do not quite see the point. I have just said that if you had an officer he would probably be assisting one side. He would not be holding the balance.

E-3416. Under the heading "Health", there are enumerated a number of questions, of which the first one is: The extent to which it is possible to provide medical facilities. You have sent with this document a large number of replies received. May I know whether the Director of Public Health or any of the medical officers of the Province were communicated with on that particular question?—In all such cases we consult the Government department concerned. In this case we consulted the Local Self-Government Department of the local Government because under this Department there are the Department of Public Health and the Surgeon-General. The Department consult their officers and send their replies to us. All these officers, I presume, were consulted in the matter.

E-3417. My difficulty in reading the replies which have been sent in is to find the answer to question (1), viz., the extent to which it is possible to provide medical facilities?—That is a very wide question. I should think that it would be possible to get medical graduates to do the work; the question of finance comes in of course, but that is a different matter. I may say that this is my own view, because I cannot express the views of other departments. I think the Surgeon-General to the Government of Bengal submitted a short memorandum on that particular point to the Commission.

E-3418. You say: "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". May I know what form that encouragement, it is proposed, should take?—I do not think the question as to what form that encouragement should take was considered in detail.

E-3419. Has the Government of Bengal thought of any simple scheme of sickness insurance?—I do not think so. If they have, I would not be in a position to answer the question because it is hardly within my department to answer questions of detail on sickness insurance. The subject would be one for the Department of Public Health.

E-3420. I want to follow that. It is again stated: "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"; and they advise that it should be central. Is the Government of Bengal prepared to give us any indication of when they think this will have to be done?—No; I should not think so.

E-3421. *Diwan Chaman Lall*: If you had information in regard to all the matters upon which in your statement with regard to minimum wage fixing machinery you say correct statistical information must be presupposed, leaving the question of cost of living on one side, would you have any difficulty?—It would help us assuming minimum wages were considered to be necessary. It would depend what sort of minimum wage you were going to try to impose. In Australia, for example, they have tried particularly to get at the subsistence wage.

E-3422. The expression "living wage" came from Australia?—Yes.

E-3423. I am not asking about subsistence wage but about the factors which would be necessary for you to make up your mind in regard to a minimum wage?—I think I have mentioned most of the factors in the memorandum.

E-3424. The way to get at the cost of living would be to hold an enquiry in any particular area where there are industrial workers whose conditions in regard to minimum wages you wished to discuss?—Yes, for that area.

E-3425. Is it difficult to get information in regard to wages paid or any of the other factors that you have mentioned with regard, for instance, to coal mines?—There would not be much difficulty with regard to some of the items while with regard to others there might be difficulty. An enquiry into wages paid for the purpose of minimum wage machinery does not mean a general census of wages; it means a very detailed census for each individual type of worker, because minimum wage fixing has reference not only to general wage fixing but to the relationship of one grade of wages to another grade of wages in the same industry.

E-3426. It would not be difficult to find out what the rate per tub of coal is, and the next question would be, whether the earnings were adequate or not?—On that I could not give you any opinion. The very use of the word "adequate" raises the question of a subsistence or living wage.

E-3427. If machinery were set up for the purpose of fixing minimum wages, I suppose its object would be to find out whether the wage paid was an adequate wage or not?—That I could not say.

E-3428. What is the system adopted in other parts of the world?—It depends on the Act. Under the British Trade Board system I think the minimum rates are fixed not so much with reference to the cost of living or adequacy of the wage as with reference to the particular industry that is under discussion.

E-3429. And in reference to the surrounding trades?—Yes, and with reference to the other types of workers in the same industry.

E-3430. I suppose you will admit that it is easy to find out what a worker in a particular industry is earning?—I am not at all sure of that; in some industries it would take some considerable time and analysis to find out what the actual wages in the industry were. Of course there would be no difficulty in the case of an individual worker, but there is no point in raising the minimum wage issue in connexion with an individual worker. I myself at one time made an analysis of wages in the coal mines; I had not much difficulty in finding out what I wanted, but the general type of wage I wanted was not necessarily the wage that would be useful from the point of view of setting up minimum wage machinery. Since then the local Government have not made any analysis of wages in coal mines because the necessary figures are given in the Annual Reports of the Chief Inspector of Mines.

E-3431. Would it be a very expensive system if you set up a board consisting of an equal number of representatives of employers and workers with an independent chairman who would be entrusted with the task, let us say, of dealing with minimum wages in the coal industry?—I am not prepared to admit that Government would consent to set up any type of minimum wage machinery for the coal industry alone. I have never tried to work out the cost, I do not suppose it would be so very expensive for the coal industry alone; but if you are going into the coal industry you must be prepared to go into other industries as well.

E-3432. Would the same remark apply to the jute industry?—It would be much more expensive and much more difficult in the jute industry.

E-3433. Am I correct in assuming that there are a quarter of a million workers in the jute industry who are getting less than Rs. 4 a week?—The figures are given in the memorandum.

E-3434. Would there be any difficulty from the financial point of view in setting up a board of that description in the jute industry?—There would be very considerable difficulty as far as the Government of Bengal is concerned because, as I said in reply to a previous question, the Government of Bengal would not consent to spending any money on working minimum wage machinery for jute, coal or any other industry until they had fulfilled other functions in connexion with labour which they regard as more essential and important.

E-3435. Therefore what you are now suggesting is that instead of having Provincial legislation of that type the burden should be shifted on to the Central Legislature?—No, I am not suggesting that at all. I would, however, express my personal opinion that if the time came when it was proved that minimum wage machinery was necessary, it would have to be taken up centrally.

E-3436. So that the difficulty in regard to your Provincial Government not being in a position financially to deal with it because they have other important matters to deal with before they deal with this, would not arise?—The whole argument would then go over to the Government of India and with their views on the subject I am not concerned here.

E-3437. What exactly do you mean by proving the necessity for minimum wage fixing machinery?—Proving that it is necessary to establish a minimum wage.

E-3438. One of the factors in regard to that would be the adequacy of the wage as a living wage?—Yes, that would be one factor, or if you take the British standard, 'sweating'.

E-3439. What would in England be considered sweating in industries which are unorganized would be applicable in this country to comparatively highly organized industries, such as the jute industry?—No, I would not admit that. I have not the adequate material to give an answer on that either officially or un-officially.

E-3440. Do you consider that a wage of less than Rs. 4 a week is an adequate living wage for a worker?—I have just replied that I cannot give an opinion on that subject either officially or un-officially. That question requires very careful analysis with all the necessary materials.

E-3441. Therefore it would be an advantage to have some sort of machinery in order to investigate it?—There is no harm in investigation; that is a matter of funds and staff.

E-3442. If investigation proved that it was not an adequate living wage then the body that investigated could make recommendations fixing a minimum wage?—The body which was investigating could make recommendations; I see no objection to that.

E-3443. If it were proved that workers in the four principal industries of coal, cotton, jute and the tea gardens were not getting an adequate wage, the necessity of providing machinery for fixing minimum wages would be proved?—No, I do not admit that; it would not necessarily prove the necessity for machinery for establishing a minimum wage; the proof might point to other factors not connected with the minimum wage, such as the supply of labour.

E-3444. But surely even under the Trade Boards in England one of the conditions often laid down is whether because of the excessive supply of labour wages have been lowered?—You are taking hypothetical conditions on which it is very difficult to give an answer. I am not going to say that because a body making an investigation reached the conclusion that wages were too low, minimum wage machinery essentially follows; I should have to see the grounds of their recommendations.

E-3445. According to the Government of Bengal what would be the conditions to induce the Government to set up a minimum wage fixing machinery?—That I am not prepared to say; the Government of Bengal have not considered in detail any such conditions and I have not considered them myself.



E-3446. So that I take it the matter is left to the Royal Commission or to some other body set up to investigate this problem as far as the Government of Bengal are concerned?—Anybody might be set up to investigate the problem, find out things and make recommendations, but obviously until one sees how the recommendations are reached and what they are it is impossible to answer questions of a hypothetical character like that.

E-3447. During the last strike this question was raised; what action did the Government of Bengal take when this demand was brought to their notice?—The Government of Bengal took no action at all; they could hardly be expected to take official action on each individual item of a long list of grievances.

E-3448. Do you not think the Government of Bengal should have enquired into the feasibility and possibility of setting up minimum wage fixing machinery?—If the Government of Bengal were to take up that attitude towards every point of that type that was raised they would have to employ masses of officers. One has to have a certain perspective with regard to problems of wages and labour problems generally; one has to consider what it is possible to do in a certain time and over a certain period. While agreeing that in certain circumstances minimum wages may be desirable, I do not think that the minimum wage question is one of any urgency at the present moment in Bengal.

E-3449. What do the Government think would be the circumstances under which it would be desirable?—The circumstances would be possibly general reports of bad examples of sweating or the equivalent of sweating. But we have had no reports to that effect.

E-3450. Have you ever tried to find out whether there is sweating, by which I take it is meant workers working long hours on low and inadequate wages?—No enquiry has been made at all.

E-3451. If it is proved that workers are working long hours in particular industries in Bengal and are not getting adequate wages the Government of Bengal would be quite prepared to consider that circumstances have arisen under which minimum wage fixing machinery should be set up?—If proof of that nature were put before them they would be quite prepared to consider the facts and any recommendations that were put before them; this would not necessarily commit them to the opinion that the cure for such evils, supposing they are evils, is the setting up of minimum wage machinery.

E-3452. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Referring to what you say with regard to the "extent of organization of Trade Combinations", surely the power of nomination so far as the Provincial and Central Legislatures are concerned, resides absolutely in the Governor and Viceroy?—Yes.

E-3453. That being so, these bogus organizations could not mislead the Governor or the Viceroy?—That is true.

E-3454. With reference to what you say as to the "nature of activities" and the extent of strikes and lockouts during the period from 1921 to 1928, it would appear that the existence of strikes in Bengal industries is a normal state of things and apparently in one or other industry there is always a strike?—Many of these strikes are very small and insignificant.

E-3455. That may be, but it indicates that the normal friendly relations between employers and employees do not exist?—I would hardly say that; the number looks very large but although it has come to nearly 600 for this period I would not say that industrial disputes have been a very prominent feature in Bengal.

E-3456. It has apparently involved a loss of 13 million days in eight years?—Yes.

E-3457. Therefore these disputes leading to strikes have been highly detrimental both to employers and employees?—Yes, all disputes are.

E-3458. The extent of these strikes is so great that it raises the question of the economic loss which the community sustains in consequence of these trade disputes?—Yes.

E-3459. Has the Government of Bengal considered the question of bringing into existence proper negotiating machinery in order that threatened strikes which have been avoided in some cases may be avoided in as large a number of cases as possible?—They consider that negotiation is a matter for the two sides.

E-3460. But Government are responsible for the general welfare of the whole community?—Yes.

E-3461. That being so, when Government finds the two classes who are engaged in producing wealth are constantly fighting with the result that the community suffers severe economic loss, is it not their duty to consider whether they cannot evolve machinery to prevent this serious loss?—The Government of Bengal for years were the only Government in India that had such machinery.

E-3462. In spite of that machinery the result has been as indicated; does not that necessarily mean that that machinery should be improved so as to meet this growing evil?—I would invite your attention to that part of the memorandum where 42 instances of cases of strikes are given; that is one indication of the impossibility of anticipating a great deal of the industrial trouble in Bengal; the reason is of the extraordinary causes which bring it about. For example, one is: the presence of elephants in the locality supposed to be the vanguard of a Gandhi army. It would be very difficult to anticipate that. If the causes are not ascertainable before the strike breaks out I do not see how machinery can function at all. Practically none of these cases, so far as I can see, could have been referred to any one; the workers simply left their work overnight; there was no question of the manager or any one else being able to talk to them about the causes. If any machinery is to function there must be some organization on each side in order to keep the machinery going.

E-3463. You have reported that so far as employers are concerned they are fully organized; you have given a long list of associations representative of the employers?—Yes.

E-3464. Then has Government done anything to help the constitution of labour organizations of the right kind to meet the admitted evil?—I sent to the Commission a statement of an effort that we made in 1921. As a result of the report of the Industrial Disputes Committee Government sent to all employers copies of model constitutions for works committees.

E-3465. Do you think the setting of works committees would eliminate the causes of these frequent strikes?—As a matter of experience works committees have not been formed because of the ignorance of the employees.

E-3466. Is it possible for the ignorant workmen to be organized under the auspices of the employers?—That is a matter for the employers to decide.

E-3467. But a little incentive from Government is needed. You say that some unions with a more permanent organization have attempted to create definite machinery for negotiation, and in one or two instances threatened strikes have been avoided by negotiation. That is an indication of the machinery which might have the desired result?—Yes, the negotiation in those cases was the result of organized unionism.

E-3468. Has Government done anything to encourage the constitution of organized trade unions in Bengal?—Government has taken no definite action to tell people to organize themselves into trade unions, and they have not told employers to form themselves into associations.

E-3469. Does Government consider that their obligations are restricted to dealing with strikes after they have occurred?—Not necessarily so; under the Trade Disputes Act there is certain machinery which may be utilized for apprehended strikes.

E-3470. *Mr. Clow:* Mr. Weston in his memorandum suggests that legislation should be co-ordinated with the aims of the Factories Act so 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. What do you mean by "registration"?—*(Mr. Weston)* Municipalities register the small bazaar industries which are carried on in their area; in some cases I understand they give a licence to them to carry on these industries.

E-3471. What conditions are you contemplating when you say "the conditions laid down in the Factories Act"?—The consideration there is whether you can get the same discipline imposed upon those industries as the Factories Act imposes upon the larger industries.

E-3472. But registration will be given before the factory is started?—These are cases of small factories which do not come within the scope of the Factories Act.

E-3473. How can a municipality ensure before giving registration that after registration is granted the factory will work reasonable hours and provide reasonable accommodation?—Of course they could not do what the factories staff does, but they could impose such conditions in the construction of the factory, its drainage and its general facilities for industrial purposes which would secure a greater improvement than obtains at present.

E-3474. But you have not power to inspect these factories?—No, I am looking to the future, and considering whether anything in that direction may be possible.

E-3475. Do you believe it is possible to apply in its entirety the system adopted at the Government Ordnance Factories, in the jute mills, for example?—My own opinion is yes.

E-3476. In fact, to eliminate the *sardars* as intermediaries and reduce them to the position of supervisors?—Yes.

E-3477. Have the Government of Bengal any views on the question of Local versus Central legislation in labour matters?—(Mr. Gilchrist) I think it will be gathered from the general tenor of much of the material which has been put before the Commission that the Government of Bengal are generally of opinion that legislation should be Central.

E-3478. Can you give any reason in support of that view?—In the first place the Devolution Rules.

E-3479. I am not talking of the position at present?—So far as the future is concerned, I would say, in the first place that as a general proposition provinces would feel happier about labour legislation were they assured that the same conditions were imposed in the whole of India. Another thing is this, that Local Governments under the present system have come to look on the Government of India as an initiator of labour proposals. I suppose that is largely due to the fact that the Government of India is the competent authority for Geneva purposes, and that all the Geneva proposals, recommendations and conventions are dealt with by the Government of India and come to the Local Governments with the views of the Government of India. Geneva promises within a short time to cover every conceivable item in labour legislation.

E-3480. Could you throw any light on the apparent failure of trade unionism to establish itself in this province?—That is a very big question; but I would refer to the number of unions under the heading of "trade combinations" in this memorandum. There have been many labour bodies of sorts in Bengal, and there still are although a relatively small proportion of them are registered; I suppose the first general answer to your question would be that if there are not many effective trade unions in Bengal as compared with other parts of India, then conditions of employment in Bengal must be better. There may be other causes such as the very mixed population a cause which operated in America for a long time against effective trade unionism.

E-3481. You would not maintain that conditions are satisfactory in printing presses generally in Calcutta?—I am not familiar with all printing presses in Calcutta, but I take it from the reports of Chief Inspector of Factories that some are good, some moderate and some bad.

E-3482. You have a population there which is not immigrant and has a certain degree of literacy, but they do not seem to be very effectively organized?—A union has been registered quite recently, how it will function it is difficult to say.

E-3483. With regard to indebtedness, has the Local Government ever taken up the question of whether any legislative measures would be effective in protecting debtors against the money-lender?—(Mr. Ganguly) The Usurious Loans Act was passed some time ago.

E-3484. It does not seem to have been very effective?—No.

E-3485. You have no further measures in contemplation?—Not that I know of. The Usurious Loans Act in its present form was passed ten or twelve years ago; it is a Central Act.

E-3486. Can we take it that the results which you give us of an agricultural wages census are more or less reliable and represent the general level of agricultural wages throughout the province?—(Mr. Gilchrist) I cannot answer that; I take it they are reliable. They are published by the Agriculture and Industries Department.

E-3487. Could those figures be used to provide a measure as to whether a particular industrial wage was adequate or not?—I could not say, as I am not familiar with the census machinery, I know that for the coming census the machinery has been improved.

E-3488. Has the local Government formed any opinion as to the utility of the Boards provided for under the Mines Act?—Under the Mines Act the local Government has to refer certain matters to Mining Boards; the local Government therefore ask for their opinion of the Bengal Board. The Mining Board is useful in this sense, that Government gets the opinion of the Chief Inspector of Mines, who is usually also consulted individually, and of the district authorities. Most of the opinions are, however, usually expressed through other channels.

E-3489. Apart from the district authorities the opinions of all the other authorities concerned, the employers on the Board and the Chief Inspector of Mines, could be made available otherwise?—They actually are made available otherwise, either through the Indian Mining Association or Federation or direct from the Chief Inspector of Mines. The value of the other opinions depends very much on the experience of the individual officers dealing with the case.

E-3490. In your memorandum, in discussing the very large extent to which your industries are carried on by immigrant labour, you say that of the total number of workers 36,000 were born in the United Provinces?—That applies to unskilled workers in jute. There may be some mistake there.

E-3491. You allude to the very small proportion of Bengalis in industry, and especially in the unskilled branches of industry. Does the diminishing proportion represent an absolute diminution or is it simply that the increasing needs of industry have been provided for by other provinces while the number of Bengalis has remained constant?—As far as I remember the figures for a certain number of jute mills give about 178,000 Hindustanies (the people from Bihar and the United Provinces) and about 76,000 Bengalis. That is a bigger proportion than I expected when we started making the enquiry.

E-3492. That figure of Bengalis would presumably include the descendants of immigrants?—I do not know. No distinction was made in the forms. If those figures are correct it would be 70,000 out of about 3½ to 3¼ lakhs which would be about 20 per cent. That is not far out from the census estimate. These figures were taken from the whole area; but the great majority of Bengalis are employed in the mills south of Calcutta. In the early days of the jute industry that labour was largely *Bengali*, but, as the jute industry developed, labour became scarce and intensive efforts were made by employers to recruit in other areas. That was the origin, as perhaps you know, of the Foley-Fremantle Enquiries in 1906. Then once the stream set in from upcountry it flowed very strongly.

E-3493. Why has the Bengali been unable to secure a larger share; is it that the wages are not sufficiently attractive?—No; perhaps it is the other way round, that he does not want the wages. It may also be that the Bengalis are not able to stand up to the long hours so well as upcountry men, but that is a point upon which I am not in a position to express an authoritative opinion.

E-3494. *Miss Power*: Who prosecutes under the Act for the Factory Inspection Department?—The Factory Inspectors.

E-3495. But who conducts the prosecution?—The Factory Inspector in ordinary cases, but he may brief a lawyer to do it.

E-3496. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does not the Factory Inspector instruct a particular lawyer who is an expert in these matters?—Yes, he instructs a certain lawyer, but not necessarily in all cases.

E-3497. *Miss Power*: Does the prosecutor draw the attention of the Magistrate to the inadequacy of fines?—I suppose the prosecutor asks for the heaviest fine possible, but whether he puts before the Magistrate an actual statement of the delinquencies of Magistrates in the past I could not say.

E-3498. Has that point ever been brought to the attention of Magistrates in Bengal?—I have answered that question in reply to *Sir Victor Sassoon*.

E-3499. Do Government approve of a special Magistrate to try cases of that kind?—My opinion is that, there are only two methods of overcoming this trouble of inadequate fines; one is to amend the legislation and the other is to appoint special Magistrates.

E-3500. How would you amend the legislation?—By proposing minimum fines for second offences, but a special Magistrate seems to me to be preferable.

E-3501. With regard to hours, you say that "the Government of Bengal have carefully considered the question of whether the hours of adult women should be reduced below those of adult men, that on general grounds of humanity and progress they would prefer to recommend a lower working limit for women, but do not do so because if they did, women might be supplanted by young men workers". Does that mean that the Government of Bengal feels that the ideal to be aimed at is a differentiation between the hours for men and women rather than reasonable hours of work irrespective of sex as embodied in the Washington Convention?—The Washington Convention is hardly applicable in this case because the limit of eight hours is not applicable to India at all.

E-3502. I am referring to the principle of a reasonable working day for the industrial worker irrespective of sex?—The view of the Government of Bengal with regard to the hours of women is that ten hours is possibly too long for women workers, but there is no very definite proof that they cannot continue for ten hours without losing efficiency.

E-3503. Then that sentence really does not mean that the Government advocates differential hours between men and women?—No. It only means that if there were to be difficulty in shortening the day women should have prior consideration.

E-3504. On the question of the desirability of a fair wages-clause in public contracts, you say that this has never been raised in Bengal and 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. I understand that contractors are used-very extensively in this Province. Do you actually know that everywhere where contractors are used the workers employed by the contractor get the same wages as those employed by the main employer?—I have no information on that particular point; I have only got information so far as Government departments employ contract labour.

E-3505. So that your information with regard to that sentence really only applies to Government employees?—I have no information on the major point you have raised.

E-3506. Is not the unorganized state of Indian labour the reason why such a clause would serve a useful purpose?—Not necessarily, if the people are getting the wages which are customary in the area.

E-3507. But such a clause would ensure their getting those wages?—I am afraid that particular item was misunderstood. The Government of Bengal have not considered that point. If it were proved that people supplying articles through public contracts were not reasonable in their treatment of labour there would probably be a case for some sort of stipulation.

E-3508. You consider it is necessary to prove that before you would advocate such a clause to protect labour?—Once the principle is granted there is the necessity of organizing a staff for purposes of inspection; that means expenditure of money, and one goes back to the fact that Bengal has no money.

E-3509. *Mr. Cliff*: But there are no inspections in England with regard to the fair wages clause in contracts?—If you inserted that clause here how would you enforce it?

E-3510. The suggestion is that you would have to adopt a standard which would gradually be known to the people and they would begin to raise questions?—I thought Miss Power suggested that a fair wages clause should be put into public contracts as something to be enforced by means of inspection.

E-3511. *Miss Power*: You are very definite in your statement that it would serve no useful purpose?—If it were shown that public contracts were held by firms which did not satisfy the Inspectors of Factories as regards conditions, then the question might be raised.

E-3512. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it not a fact that there are no standardized wages even in the organized industry of the jute mills; that is to say different wages are paid for the same work in different mills. Would not that make it difficult for you to specify what is a fair wage?—It seems to be the same problem as arises with regard to minimum wages.

E-3513. *Miss Power*: Supposing the Government were carrying out a big contract, partly by direct and partly by indirect labour, as is the case at the Sukkur Barrage, do you not think it would be fair that there should be a fair wages clause so that those workmen employed by a contractor on exactly the same work as others employed direct by Government should be protected as regards their wages?—I think personally as a general principle it is perfectly fair.

E-3514. Why should it be necessary to have this elaborate investigation, such as you imply, before you concede that protection?—You are taking the case of the Sukkur Barrage where conditions are easily ascertained and there is direct employment. At present in the Public Works Department and the Irrigation Department there are certain rules as to the health conditions of workers who are employed on big contracts. It is included in the Public Works Code.

E-3515. But not with regard to wages?—No.

E-3516. The Chief Certifying Surgeon has said that it would be in the interests of the child operatives and of the Factory Inspection department if whole-time Certifying Surgeons of Factories were given the powers of an Inspector so far as child labour is concerned. Would you agree with that?—That is a question which is under consideration; I could not give you any definite answer at the moment.

E-3517. With regard to women Factory Inspectors do you feel that the industrial woman and child worker in Bengal would benefit now, in 1930, at least as much as the woman and child worker in England benefited from 1890 onwards from the appointment of women inspectors?—I could not speak as to the comparative position, but the Government of Bengal have considered the question of appointing women Inspectors of Factories and have come to the conclusion that it would be better in the first stage if funds were available to appoint a woman who might be called an inspector, and attach her to the Public Health Department to look after matters of health mainly.

E-3518. But that is not a Factory Inspector, is it?—Her main function would be looking after health and women's welfare and reporting on these things; but she could be empowered as a Factory Inspector just as the present Inspector of Septic Tank Installations is empowered as a Factory Inspector though he works under the Director of Public Health.

E-3519. To whom does he report?—To the Director of Public Health and I think also to the Chief Inspector of Factories.

E-3520. So that this woman inspector would be reporting to two departments?—Yes. That is only as a first stage; it is the old question in Bengal of money again.

E-3521. I see you actually propose to appoint one additional inspector?—We propose to appoint one additional inspector and one additional assistant inspector.

E-3522. Could not one of these be a woman?—The Government of Bengal considered that at the time when these proposals were put up and came to the conclusion that it was necessary first to have a full complement of men inspectors. It is a case of getting the absolute essentials first.

E-3523. Then you do not regard a woman inspector as an absolute essential?—Not in that sense; if you could get a qualified woman engineer you might be able to do something.

E-3524. Has not the value of woman inspectors been proved in practically all the European countries?—Yes, I quite agree with that, but I must refer you to the qualifications of inspectors stated in item 139 of the Memorandum of the Government of Bengal.

E-3525. You have had some assistant inspectors without those engineering qualifications?—Not one.

E-3526. In England they appointed women in the first place without those qualifications in order to enforce other parts of the Act affecting women and children?—The view of the Government of Bengal is that we must first get a full complement of men inspectors with engineering qualifications.

E-3527. *Mr. Tassie*: Do the Government of Bengal take up the attitude that the less interference with industry by Government the better?—That is stated in the memorandum. The Government of Bengal so far as non-public utility industries are concerned have adhered to the policy laid down by the Industrial Disputes Committee.

E-3528. *Mr. Cliff*: That is until the last strike?—Yes, the last strike was a very exceptional case.

E-3529. *Mr. Tassie*: I think Mr. Cliff suggested that when labour has no recognized union or representative, a Government representative might act as an intermediary when a strike was anticipated or had started. If Government did that, would not they be at once accused of taking sides?—That is the view I have expressed. Government's duty has been interpreted as keeping the balance and not entering into the disputes of one side or the other; if a Government officer did go in, his action would probably be interpreted as going in on one side.

E-3530. Have not there been cases in which Government have only gone so far as to preserve law and order but have been accused at once of doing this to help the employer?—Yes, such cases have arisen. I have not been concerned with them.

E-3531. It is quite possible that the same thing might happen again: if they rushed in too soon and before they were asked, they would be at once accused of taking the part of the employer?—There is a distinct danger of their being accused of taking the part of one side or the other; I do not say of the employer necessarily.

E-3532. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You remember my resolution in 1921 to enquire into the industrial disputes and to set up machinery?—Yes.

E-3533. The Government accepted the principle that the setting up of machinery was part of the Government's duty?—Yes.

E-3534. An enquiry committee went into the causes of a good many strikes?—Yes.

E-3535. As the result of that enquiry there were two alternative recommendations: (1) to set up this panel and (2) the creation of works committees?—Yes.

E-3536. Soon after that recommendation although the panel was not then constituted, Government appointed a committee to enquire into the dispute on the Light Railway at Howrah?—Yes. The conciliation panel was constituted on the 29th August 1921; the Light Railway strike ended on the 2nd July 1921, before the constitution of the panel, but after the report came out.

E-3537. That conciliation committee settled that strike amicably?—Yes.

E-3538. Then the Government distributed a book on works committees to almost all of the industrialists?—Yes.

E-3539. None of the employers ever thought of starting works committees?—Some of them did.

E-3540. Can you give me one name?—I do not want to give names, but I know that several employers did try their best to start works committees and completely failed.

E-3541. One of the reasons why the panel was not resorted to by the disputants was because you confined its activities to public utility services?—That is the policy stated in this document.

E-3542. When a strike took place on the Light Railway Workshop at Bankra, which is a public utility service, the workshop employees under Martin & Co. made a request that Government should interfere and appoint a conciliation board to investigate their troubles, but Government refused?—I could not give you off-hand the precise details of this strike.

E-3543. I suggest to you that Government refused because they said the employers were not willing?—I could not tell you. My recollection of these strikes is that they all collapsed after the East Indian Railway strike collapsed, that being the main strike from which they arose.

E-3544. In the memorandum on minimum wages which you have submitted, you have given Sir John Kerr's reply to my resolution, but you have not published my resolution giving the facts and figures of the low wages prevailing in certain industries which were the main points of my argument?—If you like we can forward the proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council to the Commission. Doubtless you collected these facts with a great deal of trouble but disconnected facts like those would not justify the imposition of minimum wage machinery in any particular trade.

E-3545. When the conciliation board was being discussed Bombay thought the legislation should be provincial while others thought it should be central?—I could not give you any information on the views of the Government of Bombay.

E-3546. In Australia and the United States most of the industrial legislation is State legislation and not Federal legislation. You have written an important book on industrial legislations of the world and you say that most of the important developments in labour legislation have taken place in States and most of the industrial peace legislations are provincial?—Yes.

E-3547. Why do you think industrial legislation, for example this minimum wages machinery legislation, should be Central?—I have not said I agreed to a Minimum Wage Act.

E-3548. Should the Trade Disputes Act be Central or Provincial?—I think I have answered that question in reply to Mr. Clow.

*Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: In the United States and Australia most of the industrial legislation is Provincial.

E-3549. *The Chairman*: It has led to a great deal of trouble in Australia and the United States?—And in Canada also there is a great deal of Provincial legislation which has led to very great difficulty with regard to the ratification of conventions by Canada. I said I preferred Central legislation.

E-3550. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Have you made any serious efforts to see that co-operative credit societies are started in the jute mill area?—(*Mr. Ganguly*) Within the last three or four months we have started some societies. Before that we had for years four societies in Serampore, which used to finance jute labourers and other people.

E-3551. It was not confined to mill hands?—No, but several thousands of mill hands are members of that society.

E-3552. In all the big head offices in Calcutta, such as Mackinnon Mackenzie, Jardine Skinner and Bird & Co., the clerks have co-operative societies?—Yes, and on most of the railways.

E-3553. When these co-operative societies were inaugurated the employers advanced large sums of money in order to start them?—Yes.

E-3554. Do you think if the employers in the jute mills supplied money to properly constituted co-operative credit societies it would be a good thing?—That depends on whether the employers would think it a safe investment for their money; but of course if they did so it would be helpful.

E-3555. *The Chairman*: If they made contributions in money would you allow them some power of supervision?—Yes, ordinarily we allow it in the case of these employees' societies.

E-3556. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Do you think co-operative shops for the sale of foodstuffs and clothes would be very useful in the jute mill area?—Yes, they would be very useful; we have some.

E-3557. Has your department ever contemplated helping to start such a shop in the jute mill area?—Yes, we have several co-operative stores. Here we have two co-operative stores exclusively for Corporation employees: municipal scavengers and people of that class. The Corporation has helped these shops a great deal.

E-3558. *Mr. Cliff*: Has Government given direct assistance to these co-operative societies?—They give loans free of interest for the first three years from the date of registration of a society.

E-3559. *Maulvi Latifat Hussain*: Have you ever examined the cost of living of jute workers?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) That is answered in the memorandum. There has been no cost of living enquiry into the jute industry.

E-3560. Do you think the cause of indebtedness among the jute workers is low wages?—That question has already been answered.



E-3561. *Miss Sorabji*: Referring to your answer with regard to a conciliation officer, I suppose you would also say that there must be more understanding of the situation by the workmen before conciliation officer can do for them what a conciliation officer can do for workmen in England?—Or by the workmen's leaders and organizations.

E-3562. We have not yet got as far in India in understanding all the legitimate uses of the strike as they have in England?—No, I think that is pretty evident.

E-3563. Do you not think that trade unionism is slow to grow in this country because the workmen do not understand the situation and do not understand what is secured to them by industrial legislation?—It is due to lack of education; these organizations require a certain amount of education as a basis.

E-3564. I presume you are not referring to education with regard to literacy but you mean education in ideas?—Literacy is usually found to be necessary before people can appreciate the objects of organization.

E-3565. If you wait until they can read and write it will take a long time; in the meantime do you not think they should be educated with regard to the privileges and rights already secured to them?—Any propaganda as to privileges and ideals must depend upon a certain amount of literacy.

E-3566. Do you remember what a great effect propaganda had during the war?—Yes.

E-3567. Do you not think that with regard to industrial questions there might be *viva voce* propaganda similar to the propaganda which was carried on during the war?—I think it would be possible to do a good deal by the utilization of employment officers in big concerns.

E-3568. Who do you think could do that?—It would be a matter for industry itself.

E-3569. Do you not think it is a matter for Government because we want to create a better atmosphere as between Government and the people?—That is a wide question on which I am afraid I cannot give a reply.

E-3570. Would it be possible for a labour officer to undertake such propaganda?—It depends what the propaganda is; for instance, propaganda with regard to safety could be done through the Factories Inspection Department or through a labour officer, while propaganda in other things, such as health, could be done through other officers.

E-3571. Who do you think could do propaganda in relation to the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Clearly the Commissioner could not do it and the mills could not very well do it?—The organizations of the workers might do that. Information regarding compensation however percolates very quickly in big industrial centres, where workmen soon come to know of any accident especially where compensation is paid to the victim.

E-3572. We want something more definite than that. With regard to the appointment of a woman factory inspector—she might not be qualified to inspect machinery, but seeing that there is so much more to be done than inspection of machinery and that many men officers are employed and so many more officers necessary to do that—might it not be possible to have one woman factory inspector who could use her powers under the Act to inspect the premises and the employment registers and in fact oversee the human side of the situation?—It is quite possible. There is no question about the possibility of it.

E-3573. Especially seeing that you have a long list of infractions, 42 in number, referring specifically to women and children apart from other infractions which concern women as well as men?—But the very fact that these infractions are shown in the list now proves that the men inspectors are quite capable of detecting irregularities connected with the employment of women and children.

E-3574. Considering the peculiar circumstances of the country such as the nature of the material available in our mill population, their ignorance and the consequent vigorous persuasion necessary to make them observe the rules, would you not think that there is at least as much if not more use for a factory inspector here than in England?—I am not disputing that at all. I concede the principle; it is merely a question of policy as to when to appoint one, and to which particular department the woman inspector should be attached.

E-3575. I gather you were considering the question of coupling the duties of the woman factory inspector with those of a welfare officer working under the Public Health Department. A welfare officer will probably be paid by philanthropic societies or by the millowners themselves. Would she not be in an anomalous position as a factory inspector inside a factory which finances her work?—I have no knowledge of any private person being asked to do the work of factory inspection. If a woman factory inspector were appointed she would have to be a full-time officer of Government.

E-3576. At any rate you will admit that a woman would be useful as a factory inspector?—That is conceded.

E-3577. With regard to the men coming up to the mills from the villages we find that many of them leave their families behind in order that their wives may attend to the cultivation of the fields and so on. But there are numbers who have no lands at home for their women to look after but still prefer to leave their wives at home and come single to the mills. Do you think that their reluctance to bring their women with them might be due to the fact of the presence of a large number of unattached women in the mill areas?—I could not say that. Probably it is due to the general surroundings.

E-3578. One reason why these unattached women attach themselves to some man or other is that they want protection in the midst of a community where men preponderate. Do you think that the establishment of separate lines for single women apart from men would help them in any way?—I have not considered that question.

E-3579. With regard to the education of the half-timers do you think it would encourage them to attend school if attendance at school was made a condition precedent to employment at the mill?—(*Khan Bahadur Tasaddak Ahmed*) It is difficult to answer that question.

E-3580. With regard to the Apprentices Act of 1850 is there anything in it against the Reformatory Industrial School Committee for instance asking certain selected industries to train boys for suitable occupations? Why should we not do something to test its fitness to present-day conditions?—(*Mr. Weston*) The Reformatory Industrial Schools Committee desire certain industries to train boys but I do not think it is necessary to do that under the Act. The Act was intended to help employers to get hold of suitable apprentices when apprentices were difficult to obtain, but under our present conditions we have got numerous candidates for apprenticeship but what we want is employment for them. I do not think it would help us.

E-3581. With regard to technical education I gather that you say that it is successful as far as it goes but has not gone far enough because of the ignorance and apathy of the *badralok* classes?—Yes, the Bengali *badralok* does not take advantage very readily of such facilities that we have been able to supply. For example they are not willing to pay fees as a rule for the technical education that they get and it is usual for the employer to pay fees to encourage them to come.

E-3582. Would not one way of getting over the difficulty be to spread widely in schools and colleges full information regarding industrial careers for young men as is done in England?—I have here a pamphlet called "Opportunities for an industrial career for young men of Bengal". We have sent this pamphlet to as many places, libraries, schools, etc., as we have information on record in the Industries or Education departments. If any other places to which it can be usefully sent are suggested we will send it along.

E-3583. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You have answered various questions regarding the fixation of a minimum wage. Assuming that a minimum wage was fixed it would be higher than the prevailing rates of wages, because the object of fixing minimum wage is that the present wage is insufficient and should be raised?—(*Mr. Gilchrist*) Yes.

E-3584. In that case there would be keen competition from the many unemployed to get employed at higher wages?—Normally there would be a bigger demand for posts carrying higher wages.

E-3585. Would not that lead to greater bribery and corruption about which we have heard so much?—The bigger the number that goes to seek a particular post the greater might be the possibility of corruption and bribery. But it is very difficult to say definitely.

E-3586. How would the minimum wage affect the efficiency of piece-workers?—I have not considered that aspect of the question.

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*The Chairman:* That point has been tackled by the Trade Boards in England.

E-3587. *Diwan Chaman Lall:* Dealing with the limitation of hours in factories you say in your document on the subject: "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." In the same document you also say: "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." That is your definite opinion that the time is ripe now?—That is the view of the local Government.

E-3588. Have you any suggestion to make as regards the daily limit apart from the fact that you have already stated?—The local Government think that the time is now ripe for a reconsideration of the Washington Convention and a reduction of five hours in the weekly and one hour in the daily limit.

E-3589. Dealing with the existing regulations in docks regarding the safety of workers you say: "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." Has the Government of Bengal taken any further steps in the matter? Have they suggested any regulations themselves regarding the safety of the dock workers?—I expect that the matter will be taken into consideration in connexion with the recommendations of the Royal Commission and the ratification of the Geneva Convention on the subject.

E-3590. Was the Trade Disputes Act put into force before the last strike in the jute mills?—Yes, just before the strike.

E-3591. Why then was not a Court of Enquiry or a Board of Conciliation appointed under the Act?—I have definitely stated the reasons in the memorandum dealing with the subject.

E-3592. If you will pardon my saying so, it is an indefinite reason definitely stated.

E-3593. *Sir Alexander Murray:* With regard to industrial disputes Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola asked you some questions which showed that he was under the impression that there were always disputes in Bengal and that you were never under normal conditions?—I think I have tried to correct that impression.

E-3594. For instance take the last five years. We find that there was on an average 50 disputes every year?—Yes, these figures have been swelled by the post-war strikes in 1921-22.

E-3595. Do they include the disputes in transport, conservancy and other services?—They include all disputes including those of Railways.

E-3596. During the five years ending 1928 I find that the number of men-days lost on account of these disputes is less than a million and a half. I do not know the total number of workers employed having relation to these figures. But we find that the average number of people employed in factories during this period was 550,000. Assuming that they work five days a week or 260 days a year the percentage of men-days lost by these disputes to the total number of men-days that might have been put in is less than one per cent. It would have been much better therefore if these figures had been given in the form of percentages rather than in the form of such huge figures as so many million men-days lost, which gives a most misleading impression even to people like Sir Ibrahim?—I agree that the percentages should have been worked out, otherwise the table gives a misleading impression.

E-3597. *The Chairman:* Is it not a fact, Mr. Gilchrist, that you have defined a dispute as a thing which affects ten or more persons and lasts for a day or more?—Yes.

E-3598. You include in your statistics a dispute which lasts for one day and affects eleven persons?—Yes. A very large proportion of these disputes was in very small concerns.

*The Chairman:* That should be stated in explanation of the statistics; otherwise it is likely to lead to wrong impression.

*Sir Alexander Murray:* Looked at from that point of view there have been only fifty disputes a year or an average of one per week including small disputes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**BENGAL**  
(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)  
**SEVENTY-SEVENTH MEETING**  
**CALCUTTA**

Monday, 17th February 1930.

P R E S E N T :

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

<p>Sir VICTOR SASSOON, <i>Bart.</i> Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, <i>Kt.</i>, K.C.S.I., C.I.E. Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, <i>Kt.</i>, C.B.E. Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.</p>	}	<p>Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A. Diwan CHAMAN LALL, M.L.A. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., <i>Medical Assessor</i>.</p>
<p>Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice- President, Indian Chamber of Com- merce. Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.</p>	}	<p><i>Assistant Commissioners.</i></p>
<p>Miss CORNELIA SORABJI, Bar.-at-Law, <i>Lady Assessor</i>.</p>		
<p>Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., Mr. A. DIBDIN.</p>	}	<p><i>Joint Secretaries.</i></p>

Sir CHARLES STUART-WILLIAMS, *Kt.*, Chairman, Mr. W.  
A. BURNS, Traffic Manager, and Commander NORCOCK,  
Deputy Conservator, representing the Commissioners for the  
Port of Calcutta.

E-3599. *The Chairman*: Will you explain the scope and responsibility of the Commissioners?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) Our work is roughly divided into two classes: the work which is associated with the landing or shipping of goods, and the work which is associated with the provision of proper facilities for vessels. These two sets of functions are governed by two Acts: the former by the Calcutta Port Act, which is a Government of Bengal Act, and the latter by the Indian Ports Act, which is a Government of India Act. There is, of course, in addition a great deal of ancillary work, a very considerable amount of railway work, a good deal of warehousing as distinct from landing and shipping, a certain amount of what may be called trade development work, the provision of suitable sites and the giving of suitable facilities to various trades; and in addition, the ordinary responsibilities which attach to maintaining a large staff and a large body of plant, material, machinery and so forth.

E-3600. I suppose by far the greater part of the labour employed within your area is employed by Messrs. Bird & Co. as contractors?—Yes.

E-3601. You tell us in your memorandum that light vessels crews were formerly engaged through the medium of a ship-broker, but the Port Commissioners have discontinued this practice and now recruit men direct. When did you make that change?—Last year.

E-3602. For what reason did you make that change?—There was a general agitation against the use of the broker, of which we were cognizant through the press and unofficially, and it was brought to our notice by Government that these crews were still being engaged through brokers while we were at liberty to engage them direct. We asked ourselves whether there was any reason why we should employ an intermediary there when we employed no intermediary in other departments; we found no satisfactory explanation and so we cut him out.

E-3603. You thought it was the wish of the men themselves that they should be employed directly and not through the broker?—We certainly thought their interests would not suffer. We were not cognizant of any definite grievance or malpractice; we simply saw no reason for the continuance of the intermediary and we were certain we could act as suitably and satisfactorily to the men as the intermediary could.

E-3604. Is it too soon to tell us of any result you observed from the change?—There has been no trouble or difficulty.

E-3605. We have been told that under the other system there was an opportunity of certain exactions from the men; I gather from what you say that you were not aware of that evil?—We had no representations from the men; we had no definite knowledge of anything wrong or irregular.

E-3606. Your experiment is on a small scale covering about 2,000 men altogether?—No, that figure includes the whole of the men associated with the handling of vessels; the men who had been previously engaged through brokers were only the light-vessel crews, between 200 and 300 in the course of a year.

E-3607. With regard to 3,000 men in your workshop you are employing the direct departmental method of recruitment?—Yes.

E-3608. Did you make the change there at the same time?—No; there has been no alteration within my knowledge in regard to the workshop staff.

E-3609. The workshop staff have always been directly engaged?—Yes, I think historically for the reason that the workshops have developed from a very small affair to a considerable undertaking; in the first instance there would be no question of employing any intermediaries for the small shops and so it has grown naturally and easily. The use of the intermediary was confined to the light-vessels crews, who are definitely under articles; it did not cover the use of seamen in the port who are not under articles; so that the change-over is a comparatively small one even for us.

E-3610. With regard to the leave which is given to lascars and others, above the grade of lascar apparently you give one month in a year which is cumulative to the extent of three months. Is that leave with or without pay?—With full pay.

E-3611. These people come back to your service at the expiration of their leave?—Yes; they usually put in quite long periods.

E-3612. Referring to what you say as to welfare, is there any limit of wages for people who can join the provident fund?—The provident fund is divided into two separate sections. There is the full fund which is practically identical with that in vogue on all the railways, namely, the payment of one-twelfth out of each month's pay, the doubling of that amount by the employer and the compounding of interest. To that fund there is a monetary limit of Rs. 45, which is practically identical with the minimum clerical wage, and therefore corresponds roughly to the dividing line between the literate and illiterate. In addition to that there is another fund which covers all men, more of the working classes, under which the employee pays 8 annas per month; a similar 8 annas is paid in by the employers and compound interest is given. The man is given the accumulated balance together with a long service gratuity of half a month's pay for each year's work up to 30 years which is given also to the staff in the other sections. A man of the working class, say a Serang, as soon as he gets more than Rs. 45 a month has the option of joining the larger fund; in some cases he exercises that option while in other cases he does not.

E-3613. How are those two funds distinguished?—We have what we call Schedule X.

E-3614. Are the accounts of the two funds kept separately?—No, the main accounts are kept together, but of course there is an individual ledger account for each individual employee.

E-3615. There are two sections in the same fund?—Yes.

E-3616. Does that go right down to any workman?—Schedule X covers anybody of the working class.

E-3617. Is membership voluntary or compulsory?—It is compulsory as from 1924, for the first section. The second section is still optional and will always be optional until it is clear that no working man can misunderstand it. Larger and larger numbers are taking advantage of it.

E-3618. How long has that section 2 applying to the workmen been in operation?—From April 1924.

E-3619. In what way does a workman signify his desire to be a member of that fund?—There are English and Vernacular circulars; these must be explained by a competent officer in the Vernacular to anybody joining; the man can then fill up a form and become a member.

E-3620. A man wishing to become a member of this provident fund agrees to 8 annas a month being deducted from his pay on the condition stated that an equivalent amount is added to his 8 annas and the two accumulate together at compound interest; he fills up a form or gets it filled up for him and thereupon as long as he works for you he remains a member of that provident fund?—Yes.

E-3621. What happens in the case of discharge or resignation?—In that case he will be settled up; he will be given a bonus under certain conditions; that is to say, the addition of the employers' contribution is due under certain conditions.

E-3622. As a matter of fact do you find workmen whose wages are Rs. 18 or Rs. 20 a month coming forward and asking to join that fund?—Yes, in increasing numbers; taking the case of the departmental labour on the jetty, which is our most important body of departmental labour, roughly one-third have already joined.

E-3623. They have asked to join as individuals?—Yes.

E-3624. And that number is growing and is likely to grow?—Yes.

E-3625. That would seem to indicate a degree of intelligence in what is called illiterate labour that you do not always come across in India?—My experience is that that degree of lack of intelligence can easily be over-estimated; I think it is entirely a matter of understanding the position. We have always done our utmost to make them understand.

E-3626. From your experience would you say that even with what is called ignorant and illiterate labour, with the proper amount of interest and care from above, people can be introduced to these provident fund methods of providing for their future?—Yes, always provided there is confidence in the administration.

E-3627. *Mr. Cliff*: Is everybody covered?—The Traffic Manager advises me that the answer cannot be given as an unqualified affirmative. The departmental labour at 19 and 20 berths in the coal dock has not advanced so far along that path. They are men of a different type and possibly not so permanent; at all events the fact remains that they have not advanced quite so rapidly.

E-3628. *Mr. Tassie*: What is the position with regard to sweepers?—Most of that class are pretty good; I could not give you the figures.

E-3629. They can come into it?—Yes.

E-3630. *The Chairman*: I take it from what you have said that it is open to every one?—Yes.

E-3631. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: After three years?—The co-operative credit society has a two-year limit for everybody, but the workshop staff have so far been expected to put in three years' continuous work before they join the provident fund.

E-3632. The other people can join at once?—Yes.

E-3633. It is only the workshop staff who cannot join at once?—Yes, those being men who are daily rated and paid monthly.

E-3634. Your sweepers can join at once?—Yes.

E-3635. But your workshop staff cannot?—\* Yes, the difference being a daily contract in the one case and a monthly contract in the other.

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\* *N.B.*—Sir Charles Stuart-Williams subsequently corrected this statement by saying that the three-year rule had been abrogated and that all the workshop employees were eligible for the provident fund as from the 1st June 1930.

E-3636. *The Chairman*: I am not quite clear why you should have a different rule?—I think it is a matter which is open to argument and discussion and it is a matter we propose to take up. The idea behind it is that the workshop man is a daily contract man and you must have some idea that he is going to settle down with you before you consider these benefits. I think you will find something similar in the case of the railway workshops.

E-3637. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: If after three years he wishes to join and is prepared to pay up the arrears for the three years can he join the fund and be regarded as having joined from the beginning?—That has not been done so far.

E-3638. *The Chairman*: I suppose you do not feel justified in making your half contribution until you feel that the workman has more or less settled?—Yes, that is the reason.

E-3639. In your memorandum, you tell us "Leave is taken by the Deputy Conservator's staff to the full extent allowed by the rules." You have told us already that that is leave with pay?—Yes.

E-3640. "On an average the staff must go to their homes at least every other year for about two months." That is definite and recognized leave. Does the workman take any card with him or is he given any paper to present when he returns from his leave?—Yes, he gets a slip sanctioning his leave and he draws his pay on return for that leave period.

E-3641. Have you had that system in operation for some time?—Yes, but it has led to a practice which I do not altogether like, that the man very often on the strength of his sanctioned leave borrows from the money-lender before he goes away and reimburses the money-lender on his return. One does not know how much the money-lender makes out of it. (*Commander Norcock*) It is one anna in the rupee.

E-3642. Do you consider that this custom of returning to their country periodically either once each year or for a longer period every two years contributes to the health and maintains the physique of the workman?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) I would not like to say that they live under any more healthy conditions there than they would here. But looking at it from the humanitarian point of view it is a very natural desire on their part and one to which we have no objection; it makes them more contented. I am not sure whether it is more healthy.

E-3643. Then it is a custom which you readily recognize?—Yes.

E-3644. And you base your labour requirements on that acknowledged system?—Quite.

E-3645. Under 'Wages' you say: "There are individual cases of indebtedness, but the average coolie can save about Rs. 5 per month or 25 per cent of his income." On what do you base that?—Have you yourselves given your men any facilities with regard to remittances?—No, we do not do that except in one instance, the light vessels men who are away for two months at a time; we remit to their homes on their account.

E-3646. That is an allotment that they make?—Yes.

E-3647. Is that an allotment limited in scope or is it open to them to allot anything they like?—It is open to them to say how much they will send.

E-3648. They are not limited to one-third or one-fourth as we are told the sea-going men are?—No.

E-3649. One of those men can allot, say, even three-fourths of his pay if he so pleases?—Yes. That statement with regard to Rs. 5 is based, I think, on observation and information as to the cost of living in relation to the pay earned; I should think it is a fair approximation.

E-3650. When you say the amount of leave allowed is not sufficient for the average coolie, does that suggest that you are considering a change in that respect?—No, I cannot say that; it is simply that men of that class when they go to their homes, owing doubtless to the cost of the journey and so on, like to stay at home for some longer period than can ordinarily be covered by sanctioned leave.

E-3651. All it means is that the sanctioned leave is sometimes, or perhaps often, outstayed?—That is so.

E-3652. Then if a man outstays his recognized leave I suppose he is struck off?—After he has overstayed his leave for seven days he is struck off. Of course that does not debar him from coming again to be placed on the roster, but he would then have lost his place.

E-3653. He is then treated as a new comer?—Yes.

E-3654. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: If a man joins the provident fund and then goes away after working a year or two does he get any benefit?—They get their own money with interest, but they only get the contribution after five years from the time they joined unless invalided or discharged because their posts are abolished. In the case of death the surviving relations are paid irrespective of length of service.

E-3655. With regard to organization of managing staff, you say "The relations between officers and men are good and the personal touch accounts largely for the satisfactory manner in which work is performed." You make a similar statement with regard to Chittagong. What is meant by the words "personal touch"?—It means that the foremen and assistant foremen are moving round during the whole of the day, are always available to help a man, take an interest in the more promising men and so forth. That is so with regard to workshops, jetties and the men afloat. The jetties have a superintendent and a deputy superintendent, in addition to the shed officers and others; these men are moving about all the time.

E-3656. That is to say their immediate superiors are in touch with the men?—Yes.

E-3657. But not the higher class of officers?—Yes, up to the Jetty Superintendent himself, who makes a personal round at least every morning, if not twice a day. I do not want it to be thought that the Jetty Superintendent knows every man individually; I do not think that is possible; but if a man has a very definite grievance he can always speak to the Jetty Superintendent. There is no hiatus between the Jetty Superintendent, the Harbour Master and the Works Manager and the men working under them.

E-3658. Are complaints frequently received?—I do not think there are many cases where a man feels he has a definite personal grievance; I do not hear of many.

E-3659. Do you think the foremen who are the immediate superiors of the men restrain men by threats from going to the superior officers and making their complaints?—I have no evidence so far of anything of that kind.

E-3660. Do you think that would account for the fact that no grievances are brought by the men to the superior officers?—No, I should not think that at all; I rather think the feeling is the same right through the supervising staff and there is no sort of cloaking or humbug as between the subordinate and supervising officers. From the headman downwards personal attendance in the workshops, on the ships or on the jetties is a necessary concomitant of their work. The officers all watch the work done during a portion of each day, they see how it is being done; they are available if there is any reason for complaint. (*Mr. Burns*) There may be 150 labourers working in a shed under a shed master. I would expect that shed master to know most of those men. If the men have any complaint as to any trouble in their lines, not getting leave or wanting to stay away, they would refer to their shed master. Over and above that the Deputy Jetty Superintendent visits the sheds twice a day; the shed master would either bring the men to the Deputy Jetty Superintendent on his rounds or else he would send the man with a note to the Deputy Jetty Superintendent telling him what the trouble was. I have known of a Deputy Jetty Superintendent who had been a long time on the jetties and he was regarded by the jetty staff, as being, to use an Indian phrase, their father and mother. He knew all their wants, and they would come to him if they had any trouble whatever.

E-3661. Are the shed masters on the same footing as *sardars* employed in jute factories?—I do not know what is the position of *sardars* employed in jute factories. The shed masters are mainly ex-soldiers or Anglo-Indians who have risen from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 a month up to Rs. 300 or Rs. 600; they are highly competent and experienced men, as they must be to run a shed; they have a very intimate knowledge of labour.



E-3662. *Mr. Clow*: Who makes enquiries into the causes of accidents?—*(Sir Charles Stuart-Williams)* Serious accidents are governed by a set of rules somewhat resembling those in force on railways; that is to say a departmental court of enquiry is held, on which there would probably be an engineer, a traffic man and possibly a representative of the Marine Department. Their report comes to my office; an important case I see myself. Suitable action is taken on the basis of their recommendations.

E-3663. Would it not be desirable that accidents happening to your employees should be investigated by an authority independent of you?—My personal answer is that I do not think there would be any gain, but I would like to know what you mean by a serious accident.

E-3664. I mean any accident causing serious injury. I am not talking of workshops?—A railway accident is dealt with under the Railway Board's rules by the Government Officer, and workshop cases come under the Factories Act; that only leaves the work on the jetty. If there appears to be criminal negligence, the police take action through the public prosecutor. I do not see who else you would introduce unless you had Board of Trade Inspectors.

E-3665. I was thinking of the British system when an officer under the Chief Inspector of Factories would be brought in?—As far as we are concerned there would be no objection whatever; it would simply mean that instead of sending our railway accidents to the railway man and marine accidents to the Principal Port Officer and so on, you would have another section with a corresponding officer who would consider the report of our committee and whether further investigation was necessary.

E-3666. Does the departmental enquiry system cover an accident on a ship?—No, not so far as we are concerned, unless our crane man is involved. That would come under the Principal Port Officer acting in another section of his department and not concerning us.

E-3667. With regard to workmen's compensation, you say "Compensation has been paid in the cases of five jetty coolies since the Act was passed." Does that refer to the Act of 1923 which came into force in 1924?—Yes.

E-3668. That seems to be an extraordinarily small number, particularly as you append one of your orders which says "accidents resulting in injuries to coolies are becoming far too frequent at the jetties"?—That refers mainly to accidents of a minor kind which are dealt with by giving a coolie full pay and sending him to hospital. That figure is, I think, correct. I will verify it, but I do not see any reason to suppose it is incorrect because I hear of all the cases and I do not think there is a large number.

E-3669. Under "workmen's compensation" when you speak of section 31 (i) (h) what are you referring to?—That is our own Act, the Calcutta Port Act of 1890, under which we have always had powers to give compensation.

E-3670. *Mr. Cliff*: Perhaps the explanation is that there are five cases which are absolutely payable under the Workmen's Compensation Act, but you have paid compensation apart from that?—Yes.

E-3671. That does not give the number of accidents that have actually occurred?—No. If liability for compensation has been equitably incurred it has been paid under our own Act. But, speaking without having verified the facts, I can say that all cases other than those coming under the Workmen's Compensation Act would be cases of temporary injury which were treated in a hospital, the men getting full pay and treatment during that period and then coming back to work; that is to say they would not be cases involving permanent loss or partial loss of capacity.

E-3672. Have you any statistics of fatal accidents in the port? The port is a well defined area?—Yes.

E-3673. I would like the number of accidents happening to all those engaged other than as seamen?—Yes. *(Sir Alexander Murray)* The Workmen's Compensation Act covers dock labourers employed in a dock where mechanical or electrical power is used but it does not cover accidents in the stream?

*Mr. Clow*: I think that has been covered by notification.

E-3674. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I should like an assurance that it covers all the workmen not only in your docks but engaged in connexion with port work in the stream?—I cannot give you figures of accidents happening on vessels at moorings in the stream; although it is within our jurisdiction I should not necessarily be informed of such accidents.

E-3675. Do you accept responsibility for workmen's compensation to all your work—people whether employed in the docks or outside the docks?—We have taken a liberal view in any doubtful cases; we have interpreted the law as liberally as possible. In Bombay a man was injured while unloading a railway wagon; it was considered doubtful whether he came under the Act; I think they refused to pay but an award was made against them. In a case of that kind we should always pay because we always take the liberal view.

E-3676. *Mr. Clow*: Who employs persons engaged in work such as scaling in the dry dock and that sort of thing?—Work in dry dock is controlled by a limited number of firms to whom we give facilities in providing small godowns and that sort of thing; they bring their staff and do the work themselves.

E-3677. Supposing a man working on the side of a ship in dry dock fell and was killed on the floor of the dock, who would make the investigation?—We should get a report as to the accident which would be supplied to the police. The police would hold an enquiry in which our staff might be represented and would certainly be called as witnesses; but responsibility for investigating such an accident would not lie with us.

E-3678. Who is responsible for preventing accidents of that kind?—I should think we are responsible in a general way; that is to say, we are responsible for providing reasonable safeguards.

E-3679. But you are not responsible for slings and things of that kind?—No, I do not think that would be our responsibility with regard to a man actually working on a ship in dry dock.

E-3680. Have you considered the provisions of the draft Convention adopted last year at Geneva with regard to the loading and unloading of ships?—I have seen it.

E-3681. Have the Port Commissioners considered what, if any, action they should take under it?—No; I do not think we have had an official reference on that matter. In any case it is so vague that it is of very little practical value.

E-3682. I think one of your senior officers assisted in framing it?—(*Mr. Burns*) I do not think we have definitely considered it.

E-3683. With regard to hours, you say "Probably the coolie himself would be the first to resent any enforced stoppage on Sundays and holidays". That is hardly a valid reason for not compelling him to take a weekly holiday?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) The coolie can stay away if he does not want to work.

E-3684. How many days' work a week does he get ordinarily?—Ordinarily six days work. The number of vessels working on Sunday is certainly less than half. (*Mr. Burns*) He would never have to work more than two Sundays a month. If he does not want to work he can stay away. He would then be marked absent for that day and would lose one day's pay.

E-3685. Is this labour employed with complete regularity?—(*Sir Charles Stuart-Williams*) Absolute complete regularity; it is not casual at all; if a man is employed he stays on until by his own act or owing to ill-health he leaves us.

E-3686. With regard to Chittagong you say: "Payment is made during the first week of the month to all except the daily paid staff at the workshops, whose wages for the month are paid on the 15th of the following month". What would be the difficulty in paying them at the beginning of the month?—We could not pay everybody on the same day or even within the first two or three days of the month without maintaining a staff of pay clerks who would have no work to do during three-fourths of the month.

E-3687. This is described as the daily paid staff?—I think that means that is daily rated staff paid monthly; for instance, fitters are daily rated men getting Rs. 1-8-0 a day and they are paid at the end of the month; if they work 24 days they are paid Rs. 36.

E-3688. Would it be very difficult to pay them by the day?—It would be almost impossible and I should think most objectionable from his point of view ; he would merely fritter the money from day to day ; I do not see any advantage in it.

E-3689. At present Bird & Co. seem to be paying a lot of their coolies every day. We saw them actually being paid by the basket?—(Mr. Burns) That is casual labour.

E-3690. I am suggesting that 15 days is rather a long time to keep back the wages of people who are on daily rates?—(Sir Charles Stuart-Williams) It is only felt on the first occasion, on which they receive pay.

E-3691. Would it not be possible to divide up the workmen into batches who would be paid on different days of the month?—I am afraid that cannot be done ; you must start with the end of the month. If a man starts on the 1st January he receives his pay on the 15th February. Admittedly six weeks is a long time to wait, but when he has once got over that first period he is then paid regularly each month. The staff have to be paid on pay sheets which must be prepared with great care at the end of the month by a limited number of clerks in the individual office where they are employed. Those clerks start work on the last day of the month or the first day of the following month. All the pay sheets are got out in about two days ; they then have to go to head office to be audited and then payment begins.

E-3692. Sir Victor Sassoon: How long after the end of the month can you get your pay sheets made out, scrutinized, audited and returned for payment?—It depends a good deal on the pay sheet. In the case of the regular staff I think it would be done in three to four days ; in the case of some of the other staff it would be more difficult.

E-3693. The Chairman: We have actually come across cases where much more rapid payment has been effected by dealing with the people in sections so that work both of making up the pay rolls, checking accounts and making payment is more or less spread over the month instead of accumulating at the end of the month ; do you not think it would be possible for you to follow that system?—I should like to consult the Chief Accountant about a matter of that kind ; it is difficult to say because it is quite possible that the men who are occupied in doing pay list work at the end of the month are doing other work during the other parts of the month.

E-3694. We have been impressed by a certain number of cases where we have seen it done with obvious economy in staff requiring no addition to the pay clerks or accounting department and with considerable convenience to all parties?—I think a good deal would depend upon the size of the undertaking and other things of that kind. Ours is a small undertaking compared to the railways in regard to the number of staff ; and they could do economically what we could not do economically. But one point I wish to make it clear and that is that when a man gets his one month's pay it makes very little difference to him whether he is paid on the 1st or on the 15th. That is the basis of the whole argument.

E-3695. That is an argument that we have heard everywhere, but we have actually seen in practice a more modern system, more corresponding with the European system, which has certainly not cost an anna more to the employer and which is of greater benefit to the worker?—We are quite prepared to investigate that and see whether it could be worked.

E-3696. Sir Victor Sassoon: Would you say that your supervision of your men is similar to that exercised by Messrs. Bird & Co.?—I think our supervision is possibly more expensive, and therefore possibly more efficient.

E-3697. You think it is more efficient because it is more expensive?—I think so.

E-3698. Do you have the same relationship between your supervising staff and the men or you have better relationships than they claim to have?—I think we can claim that we have better relationships because our staff are more permanent and take a bigger interest in the undertaking.

E-3699. Would you say that there is any chance of bribery going on between the leading ratings and the actual labour?—That is a question that is extremely difficult to answer by yes or no. I am not quite clear what you mean by bribery and corruption in this connexion. For instance, if a man pays for nomination to a job, is that bribery?

E-3700. Yes. I suppose we can call it an illicit commission?—I should not like to say that that does not happen.

E-3701. It might be that one might be paying a little amount every week to the man who got him the job. Although you would naturally like to discourage it, you do not say that it has been completely stamped out?—I would say that there is nothing like that as regards the higher supervising staff, and I would also say that it is extremely improbable as regards the subordinate supervising staff. But when you come to a little lower rank I would not like to say that it is impossible.

E-3702. You have no actual knowledge of the extent to which it does exist?—We have had no complaints. The only evidence we have on that point is this: When we had a strike of the lascars seamen about two or three years ago I called to my room about a dozen of the representatives of the men chiefly concerned to ask what their grievances were. They told me that their grievance was with regard to pay. I said to them "Before we go further I want to know exactly whether you have any other grievance in regard to the conditions of service, whether you have any grievance in regard to *dasturi* or *zoolum* and that sort of thing?", and the answer that they gave was a definite no. How much value you can attach to that negative it is for the Commission to decide. I naturally attached a limited significance to it, but that is what they definitely stated at that time.

E-3703. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Regarding your provident fund, do I understand that it is open to any employee of the trust to join the fund?—The actual rule reads as follows: "All employees on pay less than Rs. 45 a month who joined the Commissioner's service on or after the 1st April 1924 can, with certain exceptions, become members of the provident fund on the following terms . . ."

E-3704. What are the exceptions?—(*Mr. Burns*) It is not properly used. The exceptions refer to purely temporary men who are engaged for a definite period; otherwise, there is no class of staff which cannot join the fund.

E-3705. Can your daily-rated men join the fund?—They come under workshop establishment. There is a limitation of three years.

E-3706. We have been discussing this question during the course of our tour, and we have been told by people who employ labour, such as you do, that where there is frequent coming and going of labour the trouble of keeping accounts is so enormous that they did not think it advisable to allow workers of that description to join the provident fund. Do you make your contribution of 8 annas from the very beginning of a man joining the fund, and if he goes away, say, at the end of 5 months or a year, do you pay him the contribution?—The difficulty you indicated is really one of the reasons for the existence of the 8 annas fund arrangement. As soon as the man is competent to become a member and wants to become a member, the thing comes into force; 8 annas is deducted and 8 annas is added; his account is opened in that way.

E-3707. How many years has he to serve before he could get the full contribution?—For five years.

E-3708. Could you please send a copy of the constitution of your provident fund and of the co-operative credit society and also a copy of your latest accounts?—Yes.

E-3709. Under the head "unskilled labour" you give us a figure of 1,745. Does that cover all your unskilled labour?—(*Mr. Burns*) No. It does not include the labour at the 20-coal berths, nor does it include the tea warehouse labour.

E-3710. Will you kindly give us the total number of workers that you have in the docks under the head, seamen, workshop labour and unskilled labour?—Yes.

E-3711. What are the hours of work for the labour employed by you?—7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 5 a.m.; we have two periods of ten hours each.

E-3712. How do you ensure that the men who work during the day do not also work during the night?—(*Mr. Burns*) Messrs. Bird & Co. supply the night labour; in the day time it is supplied by ourselves.

E-3713. Let us take the loading hands, the transit shed porters and the warehouse porters. Do none of these work at night?—No, unless they get smuggled into the Bird & Co's. ticca labour.

E-3714. Do you not employ labour at night?—No, not at the jetties.

E-3715. Anywhere else?—At the coal berths the men work on 8-hour shift.

E-3716. How do you know that a man works only for 8 hours and does not work for 16 hours, or for that matter 24 hours, out of 24 hours?—If he were working more than 8 hours I should have expected that man to make a complaint immediately.

E-3717. Do you keep any registers?—Yes; there is a record kept of men that work. The men are divided into three different groups, and the names are all kept by the labour supervisor; they are summoned according to their turns if there is work.

E-3718. Apart from the fact that the man will make a complaint if he is being worked for 16 or 24 hours out of the 24, how do the port authorities know that a man is not being worked for more than his 8 hours in the 24?—The labour supervisor who is in charge of the labour knows almost all the men individually.

E-3719. *The Chairman*: I take it that no man could do two shifts, to say nothing of doing three shifts; it is physically impossible?—I have already said that the man himself would complain.

E-3720. *Sir Alexander Murray*: As a matter of fact, we know that in Bombay some men work for 24 hours, and the next day they are laid-off.

E-3721. *Mr. Tassie*: In your case the men would not get paid if they work more than one shift?—That is so.

E-3722. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Your men are daily-rated men?—No; they are all monthly coolies. There is nothing casual about their employment whatsoever. Mr. Cliff and you saw a number of them in the lines, when you visited the other day, doing nothing although they are paid for that day.

E-3723. I see, for instance, that your warehouse porters get Rs. 17 or Rs. 18 a month. Messrs. Bird & Co. evidently pay their men at a higher rate. Do you find any complaints coming along?—Our men are more regular and they have, in a way, more privileges; they get free housing and overtime.

E-3724. Under the head 'Safety', you say that there were only 25 injury leave cases in September 1928. Does that indicate that you expect more than 25 in a month?—The 25 cases in September are in relation to the total head of labour.

E-3725. Out of 1,745 workers, I take it?—(*Mr. Burns*) 1,500 at least at the jetties. The figure of 1,745 that we have shown is the maximum figure budgeted for. At the busy time the figure would be about 1,500.

E-3726. You might have in September 25 injury cases out of 1,500?—Something like that. Of these some might be slight injury cases. For instance, if a man has cut his feet or finger very slightly, that would be classed as an accident.

E-3727. Naturally, because evidently you pay the man his full pay?—Yes.

E-3728. Could you give us a tabulated list of accidents at the jetties since the Workmen's Compensation Act came into force?—These are the figures for the year 1929: There were 278 slight accidents, 12 serious accidents and two fatal accidents.

E-3729. Could you send us a tabulated statement from 1921 up-to-date?—Yes.

E-3730. You say: "As compensation, the Port Approaches' men receive provisions or provision allowance . . ." What will be the percentage of his pay that you give him as provision allowance?—(*Commander Norcock*) When we are unable to supply provisions ourselves we give Rs. 8-8-0 a month as provision allowance.

E-3731. What will be the pay of the man who draws this Rs. 8-8-0 allowance?—He may be a *manjeer* or a *lascar*.

E-3732. His pay would be Rs. 17 or Rs. 18?—More than that; it might go up to Rs. 32.

E-3733. When you pay Rs. 18 and upwards as pay, then they get an allowance of Rs. 8-8-0 over and above that; the allowance has nothing to do with the amount of pay drawn?—It has nothing to do with the pay at all.

E-3734. Dealing with the question of housing, you say: “. . . . accommodation is provided for 342 men, but the actual number now in occupation is 284.” It is rather exceptional to find houses available but not occupied. Has that any relation to the allowance to which you refer by saying “House allowance is paid at Rs. 1-8-0 a month for porters and Rs. 2 a month for other classes, when men do not care to live in Commissioners’ quarters.” Why do you keep empty houses and pay house allowance?—It may seem a strange arrangement but it is a very difficult thing to stop it. On the whole, it is better to have such an arrangement when some men prefer to live outside.

E-3735. You think that the man should have the freedom to choose whether to live in the house built by the trust which we found to be a very nice lodging, or to live outside and get an allowance of Rs. 1-8-0 or Rs. 2 a month?—There is a reason for that that may not have occurred to you. Our housing is a long distance from the jetties where they work. They are taken down by a special passenger train. It naturally takes a little time for them to get down to work, and they therefore prefer to have housing accommodation nearer their work if possible.

E-3736. Dealing with the rules regarding granting of leave and holiday allowances to the menial and labour staff in the traffic department, you say that you give your labour leave provided no additional expense is incurred by the appointment of substitutes. Does that mean that a menial labourer does not get his holiday?—No; he gets his holiday all right. One of the other men carry on his work while he is away because he does the same thing for him in turn.

E-3737. You say that these leave rules apply both to the menial and labour staff in the traffic department. That covers not merely the menials but all the labour in the traffic department?—(Mr. Burns) Yes. I have got a complete list of staff to which that applies.

E-3738. You might send it in?—Yes.

E-3739. Do you give your men full pay when they are off during sickness?—If the sickness is in any way due to their work, of course we do.

E-3740. Messrs. Bird & Co. gave us to understand that they give their monthly hands full pay during sickness. I wondered whether you had anything of that description?—To which particular section of the staff are you referring now?

E-3741. I am not speaking of the skilled workers. Take, for instance, your loading hands, transit shed porters and the warehouse porters?—(Mr. Burns) In our memorandum you will see the details given under ‘Leave on full pay.’ That includes the full leave to which they are entitled unless the men have been actually injured in the execution of their duties. Beyond that there is no leave on pay.

E-3742. Mr. Ahmed: How many ferry-boats belonging to the Port Commissioners are now lying on the river Hooghly?—There are nine in all; three are usually on the north of the bridge working regularly and the balance on the south of the bridge.

E-3743. The crews who work in those ferry-boats work from 6 o'clock in the morning till 8-30 in the evening, is it not?—They are nominally on duty during this period.

E-3744. Do they not actually work during this period?—They are actually on duty during that time, but their work, as you know, is intermittent. In the early part of the day up to 10 o'clock or thereabouts the vessel is working without intermission and again about the time that clerks leave their office the traffic becomes brisk. But during the middle of the day there are periods when the vessel is lying aside the pontoon, and they have periods of rest then. This does not apply to the serangs, because there are two of them supplied for each vessel and they divide the period during which the vessel is actually running between them.

E-3745. *Mr. Tassie*: These men live on board?—Yes.

E-3746. *Mr. Ahmed*: Both day and night?—They have no residence on the shore at all.

E-3747. They sleep on board the steamer?—That is so.

E-3748. In open space of exposure of cold wind?—There is accommodation down below; they do not have to sleep on the deck.

E-3749. From 6 in the morning till 8-30 in the evening they cannot leave the steamer?—(*Commander Norcock*) In actual fact, there are always one or two coming to the shore; there are sufficient numbers to allow that; they make arrangements amongst themselves to go out in turns.

E-3750. If they are to be on duty from 6 in the morning till 8-30 in the evening, how can they leave the steamer?—They are not on duty all the time, because the vessel is not running.

E-3751. *Mr. Cliff*: Mr. Ahmed's point, I think, is whether they can leave the boat altogether between those hours?—(*Mr. Burns*) They can leave within those hours with the permission of the ferry superintendent. I understand that the men suffer no hardship from any refusal on his part to give them reasonable facilities to go to the shore. I have never had a complaint on that point.

E-3752. *Mr. Ahmed*: If they take leave their pay will be deducted?—Certainly not; there is no deduction of pay. They are paid for the whole period.

E-3753. Can they leave the steamer, say, for five minutes?—Not without getting definite permission from the ferry superintendent.

E-3754. In your memorandum you make a statement that the average coolie can save about Rs. 5 per month. Can you tell us what is the cost of living for a man, his wife and two children?—I cannot tell you.

\* E-3755. You say that Rs. 5 represents 25 per cent of his earnings. Do you mean to say that a man, his wife and two children can live on Rs. 15 a month?—I am afraid I cannot add to what I have already said in this connexion.

E-3756. *Mr. Cliff*: Dealing with the question of saving of Rs. 5, do a considerable proportion of your men have their families in upcountry?—I think most of them have their families in upcountry.

E-3757. When you say they can or do save Rs. 5 is that after they have made provision for their family in the upcountry?—I do not take it to mean that. It means that after allowing a reasonable provision for his whole cost of living he must have Rs. 5 saving at least; I think possibly a little more.

E-3758. On the question of safety, dealing with regulations in docks, I see that this matter has been under review by the local Government, and they state: "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." They go on to say that there is a difference of opinion between the local Government and the Port Commissioners. The local Government apparently are in favour, and 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." Can you tell us the reason for your opposition to that?—I am afraid I cannot answer without looking up the papers again. It is probably a matter of machinery rather than anything more vital.

E-3759. The Government are pointing out to us that your suggestion apparently would mean the creation of a new department or new departments, and their point is that they want to keep it under the factory regulation, under the same inspectors?—I think perhaps it is a matter of practicability rather than anything else. We have always taken a liberal view and tried to bring possibly as much under the Act as we reasonably could be expected to; it is not a question of, so to speak, economy or anything of that kind.

E-3760. I believe in other places I have heard a contention that it should be under a Ports Act. That would mean a separate machinery. I am wondering whether that is the ground that you are traversing?—We should have no objection whatever to accepting the principle of liability within our own limits.

E-3761. Government are for extending the scope of the Factories Act and having the inspection and the enforcement under regulations framed under the Act itself. Have you got any opposition to that?—The difficulty is probably to say what is a factory. Are you going to call it a factory if there are none of the factory conditions attached to it? For instance, if you are loading a bullock-cart, which is as safe an operation as one can well imagine, is that a thing which could or should be brought under factory regulations.

E-3762. The claim made is that all menial labour engaged on the dock should be brought within the safety regulations?—We agree in principle.

E-3763. Will you send us a copy of your letter written to Government in this connexion?—Yes.

E-3764. The Chief Inspector of Factories in his memorandum says: "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." Government propose that all menial labour in docks irrespective of their employment should be brought within the provisions of the Act. Is there any opposition from the Port Commissioners to all classes of menial labour being brought under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No. I think we specifically said we had no objection, to a later reference. I should like to make one point clear. If a case occurred of death or serious injury which did not come under the Workmen's Compensation Act, it must not be assumed that we did not pay compensation; we always pay compensation at least as liberally as we should have done under the Act.

E-3765. With regard to the 80 per cent of the labour which is employed under contractors, do you exercise any control over the rates of wages, the hours of labour and the conditions of service, and is there any clause governing that in your contract?—No.

E-3766. Does it mean that a dispute can occur with the contractor and the work on the dock may be stopped and you have no power to intervene?—Probably you are thinking of strikes. When the work begins to suffer we should begin to take an interest in the matter, and we should be in constant touch with the contractor.

E-3767. I am wondering what interest you take before the work begins to suffer, that is, before the trouble actually arises?—We should not take action until the work begins to suffer.

E-3768. May I apply that in another way? I see your memorandum says that you had a strike and that later two officers of the Port Trust were appointed to investigate into the matter and they made recommendations which were subsequently adopted by the Port Commissioner. I see that these two officers of the Port Trust put forward reasoned arguments in respect of certain increases. I want to know whether any reasoned argument was put before the strike occurred by any officers of the Trust?—One of the two officers to whom you referred was the then Deputy Harbour Master, a man with long service here; and the other was the senior assistant accountant whose speciality was the establishment work. They were given full powers to report and investigate in the fullest degree. They went round to every section of the staff concerned and heard them practically in every case directly. One of these two officers was speaking the language very well indeed; he was an Anglo-Indian; and as far as my information goes, I should say that every section of the staff concerned had an opportunity of stating their case before these two officers.

E-3769. That is not my point. What you say happened after the strike occurred; I am concerned with the happening before the strike. It appears that a couple of months before the strike occurred a union was formed.



Apparently the men were discontented. Dealing with the point of contact that Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola put to you, was there any consideration given or any recommendations made by any of the supervisors in the Port to the Port Trust itself with regard to increasing the rates of wages of the particular people whose wages have now been increased?—There was one set of recommendations put up which was accepted and embodied in the final settlement.

E-3770. Were they put up before the strike?—The officer in charge of the department, that is, the Harbour Master, made certain recommendations which I accepted and got sanction for; these were not accepted by the men, and they demanded much larger concessions.

E-3771. What date was that?—That was before the strike.

E-3772. How long was it before the strike?—A short time before the strike. I was unable to accept the whole of their demands.

E-3773. Is it a matter of weeks or months?—Weeks.

E-3774. Is there any objection on the part of the Port Trust to establish a permanent machinery to help men to make representations on matters arising out of their employment?—We have always taken up the attitude that we would recognize any registered trade union if we were satisfied that it was thoroughly representative of the body which it presumed to represent and had a reasonable proportion of actual workers on the executive committee of the union. But so far that has not led to any real effective work. Personally I would prefer an internal organization, a small representative body of the workers which would work directly under the head of the department to an outside agency composed of a good proportion of lawyers for instance.

E-3775. Have you got any internal machinery?—No.

E-3776. The union that was in front of us the other day said that you asked for their rules and constitution as a condition precedent to recognition?—Yes, that is correct.

E-3777. Do you as a Port Trust go any further than the Indian Trade Unions Act?—I do not quite know how far the Act goes, but certainly we want to be satisfied that the union is thoroughly representative.

E-3778. Before I come to the point of the representative character of a union, I believe surely the Port Trust does know the terms of the Indian Trade Unions Act and the conditions on which registration can be obtained?—Yes.

E-3779. Is the Port Trust prepared to accept that as a basis of recognition?—I think before you deal with a body that claims to be representative you must be sure that it is representative.

E-3780. Let me deal with the question of representation. As I understand it the Port have no objection to a combination of their workpeople?—No.

E-3781. Do the Port Trust take the line that until a considerable measure of success has attended the organizing effort of the workers there can be no recognition?—I do not think we have attempted to maintain any limitation of that kind.

E-3782. Can it be taken that when a trade union organization is started amongst your employees, provided the organization is on the general basis of the Indian Trade Unions Act, the question of numbers will not be a bar to recognition by the Port Trust seeing that there must be a beginning to any new organization?—The trouble is that you might have competing parties quarrelling with each other among the same body of workmen concerned. We have that as a matter of fact now.

E-3783. You may have that in a new field, I agree. But that is a matter for the trade unions to co-ordinate amongst themselves. Is not the Port Trust prepared to recognize a union which observes the Trade Unions Act?—But where are we to draw a line? Are we to recognize a union which represents only 10 per cent of the members which it claims to represent?

E-3784. What percentage would you put it at?—It should be more than 50 per cent. But that is my own personal view.

E-3785. Has the Port Trust got any policy at all?—Not in terms of percentages. Speaking from memory I can say that the Port Trust has agreed to recognize a union provided it is registered and is reasonably representative of the staff concerned.

E-3786. Is that the declaration of policy that is extant now?—There is nothing in writing. That is my understanding of the position any way.

E-3787. What is the attitude of the Port Trust in regard to the weekly rest day?—We favour it subject to the limitations of certain services which will have to be carried out in the same way as on railways. There are certain kinds of work which must go on. I have no reason to suppose that any body of workmen are worked so continuously as to be definitely detrimental to their health.

E-3788. Would you specify one or two exceptions which you say would necessarily have to be made?—For instance there is the ferry service which has to go on according to time table.

E-3789. That could be done surely by relief crews?—Most of our serangs and others are not at all overworked; in fact they are underworked. There are two sets of crews for a total period of 14 hours.

E-3790. Can it be taken that the Port Trust generally favours the weekly rest day—one rest day in seven days?—We have that in the workshop already.

E-3791. But regarding all classes of labour?—The Railwaymen for instance are on 8-hour shifts.

E-3792. I am asking whether with regard to all classes of labour generally speaking the Port Trust is in favour of a weekly rest day?—We never had that problem before us in a definite form.

E-3793. Have the Port Trust considered the question of a reduction of weekly hours?—(*Mr. Burns*) The daily hours were formerly from 6 to 6 but now it has been changed to 7 to 5. That is quite a recent change made since the War about the year 1920 or 1921.

E-3794. That was ten years ago. Is it likely that the Port Commissioners would favourably consider the reduction of weekly hours?—I would not like to commit myself. It strikes me as a very difficult matter to effect. (*Mr. Burns*) Take the Railway staff for example. They have eight hours' turns of duty. They have themselves worked out an arrangement whereby one set of men work 48 hours a week, another set 58 hours a week and a third set 62 hours a week. One set has every third Sunday off and so on. They have different periods of work and rest arranged among themselves and if we were to interfere with their arrangement and lay down another rule the men themselves would be the first to protest.

E-3795. If you simply lowered the basis on which that arrangement was made from its present figure to 48 what would be the difficulty?—At present it is an 8-hour day and even taking it for seven days in the week it works out to less than 60 hours.

E-3796. The same arrangement could be worked at 48 hours a week?—If you shortened the daily hours.

E-3797. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How many hours does the lowest class do?—48 hours. The others work 58 and 62 hours making a total of 168 hours.

E-3798. So that if you reduced the maximum to 48 there would be people working less than that, for example, 42, and 40 and so on?—Yes, and we would have to employ more staff obviously.

E-3799. *Miss Sorabji*: As employers of labour would you have any objection to deducting a certain portion of your workers' wages and crediting it to a trade union fund if your workers so desired?—We have no objection to our workers contributing to a fund of that kind but we are not prepared to act as a collecting agent for the trade union.

E-3800. *Mr. Tassie*: On the question of the reduction of hours if you reduced your hours of work your port would become more costly to shipping?—Undoubtedly.

E-3801. At present there is a complaint that Calcutta is an expensive port?—Yes, not a cheap port, certainly.

E-3802. *The Chairman*: I think your point is that you should not be handicapped with competing ports?—Yes.

E-3803. On the other hand we were gratified to learn when we visited the port the other day that your trade was steadily increasing for the last five or six years?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**Mr. H. F. DARVELL, Shipping Master, Calcutta.**

E-3804. *The Chairman*: What is your experience?—I have had 21 years' experience afloat, including seven years in command of all types of vessels with lascar crews, and I received my present appointment in December 1924.

E-3805. So that you came to your office with a wide general knowledge of the lascars, their circumstances and needs?—I think so.

E-3806. When you came to your present office had the Government of India decided as to its action following what is generally known as the Clow Committee's Report?—Nothing came to me to lead me to believe that they had.

E-3807. You were appointed subsequently to that report?—Yes.

E-3808. And presumably with a view to carrying into effect such parts of that report as Government might decide to adopt?—That is so.

E-3809. Under the first alternative method of recruitment I understand the broker was to be abolished?—There was no question of abolishing the broker; that was never agreed to by the agents, ship-owners or masters. I had no instructions whatever to proceed directly towards the elimination of brokers. My instructions appeared to me to be requiring an endeavour to clear up matters in connexion with the bribery and corruption that was said to exist and to do my best with the other problems in connexion with recruitment. It appeared to me from the outset that I had a very heavy task before me. I went into the figures of the number of men available. My first discovery was that from 1914 to 1924, the date of my appointment, we had enrolled at the Branch Shipping Office, Kidderpore, 74,282 new seamen. Since the Seamen's Recruitment Committee sat in July 1922 until December 1924, 23,602 new ratings had been enrolled and given certificates to proceed to sea. I went further into this question and found from my records that only 11,700 of those men got to sea. In ten years the number of seamen available had been increased by 74,282.

E-3810. Of the total number of seamen that were previously available what was the total number sailing the seas at any one time?—We cannot get that figure exactly. We have at the present date on our registers 243,000 names, but I must point out that these registers have been in existence since 1887. I estimate that out of that total number there are about 140,000 effective seamen, that is, seamen available for employment.

E-3811. Does that include the 74,000?—Yes. The total number of registered seamen up to November of this year is 233,742 including a few Goanese. They are registered in my registers at Kidderpore. I estimate that of this number 25 per cent are now dead, i.e., 58,435 should be deducted from that figure. Then there are men who are alive, but have given up sea service voluntarily, such as aged men, men who have given up the sea after the first voyage, and men who are invalided permanently. I estimate them at 15 per cent or 35,062. I estimate, therefore, that 93,497 should be deducted from the original 233,742, which leaves approximately 1½ lakhs of effective seamen available for employment. These are my figures arrived at after a careful analysis of the question.

E-3812. The position up till 1924 was that you were constantly adding new names every year to the register with the result that annually you were decreasing the opportunity of any one person on the register to get employment?—Yes, we were adding 6,000 to 10,000 men a year; during the ten years from 1914 to 1924 we enrolled 74,000 men. New men were being given certificates whether they were hale or not, and whatever their age. I considered this was a very serious position, and I therefore began to reduce the number of recruits. Before and during the War men could go to sea without *nullis*. My senior clerks tell me that a third of the crews consisted of men

without *nullis* and there was no means of knowing whether they had ever been to sea before. In 1925 I gradually reduced the number of new recruits to 25 per day, three months later to 20 a day, until I brought the figure down to about 15 a day. In 1926 I stopped open recruitment altogether, and from that date we enrolled no new men for sea service unless I had a letter requesting me to do so from the Commander or officers of ships signing on crews. That request would be worded somewhat in this way:—

“ To the Shipping Master,  
Calcutta.

I wish you to issue a continuous discharge certificate to the following seamen” (giving their names and their fathers’ names)  
“ for the purpose of signing on this vessel’s articles.”

All new recruits in Calcutta are now enrolled in that way, and all of them went to sea except those who were eliminated by the Port Health Officer at the last moment as being unfit. Now in Bengal all the new recruits are medically examined and certified fit for sea service before they are allowed to sign the agreement. We enrol in this way about 5,500 a year; they are all first ratings, that is to say, of the lowest grades carried at sea.

E-3813. Has that number of 5,500 continued pretty steadily since 1926?—Yes; it is 5,500 instead of 10,000. Previously men had to hunt round for employment, but now the men get away to sea.

E-3814. What is the actual wastage which you would set against that figure owing to old age, voluntary retirement, not wishing to go to sea again?—It is very difficult to arrive at figures of that kind; many men leave the sea, go to their own country and disappear, never going to sea again. The majority probably consists of older men who find it is better to give up searching for employment. I think the present recruitment is about equal to the wastage of effectives. These new recruits are mostly coal trimmers and lascars, and I think we are probably enrolling too many even now.

E-3815. Have you any further proposals to make for reducing the number?—I am working at that problem almost daily in endeavouring to encourage ships’ masters and engineers not to allow the head ratings to recruit too many of these men; for instance, if a serang says that he wants 12 coal trimmers, and that 10 of them should be new men, I tell the Chief Engineer that I consider that an excessive number of new men, and suggest that he should wait a day or two and try to recruit men who already have *nullis*. I always find the ships’ officers endeavour to meet my wishes.

E-3816. Is the allotment of a seaman’s wages to his family restricted to one-third of his wages?—Yes, in the Act it says “not exceeding one-third.”

E-3817. Do you think there is any justification for such a restriction?—I should say there is not. I have never known an Indian seaman to ask for such an allotment. It is always considered that the allotment of seamen’s wages for their families is a matter entirely in the hands of the master and owners. Even in the United Kingdom they will not give every man an allotment. In the United Kingdom the steady married men have a part of their wages allotted to their families monthly, and the money is collected by the man’s wife or relatives from the offices of the owners or agents.

E-3818. Do you mean that the masters of ships discourage it?—They do not exactly discourage it, but there are cases in which the master may not consider it advisable to let a particular seaman have an allotment, because he might desert and the master might not be able immediately to communicate with the owners and get the allotment stopped. Masters of ships say that the allotment of seamen’s wages is entirely at the master’s option.

E-3819. What is your view about that?—My view is that they are wrong, that if a seaman claims an allotment of a certain portion of his wages he should have it.

E-3820. You think as a matter of right he should have it?—Yes.

E-3821. Would you put the proportion as high as 75?—I think that is excessive.

E-3822. Section 53 (ii) of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act says that a seaman may require that a stipulation shall be inserted in the agreement

that an allotment not exceeding one-third of his wages shall be made. What is your experience?—To my knowledge we have never issued an allotment note in Calcutta to any Indian seaman; they never ask for it.

E-3823. The Seamen's Union, in the memorandum they have submitted to us, stated that as one of their grievances?—Yes, they probably would.

E-3824. How do you account for that?—I cannot say; possibly they think that would be beneficial to the seamen; there is no doubt that a seaman under the Act can claim an allotment of his wages if he wishes it.

E-3825. Are the seamen informed that they can claim that right?—It is not in the agreement, but I think you will find that every seaman would know that, particularly if the union has mentioned it. I should say every seaman is aware that he can have a portion of his wages collected in Calcutta by his relatives while he is away on service. May I refer you to section 55. I have gone into the matter in the Shipping Office records, and I am told that we have never, on any occasion, had a request from a lascar seaman for an allotment of his pay.

E-3826. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Is it possible that the seaman is afraid that if he tries to insist on his right he may lose his job?—I do not think so. I have never had a case here in India where a master has said that he would refuse an allotment; the masters merely state that the allotment arrangement at the start of the voyage gives them a lot of trouble; they must keep in touch with the owners at home. If a man is ill in hospital his allotment immediately ceases, and the master has to cable home to stop the allotment because there is no means of recovering the money once it has been paid.

E-3827. *Mr. Ahmed*: Then why do they not take the benefit of the section?—That we cannot find out.

E-3828. *The Chairman*: It clearly means more trouble to the masters?—Possibly it does, and the agents would have to set up separate departments to handle these allotments. It would be a very big thing, and it might mean that the relatives would have to be brought from upcountry to Calcutta in order to be paid the money, or else the money would have to be remitted by money order to the seaman's relatives.

E-3829. You know how allotments were made to the wives of soldiers during the War?—I was with lascar seamen all through the War, and there was no allotment for them.

E-3830. *Mr. Tassie*: During the War the only people that got it were the wives of men who were prisoners in Germany; a lot of them got it. The only way in which you could be sure of the relatives getting the money was by sending the money to the Magistrate upcountry and asking him to see that it was paid to the right people. Until that system was instituted it was found that money was sent but never got to the relatives. The soldiers were in a different position because they had their Army regulations?—I have never had a single case of a lascar seaman asking me to institute an allotment for him or endeavour to get a master to permit him to take out an allotment. Although the section of the Act provides for it, the first information we have had in connection with allotments is the information you give me now that the Indian Seamen's Union has asked for allotment for seamen.

E-3831. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you think the lascar is not sure that the money will get to his family, and that may be the reason why he does not ask for it?—We have the local address of every seaman who enters into an agreement, and the address can always be furnished to the local agents.

E-3832. But it does not necessarily follow that the relatives get the money?—No, we can only go by the address that the seaman gives, and we can furnish that address to the ship's agents.

E-3833. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you not think that probably for generations the Indian seaman has been in the habit of making other arrangements for his family?—Yes.

E-3834. *The Chairman*: Does he send money by money order?—Yes, he sends money by money order from ports abroad. During the voyage he receives advances from the master and in ports abroad one can frequently see half a dozen seamen lined up at the post office sending money orders to India,

E-3835. Then do you think that possibly he prefers that less regular method?—I am of the opinion that he does, that he would rather draw the money himself abroad and remit it as required.

E-3836. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Then he can remit it if he does not need it himself?—Yes, and that is, therefore, frequently done.

E-3837. *The Chairman*: But I suppose the temptations open to lascars in ports of call are numerous?—Yes, they certainly are.

E-3838. And the wife may be the person who suffers?—I should hardly agree to that; in ports of call abroad, when the seamen draw money, they spend it on themselves and may remit a portion home; they very often send money to their relatives.

E-3839. Where does the information come from on which you base the serious statement in your memorandum as to the indebtedness of Calcutta seamen?—I cannot tell you; that is the Government memorandum. It is a matter on which we can merely go by hearsay. I myself have questioned numbers of seamen during the last four years, and it appears to me it is principally the head ratings who obtain loans; I fancy that the debts of the lower ratings are very small. I can understand the head ratings borrowing money because there are so many of them seeking employment. This morning about 60 serangs lined up for one appointment.

E-3840. If the indebtedness is as serious as is stated in the Government memorandum, do you think something might be done to encourage thrift and to avoid indebtedness?—I cannot myself see what can be done to prevent these people borrowing money if they wish to do so.

E-3841. We are told that these people are essentially agriculturists and have their country homes to which they return; it looks as if they go to sea not so much to save money as to get away from debt?—That may be so, but I have always concluded that the lascars go to sea because he is fond of the sea and takes to the sea naturally; it also possibly helps him with his family affairs and his holdings in the country. The men tell me that it enables them to acquire additional plots of land. We know that they go to their homes from this port with considerable sums of money. Sometimes a lower rating will draw as much as Rs. 250 which is quite a large sum for a lascars to have in his hands at one time. Seamen will go home with large sums of money and remain at home for six or eight months.

E-3842. Do you find sharks waiting outside your door?—We watch that; if any individual seaman requires police protection we send him out with a Police Sergeant. Although we handle large sums of money in the Shipping Office we have had no cases of theft to my own knowledge. What occurs outside we cannot know. If these men suffer from crimps and sharks it is nowhere near the Shipping Office, but happens where they live, at Kidderpore, Howrah and other places. I myself have had many complaints during the last four years from seamen that people are waiting to molest them, and I have sent them with the police to see them off the premises. We can do no more than that. They say that *goondas* are waiting for them, but such cases are very rare. There have been probably five or six cases during the last year.

E-3843. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is there a post office?—The General Post Office is within 100 yards of the Shipping Office, and the seamen can go there.

E-3844. *Mr. Ahmed*: I suppose the Kabuli money-lender waits outside the shipping office?—I do not think we have any money-lenders in the vicinity of the shipping office; I think the money-lenders are in the vicinity of the boarding houses in which the seamen live; but our seamen, when they are paid off, do not remain in Calcutta long; they disappear. After two or three ships have been paid off you will find the trains at Sealdah and Howrah in the evening loaded with seamen going back to Sylhet and other places.

E-3845. *The Chairman*: Then is it your opinion that on the whole the seaman goes home with a considerable sum of money saved?—Yes, I think he does. The term of employment varies; some men are paid off with two months wages while others will draw 18 months wages. A coal trimmer's wages for 18 months will be 18 times Rs. 18.

E-3846. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does that mean that he did not want to draw it before?—During the currency of that agreement he has probably drawn small sums abroad which the master gives at his option. Very few British ship-masters refuse these advances.

E-3847. Is not he entitled to his money until he gets back?—Legally he is not, although he signs on for so much a month; I do not think he can claim the money until he returns from the voyage and the agreement has expired.

E-3848. *The Chairman*: In the United Kingdom not only do the married men make allotments to their wives, but young sailors make allotments to their parents during the time of their absence at sea?—Yes; it would be a very excellent thing if Indian seamen would do the same, but it would mean establishing departments in the offices of the companies to handle these allotments. Fifty-six thousand seamen leave this port every year.

E-3849. Do you not think it would substantially add to the happiness of a seaman's life?—Possibly it would. There is no reason why they should not have the allotment system if they wish it.

E-3850. And that some body should take an active interest in seeing that they get it?—Yes.

E-3851. Would that fall within your province at all?—According to this section of the Act it is clear that it does; it would mean that I shall have to have an increased staff for a special cash department; I think I should require another four or five clerks.

E-3852. If it would substantially improve the status of 150,000 seamen that would not seem to be an unduly large establishment?—No, it would not, but I must state that we should need that staff. We should need an experienced accountant with several assistants at the shipping office if the allotment system for Indian seamen is to be put into force in the Port of Calcutta.

E-3853. *Mr. Clow*: It would not be for you to pay the allotment?—I should have to recover the money from the agents or owners locally on behalf of the claimant if agents or owners neglected to pay it.

E-3854. Have you an allotment note?—We have no special allotment note here; we use the English allotment note occasionally for English seamen.

E-3855. *The Chairman*: It really looks as if no thought had been given to the effective operation of that section?—Possibly not, because there has never been any request for allotments of wages. Men ask me all sorts of things, but I have never had a request made to me either by a high or low rating for an allotment of his pay to his relatives while he is at sea.

E-3856. What proportion of the total recruitment in the Port of Calcutta now goes through your office?—Seventy-five per cent of the new men pass before me personally while my deputy deals with the other 25 per cent. I should say that we deal with about a quarter of the work in our office under what is described as "Method No. 2" while about three-quarters is done in the agents' office, i.e., by "Method No. 1."

E-3857. Is there any tendency for these proportions to change?—I do not think so; I think it will remain just where it is. The firms which have decided to adopt Method No. 2 have in many cases no fixed local agency here.

E-3858. I understand you really got to work on this problem in 1926?—No, I did a considerable amount of work prior to that which I should like to describe to you. If the master will sanction it every lascar seaman can have, and invariably does have, a month's advance of his wages at the time he enters into the agreement. Prior to 1929 this was done by means of advance notes for about half the shipping at the port, the British India Steam Navigation Company have never used advance notes, but have always paid cash advances to their seamen. The remaining half of the seamen who sign on in Calcutta received advance notes. It was said that the seaman lost a considerable amount of the face value of the notes when they cashed them. Of course that is common all over the world, but there were certain people who said it fell very heavily on the lascars because the people who cashed the notes could do what they liked with him; they might keep the man waiting until the eleventh hour and then accept the note at a very great discount. In 1926 I instituted what I called the "half cash-note"

or the "half advance note" system. That meant that the man took a part advance note for his month's wages, the advance note being made out for just half that amount, the remaining half in cash being paid at the local address that the man gave to the broker's clerk, that being usually a boarding house. The clerks would proceed to the address to see if it was correct, and then pay over to the man the other half in cash. I have had no complaints that that money was ever retained. We carried on under that system for a year or two when I considered it necessary and safe to go a step further and we instituted a system by which half the amounts of the month's advance was paid in cash on the vessel before the Shipping Master so that the seaman, instead of having a paper note to negotiate, had half the cash paid him at the time of signing on, and took the other half in the form of a note which he negotiated through a money-lender or in his boarding house. We have recently improved on that system. The note has been abolished altogether, and the lascar seamen receives in cash the full advance of a month's wages at the time of signing on. The seaman may not be required to join the vessel for four or five days after that. They are the only seamen who obtain a month's wages in full in cash before they join the ship. Of course the advances are made conditionally on the man going to sea, so that it is a method by which the seaman is trusted. These advances made to seamen are in the hands of the brokers, and I believe the brokers are complaining. However, the brokers very willingly fell in with my suggestion some few months ago. We shall probably never again see an advance note in connexion with lascar seamen.

E-3859. Is the advance made direct to the seamen?—Yes, in my presence; i.e., either I or my deputy see that a full month's wages are in the hands of each individual seaman at the time of signing the agreement.

E-3860. Does the lascar, like some other sailors in the world, like to have a jollification the night before he goes on board?—Possibly a few of them do, but I do not think they do that to any great extent; they are very good men; they usually spend the money in purchasing a few necessities for the voyage such as clothing and boots, and they probably send some away to the country.

E-3861. You are satisfied that that change has been greatly to the advantage of the seamen?—I think so; the seamen in Bengal very much appreciate it.

E-3862. *Mr. Tassie*: If the seaman does not sail, who loses the money?—The broker loses it.

E-3863. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have the unions not tried to get advances made through them?—I have had no direct suggestion in that direction.

E-3864. *Mr. Ahmed*: How much profit does the broker make out of it?—Five per cent on the total amount. He has to stand the loss in respect of the seamen who desert at the last moment. A ship very seldom leaves Calcutta without having three or four men missing. At the time of sailing the broker has to find substitutes to fill those places and has to pay them another month's wages which he cannot recover from the ship's agent.

E-3865. *The Chairman*: That is not a large wastage?—It is not.

E-3866. *Mr. Clow*: That 5 per cent is paid by the company?—Yes.

E-3867. You have said that the registers have been in existence since 1887?—Yes.

E-3868. Are those the registers which you are now preparing?—No; those are the old registers containing the records of the seamen. We must keep the records of seamen as closely up to date as possible. Very often when a ship is turned round hurriedly we have no time to register the last voyage of the seamen. There are 982 registers.

E-3869. Do they serve any useful purpose?—Yes, they keep the seamen's record of service up to date. We are considerably behind with the card index system. We have been trying for the last 12 months to get that card index system up to date, but we are still over a lakh of cards in arrears. The Government have promised from the 1st March of this year that we shall have extra hands at the branch shipping office in order to make an effort to get that card index system up to date.



E-3870. You have no systematic means of striking men off the register?—No; we probably only get intimation of the deaths of about 30 or 40 local men a year though the number of Bengal seamen afloat reported “died during the currency of the agreement” would probably average about 200 a year. In those cases where we receive intimation of the death the *nikkis* are returned to us and we erase the men’s names from the register. We can only estimate how many men died in the districts.

E-3871. What purpose are the registers of serangs which you are now preparing intended to serve?—I have yet to find out. I was told to start those serangs’ registers four months ago. I keep a general register of all the serangs, the serang being considered to be the key-man of the crew. The Commerce Department of the Government of India decided that it would be a very good thing if we started these two methods of recruitment for the leading ratings, and I was instructed to commence what are called general registers. We enter in these registers full particulars of leading ratings, serangs and butlers, with the purpose, I suppose later on, of taking men from these registers for employment. It will take me another 15 months to complete those registers; they contain 500 names each, and are very heavy tomes. Up to the present I have registered 540 engine room serangs alone. I obtained the following figures this morning: I have registered 10 or 12 serangs this morning. In four and a half months I have registered 478 engine room serangs, 309 deck serangs and 151 butlers. The rule is that a Gazetted officer must attend to this registration himself.

E-3872. What are the difficulties in the way of adopting the proposal made by the committee that the ship’s officer should have a free choice in the case of serangs who had left not more than three months before?—I do not remember the exact wording of that recommendation. This morning in the Shipping Office we had a selection of serangs by the captain of a Dutch steamer. There were 65 men rostered up. What the captain did, and we could not stop him, was to sort out about 12 men who appeared to be the most likely men, put them on one side and select the men he required from those 12 men.

E-3873. The report says that as regards serangs and butlers it is proposed that the Chief Officer and Chief Engineer should be at liberty to nominate any serang or butler who has been discharged from a ship of the same line not more than three months before?—That is done. The master or officer who wishes to re-employ a serang or butler who has previously served in his vessel in the voyage preceding the one that is contemplated is at liberty to do so. Many masters object to walking round and scrutinizing the records of 65 men, which will take about two hours, so they, therefore, cast their eye along the line and pick men out.

E-3874. The committee proposed that the free choice of the officer should be restricted in certain cases; that is to say, when he wants to choose a man who has not been on a ship of the same line less than three months before?—Yes, that is not done.

E-3875. What difficulty is there in restricting his choice to two classes of men: (a) men who have been on the same line not more than three months before, or (b) a certain number selected by you from your register?—There can be no objection to that if the officers and engineers agreed. The masters and officers endeavour to take the men who have been longest out of employment provided they are satisfactory men; that is the utmost we can get them to do.

E-3876. Surely it is an undesirable system to select the men who have been longest out of employment?—It is in a way.

E-3877. It would be better to select the men who have been the shortest time out of employment?—Yes, but it was said that there was so much unemployment among these head ratings that employment should be given to the serang who had been longest out of employment, other things being equal. I believe that is the method the British India Steam Navigation Company adopt.

E-3878. This system which is proposed as far as serangs are concerned has been rejected presumably because it is in some way impracticable. What are the difficulties in following the method stated in paragraph 7 of the main report?—Paragraph 7 says it is considered that the power of selecting of seamen, including serangs, should be restricted to two classes of employees.

As a matter of fact the masters of ships leave it to their Chief Officers and Chief or Second Engineers. It says that they should have the power to select serangs or butlers subject to the approval of the master. That is done. It says that it is proposed as regards serangs and butlers that they should be at liberty to nominate any serang or butler who has been discharged from a ship of the same line not more than three months before. That is really what is done now; they have the option of doing that. The whole point is the three months.

E-3879. *The Chairman*: You do not muster the men with any regard to the length of time they have been out of employment?—No. Under the latest scheme my instructions are to enter any one on the general register, but I pointed out that I had men coming along who had been 15 or 16 years out of service, many of them being old men and some of them probably partially blind. Government instructions are that I must roster and register these men. It is quite possible we shall have trouble about this. In that muster of 65 serangs that we had this morning, it is quite possible there were 20 or 30 men who were too old for employment. I have on my general registers now the names of numbers of men who have been out of employment for eight or nine years. When I asked these men where they had been during the last eight or nine years they said they had been at home. They had gone home because they felt they could not get a job, but they say that now they understand we are commencing these registers, and so they think they will possibly get employment.

E-3880. *Mr. Clow*: I suggest the registers were designed for a particular purpose, and the purpose has been forgotten?—The registers were designed to be worked, if possible, in conjunction with the roster system; that means that employment is to be given to men in order of rotation.

E-3881. But there was to be a choice in both cases?—Yes, a limited choice in both cases.

E-3882. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: If a man is obviously too old has the Shipping Master any right to take his name off the roster?—Apparently not. I am told to put them all in and they must take their chance with the others. I have no right to remove a man's name.

E-3883. *Mr. Clow*: Do you not think it would be a good thing to exclude from the roster men who have not been to sea for a long time?—Yes.

E-3884. Do you think that would be a practical proposition and would greatly relieve the stipulation?—It probably would. I think if a serang has not been to sea for four years we may conclude he has left the sea and does not want to return.

E-3885. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You would qualify that by saying "unless the master wants that particular man"?—Yes. In one or two cases I have known a master to pick out an old man who had sailed with him before although he may not have been at sea for two years.

E-3886. *The Chairman*: You would recommend a four years' limit with certain powers of elasticity?—Yes.

E-3887. *Mr. Clow*: What would be the effect of stopping the recruitment of new seamen for a year?—These new recruits are all first voyage ratings; they are in the main coal trimmers, that is to say, the lowest paid men. When a coal trimmer has made one or two voyages he does not want to go to sea again unless he can go as a fireman. The result is that one must continually recruit these lower ratings, otherwise ships would be held up for want of coal trimmers. There is not the same amount of recruitment in the deck department. Yesterday I signed on a vessel's crew of 65 men; I had to recruit 2 new lascars and about 11 new coal trimmers on that steamer because men were not available. The men who have sailed before will not go as coal trimmers because they want to become firemen.

E-3888. Is not there the same surplus with regard to deck crew?—No, there is not. The engine crew is considerably larger in number; the coal trimmers are all paid the same wage. The wages of the deck lascars graduate from Rs. 25 down to Rs. 18 for the lower ratings.

E-3889. As regards the question of payment to obtain jobs do you think that there has been an improvement since you took over charge?—There is a tremendous improvement. In 1925 I remember I had at least ten complaints a week; it appeared to be the idea of the seamen when they

came along and made complaints that I should investigate them very fully and send off the men concerned and get somebody else in their place. The complaints were usually against serangs; I do not think I have had complaints against other people in a crew. In 1926 we found that these complaints were getting less and less in number. In 1927 they were still less. In fact, last year I had very few; it was about 12 for the whole year. I account for that in this way. I inserted a clause in the articles of agreement that no money was to be advanced to a seaman abroad unless the master of the vessel obtained the thumb-print of the seaman and saw that the money was directly put into the hands of the seaman. I found that for many years it was the practice to pass these advances into the hands of the serangs to be handed over to the seamen. What the seaman got nobody knew; he probably got half of it.

E-3890. You are referring mostly to the engine crew?—Yes.

E-3891. But even in the days when the system was at its worst in Calcutta the money was paid to the seaman himself. In 1921 we were satisfied that the money was being paid to the seaman himself?—That may be, but 15 or 20 years ago we knew ourselves as young officers that money was being paid to the serang for passing it on to his men.

E-3892. The mere payment into the hands of the seaman is not in itself a guarantee against some of it finding its way later on elsewhere?—We see that the seaman has his legitimate dues according to his accounts paid into his hands separately. What we do is to muster the men together and put this question to each one of them: "Are you satisfied that you have got your dues? Do you understand this account?" And he says, yes. Fifty per cent of them are illiterate and they do not understand the accounts. They merely retain in their minds the number of months they were at sea, the wages they have earned during those months and the advance they have taken; they make their own calculation and say that their dues are so and so. We see our accounts and see that they get their legitimate dues.

E-3893. Can you assure us that the diminishing number of complaints is due to the diminution in extortion and not to diminishing lack of faith in the shipping office's powers?—Possibly I cannot. We will never cure it altogether. As shipping officers that is the utmost that we can do.

E-3894. Have you ever heard of summary proceedings under section 63 of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act?—No, not in Calcutta.

E-3895. Where and how are the articles of agreement signed?—It is signed in the ship or at the shipping office. It is signed first by the master, then by myself and then by every member of the crew. Up to two months ago the seaman was only making a cross in the agreement; but now I have instituted a system whereby he puts his thumb-print.

E-3896. Is there any official of the union present in the ship at the time?—Very often they are present.

E-3897. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Has any one the right to stop them from coming on board ship?—The master has the right, but I do not think he would exercise that right so long as they gave no trouble.

E-3898. *Mr. Joshi*: You said that crews could not be made up if fresh recruitment was stopped altogether?—I am afraid we should have a difficulty in completing the lower ratings—not the higher ratings—that is, from the serang down to the tindal; it is what we call the tail-end of the crew.

E-3899. We have heard several times that the number of men present in Calcutta is very large indeed?—Not of the first voyagers.

E-3900. But why do you want first voyagers?—I have tried to explain that the first voyagers merely replace the men who are not willing to sign on again at that grade which is the Rs. 18 grade; they are mostly coal trimmers.

E-3901. So it is quite clear that these first voyagers have become necessary because the lowest rate of wages is very small?—I would not say that, but because the men who are earning the lowest rate consider that they should be promoted to one grade above.

E-3902. You cannot get men on the lowest rate unless you get the first voyagers?—You cannot keep the seamen on the lowest rate for ever when there was a grade above to which they can be advanced.

E-3903. What it comes to is that you really create unemployment for the senior men simply by keeping the lowest rate a very small rate?—I would not say that. I still contend that this freshening up of the lower ratings will always be necessary as the grades of pay vary. The British seaman signs on as a fireman, and a trimmer while the Indian seaman enters, first of all, as a coal trimmer. After a voyage he expects to jump up to be a fireman. If he cannot jump up to be a fireman he will remain at home until he finds an opportunity of getting somebody to promote him.

E-3904. *The Chairman*: Is there anything against the adoption of the British system here?—I am afraid we should never get an Indian fireman to fire and trim alternately.

E-3905. *Mr. Joshi*: You said that new men are taken only on the request of the ships' officers; is that true?—There have been a few exceptions in cases of passenger crews that have been put together in the port of Calcutta by the agents. When no master, engineer or officer is present, a broker may come along to the shipping office and state that the serang requires two or three new coal trimmers. We have had only two or three such cases during the last two or three years. In all other cases the master, or the officer or the engineer of the ship must give us a certificate stating his requirements of the new ratings.

E-3906. I have got here a slip from a broker asking you to issue certificates to some three people. Is that a rare thing?—That is one incident that I am referring to; that occurred about four months ago. The agents of the British India Steam Navigation Company were engaging a crew to send down to the steamer "Staffordshire" at Rangoon.

E-3907. They do not employ brokers; this is a broker's note. Do the brokers also help the British India Steam Navigation Company?—No; but the Bibby Company employ a broker here. Will you let me see the note?

(The note was handed to the witness.)

This is a case of a passenger crew that I was referring to. In this case, as nobody was available the broker gave a chit of this description. I see my deputy shipping master passed it. This is a request for nullis to be issued to these men. I have seen this before; it was brought to me by the union officials about two months ago.

E-3908. May I ask you whether the necessity for engaging new men is not due to the fact that the ships' officers only select the serangs, or what you call the higher ratings, and not the lower ratings. But suppose you begin to register the lower ratings also and they are directly recruited?—What will be the idea of registering lower ratings?

E-3909. To recruit them direct instead of recruiting them through the serangs?—The recruitment is not really done by the serangs; they are made responsible only in bringing the men together; a lot of the power of the serang is disappearing.

E-3910. They are made responsible in bringing the crew together, but the crew is not directly selected either by the ships' officers or by anybody else?—That is so. But when a crew is selected, and before the articles of agreement are signed, a certificate is given to us by the ships' officer stating that he has personally selected the crew.

E-3911. He only selects out of the men brought in by the serang?—Yes.

E-3912. That really necessitates first voyage certificates being issued again and again because the serang chooses the men and he is not willing to take the men who are already available?—The serangs will of course say that it is no good going to sea with men that they do not know. A suggestion was made some time ago that the lower ratings for the crews should be selected entirely apart from the influence of the serangs. We have always given the union a fair play in these suggestions. I thought the best thing to do was to put this information before 10 or 20 of the leading British ship masters, and we have received their opinions; they are certainly very emphatic.

E-3913. *Mr. Clow*: Who made that suggestion?—I do not know. *Mr. Joshi* is making it now. It was a suggestion made by the union which is endeavouring to enforce it during the last four or five years.

E-3914. *Mr. Joshi*: You think that this system of indirect recruitment must always continue?—I do not agree that it is indirect recruitment. There are a number of men brought before the officers and engineers of the ships, quite enough for them to select probably a crew and a half. The officers reject any men whom they do not want.

E-3915. On the question of indebtedness, you replied to the Chairman that there is less amount of indebtedness in the lower ratings?—I have no information whatsoever in connexion with that.

E-3916. You said that the higher ratings are more indebted?—I think that some of the higher ratings are indebted in large sums of money.

E-3917. Is it due to the fact that a man belonging to the higher rating is himself a money-lender?—I do not think so.

E-3918. I may tell you my experience in Bombay. There are serangs who keep men with them and feed them till they get a job. Thus they are really the money-lenders of the crew. In Bombay there are clubs maintained by the serangs, and the serangs are indebted to some money-lender, while the men are indebted to the serangs. Did you enquire whether such a thing exists in Calcutta?—I have gone into the question and have enquired of many serangs whether they lend money to the men, and in many cases they informed me that they lend the men money when they commence the voyage or sign on; others lend them money for buying clothing or other outfit; in some cases they themselves buy it and give it to the men. But what the serang recovers at the termination of the voyage I do not know.

E-3919. If the men are indebted to the serang they are under his control on account of this indebtedness?—I have not heard any complaints so far from the seamen in regard to this.

E-3920. You do not receive complaints because the men are fed by the serang. I know of cases in Bombay where the serang feeds a whole lot of men?—That is the family system in Bombay.

E-3921. It has nothing to do with the family system. He feeds the men because the men cannot live in Bombay without employment. He borrows from the money-lender and goes on feeding them?—But then he recovers that money from them afterwards, for if he feeds the men, say, for about 14 days why should he not recover the money?

E-3922. I do not say that he should not recover. The question is whether this system by which the men have to be under a serang in order to get a job does not create in them the idea of slavery? The man knows that he cannot get a job unless he gets hold of a serang and becomes indebted to him?—I do not think so. We have scores of men who will only sail with a particular serang.

E-3923. You have not heard any complaint because the men are indebted to the serang?—I have never heard from a lower rating lascar scannan or a fireman that he has borrowed money from his serang.

E-3924. On the question of removing a man's name after a period of 3 or 5 years, you took it for granted that when a man did not get a job for 5 years he was out of Calcutta. It is quite possible that a man may be in Calcutta and may not get a job; that is not very unlikely on account of this system. But you still want to remove his name?—It is quite possible that the man may have been down to Calcutta on several occasions to try again and again and he may be one of the unfortunate men.

E-3925. You want to penalize him for doing that?—I think four years is a reasonable period. We have an unwieldy number amongst the senior ratings; we have 3,000 men for 700 ships. As I have already said, we had 65 applicants for one job in one vessel. This unwieldy number is due to the fact that in the past promotions were made very freely. But I have stopped that now. I have no real power to say to a master, or an officer or an engineer that he should not promote any of his men but they have realized the advisability of not promoting any more men until we get this unwieldy number worked off; the British India Company are not promoting any men as also the officers of other ships are not promoting any men. I have already informed the committee that about 500 serangs are on our engine serang register, and I shall go on registering these serangs for probably another ten months.

E-3926. May I know whether you are working towards a scheme like the one proposed by Clow Committee?—No; I have no instruction in that direction from Government.

E-3927. May I ask you whether you were not specially appointed to carry out at least a part of the work which was recommended by that Committee?—My first instructions from Government were to examine the question thoroughly. We have met at different times during the last 4 or 5 years and we have discussed the modes of finding employment for this tremendous number of men that are available. We have gone into the serang question, and this latter movement was decided upon in March of last year, and all the local agents were circularized in connexion with this scheme by the local Government; it was consented to put this scheme in operation in July this year.

E-3928. Did the local Government not announce in August 1924, after your appointment, that a labour bureau would soon be established for doing work in that direction? May I ask whether the object with which your appointment was made was given up soon after your appointment?—That I cannot say. I have merely carried out my instructions received from time to time in connection with recruitment. The last note of Government was to establish these registers for recruitment of crews; this was instituted in September of last year.

E-3929. Leave aside the recruitment of lower ratings. Even the registers for higher ratings were undertaken only five years after your appointment?—That is quite possible.

E-3930. May I ask you what came in the way of keeping a register of serangs soon after your appointment; why should five years be necessary merely to start work on the lines of registering serangs?—From the facts and figures placed before the Government, I think they thought that they required additional time to consider the question. In the meantime—I think it is recognized by all—I was working personally to eliminate bribery and corruption. No definite instructions were ever given to me to commence registers until September.

E-3931. The union in its memorandum makes a statement about the new club, that is the seamen's institute, and they apprehend that this institute will only be reserved for European seamen. Is that apprehension correct?—The Marine Club really emanates from the old sailors' home, and the old sailors' home, I believe, was erected from the money that was subscribed by European residents of Calcutta for the benefit of British seamen. In the days when there were probably 100 or 200 sailing ships lying on the shore, many of these seamen had to be provided with accommodation. I understand that the European residents of Calcutta subscribed very liberally for the erection of that home.

E-3932. But I learn from the Government of India's memorandum that this new home does not have any reservation for Europeans?—At present it has only reservations for Europeans. I have never heard that it was ever intended to accommodate Indian seamen there.

E-3933. *The Chairman*: Is it not the position that there is nothing in the rules that excludes Indian seamen in this Marine club, but that there is a proposition for putting up a separate institute for Indian seamen?—We have discussed in a tentative fashion the possibility of having to do something for the Indian seamen later on, something probably connected with the present Marine club. It is of course a matter of funds. We are not at present self-supporting; I myself am a member of the committee of the club.

E-3934. *Mr. Joshi*: This is what the Government of India say: "Under the Memoranda and Articles of Association of the new (Marine) Club, Indian seamen are not excluded from the possible future benefits arising from the club?—You should know that they say 'possible future benefits'."

E-3935. I want to know whether any steps are being taken in that connection?—Not at present.

E-3936. Are they likely to be taken soon?—I cannot say.

E-3937. So the Government of India's statement that in future it should be done is correct?—I do not follow you.

E-3938. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What Mr. Joshi wants to know, I think, is whether the future will be near or distant?—I am afraid it will be distant. We shall require funds. We shall have to find money somewhere before we can do anything in connexion with welfare work in the club. At present we have hardly sufficient money to carry on.

E-3939. *Mr. Joshi*: You said that the money raised for the home was from the European residents of Calcutta. Did the money not come also from European companies who employ lascars?—I have not sufficient information at my disposal to give you any definite answer, but it was generally understood by the committee members that the money was subscribed by the European residents of Calcutta.

E-3940. Am I correct in saying that the major portion of the money came either from Government or from the shipping companies?—That I cannot say.

E-3941. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: With regard to the indebtedness of the men I want to know whether it has something to do with their average employment. For what period, in five years' time, does a seaman remain unemployed?—A month ago I took out from our tables in the shipping office particulars of employment obtained by 20 ratings; and if you glance through this you will find that for about two-thirds of their time they are occupied.

E-3942. You took 20 men haphazard?—Yes. For instance, you will find that one man in the list was in employment for three years and seven days during four years and ten months.

E-3943. And you say that on an average they are employed for two-thirds of the time?—I have not worked out the average but I think you will find that this is a correct estimate.

E-3944. We have been told that in a number of cases they are only employed 20 per cent of the time or one year in five years?—I do not think so.

E-3945. What will be the proportion of the number of men wanting employment to the number getting employment every year, which you said was about 50,000 a year?—I think there must be three times as many waiting for jobs.

E-3946. So that instead of one-fifth you make it one-fourth, the proportion of men getting employment to the total number of men wanting employment?—Yes, about one-fourth.

E-3947. If you had only one-quarter of them employed or in other words a seaman got employment only for one year in four, would he not get into debt during the remaining three years because he could not be expected to earn enough in one year to keep himself and his family for four years?—Yes, he could not.

E-3948. Would that account for the indebtedness of the higher ratings among whom there is a great deal of unemployment?—Out of 3,000 higher ratings some of them have been out of employment for 8 or 9 years. But unlike the British seamen they will never revert to a lower employment; a serang will never agree to work as a tindal. He will probably raise a certain amount of money from somebody in the hope of paying it back when he gets a job.

E-3949. Would that not account for the indebtedness of a large percentage of these men?—You have put it at 75 per cent?—Have I put it at 75 per cent?

E-3950. Anyhow considering the facts which you have just now stated it would not be surprising if that was so?—No, it would not be surprising.

E-3951. You said that a serang would refuse to have men whose work he did not know?—Yes, he will refuse to have men with whom he thinks there will be a possibility of trouble.

E-3952. Still he sometimes asks you for first voyage men of whom he could not obviously know anything?—The first voyagers signed on vessels are usually the friends of some one on board.

E-3953. Supposing you had some men who were not first voyagers but who were probably coal trimmers?—If they were certificated I would request the engineers to sign them in. There would be no necessity to take first voyagers.

E-3954. Any man who has been at the bottom for one or two voyages will want to be promoted and surely there ought to be some system by which you get vacancies at the top?—It is time that many of these head ratings were eliminated.

E-3955. Have you any suggestion for the elimination of these head ratings?—We can only suggest that a serang who has been out four years should be taken off the register and shipping agents must be told not to keep on their register men who have been out four years.

E-3956. Would you object to the shipping agent employing any man if he wanted to, as you gave the case of somebody whom the shipping agent knew and wanted to employ?—That was only a two-year case.

E-3957. Even supposing it was a four-year case?—We could not object if the shipping master or agent wanted the man.

E-3958. You might put out of your roster any man who has been out of employment for more than four years. That would not prevent him from going direct to the line where he had been employed and get to work?—No, we register everybody.

E-3959. If you arranged in such a way that you would not put up men who had been out four years unless they had been definitely asked for, and you would give preference to men who have been longest out of employment, would not that keep away the whole lot of them who had no chance of being put up?—It might be considered.

E-3960. Otherwise as far as I can see your unemployment is going to keep on getting more and more?—It is quite possible, but it remains to be seen. Our figures are that we have about 75,000 men in the districts who come down to Calcutta whenever they feel inclined to take a job. Out of these 75,000 there are many who will not return to Calcutta.

E-3961. Would it help you if the union kept in touch with these men and put up list of men willing to come to Calcutta if there was any chance of employment?—I am afraid it will not.

E-3962. I am suggesting this in order that men may not stay in Calcutta if they have no chance of getting employment?—I do not think at present we have an unwieldy number here in Calcutta. There may be 12,000 men here at any one time.

E-3963. How many new men do you take in a month?—About 4,800 to 5,000.

E-3964. Do you not think that three to one is an undue margin?—I have reduced the recruiting figures. Had we gone on as we were going prior to my arrival here in 1924 we should have ten times the number.

E-3965. Could not the union help to keep some of them out of Calcutta?—I hardly think that is a practical suggestion. Many of the men are rejected at the medical examination of the crews which has come to be a very strict thing nowadays. The medical officers go very thoroughly into the fitness of the crews to proceed on the voyage.

E-3966. Suppose it appeared to the medical officer that a man was permanently unfit, would he be rejected and taken off the register?—He can do that now only for a period. But in my opinion he should be taken off the register permanently.

E-3967. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Speaking of sickness you say that only 8 per cent fail to pass the doctor owing to venereal and other diseases. Is the percentage so low as that?—Yes, only about 8 per cent of the men are rejected at the time of signing on of the crew. That includes cases of venereal and other diseases.

E-3968. Do you ever consult the shipping master in Bombay or Rangoon as to any common policy?—No, I do not.

E-3969. As regards serangs the only reason given why they should have no voice in the selection of the crew is that the control should be taken out of their hands. What percentage of the crew should a serang put together?—The serangs will be able to put together at least 50 per cent of the crew.



E-3970. Have you had experience of rosters in other countries?—No. I only knew that the roster system was tried in the United Kingdom and proved a failure.

E-3971. Was it because it led to inharmonious crews?—No, I could not say that. The reason was that the men available for a particular crew did not answer when the roster was called, because that particular ship did not suit them. That applies to lascars also. You cannot get lascars to sign on for any ship. He will not sign on with any crew. So also a serang; he would not sign on for any ship. I have a case with me at present where a shipping office sent down a serang for the vessel at an outport but the men refused to serve with him, and he had to be sent back to Calcutta. That is the situation with the lascars.

E-3972. Have you any Indian seamen signing on European articles?—During the War we had a few cases of such men. When once they have signed on an European agreement they could not sign on Indian agreement. I have one or two cases who have not been to sea since the War. They say they have acquired other habits and that they are unsuitable men to sail with the lascar crew.

E-3973. You say you have stopped the promotion of younger men to higher ranks. Do you think it is fair?—It is not fair, certainly. But there has been so much of distress among the older men the serangs—100 to 150 of them wait in the shipping office every day—that we thought it advisable to stop promotions for a certain period. We may have to open it up again.

E-3974. Do you get many complaints of crews from Bombay being brought over here?—Very few, just one or two.

E-3975. We had complaints in Bombay that Calcutta crews were sent over to Bombay and signed on from there. For what is this done?—I suppose the shipping companies consider that the Calcutta crews are more suitable than the crews on that side. The British India engine room crews are almost always recruited in Calcutta and sent over to Bombay to join the ship there.

E-3976. We have had it suggested that the wages of the Bengal seamen are lower than the wages of the Bombay seamen. Would that be a sufficient reason?—I do not think really that is a sufficient reason. My own experience is that the Bombay engine room crews are very difficult to put together with the exception of the few *Punjabis* which the P. & O. Co. have.

E-3977. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What do you mean by "very difficult to put together"?—They do not make good crews. Invariably the Bombay engine room crews want to break off their agreement when the vessel reaches home ports; that is possibly a reason why shipowners prefer Calcutta crews to sign on.

E-3978. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you had any complaints about the *Punjabi* crews?—Very little. The P. & O. Co. report that they have had very little trouble.

E-3979. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you get many complaints of overtime and overwork from seamen?—Very few in the port of Calcutta. During the past few years I had one or two complaints of excessive work by men. Possibly during the time of transport of vessels at home ports these men have been on duty more than 12 hours, most of it standing about. When I went to the European officers and mentioned it to them they told me that the circumstances necessitated such work and that after two days or so when convenient the men would have a day off. That was the way in which they were compensated.

E-3980. Do you get many complaints from the unions in Calcutta regarding the grievances of the men? Do the unions come to you freely?—Very freely indeed. My correspondence in the office has gone up by 5 to 10 per cent owing to correspondence with the unions. They always take up every little bit of grievance. They appear to stand by and pick them up. We always go into the cases thoroughly; a union official attends and we do our best to satisfy them.

E-3981. Do the unions simply pass on the grievances to you without sifting them up and seeing whether they are genuine or not?—No; they just bring them in; they bring the men along and we go into the case and satisfy them.

E-3982. You never refuse any communication?—I have never closed my doors to seamen. I give 40 to 50 interviews a day to them.

E-3983. When the seamen are paid off in Calcutta to whom are the wages actually paid?—There are two officials of the shipping office who see to it that the wages are paid into the hands of the seamen themselves.

E-3984. *Mr. Ahmed*: The memorandum of the Indian Seamen's Union says that the people of the sea-coast towns like Chittagong, Coomilla, Noakhali, Barisal and Sylhet on the Surma river and Dacca historically were sea-faring people and these places have been all along the recruiting ground for supplying crews to the ships. Therefore they were originally and primarily seamen and not agriculturists?—They probably were.

E-3985. Only some of them when they found it difficult to get sufficient employment at sea they took to agriculture as a secondary occupation?—I have always thought that it was the other way about.

E-3986. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You do not agree that there is a type of seamen who are primarily seamen and secondarily only agriculturists?—No.

E-3987. *Mr. Ahmed*: How is it that people living in the interior like higher Assam, North Bengal and West Bengal do not make good seamen?—I can only say that there is a population living near the sea and the rivers who are more inclined to take to sea than people living in the hinterland.

E-3988. During the time of the East India Company and thereafter did not these people from those places stated above come down to Calcutta in large numbers and get engaged as seamen?—I have no information about that.

E-3989. You know about the conditions of seamen working in the Royal Indian Marine Transport Department of Calcutta?—I do not really know what their conditions are; I have nothing whatever to do with them.

E-3990. In December 1924 the Government of India published in the papers their decision to start a seamen's recruitment bureau and appointed the Shipping Master, Calcutta, as officer in charge of the bureau as recruitment officer?—I have not seen that letter myself. I have the letter in connexion with my appointment as Shipping Master and officer-in-charge, seamen's recruitment bureau.

E-3991. Since your appointment have you done any direct recruiting yourself?—No, I have never done any direct recruiting myself. In the first place I have never thought it was the intention of the Government of India to establish a recruitment bureau.

E-3992. If you have been appointed as a recruitment officer why have you not done any direct recruiting yourself?—Simply because we have been proceeding in other directions. All the time I have been in close collaboration with the Government of India through the local Government when we were under the local Government. Now we are directly under the Government of India. Our bureau can go only up to a point in the matter of recruitment of seamen. Beyond that the Shipping Masters and shipping agents who have to employ the crew and work them should have their choice.

E-3993. Have you had any further instructions from the Government of India directing you not to recruit directly?—No such order came from the Government of India.

E-3994. In spite of that, instead of discharging your duty as recruitment officer and recruiting seamen directly why have you been recruiting through serangs and *ghat* serangs and other agency? Is it not in contravention of the terms of your appointment as recruitment officer?—My instructions were that I was appointed Shipping Master and officer-in-charge, seamen's recruitment bureau. Since my appointment I have been

in close collaboration with the Government of India in whatever I have been doing. In consultation with the local shipping agents we have now devised two methods of recruiting, and the Government of India have permitted the adoption of these two methods.

E-3995. If that is so, the Government of India have virtually withdrawn their original order?—I could not say that.

E-3996. You know that the Clow Committee recommended direct recruitment to check bribery and corruption. In view of the fact that bribery and corruption is still prevalent in connexion with recruitment why have you not taken any steps to check them?—You have still allowed the old system to continue.

E-3997. *Mr. Cliff*: Has there been any direction following the order of appointment in 1924 up till now?—I do not think there has been any. It was left to me entirely to do what I liked. At times I met the officers of the local Government and explained the situation to them. I have had no instructions from the Government of India in any matter until the methods I have described were evolved at a meeting of the shipping agents and an official of the Commerce Department, Government of India, last July. The representatives of the shipping companies in Calcutta have consented to adopt this scheme.

E-3998. You have done this of your own volition?—Not this, but everything previously.

E-3999. *Mr. Cliff*: The union suggest a State employment bureau, consisting of a Government officer with a sufficient staff, and with two representatives of the Indian Seamen's Union and two representatives of the shipping companies as an advisory committee. What practical objections are there to that?—The union have always been very keen on having this advisory committee, because, I suppose, it would enable them to do far more than they can do at present. What use the advisory committee could be I do not know.

E-4000. What practical objections are there to recruiting a crew in the shipping office?—Very many. We have not the staff or space. We should be working day and night. At present the master and officers of the ship personally supervise the recruitment of their crew, and can only give the matter their personal attention on the vessel itself in the early hours of the morning. They would object strongly to being taken from their vessels in order to attend the shipping office.

E-4001. Are those the only practical objections?—That is all I can see at present.

E-4002. With regard to unemployment, what percentage reduction would there be in the unemployment of seamen if your suggestion of a four-year limit were carried out?—How many men would be wiped out?—About 1,000. What I object to is this: men are coming down to Calcutta merely because they have heard that these books have been started. I registered one man who had been 18 years away from the sea. I have registered many men who have been seven or eight years away from the sea.

E-4003. *The Chairman*: Under Government instructions you are bound to put them all down?—Yes.

E-4004. Government could themselves issue instructions as to a time-limit?—Yes.

E-4005. *Mr. Cliff*: Under the law you cannot eliminate those men?—No. If I comply with the instructions of Government I cannot take the names of these men from those books.

E-4006. What is the purpose of the register?—Merely to endeavour to afford to the serangs a better distribution and fairer selection of labour.

E-4007. Is it going to have any real practical effect?—I do not think so.

E-4008. *The Chairman*: Would it be a good thing if the existing register could be thoroughly weeded out?—Yes. Serangs who have been four years without obtaining a post should be strongly discouraged from coming here and swelling the ranks of the present unemployed efficient seamen.

E-4009. *Mr. Cliff*: Are there any records anywhere from which you could give us the numbers of the different ratings?—No; we merely register the men's names as they come. They are all mixed up.

E-4010. You have referred to a complaint made to you some time ago about the shortage in the lowest rating. Is there ever a shortage of labour apart from that?—There is no shortage in the medium and upper ratings. At sowing times of the year it is difficult to get a crew together. At those times we find taking a large steamer carrying a crew of about 85 men for instance, that there may be 15 to 20 men short, and the crew cannot be completed for four or five days. Then again, if out of a crew of 85 the medical officer discards 10 or 15 it is probable that another 20 will leave as they say they will not sail without their friends.

E-4011. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I suppose those men are fairly sure of another job, or they would not do that?—Probably they are.

E-4012. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you ever had a case of a ship not being able to sail for want of a crew in sowing times?—Never.

E-4013. Taking seamen generally, have you any further suggestion to put before the Commission as regards dealing with the problem of unemployment?—No. We must see how this works. The leading ratings are looked upon by the masters of the ships as being the key men of the crew. The masters emphatically state that unless the serang has the power given him of getting the crew together and being responsible for them, the crew falls to pieces in a few days.

E-4014. *The Chairman*: The Government gave you time to study the situation here but apparently with no more instructions than to try to provide those remedies which you found most effective into an admittedly unsatisfactory condition of affairs. Will you take the Clow Committee Report away with you, and, at a later stage, let us have a supplementary note of your experience as to what difficulties, if any, you yourself see in the carrying out of those recommendations? It is clear that the Government of India decided so much as this on the first and second method; but what we are not yet clear about is why it was found impracticable or inadvisable to adopt the other recommendations of the Clow Committee. Will you send us a supplementary note in regard to these matters?—Yes.

E-4015. *Mr. Cliff*: When we were in Bombay we found that there were not only Indians who had signed on under British articles, but men from Malay and other foreign countries who were stranded in Bombay. Are there any such men stranded in Calcutta?—No. We find that, sooner or later, we can always find them jobs on board ship. A good number of tramp steamers come to Calcutta which carry crews under European articles and which have to leave one or two men behind on account of sickness, and these Malays can be made to fit in on those ships.

E-4016. *Mr. Tassie*: The union have suggested that the signing on board ship should be abolished. Would not that be a very serious matter for the master and officers?—Yes. It would mean stripping the ship of possibly every man on board, including officers and engineers. If the signing on had to be done at the shipping office it would mean half a day there, whereas it only takes 2½ hours in the morning before breakfast on board ship.

E-4017. The union make the statement that the seamen themselves cannot give up their job until the contract is over. Is it not the case that a ship's crew, as soon as the ship comes back to an Indian port, insists on being paid off whether their time is up or not?—Yes. All ships' crews on Calcutta 12 months foreign articles can claim to be discharged on the ship's first return to Calcutta.

E-4018. Or even Bombay—at any Indian port?—Not at any Indian port.

E-4019. But that happens, does it not?—Yes.

E-4020. *Mr. Cliff*: It has been suggested that if the company wants to discharge a crew it can do so without giving any reason and without paying the wages for the unexpired period?—No, that is not so. They cannot discharge the crew until the vessel returns to the port of first engagement. There are cases of crews entering into a 12-month foreign agreement who

undertake at the outset to serve for a further period of three months after the expiration of the first twelve months, provided the ship is bound back to a port in India or Burma.

E-4021. *Mr. Tassie*: Was not there a case recently where the crew insisted on a 100 per cent rise in wages because the ship was not bound back directly to an Indian port?—Yes. The crew got their 100 per cent increase, but that vessel was not bound back direct to India. Their twelve months' agreement had not expired. They had another eight weeks to go. The men had engaged to continue for another period of three months if the vessel was bound back direct to India or Burma. The vessel was not, and so the men could claim to be sent back to Calcutta within the first twelve months. They refused to proceed unless it was made worth their while, and they claimed 100 per cent additional wages, which the master had to give them. There was another case of almost brigandage on the high seas, where the master could not get another crew. It was somewhere in the Pacific. The crew went to the master and said "We refuse to proceed any further. We want to go back. Unless you make it worth our while, we shall refuse to go on in the vessel". As the master could not get another crew, he had to give way.

E-4022. There have been complaints made about the accommodation of Indian crews on board-ship. How does it compare with the accommodation of Europeans?—It is situated in the same part of the ship. The accommodation figures are somewhat lower for Indians than for Europeans, but they are deemed to be sufficient for the size of the crew.

E-4023. You say you have had cases where attempts have been made to make up crews without serangs?—I have many cases on record, which show that it is impossible to make up crews without serangs.

E-4024. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Was not one of the main reasons why, as recruitment officer, you could not accept the recommendations of the Clow Committee that the Liners' Conference was opposed to them?—The Liners' Conference was certainly opposed to the original scheme, but I myself had no connexion with or communication with that Conference.

E-4025. You state that the Government has no intention of doing away with the licensed brokers?—That is so.

E-4026. Is it not a fact that the British India Company, which recruits practically 50 per cent of the seamen, has no such system of licensed brokers?—That is so.

E-4027. That is due to the fact that that company make advances and take the risk of any loss which may occur through desertions?—That is news to me.

E-4028. I put it to you that licensed brokers are being used at present simply for the purpose of giving advances and taking the risk of desertions. You remember that sometime ago there was a prosecution of a licensed broker for extortion and bribery, and that some other officers were also implicated?—Yes.

E-4029. And although Mr. Roxburgh discharged the accused he made some very strong observations?—Yes.

E-4030. You said that on the recommendation of the officers of a vessel you were obliged to issue *nullis* to over 5,000 men every year. Have you any knowledge as to whether or not those officers are in close touch with the licensed brokers, and whether friendship has anything to do with those recommendations?—No.

E-4031. Do you remember the union bringing to your notice a case of extortion last year from three boys by a licensed broker?—Yes.

E-4032. Are you satisfied that the complaint was *bona fide*?—Yes.

E-4033. Why did you not take any action under the Merchant Shipping Act?—It was not necessary because we considered there was no truth in the statements made.

E-4034. You said just now that the complaint of the union in connexion with the extortion of Rs. 24 from these boys was *bona fide*?—I did not say that.

E-4035. *The Chairman*: Will you make the point clear?—The union officials brought forward three boys, and stated that a licensed broker had taken from them Rs. 3, Rs. 4 and Rs. 5 respectively. The broker denied the charge and stated it was all false. The principal officer and myself held an enquiry in the shipping office, calling before us these boys and the union officials and other witnesses, and we decided there was nothing in it. There were other accusations at this time being made against this broker.

E-4036. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: Why was this broker boycotted two or three months ago?—We have never been able to fathom that. The union's activities appear to us to have been always directed against this one particular broker.

E-4037. Can you throw any light on it at all?—I can only say that his manner has been referred to as overbearing and troublesome.

E-4038. Was there a case reported to you about the throwing overboard of some seamen?—Yes.

E-4039. What was the reason?—The reasons stated were that the men were being harassed by the serang, and refused to pay him money.

E-4040. Two or three men during the course of that voyage jumped over the side because of these exactions?—Yes. This case was very fully investigated both at the shipping office and in the Chief Presidency Magistrate's Court, and the evidence was quite sufficient for Mr. Roxburgh to dismiss the case.

E-4041. You have a reasonable suspicion that bribery was at the root of it?—No. I have no suspicions at all. The investigation elicited nothing. The original complaint was that a serang had been trying to extort money from the men, and they were very worried, and jumped over the side; but there were witnesses to prove that one of the men jumped over deliberately. The statement made by certain members of the crew was that the serang had thrown them over.

E-4042. *The Chairman*: A great deal of your time, and that of your office since you were appointed, would appear to have been taken up in compiling an enormous register which is not of much use?—It has taken an hour or two a day for the last four and a half months to keep the serangs and butlers registers up to date.

E-4043. Is that register, containing I understand 233,000 names, supposed to be a register of live seamen available for employment?—No. These are the total number of seamen registered since 1887.

E-4044. It is not a live register?—No. We estimate that of that number 140,000 men are effective for employment.

E-4045. Do I understand that you had Government instructions to take every one who applied?—I have Government instructions to enter the name on the serangs and butlers register of any man who applies.

E-4046. When you were conscious that that meant putting on the register a number of men who had been seven or more years away from the sea and were not likely ever to be employed again, did you make any protest to the Government against that order?—Yes. I communicated with Government and pointed out that we should probably be entering the names of men who had been 15 or 16 years out of employment, but I was told to do nothing but continue and enter the names, and give the men an opportunity.

E-4047. What was intended as a means perhaps of reducing unemployment has really had the opposite effect?—Yes.

E-4048. Will you let us have your opinion as to the desirability of a time limit for that register—whether 4, 5 or 6 years?—Yes.

E-4049. I take it your general view is that it would be for the real benefit of the whole community of seamen not to have so large a register that the chances of employment are really infinitesimal?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

**BENGAL****(Excluding Coalfields and the Dooars)****SEVENTY-EIGHTH MEETING****CALCUTTA.****Tuesday, 18th February 1930.****PRESENT:****The Right Hon'ble J. H. WHITLEY (Chairman).**

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, <i>Bart.</i>	Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, <i>Kt.</i> , K.C.S.I., C.I.E.	Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, <i>Kt.</i> , C.B.E.	Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E. I.M.S., ( <i>Medical Assessor</i> ).

Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.	} <i>Assistant Commissioners</i>
Mr. SEW KISSIN BHATTAR, Senior Vice-President, Indian Chamber of Commerce.	
Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C.	}
Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.O.,	
Miss CORNELIA SOBAJJI, Bar.-at-Law, <i>Lady Assessor</i> .	
Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.	} <i>Joint Secretaries</i> .
Mr. A. DIBDIN.	

**Mr. E. C. BENTHALL, Mr. W. GOW, Mr. D. K. CUNNISON,**  
**Secretary, representing the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.**

E-4050. *The Chairman:* What is the scope of the activities of the Chamber of Commerce?—(*Mr. Benthall*) The Bengal Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1833; it now consists of 240 members, mostly European, and is representative of the trade, commerce and industry of the Province of Bengal. It is managed by a president, a vice-president and a committee of seven. The committee are elected annually by the members of the Chamber and carry on its business in accordance with the provisions of the articles of association. In addition to the work of the Chamber as represented by the committee there are 22 commercial associations recognized by the Chamber. The association with the Chamber is a loose one; they are not even affiliated. The business of these associations is carried out by the secretarial staff of the Chamber under the direction of the committees of the various associations. These associations represent practically every branch of the commerce of the port, and include the tea association, the jute mills association, and the other associations. Firms or individuals who are not members of the Chamber may be members of the various associations.

E-4051. What are the objects of the Chamber?—The first object for which the Chamber is established is to promote and direct the trade, commerce and manufacturers of India; and in particular the trade, commerce and manufactures of Calcutta; that is the primary object, and there are nineteen other objects which elaborate that primary object.

E-4052. Has your Chamber any view as to the desirability in future of maintaining the contact of the industrial labour with the land?—I do not think the subject has ever been discussed.

E-4053. I assume from what you say in your memorandum that the custom of the Indian industrial worker of returning to his land from time to time is in your opinion a custom which contributes to his physical well being and his happiness?—The question has never been discussed, but I think that is a true statement of fact.

E-4054. I take it that your Chamber does not discuss questions of general industrial policy with regard to industrial labour but leaves all those matters to its constituent bodies?—It does discuss them, but it does not trench on the ground which is rightly covered by the various associations; its functions are more to co-ordinate the views of the various associations.

E-4055. It does not advise its constituent members on questions of general policy which would cover the whole of the industries?—I believe the opinion of the Committee of the Chamber carries great weight with these associations.

E-4056. Let me take a single instance: the question of whether this custom of returning to the country at intervals should be universally recognized and all industries should make arrangements for a recognized leave to meet the desires of the workers in that direction?—That question has never come up and we have never had occasion to express any views.

E-4057. What are the views of your Chamber on the question of the acquisition of land for housing labour?—The views go back to the Indian Industrial Commission of 1918. At that time there were two view points under discussion: firstly, the acquisition of land for starting new industries, and secondly, the acquisition of land for housing of labour. Both these questions were discussed at that time with Government. As regards the question of land for starting new industries the Industrial Commission thought that before Government could take any action in the matter the industry should satisfy Government that the acquisition of land would be in the interests of the general public. There was some difficulty in settling what would be in the interests of the general public and considerable discussion took place. Out of that discussion arose the suggestion, which the Committee of the Chamber supported, that a Board should be formed of selected persons to be appointed by the local Government. The Board would be empowered to hold public enquiries and to call and hear witnesses; they would be expected to examine any scheme carefully, having regard to the statistics of the industry examined and their report would be submitted to the local Government by whom it would be published to enable persons to raise objections. That is a policy which might apply to the acquisition of land for new industries and might also apply I think to the acquisition of land for the housing of labour.

E-4058. You are now referring to 1918?—It was last discussed in 1922 when it was suggested that Government should take powers on the application of the employer concerned to acquire at the public cost sufficient land in the vicinity of the mill, etc., for the establishment of dwellings, and should lease such land at a rent equal to the cost at current rates. With a view to the provision of accommodation the Chamber endorsed the proposal in respect of the acquisition of land and were of opinion that the idea was thoroughly sound. I think Government raised objections and nothing further has been done since.

E-4059. Your Chamber since 1922 has taken no further action?—No.

E-4060. I think you also dealt with the question of the employment of women underground in the mines; was that prior to the passing of the recent Act?—The only time it was referred to the Committee of the Chamber was October 1928; the Chamber had no comment to make except that they thought that if the employment of women underground in mines was to be prohibited it should also be prohibited in open quarry working where the conditions were liable to be equally dangerous.

E-4061. On the question of the shift system in jute mills, I anticipate that you will be non-committal?—We have expressed our views. The history of the matter is rather long. The matter was referred by the Government of Bengal to the Chamber of Commerce and we were asked to obtain the opinion of the Indian Jute Mills Association. The matter was referred to that association, who issued a questionnaire to their various members, I think in the form of four questions. The various members of the association answered that questionnaire and the answers were forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce. The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce considered the matter entirely as a matter of principle; they pointed out first of all that the Act\*, namely, the Factories Act (amended) of 1922, had only been in force for two years. They said: "It is therefore on the short experience of less than two years and on the ground of administrative difficulties

\* Witness subsequently pointed out that the reference should have been not to the Act but to the form of Employment Register.



that it is proposed to forbid to a great industry a system of working to which both the industry and the labour connected with it have been accustomed for many years and the dislocation of which might cause serious consequences . . . .” “As far as they were aware there was no country in the world where the shift system was illegal . . . .” “The Committee cannot agree that it is right that Government should dictate to an industry that it shall restrict the hours of working its machinery to 11 per day, thus handicapping it against its competitors in other countries by withholding from it the right to expand its production when the conditions of industry are favourable.” They finished by saying that “in their opinion it is more reasonable that Government should so organize their system of inspection as to make it efficient to deal with the old established conditions of an industry than that those conditions should be pruned and shaped to meet administrative difficulties.”

E-4062. What was the policy of your Chamber with regard to maternity benefits?—First of all the Committee put up a memorandum on that question. They said: “with its object they have every sympathy, for it is only right that Government should take measures to counteract those evils which in other countries have been shown to be incidental to industrialism; but these measures must be of a practical and businesslike character, and there is no reason why they should press unduly on industry.”

E-4063. That is to say, you did not think that a charge for maternity benefit would be a serious charge on industry?—They approved of it provided it did not press unduly on the industry.

E-4064. You think it would not, provided it was practical. I take that to mean: provided it was a practical and businesslike scheme it would not press unduly on industry?—I take it to mean that it must be a practical and businesslike scheme and there is no reason that legislation should press unduly on industry; in other words it is not right that legislation should press unduly on industry.

E-4065. I read it the other way. Your Chamber did not go further and recommend to its constituents a standard form of maternity benefits?—They had before them a draft Bill, which I think was introduced by Mr. Joshi, and what they wrote was mainly detailed criticism; they said: “it is the opinion of the Committee of the Chamber that a Bill with defects such as these ought not to be passed into law; the Bill approaches the problem from a wrong standpoint.”

E-4066. But you did not take the further step of saying what in your view would be a practical and businesslike scheme?—They said: “the Committee of the Chamber have considered the various forms of assistance which are already given by employers and they think the baby clinic is likely to be the most satisfactory in practice.”

E-4067. *Mr. Cliff*: The Government say your Committee recommended 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; and then later that legislation on such a subject, if taken, should be Central and not Provincial. I see there is a difference of opinion between you and the Bengal Government on the question of its being Central or Provincial?—Yes; what we said was that “proceeding on these lines the central idea of the Bill might be that every factory, mine or estate employing women, or every group of such factories, mines or estates employing women, should be required to establish and maintain a suitable baby clinic for the women workers.”

E-4068. All these observations were in 1925; have any observations been made later than that?—Not by the Committee of the Chamber. That last sentence was qualified in this way: “If the principle of taxing industry is to be admitted.”

E-4069. *The Chairman*: Like all other Chambers yours is essentially cautious?—We have to be very cautious.

E-4070. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: In view of the fact that Bengal has such a huge population why is it that such a large proportion of the industrial labour comes from outside the province?—That is a problem which has excited a good deal of interest for many years. I take it it must be because the population of Bengal does not take so kindly to industry as the populations of other provinces.

E-4071. Would it be due to the fact that in Bengal the income of an agriculturist is larger than the income of agriculturists in those parts from which labour migrates to Calcutta?—That is quite possible.

E-4072. Has any change taken place in the degree of superstition of the workers ; for instance, has there been any change with regard to their appreciation of the sanitary measures adopted by the State and industries for their betterment?—Yes, there is some appreciation. For instance, many years ago the Madrasi labour that first came to the jute mills would not under any consideration go into *pucca* coolie lines, but now they are generally to be found in such lines. On the other hand the Bilaspuri labour still does not take kindly to *pucca* buildings.

E-4073. *Mr. Cliff*: Referring to what you say on this matter in your memorandum, when were these two stories first told?—I am not in a position to say.

E-4074. And I do not think any one else is?—With regard to doors being used for firewood I can give you chapter and verse for that because it is quite recent ; and there have been recent instances in which *charpoy*s, which are string beds, were provided for certain coolies both at the jute mills and in tea gardens and in each case they were used for firewood.

E-4075. *Miss Power*: Are not these stories on a level with the story which is told in England of the bath being used for storing coal?—I have no experience of that.

E-4076. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Do you think the difference in the mentality of labour in the two different places to which you refer may be due to the extent to which primary education has advanced in the different provinces?—I am not in a position to comment on that.

E-4077. There must be some reason why their mentality has improved in some provinces while it has not improved in other provinces?—I think the real history of that is that the Madrasis came to the mill areas first. The Bilaspuris when they first came only took up outdoor work, such as earth work and that sort of thing and have only in more recent times taken to jute mill work ; so that there is reason to hope that the Bilaspuris will ultimately take to living in *pucca* coolie lines.

E-4078. What remedies would your Chamber suggest to prevent strikes being brought about by the selfish activities of speculators, the intimidation of workers and generally by pressure other than that due to economic causes?—First of all there are the hard lessons of experience ; I believe the labour in the jute mills has profited by its experience and has learnt that these political agitators have not benefited them during the last strike. I think the political agitators have to a large extent lost their influence over labour.

E-4079. That is in Calcutta?—Yes.

E-4080. Where the large majority of the workers wish to work but are coerced by the threats of the minority, what would you suggest with a view to protecting the majority who are willing to work?—That is a question of picketing and protection by the police authority, particularly round about the home where it is particularly difficult to deal with this problem. It is going to be very difficult to prevent any one passing money to any other body. May I give you two instances of what happened from my own personal experience during the last strike. I am not now speaking as representing the Chamber. In one mill the men, as I believe in most cases, wished to work. The strike leaders went down to the mill to create trouble and pull the workers out. The workers were not frightened, the *sardars* collected forces and told the strike leaders that if they came there they would get hurt ; the strike leaders went away and that mill worked solidly throughout the strike without an hour's cessation.

E-4081. *The Chairman*: Sir Ibrahim's point is that you have made a statement here without suggesting a remedy?—I think it must be a matter of police protection. In another mill the workers went on working solidly until the strikers from a mill a mile away came flooding across the fields, charged through the mill and carried away with them the labourers who were peacefully working ; they later stayed out for a day or two but immediately police protection was given they went back to work. It comes down to the question of picketing round the mill and the mill quarters.

E-4082. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: What are the views of the Chamber with regard to picketing?—I think the last time the matter came up for discussion the Committee summed up the position in this way: "the Committee accordingly very strongly recommend that the view taken by the Government of India in 1921 should prevail, and that a definite responsibility should be laid on the unions or their executives for the prevention of

the issuing of any orders authorizing picketing in any form by the members of the union, and further that should the unions authorize, or through their members or executives take part in picketing, they should be held responsible for their actions and their funds should be made liable accordingly." That was 1925; that is the last time it came under the notice of the committee.

E-4083. Is it the view of the chamber that if labour continues to work for a prolonged period in an industry, it loses gradually its agricultural tendency and becomes stabilized industrial labour?—I think so. That is borne out by some of the lives of the industrial workers given in the evidence of the jute mills.

E-4084. Has the chamber noticed a distinct tendency in that direction?—There is a distinct tendency, but it is slow.

E-4085. *Mr. Clow*: In the industries which you represent I take it the managing agency system is practically universal?—It is not universal but it largely predominates.

E-4086. What are the important exceptions?—The Bengal telephone system, the Gas Company and electric supply.

E-4087. What is the ordinary system of remuneration of managing agents?—It may be by a commission on sales, but that is not usual; it is usually an office allowance to cover out-of-pocket expenses and a commission on the profits.

E-4088. What is the general system in the tea and coal industries?—I have no experience of tea; as to coal, I should say it is a commission on profits.

E-4089. Would you be prepared to agree that the effect of the managing agency system is to some extent to increase the distance between the employer and labour by introducing another authority between the company and its employees?—No, I would not say so; it tends to closer working.

E-4090. In the case of big concerns, from the commercial point of view, what are the advantages of the managing agency system over those of the system of more direct management?—I think the system originally grew up through Europeans coming to India, a European goes Home and then his partner carries on his work, both partners being experts. If you have a single authority controlling a business, when that man goes Home it is difficult to find a capable successor. The managing agency system also makes for continuity.

E-4091. But the system has now been copied by purely Indian firms and presumably they find some advantages in it which the other system does not offer?—I do not think it is for the chamber to pass any comment on that.

E-4092. *Mr. Tassie*: Is not the managing agency system a great help with regard to finance?—Yes, of course it is; a strong managing agency will often see a company through which would otherwise collapse.

E-4093. *Mr. Clow*: What is the view of the chamber on the general question of whether labour legislation should be central or Provincial?—I do not think that has ever been discussed; I think it is a matter on which different views have been taken at different times on different questions.

E-4094. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to the Maternity Benefits Bill, who suggested Central legislation?—We did then, but in other cases we have suggested the local Government taking action.

E-4095. *Mr. Joshi*: In your memorandum you say: "The labourer in this country in many cases lives practically rent free in a house provided for him" by the employer. Can you tell us what proportion of workers are housed by employers rent free?—I think evidence on that point has been given by the various associations; the chamber has no information covering all the industries in which it is concerned.

E-4096. When you say "in many cases" what proportion do you mean; does it mean 500 or 200?—I think the jute mill industry stated in evidence that it housed 30 per cent of its labour.

E-4097. You have not any information as to the proportion?—Not covering all the industries in which we are interested.

E-4098. You say "In the large majority of cases the labourer still owns land in his own village". Have you any definite information as to what proportion of workers own land?—I have no percentage figures, but I think if you look at the lives of industrial workers as given by the Jute Mills,

Association, you will find instance after instance in which the worker states that his father had a small piece of land which was perhaps not big enough for the family and that was why he came away, but that he hopes to go back to that land. I do not think the chamber could give you any statistics.

E-4099. You say "he gets free water and light in the urban districts". I suppose you mean towns?—Yes.

E-4100. In towns the water is supplied by the Municipality and if the worker pays rent presumably he pays municipal taxes?—It is frequently supplied by the concerns themselves in urban areas.

E-4101. *The Chairman*: When you say "urban areas" I take it you are referring to what we may call jute municipalities?—Yes.

E-4102. *Mr. Joshi*: The statement in your memorandum is a general statement, but I take it you desire to confine that statement to the jute areas?—Yes.

E-4103. It appears from your memorandum that you do not like trade unions which are not controlled by workers; perhaps your feeling is that they are being exploited?—That is so; I think at one stage we suggested that there should be a 75 per cent majority of workers.

E-4104. If it is, as you say, undesirable that the union should be controlled very largely by people other than workers, is it not also undesirable that the workers should be employed by classes who are not themselves workers; is there no chance of exploitation of workers when they are employed by people who are not workers? For instance, is the manager of a jute mill a non-worker?—I do not think he would agree to that.

E-4105. Are the members of your chamber, who are the real owners of these factories, workers?—They work very hard.

E-4106. Have you any ground to suppose that the man who manages the union does not work very hard?—None at all.

E-4107. If you are a worker, is he not also a worker?—That is quite possible, but it depends on the direction in which he works.

E-4108. May I therefore take it that as long as the secretary of a union is a hardworking man you do not mind whether he is a politician or not a politician?—It depends on the direction in which he works and it depends on his responsibility.

E-4109. You want a responsible secretary of a union but you are not against a non-worker?—Not at all.

E-4110. So that this statement requires modification?—The expression "workers" refers to the workers in an industry, not to a man who works. This is what we said at one time: "Definite provision should be made to secure that at least a majority of the members of the executive of each union should be persons actually employed as workers in the particular industry to which the union relates."

E-4111. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you any more objection to the union having a paid secretary than you have to the Chamber of Commerce having a paid secretary?—Not at all, provided he is responsible.

E-4112. Are you prepared to accept the Indian Trade Unions Act as to the constitution of trade unions, or do you want more than the law of the country has provided?—I think not.

E-4113. Do you think that your Chamber of Commerce would accept the Indian Trade Unions Act with regard to the constitution of unions?—We have made various comments at various times and some quite recently. We have to accept it if it is the law of the country.

E-4114. Therefore if a union is registered under that Act, does your Chamber of Commerce say that that union is a suitable organization for recognition and dealing with?—We have to recognize it; but the attitude of the employers towards such a union would depend upon the constitution and actions of the union.

E-4115. So that your Chamber of Commerce would be prepared to accept registered trade unions which conform to the Indian Trade Unions Act?—It has to, but it still holds its views as to the representation of workers in that union. We do not mind outside persons taking an interest in the union provided they take a responsible interest; but our experience is that

unions in the past have been very largely merely strike committees and you cannot expect employers to be sympathetic to such bodies.

E-4116. *Mr. Joshi*: You do not now adhere to your view that it is only the worker who should be an officer in a trade union?—Our attitude is that 75 per cent of the executive committee should be workers in the industry concerned.

E-4117. With regard to what you say as to sickness insurance, if a scheme of contributory insurance is imposed by law, do you think the industrial worker will throw up his job and go back to agriculture?—It is our opinion that he would probably go on strike.

E-4118. But in Bengal he does not remain on strike very long ; he comes back to his work?—Yes, in most cases.

E-4119. So that the only difficulty in the way of sickness insurance is that you will have to go through a short strike?—It may possibly be a long one.

E-4120. Have you had previous experience of this kind that when Government passes some measure giving benefit to the workers, the workers have gone on strike?—Yes. When Government passed an Act that there should be an interval of one hour in the engineering workshops. (*Mr. Gow*) Instructions came from Government in accordance with the Factories Act that there should be a one hour rest period during the day.

E-4121. But that gave the workers no benefit?—(*Mr. Gow*) Yes, it gave them a benefit in so far as it gave them an enforced rest.

E-4122. Do you not think that was a disadvantage to the workers because it meant they got home late?—The Government evidently did not think so.

E-4123. The worker used to work in the engineering shops for 8½ hours, but under this provision he had to remain half an hour longer?—Yes, but that was put through according to Government for his benefit.

E-4124. Can you give me a clear instance in which though the worker stood to gain he went on strike?—(*Mr. Benthall*) The point is, are you to do what the labour wishes or what the Labour Commission or Government think is best for labour.

E-4125. If the worker would give up industry in case sickness insurance is introduced, and would go back to agriculture, we shall have to consider whether a sickness insurance scheme should be recommended or not?—I think you should find that out from the labour and not from the employer ; the employer has given his opinion.

E-4126. I want to know whether your opinion is based on facts?—It is based on experience in the one case and on general knowledge so far as the rest is concerned.

E-4127. Has any scheme proposed by Government for the benefit of labour been supported by your Chamber?—The first instance which I have before me here is the Committee's complete agreement with the Government of India that the principle of the 60 hours week should be adopted in the provisions of the Indian Factories Act following on the Washington Conference. Our attitude has been sympathetic in every case.

*Mr. Joshi*: That unfortunately came after the 60 hours was established in many large industries so that it was a question of competition for you and you recommended that in your own interests.

E-4128. *Miss Power*: In reference to what you say as to workers being controlled by anti-social forces, you imply the remedy is the better education of the worker. What is the attitude of the Chamber towards education in industrial wards?—Education in industrial areas has, I think, never come before us; I do not know why ; but the Bengal Rural Primary Education Bill came before us two years ago and we strongly supported primary education. Our concluding sentence was this: "there can be no question that the cause of primary education in Bengal has received inadequate attention."

E-4129. But the Chamber as a Chamber has never dealt with the question of education by the employer?—No; it considers education to be the duty of Government.

E-4130. Is the Bengal Rural Primary Education Bill of 1927 to which you have referred, the same Bill as is now before the Council?—Yes, but considerably altered.

E-4131. As a Chamber you have really never taken the matter up actively?  
—No.

E-4132. Referring to what you say with regard to welfare work has your Chamber any policy as a Chamber on this matter, or does it merely express an opinion on individual measures submitted to it either by Government or by its constituent members?—On individual measures.

E-4133. You have expressed your opinion on a particular Maternity Benefit Bill and on matters of that kind; has the Chamber as a Chamber any policy with regard to general welfare work?—No, because the conditions in which it is a necessity are so very diverse, varying, as they do, from conditions in Assam to conditions in the coal mines. We regard that as being more the function of each Association.

E-4134. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is it not a fact with regard to most companies that when they are first forming any industry in India there is no working capital supplied as capital of the company and finance has to be obtained through the guarantee of the managing agents?—That has been the case in many instances.

E-4135. That is to say, until a company has built up sufficient reserves it is dependent on the counter-signature of the managing agents to get the working capital necessary for its expenses?—Very often.

E-4136. That therefore is probably one of the reasons why the managing agency system has continued?—Yes.

E-4137. The Chamber says that it objects to unions run by people other than workers whose interests are frequently not those of the labourer. That may still occur with regard to a registered trade union, may it not?—Yes.

E-4138. A union may carry out all the sections of the Trade Unions Act but still be an undesirable union from that point of view?—Yes.

E-4139. I gather that there is no section in the Trade Unions Act which insists that an employer should recognize or treat with any particular union?—There is not.

E-4140. So that when in reply to Mr. Cliff you said you would carry out any provisions of an Act, such provisions of this Act do not say that you must recognize any union that is registered; you are still at liberty to insist on the higher conditions, that the union should be run by a majority of workers in the industry?—I would not like to commit the Chamber to any opinion in regard to that, but it is obvious that if the trade union is not being properly run, the attitude of the members of the Chamber towards such a union is likely to differ from its attitude to a body which is responsibly run.

E-4141. Although both bodies may have carried out the provisions of the Trade Union Act in the form of being registered?—Yes. Great stress has been laid on the secretary of the union, but of course a secretary merely takes his orders from the Committee.

E-4142. If compulsory sickness insurance led to a strike, would such a strike be due not to labour objecting to the benefits but labour objecting to pay its share for those benefits?—That is the main point.

E-4143. Labour would be perfectly prepared to receive any benefits for nothing but they might go on strike or suggest strongly that their wages should be raised to enable them to pay any statutory contribution?—Yes. It may appear that the attitude of the Chamber is not very sympathetic to the Sickness Insurance Bill, but the attitude which the Chamber actually took up was that what is much more suited to the present conditions in India is the extension of general health work in the direction of a Government free health service.

E-4144. And your people would not strike against that as they would get it for nothing?—I think not.

E-4145. Would your Chamber go so far as to say that all picketing, whether peaceful or otherwise, should be made illegal?—In 1922 we said: "The Committee agree with the Government of India that in the present stage of the labour movement it would be most undesirable to countenance picketing in any form. They further agree that apart from the provisions of the Indian Penal Code dealing with picketing, a definite responsibility should be laid on unions or their executives for the prevention of the issue of any orders authorizing picketing in any form by members of a union."

E-4146. What is your view of it?—My personal view point is that it is very difficult to control picketing ; I cannot commit the Chamber on a point on which they have not definitely committed themselves.

E-4147. Your personal view point is that you would like all picketing to be made illegal?—I should have no objection to peaceful picketing, if assurance were given that it would be peaceful. But our experience has been that it is apt to be violent.

E-4148. Then your objection to picketing is not *qua* picketing but because it is not peaceful?—That is so.

E-4149. Then you would be in favour of legislation making intimidation a cognizable offence?—Personally yes.

E-4150. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What are your views with regard to recognition of registered and unregistered unions?—That is a question which was brought up before the Associated Chambers of Commerce and thoroughly discussed in Bombay. I suggest the simplest thing would be to put that discussion in as evidence.

E-4151. *Mr. Tassie*: Did we not recommend that all unions should be compulsorily registered?—We have expressed our opinions in this memorandum. The view of the Chamber was that all unions should be compulsorily registered.

E-4152. *Sir Alexander Murray*: And you ought not to be forced, therefore, to treat with unregistered unions?—That is so.

E-4153. *Mr. Cliff*: Does that include all trade combinations?—No, it is with particular reference to trade unions, based on our experience of recent years.

E-4154. *Sir Alexander Murray*: With regard to the constitution of the union, would I be putting it fairly if I said that provided the people in charge of the affairs of the union knew the conditions of the workers who were members of the union, your objections would not have the same force that they would have if the people did not know the conditions of the workers?—That is so, but in order to have that experience it is much better that they should be workers.

E-4155. What do you mean when you say in your memorandum that the improvement of conditions for the industrial employee must be a slow matter and will not be accomplished by the application of any universal panacea?—I will take an instance ; I believe the establishment of clinics would be better done by slow methods rather than by methods such as were adopted at the time of the Hookworm Enquiry ; when hookworm stations were started, I believe, in all the mills and buildings were put up, but there is no trace of those buildings to-day, the whole of that effort having apparently been wasted. There is no objection to the spending of money provided it is not wasted.

E-4156. How would you encourage the slow moving employer to keep abreast of his more advanced neighbour with regard to improved conditions for labour?—Public opinion.

E-4157. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Not legislation?—In some cases ; I think the attitude would have to depend entirely on the question under discussion.

E-4158. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What had you in mind when you wrote: "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"?—I think it refers to housing and clothing.

E-4159. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: I hope you do not refer to the *bustis* at Howrah?—No.

E-4160. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You do not suggest that what we saw in the insanitary *bustis* of Howrah, Titaghur and Kankinarah is suggestive of anything but poverty and distress?—No, this refers to the general conditions of India.

E-4161. What had you in view when you wrote: "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 antagonising where their anxiety is to help"?—For instance, a jute mill employer wished to improve the living conditions of his workers ; finding four workers living in one room he said "This is too small for you ; I will break down the partition and give you four men two rooms". However, when he went back a week later he found eight men in the enlarged room.

E-4162. Can you give instances in which we have unnecessarily followed western conditions without making allowances for the independence of Indian labour and his easy conditions?—As regards the easy conditions I think interesting information is given in the memorandum submitted by the Indian Mining Association which is before you and which therefore I need not stress. Also at the time of the Muhammadan *Roza* one must not press Muhammadan workers too hard because the fast which they have to maintain is a strain on the body. You have to be particularly considerate at the time of the *Roza* and particularly when it occurs in hot weather. They have to work easily.

E-4163. I take it the Chamber has in view that you cannot always shorten the hours of labour and expect intensive work, the labour preferring rather longer hours and easier working?—Yes.

E-4164. *Mr. Cliff*: Is there any legislation providing rest during the fasting month and would not that be suitable to Indian conditions?—It is very difficult to arrange where you have such a mixed labour force. Very easy conditions are allowed by custom but not by law. Perhaps it is better to leave it to custom.

E-4165. *Mr. Ahmed*: With reference to the questions Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola put to you as to why the large proportion of your labour comes from outside the Province of Bengal, what is the income per month of an industrial labourer at present in this Province?—The evidence has been given by the various associations.

E-4166. But I am asking you as representative of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce: what is the average income of an industrial worker?—I have no figures of the average income.

E-4167. Have you any idea?—No. I have no figures of the industrial income other than those supplied by the associations.

E-4168. If I say that the income of the industrial labourer in the jute mills is not more than Rs. 25 per month, should I be correct?—I think you are referring to the evidence of the Indian Jute Mills Association; I have not got that evidence at the tip of my tongue.

E-4169. Are you aware that the average income of the Indian seaman is Rs. 20?—No, I have no information on that subject.

E-4170. If the average income of the agriculturist is not more than Rs. 20, how is it and why is it that the Indian seaman prefers to seek sea employment, though the majority of such men are unable to get work at sea?—I cannot answer that question; perhaps the seamen would be able to answer it.

E-4171. Why are Indian seamen agriculturists in origin you say? Are you aware that the people of Lower Assam and Eastern Bengal were seafaring people before the advent of the British to this country?—I believe so.

E-4172. These seamen or their predecessors were seafaring folk before they were agriculturists; they have become agriculturists since the time when the jute mills were started in Bengal?—I am afraid I have no information on that point.

E-4173. Therefore the cry of Statesmen, the Englishman and your Chamber of Commerce is no answer to the argument?—I do not know what the cry of the Statesmen and the Englishman is.

E-4174. I ask you as representative of the Chamber of Commerce what was the demand of the strikers in the Kankinarah strike of August 1929 and how was that strike settled?—I am giving evidence as the representative of the Chamber of Commerce and I will give you evidence of the attitude of the Chamber of Commerce at that time.

E-4175. The difference between the workers and the employers was with regard to an increment of wages, was it not?—The Chamber of Commerce was not concerned with that.

E-4176. But you know that the employees struck for higher wages?—In some cases only.

E-4177. And then as soon as they got their demand satisfied the strike was ended?—In some cases only. In many cases they formulated no demand and in many cases they went on strike as soon as their demand was satisfied.

E-4178. The strike ended all the same?—Yes.



E-4179. Were not all the strikes ended by the payment of an increment of wages?—In some cases.

E-4180. In other cases how was the strike ended?—By the workers going back to work.

E-4181. You compelled them to go to work owing to their starvation?—We did not compel them; they came back voluntarily.

E-4182. Why did they strike?—For a variety of reasons, evidence of which I think has been given by the Jute Mills Association.

E-4183. *Mr. Cliff*: Does your Chamber of Commerce affiliate the associations or the individual firms, or both?—There is no actual affiliation; the point is covered by one of the objects of the Chamber of Commerce, which is as follows: "the Committee have power to enter into arrangements upon such terms and subject to such conditions as the Committee may deem desirable for working in connexion with any association organized for the protection of trade or better development of any branch of trade, commerce or manufacture in Bengal or with like objects that may apply to be allowed to work in connexion with the Chamber."

E-4184. Does the Indian Tea Association become a member or do the firms composing that association become members?—The firms.

E-4185. Have you any knowledge as to why the Liners' Conference have not given evidence to the Commission?—No.

E-4186. Is there no representative body of shipping here?—There is a Shipping Sub-Committee of the Chamber which deals with all shipping questions.

E-4187. Can you tell me why they have not given evidence as a sub-committee?—No, I have no recent information. The original attitude of the Chamber in this matter was that for ocean and coasting shipping the Shipping Sub-Committee of the Chamber should undertake the evidence. I am sure they would be glad to give evidence. The note was approved by the Shipping Sub-Committee, which represents the shipping interests of the Chamber.

E-4188. You said that the Chamber co-ordinates the views of the different associations; does the Chamber advise the different associations?—When any matter which concerns a number of associations is referred to the Chamber the question is referred to the committees of the various associations who give their views to the Chamber and the Chamber tried to co-ordinate those views.

E-4189. I notice that the Government addressed a communication to your Chamber. I want to know whether your Chamber as a Chamber can advise the members of the Association. Can you differ from them on any point. Has it got a separate existence?—It has a separate existence. For instance it took a different line over the question of multiple shifts.

E-4190. Has it taken a different line on any other question?—We have questions coming before the Chamber which are not referred to the Association and *vice versa*. There are members of the committee of the Association who are also members of the committee of the Chamber.

E-4191. *Sir Alexander Murray*: When any question is referred to your Chamber for opinion you send out circulars to the various Associations and get their views. You then draft a reply and send it out to the members again asking for their approval and remarks. Is that not the procedure you adopt?—That very frequently happens, not always.

E-4192. *Mr. Cliff*: What is the Chamber's definition of an agriculturist?—The Chamber has never tried to define the term. Speaking off-hand and without ever having tried to define that term before I should say that it is "a man who retains his connexion with the soil." I may go further and say that many of these so-called agriculturists who come to work in industry in Bengal are not primarily what were originally called agricultural castes. They are the lower castes such as the *Chamars* (leather workers) and the *telis* (oil workers) who possibly possessed less land in the villages and therefore on account of the heavy pressure on land were driven to industry as an alternative outlet. I think that is borne out by the census of 1921.

E-4193. Has any of your constituent associations taken a census of the workers as to whether they had any land?—No census that I am aware of.

E-4194. I am trying to get proof of the statement that the Indian industrial worker is primarily an agriculturist and I have not succeeded in getting it?—I think the life histories of jute mill workers—about 80 of them—put up by the Indian Jute Mills Association give very interesting information on the point.

E-4195. I was wondering whether you have yourself ever taken a census of your workers in order to test the truth of the statement?—No, I am not aware of any census having been taken.

E-4196. In your memorandum you refer to the efforts of reformers to improve the condition of the workers and go on to say and say rightly:

“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 antagonising where their anxiety is to help.”

We had the Associations before the Commission and we have asked them what their programme for the amelioration of the condition of the industrial workers is for the next ten years. Can your Chamber give us any definite programme in respect of that?—There is no definite programme that I am aware of. I would like to say in the first place that the mere advent of the Royal Commission has had an extraordinary educative effect and I think that the Industrial Legislation Sub-Committee of the Chamber will consider the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

E-4197. I am concerned because I fail to find any concerted policy on the part of the industrialists. I do find that in so many cases the action proposed is considered to be premature. Some of your observations in your reply to the Government were written as long as five, six or seven years ago and I am wondering whether during that period the attitude of the industrialists represented in your Chamber has changed and whether you would give a different answer to-day to the questions which have been submitted for your consideration?—I may say this that where the Chamber has made any such statement it has always given its reasons and those reasons have in practice proved reasonably sound.

E-4198. That was probably because they were not put to the arbitrament of a body representative of the workers and the industrialists?—Practical experience has proved those reasons to be sound.

E-4199. In your memorandum you say:

“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 prejudices, but he is easily impressed. . . .”

Will you forgive me if I say that there is a great deal of conservatism with regard to your Association? Take the case of the Workmen's Compensation Act. When you are dealing with sickness insurance you say that you really require more time to examine the effects upon the worker of the Workmen's Compensation Act. And Government on the other hand say that with regard to Workmen's Compensation Act they are satisfied that it has not borne heavily upon industry. How much longer time would you require to see the effects of the Workmen's Compensation Act upon the worker?—I do not think I can give any definite period. With regard to sickness insurance we have stated that what is best suited to the present conditions in India would be an expansion of the general health work in the direction of free Government health service. We are not fundamentally opposed to sickness insurance. We have dealt with the difficulties and mentioned two of them. One is the migratory character of labour and the other is the objection of the worker to pay a levy.

E-4200. The communication of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to Government does not stress the point of the migration of the worker apart from the men employed in the mining industry. That Chamber says in their letter to the Government of Bengal, dated 30th August 1929:

“ . . . The subject in this way may be found to narrow down considerably, making it easier to comprehend the nature of the fundamental problems involved in it. For, obviously among the industries referred to the consideration of difficulties arising from the paucity of medical men, etc., may be dispensed with as offering no insurmountable obstacle to the operation of any scheme. It is only in connexion with the coal industry that the difficulty concerning migration may appear to be of some importance.”

Does your Chamber consider that the migratory character of labour is such a serious matter?—I do not say that it could not be overcome. But it is an obstacle.

E-4201. Dealing with the last general strike in the jute industry you say that "it is notorious that the strike was largely instigated by, and kept going by, political agitators. . ." Have you any evidence? We have had advice that the speculators were at the bottom of the strike. Have you any evidence to show that any political leader was responsible for this strike, because this is the first time that I have heard that some political leaders were at the bottom of the last strike?—Here is a speech of one of the political leaders reported in a newspaper.

"The labour movement was very closely connected with the Swaraj movement. What is needed at the present moment is a co-ordination of the two in order to force the hands of an unsympathetic Government."

I can put in evidence if necessary.

E-4202. The evidence put before the Commission was that the strike was largely instigated, if not entirely by the speculators. I wonder if you are controverting that view?—I should say partly the speculators were interested; partly the political agitators were interested and partly labour also was interested.

E-4203. With regard to trade unionism you answered Sir Alexander Murray, as many other people have done and said: "If trade unions are properly run . . ." Are you willing as a Chamber to allow trade unions to say whether your Chamber is properly run?—I suppose they are entitled to say that in evidence before you if you are asking that question.

E-4204. Will you refuse to have dealings with any body which you judge is not properly run? Who decides whether your Chamber is properly run?—If it was not properly run it would cease to exist as most unions do after a short time.

E-4205. Who decides it, the members?—I presume so.

E-4206. Would you not give the same right to the trade union people?—No one would listen to the Chamber's opinion if it was not properly run.

E-4207. Take the question of combination of workmen. Have the employers here in Calcutta encouraged combinations amongst work-people?—We support the Kankinarah Labour Union of Mr. Chaudhuri.

E-4208. Is that the only instance?—Speaking from personal experience entirely it is the only union with which I have had any dealings which could be considered to speak with a sense of responsibility.

E-4209. I will come to the Kankinarah Labour Union in a second. Take the question of collective action by work-people. Is there any definite machinery in Bengal whereby the workers can make joint representations?—There is none because it has not been the custom of the country in the past.

E-4210. Is that not conservatism on the part of the employer?—Also on the part of the employee.

E-4211. Let us come back to the question of the Kankinarah Labour Union. In connexion with the last strike the union passed certain resolutions and sent them to the managing agents of certain mills and to the Chamber of Commerce. The president of the union gave evidence before the Commission and said that he received no replies at all to his letters. What I want to get at is the sincerity of the industrialists in dealing with trade unions. I want to take the particular case which you have mentioned as an instance and ask the Chamber what they have to say as a Chamber on that point?—The Secretary says that the question did not come before the Chamber.

E-4212. Dealing with the question of trade unions your Chamber has made no observations on this question as a Chamber?—Yes.

E-4213. As a Chamber which is concerned with the development of the interests of the trades represented, surely you will agree that orderly negotiations are better than the present position?—We have always had a system of orderly negotiations.

E-4214. With trade unions?—Not with trade unions.

E-4215. If you want to develop trade in this country orderly negotiations with trade unions will help?—Yes, but I am not prepared to commit my Chamber to any view as to whether trade unions or works committees which

are a possible alternative would be a better solution. The last time when the question came before the Associated Chambers in Bombay it was left pending the views to be expressed by the Royal Commission.

E-4216. At the moment your Chamber has no views on the question?—The Chamber has no views.

E-4217. *Miss Sorabji*: You say that the ordinary worker is ignorant and easily misled by interested people and you propose that something should be done to educate him. Would you agree that propaganda about the legitimate aims and objects of trade unionism on right lines would be helpful to him?—Propaganda by employers will always be looked upon with suspicion. It has been tried and not found effective.

E-4218. If it were undertaken by philanthropic societies and responsible persons?—Yes, it might be useful.

E-4219. With regard to sickness insurance and such other welfare benefit schemes if some attempt were made to help the worker to understand what the authorities mean by benefit would it not happen as a consequence that you might get his co-operation in any scheme undertaken for his benefit?—Yes, education will be useful. But the Chamber as a whole has no definite policy in this matter; individually my firm is directing its attention to forming welfare committees and works councils with a view to training up workers in welfare so that they might be leaders in this movement in the future.

E-4220. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: Do you think that generally speaking the workers are satisfied with their rates of wages?—Covering the whole of the interests represented in the Chamber I should say yes, for this reason that in 1920 or thereabouts there was an increase of 50 to 60 per cent in wages. At that time the index figure of the cost of living was round about 270 and has now fallen to 160 or thereabouts to-day. Therefore the benefit of the increase in real wages has been considerable. Generally speaking, they are contented with their wages to-day.

E-4221. Do the mill managers keep in close touch with the workers in order to remove their legitimate grievances and prevent them from falling into the hands of unscrupulous exploiters of labour?—Speaking as an employer I may say that the mill managers do their best to keep themselves in the closest possible touch with their labour and every one knows that the surest way for a man to get the sack is to quarrel with his labour.

E-4222. The Kanjinarah Labour Union approached the mill managers with the legitimate grievances of the workers before the last strike. Did the managers make any efforts to settle the matter?—It applies to a particular industry and I have nothing to say.

E-4223. *Mr. Sew Kissin Bhattar*: Dealing with strikes you say:

“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.”

In answer to Sir Ibrahim you said that the only way to get over the difficulty was to have extra police protection?—Not the only way.

E-4224. Have you got any other way?—For instance closer contact between the employer and the workers will lead to improvements.

E-4225. During the last jute mill strike was sufficient police protection given to the people concerned?—In certain areas, yes. There were no serious riots; there was a great deal of intimidation in the *bustis* and the mills.

E-4226. What is the best method by which this intimidation could be stopped?—I have no universal remedy to suggest.

E-4227. Have you any evidence to prove that speculators were at the bottom of the last strike in the jute mills?—These things are so notoriously difficult to prove. But I think we have had sufficient circumstantial evidence to justify the making of that statement.

E-4228. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: With regard to the formation of works committees the Bengal Government addressed a letter to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in 1922; has any action been taken since then?—The Secretary says that he cannot say without reference to the files.

E-4229. Employers generally complain that workers go on lightning strikes without formulating their grievances and demands and they are not in a position to know the minds of the workers till long after they have struck. Would it not help you to know their minds if you had works committees on the lines of the village *panchayats*?—The Chamber's attitude as explained to you in a letter, dated 10th June, is that no useful purpose will be served by undertaking any new movement in any industry till the Whitley Commission has reported. My own personal view is that welfare committees or works committees will be very advantageous and individually we propose to start them.

E-4230. *The Chairman*: Your Chamber is of course aware of the terms on which the recent strike in the jute mills was settled. Have you any information whether those terms have been fully implemented by the employers in the jute industry?—I believe so. I have personally addressed a demi-official letter to a Government official stating that I thought that the terms were fulfilled.

E-4231. On what ground? Have you enquired from the various jute mills as to whether that has been done?—Not as a Chamber.

E-4232. You would agree, would you not, that the credit of industry generally in Bengal would be involved if there was any failure fully to implement the terms of a negotiated settlement like that?—Certainly.

E-4233. Therefore it would be a matter concerning the whole of the industry as represented in your Association not merely the particular jute industry?—Yes.

E-4234. I take it from what you say that your Chamber has not taken any steps to satisfy itself that the terms of that agreement have been in all cases carried out?—So far as I am aware the Chamber has not heard of any case in which it has not been carried out. Therefore no occasion has arisen to institute an enquiry as to whether it has been carried out.

E-4235. How would the Chamber know of a case where the terms have not been carried out? One item in the settlement was the giving of maternity benefits. It was left vague in the document. Has there been any endeavour to see that a minimum standard was applied to the performance of that part of the terms?—Not as a Chamber. So far as I am aware the members of the Jute Mills Association have consulted among themselves and decided what the minimum rate should be. In matters like this they consult among themselves area by area, for instance the Titaghur area, the Budge Budge area, the Bhatpara area and so on. I believe that is the way they discuss these matters in the Jute Mills Association.

E-4236. Would you not agree that if there was diversity area by area in the interpretation of the terms of an agreement which was signed as I understood by the Chairman of the Jute Mills Association, that it might lead to trouble?—I understand when the Chairman of the Jute Mills Association signed the agreement he signed it as an undertaking to place the matter before the members of the Jute Mills Association and that was done.

E-4237. It is true that he disclaimed any power other than to recommend. No doubt that is the correct reading of the situation. But still as a Bengal Chamber of Commerce you have agreed, I think, that it is a matter of substantial importance to industry outside the jute mills and that there should be no question as to the full implementing of the terms of the agreement?—I still maintain that there is no question about it.

E-4238. It is a little difficult to know where the information in the negative would come from if there were not some means of collecting information from those concerned as to how the several heads of the agreement had been implemented?—Yes, the Chamber has no such machinery. As a matter of fact the Chamber did not interfere with the conduct of the negotiations which resulted in the settlement of the strike. It was left entirely to the Jute Mills Association and the Chamber interested itself in other aspects.

E-4239. I understood it perfectly. I only put this point to you as you appear to be such a representative body of the industry and commerce of Calcutta and Bengal that it would seem a matter of over-riding interest to you although none of you may be actually concerned in jute that there should be no failure to completely fulfil the conditions of an agreement which has

been signed?—The position is that individual members of the Committee have satisfied themselves from their knowledge of the jute mills that the terms are being carried out.

E-4240. I am not suggesting that any one has failed to do that. But the Chamber might serve a useful purpose if it was able to assure the public in general and in some detail as to how exactly the terms of the agreement had been implemented?—I think that the matter should be left to the Indian Jute Mills Association.

E-4241. You do not think that your Chamber—I do not say is responsible—has a substantial interest in the matter?—If any question arose that the terms were not implemented I have no doubt that the Committee of the Chamber will discuss the question. But the matter of making a public pronouncement on the question would be left to the Indian Jute Mills Association. I will draw the attention of the Committee to the point. May I add that five out of the nine members of our committee are interested in jute mills.

E-4242. That again would seem to show the relation of this great single industry with the general commerce and industry of the Province as a whole?—Yes, I have made that point to illustrate that if there was any doubt whether the terms were carried out or not we would be sure to hear of it.

E-4243. *Sir Alexander Murray*: As regards this question of the origin of labour, after all organized industries in India are a matter of comparatively recent growth. If the labour is not essentially agricultural in origin and character what else is it? Where has it come from?—I presume there was a stage in every country when the industrial worker was primarily an agriculturist.

E-4244. Especially in India at the present moment. In your memorandum you say 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”. Further on you say that “these figures afford convincing proof of the statement that industrial labour is essentially agricultural in its origin and character”. You do not seem to have two minds on this question?—I think not.

E-4245. Have you any returns given to the Chamber, quarterly, half-yearly or annually, that keep its members posted as regards wages ruling in the agricultural areas from which labour is ordinarily drawn?—Yes, we have extremely interesting returns from various districts, mostly in Bihar and Orissa, which have been going on, I think, since 1896 or even before that.

E-4246. So for about 35 years you have been getting from the District Magistrates and district commissioners, in particular agricultural areas, the ruling rates of wages there and the conditions obtaining as far as crops are concerned, to indicate whether recruiting might be successfully done?—Yes; it also gives the reason why there is unemployment in certain areas.

E-4247. *Mr. Ahmed*: Do you get these returns quarterly, half-yearly or annually?—Half-yearly.

E-4248. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Could you send us copies of the half-yearly returns for the last two or three years that you have been getting from the districts and that have been circulated by the Chamber to its members?—Yes.

*Mr. Cliff*: If possible, I should like to know what methods are adopted in compiling those returns.

E-4249. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: We have received a memorandum from two of your members regarding the jute pressing industry in Calcutta. May we know whether your Chamber or its committee have approved of this document?—The Chamber have not officially approved of it. These two gentlemen were nominated by the Chamber, but this memorandum has not come before the Committee.

E-4250. This is really a report of these two gentlemen?—Yes.

E-4251. I would like to draw your attention to the statement made therein with regard to works committees, and should like to know if there is any justification for making that statement. It is said: “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." Has your Committee or you personally got any knowledge of experience of these works committees that have led to this situation?—No, I have not.

E-4252. You have no personal knowledge of works committees in Bengal or in Calcutta which have led to bribery and corruption ending in bad work and less earnings per head?—No.

E-4253. We have heard generally that the workers do not take any interest in works committees, but this is the first time, I think, that we hear that works committees have led to bribery and corruption ending in bad work and less earnings per head. I do not know if there is any evidence in justification of this statement?—I do not know. You might examine the authors.

E-4254. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Mr. Gow, have you any experience of these works committees?—(*Mr. Gow*) No, I have no experience.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

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**Captain R. LIDDELL, Marine Superintendent, British India  
Steam Navigation Company, Limited.**

E-4255. *The Chairman*: The memorandum which we have in front of us bears your name, but if I am correctly informed it represents the views not only of your company, but of the shipping community in Calcutta?—Yes, as represented by the shipping sub-committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

E-4256. Will you tell us in your own words exactly the procedure which resulted in the preparation of this memorandum and its approval by the shipping sub-committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce?—I was asked by the shipping sub-committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to draw up a memorandum in conjunction with other superintendents of shipping companies in India or who were represented in India. That memorandum was approved by the other superintendents and was then submitted to the Chamber and I was afterwards asked to give oral evidence in support of it.

E-4257. By that method we may take it that this memorandum represents the views of the whole of the shipping community in this port?—Yes, particularly of those in the coastal trade.

E-4258. And after it had been prepared it received the unanimous approval of the shipping sub-committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

E-4259. You have recited to us the fact of the appointment of Captain Darvell as Shipping Master and Officer-in-charge of the Seamen's Recruiting Bureau, and you say that in 1924 there was a very large number of persons granted continuous discharge certificates owing to the idea that they would get regular employment once they were on the register. Can you give us your estimate of the number of potential seamen available and the number who "circulate in employment." You put the total of lascars available at 100,000?—That figure is an underestimate. I understand from the Shipping Master that he quotes the figure of 150,000, and I think that is more correct.

E-4260. When you state that "Of this probably about 50,000 circulate in employment" will you give a closer definition of what you mean by "circulate in employment"?—Those who are afloat at one time and those who are regular applicants for employment, basing it on a man being out of employment for, say, a period of six or seven months.

E-4261. Those are two different things. We would like to have a figure of those afloat at any one time, and secondly, those who had in fact got employment within a period of two years?—In the case of British India Company we have actually afloat at one time about 15,000 men, made up of about 4,000 deck lascars, 5,000 saloon ratings and 5,000 firemen.

E-4262. At what figure would you put the total number of men which you engage in a period, say, of three years?—We consider that we always

have between 20,000 and 25,000 men employed who are regular employees of the British India Company. The British India Company operate about half of the shipping visiting the port of Calcutta.

E-4263. Presumably there is a greater continuity or regularity of employment amongst the serangs and men who sail for you than amongst the general body of lascars in Calcutta?—It probably is so. My company aim at continuity of employment.

E-4264. Is the list of serangs whom you employ at different times in your company a limited list?—No; it is open to any one who cares to register to do so. We started the registers in 1921 after the International Labour Conference at Genoa. Up to the moment on our list the actual numbers which we have registered for employment in the company are 226 deck serangs, 200 engine-room serangs, 782 seacunnies and 200 butlers.

E-4265. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you confine your register to men who work in your line itself?—No, any man who wants employment must register with us, but we give preference to men who have served in the company previously.

E-4266. *The Chairman*: Out of that number of 226 serangs how many are engaged at any one time?—We have 127 steamers, and that is the number of serangs. Each ship has one serang, one fireman serang, four seacunnies and one butler. I am dealing now with the senior ratings.

E-4267. By the phrase "Of this probably about 50,000 circulate in employment," what you really mean is that only about 50,000 out of 150,000 have any reasonable chance of finding occupation?—No, I mean that that 50,000 is the number of men who follow the sea constantly and who do not go away from the sea for long periods. We have had cases of men coming down asking for employment who have been away from the port of Calcutta for six years.

E-4268. You say "The Employment Bureau has, since its inception, done much to further the interests of the seamen"?—Yes, it has been a means of bringing to the notice of the officials of the companies any complaints of the men. It has helped men to find employment, and it has generally co-operated with both men and the shipping companies particularly in advising masters of ships regarding suitable men who are available at the time.

E-4269. Do you think that the establishment of the office has been a benefit to both employers and employed?—I think so.

E-4270. Do you think it has had any effect in diminishing the exactions made from the lascars of which we have heard a good deal of talk?—No, I do not think it has been able to do much in that respect, because since the War period the question of exactions has automatically reduced itself. Before 1921 one heard of the great amount of bribery and corruption which went on, but during the whole of my contact with the seamen I have only had one or two definitely proved instances of bribery. I think it is a very much exaggerated statement. I think that to-day bribery is more or less negligible. I am speaking now of when the men are actually on the ship. What happens after they leave the ship I cannot say.

E-4271. Is it your opinion that as a general rule the serangs do not make exactions from the crews which they take on board?—Yes, at the present day. I think the exactions are almost negligible at the present moment, certainly amongst the ships employed on the coasts of India.

E-4272. Have you ever had to get rid of a serang on complaints of that kind?—Yes, I have had to get rid of two within the last three years.

E-4273. How did the complaints reach you?—Directly from a lascar.

E-4274. You found in those cases the complaints to be substantiated?—Yes. We believed them to be correct.

E-4275. Do you feel that by this means of close attention to complaints you are able to weed out your serangs and only get those who refrain from these practices?—Close personal touch between the shipowners' representatives and the men is one of the best ways of keeping things going right, and also to encourage the men to bring their complaints forward and have them sifted, but the seaman to-day generally is very much more alive to his own interests than he was in pre-war days. When once he draws his money and puts it into his pocket he, like any other human being, does not part with it.



E-4276. In your opinion, given conditions of close supervision on the part of the authorities, readiness to listen to complaints and a modicum of courage on the part of the lascar himself, there need be no complaint?—I think the complaints will become fewer and I think men will realize that the shipping companies, through their representatives, have a very clear and definite desire to help them.

E-4277. Dealing with the question of a roster system you say in India this is almost impossible and when tried has proved disastrous from a disciplinary point of view. How and when has the system been tried and failed?—When it was first proposed by the recruitment committee to set up registers we started out with the idea that we could work a roster system. Each individual man was chosen either by the Superintendents or the Captains in the presence of the Superintendents.

E-4278. Without the intervention of a serang?—Yes. We chose our serangs and then we took men according to the length of time they had been out of employment, and also according to their physique, with the result that we got two or three crews which proved a complete failure when they got to sea.

E-4279. That was in your company?—Yes.

E-4280. How many cases did you actually try?—Two; probably more. We tried it for a period of about six months, but these are two particular cases which were of an acute type. It was a failure from every point of view. Firstly, the serangs had no control over the men at all, and secondly, the men themselves were quite unhappy because they all came from different villages and towns. We then came to the conclusion, which has since been confirmed, that the men themselves will not sail under any other conditions than what we call the "village system".

E-4281. A moment ago you told me that the Employment Bureau has done much to further the interests of the seamen. Later on I see you say that you think the introduction of the Bureau was a mistake and you are doubtful whether it will ever succeed. That seems a contradiction?—What I meant to convey was that the Bureau as it stands at present, as represented by Captain Darvell who has not only a very wide experience of, but a big sympathy with, the seaman, did much to remove the little grievances they had and to represent them to us. On the other hand, as a recruiting office pure and simple I do not think it can be a success.

E-4282. Captain Darvell told us that through the Bureau about one quarter of the lascars at present going to sea from Calcutta were recruited. He described to us Method No. 1, which is what your company and other companies work upon, and Method No. 2, through his office, which supply the crews where the companies are not in a position to act under Method No. 1?—But I do not think Captain Darvell takes on the direct supply of the crews. I think they are chosen in his office and he gives what help and advice he thinks necessary, because the masters of ships coming here are in the majority of cases ignorant of the local conditions.

E-4283. I agree the crews are not chosen in his office as units without regard to their ties with one another or their relationship to the serang, but we were informed that one quarter of the recruiting in Calcutta does take place with the aid of his office?—That is because the British India Company, which represents the biggest proportion, has their own system of recruiting. They actually recruit in their own office. They have a waiting room for the serangs and lascars. On the other hand those offices who have not such an organization or a staff of Marine Superintendents have to go to the Shipping Office to get their crews.

E-4284. The point is this: what you say in your memorandum would appear as if you thought the Bureau was no good, and that it should be abolished, but I think you will admit that one quarter of the recruitment does take place through Captain Darvell's office?—It may be it does. I do not mean to suggest that the office should be done away with, because it has done a lot of good; but I do not think that the crews should be put together and chosen on a roster system. That is what I really meant to convey.

E-4285. What you really mean is that you think the introduction of a roster system would be a mistake?—I do not think it is at all practicable in India.

E-4286. You describe the system which is adopted by your company which deals with some 50 per cent of the total crews and which, I think, is adopted also by other companies, forming about three-quarters of the whole?—I think most of the companies at the moment do not follow our system. I think we are the only company now which has direct recruitment.

E-4287. Describing to us the choosing of a crew you say "In this respect the actual time a man has been out of employment has a distinct bearing on the choice, but the company are forced at times to consider the applicant and the type of vessel to which he will be appointed". Will you tell us how far you are able to give consideration to the actual time a man has been out of employment?—If a crew is required for a steamer it very largely depends on the number of serangs available. One day you will have 20 serangs available. On the other days you will only have one available. If we have a number of serangs available for a certain class of ship, all other things being equal, and there being nothing against the men, he is given preference.

E-4288. The one who has been longest without a voyage?—Up to a point, but we have also to take into consideration the total amount of employment which the man has had previously. You could get a man who has been more or less in constant employment even if he has been out of employment for six months, and then you could get a man who is doing really very little employment over a period and is out of employment for a shorter period. That man would get preference.

E-4289. You say "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 new crew signed on in their places". How far do you find that practicable?—It has been a complete failure. If we are going to have continuity of employment we think we should have the men who are the most suitable. If a man has been in a ship for three or four years and has given good service, I personally cannot see why he should be put out of employment for the sake of others.

E-4290. That is to say, where you have men, who are desirous of continuous employment, going back on a second or third voyage, in the interests of efficiency, it is desirable that they should go and not be signed off?—Quite so—definitely to keep continuity of employment so that we are able to build up a permanent employment for the men, but against that I find from experience that serangs do not wish to remain much longer than three or four years on a ship. That does not apply to the regular coasting steamers where they are in touch with their homes the whole time. In support of that it was suggested some time ago that the articles of agreement should be extended to cover periods up to three years.

E-4291. Will you look again at the paragraph I have quoted because it seems to me from what you have said now that the whole of it should be withdrawn. You begin by saying "Instructions have been given" and you end up by saying "It is hoped by this method that unemployment will be reduced"?—I should have said "Instructions were given" and "It was hoped", but it has not been found a practicable scheme.

E-4292. *Mr. Tassie*: Do you not think other companies have found it practicable? Take the Harrison Line for instance.—Yes, but I think it will be found that where men are on long voyages, say Continental and American voyages, when they are away from India for so long, they themselves want to sign off, but I do not think it should be made a practice to sign a man off automatically because he has been so long in employment.

E-4293. *The Chairman*: You tell us that after a strike in 1919 increases of wages were given ranging from 60 to 80 per cent. How comes it that that increase was only given after a strike? Were you not aware of the cost of living having risen?—I was not here at the time, but the strike came about simply from the state of unrest which existed everywhere.

E-4294. But here apparently was a state of things where the companies were blind to the grievances of the men and however readily they granted it, from what you tell us it was only granted after a strike?—I do not know that the grievances of the men were ever put to the companies properly. I think it will be found that there was no proper representation made to the companies.

E-4295. Is there now any channel through which the men can make known their grievances?—They can make them known by directly bringing them to the notice of the shipping companies.

E-4296. Does your company deal with any one of the two or three organizations amongst the seamen?—No.

E-4297. You tell us "It is to be admitted that unemployment and poverty amongst seamen are a serious matter". Have you any remedy to suggest for that state of affairs?—I think the only remedy is in controlling the number of men who become seamen.

E-4298. We have had a suggestion put before us to the effect that there should be a limit laid down in order to reduce the number. A limit of four years was suggested. What have you to say to that—where a man has been absent for four or more years from the sea he should not be entitled to call himself a seaman again and put his name on the list?—I do not know whether the men would not think that a hardship. If a man has been a sailor for so many years, and then goes away for a period of four years, when he comes back he would still want not to give up the sea.

E-4299. When I asked you what is your remedy just now you suggested limiting the list?—I meant limiting the number of new men.

E-4300. In what way would you limit the number of new men?—I would not grant any more first-discharge certificates if other men who have been to sea are available.

E-4301. You would absolutely stop recruitment for a period?—I would not lay down a period, but as long as seamen who have been to sea are available, I would not take other men as first-discharge men; we do not in our Company. We take no new men.

E-4302. We were told yesterday that that might apply to the upper ratings, but it could not be applied to the coal trimmers?—I understand that one of the difficulties about coal trimmers is that once they become coal trimmers they do not want to remain coal trimmers, and as soon as they become firemen they will not go back to coal trimmers. That goes right through all the sea-faring ranks. Once a serang always a serang; but amongst the lascars, where there are plenty of men available, I cannot see why it should be necessary to take new men.

E-4303. Your suggestion is that no new first-voyage certificates should be given until the unemployment situation has been solved?—Only for deck lascars, not for coal trimmers.

E-4304. You would stop the issue of new certificates in the case of deck lascars, but you would not apply that to the engine room staff?—I would sooner say that I would consider the advisability of stopping it, because there is one point which should be taken into consideration, namely, the question of the serangs and the tindals and the seacunnies wanting to get their children away to sea. They take them with them and train them. That is a point on which the Shipping Master could give more information than myself because he has the figures. From the seamen's point of view I think it might be considered whether they would desire to take their children to sea with them. There is no doubt that the serangs do take their relatives.

E-4305. Your suggested remedy now comes to this: that no more first-voyage certificates should be issued to deck lascars except where there is some already existing connexion with the sea?—Yes, some definite reason for granting it.

E-4306. Dealing with the question of indebtedness of seamen, you say "A first step to remedy this state of affairs is for the company to institute proceedings against anybody who imposes on the seaman, on the lines of the legislation which was framed in the United Kingdom". What is that legislation?—Right throughout the whole of the shipping legislation at Home there have been efforts made to protect the seaman from imposition.

E-4307. You cannot quote chapter and verse?—No.

E-4308. *Mr. Cliff*: You are referring, for instance, to protection against crimping?—Yes; that was one of the greatest evils all over the world, but there has been a gradual protection built up to save the seaman from himself.

E-4309. *The Chairman*: Then you cannot go further than you have done here?—The Recruitment Bureau Officer investigates every case that is

brought to his notice of people attempting to rob the seamen and proceedings should be taken against anybody where there is reasonable cause to believe that the accusations are proved.

E-4310. Then you think Captain Darvell and his office have been a real benefit to the seamen because they watch things of that kind and have been successful in reducing the evil?—I do most certainly.

E-4311. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Have you evidence to show that men who take to the sea have an alternative employment on the land?—Yes, I have the evidence of the men themselves; I know the lascars very well and I have made it my business to find out what the lascar does when he goes to his country.

E-4312. Does not your method of getting crews through serangs give a monopoly to the serangs and enable them to select such men as they like?—No, I do not think so; if you want a crew of twenty men he will bring thirty and you can select the men you want.

E-4313. But does it not imply that the actual employment is in his hands?—I do not think it is in his hands; it is in the hands of the Master of the ship who selects the men. The men are signed on and are paid a cash advance, the money is given to the men individually and I do not think the men pay the bribes that are stated. Theoretically the system may lead to bribery and corruption but in actual practice it does not.

E-4314. What proof have you of that?—The proof of personal experience through being in close and personal touch with the men. We have practically no cases of men complaining of bribery. During the last two or three years we have had two cases in which it could be proved. I was talking to the Shipping Master the other day and he said that when a man died at sea it was extraordinary how much their relatives knew as to their wages, the money due to them and that sort of thing. He said he had very few complaints of serangs robbing the men.

E-4315. Do you think it is possible to prove corruption of this kind in many cases?—I think it is very difficult to prove it.

E-4316. If they were able to prove corruption in two cases the inference is that many more cases of corruption actually existed although they could not be proved?—I can only repeat that it is my firm conviction that bribery does not exist to the extent which is stated.

E-4317. Then how do you account for the condition of indebtedness in which all the seamen are reported to be?—I do not think seamen are in debt any more than other workers. I am told that nearly all the Indian small wage earners are in debt.

E-4318. The cause of the indebtedness may either be that the wages are insufficient or that the amount the man actually gets after deductions is insufficient?—No, I do not agree with that. The social customs such as marriage dowries cost large sums of money which have to be raised through money-lenders. That has nothing to do with the system of recruitment.

E-4319. Marriage dowries are a form of expense which does not occur very frequently, does it?—That I cannot say.

E-4320. You say that the allegation of the Seamen's Union that the brokers take bribes and generally exploit the men is not the case?—I am most emphatic on that.

E-4321. After personal investigation into the matter?—Yes; the supervision is so close now that it is almost impossible for exploitation to go on.

E-4322. You say that preference is given to people who have been longest out of employment; that does not reduce the volume of unemployment?—We spread out the employment. The unemployment among the lascar seamen is a very difficult one to deal with. All our scaling and painting of ships is done in this Port. Originally it was done by contractors through our workshops. When the question of the unemployment amongst seamen was brought to the fore through various articles that were written I attempted to reduce it by giving sea-going lascars, tindals and serangs employment as daily lascars on ships. On that work we employ on the average about 600 men a day. The response to that offer from the sea-going lascars has been practically negligible. Another thing which makes me very sceptical about the statements which are made as to unemployment is this. At Home if men are out of employment for a long time they appear obviously to be down and out; but you never see that state of things in

India amongst the unemployed seamen, who after they have been away from the sea for a time appear just as fit and healthy as the day they left the ship.

E-4323. By this method the volume of unemployment is not reduced?—Yes; the difficulty in reducing unemployment is that once a man is a seagoing lascar he does not want any other kind of work although the conditions of that work may be the same. I do not say they all will not accept employment on land, but the response to the offer I made has been more or less negligible.

E-4324. *Mr. Clow*: I think you said you had a register of your serangs?—Yes, we keep a register of serangs and seacunnies.

E-4325. What are the numbers?—Actually on our register at the moment there are 226 deck serangs, 200 firemen serangs, 782 seacunnies and 200 butlers.

E-4326. Can you give us an estimate of the average time that each of these men spends on a ship?—It is very difficult to get at that. Where men apply for gratuities for long service we base any gratuity given on a period of 25 years. Assuming that a man goes to sea when he is about eighteen years old, which is the general average, he is between 55 and 60 before he has completed 25 years' service.

E-4327. I want the proportion between the time the man is employed and the time he is in his village unemployed?—It varies very much; on the average I should say he is in his village anything from eight months to a year.

E-4328. Out of the 226 deck serangs how many are at the present moment at sea?—127. That is the number of ships the company have.

E-4329. I suppose they are mostly on twelve months' agreement?—Yes, and the local mail steamers are on Coasting Articles.

E-4330. Have you ever taken steps to find out what the facts are with regard to bribery in cases where you have had no complaints?—No; if I get no complaints and at the same time make it clear that any complaints will receive sympathetic hearing, I do not go and ask for complaints because I think that would be looking for trouble. There is a very big difference between the lascar of to-day and the lascar of 1921; he is very much more in personal contact with us than he was. Never a day goes by without three or four men coming to see us, particularly seacunnies.

E-4331. You have not tried the experiment of going on a ship on the river and telling the serang that you are not going to take any action against him but ask to see his account book?—No.

E-4332. Captain Penny did that?—Yes, I heard of that. I will accept the statement that perhaps in those days there was bribery. If men can pay Rs. 500 or Rs. 1,000 for a ship, there must be a method of making that money. That money cannot be made out of lascars' wages; the ship must have been worth that for some special purpose. There is no doubt that the Indian generally is now protecting himself. For instance, on our passenger ships there are numerous societies for the protection of deck passengers and we now get very few complaints. Whether in the old days the deck passenger was exploited or not I cannot say, but if he was he has learned to-day that he need not be exploited and he has formed a society to protect himself. I do not think there are the opportunities now.

E-4333. On one of your ships a serang admitted to us that he was getting Rs. 88 per month from the men, that would enable him to pay off the sum you mention without trenching on the deck passengers?—Yes, but I do not think that man would get that amount to-day. Of course twenty or twenty-five years ago the wages of the lascars were paid to the serang in a lump sum and he paid the men who came from his village. Since the war, at any rate, the men have received their money direct; they know the value of money and they will not part with it once they get it.

E-4334. Are you satisfied that serangs are not themselves subject to exactions?—I do not think they are; we have watched that very carefully and we have done our utmost to satisfy ourselves that the *ghat* serangs do not extract money from the other serangs.

E-4335. Do any of your *ghat* serangs run boarding houses or are they interested in boarding houses?—No, I have made enquiries about that.

E-4336. The allegation is made that seacunnies work for two watches of 12 hours each; is that correct?—Yes, but they do not work all that time; part of the time they are just standing by.

E-4337. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many *ghat serangs* have you?—I have three *ghat serangs*, a *ghat butler* and one for the firemen.

E-4338. For what purpose do you appoint these *ghat serangs*?—The system has grown up from the time the Company was in its infancy from a very small beginning; I think they were originally serangs under the Company.

E-4339. Nowadays if there is a vacancy, are your *ghat serangs* chosen from the serangs on board?—No. We have had no vacancies during the last ten years; the *ghat serangs* whom we have to-day have been with us for the last ten or fifteen years, so that the position has never arisen. I think it would probably be kept in the family as a family concern and their sons would take their places.

E-4340. Evidently their purpose is to bring crews on board and to fill up blanks at the last moment?—Yes. They are what we call contact men; they have no say at all in the actual selection of the men; they put it about that we want men and once the men are chosen and signed on they see them on board. When we are sending crews away they go to the station and see the men off, look after their baggage and things like that.

E-4341. What are they paid?—Their pay is Rs. 75 a month and a commission on the advances. The ordinary serang is a paid servant who draws his monthly wages.

E-4342. You have told us you have stopped recruiting new seamen?—Yes.

E-4343. Have you stopped recruiting new serangs?—Yes; I do not think we have made a serang for six or seven years except where a serang has died at sea or gone into hospital when the *bara tindal* has been promoted. Actually the creation of serangs in the Port of Calcutta has been completely stopped.

E-4344. Do you not think the tindals have a grievance in that respect?—They have a very definite grievance and I think it is a justifiable grievance. I think the present system is a very bad system. In the course of time it is going to react against the efficiency of the shipping of the port and we shall have serangs who will not be up to the standard we are used to.

E-4345. Could you not pension off the older serangs and give the other men a chance?—Yes, but it would be a very slow process. The serangs who muster up for employment are from 45 to 50 years of age.

E-4346. Could you say you would not take a serang older than 50?—We could, but we do not advocate it because I do not think it would be fair to the men who have served the company for very many years.

E-4347. Would you rather have discontented tindals than be unfair to the older serangs?—Yes, I think so. I do not think we could justify the promotion of a man by putting another man out of employment. Where a man gets too old for the job we do give him a gratuity. We used to give pensions, but now we give a gratuity.

E-4348. Where men have been tindals a long time and have been waiting for the promotion that never comes do you give them extra allowances over and above the ordinary graduated pay?—No. Another thing is that it is not every tindal who will make a good serang.

E-4349. You say that seacunnies are independent of the serangs altogether?—Yes

E-4350. Are they actually independent of the serang in working?—Yes, absolutely; the seacunnies are chosen by the commanders of the ships or by one of the superintendents; now we do not allow seacunnies to be chosen on board a ship. In that respect we get nearer the roster system than with any other class of labour. Length of service is a very big factor with regard to seacunnies, particularly up and down this river. We have created very few new seacunnies for a number of years; where men have been promoted to seacunnies it has been the outcome of accidents at sea, desertions, death or illness.

E-4351. You say that when a crew is required for a vessel all serangs out of employment are mustered?—Yes.

E-4352. I suppose you mean the serangs who are on the spot at the time?—Yes; in our office we have built a waiting room for lascars, serangs and seacunnies. They sit there all day and when a crew is wanted those serangs are told.

E-4353. Out of the 100 odd serangs who are not at sea how many are available to-day?—To-day there are twelve serangs available.

E-4354. What happens to the rest of them?—They go away to their country.

E-4355. On what principle do you arrange for these twelve serangs to come down and be on the spot?—We do not arrange it at all; we choose from the men available. Any day about a dozen or fifteen will be found mustered.

E-4356. Is it the same dozen or fifteen?—No; they remain the same for a period of a month or two months and then they vary.

E-4357. How long do these serangs stay upcountry before they come back and wait for employment?—On the average about a year. The men who stop in their villages for three or six years are generally very old men, and I think they are in partial retirement because they do not seem to be particularly anxious to get ships and they will only take certain ships.

E-4358. Why do you send crews from Calcutta to Bombay?—Because the Calcutta crews are definitely more adaptable than the Bombay crews.

E-4359. Does that apply to both deck crews and engine crews?—Yes, generally. Perhaps custom plays a certain part in it; we have always had Calcutta firemen and the captains of the ships find that the Calcutta crews are more adaptable than the Bombay crews for several reasons. I think the principle reason is caste; all the firemen are Muhammadans and you have less trouble with the Calcutta crew with regard to water and food; they fraternize and are generally happier. There is no doubt that a happy ship is an efficient ship.

E-4360. Why do the P. & O. Company take Punjabi Muhammadan firemen?—I think again it is a question of custom; they have always taken Punjabi firemen; but I doubt whether they are any better than the British India crews.

E-4361. Is there any force in the argument that the Calcutta crews are cheaper?—No. Of course ours is a commercial concern and naturally the question of cost arises, but there is not much difference in cost. If we take a crew on one of our ordinary steamers of about 8,000 tons dead weight to Bombay it costs us about Rs. 3,350; then there is the cost of repatriating the old crew, so it costs practically Rs. 7,000; the saving in cost is really very small. On the British India steamers going up the Gulf Hindu crews are used, they are perfectly capable and very good crews; but for steamers engaged in international trade the general consensus of opinion is that the Bengal crews are better.

E-4362. *Mr. Ahmed*: Your Captain Penny was one of the members of the Clow Committee?—Yes.

E-4363. The Clow Committee reported that bribery and corruption was in existence, but since then you have maintained a system of employment through serangs, ghat serangs and butlers?—No, since then the system has undergone a change. Before 1921 it is true that the selection was more in the hands of the *ghat* serangs. But during the intervening period there has been a gradual tightening and hardening up, so that to-day these *ghat* serangs have nothing to do with the selection of the crews.

E-4364. How are the crews selected?—By the Captains of the ships, or the Company's officials direct, the Marine Superintendents.

E-4365. The Captain of the ship chooses the serang?—Yes.

E-4366. And the serang introduces the crews to the Captain?—Yes, if you like to use the word "introduce".

E-4367. At the time when the Clow Committee reported, was not bribery and corruption rampant?—I am quite prepared to accept the fact that there was a suspicion that bribery existed to a very large extent, but I have never

agreed with that view; I think it has been very much over-rated and exaggerated. During the period of 9 or 10 years which has elapsed since the Clow Committee reported I have satisfied myself that bribery is not rampant. I will not say there is no bribery.

E-4368. You have never appointed any man through this Employment Bureau?—No.

E-4369. Therefore you have not given a trial to this system which was decided upon by the Government and was introduced in 1924?—We have not considered it necessary to change our system. We have built up our system from the early days, that system has given perfect satisfaction to the lascar, the Bureau Officer and, I understand, to the Government, as being a perfectly clear and straightforward system of supplying men.

E-4370. You say this system is a bad one but you have never tried it?—I have not said it is a bad one; I said I thought it would not succeed, if we were to work it on a roster system, applying to the Shipping Master or the Bureau Officer to supply us with crews.

E-4371. You have not given the system any trial?—No; we have no desire to give it a trial.

E-4372. Without having any experience of the system you have jumped to the conclusion that it is a bad system?—No; I do not jump to a conclusion about anything; I investigate the matter and discuss it with people who are in a position to give an opinion.

E-4373. Captain Penny was your representative on the Committee and he agreed to it?—Yes, but it does not necessarily follow that because a technical officer of my company agrees with a thing as being suitable that I should agree with it. After all I have had as great an experience of lascar seamen as most people and it is my considered opinion that our system if it is worked properly is as good as any other system in existence.

E-4374. Without trial of the system you have come to the conclusion that the report of the Clow Committee is erroneous?—No, I did not criticize that report.

E-4375. You are maintaining the system of recruiting through these serangs; is that not so?—No, that is entirely wrong. We are not getting crews through the serangs at all; we are recruiting our own crews. I am most emphatic on this that the *ghat* serangs have no voice at all in the selection.

E-4376. But you have admitted that the serangs introduce the crews to the Captain?—No. I will explain the system again: when a crew is wanted we choose serangs. The serangs are chosen by the Captain of the ship or an official of the company. The serang is told to bring suitable men to the office. He brings a number of men, the crew are then selected from those men by the Captain of the ship or an official of the company. You are getting confused between the serangs of the ships and the *ghat* serangs who are totally different people.

E-4377. Do you not keep any *ghat* serangs now-a-days?—We have three *ghat* serangs.

E-4378. What is the duty of those three *ghat* serangs?—The duties of the *ghat* serangs are to keep in contact with men after they have been finally chosen, see them on board the ships, and supply other ratings if desertions occur. In the event of crews going away by train they accompany them to the station and look after them.

E-4379. In other words they also recruit men whenever it is necessary?—No, they do not; they only recruit men at the eleventh hour.

E-4380. Then they are kept for that contingency?—The *ghat* serangs have nothing to do with the recruitment of the men. That is a most definite statement which I should like to be clearly understood. They have no voice in the putting of the crew together.

E-4381. You say in your memorandum that As. 8 a day is the cost of living of an Indian seaman, and that you pay him As. 10 a day. Do you think that As. 2 a day is sufficient to maintain his family consisting of a wife and two children? Does he not get into debt simply to maintain his family?—We pay the market rate. The market rate has been considered sufficient for him.

E-4382. Because you get them at that rate and so you appoint them; you do not care to give a living wage to the Indian seamen?—I do not know what



you are getting at. We pay the lascar what is considered to be a living wage for a man in Calcutta. He can exist on that. That is the usual travelling allowance.\*

E-4383. *Mr. Cliff*: In your memorandum you say that the Indian Seamen's union is not in any way representative of the men. Is that true?—In my opinion it is true. I understand that their numbers at the moment do not exceed 15,000. This has been increased tremendously since the Commission sat. I am told by the General Secretary that before the Commission arrived their numbers were much smaller. There are 150,000 seamen in Calcutta and surely if a body has only 15,000 men on it, it cannot be considered to be representative of the men.

E-4384. They may not be a representative body, but you say they are not representative of the men. Suppose you take a period last year when there were 8,000 seamen on the body. Does that not focus the opinion of those 8,000 men?—No, I do not think it does. I think it focusses the opinion of the executive of the union who may probably have a whole-hearted desire to help the men, but the men themselves are illiterate and do not understand.

E-4385. Would you apply that to an actual incident which occurred? You say that the seamen's union does not focus the point of view of the seamen. Do you remember the action they took against a certain serang broker in this city?—Yes.

E-4386. Why do you think the seamen took that action?—I do not know. I could not say. He was employed by our company and we have had no complaints from the men against that broker. They took the action at the instigation of the union. I understand from the Secretary of the union that he was accused of taking bribes. As it was a matter which did not concern me I did not follow it up closely. It was not one of our ships.

E-4387. Here is an instance where seamen are beginning to organize in order to free themselves from the exactions of a broker and they have determined not to sign on with that broker. Obviously they determined not to sign on with him in order to prevent exactions. He is a broker employed by your company. What co-operation is your company offering in order to break this system of exactions?—Every co-operation to the men and to the unions. Though we do not deal with the unions directly I am in the closest touch with the officials of the union. They come and see me with their complaints. If there was any proved case of complaint against any broker he would not be employed in any of the shipping companies here. I am confident of that. But I have to say in this connexion that we have to be very careful about these accusations. Not unoften do they proceed from malice. I have found that in some cases the professional anonymous letter writer has been at the bottom of it.

E-4388. I want to ask this pertinent question. I find that an organization of seamen have determined to prevent exactions from themselves and of their own volition as a union put a broker employed by you out of business. What is your company as a company prepared to do in conjunction with the union to prevent these exactions taking place?—We are prepared to do everything to stop any form of bribery. But the unions which bring them up must prove that they are genuine. We cannot accept complaints from one body of men against another as true without proper investigation.

E-4389. Many of the seamen are convinced that it is no use appealing to the shipping employers and therefore they feel that the only way to break this bribery is to act on their own?—I do not know whether that is true. We get occasional complaints about food, accommodation or ill-treatment and so on. Why should they refuse to bring forward complaints about bribery. As they do not bring such complaints we feel justified in assuming that this bribery does not exist to the extent that is made out.

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\* (The witness subsequently sent in a written communication saying: "The report is not quite clear. The inference is that the question and answer is in reference to lascars on articles, whereas the discussion was about extra lascars who were given daily labour on ships. Mr. Ahmed asked if a lascar could live on eight annas a day why he was given ten annas and I replied that the additional two annas re-imbursed him for travelling expenses to and from the steamer, and in addition to his pay he was given food".)

E-4390. I have no reason to doubt your belief when you have stated quite frankly that you do not believe there is exaction by *ghat serangs*?—The supervision is so tight that they cannot get away with it.

E-4391. But seamen are themselves just as confident that it does exist. They are men who do not get good employment. Could you guarantee that they would not be penalized by the present *serangs* if they gave evidence of bribery?—They have the assurance of the company that they will not be penalized. We do as much as possible to reduce the influence of the higher ratings over the lower ratings. No matter what we do we cannot get away from the old village system.

E-4392. *The Chairman*: Within the last two or three years you have got rid of two *serangs* against whom bribery was proved?—We have explained to the men that if bribery was proved against anyone we would get rid of him.

E-4393. *Mr. Cliff*: Can I put it to you this way? Is there any objection on the part of your company that instead of the *serangs* bringing the men the union may bring the men?—Yes, every objection. We wish to select the men who are most suitable for our work; we do not want the union to select the men for us.

E-4394. If the principle of selection is granted what practical objection is there?—Because we cannot get away from these *serangs*, we find that our business is run successfully and our men are contented under the present system. We employ close on 15,000 to 20,000 men and the complaints we get are negligible. Ships are visited every day by our officers when they are in ports and the men have ample opportunities of making complaints if any. These men have been in this company for so many years, some of them 10, 15, 20 and 25 years and they know their officers very well. It is not the case of casual employees who are afraid to go to us. These men have known us ever since we joined service as young officers, so much so there is complete mutual knowledge and sympathy between the officers and the men. It is my firm belief that the seamen of Bengal to-day are a very happy and contented lot.

E-4395. Still you are getting day by day men organizing themselves into trade unions and one of their chief objects is to break the power of exaction of the *serangs*. What is that due to?—I think every body tries to better his conditions. On the question of bribery I seriously doubt whether it exists at all. This bribery at any rate does not exist to the extent that it is said to exist. Perhaps before 1921 that sort of thing did exist because every body seems to say it did. After all if responsible persons like Government officials, shipping officers and public men get together to stamp out the vice, I think they will to a large extent succeed.

E-4396. I am not speaking of 1921. I am speaking of 1929 and 1930?—I am saying that a great deal of change has taken place and that conditions to-day are not what they are exaggerated to be.

E-4397. You have stated in evidence that you find it practical to work the roster system as nearly as possible?—That was really a clerical error. I should have said that the roster system is not a practical scheme. We are endeavouring to give the first chance to people longest out of employment. That more or less becomes a roster system as far as the effort is concerned. But you cannot work a strict roster system. The idea is to give a fair chance to every one.

E-4398. Do you remember No. VII of the recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee with regard to men who have been on shore not more than three months?—Yes, I think that an endeavour should be towards continuity of employment irrespective of how long a man has been out of employment. If a man is a good man and has served a particular company for a number of years, even though he has been only one month out, there must be no difficulty in appointing him provided he is the most suitable man.

E-4399. That is the recommendation of the Seaman's Recruitment Committee. I understand you are not really putting that into operation?—I think we are.

E-4400. You are trying to apply the roster system as near as possible?—We have 226 *serangs* on our register and we try to distribute the jobs among these men. All these men who are permanently employed with us may in the future get pensions.

E-4401. Having 226 serangs do you try to share the work among these 226 or do you try to work the recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee?—We try to share the work among these 226 serangs provided the men are suitable for the particular type of ship. The British India Company have many and varied types of ships and the same thing applies to the Asiatic Steam Navigation Company. We have to consider the man's qualifications for the particular type of vessel.

E-4402. Apart from the answers which you have given in your evidence have you any other contribution to make with regard to reducing unemployment among seamen?—No. The maritime market is overstaffed. The only way to reduce unemployment is to try to prevent people coming to sea who do not want to follow it up ultimately and thus stop new recruits. I would not make any hard and fast rules but we should endeavour to limit new recruits.

E-4403. What gratuity do you pay your men who are being retired?—We pay on a sliding scale according to service.

E-4404. Would it help to encourage the men to retire voluntarily by offering them decent gratuity?—Whenever the men feel they cannot work hard they retire of their own accord. But employers generally feel that if a man has been in their service for a long time they should not compel him to retire and thus go out of employment, because gratuity is not the same thing as wages. I do not think it is a method which we can adopt.

E-4405. We have heard that men refuse to take a lower rank once they have been on a higher rank. Would it help the men if you guaranteed that if they took a lower rank for one voyage they would have no difficulty in getting a higher rank for any other voyage and that they would not be permanently reduced in their rank?—We have tried that, but the seamen would not agree. They feel that once a serang gives up the post of serang he would not get it back for a long time.

E-4406. Where do your crew sign on?—Ships actually in Calcutta sign off and sign on board-ship. We send a lot of crew to other ports and they sign on in the shipping office. It is simply a matter of convenience.

E-4407. Who selects the crew that you send to other ports?—Ships wire their agents and they select the crew. In the majority of cases the selection is made by myself and one of my assistants who is a responsible official of the company.

E-4408. *Mr. Tassie*: On the question of the recognition of unions you said that there has been an increase in the strength of the unions since the advent of the Whitley Commission. Was it due to the fact that the men were told that if they joined the union they would get increase in pay?—I think it is quite possible. It is propaganda no doubt. I have no definite proof of it, but it is a reasonable suggestion to make.

E-4409. As regards the boycott of the broker referred to, was it not due to the fact that he tried to start a separate union?—I do not know, but there have been unions started from time to time of which we hear a good deal.

E-4410. The Seamen's Union object to the crew signing on in the ship. Would you have any objection to the crew being signed on in the shipping office itself?—It will dislocate the work. While the crews sign on the ship will be working cargo. Steam has to be maintained and ship has to be watched. We do not want casual labour to look after the ship while the crew are signed on.

E-4411. As a matter of fact the crew live round about the docks and it is much easier for them to sign on in the ship than in the shipping office which is sometimes not so near as the ship?—Yes, it is less expensive to them also.

E-4412. As regards the difference between Indian and European crews, would you give an example of how many European and Indian crews you would require for a standard ship?—There is a very considerable difference between the two. In the case of a ship of 8,100 tons dead weight, that ship

could be manned by 38 European crew including officers whereas it would require 80 to 90 Indian crew including 11 or 12 officers because you have wireless also now. It will be nearer 90 than 80 against 38 British.

E-4413. Could you give us exact numbers?—The firemen of course vary according to furnaces. But you can take the average crew for an ordinary standard type of cargo ship to be 25 to 26 lascars, 35 firemen and about 14 saloon ratings.

E-4414. That includes butlers, serangs and such other persons?—Yes; that is the actual lower deck ratings.

E-4415. That comes to 74?—Yes; and then you have got 12 Europeans.

E-4416. That comes to 86. For a boat of the same class you are able to carry on with about 38 Europeans?—Yes.

E-4417. So that, if we raise the pay of lascars to any extent we would get nearer the point at which it would pay to employ a European crew?—That is so.

E-4418. *Mr. Ahmed*: Then why do you not prefer to employ European crews?—There is no reason why we should. If the ships are trading in India, the Indian is more suitable; and of course the question of economy comes in. You cannot raise the wages to an extent which would stand in the way of operating your ships.

E-4419. *The Chairman*: We were consulting Captain Darvell yesterday and in particular directing ourselves to the possibility of reducing the number of seamen surplus to requirements, I will not say hanging about Calcutta but coming and going in the hope of obtaining employment, and he undertook to look into the question as to whether a limit of years of absence from the sea could be established. You yourself have also made the suggestion that to some extent the number of new certificates granted could be limited reasonably. Both these proposals are made with the object that those who remain as potential seamen should get a considerably increased chance of employment. Would you be willing to consult Captain Darvell to bring your experience to bear and see if some advance cannot be made in that direction, so that on the average you would bring the number of potential seamen more into relation with the actual numbers who have the chance of going on sea voyages?—I think we could do that. In fact, every proposal which the Shipping Master takes up he works in closest contact with the shipping companies, and we are indebted to him for all sorts of suggestions of that nature.

E-4420. You have agreed that there is something unsatisfactory in the present system because there are a very large number of men waiting for employment?—I think the question of unemployment is very much over-rated. When I used the term "people are unemployed" I did not mean "people who cannot obtain employment".

E-4421. We are told that the bulk of them are away in their country, following some occupation on the land or otherwise. But still they occasionally come to Calcutta in the hope of getting employment?—Yes; but when I offered 300 or 400 men daily employment they would not look at it. I cannot therefore say that the distress from unemployment is as great as it is made out. That is my point, and that is what I have tried to establish right through my evidence.

E-4422. I am not following that side of the question at all, but I am simply taking your own figures presented to us. You have agreed that something like 140,000 or 150,000 potential seamen are on the lists in Calcutta, and you agreed also that 50,000 is about the number who can have anything like continuity in sea-going employment. Those two figures are quite enough to show that practical men might put their heads together to relieve that situation. Although a large proportion of those may not be in the real sense of the word unemployed, and although they may be reluctant to take other kinds of shore jobs here and would rather wait in the hope of getting a job, still, I think you will agree, there is a problem which is worthy of attention?—I think so.

(The witness withdrew.)

**BENGAL**  
(Excluding Coalfields and the Doors)  
**SEVENTY-NINTH MEETING**  
**CALCUTTA**

Wednesday, 19th February 1930.

PRESENT:

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

<p>Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA, <i>Kt.</i>, K.C.S.I., O.I.E., Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, <i>Kt.</i>, C.B.E., Mr. A. G. CLOW, O.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.,</p>	}	<p>Mr. JOHN CLIFF. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A., Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., (<i>Medical Assessor</i>).</p>
<p>Mr. J. A. TASSIE, Vice-President, Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Mr. K. C. RAY CHAUDHURI, M.L.C. Maulvi LATAFAT HUSSAIN, M.L.C.</p>	}	} <i>Assistant Commissioners.</i>
<p>Miss CORNELIA SOBAWI, Bar.-at-Law, <i>Lady Assessor.</i></p>		
<p>Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S. Mr. A. DIBDIN.</p>	}	} <i>Joint Secretaries.</i>

**Mr. R. CHAKRAVARTI** (of the Mohini Mills, Ltd., Kushtia, Bengal), **Mr. U. M. BOSE**, **Mr. H. P. GHOSE**, and **Mr. J. H. SEN GUPTA**, representing the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.

E-4423. *The Chairman*: What are the membership and purposes of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce?—(*Mr. Chakravarti*) There are altogether about 300 members of the Chamber representing cotton, engineering, mercantile, banking and jute mill interests.

E-4424. Have you any specific recommendations to make with regard to the organization of labour?—They should be educated; they should have their own men to guide them and not outsiders.

E-4425. Would you suggest that the good organization of labour must wait until primary education is general in this province?—No, but they should be sufficiently educated and that as soon as practicable.

E-4426. Is not that putting off to a rather distant future the possibilities of the proper organization of labour?—No, not necessarily.

E-4427. Has your Chamber itself taken any steps to promote the organization of labour?—No, not yet.

E-4428. You have no specific suggestion to make to the Commission?—No.

E-4429. Do the members of your chamber recognize such unions as there are and negotiate with them in labour matters?—No. There has been no occasion for it.

E-4430. Then at present you are really without orderly contact with labour?—Yes.

E-4431. Have any of your members made endeavours, within their own factories, to bring the labourers into contact with the management by means of works committees or works councils or any similar organization?—The labourers in our mill (the Mohini Mills) come direct to us; they have not any sort of committee or anything of that kind; whatever grievances they have, they put to us directly; they have no regular organized committees.

E-4432. Would you not agree that even in the absence of general education in any body of workers, there are usually some more intelligent than the others who might be their natural leaders within the industry?—Yes, that is my idea, that there are a good many intelligent men among them who can make them go according to their own dictation instead of being led by outsiders.

E-4433. Would it not be possible to bring together those more intelligent men amongst the workers to form some sort of committee or council?—I think that would be possible.

E-4434. And that might make the beginnings of some organization such as you indicate in your memorandum?—Yes, that will be just making the first beginnings of organization.

E-4435. Would it not have this advantage, that instead of the individual presenting any grievances to the employer, there would at any rate be a group of the more intelligent workers who would be in a position to act together in making representations to the employers as to the conditions of their work, and so forth?—Yes; they would form a sort of group, and if they have any grievance they can put it before the managing agents of the employer.

E-4436. But so far no steps in that direction have been taken?—No.

E-4437. It is left entirely to the individual to bring his grievances, if he has courage to do so, to the employer?—Yes, at present they are doing it themselves.

E-4438. Have you any remedy to suggest to us for removing the blot of bad housing from the industries of Bengal?—The mills should provide for better housing.

E-4439. Where these industries stretch for some 20 miles up and down the river, do you think the municipal organizations as they at present exist are capable of dealing with this big problem?—I do not think they have regulations for the building of houses.

E-4440. Do you think re-organization of local government which might establish one great authority outside the city of Calcutta covering a large area might be in a better position to deal with these problems than the various little municipalities?—Yes, if there were provincial legislation that would help. Government should make rules amending the Bengal Municipal Act as regards building regulations. Where there is a municipality it should look to these things, and where there is no municipality, Government could make regulations; Government should help them with finance and regulations.

E-4441. You suggest it should be possible to apply the powers of the Land Acquisition Act to the purchase of land for housing, whether by the municipalities or by the individual millowners?—Yes, acquire the land on behalf of the municipality or the mills.

E-4442. Presumably you would give the first opportunity to the municipality to do the building; if they were unable to do it you would provide that the mills might use that Act provided their housing schemes were approved by the local authority?—Yes.

E-4443. In order to prevent strikes and lock-outs you appear to advocate what is commonly called compulsory arbitration. Has your committee actually examined the results of such a scheme? How would you compel a millowner to keep his mill open against his will if he was making a loss?—If he is making a loss he should not be compelled to keep his mill open.

E-4444. If a body of workers were determined not to work how would you compel them to go back to work under the order of a court of compulsory arbitration?—If they go on strike without cause they should be compelled to go back to work.

E-4445. How would you compel them to go back to work?—By legislation.

E-4446. But legislation is just a piece of paper with something written on it; it does not in itself do anything?—Government have a long and strong hand to make them amenable to rules; it can be done with the help of the authorities.

E-4447. It appears from your own memorandum that you have a sickness rate which fluctuates very violently when there are epidemics?—Yes.

E-4448. In any attempted form of sickness insurance that would be one of the factors which would have to be considered in making the actuarial basis for such a scheme?—The epidemics are irregular in their occurrence; it is not necessary that there should be any insurance for sickness.

E-4449. Has any estimate been made of the times of occurrence of these epidemics or their magnitude?—No.

E-4450. Is the provident fund system which you tell us you have in your mill a compulsory provision applicable to the whole of your workers?—All the employees earning more than Rs. 10 a month have got to subscribe one anna in the rupee.

E-4451. There is a deduction at the time of the payment of their wages of one anna per rupee?—Yes.

E-4452. Have your workers made any objection to that compulsory deduction?—No; they are willing that the deduction should be made; they understand that it is a saving for their own benefit.

E-4453. What benefits do they draw from that fund?—They do not get any benefits but in times of necessity they can withdraw money up to two-thirds of their contribution. This scheme has been in existence for twenty-two years.

E-4454. Have you any figures to show how much your work-people on an average have accumulated in that fund?—Those who are very old get about Rs. 500 when they retire. Many of them withdraw sums of money from time to time in order to buy land or make a new house. When an employee leaves our service or dies the whole of his contribution is paid plus our contribution and interest.

E-4455. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: Have you any suggestions to make with a view to prevent strikes occurring before negotiations?—Yes; the workers should put their grievances before the employer.

E-4456. But if they are not organized how can they do that?—They can select some of their men to represent their point of view.

E-4457. But they must be organized to select some men to represent their grievances?—Yes, so long as there is no organized trade union.

E-4458. Then you would advocate constitution of trade unions?—Yes.

E-4459. What would be the authority who would enforce the decisions of the compulsory arbitration which you advocate?—Government.

E-4460. That is to say by physical force?—Something like that.

E-4461. You seem to think it is desirable to compel people to work against their wish. You say that the trade unions are controlled by a few outsiders who have no direct or indirect touch with the mass of the labourers. Have the managing agents or the employers any direct touch with their own labour?—We have. I do not know whether they have in the jute mills; probably they have not. We have direct touch with our labour because our office is in the mill and the men can put their grievances before us.

E-4462. Is the understanding between yourselves and labour much better because of that touch?—Yes.

E-4463. You say that labour leaders wholly unconnected with labour and ignorant of actual labour conditions lead labour down a precipice and in some cases exploit them for their own advantage. What are the advantages which they secure to which you refer?—They used to pocket the money taken from these labourers.

E-4464. Can you give us any evidence to show that these leaders obtain money from labour in order to lead them to strike?—It is very difficult to get direct evidence to that effect.

E-4465. You have no evidence?—No: it is all hearsay.

E-4466. I suppose you appreciate that it would take a long time to make compulsory primary education effective in India?—Yes.

E-4467. Can you suggest any remedies in the meantime?—Yes, not to make them educated in A, B, C, but to give them general education as to what is good and what is bad with regard to strikes.

E-4468. Who do you think will carry out the distribution of pictures, literature and give popular lectures and talks to labour such as you advocate?—Dr. Bentley is giving lectures with regard to health and that sort of thing;

the Government should arrange for the exhibition of pictures with regard to health, sanitation and other education; the millowners could help by forming groups.

E-4469. Do you wish to throw all this on the Government?—Government should do it.

E-4470. What are you referring to when you say that Government have adopted various measures which are designed to benefit labour at the sacrifice of the interests of capital?—International Conventions reducing the hours of work and things of that kind.

E-4471. Apparently your panacea is that the cost of measures for the benefit of labour should be borne by Government and the general public?—Legislation fixing a minimum age for the employment of young persons and reducing the hours of labour has adversely affected production.

E-4472. *Mr. Clow*: The convention as to the minimum age to which you refer only relates to trimmers and stokers?—Formerly the minimum age was twelve, but now it has been raised to fifteen.

E-4473. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: To what are you referring when you say that national governments in other countries are adopting various measures to stimulate the progress of industry?—In Japan they have a system of compulsory education of workmen.

E-4474. It would take a considerable time for compulsory education to increase the efficiency of the workers. As a matter of comparison what have other national governments done which the Government of India has not done?—Compulsory primary education and commercial training.

E-4475. *Mr. Ahmed*: There is a commercial school in Calcutta?—Yes, in Corporation Street, but that is not meant for workers.

E-4476. *Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola*: You have nothing to add to what you have already said with regard to what other national governments have been doing in this connexion?—No.

E-4477. What are the indigenous industrial concerns which you say have disappeared in consequence of the policy adopted by Government?—The mercantile marine.

E-4478. Do you say that is a result of measures adopted by Government to benefit labour?—No; it is due to the indifference of Government; European companies reduced their rates so much that these people could not compete.

E-4479. Is there anything else?—No, nothing else.

E-4480. *Mr. Clow*: You have given a list of ten International Labour Conventions; could you indicate the ones which in your opinion have very adversely affected the industries of which you speak?—Limiting working hours, limiting the age of children.

E-4481. The convention with regard to the minimum age of children was not ratified and it is not contained in your list. Are there any others?—No.

E-4482. You remember that the ratification of the convention as to hours of labour was passed by the unanimous vote of the Legislative Assembly?—Yes.

E-4483. Do you suggest that the working hours should not have been limited to 60?—No, they could easily be raised a little more.

E-4484. What do you think the limit should be?—At least 66; workmen can very easily work 11½ hours a day.

E-4485. On what do you base that opinion; have you tried it?—No, I have not tried it. Before 1921 they used to work twelve hours a day and they did not complain.

E-4486. But were they really working twelve hours?—Yes.

E-4487. Is it not a fact that the ratification of the convention followed a series of strikes throughout the country in favour of ten hours a day?—No.

E-4488. There were a number of strikes throughout the country?—Not in our place; in our place they used to work twelve hours.

E-4489. I am not referring particularly to your mill, but there were several important strikes in favour of 10-hour day?—Not in Bengal.



E-4490. Why do you say that the payment of wages fifteen days after the end of the month is for the good of the workers?—Because otherwise they squander the money.

E-4491. But they get the money ultimately; how does it prevent them from squandering it?—Otherwise they will squander it every week on Sundays.

E-4492. Why should they squander it more if you paid it on the fifth day of the month instead of on the fifteenth?—It is necessary to pay it on the fifteenth in order that the wages may be calculated.

E-4493. Then it is not necessary for the good of the workers?—Not always.

E-4494. *Miss Power*: Pending the inauguration of a general educational programme by the provinces do you consider it is the duty of the employer to provide educational facilities?—In the present state of trade depression I do not think the mills are quite in a position to provide for it.

E-4495. It would appear from your memorandum that as a chamber you are in favour of employers providing educational facilities; is that so?—Yes, employers should help to some extent.

E-4496. Then your chamber feels that they should help but that they are not in a position to do so at the moment?—At present they are not, but they should do so as far as possible.

E-4497. Do you mean by providing schools for their own half-timers?—Yes, and for adults also if possible.

E-4498. When you speak of reducing the hours of labour in the jute industry and in the mines are you referring to the number of hours permissible in a day or a week?—In a week.

E-4499. Not in a day?—No.

E-4500. I do not quite follow why you suggest a reduction of the number of hours per week in the mines; are you not referring to the number of hours per day?—No doubt, it should be reduced but I have no experience of coal mines.

E-4501. In view of what you say as to the fixation of minimum wages, you would appear to suggest it is impossible to have any minimum wage machinery unless both employers and employees are entirely organized?—Yes; there should be a mutual arrangement between the two in order that there may be no loss to the employers or the employees; one should look to the interests of both.

E-4502. You suggest in your memorandum that it is impossible to have such machinery unless the workers are entirely organized; do you not feel that minimum wage fixing machinery is one of the methods of protecting the workers who are less capable of looking after themselves, that is to say the less well organized? But industry must be able to pay it.

E-4503. But do you not agree that if an industry is completely organized it will be able to look after its own interests without the necessity for such machinery?—Different rules may be made for different trades.

E-4504. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say that the workmen both adult and boys will not take to education unless the law compels them to do so?—Yes, that is my personal experience; they do not want to go to school.

E-4505. In the memorandum of the Chamber of Commerce it is said that in the jute mill industry, municipalities do not encourage expenditure on education as this would increase the taxes. Is that the case?—May I refer you to the Bulletin on Indian Industries and Labour?

E-4506. This is taken from some other publication, is it?—Yes.

E-4507. But if you say that from your own experience workmen whether adults or boys will not take to education unless the law compels them, how would the municipalities be able to compel them to go to school?—There should be legislation making primary education compulsory.

E-4508. But there is no difference in that respect between jute mill areas and your cotton mill areas, is there?—I do not know the mentality of the people on that side.

E-4509. Do you think that the people in the villages suffer more from diseases than people living in the industrial towns?—Yes, they are careless about their health and there are no sanitary arrangements.

E-4510. It is stated in the memorandum of the chamber "There can be no doubt that the establishment of public employment agencies would improve the conditions attendant on the recruitment of labour". Later on it is said "There is no unemployment". If that is so, what are you going to do with employment agencies?—They will be useful for filling casual vacancies caused when some of the workers go home.

E-4511. Would it be advisable to have an employment agency for your mills?—No. We do not need it.

E-4512. Who does need it?—I do not know whether the jute mills do.

E-4513. *Mr. Ahmed*: You have said that education is necessary in order to remove illiteracy, owing to which the workers in India cannot lift themselves up to the level of the workers in other countries. You want compulsory education?—Yes.

E-4514. If *Mr. Gokhale's Education Bill of 1910* had been passed in the Imperial Council it would have been beneficial both to the country and to the masses, would it not?—Elementary education is needed.

E-4515. You think it is high time that Government should take up the question?—Yes.

E-4516. Are you of the opinion that the primary Education Bill which has been pending during the last two years will be of the same value as *Mr. Gokhale's Bill* would have been?—The primary point is that the labourer should be educated.

E-4517. You think there should be compulsory education among the masses?—Yes, if it is made compulsory amongst the masses the workers will be benefited.

E-4518. You referred to indebtedness and also to the want of proper nutrition on the part of the workers and their getting adulterated food. Do you mean that their want of proper nutrition is due to the fact of their indebtedness?—It is difficult for them to make both ends meet sometimes, especially when there is sickness among the family. Indebtedness is for not being economic.

E-4519. I take it that they cannot make both ends meet because they do not get enough wages; they do not get a living wage in order to maintain themselves decently. Is that what you mean?—Yes.

E-4520. Therefore, it is necessary that sufficient remuneration should be given to them in order that they can make both ends meet?—Yes.

E-4521. You say that it is difficult to collect statistics. You are, therefore, not in a position to say that there are more debts in the rural areas than in the mill areas?—I cannot say.

E-4522. Do you give medical assistance to your mill hands who live away from the mill area?—Yes.

E-4523. Do you send your doctor to those of your mill hands who live outside the mill area, and keep records about them?—Yes, we do. We spend over Rs. 3,500 a year on medical assistance because we think it is to our advantage to do so. That is a somewhat considerable sum for our size of mill and the capital invested.

E-4524. When you say "The chief complaints of the labourers seem to be that they do not get fair and adequate wages, and that they are over-worked and ill-housed", do you mean that they are working more than ten hours, or do you mean that they are working very hard?—They cannot be made to work longer than ten hours under the Factories Act.

E-4525. Then what do you mean by "over-worked"?—That is the complaint of the workers. They want to work shorter hours and get more wages. They only look at it from their side of the matter.

E-4526. You state that "The leaders from amongst them fail to control the policy of the union effectively". Why do you say that? Is it merely a guess?—The recent jute strike proves that. The leaders tried to stop the strike, but they could not. The workers got out of control.

E-4527. Did they not listen to their leaders?—No.

E-4528. Was the strike not terminated in the workmen's favour; did they not get an increase of wages?—That was offered from the beginning. They did not actually know what their grievances were.

E-4529. Before the strike they did not get anything extra for additional work. They got it after the strike. The strike was terminated because the

employers agreed to pay the workers what they wanted. Their demands were satisfied. Is it not the fact?—I do not know about that; I am not concerned with jute.

E-4530. *Mr. Cliff*: As to what has been stated in your memorandum in respect of sex ratio in the jute mills, I want to know whether the statement contained therein is the result of the close personal knowledge of the jute mill area?—No.

E-4531. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have relied for your information on the books written by Miss Broughton and Miss Curjel?—Yes.

E-4532. And not from your personal knowledge of the conditions?—No.

E-4533. *Colonel Russel*: You say that there is no adequate system of registering births and deaths. Why do you say that?—There is no regular legislation compelling people to register births and deaths. If any body does not register a birth or a death, the municipality or the police do not prosecute.

E-4534. They have powers to prosecute?—Yes, they have, but it is very seldom that those powers are exercised.

E-4535. The system is there, but the practice is not there?—Quite so.

E-4536. Dealing with diet you say "It is entirely unscientific and possesses nutritional defects". Where did you get that quotation from?—From Miss Broughton's and Miss Curjel's books.

E-4537. Have you any facts to support that statement?—The food which is generally supplied in the market is wanting in nutrition. There is adulterated milk, ghee and so on.

E-4538. Have you any proof of that?—There have been many prosecutions.

E-4539. You say that working conditions are not satisfactory, but you do not give any details?—That is a quotation from Miss Broughton's book.

E-4540. You say that drunkenness and illicit relations are very prevalent. Have you any figures to prove that?—No, that is again taken from Miss Curjel's book.

E-4541. Dealing with medical facilities you say that the provision for medical relief in the mills is often unsatisfactory; in what way is it unsatisfactory?—That is a quotation from Miss Broughton's book.

E-4542. You say there is little or no provision for women doctors and trained midwives. Have you any women workers in your mill?—We have only five or six women employed in the spinning section.

E-4543. Are there any children in your mill?—Yes, half-timers. The mill doctor attends to them.

E-4544. You say that bathing facilities are by no means ideal. You also say that in connexion with Indian labouring women the lack of personal hygiene is due to the lack of adequate bathing arrangements, and you suggest as a solution of that, that hygienic propaganda is necessary. Would it not be better to provide bathing facilities first and then do the propoganda work?—Yes.

E-4545. *Miss Sorabji*: You have already been asked questions about the illiteracy and ignorance of the workers. From your remarks I gather that you differentiate between illiteracy and ignorance, and you recognize that to remove illiteracy would take a long time but that you might begin removing ignorance almost at once. Only your view is that Government should do it. Would it not be possible to consider this suggestion? Could the need not be met by a board of improvement or an improvement committee got together by the employers on which perhaps you might get the services of an officer of public health for teaching sanitation, as you yourself have suggested, and also the services of some body from a philanthropic society like the Y.M.C.A. or Toc. H. for teaching the duties and responsibilities of citizenship?—Your suggestion really amounts to the formation of a sort of welfare committee. I think that can be done.

E-4546. The employers would make an immediate beginning in that direction?—Of course, they should be helped by Government.

E-4547. Would it not be sufficient if Government were to give you one of their public health propaganda officers to give lectures?—That would do.

E-4548. So that you could start a committee of improvement to put this programme into operation almost immediately?—Yes.

E-4549. *Maulvi Latafat Hussain*: In your memorandum you say that you will support any measure which will be for the amelioration of the conditions of Indian labour. Do you not think it would be advantageous if a co-operative bank for the use of the workers in every mill was started?—Yes.

E-4550. You say that the chief complaints of labourers seem to be that they do not get fair and adequate wage and that they are overworked. Do you not agree that their wages are inadequate and that some improvement in that direction should be effected?—The workers will never be satisfied with the wages they are earning, but you should see whether the industry can meet their demands.

E-4551. The workers are already overworked and yet you suggested that they can work for twelve hours?—The jute mill workers complain that they are overworked, but I think they can work for eleven hours easily without any detriment to their health.

E-4552. Again you say: "The committee would mention in this connexion that the attitude of labour also as expressed through their unions and leaders has not been conducive to the best interests of capital". What do you actually mean by this statement; what help do you expect from the labour leaders?—They only look to the interests of the labour; they do not see whether the employers are in a position to meet their demands; they ask for more than the capitalists could pay.

E-4553. *Mr. Ray Chaudhuri*: You are very much interested in cotton industry and you have some experience of cotton industry in Bombay, is it not?—Yes.

E-4554. In your factory what is the number of half-timers working now?—89 are working to-day.

E-4555. In the memorandum of the chamber you have advocated compulsory primary education. Do I take it that you want that the employers should be made liable to provide educational facilities for half-timers?—To some extent, but not to the fullest extent.

E-4556. On the question of sickness insurance, do you agree that some scheme of sickness insurance should be introduced for the benefit of the workers?—I do not think it is necessary because sickness is only casual.

E-4557. But all the same sickness is there?—Yes, but why should every body pay premium?

E-4558. I am coming to the question of payment later on. But do you approve of a scheme of sickness insurance which will benefit the workers from the point of view of medical aid?—They are getting medical aid now free of charge. They may not like to pay any contribution.

E-4559. At present you are spending Rs. 3,000 a year for medical assistance. Is it your opinion that the workers will refuse to contribute even a very small share to a sickness insurance fund?—It will create some hardship to them because they are now getting free medical help.

E-4560. But if it is made compulsory they will have to pay, and the hardship will disappear?—Of course, in that case they will have to pay, but all the same the hardship will not disappear.

E-4561. In your mill have you had any cases under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No. So far we have had only one accident; that happened only a month ago.

E-4562. You think that the Workmen's Compensation Act is beneficial to the worker, especially in cases of fatal accidents?—Yes.

E-4563. And so the Convention of the International Labour Conference regarding further extension of the present Act would prove beneficial. In cases of fatal accidents the amount of compensation given at present is thirty months' wages, and the International Conference insist that the amount of compensation should be greater. I take it that you would have no objection to that?—I should think that what is given now is quite adequate.

E-4564. You said that some of these conventions impose a burden on the employers; you referred in particular to the hours of work. May we know how many hours you work your factory?—Sixty hours a week.

E-4565. Have you ever worked less than sixty hours?—Yes; but at present we are working sixty hours.

E-4566. But you have worked less than sixty hours?—On account of *Ramzan* we are now working only 9½ hours a day.

E-4567. Do you not think that shortage of hours is conducive to the health and efficiency of the workers?—No. They can very well work eleven hours.

E-4568. In this climate?—Yes.

E-4569. Do you provide housing for all your workmen in Kushtiya?—No, only to a small proportion; most of the workers live in the surrounding villages.

E-4570. Can we take it that about 15 per cent of the workers are housed by you?—Two-hundred and thirty eight workers live in the company's quarters.

E-4571. What rent do you charge?—Rs. 1-12-0 for single quarters, and —The room is ten feet by eight feet with five feet verandah.

E-4572. You charge Rs. 1-12-0 for a single room in the village Kushtiya? —The room is ten feet by eight feet with five feet verandah.

E-4573. Have you got a municipality in Kushtiya?—Yes.

E-4574. Would you agree that all the municipalities in Bengal which are outside Calcutta should have larger powers to acquire land for the housing of the workers?—Yes, they should where there are industrial concerns.

E-4575. Have you any workmen's union in Kushtiya?—No.

E-4576. Have you had any strikes in Kushtiya?—We had one in 1926. That was a communal strike and not an industrial one.

E-4577. But you know that in industrial areas there have been what are known as lightning strikes, that is to say, strikes take place without the employers knowing what the grievances of their employees are. Do you think that in the absence of a trade union there should be some sort of a *panchayat* or works committee consisting of the representatives of workmen and the supervising staff, which can look into the grievances of the employees?—Yes.

E-4578. You think that such a committee would be a good thing?—It will be beneficial.

E-4579. The function of such a works committee will be to hold occasional meetings at which the grievances of the workers would be discussed?—Yes, and to put those grievances before the employers.

E-4580. Are your workers in Kushtiya heavily indebted?—Not many; some of them who have no good moral character are.

E-4581. Did the Government co-operative societies department write to you to start a co-operative credit society for the benefit of the workers?—No.

E-4582. Do you not think that such a society would be beneficial to the workers?—I do not think they need it. There are very few who borrow money.

E-4583. That may be so as far as your workers are concerned. But you know that many workers in industrial areas are heavily indebted. I want to know the opinion of the chamber as a whole whether they do not think that co-operative credit societies are beneficial to the workers?—Certainly they are beneficial.

E-4584. You think that the employers should advance some money to these co-operative credit societies?—They should help.

E-4585. I think you are aware that one of the Conventions of the International Labour Conference is that there should be some sort of legislative machinery established whereby the conditions of each industry could be investigated and a minimum wage fixed according to the needs of the workmen of that industry. Do you not think that in Bengal a machinery of that kind will be extremely useful both from the point of view of the employers as well as the employees, in finding out, after proper enquiry, what minimum wage should be fixed?—Yes, provided the enquiry is not one-sided.

E-4586. *Mr. Tassie*: You refer in your memorandum to the insanitary condition of the *bustis* adjoining the mill area. The Commission have seen some of these *bustis* round about Howrah and elsewhere. They are almost as bad as the worst slums at Home. A good many of the members of your Chamber are landowners and property owners, are they not?—Some of them are.

E-4587. Have they ever gone into the question as to whether it is possible to build a sanitary *busti* that can be let out to the workers at an economic rent?—(*Mr. Ghose*) An experiment in that direction was made by the late Rai Sathanath Ray Bahadur, who was the Honorary Secretary of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce. He built what are known as model *bustis* in Calcutta for workmen, but the experiment did not prove successful. These quarters had to be pulled down to make room for the Ray Mansions in Elgin road.

E-4588. This is the only experiment that you know of?—Yes.

E-4589. *The Chairman*: In what respect was it unsuccessful?—It did not pay an economic rent.

E-4590. *Mr. Tassie*: In your memorandum you say: "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". What do you suggest Government should do to help the industries?—(*Mr. Chakravarti*) There should be legislation for putting tariff duties and such other things when necessary. As far as cotton is concerned, I can say from my experience that we have to meet a heavy competition with Japan.

E-4591. But cotton is helped to a certain extent just now, is it not?—Yes, but it is not sufficient.

E-4592. And steel is also helped to a certain extent, is it not?—Yes.

E-4593. Both those industries are in a very bad way just now?—No. The Bombay millowners are in a very wretched condition.

E-4594. If you come to this side, the chief industries are jute and tea, and for the last five or six years they have been more or less paying very well, yet they are not assisted indeed—they pay export taxes?—Tea is not in a very good condition now; neither jute is.

E-4595. But both have done very well in the last few years. Surely with this before you it seems that industries that are unassisted by Government do better than those that are?—What we say is that what has been given is not sufficient.

E-4596. You referred to the indebtedness among the labour population. Would you say that indebtedness is worse among the labourers than it is amongst the *badralok* class or the ordinary agricultural population?—Yes, because they do not save a single pice.

E-4597. Do the agriculturists save any money?—They are more economical than these labourers.

E-4598. But they come from the same class, do they not?—Yes, almost the same class.

E-4599. Is it not a fact that the *badralok* class, that is the *baboo* class, are supposed to be very much indebted?—The middle class are more indebted.

E-4600. So, indebtedness is not confined only to the labour class?—No, but they pay a very heavy rate of interest. The *badralok* class is indebted for want, while the workers are for want of economy.

E-4601. As regards education, I notice that like any one else you are in favour of free education. Do you not think that if there was less education, the men from the intelligent class who are now overloading the professions of law and politics would go into industrial careers and provide a more intelligent class of weavers?—I do not refer to higher education. It should be only general education. My intention is not to make them M.A.'s or B.A.'s or lawyers.

E-4602. But do you not think that that is the effect of education here?—No.

E-4603. It is not right, but that is what happens?—No doubt it happens, but what I advocate is only general education among the workers.

E-4604. *The Chairman*: You are representing the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, is it not?—Yes.

E-4605. There is also, I think, an Indian Chamber of Commerce?—Yes.

E-4606. What is the difference between the two?—The two are separate bodies.

E-4607. Do they represent the same or different interests?—Almost the same, but they have got different members.

E-4608. *Mr. Tassie*: Is it not a fact that the Indian Chamber of Commerce is mostly composed of upcountry men?—Yes, they are mostly Gujeratis and Marwaris.

E-4609. Whereas yours is very largely a Bengali Chamber?—Yes. There are some Gujeratis too. There are some members who are common to both the Chambers. For instance, Mr. Birla is a member of our Chamber as well as of the other Chamber.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

**ROYAL COMMISSION**  
ON  
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