

INDIA.

Committee appointed to consider  
the grievances of Piece-Workers  
in the Government of India Presses.  
1921.

Report

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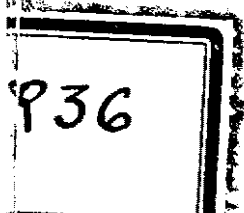
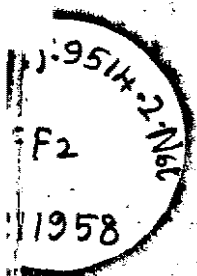
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# PIECE-WORKERS' COMMITTEE

1922.

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## REPORT.



PIECE-WORKERS' COMMITTEE, 1922.

*President.*

SIR VITHALDAS DAMODHAR THACKERSEY, K.T., M.L.A.

*Member.*

THE HON'BLE MR. GANESH SRIKRISHNA KHAPARDE.

*Member and Secretary.*

MR. F. D. ASCOLI, I.C.S.

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## APPENDIX A.

*Comparative statement showing the cost of supervision and labour establishment in the Calcutta and Delhi presses, November-December 1921.*

## CALCUTTA.

*Supervising establishment (Salaried).*

	Rs.
6 Overseers .. .. .	2,550
35 Case foremen, section and assistant section holders..	4,105
6 Other foremen .. .. .	510
2 Mechanical engineers .. .. .	462
32 Computers .. .. .	2,031
2 Checkers .. .. .	118
<hr/> 83 Total cost of supervision .. .. .	<hr/> 9,776

*Labour establishment.**I.—Salaried.*

204 Readers, revisers and copy holders .. .. .	13,860
16 Lino and Mono operators .. .. .	1,365
9 Mono casters .. .. .	460
24 Press and machinemen .. .. .	450
18 Type suppliers .. .. .	364
30 Warehouse and binding men .. .. .	607
73 Foundry, stores men, etc. .. .. .	1,962
22 Duftries .. .. .	385
184 Forme carriers, mechanics, coolies, etc. .. .. .	3,286
<hr/> 580 Total .. .. .	<hr/> 22,739

*II.—Piece-workers.*

501 Compositors .. .. .	19,731
13 Impositors .. .. .	582
77 Distributors .. .. .	1,814
147 Pressmen, inkers and fly boys .. .. .	4,255
80 Warehousemen .. .. .	3,319
304 Binders .. .. .	12,743
104 Foundrymen .. .. .	2,752
<hr/> 1,226 Total .. .. .	<hr/> 45,196
<hr/> 1,806 GRAND TOTAL .. .. .	<hr/> 67,935

Percentage of cost of supervision (including computers) to labour .. 14.39

Percentage of cost of computers and checkers to piece establishment. .. 2.77

## DELHI.

*Supervising establishment (Salaried).*

	Rs.
1 Overseer .. .. .	380
16 Case foremen, section and assistant section holders ..	1,855
2 Other foremen .. .. .	144
1 Time keeper .. .. .	65
9 Computers .. .. .	485
1 Checker .. .. .	75
30	Total .. .. .
	3,004

*Labour establishment.**I.—Salaried.*

65 Readers, revisers and copy holders .. .. .	4,787
6 Lino operators .. .. .	600
9 Machinemen .. .. .	386
17 Proof pressmen, etc. .. .. .	381
4 Type suppliers .. .. .	92
37 Forme carriers, coolies, etc. .. .. .	581
4 Inkers .. .. .	100
4 Fly boys .. .. .	56
3 Mechanics .. .. .	120
151	Total .. .. .
	7,103

*II.—Piece-workers.*

212 Compositors .. .. .	11,641
4 Impositors .. .. .	256
41 Distributors .. .. .	1,100
19 Pressmen .. .. .	593
49 Warehousemen .. .. .	1,305
325	Total .. .. .
	14,905
476	GRAND TOTAL .. .. .
	22,008

Percentage of cost of supervision (including computers) to labour 13·64

Percentage of cost of computers and checkers to piece establishment 3·75

## APPENDIX B.

List of compositors who have left the Government of India Presses (including deaths in 4 years 1918—21).

Total staff of compositors— 501.

	Total	Annual average.	Percentage of staff.
			Per cent.
Under 1 year's service .. .. .	202	60·5	10
1 and under 2 years' service .. .. .	59	14·75	3
2 and under 3 do. .. .. .	37	9·25	2
3 and under 4 do. .. .. .	19	4·75	1
4 and under 5 do. .. .. .	14	3·50	$\frac{1}{2}$
5 and under 6 do. .. .. .	19	4·75	$\frac{1}{2}$
6 and under 7 do. .. .. .	6	1·50	$\frac{1}{10}$
7 and under 8 do. .. .. .	2	·50	$\frac{1}{10}$
8 and under 9 do. .. .. .	3	·75	$\frac{1}{10}$
9 and under 10 do. .. .. .	2	·50	$\frac{1}{10}$
10 and under 11 do. .. .. .	1	·25	$\frac{1}{10}$
11 and under 12 do. .. .. .	1	·25	$\frac{1}{10}$
12 and under 13 do. .. .. .	1	·25	$\frac{1}{10}$
13 and under 14 do. .. .. .	2	·50	$\frac{1}{10}$
14 and under 15 do. .. .. .	..	..	..
15 and under 16 do. .. .. .	1	·25	$\frac{1}{10}$
16 and under 17 do. .. .. .	..	..	..
17 and under 18 do. .. .. .	1	·25	$\frac{1}{10}$
18 and under 19 do. .. .. .	..	..	..
19 and under 20 do. .. .. .	..	..	..
20 and under 21 do. .. .. .	..	..	..
21 and under 22 do. .. .. .	..	..	..
22 and under 23 do. .. .. .	..	..	..
23 and under 24 do. .. .. .	1	·25	$\frac{1}{10}$
24 and under 25 do. .. .. .	1	·25	$\frac{1}{10}$
25 and over .. .. .	..	..	..
<b>TOTAL</b> .. .. .	<b>372</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>18</b>

89 left in 1918.	50 under 1 year.	12 under 2 years.
101 left in 1919.	56 under 1 year.	19 under 2 years.
77 left in 1920.	46 under 1 year.	10 under 2 years.
105 left in 1921.	50 under 1 year.	18 under 2 years.

Proportion of men under 2 years to total who left :—

1918	Per cent.	1919	Per cent.	1920	Per cent.	1921	Per cent.
..	70	..	74	..	73	..	65

The smaller number who left during 1920 is due to the closing of the press during the strike in that year.

*Resignations.*

Total 8 ..	1918	..	..	5 men (2 under 1 year, 1 under 2 years, 1 under 6 years, 1 under 19 years).
	1919	..	..	2 men (1 under 1 year, 1 under 4 years).
	1920	..	..	Nil.
	1921	..	..	1 (under 7 years).

## DISSENTING MINUTE OF THE HON'BLE MR. G. S. KHAPARDE.

I regret my inability to agree with the more important conclusions arrived at by my colleagues of the Piece-workers' Committee, and embodied by them in their report, so I have signed it subject to the minute which I write now. I shall divide it into three parts. In the first I shall propound the view which commends itself to me as correct. In the second I shall endeavour as briefly as I can to indicate the reasons which lead me to a view different from that of the other members of the Committee on matters of principle and in the third part I shall point out the ways and means to carry out the recommendation which I have the honour to make. They will be found to meet the wishes of piece-workers and effect economies which Government desires, without sacrificing efficiency in any way.

## PART I.

2. There was trouble in the Government presses at Simla, Delhi and Calcutta in 1920. At Simla at any rate the piece-workers thought it was a case of lock-out and the Hon'ble Sir Thomas Holland, the then member for Commerce, maintained that it was a case of a strike. So on 14th September of that year the following resolution was moved in the old Indian Legislative Council :—

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council the appointment of a mixed Committee of officials and non-officials to investigate and report on the causes of the troubles in the Government presses at Simla, Delhi, and Calcutta, and propose remedial measures.”

During the debate on this resolution Sir Thomas Holland admitted that the system, as it obtained before 15th July 1920, was faulty and added that he had introduced a new system since that date and he wished to give a trial to it. “ I have told the men repeatedly ” said he “ that if the terms sanctioned in the Government Resolution of 15th July do not demonstrate that they would get higher wages for shorter hours of work, I would tear up the Government Resolution and that I would revise the rates and again revise them until the men demonstrate (acknowledge ?) that they are able with these terms, to earn a decent living by working during . . . . . decent hours ” . . . . . and in winding up the debate he added “ I promise the men that I will tear up the Government Resolution if they do not get better income for shorter hours of work ” and concluded “ next year after these men are back at work, I am quite willing to lay the whole result before a committee of the council to allow that committee to judge whether I have been fair to the workers.” . . . . .

A year passed over these events and in the interval the Hon'ble Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandy in the Council of State and Mr. Neogi, M.L.A., in the Indian Legislative Assembly put questions but the complaints of the piece-workers remained unredressed. So on 30th August 1921 the following resolution was sent in :—

“ This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that either the piece system at present obtaining in Government presses be abolished and the employees be converted into Government



servants or a mixed committee of officials and non-officials be appointed to consider the grievances of the employees and propose remedies."

This resolution the Government was pleased to accept and the present Committee of piece-workers was constituted.

3. The points for determination therefore are :—

- (i) Does the system introduced by Government of India Resolution of 15th July 1920 give the piece-workers higher wages with shorter hours of work ?
- (ii) Are the conditions introduced by the said Resolution such as to enable the workers "to earn a decent living by working during decent hours" ? In other words do they earn a living wage ?
- (iii) What are the grievances of the workers ?
- (iv) What are the remedies proposed ?
- (v) How are the remedies proposed to be carried out and applied ?

4. To properly understand the significance of the first point mentioned above, one must recall the circumstances that all the employees of the Government presses at Simla, Delhi and Calcutta fall naturally into two classes, viz., (1) salaried, i.e., paid fixed wages by month, and (2) piece-workers, paid according to the work turned out by them, at rates fixed when the piece system was first introduced without giving them any allowance for Sunday or other days when the press is closed. The status of the former is that of Government servants governed by Civil Service Regulations, while that of the latter is of a very nondescript character. They may be regarded as petty contractors in so far as they are paid by the piece. They become day labourer when they are paid so much per hour when they are doing what is called time work. They are sub-divided into permanent and temporary and those falling under the first sub-division get a sort of pension calculated on last six years' average earnings at the end of twenty-five years of approved service, while the temporary hands are entitled to no pension. The leave allowances are not admissible for either classes of these piece-workers.

In this enquiry we are concerned with piece-workers alone. With the salaried hands we have nothing to do except in so far as their duties bring them into contact with the piece-workers, and the duties of both become inter-dependent and affect the piece-workers in their wages and efficiency.

Between these two classes of employees, viz., the salaried hands and the piece-workers, there was and is friction, on account of the terms of their service, and other matters which need not be mentioned here but will appear clearly and specifically in later paragraphs. It may also be noted that the Private Secretary's Press has no such dual system. In it every employee is a Government servant on salary or fixed wage system.

The friction mentioned above between the salaried hands and the piece-workers has existed almost from the introduction of the piece system, and is due,

in my opinion, to the difference of status between them, their allowances, and their pay, without, in some cases there being any difference in their qualifications. As for instance, a piece-worker gets appointed as a section holder and has the privileges of a Government servant, distributes work among his former colleagues, has patronage and acquires the power to affect the earning of his old companions.

It may be mentioned also that the salaried hands hold a dominant position, have authority and power and the piece-workers are at their mercy in all matters, corruption, personal likes and dislikes and other human imperfections have their share in straining the relations between the two classes of employees. The piece-workers complained of long hours, inadequate payment, unjust reductions and fines, etc., and matters came to a head when the Government of India circular of 15th July 1920 was issued.

Remembering the factors mentioned above, it is to be seen whether the said circular gave the piece-workers "higher wages with shorter hours of work". It will be observed that the elements are (1) wages, (2) hours of work and (3) the relation between the two.

To take them *seriatim*, nobody knows how the rates at which the piece-workers were originally and are to this day paid, were fixed in the first instance. I wished to know how they were calculated and on what basis, but no information is available on the point. Perhaps with considerable research and a good deal of antiquarian labour, something might be discovered, but that would not be without an amount of trouble and expense which under the circumstances may not be regarded as reasonable.

Taking for granted the rates, then, as fixed, no matter how, we perceive that they proved inadequate very soon, and they were supplemented by allowances and when we reach the period of the issue of the circular we find that these allowances put together amounted to 35 per cent. of the earnings of the piece-workers, and the Government of India circular of 15th July 1920, gives them 40 per cent. at Delhi and Calcutta and 50 per cent. at Simla.

"The present scale of rates of payment" says the circular "will be raised by 40 per cent. for Calcutta and Delhi and by 50 per cent. for Simla; at the same time, the special temporary allowances at present in force will be abolished."

It may be noted that at Simla, the rates were always higher, by reason of its being situated in the hills and its peculiar conditions.

So the piece-workers gain 5 per cent. at Delhi and Calcutta and 10 per cent. at Simla.

Now as to the hours of work, the Hand Book series of the Central Printing Office No. 1 for readers, compositors, distributors and impositors prepared by Mr. W. M. Ross, Superintendent of the Government of India, Central Printing Office, in April 1899, at page 6, paragraph 8, lays down:—

"Day attendance commences at 10 A.M. Men coming after 10-5 A.M. are fined half an hour's pay and those coming after 10-30 are fined one hour's pay. The roll is closed at 10-45 A.M. after which

there is no admittance. Men on piece-work are not allowed to commence work before 10 A.M. or to continue work after 5 P.M."

This handbook settled the hours of work before the issue of the Government of India circular of the 15th July 1920. They were from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., i.e., 7 hours, with nothing specified as regards rest.....

The circular in question by its paragraph 7 says :—" The Government of India find on enquiry that the hours of work in the presses are at present undeniably long and they have decided that in future the normal day for all industrial workers in the presses who draw overtime allowances should be  $8\frac{1}{2}$  hours on five days of the week (7 A.M. to 5 P.M. or such other hours as may suit local conditions including  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours' complete rest for meals) and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours on Saturdays (7 A.M. to 1-30 P.M. or such other hours as may suit the local conditions, with one hour's rest) thus making a total of 48 hours ordinary working hours in the week....."

A little calculation will show, that in pre-circular days the week consisted of 42 hours and the circular makes it of  $47\frac{1}{2}$  hours. So the working hours of the week are, by the circular, lengthened from 42 to  $47\frac{1}{2}$  hours, and this is said to be done, with probably unconscious humour to shorten "undeniably long hours".

Lastly to take the relation between the wages and the hours of work, the excess of 5 per cent. at Delhi and Calcutta and 10 per cent. at Simla granted by the circular appears to be eaten up by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours excess of work. So on the first point I hold that the system introduced by the Government of India Resolution of 15th July 1920 does not give the workers higher wages with shorter hours of work.

5. The second point is directed to finding out whether the Government of India Circular of the 15th July 1920 has enabled the piece workers to earn a decent living by working in decent hours. In other words do they earn a living wage ? To determine this question properly one must look up the rates prevailing in the market in pre-war days and compare them with the prices ruling now. Fortunately it is not necessary to undertake this enquiry as it is a matter of common knowledge that the purchasing power of money has considerably declined and the prices of nearly all necessaries of life have gone up something like two hundred per cent. This has led to the revision of the pays of all Government servants and no corresponding increase is noticeable in the case of the unfortunate piece-workers. This taken in conjunction with the circumstances considered in deciding the previous point lead me to answer the question in the negative and hold that the conditions introduced by the Government of India Resolution of the 15th July 1920 do not enable the workers "to earn a decent living by working during decent hours".

6. The determination of the first two points, however, does not dispose of all the points raised by the piece-workers. The Government of India circular deals only with their wages and their hours of work. The persons concerned have many other grievances and they are covered by the third point which embodies the question what are the grievances of the workers ? They are set

forth in considerable detail by the piece-workers themselves in the two memoranda submitted by them and are on the record. For convenience of reference they may be briefly summarized as follows, with brief statement of evidence in support of each of them.

(a) That the rates at which the piece-workers are paid were never revised since their introduction in 1875 till 1920.

Vide question No. 110 put by the Hon'ble Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy of Kassimbazar in the Council of State and answered by the Hon'ble Mr. Lindsay.

(b) Differentiation in the increase of pay sanctioned to the salaried hands and the 40 per cent. granted by the Government of India circular to the piece-workers.

No information on the point is available in the papers supplied. A statement for the whole salaried establishment in tabular form will throw light and bring out the grievance clearly :—

Original pay at the creation of the appointment.	The date on which the pay was revised.	The increase granted.	Its percentage on the original pay.
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(c) The distinctions among the piece-workers, between the permanent and what are called the temporary hands, affecting injuriously the wages and status and pensions to the latter.

Admitted in paragraph 15 of the majority report.

(d) In cases where pensions are granted they are calculated on the average income of last six years when owing to advancing age, the earnings have a clear tendency to decrease.

Admitted in paragraphs 16 and 19 of the majority report.

(e) In computing the twenty-five years' service required as a necessary qualification for pension, holidays, and casual and other leave are left out of account altogether.

Admitted in paragraph 16 of the majority report.

(f) Arbitrary reduction in wages by computers and checkers.

Admitted in paragraph 21 of the majority report and in paragraph 22 of the same.

(g) Favouritism of section holders ..

Admitted in paragraph 20 of the majority report.

(h) A variety of fines .. ..

Admitted in paragraph 17 of the majority report.

(i) Unfulfilled pledges .. ..

Admitted in paragraph 13 of the majority report.

(1) Payment for lost time or no work allowance.

(1) No statement has been produced to show that any payments were actually made on this account, vide paragraph 13 (d) of the majority report.

(2) Provident fund promised but not yet inaugurated.

(2) Admitted in paragraph 13 (a) of the majority report. The delay is tried to be excused.

(3) Pensions promised to all permanent and temporary hands but not yet granted.	(3) Admitted and remedies proposed by abolishing the distinction between the permanent and temporary hands, vide paragraph 15 of the majority report.
(4) Works Committee .. ..	(4) Discussed in paragraph 13 (b) of the majority report but grievance not admitted.
(5) Work not distributed according to seniority.	(5) Admitted in a way in paragraph 20 of the majority report.
(6) Selections for appointment as section holders.	(6) Admitted in paragraph 23 (b) of the majority report.
(7) Delay in distribution of work .. ..	(7) Discussed in paragraph 20 of the majority report but got over by urging that the rates of pay are ample to cover delays.
(j) Abolition of piece system .. ..	Will be dealt with separately.

7. It will be observed that with the single exception of the second grievance, which it is not possible to judge for want of materials, all the others are admitted and some of them, viz. (c), (d) and (e) are sought to be removed by the majority report by abolishing the distinction, at present made, between the permanent and temporary hands of piece-workers. With regard to grievance (f) it is admitted by the majority report in its paragraph 21 that "when work is paid by the piece, disputes are apt to arise in computing the value of the work done..... difference in calculations are possible and do admittedly arise in the case of allowances on account of space" but the reality of the grievance is doubted on the assumption that the computer has nothing to gain from short payments, forgetting that the computer, having the power, may, by his calculations, favour friends and injure all whom he dislikes and thus render his goodwill worth having. The Examiner of Press Accounts is cited to show "that in his experience cases of excess calculations were at least as frequent as deficient payment" which all goes to support the contention of the piece-workers and strengthens their case. The paragraph ends with the significant words "as regards computation we have no recommendations to make" which presumably means that there may be a grievance but no remedy is proposed for it. This does not appear to be a satisfactory solution of the matter.

The next grievance (g), about favouritism of the section holders, shares the same fate. It is discussed in paragraph 20 of the majority report. "The main argument against the section holder however is that the existing system admits of the exercise of favouritism. We admit that this is a fact." The remedies suggested are closer supervision, an increase in the staff of overseers, larger employment of machinery and maintenance of a register, but it is added that "a note of warning is however necessary, that the section holder is the pivot on whom the work of the press depends ..... it is essential that the powers that he exercises for the due performance of the work should not be impaired." Then follow pious wishes that he should be impartial. A system

which is so weak and uncertain at the core can not be good and ought not to be spared even if it be hallowed by custom.

Then comes the question of a variety of fines (*h*) discussed in paragraph 17 of the majority report. They are enumerated to be (1) average fine, (2) pye-sorting fine, (3) late fine, (4) breakfast fine, (5) absence fine, and (6) special fines.

"The first of these" it is said "is no longer in existence". One likes to know when it was taken off. Was it done away with before or after the complaints reached the Indian Legislative Council in 1920?

For the remaining five kinds of fines the following figures are given, presumably for the six months from July to December 1921:—

				Rs.	A.	P.
Fines for breaches of discipline	..	..	..	51	14	7
Breakfast fines	..	..	..	18	0	2
Late and absence fines <sup>1</sup>	..	..	..	1,774	11	7

Nothing is mentioned about (2) pye-sorting fines, (4) breakfast fines and (6) special fines. The aggregate amount recovered for all fines put together is also not given, and the incidence of these is said to be very light when distributed among 12 hundred workers. One would like to see the figures for different parts of the year, and go through a little calculation to make sure that the incidence is as light as is made out. Supposing, however, that it is as mentioned it is not the incidence that matters. In the state of mind into which the piece-workers are thrown by the system at present prevailing, these fines would act as frequent pinpricks causing irritation and leading to general discontent and dissatisfaction and these are what interfere most with smooth working and willing co-operation. A system which causes these without affording adequate safeguards for justice and fair play is not of much practical use and stands self-condemned. The last portion of this paragraph 17 of the majority report reads as follows:—

"We must add that the money received by fines is not credited to Government the proceeds from fines are being funded with the object of creating a compassionate fund for the benefit of press employees and their families."

If this is intended to show that Government is not interested in inflicting these fines, the labour is superfluous as no sane man can imagine or attribute such a motive to the British Indian Empire, whose resources are practically unlimited and the sum collected is too paltry to enter into any calculation of its management. It is therefore difficult to understand why this matter is introduced. It is not known under what authority this fund is inaugurated, who are its trustees and where it is shown in general accounts.

The next item of unfulfilled pledges (1) is rather comprehensive in its nature and falls under seven heads.

The first of these about lost time allowance is rather important. The piece-workers allege that it has never been paid, nay those that claimed it have been dismissed. It is discussed in paragraph 13 of the majority report in subparagraph (*a*).

From the papers it does not appear that the workers claimed to be employed and paid even if Government had no work for them. If they have any lurking notion of that kind, they are certainly wrong. What is most noticeable is that no statement is produced to show that payment for loss of time, under the rules laid down for it, was actually made to any body, and if so, what the total amount of such payment was? The workers produced at least one instance. It may or may not be right in the claim made, but it was always easy to meet their allegation by producing a list of payments actually made on that account. This has not been done, but on the contrary we read "It is however possible, the superintending staff, in their efforts to run the press economically may show a tendency to disregard the new rule," and the particular attention of the staff is drawn to it. This leads me to hold that there is an element of truth in the grievance.

The second and third items about provident fund and pensions are favourably considered by the majority report and nothing more need be said about them here except to point out that the complaint about delay with regard to the provident fund is true, but is likely to be removed soon.

The fourth item of the Works Committee is both interesting and important. By its constitution the Superintendent of the press is its permanent President; the piece-workers elect the Secretary, but the presence of the former gives it an official colour and makes the position of the salaried staff, already dominant, still more dominant. The elective Secretary would not be able to affect it appreciably. If the workmen could elect their own President and consult, debate and decide among themselves, they would feel free and would be in a position to ventilate their grievances. The sittings of the Works Committee need not be open to the public and its resolutions may have to be submitted to Government through the Superintendent of the press and he may have the right to address them whenever he likes and give them such information and advice as he deems fit, and may make such remarks as he deems proper in forwarding their resolution but their deliberations should be free. This would retain its popular character consistently with maintaining its official nature and discipline. If the change suggested is made, the workers will soon and easily appreciate its benefits. At present they regard the committee as a purely official function and it may be that they cannot freely speak their mind for fear of offending the presiding Superintendent who can make or mar their prospects by the exercise of the supreme power vested in him for administrative reasons.

The fifth and sixth items about the distribution of work and selection of section holders are adequately dealt with by the majority report and I agree with the recommendations made.

The seventh item of delay is discussed in the earlier part of paragraph 20 of the majority report, where it is characterized as an unjustifiable *reductio ad absurdum* but unfortunately the part so condemned is not pointed out, nor reasons assigned to so characterize it. I am therefore unable to agree with the conclusion arrived at. There is said to be no proof of delay. The workers in each of the Government presses at Delhi, Calcutta and Simla were allowed to send only one witness each and they all supported the allegation of delay while the witnesses called by the press administration denied it. Thus it is

the word of one class against another. Had the matter rested there, it would have been somewhat difficult to decide against the workers and this appears to have been felt and we find the following remark: "Whatever delay may be caused to the work of composition, we are satisfied that it is inconsiderable and the actual earnings of the compositors show clearly that the rate of composition have been fixed at a level which adequately compensates for any delay that may occur".

It is submitted that the primary question under discussion here is whether there are or are not delays. If there be delays there would be the further question whether they are considerable or inconsiderable by computation in time. To introduce into the consideration of the existence of delays the question of the sufficiency or otherwise of the rates at which the workers are paid would appear to be beside the point and involves the mixing up of matters needlessly. I hold that there are delays as alleged by the piece-workers and they are considerable in the sense of being appreciable.

The last item (j) is more of a suggestion or a recommendation than a grievance and will be considered in its proper place.

8. Having finished the three points, we proceed now to consider the fourth point about the remedies proposed. This involves a discussion which in my view falls more appropriately under the next part where I propose to give, as briefly as I can, the reasons for differing from my colleagues.

## PART II.

9. In this part is to be discussed as carefully and briefly as practicable the fourth out of the five points for determination noted in the earlier part of this minute. It is what are the remedies proposed? The piece-workers have answered it by their last grievance (j) which I said as more in the nature of a recommendation than a grievance. It is that the piece system at present prevailing in the Government presses should be abolished. This, however, is strongly opposed to the view which commends itself as correct to my colleagues except in some small particulars. This must therefore be looked into somewhat more in detail. The whole controversy has revolved round it since the matter came into the council and the workers would carry it back to the introduction of the piece system itself. It is discussed in paragraphs 2 to 12 of the majority report and covers something like 19 pages in the typed copy supplied to me. The argument has therefore to be summarized for being examined. Paragraph 2 of the report proposes to "examine the principles of the system of piece-work and then to consider its application to the Government of India presses". The next paragraph lays down the principle as enunciated by the Hon'ble Sir Alexander Murray. I state it as far as possible in his own words. That in a country that is developing industrially it was to the advantage of both the employer and the employed that the worker should receive the full benefit of his exertions and if the rates were correctly fixed, the employer also get the best value for his money. The piece system seems to secure this and should be continued until labour finds its level. Paragraph 4 lays down the further principle that printing establishments must be run strictly on commercial lines.



These I take to be the main principle of the system and what follows may be regarded as their application to the Government presses. Paragraph 5 points out the differences between Government and private presses, paragraph 6 maintains that press work is a form of labour and appears to disapprove of the piece-workers aspiration to the status of a Government clerk under Civil Service Regulations. Paragraph 7 endeavours to show that piece system is economical. It requires less supervision. Private presses spend as much as 25 per cent. on it while Government presses incur an expenditure of between 13·64 per cent. to 14·39 per cent. It may involve complicated accounts but they do not cost much inasmuch as they come to only 4·77 per cent. Paragraph 8 anticipates certain objections, *viz.*, careless and inefficient work and answers them. It concedes that distributors may advantageously be salaried hands but qualifies the concession by insisting that the salaries should be only such as are paid in private presses which do not compare favourably with their earnings in Government presses and so on.

Paragraph 9 dwells on the circumstance that press establishments are stable while they would not be if the hands could earn higher wages in the open market, and the remaining three paragraphs, *viz.*, 10, 11 and 12, institute a comparison between Government and private presses and enforce the conclusion already mentioned that the earnings in the former are higher than in the latter.

10. Now to take the general principles. The first of them is that in a country which is in the process of industrial development, to quote the exact words used by Sir A. Murray it was to the "advantage of both the employer and the employed that the piece-work system should be adopted whenever possible, the worker received the full benefit of his exertions, and if the rates were correctly fixed, the employer also got the best value for his money". In the debates in the councils, old and new, Sir Thomas Holland also expressed himself similarly and the weight of his high authority may very properly be added to that of Sir A. Murray. Assuming then for the sake of argument that the principle as stated is correct, it has a proviso which I have taken the liberty to italicize. Its importance is apparent from the circumstance that it is carefully repeated in a subsequent paragraph No. 7 during the course of its discussion. So the question arises, have the rates in this case been correctly fixed? In paragraph 4 above it has been shown that nobody knows how the rates were originally fixed as early as 1875. No data is now available. They soon proved inadequate and were supplemented by allowances, and the workers are not satisfied with them. There was no revision of rates even so much as attempted up to 1920 as admitted by the Hon'ble Mr. Lindsay, and even in the present enquiry no evidence was led to show that the men earned a decent living wage. All the efforts that have been made have been directed to show that the earnings are higher in Government presses than in two private presses, but that circumstance by itself does not satisfy the requirement of "a decent living by working through decent hours." So the promise given by the Hon'ble Sir Thomas Holland on behalf of Government still holds. It is as follows:—"I have told the people repeatedly that if the terms sanctioned in the Government Resolution of 15th July do not demonstrate that they

would get higher wages for shorter hours of work, I would tear up the Government Resolution and that I would revise the rates and again revise them until the men could demonstrate (acknowledge?) that they are able with these terms to earn a decent living by working during decent hours”.

It may possibly be objected that in the statement of the principle, the proviso is introduced in such a way as to indicate that it governs the clause relating to the employer only. I hope such an objection will not be raised because the use of the word “also” after the word employer, militates against the restricted interpretation sought to be put.

The condition of the rates being correctly fixed is general and governs the cases of both the employer and the employee. Were it otherwise, it would protect, nay, promote the interests of the employer only and neglect those of the employee and be open to the charge of having been conceived in the interests of capitalists alone, which I am sure is not the case. If this be so, as I believe it is, the statement of the principle, appears to be loose and not accurate, because the limitations necessary to guard the interests of the labourers are not introduced. To do so it would have to contain a further proviso to the effect that the hours and conditions of the labour should be reasonable, i.e., decent, and the whole arrangement should secure to the worker a decent living wage. Now in the case of the Government presses which forms the subject matter of the present enquiry the complaint of the workers is that the wages are not adequate and conditions imposed by the prevalent system, necessitate delays and lead to curtailment of their earnings by faulty computation, and arbitrary fines, etc. To omit the limitations which protect the workers would involve a begging of the whole question which, I feel sure, was never intended.

Apart from a discussion on *a priori* grounds, we have to see what practical men who had tried the systems have got to say about it. Mr. Christie of the Caledonian Press says “he tried the system but had abandoned it, owing to the fact that for their work the system was unwieldy and expensive, as it involved an additional accounting establishment”. It is a matter of somewhat remarkable coincidence, that the piece-workers urge the same objections as Mr. Christie though not in the same words nor in the same concise form.

There is the further circumstance admitted on all hands that in no private printing establishment at Delhi, Simla or Calcutta, is the piece system in force. Had the representatives of these private establishments been called, it is highly probable that they would have told a similar story. Even in a highly developed country like England hand composition is always done by salaried hands and there is no reason why it should not be so in India.

So with due deference to the views of Sir Thomas Holland and Sir Alexander Murray, I have come to the conclusion that the principle enunciated by them, has not been stated with all the necessary limitations and cannot be accepted as sound so far as the working of the Government presses is concerned.

11. The difficulties, briefly set forth in the succeeding paragraph in the way of the acceptance of the principle enunciated led to the enquiry as to whether there was any difference in the circumstances and working of private printing

establishments and the Government presses. A comparison between them has been instituted and carried out in some detail and it deserves attention because it leads to the second principle of Government presses being run strictly on commercial lines.

Before entering on the consideration of this comparison and the principle of running establishments on strictly commercial lines evolved therefrom, let us find out if there are any circumstances common to both which supply materials for comparisons. Trading concerns are invariably opened for purposes of gain. The investors in them look for profits and they decide to go in for them or not according as the dividends are tempting or otherwise. The merchants concerned owe no duty to anybody except themselves. They have of course to obey laws, be honest and so forth, but within the limits imposed by these they are free to make as much profit as they can and nobody does or can interfere with them, except in very exceptional circumstances.

Government concerns are on the other hand mainly designed and worked to attain the highest efficiency possible with due regard to economy. Profit is, however, not their aim. Government being primarily responsible for good administration owes by its nature duties to all and has of necessity to maintain standards high and open to criticism by all. It has to raise money to maintain itself but that has to be as little as possible consistently with the highest efficiency practicable within its means.

Thus the private and Government establishments stand on different footings. The first look principally to profit or money gain subject to the conditions imposed by law and common honesty while the latter have to keep highest efficiency principally in view leading to good Government, subject to all reasonable economy and the good opinion of the general public. Each has naturally a tendency to concentrate on its principal object, and the complaints against private enterprises are about sweating labour, etc., which are the commonplaces of every day life, and need not be elaborated, at any length here. Thus there is not much to compare. The only factor that may be said to be common to both is economy but it is induced by different motives governed by totally different sets of principles and consideration and, comparisons, if at all instituted, have to be carried out with great caution and within very narrow limits.

The present is a case which brings out all these peculiarities in a striking manner. Only two representatives of private presses were examined, and when one of them was asked how the workers lived with the small wages given and hard conditions imposed in the shape of no leave being allowed even for illness, etc., except when brought on by an injury caused by a defect in the machinery employed in the press, he replied he did not know, but that the workman managed to exist somehow.

This is not an answer which a responsible officer of Government could give because Government is responsible for the well-being of all. The companies which have Mr. Duncan or Mr. Christie for their officers, have no such responsibility and that makes all the difference in their respective outlooks and methods of management.

12. The work done by private companies is said to be different from what falls to the Government presses. The companies are said to have a good deal of display work which the Government presses have not. No statistics have been produced to prove this, but supposing this to be so, Government presses have a great many statistical statements to print which the private companies have not, so things get equalized, or they ought to. In the absence of figures to show the proportion of the display to other work in the private presses and of the statistical tabular work to block work in the Government presses, it is not possible to formulate the difference of work between the two sets of establishments even distantly approaching the degree of certainty that is necessary to base usefully any distinctions upon it.

13. It is said that converting the piece-workers into salaried hands would require considerable increase in the supervising staff. This is a matter of opinion and an actual trial alone can be decisive. A person who supervises thirty can easily supervise a much larger number when they are working in one block of buildings, and even if some strengthening of the supervising staff was eventually found necessary, the increase would be easily more than covered by the great reduction that would follow the abolition of the present complicated system of accounts and its examiners.

14. Facility for dismissal and getting rid of the undesirables, is said to be a great advantage in private management. It may or may not be so but it certainly leaves great room for favouritism and exercise of arbitrary power on insufficient grounds. It is the absence of these that attract the labourer to Government employment, and if security in that direction is removed, Government office would be the sport of the fluctuation of the market and efficiency would be seriously impaired by work not being done in time.

15. Paragraph 6 of the majority report is devoted to showing that piece-workers are merely industrial labourers and cannot and ought not to aspire to the status of Government servants under Civil Service Regulations. No principle is cited to support the position but objections are urged on the ground of expense and practice. Later on it will be shown that the expense will not be great and will be more than covered by the economies that will necessarily follow. The argument based on practice does not appeal as the work at present done by piece-workers was not very long ago done by copyists; the difference being that in those days the clerks employed formed the letters with their own hands, and now they put iron types together. The manual labour is very much the same only type has been substituted for the pen. The mere copyist was never held in great respect and there is the old Persian proverb "Nakkal Navisra Akkal Nadarad," meaning that the copyist has no brains, but all the same he was never, at least in India, looked upon as a mere labourer. If I remember right, Mr. John Stuart Mill in one place said that in England a copyist is looked upon as a gentleman, though for the exercise of his profession he did not require brains superior to an ordinary labourer. This position which society assigns him is due to historical causes, which need not be detailed here. The stenographer is walking in his wake and one day will have to rub shoulders with him. Be

that as it may, nobody is too low to be below justice and fair play, and even the humble piece-worker may have the status of a Government servant.

16. In paragraph 7 of the majority report the main topic of discussion is the economical aspect of the piece system and the test proposed is that "If it results in a smaller outturn, an excessive supervising staff or an unduly complicated and expensive system of accounts" then "it should be condemned". This test may be provisionally accepted. I say provisionally because there are other elements, such as smoothness in working, securing contentment and willing co-operation, etc., which are equally important and must be taken into consideration in judging a system, but at present I do not wish to complicate matters and lengthen the discussion by introducing them. The element of quantity of outturn is taken first. It is said "on general principles it is obvious that if the earnings of a man are dependent on the amount of his work, his outturn will be greater than that of a man whose earnings are the same *whatever quantity of work he produces.*". I take exception to the words which I have taken the liberty to italicize. I cannot believe in any office, specially one in which a Government officer presides, a man who copies forty pages a day will be given the same pay as one who copies only one or half a page, unless it happens that the one or half page represents application of peculiar skill or exercise of some kind of special talent. Equal work equal pay is the ordinary rule and by well established custom and long practice, the minimum which an ordinary man ought to be able to do is well understood and universally recognized, and any body falling below it in his outturn would either not be taken on at all or got rid of soon. So the words objected to by me should be replaced by others to the effect "so long as the quantity of his work done does not fall below what an ordinary man can produce". I can understand that a man paid by the piece has great and powerful inducement to increase his quantity, but it must be remembered, that he is under a temptation to be hasty and even careless.

So what is gained in quantity is lost in quality. The piece system like all others, has in it good points and bad, and this circumstance detracts from the superiority tried to be assigned to it.

17. As regards supervision the generalization taken for granted is "that a larger supervising establishment is necessary to ensure that a salaried hand produces an amount of work proportionate to his salary than to control a staff whose earnings depend on the amount of work produced". This proposition does not appear to me sound and I regret I must dissent from it. A supervisor is there, not to do any particular piece of work himself but to see that those under him do theirs. So his business is to see that the men assemble at the proper hour, are busy doing their work during the required time, and turn out at the end of it a quantity which is well understood and recognized by experience and long practice. He may have occasionally to give them advice as to how a particular piece is to be done, and may have to settle points of dispute between them. For all these purposes, he would have to be constantly on the move watching one here and talking to another there and so on. One can easily be in charge of a fairly big room or block and do the needful, his capacity to supervise is, so to say, limited

not so much by the number of work-people under him as by the hall or block to supervise which he is appointed. In fact if all that is claimed for the piece system be true then, each workman having his own task master in him in the shape of the desire to earn as much he can, there need be no external supervisor at all "to ensure work". Then why is one engaged for every batch of compositors in Government presses? The fact appears to be that he is doing the work in a way of a compositor and checker and has perhaps other capacities. Perhaps he supervises not the workman but the compositors and the checkers.

18. Another thing to which I must take exception is that in computing the cost of supervision, the officers in charge of the press and the accounts and office section are excluded. Why and on what principle is this done? If we turn to the statistical returns submitted every year it is seen that the head "supervision" includes, officers, establishments, servants, press supervising and store keeping staff, branch supervision and accounts, auxiliaries and contingencies. Why are they then excluded here? They are there because the workmen are there doing work which require to be supervised; they constitute the portions of the establishment in which the private presses save and the Government presses spend rather too freely. The former show a profit and the latter do not. Further we have for the Government presses a Controller and his staff and there is the Examiner of Press Accounts and his establishment. Unfortunately the detailed statements of the private presses are not before me. So going into figures will serve no useful purpose. As an illustration take the case of the Simla Central Press, for 1919-20. Workmen were paid Rs. 89,413 including overtime, while the expense incurred on its administration comes to Rs. 72,395, the proportion between the two is approximately 5 to 4 which is much higher than 25 per cent. mentioned by the private presses and 13 to 14 per cent. calculated in the majority report. The same will be found to be the case in the case of Delhi and Calcutta Government presses. To me it appears that the Government administration of the presses is top-heavy and if any where it is to this part one should look for effecting savings and making the whole self-supporting.

19. The two tests of outturn and cost of supervision being thus found of no avail in awarding superiority to the piece system, much would naturally depend upon the remaining test of the complexity or otherwise of the accounts necessitated by it. That the point works unfavourably for the piece system, appears, however, to be conceded, because in this selfsame paragraph 7 of the report the discussion of it begins with the words "it might still be urged that the piece system involves an unduly complex and expensive system of accounts" and after quoting figures to which I have already objected as not inclusive of the items of officers in charge of the press, Examiner of Press Accounts, etc., it is defended by saying that "the cost of the extra accounting establishment is inconsiderable". It may be pointed out that this defence of the system does not accord with the remarks of Mr. Christie who said that he tried the system but found it unwieldy and expensive as "it involved an additional accounting establishment" and is deprived of all its force by the circumstance already referred to—that item

shown in official accounts as constituting supervision are excluded from calculation and thus its percentage is reduced to 14 odd as will be shown in paragraph 21 post. Thus all the three tests proposed fail and I can not concur in the conclusion which favours the system.

20. There remains to consider the principle that the Government printing establishment must be run strictly on commercial lines but it need not detain us long as the difference between Government and private establishments has been indicated in a previous paragraph, and efficiency which is the chief aim of the former, cannot be estimated in rupees, annas and pies. If by asserting the principle it is meant that the Government presses should be so worked as to leave a margin of profit such as would satisfy merchants I disagree, because Government does not wish to trade and compete with private enterprise. If, on the other hand, it is meant that Government management should be as economical as possible I agree provided it meets the requirement of efficiency. My ideal is that it should be strictly self-supporting wherever possible with high efficiency. Paragraph 8 of the majority report tries to anticipate and meet objections to the piece system in my humble judgment not successfully, and tries to distinguish between independent and inter-dependent work apparently to make out that it is only work of the latter character that would have to be taken into consideration. The business of the distributors is of this description, and an exception in their favour is made, but with the limitation that their pays should not exceed those that are allowed in private presses. To strengthen the position it is pointed out in paragraph 9 that the press establishments are stable in the sense that many workmen do not leave it as they would have done if the market rates were higher. This assumes that there is competition in the trade, which unfortunately there is not. Printing industry has not yet advanced to the same point as mill industry has done. So workers do not migrate from one press to another as the mill hands do. Then trade unions are in a somewhat nebulous state, have not yet properly assumed their functions and have not gathered strength to influence wages. It appears to me wiser to grant a living wage to labour now and not wait longer until all the somewhat undesirable developments take place, the differences between capital and labour get accentuated and feelings get introduced to strain the relations between them and even create estrangement. There is no merit in yielding under pressure. It takes away all the grace of the thing and leaves a bitterness behind which I would do all I could to avoid. Labour problems are just coming up now and if they are met half way in a fair and even generous manner the bitter experience of the West may not have to be repeated. I speak with as little or as much authority as an earnest layman may claim and hope that this aspect of the case will attract as much attention as its importance demands. The next three paragraphs 10, 11, and 12 of the majority report are designed to carry on the comparison between private and Government presses, and the fact that the former have shorter hours, advantages of continuity of employment, certainty and fixity of wages and the friendly feelings generated by long association under a discipline that is generally more lax and less rigid than in a Government establishment, all these and many more considerations that will readily occur are not brought out prominently. In fact a weak case has been rendered weaker and it

appears unnecessary to labour the point and lengthen discussion on this portion of the case.

### PART III.

Having pointed out what in my opinion is the true remedy, it remains to indicate how it is to be applied\* and incidentally show how it combines all the advantages of being economical, satisfying, smooth in working and conducive to willing co-operation on the part of workers. Judging by the annual statistical returns of which I have some before me and taking the figures from No. 219-Pg., dated the 14th January 1921, it would appear that Government spends Rs. 6,72,448 on workmen of all kinds in the press, and supervision with its auxiliaries comes to Rs. 4,37,035.

So roughly speaking the proportion between the two comes to 6 to 4, so that out of every 10 rupees spent six go to workmen and 4 to supervision. This is very high. If to the supervision we add its contingencies, which come to Rs. 15,57,059, the proportion rises much higher and brings out clearly the top heaviness of the present establishment. If anywhere, reduction is most urgently needed it is here.

If we take the figures for 1919, they change, but the proportion remains very much the same, for we find, that the workmen receive Rs. 5,60,558 while supervision takes up Rs. 3,73,917 and the contingencies go up to Rs. 13,38,863, and the general soundness of the conclusion arrived at is indisputable, and so calculating the amount as to confine them to the piece-workers and their supervision would not improve matters.

22. I submit two schemes to carry out the conversion of all piece-workers, permanent and temporary, into salaried hands on the abolition of the piece system in the Government presses. They are to be regarded as alternative. If the Government decide to grant pensions to the workers then the one beginning with Rs. 40 a month and ending with Rs. 120 per month may be adopted along with the annual increments provided for therein. If on the other hand it is considered proper to give them all the benefit of the provident fund, which, it is believed, is under consideration, then the scheme beginning with Rs. 50 a month and ending with Rs. 125 a month together with the increment proposed under it, may be adopted, for, in that case, workmen would be contributing to it every month and thus in a way providing for themselves under the aegis of Government. Both of them are designed for the Government presses at Delhi and Calcutta. The Simla press can easily be brought under the one or the other of them as is ultimately decided by adjustment of figures.

### SCHEME A.

#### PROPOSED SCALE.

The Government Printing, India, "Calcutta and Delhi" has got 216 permanent and 489 temporary compositors, 6 permanent and 5 temporary impositors, and 8 permanent and 109 temporary distributors under piece system divided into 31 sections having on the average 22 compositors and the (including 11 impositors and 117 distributors) annual cost of which is Rs. 4,84,500 as shown in the Budget for 1921-22.

It is proposed to bring these men on a time-scale of pay. The scale proposed is Rs. 40—2—52—3—76—4—100—5—125. The working hours may



be 9½ hours, including half day overtime, as it obtains at present. The initial pay in this scale will be fixed in accordance with the length of service. From Table I it is seen that the introduction of salary system would cost Rs. 6,35,808, the present expense under piece system (excluding distributors) being Rs. 4,49,400 annually. So the excess under the new scheme would amount to Rs. 1,86,408.

**PROPOSED REDUCTION OF SUPERVISING STAFF, FOUNDRY ESTABLISHMENT, PYE-SORTING, ETC., ETC.**

The abolition of piece system would do away with most of the vast array of supervisors, e.g., overseers, computers, checkers, etc., as will be seen from Table II. Up till the year 1905 there were only one deputy superintendent and one overseer. At present there are three deputy superintendents and six overseers (including Delhi).

Some reductions can conveniently be made in this staff, which means a large saving on the part of Government. If the piece system be abolished the authorities would be able to do away with the whole lot of checkers and computers and some portions of reading branch, foundry establishment and also the press audit branch. Table II will show a total sum available for revision is Rs. 2,02,460. Now even taking out from this excess of 1,86,408 required for converting the piece hands into salaried ones Government can effect a total saving of Rs. 16,052, annually.

**TABLE I.**

**PROPOSED SCALE.**

*Funds available for revision.*

Budget provision in 1921-22 for :—				Rs.
216 Permanent compositors	..	..	..	} 1,82,000
6 Permanent impositors*	..	..	..	
8 Permanent distributors	..	..	..	
489 Temporary compositors	..	..	..	} 3,02,500
5 Temporary impositors*	..	..	..	
109 Temporary distributors	..	..	..	
Savings for probable reduction of other establishments as shown in table II due to this revision	..	..	..	2,02,460
Total .. ..				6,86,960
<i>Less :—</i>				
Budget provision for 117 permanent and temporary distributors at an average monthly cost of Rs. 25 per head	Rs. 117 × 25 × 12	..	..	=35,100
Net sum available for revision .. ..				6,51,860
Time scale of pay proposed for compositors and impositors :— 40—2—52—3—76—4—100—5—125.				
Total cost of this revision :—				
716 (men) × 74 (average * cost) × 12	..	..	..	=6,35,808
Probable saving to Government .. ..				16,052

\*The rough average of this scale is Rs. 74 per head per month. Casualties, resignation, dismissal, death, etc., and also the pay for the impositors (whose pay should be less than the compositors) have not been taken into account in calculating this average.

TABLE II.

## PROPOSED REDUCTION OF STAFF, ETC.

Existing Staff.	Budget provision for 1921-22.	REDUCTION PROPOSED.	
		Number.	Amount.
	Rs.		Rs.
3 Deputy Superintendents .. .. .	21,260	1	7,080
6 Overseers .. .. .	26,640	4	17,760
1 Confidential clerk .. .. .	3,540	1	3,540
38 Computers .. .. .	20,880	34	18,700
3 Checkers .. .. .	2,280	3	2,280
31 Section holders .. .. .	44,640	11	15,840
13 Assistant section holders .. .. .	9,360	13	9,360
44 Clerks (Accounts Branch) .. .. .	27,780	22	13,890
3 Foremen .. .. .	9,000	1	3,000
3 Storekeepers .. .. .	3,600	1	1,200
8 Report writers .. .. .	2,880	4	1,440
Paper saving (on account of charge file for every branch).	24,000	0	24,000
Saving in material on account of reduction in Foundry.	49,620	1/3rd	16,500
<i>Permanent.</i>			
113 Readers and Revisers .. .. .	1,21,160	..	..
75 Copy holders .. .. .	29,160	..	..
<i>Temporary.</i>			
Readers .. .. .	54,000	}	
Copy holders .. .. .			
Savings on account pye-sorting and distributing	2,500	..	2,500
Savings in Press Audit .. .. .	49,020	1/4	24,510
Total .. .. .	5,01,320		2,02,460
Deduct Excess payment .. .. .	..	..	1,86,408
Total saving by Government .. .. .	..	..	16,052

## SCHEME B.

## PROPOSED SCALE.

The Government Printing India, Calcutta, has got 500 compositors under piece system divided into 20 sections. Each section has on the average 25 compositors and their monthly earnings are Rs. 1,250 and the total for 20 sections cost Government Rs. 25,000. For converting these piece-workers into salaried hands time scale pay is proposed.

The compositors have been divided roughly as Table I will show into four classes. The first class men begin on Rs. 80 and the fourth class on Rs. 50

rising up to Rs. 125 with an yearly increment of Rs. 5, the working hours being 9½ hours including half-day over-time as it obtains at present. Now looking into Table I it is seen that the introduction of salary system would cost Rs. 31,000. The present expense under piece system being Rs. 25,000 monthly, So the excess under the new scheme would amount to Rs. 6,000.

#### PROPOSED REDUCTION OF STAFF AND MATERIALS.

The abolition of piece system would do away with most of the vast array of supervisors, *e.g.*, overseers, computers, checkers, etc., as will be seen from Table II. Up till the year 1905 there were only one deputy superintendent and five overseers, in spite of Delhi Press being severed from the Calcutta Press (*vide* Hon'ble Mr. Lindsay's reply to Hon'ble Maharaja of Kassimbazar).

Some reductions can conveniently be made in this staff, which means a large saving on the part of Government. If the piece system be abolished the authorities would be able to do away with the whole lot of checkers and computers. Here also a large saving can be effected. Then again a decent saving can be made out of materials. Another necessary reduction can be effected in the way of doing away with the excess copy holders quite out of proportion with the number of readers. Table II will show a total saving of Rs. 14,540. Now even taking out from this the excess of Rs. 6,000 required for converting the piece hands into salaried ones, Government can effect a total saving of Rs. 8,540 monthly.

TABLE I.  
PROPOSED SCALE.

Division of Composi- tors into classes.	WORKING HOURS.			PAY SETTLED ACCORDING TO THEIR SERVICE.			
	From	To	Total	Grade Begins.	Yearly increment.	Grade up to.	Total monthly pay- ment.
	A.M.	P.M.	Hrs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
100 (1st Class Service)	9	6½	9½	80	5	125	8,000
100 (2nd Class Service)	9	6½	9½	70	5	125	7,000
100 (3rd Class Service)	9	6½	9½	60	5	125	6,000
100 (4th Class Service)	9	6½	9½	50	5	125	10,000
Total ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	31,000
Present Expense ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25,000
Excess ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6,000

N.B.—The Government Resolution No. A-31, dated the 15th July 1920, stated that the men used to earn from Rs. 35 to Rs. 90 according to old class rates.

TABLE II.

## PROPOSED REDUCTION OF STAFF.

Designation.	Number at present.	Number of reduction.	Working from	Hours to	Total.	Monthly average payment.	
						Rs.	Rs.
Deputy Superintendent	2	1	10	5	7	800	800
Overseers .. ..	5	4	10	5	7	500	2,000
Confidential clerk .. ..	1	1	10	5	7	200	200
Computers .. ..	50	50	10	5	7	40—4—80	3,000
	27	..	..	..	..	50—5—120	..
						100—10—200	..
Checkers .. ..	2	2	9	6½	9½	60—75	120
						40—80	..
Section holders .. ..	20	10	..	..	..	100—50—150	1,200
Assistant section holders	11	11	9	6½	9½	40—4—80	5,000
Clerks (Accounts Branch)	25	15	10	5	7	250—20—400	..
						110—10—200	..
						50—4—110	1,100
Foreman .. ..	2	2	..	..	..	200—10—300	500
Store Keeper .. ..	2	1	..	..	..	100—5—150	100
Report writer .. ..	8	4	9	6½	9½	30—0—0	120
Paper saving .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,000
Saving in materials .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	500
Readers .. ..	70	15	9	6½	9½	..	1,700
Copy holders .. ..	100	30 × 15	9	6½	9½	30—4—60	1,700
Total .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14,540
Deduct excess payment	..	..	..	..	..	..	6,000
Total saving by Government.	..	..	..	..	..	..	8,540
Outside contract works 1920-21.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8,44,020

If work done in Government Press, it will bring at least 2 lakhs rupees profit to Government.

TABLE III.

STATEMENT SHOWING SOME PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT PRESSES' WORKING TIME AND PAY.

Compositors.	WORKING HOURS.			PAY.		
	From	To	Total working hours.	Grade Begin.	Yearly increment.	Grade up to
Eastern Bengal Railway ..	10	5	7	40	4	90
Englishman .. .. .	10	5	7	40	4	90
Police Commissioner ..	10	5	7	60	5	80
Press .. .. .	..	..	..	55	5	80
Government of Bengal ..	10	5	7	50	4	100
Darjeeling Press .. .. .	..	..	..	40	4	80
Government of Bengal ..	10	5	7	75	8	150
C. I. D. Press .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..

23. It will be observed that, both the schemes are so conceived as not to lead to any additional outlay on the Government presses. They are economical in the sense of making an appreciable saving without impairing efficiency.

The minimum and maximum pays are taken from what may be regarded as representing fairly the rates in other presses, considered along with those obtaining in the presses of which two representatives were examined.

My object in proposing and supporting the above schemes is to give initially something to a workman which he would like to have, and so increase it by periodical increments that he would have a reasonably strong inducement to keep it and not be swayed by the fluctuations of the market. He could remain in service as long as he is efficient and should return with something certainly not less than what he began with. When at the end of the service, he goes, he must not go with the bitterness which of necessity must have been in the heart of Babu Hira Lal Neogy who was a compositor of Section VI, Government of India Press, Calcutta, and who after twenty-five years of approved service had to retire on a miserably small pension of three rupees and six annas a month. This instance was brought to notice by the piece-workers and the facts mentioned were never denied. This may be an extreme case but there is no reason to regard it as solitary and there may have been many of equal, if not of greater hardship. I am anxious that cases any way approaching to this should never occur. A workman in retiring should have enough to evoke something like content and goodwill towards the Government which he served. The terms which I propose will I think secure this. They should not be as low as hard bargaining will make them, nor so liberal as to lead to waste.

There is nothing like reaching the maximum in matters of this kind but there is a point at which one likes to stick and does not give up lightly. This point I have endeavoured to attain and if my proposals are accepted there is a

reasonable hope of instilling gratitude and preventing workmen from continually hankering for something to make both ends meet and leave a little, a very little over. It will alleviate labour unrest at least to that extent, remove the bitterness at present prevailing and may introduce an element of permanency and finality in the settlement.

24. That the piece system did not work smoothly may easily be gathered, both from the grievances complained of and the bickering and quarrels evidenced by the paper which I believe was presented and is on the record. The fact that only a few witnesses were allowed to be elected by the piece-workers will account for the smallness of the number of instances cited. If the piece-workers are converted into salaried hands and included into the general category of Government servants, the diversity in the arrangement of the Government press establishments will be reduced and that will conduce to harmony and the experience of all Government offices will bear this probability out. At present, something like three systems are in vogue in the Government presses. There are the salaried Government servants, then there are piece-workers with a nondescript status as pointed out before and there are contractors to whom work is given direct, and the sums spent in payments to the last come up to a few lakhs. If all these are fused into one well-understood system of Government service, the advantages of smooth working and economy will be immense.

There is already a complaint of the flow of work not being regular. It would be wonderful if it was, considering the different channels into which it has to run. It is believed that only forms in general use are given to the contractors to multiply and it is said they have special facilities for doing the work. That may be, but as contractors they must make their living and the rates they charge must leave them a margin of reasonable or as is called commercial profit. This means more expense to the tax payer. Further there is an element of loss in it which cannot be ignored. The contractors keep a large number of forms ready to be supplied on demand. It sometimes happens that a progressive administration has good reasons to change or alter the forms. Then the contractor comes up with the already printed bales of forms and demands payment or compensation and it has to be granted. This tends to waste. As the subject is not directly within the scope of the present enquiry but comes in so to say, indirectly as part of the economical management of the presses I need not go into further details.

25. In the result. I regard the large majority of the grievances of the piece-workers as real and I am persuaded that the abolition of the piece system, and adoption of the well understood system of general Government service will effectually remedy them. I am not in favour of increasing the facilities for dismissal and other forms of punishment. The Civil Service Regulations safeguard discipline very adequately, and there is no sufficient reason made out for the Government presses being singled out for exceptional treatment.

G. S. KHAPARDE.

AMRAOTI :

*The 19th May 1922.*

## NOTE ON THE MINUTE OF DISSENT.

(1) We have read our colleague's note of dissent, and, though admitting that he disagrees with us in principle, we do not think that his suggestions are sufficient to refute the conclusions that we have arrived at in our report. We accordingly propose to reply to his note as briefly as possible.

(2) In paragraph 4 of his minute of dissent our colleague has attempted to show that under the new system inaugurated in July 1920, the piece-workers have neither obtained shorter hours nor increased actual earnings. As regards actual hours he has based his conclusions on the fact that under the old system the theoretical hours of work in the press were 7 hours against  $8\frac{1}{2}$  hours under the new system. Our colleague has evidently taken no notice of the abnormal number of hours' overtime worked under the old system, and we are convinced that the figures given in the table of paragraph 14 of our report prove conclusively that the actual number of hours worked has materially decreased; we are further convinced that the monthly attendance of 200 hours prescribed under the new system with a maximum of 250 hours including overtime is materially less than the *actual* hours worked under the old system. The table above referred to similarly proves conclusively that the actual earnings have increased considerably—far in excess of those earned in private presses. The theoretical arguments advanced by our colleague cannot prevail against the figures quoted in our report based on actual facts—figures derived directly from the pay sheets, abstracts of which have been studied by our colleague and ourselves.

(3) In paragraph 6 of his minute of dissent we think that our colleague has placed in a manner likely to mislead the so-called grievances of piece-workers alleged to have been admitted in the report; it might have been fairer to have stated how far we considered them real grievances and how far we have shown that remedies are possible and suggested them. We do not, however, desire to deal further with the facts which have been dealt with fully in the report. We would, however, like to explain that as regards the payment for idle hours no fewer than 8,000 idle hours were paid for in the Simla Central Press in the quarter ending December 1921.

(4) In Part II of his report our colleague deals in detail with his views on piece-work. We do not desire to recapitulate the arguments which form the basis of our report. Our colleague has evidently not fully realized the meaning of running a press on commercial lines—to put things briefly it implies that Government would not be justified in running its own presses if its cost rates were higher than those of private firms and secondly that Government cannot be justified in attracting labour from private firms by paying rates largely in excess of the general market rates. In paragraph 18 of his minute our colleague objects to the fact that in the report officers in charge of presses and accounts and office section have been excluded from costs of supervision. We would note that this was done merely to conform with figures supplied by private presses. We deal with this question in somewhat greater detail in connection with the schemes A and B propounded by our colleague.

(5) We regret that the schemes propounded by our colleague in his minute of dissent, Part III, are founded on certain fallacies and on a misconception of the annual statistical returns on which he bases the financial effect of his proposed new systems. We have already indicated in our report our reasons for holding that on fixed salaries outturn would be less and that greater supervision would be required. We must also state that if compositors are treated as Government servants under the Civil Service Regulations, it is improbable, as experience has shown in the case of existing salaried hands, that the amount of leave taken will be less than three months in the year on the average under the new Fundamental Rules. This will necessitate the increase of staff by 25 per cent. and a corresponding increase in expenditure, which our colleague has not indicated in his financial proposals. We must also repeat our view that Government cannot be justified in paying its staff salaries far in excess of those paid by private firms, as our colleague suggests. We regret that we cannot accept the figures given by our colleague in Table III of Scheme B of his minute as they are far from correct. The Government of Bengal and the Darjeeling Press pay on the piece system at the rates in force in the Government of India presses and do not pay fixed salaries. The rates referred to in our report are those of the three largest presses in Calcutta.

(6) Our colleague says that in the year 1919-20 while Rs. 6,72,448 were spent on workmen of all kinds, Rs. 4,37,035 were spent on supervision with its auxiliaries and Rs. 15,57,659 on contingencies. Our colleague's argument is, however, based on a misconception of the annual statistics. The auxiliaries and readers included by our colleague under the term supervision are entirely labour and are classed as such in all printing presses. In the statistical figures they are shown as "Administration" not "supervision". They are not entered under the head "workmen" as the value of their work is not easily distributed over individual jobs. The statistical table in question is prepared for the purpose of "costing" work, and the value of their work is distributed on the same basis as that of the supervising staff. That is the sole reason why they are placed under the same head as supervision. As regards the high rate of contingencies, we must note that more than half the amount is paid to the contractors for Government printing, and has nothing to do with the press, while a considerable portion is debitable to the publishing branch which is an organization quite separate from the press. The following statement of the charges for the past complete year (1920-21) explains the position correctly:—

	Rs.
Workmen .. .. .	5,92,297
Readers and Auxiliaries .. .. .	2,75,583
Total labour establishment .. .. .	8,67,880
Supervision and accounts .. .. .	2,33,646
Contingencies for the press including all supplies except paper .. .. .	2,78,513

Of the remaining contingencies Rs. 77,564 were on account of the publishing branch and Rs. 8,45,643 on account of payments to the Government printing contractors for stock forms. This statement of the case alters materially



the position suggested by our colleague. We do not consider it necessary to consider in detail our colleague's scheme, but we are convinced that so far from reducing supervision, a large increase would be necessary if a salary system were introduced. We would only remark that a staff of six overseers for a staff of nearly 3,000 would in the opinion of most employers of labour be considered deficient. Nor do we understand how the introduction of a salary system would reduce the demand for type by  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd nor affect the existence of a confidential clerk nor reduce the number of store-keepers required. Still less could we advise Government to reduce the amount of audit by one-half. Our colleague does not appear to have appreciated the fact that already the Government presses employ fewer section holders to compositors than in presses where a salary system is in force, and we can only regard his proposals for a further reduction as impracticable. No one conversant with labour problems would suggest that labour can be efficient or economical without adequate supervision.

(7) Our colleague in paragraph 24 of his minute of dissent makes an implication that work which should be done in the Government presses is given to contractors; but we are informed that the contractors on the other hand make a counter complaint that work which they should do is actually done in the Government presses. The dispute is not within the terms of our reference. We would however, add that if, as the allegation implies, there is not sufficient work for the existing staff, the correct remedy is to reduce the staff. Steps, we understand, are being taken to ensure an even flow of work to the various Government presses, which will result in a considerable decrease in the staff, which will on the other hand have continuous work. We are of opinion, that this will meet one of our colleague's main requirements without any radical change of system.

(8) In other circumstances it might have been necessary to meet our colleague's suggestion in greater detail, but we have been assured that with a view to ensuring very great economies the Government of India is now taking steps to replace hand labour in its presses by the increased use of machinery. We feel that this will have such an effect on the displacement of piece labour that any proposal to alter the existing basis of payment radically would merely result in an unnecessary temporary rousing of hopes at a cost to the tax payer which we have every reason to fear would not be inconsiderable.

VITHALDAS D. THACKERSEY.

*Dated the 12th June 1922.*

F. D. ASCOLI.

## BRIEF REPLY TO THE NOTE OF THE MAJORITY ON MY MINUTE OF DISSENT.

By the courtesy of my colleagues, their note on my dissenting minute has been forwarded to me with a request that if I wish to reply to it I should do so as early as possible. I gladly avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded to me. Fortunately the matters noticed by them are few being about 7 in number and not all of them of equal importance while one is purely a matter of terminology which I would have taken no trouble about if it stood alone and by itself.

2. In paragraph 2 of the note, an endeavour is made to distinguish between theoretical and practical hours of work, and if the attempt were successful, it would be found to be in the ultimate analysis "a distinction without a difference". As a matter of fact there is no theory in the matter. The Handbook and the circular which I quoted to show the hours of work as they were prescribed originally and the modifications made thereof are Government publications, not intended to propound any theory but designed to lay down authoritatively, the rules to be carried out in the working of the presses. To take the rules as laid down and to mark the consequences of their being followed is not theorizing but a process of reasoning known as deductive and cannot be logically objected to. It brings out clearly the results which the rules lead to and is perhaps the only legitimate method to be employed when the propriety or otherwise of a system—in this case the piece system, is under consideration. My colleagues appear to me to allow that the results may be as pointed out by me, but in actually working the rules, the consequences pointed out by me do not follow. If this be so, then the rules are modified by those who carry them out, and in that case, a further question arises as to whether they had the power to effect the modification. In any case one would like to know what the modifications are. The contention of the piece-workers as I conceive it is exactly the opposite of what my colleagues maintain, and that is why the trouble in the Government presses originally arose and has led to the present enquiry into the grievances of piece-workers.

It is complained that I do not refer to the table of paragraph 14 of the majority report. This table is incomplete and imperfect as a mere look at it will show. There are no figures in it for classes 18, 19, and 20 for the presses at Calcutta and Delhi. Are there no piece-workers in those classes in those presses? It is very strange if it be so. Then the foot note to the said table is as follows—

"Normal working hours are 200 per month or 250 with overtime."

Thus as shown towards the end of paragraph 4 of my minute of dissent, the Handbook made a week consist of 42 hours. The circular which came later extended the working hours to 47½ and the note copied above by me further extends it normally to 50 or with overtime to 60½. This obviously improves and strengthens the case of the piece-workers, and the conclusion arrived at by me stands.

A word may be said here about the preparation of this table which is so much relied on. It purports to be an abstract of other abstracts of figures compiled from pay-sheets which naturally would be very numerous, and are

distributed over the three Government presses and are not readily available. The abstracts prepared from them, on which the table is based were so bulky that they could not be moved from the office where they were kept at Delhi. On the principle that if mountain does not go to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain, one had to see them where they were stored. Merely inspecting them would serve no useful purpose, unless the original pay-sheets were there to compare and check the correctness of the work of abstraction and this might necessitate the examination of cognate papers. What would be the gain even if all this tremendous labour was undertaken? The slight improvement in wages would be eaten up by the increased hours of work or so little left of it, if at all, as not to be appreciable.

3. In paragraph 3 of the note on my dissenting minute occurs the following :—

“ In paragraph 6 of his minute of dissent we think our colleague has placed in a manner likely to mislead the so-called grievances of piece-workers alleged to have been admitted in the report. It might have been fairer to have stated how far we considered them real grievances.....”

This is a terminological objection. In ordinary parlance and in law, averments not traversed are called admissions and when facts alleged by piece-workers were acknowledged as true and existing I described them as admissions. I had not the slightest intention to mislead any body and I am glad to note that my colleagues were not misled. I may note also as they have done that payment for 8,000 idle hours was not evidenced by any paper or verbal statement by any body in the enquiry. If the evidence for it has appeared after the close of the enquiry, my judgment cannot be impeached on that account, unless we have a further sitting.

4. In paragraph 4 of their note my colleagues observe that I have not fully realized the meaning of the expression “ running a press on commercial lines ”. It is true that I felt a doubt about it during the enquiry and at one of the sittings asked what it exactly conveyed. One of them I believe replied that it was plain. It meant making profit. This was said in a light vein. So I omitted any mention of it, and argued the matter from paragraph 11 of my dissenting minute in a general way, and more especially in paragraph 20 of it. I pointed out how commercial and Government establishments differed from each other in their objects, operations and working. The former aimed at profit and the latter at efficiency, and the important consequences that follow from the circumstance. In the note now under consideration, the expression “ running on commercial lines ” is explained to mean “ That Government would not be justified in running its own presses if its cost rates were higher than those of private firms and secondly, that Government cannot be justified in attracting labour from private firms by paying rates largely in excess of the general market rates.” I find that I have dealt with this aspect of the case at some length in paragraph 11 of my dissenting minute and it appears unnecessary to repeat the arguments here, more especially as the meaning now put on the expression “ on commercial lines ” shows an approximation to the interpretation I put upon it. In the original report it will be found that the word

"strictly" is invariably found introduced before the expression "on commercial lines". Now it is dropped, so the rigour of commerciality is silently diminished. Then it appears to be conceded that though "rates largely in excess of the general market rates" are not to be permitted, those that are only moderately in excess of the general market rates, are apparently permissible. If to this were added the imperious demands of efficiency and the necessity of the administration being good and such as commands the general approval of the public at large by affording a living wage to the worker, and if it is recognized that occasion may arise on which Government would have to run its presses even if the cost-price exceeds that of private firms, then the interpretation put by the majority will accord with mine.

5. Paragraph 5 of the note deals with the schemes submitted by me for converting the piece-workers into salaried hands, and it is said that they are "founded on certain fallacies and a misconception of annual statistical returns". So far as I can see no fallacies are pointed out unless my difference of opinion on the points mentioned in the paragraph are to be described by that name. These points are (1) whether the out-turn on fixed salaries will be less than under the piece system (2) whether greater supervision will be necessary if piece-workers are converted into salaried hands. The majority answer both in the affirmative and I answer them in the negative for reasons which I believe I have stated at some length in paragraphs 15 and 13 of my dissenting minute and it appears unnecessary to reproduce the arguments here. I may be permitted to note that the elements of smoothness in working, securing content and willing co-operation, etc., etc., to which I referred in paragraph 16 of my dissenting minute do not appear to have attracted the attention of the majority or to have received the amount of consideration due to them.

An objection is taken to my schemes on the score of there being no provision to carry on the work during the time that the piece-workers when converted into Government servants, go on leave permitted by Civil Service Regulations. My reply is that my schemes show savings and they could be utilized for the purpose and it would purely be a matter of adjustment to be made when the schemes are put into operation. Personally I am inclined to think that the savings will be larger than I have shown. I am glad that this objection has been taken, because it is arrived at by a process of deductive reasoning similar to that I employed in judging the adequacy of the hours of work, in the earlier part of my dissenting minute and this reply to the note on it. It is not theoretical but deductive reasoning.

Then comes the reiteration. "We must also repeat our view that Government cannot be justified in paying its staff salaries *far in excess* of those paid by private firms". I have italicized the words which I wish to emphasize. I do not wish them to be "far in excess" yet I wish the wages to approximate to a living wage that there may be an element of finality, content and a sort of forestalling of unrest in the near future.

The last portion of this paragraph objects to the figures given for Bengal and Darjeeling presses. Even if they are omitted, there are other figures in Table III of Schedule B enough to support the proposals made, but as a matter of fact, their inaccuracy is merely alleged without giving the true figures to

compare with them. The complaint against the figures given in the majority report is that only European firms were called and no Indian firms were similarly honoured.

6. Paragraph 6 of the note deals with the important question of the relative proportion of the costs of supervision in private and Government presses. The agents of the private presses put it at 25 per cent. of the amount spent on labour, and the majority in paragraph 7 of its report fixed at 13 to 14 per cent. in Government presses and argued that Government spends much less on supervision than private firms do. I dealt with the matter in paragraph 18 of my dissenting minute and the opening portion of its Part III, and relied on the statistical returns annually submitted and showed that the proportion was many times much higher than that given in the majority report. It is now explained in the note that statistical statements like No. 219-Pg. of 14th January 1921 are prepared for the purpose of "costing work," that I have misunderstood the figures and new figures are given to show the true proportion between the amounts spent on labour and supervision making for this purpose a distinction between supervision and administration. Conceding for the present all that is claimed in the note and taking the figures as they are given, the result is that Rs. 8,67,880 are spent on wages of labour and Rs. 5,12,159 are spent on supervision, and it requires no great calculation to show that it is more than four times that of 13 to 14 per cent. accepted in the majority report.\* So my conclusion that the Government press establishment is top heavy and calls for retrenchment stands and remains unshaken.

Towards the end of this paragraph of the note, contingencies are explained which will be dealt with in the next following paragraph, as they come in there. Doubts are endeavoured to be thrown on the practicability of the reductions proposed by me. In some instances they are mere matters of opinion and actual trial will prove the validity of my views. Introduction of the salaried system will save a large amount of wastage that goes on now. Nearly one third and even more of the type used is thrown away, by workers and distributors in their hurry to increase their out-put and this will be amply proved by experience. I could never understand why a confidential clerk was required in a purely printing establishment. As all wastage gets stopped, smaller stores will suffice and the number of store keepers will naturally be reduced. At present the accounts are very complicated. In the case of nearly each piece-worker each of the hours during which he was at work, calls for the attention of the computer, because there are different rates for different kinds of work, and the auditor must satisfy himself that each item allowed has been properly calculated, and then there are the deductions on various accounts, and naturally the bulk of the work falling to the auditor increases. Under the salaried system all this trouble will go and the audit would approximate to that of an ordinary office. This will effect a reduction in the audit establishment. Section holders under the salaried system would very nearly lose their occupation or the most onerous part of it. They will not have to note the exact time when a piece of work is given, nor to judge and put down the particular minute at which it should be returned executed, and so on. So their staff will admit of reduction.

7. Paragraph 7 of the note introduces the question of contractors and with the latter comes in the question of contingencies which was held over in the last preceding paragraph of this reply.

Statement I of No. 219-Pg., dated 14th January 1921, gives the following figures :—

	Rs.
Workmen and overtime .. .. .	6,72,448
Supervision and auxiliaries .. .. .	4,37,035
Contingencies .. .. .	15,57,059

It will be seen that roughly speaking out of every 26 rupees spent, 6 go to workers, 4 to supervision and 16 to contingencies. So like the tail of a comet, the contingencies are larger than the nucleus of 6, coma of 4 and even their combination *viz.* 10. It is now explained that out of this large sum of fifteen lakhs and odd, absorbed by contingencies Rs. 8,45,642, or more than a half, were paid to contractors for printing stock forms. I wonder why one of these contractors, if there are more than one, was not called to show what establishment he kept, what he paid and so on, but that is not the point for which I mention the matter. I refer to it in connection with the remark made in the opening sentence of paragraph 7 of the note, that I imply that much work is needlessly given out on contract and it is stated by way of reply, I believe, that the contractors complain that more work is not given to them. Obviously they are making commercial profits and would be glad if the Government presses were all abolished and the whole work done there, made over to them. Their profits are the measure of the loss of the rate payer. As it was not within the reference I did not go into it in my dissenting minute and do not propose to go into it now but only note that it is worth going into.

8. In the 8th and last paragraph of the note, my colleagues state that the replacement of hand labour by machinery is in contemplation so my proposal need not be discussed in detail. All I wish to say is that even in a highly industrially developed country like England hand labour in the matter of hand composition has not been displaced by machinery and any attempt in that direction might lead to great trouble. These days of financial stringency are unfavourable to experiments of the kind.

9. To sum up, I adhere to the conclusions arrived at in my minute of dissent and recommend their acceptance.

AMRAOTI :

G. S. KHAPARDE.

The 22nd June 1922.