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

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PIECE-WORKERS' COMMITTEE

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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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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO CONSIDER THE GRIEVANCES OF PIECE-WORKERS IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESSES.

Introductory.—In accordance with a resolution moved by the Hon'ble Mr. G. S. Khaparde in the Council of State on the 29th September 1921, we were, by Resolution No. A-389, dated the 20th December 1921, of the Government of India in the Department of Industries, constituted as a Committee to consider the grievances of the piece-workers employed in the Government of India presses in Calcutta, Delhi, and Simla and to suggest suitable remedies. We assembled in Calcutta on the 5th January 1922. On that date and the two succeeding days we examined six witnesses, representing the six classes of piece workers in the Calcutta presses, one witness representing the salaried hands, Mr. J. J. Meikle, the Superintendent, Government Printing, India, Mr. Jagadesan, the Examiner of Press Accounts, and the Hon'ble Sir Alexander Murray, representing the large employers of piece-labour in Calcutta. On the conclusion of the evidence we examined the arrangements in the Government of India Printing Press at Hastings Street. We reassembled in Delhi on the 25th January and on that date and the following two days we examined seven piece-workers of the Simla and Delhi presses, one salaried hand of the Simla press, Mr. F. J. Hall, Deputy Superintendent in charge of the Delhi press, and two representatives of the Master Printers' Association, Calcutta, viz., Mr. C. G. Duncan of Messrs. Thacker, Spink and Company, Limited, and Mr. R. Christie of the Caledonian and Edinburgh Presses, Calcutta. Two printed statements of grievances were handed in at Calcutta on behalf of the piece-workers. The representatives of the piece-workers were selected by the men themselves. In addition to the evidence that we have heard, we have had placed before us by the Government of India a series of review sheets of the pay of every piece-worker in the Government of India presses, showing the average hours worked and the average monthly earnings for two periods of 12 months, before and after the revision of rates announced in July 1920. We have also had the advantage of consulting various papers of the Department of Industries relevant to our enquiry, and have to acknowledge with thanks the readiness with which the Controller of Printing and Stationery and the Superintendent, Government Printing, India, have supplied us with any information that we required.

Arrangement of Report.—It is first necessary to examine the basis on which the grievances of the piece-workers are founded. They claim that the piece-work system should be entirely abolished. If we were to accept this proposal, it would obviously be unnecessary to suggest remedies for the difficulties that are alleged either to be inherent in the system, or to be peculiar to the system as in force in the Government of India presses, or to examine in detail instances in which it is alleged that the Government of India has failed

to fulfil its pledges. We accordingly consider it necessary first to examine the principles of the system of piece-work, and secondly to consider its application to the Government of India presses.

3. The principles of piece-work.—As regards the principles of piece-work we have had the advantage of hearing in detail the views of the Hon'ble Sir Alexander Murray, whose experience and study of the conditions of labour in India are probably unequalled. He considered that in a country that was developing industrially it was to the advantage of both the employer and the employed that the piece-work system should be adopted wherever 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. He considered that the system was suitable for all forms of labour in which a certain degree of uniformity existed; in jute mills where more than 100 different kinds of fabric were manufactured, the system was universally adopted. He considered that the piece system was suited to the work in the Government of India presses, and that, if a system of salaries were introduced, a very large increase in the supervising establishment would be necessary in order to secure an equal output from the same number of workers and even then it was extremely unlikely that an equal output would be obtained. He considered the piece-work system essential until labour had found its level, as the system induced labour to aim at a higher standard. With these general views on the advisability of retaining a piece-work system we are in agreement. We are satisfied that if the piece-workers generally were placed on a salaried basis, a very large decrease in outturn would result with a consequent heavy additional expenditure to Government. We are further of opinion that were a salary system to be introduced, based on the present scale of earnings—a scale which we deal with later—the cost of printing would be so great that it would be necessary to consider the question whether, except in the case of confidential papers, all printing for Government should not be done at private presses; at the same time we are of opinion that, if a salary system were introduced, it would be essential to fix salaries and general conditions of employment strictly on the basis of the rates and conditions prevalent in private presses—rates and conditions which, as we show below, are in every respect unfavourable in comparison with those prevalent in the Government of India presses. We are convinced that the piece-work establishment would not accept such conditions, which, while maintaining the earnings of the bad worker, would reduce those of the average worker by some 33 per cent. and those of the good workers by as much as 60 per cent. We leave the comparison of salaries for later consideration.

4. Necessity of working on commercial lines.—It might be urged that it would not be necessary, were it proposed to adopt a salary system, to base the wages and conditions of service on those prevalent in private presses. This possible contention we are not prepared to accept. We must lay it down as an axiom that if the Government of India is to maintain its own printing establishment, that establishment must be run strictly on commercial and industrial lines. To adopt in a Government industrial establishment a scale of salaries and conditions of service in any marked degree superior to those in force in the industry generally would be unjustifiable; it would result in the attraction from private presses to the Government presses of labour and a consequent

general increase in the demands of such labour. Were private presses unable to secure and retain their labour at the rates of salary and under the conditions of service now in force, such a justification would exist. But from the evidence that we have heard, it is obvious that this is not the case. Apart, moreover, from consideration of private employers, were Government to pay salaries which would result in an increase of the cost of its printing work above that prevalent in private presses, a consequence that would be inevitable if a salary system were introduced on a scale superior to that in force in private presses, the retention of Government printing presses as a commercial proposition would be unjustifiable. We cannot express in too strong terms the absolute necessity of conducting the Government presses as an industrial undertaking on commercial lines both in the interests of Government itself and of the public who are engaged in the same industry.

5. Difference between Government and private presses.—It is, however, a fact that in no large printing presses in Calcutta is the piece-work system in force, and a presumption is accordingly raised that the system is not suitable for the Government of India presses. Mr. Christie of the Caledonian Press informed us that he had 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. In their presses he considered that the amount of supervision employed was sufficient to ensure adequate outturn, and any unsatisfactory worker was instantly dismissed. Mr. Duncan of Messrs. Thacker, Spink and Company considered that the system was inapplicable to his own press owing to the large proportion of job and display work. For solid work, which constitutes the bulk of the work in the Government of India presses, he thought that the piece system was suitable, though he strongly advocated the use of machine composition for that type of work. There is little doubt that from the commercial point of view the replacement of hand composition by machine composition to a very large extent is desirable; with that aspect of the question we are not, however, immediately concerned. As we show below the additional cost of accounting is not heavy in the Government of India presses, and on grounds of economy the retention of the system is desirable. The Government of India presses in Calcutta employ over 1,800 hands, of whom more than 1,200 are paid by the piece. To secure an adequate outturn from such a large staff, if paid by salaries, would require a greatly extended staff of supervisors, and even then it must be admitted that the facility with which a private employer is able to dismiss a slacker or non-remunerative employee from his staff, would not be possible in a Government establishment, and it would only be with the greatest difficulty that Government would be able to dispense with the unsatisfactory portion of its labour. The circumstances in the Government of India presses are *toto celo* different from those prevalent in private presses; in the latter the majority of the work is job or display work for which it is difficult to fix a piece rate, while the size of the establishment and the conditions attaching to private management make it possible to exercise a strict control over the staff. In the former the majority of the work is solid composition and Government is not in a position to exercise that control which a private proprietor is enabled to enforce over a smaller press. Subject to certain proposals which we make below, we think that the

piece system should in the branches where it is now in force be generally retained in the Government of India presses.

6. Press workers a form of labour.—We must, however, point out at this stage that the demands of the piece-workers do not consist entirely in the substitution of a salary system for payment by the piece. In asking for a salary system, they have included demands that they should be entitled to all the privileges conferred by the Civil Service Regulations on the clerical staff of Government in the way of leave, pensions, etc., and that they should be placed on an incremental system of pay, viz., a system of salaries rising automatically according to length of service. In other words, they claim to be treated as clerical staff and not as industrial labour. Quite apart from the very heavy expense that would be involved in granting the privileges of the leave rules to the workers in the press, we are unable to accept the suggestion that the work of the piece establishment is not industrial labour. In the United Kingdom the staffs of printing presses, including His Majesty's printing press, are treated as labour and paid at Trade Union rates; in Calcutta private printers treat their staff as labour. In no instance of which we are aware is labour paid on an incremental system based on length of service; the wages of labour are in all cases based on the product of that labour, and we can see no reason for adopting a different principle in the case of press labour. As we shall point out later, the labour in the Government of India presses is paid at higher rates than those earned in private presses; it enjoys pension and leave privileges which are not granted in private presses nor in any other industrial concerns, and we cannot agree that any justification exists for treating press labour in the same manner as a clerical establishment. We admit that there are certain minor defects in the adaptation of the piece system to the requirements of the press, and in some cases we suggest that the piece-workers should be offered the alternative of accepting a salary system based on prevalent wages in private presses. Generally we think that the piece system should remain. It is, however, also necessary to consider whether the system is also advantageous to Government.

7. Piece system economical.—It might justifiably be argued that the piece system should be condemned if it resulted in a smaller outturn, an excessive supervising staff or an unduly complicated and expensive system of accounts. 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—the very essence of the piece system is to ensure an outturn proportionate to the wages earned. Provided that the rates have been correctly fixed, the outturn of an establishment paid by piece must be greater than that of one on fixed wages. As regards supervision it is impossible to weigh the value of the system by definite facts and figures, and it is only necessary to preface these figures by a single generalization, viz., the obvious fact 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. As regards amount and cost of supervision we are, however, able to base our conclusions on definite figures. We were informed by the representatives of two of the largest private printing presses in Calcutta,

Messrs. Thacker, Spink and Company and the Caledonian Press, that the cost of supervision excluding the officer in charge of the press and the accounts and office section amounted to 25 per cent. of the wages paid to their labour - in labour the item of "reading" is included; the former press with an establishment of about 270 employs three overseers or one to every 90 of the staff, and approximately one section-holder to every 25 compositors; the latter press with an establishment of some 650 employs six overseers, or one to every 110 approximately of the staff, and one section-holder to every 40 compositors. In the Government of India presses the figures show that considerably less supervision is exercised. For the purpose of estimating the cost, computers and checkers, who are not employed where labour is paid on the wage system, have been included in the cost of supervision, while the officer in charge of the press, the accounts and correspondence branches have been excluded as in the case of private presses. For the month of December the cost of supervision in the Calcutta presses was 14·39 per cent. of the cost of the labour employed, while in the Delhi Press the percentage was as low as 13·64—in both cases far less than the cost in private presses; detailed figures are given in Appendix A. In the Government of India presses one section-holder is employed for every 30 men. As regards the superior supervision of overseers, the Calcutta Press employs six overseers to supervise a labour staff of 1,806, viz., one to 301 workers, while in the Delhi Press only one overseer is employed over a labour establishment of 476. Both these figures indicate far less supervision than the figures one over 90 and one over 110 in the private presses. It might still be urged that the piece system involves an unduly complex and expensive system of accounts. In Calcutta the system of work entails the retention of a staff of 32 computers and two checkers at a monthly cost of Rs. 2,149. The monthly bill for piece establishment is slightly in excess of Rs. 45,000; one computer is required for every 36 piece hands, the cost of computers being 4·77 per cent. of the earnings of the piece-workers. In the Delhi Press only nine computers and one checker are employed or one to every 32½ piece hands, the cost involved being 3·75 per cent. of the earnings of the piece establishment. It will thus be seen that the cost of the extra accounting establishment is inconsiderable compared with the outturn achieved and that even including the cost of the computing establishment, the supervision charges under the piece system are far less than those incurred in private presses which pay on the salary system. We are accordingly justified in arriving at the conclusion that the system as it exists at present is economical and involves the retention of a reduced supervising staff and of an accounting staff the cost of which absorbs only a small part of the savings resulting from the smaller supervision.

8. Alleged defects of piece system.—Before we review the details of the alleged grievances it is necessary to deal with a further general accusation against the system of piece-work, viz., that it results in careless and inefficient work. We would hazard the suggestion that this complaint, if true, might more reasonably be expected from Government than from the employees, and that the latter would only be concerned if the inefficiency of one class of workers proved detrimental to the workers of another class. We may at once dismiss the case of binders and warehousemen, as their work does not affect that of any other class; and it does not appear that their work compares

unfavourably with that done in private establishments. We may similarly dismiss the case of men employed in the type foundry. The greater part of the work is purely mechanical, as the type is cast in a machine, and in no case have the compositors, who use the type, complained that its quality has affected their outturn. Three classes remain whom it is necessary to consider in detail, *viz.*, compositors, distributors and machine and pressmen.

(a) *Compositors.*—The quality of the work of compositors does not affect the earning powers of any other class of piece-workers, but it might be urged that the system of piece-work induces them to work hurriedly and carelessly, and that their product is accordingly poor. We feel convinced that the compositors would not support this accusation, especially in view of the assertion made by them in the printed "Supplementary List of Grievances" which they filed before us, that they have a marked superiority in education and technique over the men in private establishments. The system of proof-reading prevalent both in the Government and private presses, by which the compositor is bound to correct his own bad proofs, is, we think, sufficient to ensure that the product attains the required standard. We cannot on these grounds recommend any material changes in the system of piece-work for compositors.

(b) *Distributors.*—As regards distributors, however, the case is somewhat different. The duty of the distributor is to break up the type composed by the compositors, and to replace the different types in the correct compartments of the composing cases. It has been claimed that the piece system induces the distributor, in his desire to increase his earnings, to work at such a speed, that he distributes the type carelessly and places it in the wrong compartment. We admit the force of this contention, and accept the complaint of the compositors that faulty distribution does actually impede them in their work. We must, however, qualify our acceptance of the difficulty by stating that, even despite this hindrance, the compositor is still able to obtain earnings considerably in excess of those of his brethren in private presses. We think that it would be advantageous if distributors were placed on salaries, but they must be based on those given in private presses; for similar reasons we cannot recommend that the concession of salaries should give to the distributors any further privileges as regards leave and pension—that are not enjoyed by the piece-workers—privileges considerably greater than those given in private presses. It should further be understood that as in the case of distributors in private presses, the salaries of the distributors would only be paid proportionately for the time that they are present in the press. In private presses the salaries of distributors vary from Rs. 9 to Rs. 21-8-0, in addition to which they are entitled to overtime at the rate of 50 per cent. for every 2½ hours overtime up to a maximum of 5 hours. The day in private presses consists of 6½ hours; ordinarily

a distributor can earn overtime 50 per cent. over his salary. The salaries obtainable are thus based on a nine hours' day and the possible earnings vary from Rs. 13-8-0 to Rs. 32-4-0 per month or from 11½ pies to two annas 3½ pies per hour. As a matter of fact in the pay sheets that were produced before us, in no case has the monthly earning exceeded Rs. 30, and in Messrs. Thacker, Spink and Company's press only five out of 18 distributors have exceeded a monthly earning of Rs. 20. In the Government presses the working day consists of 8½ hours, but little less than the working day *plus* ordinary overtime worked in a private press; it will accordingly be necessary to fix the lowest grade at not more than Rs. 13-8-0, the highest grade at Rs. 32-4-0 per month, 25 per cent. being allowed on hour rates as usual for overtime. An analysis of the earnings of 38 distributors in the Hastings Street Government Press, Calcutta, shows that in the past year no fewer than seven earned more than Rs. 40 per month; the lowest average hour earning was Re. 0-1-9, earned by two men, while 11 men earned at the rate of Re. 0-2-1, seven at Re. 0-2-6, seven at Re. 0-2-10, 10 at Re. 0-3-2, one at Re. 0-4-9—no fewer than 24 out of 38 men earned at a rate higher than the highest procurable in private presses. We have considerable doubts whether in the circumstances the distributors would accept the salary system. We are confirmed in this view by the fact that payment by the piece was only recently introduced into the Simla Press for distribution and that the distributors themselves voluntarily accepted the new system. The Simla distributor who gave evidence before us admitted that as a result of the change his annual earnings had risen from Rs. 231 to Rs. 415; an examination of his pay sheets shows that while the former earnings were gained by 3,343 hours' work, the latter required the labour of only 1,966½, the hourly rate increasing from 0-1-1·3 to 0-3-4·5. Another alternative which we think in every way preferable would be to require compositors to distribute their own type, the piece rate for distribution being added to the rate for composition—no complaints regarding careless distribution would then be possible. This practice is in force in the United Kingdom, and, we believe, in certain other presses in India, but it is doubtful if it would be acceptable in Calcutta. We would suggest accordingly that in the first place any compositor who desires it should be allowed to do his own distribution, and that, where distributors are required in addition, they should be given the alternative of being placed on salaries on the terms and conditions laid down above or remaining on the present piece system, subject to the condition that only one of these systems should be allowed in any one press. We believe that, if the former alternative were adopted, an increase in the number of distributors would be necessary; this would not, however, materially affect printing costs. We must also add that, if a system of salaries be adopted, it will be

necessary to give to officers in charge of the presses more summary powers than they at present possess for the dismissal of unsatisfactory labour.

(c) *Press and Machinemen*.—In the case of machine and pressmen it is obvious that their outturn must depend on the amount of matter received from the compositors. In the Delhi Press machinemen are on salaries, but we were informed by Mr. Hall, the officer in charge, who has also had considerable experience of the Calcutta and Simla presses, that the results are very unsatisfactory. It has been suggested that a remedy might lie in fixing a scale of salaries, variable by a bonus or short payment in case the outturn fall above or below a standard to be laid down. This would in reality amount to a piece system. The only remedy that we can suggest for complaints about delay is that the scale of pressmen and machinemen required should be very closely examined with regard to the amount of copy turned out by the composing staff; if the scale is correct, a constant flow of work should be available for the machines, and thus idling would be dispensed with. Idle time is already paid for periods when there is no work to be done, and we do not think that in these circumstances the men have any legitimate grounds for complaint—on the other hand it is to the advantage of Government to see that the flow of work should be such as to preclude the necessity of large idle time payments.

9. *Stability of staff of piece-workers*.—Having accepted the principle that the system of piece-work is correct and that there is no inherent reason why it should not be applied in the Government of India presses, it is necessary to examine in detail the grievances which the piece workers allege to exist and to suggest remedies therefor. We would first suggest that if the grievances of the piece-workers were real and deep, Government would find grave difficulty in recruitment and in retaining its staff. As regards recruitment no difficulty of any sort is experienced, except to a small extent at Delhi, where difficulties regarding industrial establishments generally are pronounced. It is interesting to note, however, that difficulty of recruitment mainly arises in the case of linotype operators (a highly skilled form of labour) and coolies, both of whom work on fixed wages and are not paid by the piece. As regards retention of staff we have obtained detailed statistics for the last 4 years from the Calcutta presses, which employ 501 compositors paid on the piece system. These statistics are reproduced in Appendix B. They show that the average annual proportion of men who leave amounts to 18 per cent. of the total staff; of this 18 per cent. 10 per cent. represent men who have worked for less than 1 year, and 6 per cent. men whose service is 1 year but less than 4, only 2 per cent. representing men of lengthier service—in other words desertions and resignations (which average only $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. of the staff per annum) occur almost entirely amongst new recruits. We are assured by the evidence that we have heard and from the experience of our President, whose experience of industrial labour cannot be questioned, that this record is surprising and denotes a stability of staff, probably unparalleled

in Indian industrial establishments. We were further informed by the representatives of private presses, that a certain number of this floating staff take up work with them, but that they are invariably incompetent and slackers. We are accordingly justified in presuming that the desertions are mainly confined to labour that is not worth its price, and that so far as earnings and the general conditions of employment are concerned, piece-workers in the Government of India presses have no real cause for complaint. We would further repeat our original axiom that Government industrial establishments must be run on commercial lines and that Government would not be justified in paying wages out of all proportion to those obtainable in private establishments.

10. Conditions in private presses.—We have deduced from the fact of the stability of the staff that the piece-workers in the Government presses receive adequate earnings compared with those obtained in private establishments. This deduction is more than substantiated by the actual figures. It was alleged by the compositors in Calcutta that in private presses compositors were given salaries as high as Rs. 90 together with overtime, which resulted in monthly earnings of Rs. 135. By the favour of the proprietors, we have had laid before us the actual pay sheets for the consecutive months of two of the largest printing presses in Calcutta, viz., Messrs. Thacker Spink and Company, Limited, and the Caledonian Press. These pay sheets have been examined in detail, on our behalf by Mr. Ascoli; the actual wages of hand compositors vary from Rs. 10 to Rs. 32, the majority being on wages of from Rs. 22 to Rs. 25. This wage is based on a working day from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., overtime from 5 P.M. to 7-30 P.M. is paid for at the rate of half a day's wages, till 10 P.M. at the rate of a full day's wages. The compositor ordinarily increases his wages by 50 per cent. by overtime work. His wage includes payment for Sundays and for approximately 12 or 14 days holidays when the press is closed. On the other hand, his salary is cut for absence; the penalty for lateness is the reduction of half an hour's pay for every 15 minutes' lateness. For absence due to sickness pay is never allowed save in exceptional cases where the absence is due to accidents in the course of a man's work. Promotion from one grade to another is made on the basis of ability and not of length of service. Pensions are not given as of right, but very rarely as a matter of grace in Messrs. Thacker Spink and Company's establishment, a firm of many years' standing, in which the employees number about 270, there are not more than 18 pensioners, drawing pensions varying from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7-8-0 per month; in the case of death the widow is occasionally granted a gratuity of 1 to 3 months' pay. Under these conditions of service private firms find no difficulty in obtaining recruits. An examination of their pay sheets showed that in no instance had a hand compositor earned as much as Rs. 50 in any one month and that the average earnings of each compositor in the months of October, November and December last averaged Rs. 34, Rs. 36 and Rs. 37 respectively; of which approximately one-half was on account of overtime. An analysis of these figures is interesting. Allowing for Sundays and holidays the year consists of 300 days or 25 days per month. Taking Rs. 36 as the average monthly earning, the average earnings per working day amount to Rs. 1-7-0. The average day consists of 7 hours plus 2½ hours overtime, or, excluding ½ hour allowed for meals, 9 hours; the average earnings for every hour of work are accordingly 2 annas 6½ pies, corresponding approximately with class 6,

of the 6th from the bottom of the 20 time grades in the Government of India presses ; these grades vary from 1 anna to 8 annas per hour.

11. **General conditions in the Government of India presses.**—It is now necessary to examine the general conditions in the Government of India presses piece-work establishment, apart from the basic difference between the salary and the piece system. The men are paid only for work actually done, no additional payment being made for Sundays and holidays, though, subject to the grant of necessary funds by the legislature, payment at class rates will be made from the first of April 1922 for 16 holidays each year. Piece-workers are also entitled to be paid at class rates for any time that they are kept idle in the press. Men who were in employment on the 15th July 1920 are entitled to pensions based on half their monthly earnings in the past 72 months of their service : piece-workers who entered the press subsequent to the above date are required to join a provident fund, to which Government contributes liberally. In order to enforce discipline fines are imposed for breach of discipline, absence without previous notice and lateness ; in the last case 10 minutes grace is allowed and no fine is inflicted until the 7th offence, the fine being one or two annas. It is true that certain complaints have been made to us regarding the actual effect of these conditions in practice ; these we examine later. But it is clear from the above recital that the above conditions are more favourable than those under which the salaried hands in private establishments work.

12. **Earnings in the Government of India presses.**—We have stated that the earnings of piece-workers in the Government of India presses are favourable compared with those in private presses. It is necessary to examine the earnings in greater detail. Detailed figures have been kept for the whole of the establishment from October 1920 to September 1921 ; from these figures it appears that no fewer than 31 compositors maintained an average monthly earning of over Rs. 100, the highest average monthly earning being Rs. 139. The attendance of these men in hours per month varied from 185 to 248. The majority of the piece-workers being compositors, we have had worked out the actual earnings of the compositors in the above period in the Delhi press. These correspond approximately with the earnings in the Calcutta press and are below those in the Simla press, where a higher rate is paid. Excluding 10 compositors who worked for less than 3 months, the number of men employed aggregated 240. The average monthly earnings of this staff totalled Rs. 13,358 on an attendance of 50,875 hours. The average earnings per man amounted to Rs. 55-10-6 on a monthly attendance of 212 hours, the average earnings per working hour being Re. 0-4-2½. We have already shown that the average earnings including overtime in private presses are Rs. 36 per month and Re. 0-2-6½ per working hour. Only 6 compositors averaged less than Rs. 20 per month ; 19 earned between Rs. 20, and Rs. 30, 38 between Rs. 30 and Rs. 40 and 43 between Rs. 40 and Rs. 50. The maximum number of earners was 48 between Rs. 50 and Rs. 60, after which the arc declines, 31 earning between Rs. 60 and Rs. 70, 20 between Rs. 70 and Rs. 80, 12 each between Rs. 80 and Rs. 90 and Rs. 90 and Rs. 100, while 11 exceeded Rs. 100. The maximum average monthly earning of any compositor for the year amounted to Rs. 129. *These figures show with incontestable force the great superiority of the earnings of piece-work compositors in the Government of India presses over the salaries

earned by compositors in private presses. They further show that an average working month of 212 hours produces an average wage of nearly Rs. 56, while the average month of 225 hours in private presses produces only Rs. 36. They further show that the rates, as at present fixed, are quite sufficient to cover any loss of work due either to possible delays during work or to days when the press is closed, and we must point out that the decision to pay at class rates for 16 holidays from the year 1922 will still further increase the emoluments of the compositors.

13. *Grievances regarding unfulfilled pledges.*—We have arrived at the conclusion that the system of piece-work is not only suitable for the work in the Government presses but that it has positive advantages over a system of fixed salaries; we have further assured ourselves that the system as applied to the Government presses ensures a rate of wages considerably in excess of the salaries earned in private presses and confers certain other benefits on the workers which are not given to piece-workers in other industrial establishments nor to salaried hands in private presses. We cannot, however, agree that the system in its application does not create certain difficulties and grievances nor that it is impossible to discover a solution to a large proportion of them. The grievances we shall deal with in detail commencing with instances in which the piece-workers allege that Government has failed to fulfil pledges previously made.

- (a) *Inauguration of a Provident Fund.*—In its Resolution of the 15th July 1920 the Government of India undertook to create a Provident Fund for the benefit of all piece-workers who took up work in the press after that date. We have been definitely informed that the rules for the creation of the fund have been drafted and fully considered; and that they will be brought into effect within a very short time. The delay which must occur in giving effect to a somewhat complex scheme has naturally made the piece-workers anxious; the delay will not, however, in any way affect the benefits to be derived by the men.
- (b) *Value of Works Committees.*—It is alleged by the men that though Works Committees have been created in accordance with the terms of the resolution referred to above, they are really a farce and that legitimate grievances brought forward obtain no redress. We have ascertained that whatever grievances the workmen submit to the Works Committee are recorded in the proceedings of the Works Committees and are invariably submitted to the Controller of Printing and forwarded by him to the Government of India, where they are examined in detail. It is improbable that the advantages of the system can be seen at once, but we are sure that the Government of India is fulfilling its pledge in giving practical effect to these Committees, and that in time the press workers will realize the value of the Committees and the effects of their working.
- (c) *That pensions are not given in accordance with the resolution above referred to.*—We have ascertained that all applications for pensions

received by the Government of India have been granted and that no such applications have been withheld by the press authorities. No actual instances of refusal have been brought before us, and we can only assume that this grievance is hypothetical. We further note that though in the Resolution of 1920 the Government of India only undertook to consider recommendations for pensions under certain conditions, they have recently agreed that men who fulfil those same conditions shall be entitled to pension. On the question of pensions we shall deal at greater length below.

(d) *Payment for lost time.*—The piece-workers allege that not only is payment for idle time refused, but that men are actually dismissed for claiming it. This allegation appears to have been founded on the fate of certain men in the Type foundry. Owing to shortage of work it was found necessary to curtail the staff, and the men who were to be discharged claimed payment for idle time. In their Resolution the Government of India agreed that, if men during normal working hours had to remain idle for lack of work, they should be paid at class rates. We cannot by any stretch of the imagination interpret this concession as an agreement to retain on the establishment men for whom no work could be found; such an interpretation is illogical and would suggest a degree of extravagance absolutely inconsistent with the economical working of any commercial or industrial concern. The intention of the Government of India was clearly that, if a worker were required to be present in the press but was not supplied with work, he should for that enforced period of idleness be paid at class rates. It is, however, alleged that even such payments are not made as a matter of course. The only specific instance brought to our notice was a refusal to pay a man for $\frac{1}{4}$ hour idle time, on the ground that it was unnecessary for him to be idle. It is, however, possible that in their efforts to run the press economically, the superintending staff may show a tendency to disregard the new rule, and we would suggest that the particular attention of the supervising staff be invited to the undertaking of the Government of India, and that in the case of real complaints the piece-workers should bring the actual instances to notice at the meetings of the Works Committees.

(e) *That the new rates have resulted in no real increase of wages.*—This question is of such importance that we deal with it in a separate paragraph.

14. *Present rates of earnings compared with previous earnings.*—In the Resolution of the 15th July 1920 the Government of India found that the present average earnings of piece-workers in their presses compared favourably with those that were earned in other establishments. They decided to reduce the number of hours of work and to raise the piece rates by 40 per cent. for Calcutta and Delhi, and by 50 per cent. for Simla. "The piece-workers" they added "will be able under the increased rates now sanctioned to earn more than their present

total income in a shorter working day and under considerably more favourable conditions". Subsequently at a meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council, Sir Thomas Holland undertook to examine the results of the new rates and place them before a Committee of the Council. We have had the advantage of studying the review sheets of the wages earned over periods of 12 months, before and after the new rates came into force, and we do not think that the effect of the new rates can be illustrated better than by reproducing an abstract compiled from the review sheets. For this purpose we have divided all piece-workers, whether compositors, pressmen, distributors, machinemen, ware-housemen, binders or foundrymen, into the classes according to which they are rated for the purpose of payment when on time jobs. From this abstract it will be seen that there has been an almost universal decrease in the actual hours worked, that there has been an invariable increase in the average earnings of each class and, in some cases to the extent of 50 per cent., while the increase in earnings per hour has increased to a still greater extent.

The above table proves so conclusively the advantages derived by the piece-workers under the new rates both in actual earnings and in decrease of working hours that it would be unnecessary to explain the advantages further, had not the Calcutta compositors filed a statement before us, by which they intended to show that the old system was more advantageous than the new one. The statement filed by the compositors is a purely imaginary one, which shows the total earnings possible if a man worked the maximum number of hours under each system, disregarding, however, overtime; the hypothetical earnings are based on class rates and not on piece earnings. It is only necessary to remark that the new system was intended to abolish the excessively long hours, and that in no case does the staff work the maximum possible number of hours—even including overtime. The following comparative statement for compositors in class 10 will sufficiently prove the actual state of affairs: the hypothetical figures are based entirely on the figures handed in by the Calcutta compositors:—

Year.	Month.	Hours.	Earnings.			Year.	Hours.	Earnings.		
			Rs.	A.	P.			Rs.	A.	P.
Hypothetical 1919.	September ..	309	63	1	9	1921	216	56	4	0
	October ..	278	51	8	6	1921	157½	41	0	3
	November ..	313½	63	14	1	1921	216½	56	6	1
Hypothetical average.	....	300½	59	8	1	..	196½	51	3	5
Actual average for the whole year 1919.	....	200·9	44	3	11	1921	192·3	58	14	8

N. B.—Earnings for 1919 include war allowance. The actual average figures are those of the whole piece-work staff in class 10 (old class 22); the earnings of compositors in both years would be higher.

The above table clearly demonstrates the unsoundness of the hypothetical figures, which are of no value in proving the actual earnings of the men. We are satisfied that under the present system the piece-worker has obtained considerable advantages under the new system, and that his earnings are very considerably in excess of the salaries earned by paid hands in private presses.

15. Permanent and temporary status.—We now come to the actual grievances which, it is stated, are inherent in the piece-work system and for which we suggest remedies. We cannot deny that such grievances must and do exist, but we do not think that they are insuperable to any greater extent than in any other industrial concern employing piece-workers. The first grievance with

which we deal is the differentiation between permanent and temporary establishment. This grievance is peculiar to a Government establishment in which the difference in status is of considerable importance with regard to the conditions of pay, leave and pension. This differentiation is based on the provisions of the Civil Service Regulations, which, it should be noted, do not apply to industrial establishments generally. In the Government of India presses the number of piece-workers who are classed as permanent constitute but a very small proportion of the whole and it must be admitted that the Government of India has not fulfilled its pledge to place an adequate number on a permanent basis. The piece-worker claims that, until he is made permanent, he continues to be a mere probationer; this is not an unreasonable conclusion to arrive at on the analogy afforded by the Civil Service Regulations. It is obviously incorrect in principle that a man who has worked for 20 to 25 years (and we are satisfied that such instances do exist) should still be led to consider himself a probationer or apprentice at his task. Of the 1,224 piece workers on the Calcutta establishment, no fewer than 1,000 or 82 per cent. are classed as temporary: in the Delhi press the proportion of temporary piece establishment is about 70 per cent. We are fully seized of the fact that in the presses it is necessary to be able to regulate the strength of the staff according to the flow of work; we cannot, however, accept the plea that fluctuations in the staff can amount to 70 per cent. or 82 per cent. At the same time we must admit that the majority of the temporary staff have in practice been kept continuously in employment. It is true that if the use of machinery in the presses were extended, the importance of which, we think, is worthy of the serious attention of Government, a considerable diminution in the number of hands will be necessary. It has also been proved to us that the economy which has recently been exercised with regard to Government printing, has so affected the Simla press as to necessitate the dismissal of the greater part of the temporary establishment without any corresponding diminution in the staffs of other presses. This is clearly wrong in principle. Before we suggest any remedies, it is necessary to consider what is the real difference between temporary and permanent piece establishments. The rates of remuneration are identical; the general conditions of service are the same; the decision to grant and pay for 16 days leave every year will apply to both classes alike; the rules for the provident fund to which all entrants to the press after July 1920 are required to belong, treat permanent and temporary alike. The one and only difference refers to men who were in employment in July 1920; to qualify for pension such men must have reached a permanent status after 25 years' service, though under Resolution A.-371, dated the 30th November 1921, all permanent hands are entitled to count their temporary service towards pension. We do not think that this distinction can be justified; if a man has been sufficiently capable at his work to be retained in service for 25 years, we are of opinion that it is wrong in principle to entrust his claims for a pension to the criterion whether he is still in name permanent or temporary. As a matter of actual fact we find that the number of men who after 25 years' service are still classed as temporary is exceedingly small. It will accordingly be only a formal concession on the part of Government to extend the pension privilege to all piece-workers who were in employment on the 15th July 1920 subject to 25 years continued and approved service. If this concession be granted, it may well be asked "What is then the

difference between permanent and temporary establishment." The answer is "Nothing," except that the temporary worker alone is eligible for dismissal on reduction of staff. We accordingly propose that the distinction should be abolished with certain safeguards for ensuring the stability of the senior employees and would suggest the following formula:—

- (a) Piece establishment in the Government of India presses shall not be classified as permanent or temporary. All men in employment on the 15th July 1920 shall be entitled to pension, subject to the conditions laid down in Resolution A-371, dated 30th November 1921, without reference to the word "permanent".
- (b) In order to ensure an even flow of work to all the presses and to avoid irregular decreases of establishment in different presses, a "Printing Clearing Office" should be established at the Headquarters of the Government of India to regulate the distribution of work amongst the various presses.
- (c) Whenever it may be necessary to reduce establishment on account of shortage of work, the most junior hands shall be discharged first. The discharge of a senior man shall only be made by the officer in charge of the press, who will record his reasons in writing.

It has further been alleged by the piece-workers that where reduction of staff is necessary, reductions are only made as regards piece-workers. If this is a fact, we can only state that it points to bad organization in the Government presses. Such practices must result in heart-burning, and they must, if the normal establishment is on a proper scale, imply that when work is scarce, an excessive salaried establishment is retained. We admit the impossibility of reducing *ad hoc* the superior supervising establishment, but it should be possible to lay down a scale regarding the number of readers, copy holders, section holders and computers required for a certain staff of compositors. This scale should be strictly adhered to.

16. Pensions.—We have referred in the preceding paragraph to the subject of pensions. We have proposed that the question of permanence should no longer be the criterion for a pension. We have previously shown that in private printing presses pensions are almost unknown, and, where they exist, are of an exiguous nature. The piece-workers complain, however, of two main obstacles in the existing system, namely, the method of calculating the amount of the pension and the difficulty of putting in the necessary qualifying service of 25 years. Pensions are at present calculated on the basis of the average earnings over the last 6 years of service. It is urged on the part of the piece-worker that in his old age his outturn deteriorates and that his earnings are consequently less than when he was in his prime. There is probably some force in this argument, though instances have been shown to us to the contrary. We have further been informed that the piece workers of the Bombay Government press have asked that their pensions should be calculated on the past 3 years' service, and that they have supplied figures which prove that this would be advantageous to them. An examination of the pay sheets in the Government of India presses certainly shows that the attendance of the older workers is more regular and that thus their earnings, if not higher, are at least less fluctuating.

We do not think that there is any justification for altering the existing system, but we make certain proposals later which should ensure a fair rate of earning for the older men towards the end of their service.

The second obstacle (*viz.*, the difficulty of putting in the necessary 25 years' qualifying service) is a more material grievance. Hitherto every day's absence from the press, when the press has been open, has been deducted from the amount of actual service, as the piece-worker has not been entitled to leave. Some absence is inevitable, and the moderate amount of 15 days' absence per year would increase the qualifying period for pension to 26 years. We do not desire to encourage irregular workers, but we are strongly of opinion that, in view of the length of service necessary to qualify for pension, some concession is necessary. We note that with effect from the 1st April 1922, it is proposed to allow all piece-workers 16 days' leave; this leave will presumably count as qualifying service for pension. We suggest that this concession, so far as it applies to qualifying service for pensions, should be granted with retrospective effect, *viz.*, that in the case of all piece-workers, who are entitled to pensions, 16 days' absence each year in addition to Sundays and other holidays observed by the press, should be condoned and treated as qualifying for pension. If this concession be granted, we are of opinion that the piece-workers can have no further grounds for complaint so far as pensions are concerned.

17. Fines.—We have heard a considerable amount of evidence on the subject of fines which the piece-workers allege weigh heavily upon them. They allege that the following forms of fines are imposed:—average fine, pye sorting fine, late fine, breakfast fine, absence fine and special fines. The first of these is no longer in existence; the second is a proportionate and universal deduction from the pay of compositors to cover the cost of collecting and sorting type that is dropped about. The remaining fines, however, require some description. Special fines are imposed merely in the case of breaches of discipline, and are clearly justifiable; in the 6 months from July to December 1921 they aggregated Rs. 51-14-7 or Rs. 8-10-5 per month in the Calcutta presses and clearly do not weigh heavily on the 1,200 piece-workers. The breakfast fines aggregated only Rs. 18-0-2 or Rs. 3 per month over the same period. Late fines and absence fines, however, aggregated Rs. 1,774-11-7 or Rs. 295-12-7 per month. This amounts to 1½ pies in the rupee on earnings. The press authorities argue that such fines are necessary in the interests of discipline; the piece-workers argue that the fine forms a double punishment, as they are unable to earn money when they are late or absent. As regards absence without leave the fine amounts to only 1 or 2 annas on each occasion; as regards lateness 10 minutes grace is invariably allowed, and only when this has been exceeded on 7 occasions is the fine inflicted. It cannot be argued that these fines are heavy in their incidence and it must be admitted that in the interests of the work to be done it is essential that the press authorities should have some control over the attendance of the employees. In a private press habitual lateness is punished by dismissal—a form of penalty which it is almost impossible to inflict in a Government establishment. Provided that the system of fines at present in force is worked in the existing lenient manner, we cannot advise that the press authorities should be deprived of this method of maintaining discipline. 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.

18. Fluctuations of earnings.—Many complaints have been laid before us that the system of piece-work results in such fluctuations of earnings that it is impossible for a man to forecast his income in any month to enable him to base his standard of living accordingly. This condemnation of the system as a system is obviously unsound ; provided—and the proviso is important—that the strength of the staff is regulated according to the amount of work to be done and that sufficient work exists for the staff—the earnings of each man depend on his own labour and with reasonable diligence he can ensure for himself a steady income. This steadiness of income is further insured by the fact that under existing orders every man is paid at hour rates for any period when he is present in the press but cannot be provided with work. We have, however, reason to believe that the strength of the staff is not always correctly adjusted according to the amount of work to be done and that while one or more of the presses is fully supplied with work, others are starved. We understand that this position is largely due to the stringent economies now being enforced by the Government of India in its printing and that the existing presses are now staffed more strongly than is necessary. While the Calcutta and Delhi presses are still employing practically their full staffs, the strength of the Simla press has been greatly reduced and still it receives insufficient work to keep this staff employed. The organization of the presses has not been able to adapt itself to the new conditions, nor do we think that the existing system is satisfactory. The real remedy, as we have previously suggested, is that all work for the presses should pass through a Printing Clearing Office which will maintain an even flow of work to all the presses, and regulate the staff accordingly. It has also been urged that compositors are unaware of their earnings from time to time and are thus unable to estimate their probable earnings for the month. We have ascertained, however, from the compositors themselves that they maintain their own account books to show their earnings from time to time. The amount of extra labour involved in supplying each section daily with a copy of the earnings of each compositor as computed to date would not, we think, be necessary, nor advisable in view of the cost involved. A new system is, however, being originated in the presses which will ensure that work is computed from day to day, and in cases of doubt, we think, that it will be possible for the necessary information to be obtained from the computing branch.

19. Decrease of earnings in old age.—The suggestion that earnings tend to decrease in old age is one that we have previously alluded to ; there is considerable force in the argument, and we think that a real effort should be made to place the older hands on light work. We think that this could best be effected by placing them for the greater part on correction and display work, which is paid for at hour rates. Under a rule passed by the Superintendent of Government Printing in June 1921, hour work is limited to 25 per cent. of a man's attendance during the month. The reasons for enforcing this rule we discuss below, but we think that in any case it should be relaxed in the case of the older hands.

20. Special grievances of compositors.—We now come to a series of grievances pressed with considerable force by the compositors ; in brief they alleged

that undue powers of interference are exercised in the main especially by three classes of salaried hands, viz., section holders, computers and checkers. The first complaint is as regards unnecessary delay in their work—this delay is alleged to be caused by the section holder in giving out work, by the store-keepers and type-suppliers in supplying type, and by the proof pressmen in producing the proofs and by readers in handing them back. These possible sources of delay have been elaborated in the second paragraph of the printed list of grievances produced before us. We do not intend to deal in detail with the elaborated statement which is in effect an unjustifiable *reductio ad absurdum* of the system which exists in presses throughout the world. We are satisfied that compositors are supplied on an efficient system with cases of type; we have further satisfied ourselves after a personal inspection that, if any extra type is required, adequate arrangements exist in the press for supplying it without any delay. There is no proof that any unnecessary delay exists in producing proofs, the number of galley presses being fully sufficient for the work to be done. The complaint regarding readers has still less justification, as during the process of reading, compositors are supplied with fresh work. The complaint against the section holders is more vital, though as regards the delay caused by them no justifiable grounds exist. The compositors alleged that every morning all compositors in each section, say 25—30 men, were obliged to go to the section holder for work. This would undoubtedly involve delay but happily it is not a fact. As a rule the majority of compositors have work pending from the previous day, and we are satisfied that it is seldom that more than five compositors require fresh copy at the same time. Whatever delay may be caused to the work of composition, we are satisfied that it is inconsiderable, and the actual earnings of compositors show clearly that the rates for composition have been fixed at a level which adequately compensates for any delay that may occur. 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 system of section holders is, however, based on the procedure in printing presses in the United Kingdom and is in force in private presses in India. In the latter, however, favouritism can only affect the type of work given to the salaried compositors; in the Government presses it may also affect the pocket of the compositor paid by the piece. In the face of the practice over the rest of the world we cannot suggest any radical alterations in the system of section holders, but we do think that steps should be taken to exercise greater control over the idiosyncrasies of individual section holders. We suggest in the first place that overseers should exercise a closer supervision over the distribution of work by section holders to compositors and that officers in charge of the presses should satisfy themselves that favouritism is controlled as far as possible. With the present large staff of compositors and the very small staff of overseers and deputy superintendents we admit that adequate control will be difficult; but with the decrease in hand composition by the substitution of machinery (which we have already recommended) it should be possible to exercise an adequate amount of supervision. In the second place, we recommend that in each section a tabular statement should be kept showing the hours worked and the earnings of every compositor in the section month by month, and that this statement should be regularly examined by the officer in charge of the press. If the earnings of any man show a tendency to decrease,

the officer incharge should examine his file of work in order to see whether the decrease is due to the type of work made over to the compositor by the section holder. This check will bring to light the form of favouritism which affects the compositor most vitally, viz., the power of the section holder to affect his earnings. A note of warning, is, however, necessary: the section holder is the pivot on whom the work of the press depends from the stage of composition to that of the issue of the completed book; his position is one of responsibility and it is essential that the powers that he exercises for the due performance of the work should not be impaired. These powers should, however, be exercised impartially and with sympathy, and we think that smooth working between different classes of the press establishment can be secured far more easily by the personal influence of the superior supervising establishment than by laying down any hard and fast rules of procedure.

21. Complaints against computers.—It is obvious that, where work is paid by the piece, disputes are apt to arise in computing the value of the work done. Definite rates are laid down in the Press Hand book for various kinds of composition and for the different types used. The computers work with the help of calculation tables, which are applied to an actual admeasurement of the work done. Calculation is accordingly automatic in the case of all solid work, but differences in calculation are possible and do admittedly arise in the case of allowances on account of spaces. From the evidence that we heard we do not think that the compositors treat these possible errors as a real grievance and as the computer has nothing to gain from short payments, it is equally likely that the compositor would be the gainer in the calculation. We examined Mr. Jagadesan, the Examiner of Press Accounts, in considerable detail on this point. His staff is required to check 10 per cent. of the work computed. He admitted that no two computers would arrive at identical calculations of a specific piece of work—the differences were, however, ordinarily infinitesimal, and in his experience cases of excess calculation were at least as frequent as defect payments. In forms of work other than composition, no real divergence in calculation is possible. As regards computation we have no recommendations to make.

22. Complaints against checkers.—Differences with checkers are, however, more serious. The work of the checker is to examine the time claimed to have been taken by a compositor or other piece-worker over work, e.g., correction or display work, which is paid for at hourly rates—the system is only employed in the case of work for which no piece rate is calculable; time work is popular with the men. The difficulty that arises is due to the fact that in the course of a day the same man may ordinarily do both piece and time work. The hour when time work is handed out to and received back from the compositor is noted by the section holder, but that time cannot necessarily be taken as the basis for payment as:—

(a) the compositor may have slacked;

(b) he may have also been engaged on piece-work during the period—
a possibility which the section holder is not in the position to verify.

It is accordingly necessary to have the hours claimed checked; this is done by the checker against what he considers to be the normal period that

should be taken. The compositors assert that the checker reduces the claim in cent. per cent. of the cases, and they filed one time slip in support of their assertion. The Examiner of Press Accounts—on the other hand—produced a number of time slips which showed that reductions were the exception—in his experience the amount reduced was only a small percentage of the claim. Whatever the facts may be it is clear that the system is likely to induce suspicion. That some check is necessary was proved by a statement handed in by the Superintendent of Government Printing from which it was clear that excess hours are often claimed and escape the notice of the checker with the result that hour rates are calculated at a rate far higher than what the piece-worker is actually able to earn in practice. The system of instituting a separate section for correction work has been tried but has proved unsuccessful, largely owing to the fluctuating amount of such work from time to time. It is difficult to suggest a remedy. Even despite the cutting of the checkers time work is popular amongst piece-workers and we can only surmise that it is profitable. The work of the checkers is controlled directly by the overseers, who should, we think, exercise a closer supervision over the methods adopted and explain to the men, whenever required, the reasons for reduction. At the same time the compositors must realize that claims for excess hours must result in reductions. Complaints of this nature should ordinarily be ventilated at meetings of the Works Committees, where they can be discussed and the results of the discussion will then be considered in due course by the Government of India.

23. Minor grievances.—We have now considered the more important grievances that have been brought before us. Two minor grievances remain to be dealt with :—

(a) *Hours of work in the press.*—The present hours of work have been fixed in accordance with the wishes of the men themselves, and we have no doubt that, if practicable, the time of attendance could be altered, provided that no alteration is made in the total hours of work. The press authorities have the necessary powers and we do not think it necessary to make any specific recommendations. We would only suggest that, considering the large proportion of piece-workers, due deference should be given to their wishes.

(b) *Appointment of section holders.*—In the past appointments used to be made from senior compositors: the practice is now to appoint from assistant section holders. These latter are not recruited from the better type of compositor, as the good compositor prefers the chance of a larger earning by piece-work to the smaller salary of the assistant section holders. We recognize that some cause for grievance exists, but the interests of the assistant section holders also require consideration. We accordingly suggest a compromise, viz., that in each press appointments of section holders be made alternately from assistant section holders and duly qualified senior compositors.

24. Conclusion.—It is now only necessary for us to summarise our conclusions. We have proceeded on the basis that the Government of India

presses must be run on commercial lines, and have arrived at the conclusion that the piece-work system is suitable for the running of the presses on commercial lines. The piece-work system is advantageous to both Government and the workers, and we are convinced that the latter would decline to accept salaries such as are paid in private presses. In the case of distributors, however, we have suggested that they should be permitted to choose between a salary and a piece-work system. We have shown that earnings and conditions of service are far superior in the Government presses to those prevailing in private establishments. We have suggested that the attention of the press authorities be invited to the orders regarding payment for lost time. We propose that the distinction between permanent and temporary establishment be abolished. This will improve the prospects of those not otherwise entitled to pensions. We have also advised that 16 days' absence each year should be condoned with retrospective effect in calculating qualifying service for pension. We have recommended that consideration should be shown to older men by placing them on light work. We have suggested means for avoiding favouritism on the part of section holders and have recommended that a closer supervision be exercised over both section holders and checkers; for the former post compositors will be eligible—a reform which should assist in bridging over the gap between the salaried hand and the piece-worker. We have only to add that much can be attained by sympathetic administration of the presses, and we have no doubt that the officers in charge* will always be ready to deal with genuine grievances that are brought properly to their notice. We have found that the system in force is fundamentally correct and to the advantage of employer and employee alike.³ We trust that this finding will be accepted by the men and that both the press authorities and the men will co-operate towards the smooth and efficient running of the machine.

25. We have not been able to arrive at an agreement on all the points referred to our Committee, and this report has been signed by Mr. Khaparde subject to the minute of dissent which is appended to the report.

26. In conclusion, we desire to put on record our high appreciation of the valuable help rendered to this Committee by Mr. F. D. Ascoli, who is both our colleague and the Secretary of this Committee. He has taken great pains in compiling for our information most interesting and instructive tables setting forth in clear details points that have great bearing upon the decision of the questions referred to it by the Government of India. His exceptional ability as the Secretary of the Committee has proved of immense help and we consider it our duty to put these sentiments on record.

VITHALDAS D. THACKERSEY,

President.

G. S. KHAPARDE (*subject to my note
of dissent*) *Member.*

F. D. ASCOLI,

Member and Secretary.

Dated the 5th May 1922.

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	3·70	$\frac{1}{10}$
5 and under 6 do.	19	4·75	1
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 .. .. .	..	..	..
TOTAL	372	93	18

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 3 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.
--	--	-----------------------	-------------------------------------

(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 ¹	..	..	..	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	<u>8,67,880</u>
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.