

THE
BOMBAY TEXTILE LABOUR UNION

(*Founded 1st January 1926*)

Registered under the Trade Unions Act

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

(*From 1st January 1927 to 31st December 1927*)

1928

Price Rs. 6

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The Bombay Textile Labour Union completed the second year of its existence on the 31st of December 1927. The following report contains the activities of the Union from 1st January 1927 to 31st December 1927.

REGISTRATION OF THE UNION.

2. The Union was registered on 23rd December, 1927, under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, which came into operation during the period under report. Besides securing to itself a corporate capacity, the Union has now begun to enjoy the privileges and rights to which the registered trade unions are entitled under the Act, although such privileges and rights are limited owing to the restricted scope of the Act itself. At the same time, it will have to work also under certain restrictions imposed by the Act.

MEMBERSHIP.

3. The membership received a slight setback during the period under report. The highest collection of subscriptions received in one month at the rate of four annas for men and two annas for women, amounted to Rs. 1510-2-0 and the lowest collection in another month was only Rs. 695-10-0. The effective paying membership at its highest and lowest thus stood at 6,187 and 2,809 of which 293 and 113 were women members respectively. The total collections during the period under report excluding Rs. 289-4-0 for the last year received in January 1927 and including Rs. 69-8-0 for the year under report received in

January 1928, amounted to Rs. 12,379-14-0. This gives an average effective membership of 4,256 of which 3,997 were men and 259 women membership. This is less by 1,744 members than the last year's paying membership of about 6,000 stated in the first annual report. The members' registers further showed a number of about 3,000 members being in arrears from time to time. The total average membership thus stood at about 7,256 as against about 9,000 of last year.

4. The analysis of collections by mills reveals interesting figures. The number of mills from which collections were received during the period under report was 41 as against about 60 of last year; but the largest number of mills from which collections came in one single month was 32 and the lowest number in another month was only 12. The average number of mills of collections was 21 in the year. 16 mills paid collections between 1 and 3 months, 8 between 4 and 6 months, 6 between 7 and 9, 11 between 10 and 12 months, and 7 mills paid for the whole of the 12 months. While the highest collections from one single mill for the period under report was Rs. 2,896-2-0, the lowest figure from another mill for the same period was Re. 1 only. One mill collected the highest amount of Rs. 371-0-0 for one single month and another got only as. 4 for another month. 34 mills paid between Re. 1 and Rs. 500; 5 mills between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1500 and only 2 mills paid above Rs. 2000. This analysis excludes the amount of Rs. 237-0-0 of miscellaneous collections of subscriptions received from other than the 41 mills stated above, but neither their names nor number could be ascertained from the books of the Union.

5. This setback and the violent fluctuations in the strength of the Union require explanation. In the first place, four mills which had fairly good membership last year, lost it soon after the new year began either because of the continued strike in one mill and its consequent

going into liquidation, or because of the inability of the Union to stem the tide of increasing unemployment of its members in another mill, or because of the hostility of the employers in the rest. In the second place, three more mills went to a very low level of membership for a few months owing to the failure to redress the glaring grievances of the workers—a failure again due to the stiff attitude of the mill officers. In the third place, the strikes in which the Union was involved and the negotiations were so protracted that its limited staff found it difficult to continue its efforts in maintaining and increasing the collections in other mills. Fourthly, owing to the spirit of trade unionism not being fully imbibed amongst the members, there is always visible a tendency to avoid paying the Union fees at the failure to redress even a minor individual grievance of the worker or at the inability of the subscription collector to collect subscription on the pay day owing to his illness or some other cause. However, in spite of these drawbacks, the Union did make efforts to bring a few new mills within its fold although collections from them were meagre as compared with those of the mills which it lost.

UNION'S CENTRES.

6. The Union closed one of its centres at Chinchpokli during the period under report. The work that used to be done from that centre in respect of collections, was divided between the De'lisle Road and Damodar Hall centres. The other four centres at Madanpura, De'lisle Road, Damodar Hall and Kurla are working as before.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

7. *Managing Committee*:—During the period under report, the Managing Committee of the Union consisting of the nine office-bearers and the workers' representatives elected from amongst themselves in proportion of one representative for every 200 members of each mill, held

13 meetings and passed 82 resolutions on the subjects that came before it for consideration. The average attendance of the workers at these meetings was over 66 per cent. and some of the meetings continued their deliberations late at night. Besides dealing with questions of internal administration and propaganda, the Committee considered such questions as the amendment of the Union's Constitution to meet the requirements of the Indian Trade Unions Act for the purpose of registration, the formation of the All-India Textile Workers' Federation, the flood disaster caused to the Ahmedabad workers, election of the Union's representatives to the Annual Sessions of the All-India Trade Union Congress, starting Urdu and Marathi newspapers on behalf of the Union, B. N. Railway lock-out in February 1927, the rules made by the Bombay Government under the Indian Trade Unions Act, the system of fines prevailing in the mills, the introduction of the three-loom system, the hiring of the Development Department chawls by the Unions, the period of midday rest, Dr. J. N. Choksey's resolutions on 48 hours' week, sickness insurance and industrial housing, Union's representative on the Labour Committee of the Indian Textile Association, the strikes in the Emperor Edward and other mills, and last, but not the least, the amalgamation of the textile unions in Bombay into one union. The Committee appointed Mr. Syed Munawar, M.L.C. as its organising Secretary to do propaganda work and increase the strength of the Union. The Managing Committee appointed the following sub-committees to deal with the questions assigned to each one of them:—(1) Strike Committee to deal with the strike in the Emperor Edward Mill; (2) Propaganda Committee to help the organising secretary to increase the strength of the Union; (3) Accounts Committee to check the accounts of the Union from month to month; (4) Housing Committee to consider the letter of the Bombay Government regarding the letting of D. D. chawls

to employers of labour and workers' organisations; (5) Two Newspaper Committees for Urdu and Marathi newspapers of the Union for their management and conduct.

8. *Centre Committees* :—The Centre Committees were duly formed at Madanpura, Kurla and Delisle Road Centres and functioned well during the period under report. They met 34 times, the Madanpura Centre Committee 14 times, the Kurla Centre Committee 18 times and the Delisle Road 2 times. The average attendance was 45 per cent. at Madanpura, 80 per cent. at Kurla and 40 per cent. at Delisle Road. Besides dealing with the collections and the Members' grievances, the Committees considered such questions as the trade union classes to be organised at the centres of the Union, the vernacular papers to be issued under the auspices of the Union, the women members' grievances, the three-loom and double frame systems, mid-day rest periods, etc.

9. *Mills Committees* :—The Mills Committees were formed in about 25 of 41 mills that joined the Union; at the other mills they could not be formed owing either to the collections being too low or to some of them having joined the Union towards the close of the year. Forty-one meetings of these committees were held during the period under report, of which 10 were those of the Madanpura Mills Committees, 18 of the Kurla Mill Committee and 7 of the Delisle Road Mills Committees and the rest of Damodar Hall Mills Committees. The average attendance was the highest at Kurla being about 80 per cent., that of the Madanpura, Delisle Road and Damodar Hall Committees being 32, 38 and 40 per cent. respectively. The most important work done by these Committees was that of hearing the common grievances of the individual mills and devising steps to deal with them and discussing the question of increasing the membership of the Union.

10. *Other Committees*:—The Managing Committee appointed, during the period under report, five sub-committees to consider the specific questions assigned to them. The strike committee appointed to carry on the strike of the Emperor Edward Mill workers met twice a week during the period of the strike and conducted the strike activities. The propaganda Committee met thrice and arranged a few propaganda meetings for the Madanpura Centre. The Accounts Committee consisting of the workers of the Managing Committee met twelve times to check the accounts of the Union and to suggest economy in expenditure and submitted its reports. The Housing Committee met once and decided to agree to the proposal contained in Mr. A. N. Surve's minute of dissent to hire a D. D. chawl on behalf of the Union, provided suitable changes, such as water taps in each room, electric lights and reduction in rents, were made by Government. The two newspaper Committees held seven meetings to consider the questions of distribution and finance of the Union's Urdu and Marathi newspapers.

UNION'S REPRESENTATIONS.

11. *Bombay Trade Unions Act Regulations*:—The Indian Trade Unions Act of 1926 came into operation during the period under report, and, in accordance with its provisions, the Government of Bombay published their draft regulations under the Act for the Bombay Presidency and invited criticism thereon. The Union prepared an exhaustive representation protesting against some of the harsh rules, suggesting modifications and pointing out to Government that the rules should be such as would encourage, and not hinder, the Trade Unions to register themselves and thereby attain the object for which the Act was enacted. The Union recommended, *inter alia*, that (1) the executive of the Trade Unions should be empowered to apply for registration; (2) the resolution passed by one of the authorities approved of for authorisation of

registration should be considered as sufficient evidence to show that the Union has decided to register itself ; (3) the fees for certification of registration should be reduced from Rs. 5 to Re. 1 only; (4) no fees should be charged for the alteration of rules of the Unions; (5) no hindrance should be placed in respect of the amalgamation of registered and unregistered unions; and (6) in the selection of auditors, some discretion should be given to all the Unions and the qualifications of the Auditors should be so lowered as to suit the financial condition of the Unions. The Union notes with satisfaction that the Government of Bombay accepted some of these suggestions and modified their draft rules considerably, particularly in respect of the registration fees, amalgamation of registered and unregistered Unions and the qualifications of auditors.

12. *Deductions from Wages or Payments in respect of fines* :—The last year's report stated that the Union had sent a representation on the questionnaire of the Bombay Labour Office, to be sent to the employers of Labour, regarding the deductions from wages or payments in respect of fines. In the year under report the Labour Office completed their enquiry, published a summary of its results and invited the Union to express its opinion on the necessity or otherwise of having legislation dealing with [the practice of inflicting fines on industrial workers and the form the legislation should take. The Union submitted an elaborate representation to the Labour Office containing the views of the Union on the question of fines. The Union pointed out that even the results of the Labour Office enquiry showed that the system of inflicting fines on industrial workers was so prevalent and constituted an evil of such proportion that it required penal legislation to deal with it. It strongly advocated the complete abolition of the system of fines by legislation as it held that discipline could be best maintained by efficient supervision and moral control with an

alternative of dismissal, with proper and adequate safeguards, as the last resort, that fines were in no way reformatory and had practically no influence upon the character of the offenders, and that the system did not lead to efficiency and weed out the real offenders. As regards bad or negligent work and the system of handing over spoiled cloth to the workers, the Union was equally emphatic when it stated that in view of the difficulty to locate the factors responsible for bad or negligent work and of the risk of the worker being fined for no fault of his, the fines for bad or negligent work and the system of handing over spoiled pieces to workers, should be abolished. However, if these recommendations be not approved by the authorities, the Union thought it safe to make an alternative proposal that, if the fines were not altogether abolished by law, they should be at least controlled and regulated in such a way that they should not be a source of profit to the employers or a cause of burden to the employees. It gave a long list of about thirty-seven items which should be included in the fines legislation, the most important of which were the following:—(1) Specification of acts or omissions for which the fines are to be imposed and the amount of such fines; (2) Specification of the rates of fines for breaches of discipline; (3) Maximum amount of fines in a week, fortnight and a month should not exceed four per cent., three per cent. and two per cent. respectively; (4) Deductions for damaged goods should be on the same basis as those for disciplinary actions; and such deductions to be made only when the worker's negligence is proved; (5) Spoiled cloth should not be handed over to the workmen; (6) Compensatory fines should be abolished; (7) Children below 16 years should not be fined; (8) A fines register should be maintained by each mill or factory and Government should be periodically informed of the fines collected and supplied with a fines agreement, without which no fines should be levied. (9) All fines should be credited to a separate fines fund

and utilised for the benefit and welfare of the workers; (10) No one below the rank of assistant Spinning or Weaving Master should have the power to impose fines; (11) All deductions for medicines, water, reading rooms or libraries etc. should be prohibited; (12) A joint committee of the workers' and employers' representatives be appointed to hear the fines complaints; (13) An employee who may be fined should have recourse to a law court, if necessary, if he feels that the fine was unjustly imposed; (14) The systems of "double Khada"—withholding wages for more than three days' absence,—forfeiture of earned wages, punishment of suspension as a disciplinary fine, the "Havala", charging interest on temporary advances, should be abolished. The Union concluded its representation by stating that the scope of the fines legislation should be so wide as to include each and every establishment employing all kinds of wage earners.

COMPLAINTS.

13. During the year under report the Union dealt with 215 complaints including the 22 pending from last year, of which 99 were successful, 35 unsuccessful, 14 was compromised and 61 were dropped. When the year closed 6 complaints were pending. The percentage of successful and unsuccessful complaints to the total number of complaints received by the Union comes to 46.6 and 16 respectively. So many as 61 complaints had to be dropped either because some of them proved to be, on investigation, false or frivolous or because the complainants of the rest either went to their villages or could not be traced after they lodged their grievances. Most of the complaints on spoilt cloth came from one mill and

as the Union dealt with these cases as one grievance and investigated it as such, the 16 individual complaints are shown as dropped. The Union received these complaints from 45 mills out of 80 mills in Bombay. The largest number of complaints received by the Union from one single mill was 47 and the smallest number was only one. One noteworthy fact which deserves to be noticed in this connection is that though the grievances are more or less common to all the mills, the number of complaints which were received by the Union varied in proportion to the number of members of the Union. The attitude and the treatment that was meted out to the Union by the authorities in those mills in which the Union had a fair number of members was more sympathetic and courteous, than the behaviour of the authorities of the mills in which the Union had a comparatively small membership. The total number of complaints received are given in the following table with their results :—

A statement showing the complaints of the Mill Operatives received by the Union, their Nature and Results.

Nature of complaints.	Com-plaints pending from 1926	Com-plaints received in 1927.	Total.	Success-ful.	Unsuc-cessful.	Com-promised.	Dropped or cancelled.	Pending.
1. Dismissal	4	57	61	30	14	4	11	2
2. Refusal to re-employment ...	...	5	5	4	...	...	1	...
3. Reduction in rates or wages .	9	7	16	9	5	...	1	1
4. Withholding of wages ...	...	44	44	22	10	...	12	...
5. Fines ... ..	...	8	8	2	2	...	4	...
6. Strikes ... ..	...	4	4	3	1	...	...	...
7. Assaults and Bribes ...	...	10	10	8	...	1	1	...
8. Compensation for accidents.	...	9	9	2	...	...	7	...
9. Gratuity and Provident Fund	...	10	10	7	...	...	2	1
10. Spilt Cloth ... ..	...	19	19	3	...	...	16	...
11. Miscellaneous	9	20	29	9	3	9	6	2
Grand Total	22	193	215	99	35	14	61	6

(a) *Dismissals*:—The largest number of complaints which were received by the Union during the year under report comes under the head of dismissals. The Union received 57 complaints in all. The Union found it very difficult and hard to get the dismissed workers re-instated. The absence of any legal protection against wrongful dismissals of the workers, and the arbitrary powers of the mill management gave the Union no other alternative to deal with such grievances than that of persuasion and appeal to the management. The mill rules are one-sided and arbitrary and some of them do not conform to law. Workers have often complained to the Union that they are dismissed for mistakes which are very trivial and technical in nature, and for which they are in no way responsible and sometimes for no mistakes at all. For technical and trivial mistakes where some form of mild punishment may best meet the ends of justice, the extreme punishment of dismissal is inflicted upon. The Union has received many complaints in which the workers complained that they were dismissed on the ground of less production which was due to causes over which they had no control and for which they could not be held responsible. Any penalty for a mistake for which the worker is in no way responsible is evidently unjust. Moreover, it is not seldom that the worker, who is dismissed, has put in a long service of more than 10 or 20 years. The Union's efforts to reinstate the dismissed workers were successful in 30 cases. As the Union was not able to effect immediate redress of the grievances of the workers owing to the fact that the negotiations always required long period of time before it could succeed in persuading and appealing, it had to drop 8 cases. The poor workers being unable to wait beyond the period of a week or a fortnight at the most, had to seek employment somewhere else. Three complaints were found to be false.

(b) *Refusal to Re-employment*:—The Union was successful in reinstating four out of five dismissed men.

In the majority of cases the management refused to re-employ any worker when he returned after the expiry of his leave on the ground that no leave was sanctioned though the complainants contended that they had gone home either on account of illness or other domestic difficulties after taking the permission of the head-jobbers or jobbers. It was only when the Union intervened that the management agreed to re-employ them as a matter of favour. The Union here desires to emphasise the necessity of introducing some system of leave in the mills. At present the leave is asked for and given orally. This puts the worker in a very difficult position to prove that he had taken leave.

(c) *Reduction in rates or wages*:—During the period under report, the Union dealt with 16 complaints under this head, and in nine out of these the Union was successful. One complaint dropped, as an enquiry with the Superintendent and the Head Jobber in the mill showed that it was of a frivolous nature. Three of the complaints were of an individual character. The reduction in the rates of weavers and the wages of some other fixed wage earners in the Khatav Makanji Mills led to a strike and it was through the intervention of the Union and the willing co-operation of Mr. Mulraj Khatav and his desire to meet the Union half way that the cut was brought down by half a pie.

(d) *Withholding of wages*:—The fact that the pernicious and unjust practise of withholding earned wages of the workers is common in Bombay mills can very easily be inferred from the significant number of complaints that were received by the Union, which was 44 during the year under report. The Union was able to secure the wages of the complaints by the simple and amicable method of negotiations with the mill authorities in eighteen cases. In four cases the Union had to take recourse to the law court as the only option left open to it when

private negotiations had failed. Rs. 221-15.0 were secured in this way to the complainants. Ten cases were unsuccessful and 12 complaints were dropped as the complainants had left for their villages and could not be traced.

(e) *Fines*:—Of the 8 complaints of fines which the Union received during the year under report, two were successful and two were dropped as the complainants did not wish the Union to proceed in the matter. In the majority of cases the workers were fined because they were held responsible for spoiling cloth without making any attempt to find out why the cloth was spoilt, whether it was due to defective machinery or bad cotten or negligence of the workers. The workers were also fined severely for breach of discipline. One worker was fined Rs. 5 as his relative happened to enter the mill with him without the permission of the mill authorities! Of the two successful cases one needs special mention as the Manager of the Khatau Makanji mill in a personal interview with the General Secretary assured him that henceforth workers would be given spoilt cloth if on investigation it was proved to have been spoiled by the negligence of the worker.

(f) *Spoilt Cloth*.—The union received in all 19 complaints for spoilt cloth during the year under report; 15 of which came from the Indian Mills, 3 from Khatau Makanji Mills and one from the Simplex Mills. The Union had to drop all the complaints from the Indian Mills as the management refused to do anything in the matter. The failure of the Union to redress this grievance led to serious discontent amongst the members and was responsible for a temporary drop in membership. In the Khatau Makanji Mills, the practice of inspecting the spoilt pieces by an official of the Union continued. The inspection took place twice during the period under report. In the second inspection an exhaustive enquiry was conducted and an elaborate report by the General Secretary submitted to the

Agents. The report traced the causes for pieces being spoiled, such as defective raw material, defective machinery, mistakes of the winding, warping or sizing departments and the weavers' negligence or forgetfulness and suggested the following remedies :—

1. That an officer more responsible than the cut-looker should be in charge of dealing with the damaged pieces and he should decide, in consultation with the workers' representative, which pieces should go as two parts and which should be set apart for enquiry. The cut-looker should be divested of his present wide discretionary powers.

2. The enquiry should be held every month before the pay sheet is prepared and the mill officer and the Union's representative should make a joint report to the Manager.

3. A proper complaint book should be kept with details so as to avoid misunderstanding between the mill authorities and the workers.

4. The management should be pleased to take necessary steps to improve the raw material and more particularly to avoid the knots coming in too frequently and the threads coming in reverse order.

5. The cloth damaged on account of defective raw material and the coming in of too many knots and reverse threads, should not be given to the workers. But if the defective raw material is combined with the workers' carelessness, the loss should be borne jointly by the mill and the workers in equal proportion.

6. The cloth damaged on account of the defective machinery should not be given to the workers. The jobbers should be instructed to remove the defects in the machinery as soon as they are brought to their notice.

7. The cloth damaged on account of the mistake committed in other departments should not be given to the weavers and efforts should be made to minimise the mistakes in other departments.

8. If, in a pair of Dhoti, one piece is spoiled, the the pair should not be given to the worker.

The Management promised to consider the Union's report; but by the sad death of the Weaving Master, the matter could not be proceeded with.

(g) *Compensation for Accidents.*—As regards the cases of compensation for accidents, the Union handed over some of the cases to the Workmen's Compensation Committee of the Social Service League for necessary action. Of the two workers who were successful in getting compensation, one received the sum of Rs. 300. The Union had to drop a majority of cases—seven out of nine—as it was found that the workers were not entitled to any compensation under the Act.

(h) *Requisition for Gratuity and Provident Fund.*—In the absence of any legal obligations, it entirely depends on the will of the employer to grant the demand of a worker for gratuity or bonus at the end of long service. The Union, instead of intervening directly in such matters, continued its policy of asking the worker to send the application in his own name. Of the seven applications for gratuity, the Union was successful in five cases and was able to secure a sum of Rs. 830 as gratuity for the five applicants. The efforts of the Union in two other cases for securing the provident fund were also crowned with success and it secured Rs. 782-14-5 for the two complainants. Under the existing rules of the provident fund the mill-management refuses to contribute its share to the amount standing to the credit of the subscriber, if he is dismissed. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to insist, with a view to safeguard the interests of the worker who is entitled to provident fund, that the power of dismissal

should rest in the hands of the managers of the mills alone and the worker should be dismissed only after his guilt has been proved to the satisfaction of the organization to which he belongs.

(i) *Assaults*:—There were in all three complaints of assaults which the Union received during the year under report. In the Swadeshi mills, Kurla, a worker was assaulted by the sepoy. When the case was brought to the notice of the Manager, he reprimanded the sepoy and told him that he would be summarily dismissed if he did so in future. The Manager was courteous enough to give an assurance to the Union that he would take all possible care to see that no such case occurred again in the mill in future.

(j) *Strikes*:—During the year under report the Union dealt with five strikes. The workers in the weaving department of the Spring mill went on strike and their ground of complaint was that the rates had been reduced and that there was shortage of material which caused loss of time and therefore of production. When the complaint was brought to the notice of the management of the mill, it stated that no rates had been reduced except in one case which was due to oversight and any weaver who had reason to think that he had received less wages, was invited to approach the management who would look into the case and the mistake, if any, would be rectified. As regards the other ground of complaint the management promised to investigate into the grievance.

The workers in the roving department of the Swadeshi Mill, Kurla, went on strike in July on the ground that many of them were fined Rs. 2 and 1 each. The other workers in the spinning department joined the strike resulting in the mill being completely closed for a few days. The management stated that the workers were in the habit of remaining absent in large numbers immediately after the pay day and this practice puts the mills into difficulties.

As a result of the Union's intervention, the fine was brought down to two annas only and the strike ended after a fortnight.

The weavers of the Toyo Podar Mills went on strike in July and their grievances were many, such as assaults at the hands of the mill officers' inferior raw material, poor rates, heavy fines, frequent discharges, refusal to give leave in sickness or for funeral purposes, etc. The workers also alleged that their mid-day food was not allowed to be taken in the mills. The Union officials saw the management which agreed to remove the minor grievances provided the workers resumed work immediately, and stated that their rates were not poor. As there was the risk of the blacklegs taking the strikers' places, the latter decided to join work and the strike ended within ten days.

The strike in the Emperor Edward Mills was typical of the tyranny of the mill management and harrassment of of the workers. It was declared on 16th January, continued for over a month and after that period the mills went into liquidation. The compulsoy collection of heavy contributions from the workers for giving a wedding present to the son of the Agents and reductions in rates and consequent drop in the wages were the immediate causes of the strike. The Union put itself into immediate communcation with the Manager who stated that wedding contributions were not compulsory, that the rates had not been reduced and the wages had not gone down. After considerable discussion, the Manager agreed to return the contributions if, after enquiry along with the Union's official, they were found to be collected under compulsion and conduct an enquiry into the rates reductions in co-opertion wiih the Union, provided the men resumed work immediately. The workers in their meeting on the 17th decided to resume work from the 18th on the assurance given by the Manager.

They did resume work on the 18th ; but the manager went back upon his assurance and refused to make any enquiry about the rates in consultation with the Union on the plea that the men resumed work on account of the jobbers' persuasion and not owing to the Union's efforts and, therefore, he was not bound by the assurance he gave. He even went the length of prohibiting the General Secretary of the Union from going to the mills. This change of front by the Manager gave cause for further resentment and the workers again went on strike the next day. The situation was further aggravated by the incorrect and wrong statements published in the press by the Manager. Meetings after meetings were held and resolutions passed protesting against the Manager's autocratic and high-handed manner, his attempt to mislead the public and declaring their determination to carry on the strike till an honourable settlement was arrived at. Messrs. R. S Asavale, S. K. Bole, S. C. Joshi and Syed Munawar, members of the Legislative Council, attended the strikers' meetings and informed the public that they were satisfied about the grievances of the workers being genuine and the Managers's refusal to deal with the situation in a fair manner. The Managing Committee of the Union afterwards approved of the strike and appointed a committee to deal with it. The Union approached the Agents of the mills, the Bombay Millowners' Association and H. E. the Governor for intervention ; but it did not receive any encouragement from them. The Millowners' Association did nothing beyond formally acknowledging the receipt of the Union's letter although the Union had requested it to agree to meet its committee. While the Union's intervention in the Khatav Mill strike of 1926 was characterised by the Association as " rather officious " in its 1926 annual report, this year it did not even show the ordinary courtesy of considering the Union's proposal. This attitude betrays its mentality towards the organisation of workers although some of its individual members are always profuse in showing their anxiety for the necessity

of labour organisation. The Union protests against this attitude of the Association and feels that so long as it continues, the relations between the employers and employees cannot but be strained. The letter sent to H. E. the Government was transferred to the General Department of the Bombay Government for necessary action; and it is a matter of great regret to the Union that the Department did not do anything.

After the strike was on for over a fortnight, the necessity for relief began to be felt and the Union took the necessary steps to collect funds and organise relief. For over three weeks, relief in the form of rice and pulse was given to the strikers and it was discontinued when the mill went into liquidation. The Union then tried to secure jobs for some of the workers in other mills and got a partial success.

(k) *Bribes and Corruption* :—Seven complaints about bribery and corruption were received by the Union, five of which were from one mill. The Agents of this mill used to get several anonymous letters from their workers about the practice of jobbers and head jobbers taking bribes from the workers in the form of cash, wine, etc. They took the help of the Union, asked it to make investigation and promised to deal with the corrupt people in a way which might lead to the discontinuance of this bad practice. The Union made very detailed and minute enquiries, engaged a special investigator for this work and placed before the Agents the facts as found out. The Agents were satisfied with the investigation and immediately discharged a *naikin* (head woman), one or two jobbers and gave severe warnings to others against whom the Union had found some evidence. This action on the part of the Agents had the most salutary effect on the jobbers and head jobbers and the practice of corruption was checked to some extent.

(l) *General Complaints* :—Besides the 215 complaints dealt with above, the Union received in its committee

meetings many complaints of a general character, such as bad raw material, constant breakages, provision of good water for drink, latrine accomodation, etc. The Union dealt with them by its officials personally interviewing the mill authorities and succeeded in removing some of them.

UNION'S NEWSPAPERS.

14. In accordance with the decision taken by the Managing Committee, it was decided to start two vernacular weekly papers, one in Urdu and the other in Marathi. Two Committees of the workers' representatives were appointed to fix the details of publication. The two papers came out on 2nd July 1927, the Urdu one under the name of the "Mazdoor" and the Marathi one under the name of "Majoor". The latter name was changed into the "Majoor-Bandhu" when it came to the notice of the Union that another paper of the same name was restarted in Poona after the Union's Marathi paper came out. During period in which the papers were weeklies, the Union suffered a loss of Rs. 550. The Newspapers Committees, therefore, decided to convert the papers into monthlies. The chief object of the papers is to acquaint the members of the Union with the work it has been doing. They also contain a summary of the activities of other Unions.

THE INDIAN TEXTILE ASSOCIATION.

15. This Association consisting of the mill managers and departmental heads was organised during the period under report and it took an important step of agreeing to co-operate with and consult this Union on all labour matters. It appointed on its Labour Committee the General Secretary of the Union as an Ex-officio member and the appointment was approved of by the Union's Managing Committee. The Union's representative attended most of the meetings of the Labour Committee and took part in the questions that came before it.

MID-DAY REST.

16. Since the publication of the Indian Textile Tariff Board Report, the question of Mid-day rest for the workers assumed some importance. The Tariff Board strongly recommended half an hour's rest for the workers to take their morning food. The Bombay Millowners' Association seemed to have taken this question in hand and asked the newly formed Indian Textile Association to express its opinion on the proposal made by the former. The Union may state here perenthetically that, although the Indian Factories Act clearly lays down that the workers shall be consulted for giving periods of rest of not less than half an hour at each period of six hours work done, the Association did not think it necessary to consult the workers' organisations. However, the question came before the Union in an indirect manner when it was asked to express its opinion on it by the Indian Textile Association. The Union's representative on the Labour Committee expressed himself against the proposal of dividing the present mid-day rest of one hour into two periods of half an hour's duration to be given in the morning and at noon. The Managing Committee supported the view taken by its representative and appointed a Committee to meet the Labour Committee of the Indian Textile Association in order to find out a *via media*. This joint conference took place in December but it could not bring about any proposal acceptable to both the parties. The question was still a live issue when the year closed.

ALL-INDIA TEXTILE WORKERS' FEDERATION.

17. Since the visit of the Shaw Delegation last year, the idea of organising an All-India Textile Workers' Federation with the object of securing co-ordination amongst the textile workers' organisations, gathered greater impetus. At the instance of the President of this Union, the General Secretary issued a circular to the textile unions at Ahmedabad, Madras, Bombay, Cawnpore, Nagpur,

Pulgaon, Coimbatore, Bangalore and Indore, asking them whether they approved of the idea of starting an All-India Federation. Most of these unions agreed to the proposal; but owing to various difficulties the suggested conference of the representatives of the unions could not be held during the period under report.

ACTIVITIES IN THE MOFUSSIL.

18. During the period under report the Union tried to acquaint itself with the conditions of the textile workers in the mofussil mills and sent its General Secretary to the textile centres in Khandesh for that purpose and also to find out the possibility of starting a branch of the Union. He first went to Jalgaon, at the instance of the local workers, in connection with a strike in one of the mills. He addressed four workers' meetings, interviewed most of the local public workers and succeeded in enlisting their sympathies for the labour work. He had also endeavoured to start a branch of this Union at Jalgaon; but owing to the declaration of a lockout by one of the mills, the Union's Jalgaon Branch could not function. The General Secretary afterwards visited Amalner, Dhulia and Chalisgaon where there are over 4,600 workers in four mills. He visited the mills, got information about the wages and other conditions of service and saw the workers' representatives and the local public workers. The workers seemed to be favourably inclined towards the formation of the Union; but in the absence of good organisers permanently stationed at these places who could carry on sustained propaganda among them, it was found difficult to start the Union's branches and keep them running efficiently. Although the workers in the mofussil enjoy certain climatic and a few other advantages over those in cities like Bombay, their lot on the whole is worse. Their wages are pitifully low, the fines are exorbitant and other conditions of service such as the methods of recruitment, leave, etc., are not better. What is

still worse is that the grip of the employer on them is more firm. It is, therefore, in the interest of the Bombay workers that they should, through their organisation, take steps to organise the mofussil workers at an early date.

LABOUR NOMINATIONS TO THE THE LEGISLATURES.

19. The Union is proud to record that five out of its nine Office-bearers entered the legislatures in the beginning of the period under report, either by election or by nomination. Mr. N. M. Joshi, the President, was again nominated for the third time as a member of the Legislative Assembly to represent labour interests. Messrs. F. J. Ginwala and R. S. Asavale, the Vice-presidents, were elected to the Bombay Legislative Council by the city of Bombay. Messrs. Syed Munawar and S. K. Bole, the Organising Secretary and the Treasurer respectively, were nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council as Labour representatives. The third Labour nominee on the Bombay Council, Mr. S. C. Joshi, is also connected with the Union as one of its legal advisers. The Managing Committee gave a Tea Party to these legislators in recognition of the high honour conferred on them.

AFFILIATION WITH THE A. I. T. U. CONGRESS.

20. The Union maintained its affiliation with the All-India Trade Union Congress and its Bombay Provincial Committee and took part in their activities. It sent its representatives to the two annual sessions of the Congress at Delhi and Cawnpore in March and November respectively.

PROPAGANDA.

21. During the period under report the Union held 52 general meetings of the textile workers for the purpose of general propaganda in addition to the 17 meetings of the members held for electing members to the Mill, Centre and Managing Committees. Eighteen meetings were held

at Kurla, 15 at Madanpura, 12 at De'lisle Road and 7 at Parel and Dadar. Six meetings of the head-jobbers and jobbers were held at the centres of the Union for enlisting their sympathies.

UNION'S OTHER ACTIVITIES.

22. Amongst the other activities of the Union may be mentioned the Marathi class conducted at the Kurla Centre. It was meant for the adult workers and their children. About twenty workers and fifty children enrolled themselves as students and the class went on well for about six months. But owing to the number of students gradually dwindling down and the serious industrial unrest during that period at Kurla, the class had to be discontinued. The six months' experience of this class brought forth one important fact to the notice of the Union that after ten hours' strain in the mills, the workers had very little physical or mental energy to do any serious work. The reduction of hours of work is an absolute necessity if any serious attempts are to be made in the direction of educating the workers.

23. Another effort that the Union made in the direction of educating the workers was to prepare labour songs and sing them at the residential quarters of the workers. It has prepared a batch of about six boys of the workers at the De'lisle Road Centre who are taught those songs and who go periodically from chawl to chawl and spread the Trade Union propaganda.

24. Towards the close of the year, the Union held about six meetings of the workers staying at the De'lisle Road Development chawls to consider the question of reduction

in rents. Some statistics were collected about the proportion of the incidence of rents charged and the wages of the workers. Two public meetings of all the workers were held and resolutions passed to bring down the rents to Rs. 5 per tenement. It is a matter of great regret that the Government of Bombay have not yet seen their way to take action in this matter.

MISCELLANEOUS.

25. The Union is glad to record that its system of work and its activities attracted the attention of some prominent men interested in the trade union movement in India. To mention only a few instances, the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon consulted the President and the General Secretary of the Union in its work of the industrial survey of India. Miss Matheson, Miss. I. Wingate and Mr. David, the Delegation of this Council, studied the working of the Union, attended the meetings of its Managing, Centre and Mills Committees and obtained first hand information about the conditions of life and service of the Bombay workers. Mr. and Mrs. John Mott of the Y. M. C. A., who have taken active interest in reorganising the Nagpur Textile Union, studied the internal administration of this Union with special reference to its method of dealing with the workers' complaints, the system of keeping accounts and the relations of the Centres with the Head Office in the matter of receiving subscriptions. In her second visit to Bombay Mrs. Mott visited the Union's centres and saw the actual work going on there. Both Mr. and Mrs. Mott subsequently invited the General Secretary of the Union to Nagpur in helping them to reorganise their Union on

the model of this Union. Mr. Kirk, President of the S. I. Railway Labour Union, Mr. Abdul Rahman, Secretary of the Indore Labour Union, and Mr. D. H. Buchanan of the Harvard University, U. S. A., also visited the Union's offices and centres and studied its activities. Most of these visitors were shown the industrial workers' housing conditions in the city.

26. Mr. R. S. Asavale, M. L. C., Vice-President, continued to be the representative of the Union on the Bombay Excise Advisory committee. The Union sent Rs. 250 to the Ahmedabad Labour Union as its humble contribution to the fund raised by it for housing the mill workers who had suffered in the floods.

FINANCIAL POSITION.

27. An audited statement of accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Union during the period under report is enclosed. If compared with the first year's statement, it is seen that the subscription collections went down from Rs. 17,333-5-9 to Rs. 12,597-2-0, *i. e.*, by Rs. 4,700, the expenditure increased from Rs. 8,188-14-3 to Rs. 9,099-12-10, *i. e.*, only by about Rs. 900. The increase in expenditure is due mainly to the loss on the Union's newspapers which amounted to Rs. 550 and the expenses on strikes. Considerable savings were effected in the expenses on printing, stationery and conveyance. However, the Union could not, owing to the fall on the receipt side, save as much as it did last year, in spite of the fact that utmost economy was made wherever possible. The year closed with a balance of Rs. 13,515-12-5.

28. This year the Union took the assistance of its Accounts Committee for checking the accounts and suggesting economy in expenditure. This Committee was appointed by the Managing Committee with its personnel changing from time to time and consisted of three or four workers. The reports made by it always testified to the satisfactory system and method of keeping the accounts of the Union. After going through the accounts month by month, the Accounts Committee found that there was very little room for economy and that the best way to reduce the expenditure was to increase the collections.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

29. The Union desires to acknowledge the services of those who helped it. Mr. H. A. Hussain, Bar-at-Law, had been as untiring in his zeal in helping the Union in securing the forfeited wages to its members and redressing their other grievances through the law courts without charging anything, as he was in 1926. Messrs. S. C. Joshi, M.L.C., P. S. Bakhle and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar showed commendable promptness and disinterestedness in giving free legal advice whenever necessary. The Workmen's Compensation Committee of the Social Service League conducted the Union's cases for accidents and secured compensation for the injured workers. The Secretaries of the Centre Committees, the Superintendents of the Mills Committees who are all workers and many other members of the Union not holding any office, gave very valuable assistance to the officers of the Union in carrying on their work. The Subscription Collectors in the mills, in spite of opposition

from the mill authorities, showed uncommon courage in keeping the flag of the Union flying and their loyalty to the Union. The Union is indebted to all those persons and organisations for the help they gave it.

30. The Union takes this opportunity of acknowledging the courtesy shown by those of the Agents and the Managers with whom it had to deal during the period under report. It is a matter of satisfaction to the Union to find that a few at least of the Agents and the Mill Managers were convinced of the Union's *bona fide* character and of its sincerity for the cause for which it was organised.

THE BOMBAY TEXTILE
Income and Expenditure Account for the

INCOME (RECEIPTS).

		Rs.	s.	p.
Subscription Account :—				
Collection during the year	12,597	2	0	
Interest Account :—				
On current account and Fixed Deposits	375	9	0	
News paper sale, received during the year	317	2	6	
Strike Relief Fund received during the year	102	15	3	

Grand Total ... 13,392 12 9

LABOUR UNION.

Year ending 31st December 1927.

EXPENDITURE (PAYMENTS).

	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
Management Expenses—						
Salaries	3,764	0	3			
Commission for subscription collection.	487	8	3			
Committee expenses	118	14	0			
Conveyance charges	524	11	9			
Anniversary expenses	55	12	0			
Annual meeting expenses	13	0	0			
Rent Account	869	0	0			
Printing charges	719	0	0			
Stationery	168	14	0			
Postage and Telegrams	43	2	3			
Propaganda expenses	135	4	9			
Library expenses	33	8	5			
May Day Celebrations	15	6	0			
Reception expenses	74	7	0			
Registration expenses	8	12	0			
Miscellaneous expenses	22	1	9			
				7,053	6	5
Auditor's Honorarium				100	0	0
Affiliation fees to All-India Trade Union Congress and Provincial Committee of All-India Trade Union Congress				75	0	0
Union's Delegates to All-India Trade Union Congress Sessions (Expenses)				354	0	0
Gratuity to Office Clerks				25	0	0
Help to Ahmedabad Workers for Flood Relief				250	0	0
Help to Members of the Union				12	0	0
Legal Assistance				55	0	0
Newspaper expenses incurred for Urdu and Marathi papers				866	6	5
Strike Relief expenses				146	10	6
Strike exenses incurred during the year				162	5	6
Total				9,099	12	10
Balance (Surplus of Income over Expenditure for the year)				4,292	15	11
Grand Total				13,392	12	9

THE BOMBAY TEXTILE LABOUR UNION.
Statement of affairs as on the 31st December 1927.

Printed at the Bombay Vaidhaya Press, Bombay.

	Rs.	s.	p.		Rs.	s.	p.
Surplus as per statement of affairs for 1926.	9,222	12	6	Dead Stock—			
Balance as per Income and Expenditure Account for 1927	4,892	15	11	Office Furniture and Equipment: ...	364	2	0
				Sundry Advances ...	47	13	7
				Cash and Bank Balances—			
				Bombay Provincial Co-operative Bank—			
				Rs. s. p.			
				In Fixed Deposits ...	12,010	1	0
				In current account ...	689	3	0
				Cash on hand ...	404	8	10
				13,103	12	10	
Grand Total ...	13,515	12	5	Grand Total ...	13,515	12	5

Auditor's Report:—

I have examined the above Statement of Affairs and the Statement of Income and Expenditure with the books, accounts, and vouchers of the Bombay Textile Labour Union. In my opinion, these statements fully and correctly represent the true position of the Union.

Bombay, 23rd March 1928.

J. K. PABULKAR,
 Certified Auditor.

THE BOMBAY TEXTILE LABOUR UNION



Office-Bearers for 1928

President:

Mr. N. M. Joshi, M. L. A., J. P.

The Servants of India Society, Sandhurst Road, Girgaon, Bombay 4.

Vice-Presidents:

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|--|--|
| (1) Mr. F. J. Givwala, M. A., LL. B.,
M. L. C., Solicitor, Opposite
National Bank of India, Fort,
Bombay. | (3) Mr. R. S. Asavale, M. L. C., J. P.,
39, Umarkhadi, Bombay. |
| (2) Mahamad Umer Rajab, 60 Mohme-
dan Street, Bombay No. 8 | (4) Mr. S. A. Brelvi, M. A., LL. B.,
Editor, Bombay Chronicle,
Old Custom House Road, Fort,
Bombay. |

General Secretary:

Mr. R. R. Bakhale,

The Servants of India Society, Sandhurst Road, Girgaon, Bombay 4.

Organizing Secretary:

Mr. Syed Munawar B. A., M. L. C.

Assistant Secretary:

S. V. Parulekar, M. A.,

Servants of India Society, Bombay.

Treasurers:

- | |
|---|
| (1) Moulvi Abdur Rauf Khan Sahab,
Secretary, Anjuman Zia-ul Islam,
Falkland Road, Bombay 7. |
| (2) Mr. S. M. Rane,
Takyas Ward, Kuria. |