

REPORT
of Investigations into
the Conditions of
Indian Textile
Workers

Presented to the International
Federation of Textile Workers
by the Secretary,
The Right Hon. T. Shaw, M.P.

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REPORT

Section 1.—General Introduction

The delegation of Textile Workers which sailed to India from Marseilles on the 5th November, 1926, and set sail back from Bombay on the 26th February, 1927, consisted of myself, representing the International; my daughter, Marie, as shorthand writer and secretary; Messrs. Hindle and Brothers, representing the English Cotton Workers; and Messrs. Furtwaengler and Schrader, representing the German Textile Workers.

OUR PLAN OF WORK.

We fixed for ourselves a rather ambitious programme, perhaps far too ambitious to be realised thoroughly.

We desired to find out what were the hours of labour and the wages of the workers, what the workers did for their wages, how many machines they tended, and what was their efficiency. We tried to discover what were the conditions in factories, whether accidents were frequent, whether compensation was paid, and how the organisation of the workers in trade unions was proceeding. We desired to know what was the status of the workers, whether there was any obstacle, either on the part of the Government or the employers, to their becoming members of a trade union, whether there was anything in the nature of pensions or payment during periods of sickness, how workers were found for the factories, what was the general health of the textile workers, and how they compared with other workers. We investigated the relations which exist between employers and such trade union organisations as exist. We tried to discover how conditions, in that part of India which is under British rule, compared with the conditions in native or Indian States. We were interested in the housing of textile workers. We tried to find out what were the chief hindrances to organisation, how the caste system was operating amongst the workers, and which were the most backward areas. We desired also to know the extent of the textile trade

in India, if possible to find some rough statistics as to the production of textile goods and the kind of textile goods. We were anxious to learn what direct bearing the conditions of the workers in India might be said to have on the conditions of workers in Europe. Generally speaking, we desired to make a complete survey of the economic and political position of the workers, to contrast them with the conditions in Europe and, if possible, to find some way of helping—either by advice or otherwise—in the organisation of the Indian worker. We were, of course, keenly desirous of finding a way of linking up Indian textile workers with our International.

My daughter and I, unfortunately, fell ill of a tropical fever when the work was half completed, and the full tragedy was played out when we had to land at Gibraltar, as my daughter, after recovering from fever, had contracted smallpox on the return journey. It will be known to members of the Committee that she died at Gibraltar and is buried there. The rest of the delegation, however, completed the work which had been mapped out for them, and altogether travelled many thousands of miles in so doing.

At a rough estimate, some 10,000 miles of travelling was done in India, a very large number of factories were examined, agricultural villages and workshops of other industrial workers were visited for purposes of comparison, and every source of information was sought which would help us in our task. From the very beginning of the delegation I personally declined to discuss Indian politics, not because of any lack of interest, but because I had been sent out to do special work which I felt would be hindered if I attempted to graft on to it anything in the nature of political propaganda. It will be understood that a British Member of Parliament in a country like India is asked many questions by keen political students and workers. We had to get our information from three main sources: Firstly, the trade union organisations that exist; secondly, the employers' associations; thirdly, the Government offices. For that reason, it seemed—as it still seems—to me best not to talk general politics, but to get on with the work we had been sent to do, and I am glad that, generally speaking, the other members of the delegation followed that rule.

INDIAN HOSPITALITY.

We were met with the most extraordinary kindness on all sides. Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. Bakhale, of the Servants

of India Society, the two men who are perhaps more responsible than any other two men in Bombay for the organisation of textile workers that exists there, drew up an elaborate programme of places to visit, and spared neither time nor energy in helping us. From the organised workers in all the centres visited we received the same self-sacrificing help; the employers' associations in every place we visited willingly put at our disposal information concerning wages and conditions; Government officials were found willing to place all their time and their information at our disposal. From beginning to end of the delegation, it is safe to say that we were never refused access to any mill we wanted to visit, never refused information with regard to wages, hours, and conditions, and were always given, with the greatest courtesy, all the statistical and other information in the possession of all Government Departments.

VASTLY DIFFERENT CONDITIONS.

It will be understood that all of the members of the delegation were Europeans, acquainted more or less with industrial conditions and the methods of living of European workers, and with a general knowledge of the conditions and habits of life of the European textile workers. It is a comparatively easy thing to contrast, for example, the conditions of German, Danish, Belgian, or French textile workers with those, say, of their English colleagues. After all, in European countries, where the textile industry is developed, workers approximate to the same method of living, and have almost the same habits and amusements. In India, comparison is not so easy. The part of the country which may be said to be under British protection is split into several presidencies or provinces, and there are no less than 562 Indian or Native States which make their own regulations regarding industrial law.

Not only is that the case, but the method of working in the factories varies so widely from European conditions that it is almost impossible to make accurate—or even approximately accurate—comparisons. If we take, for instance, the Indian cotton industry, we should have to try to compare it with the conditions in England. Formerly, 80 per cent. of the exported production of the Lancashire cotton trade worker was sent to India. The Indian cotton mills are equipped almost exclusively with Lancashire machinery, and the technical direction is almost wholly English too. So in order to get a comparison between Europe

and India in the cotton trade, one inevitably is bound to compare English conditions with Indian conditions. The very machinery in Indian cotton mills is made to compete with English products.

This is easily stated, but comparison is exceptionally difficult. To begin with, in the cardroom, for instance, we found three, four, and five times the number of workers employed to do the work which would have been done in Lancashire on the same machinery. So it is evident that, in making an economic comparison, wages alone could not be accepted as a basis. This proportion of workers is almost the same in other departments. It was freely alleged by employers and their managers that, although the mill engines ran 10 hours per day, the custom the workers had of taking their food when they wanted it, and excessive loitering in the mill compounds—or yards—reduced the actual working hours considerably below 10 a day. Whilst not accepting these statements at their full face value, there does seem to be ground for assuming that century-old traditions make the somewhat rigid discipline of Europe not easily realisable in India.

Our difficulties in drawing a comparison as to the standard of life were just as great. Indian workers have for centuries abstained from certain expensive foods which European workers purchase when they are able to do so. By tradition and religion, the Indian confines himself willingly to an expenditure on food which is very much smaller than is incurred by the English cotton worker, with whom, for the moment, I am comparing him. It is alleged on the workers' side that in spite of the Indian worker's custom of living on much less food than European workers are accustomed to, and of being satisfied to live on cheap foods, he does not even get enough of the latter. What is incontrovertible is that the Indian worker, even when able to buy a sufficiency of food, lives much more sparingly and cheaply than his European colleague. The wages of the Indian worker are shamefully low, but I am anxious that the full picture shall be shown without distortion, and that a due sense of proportion should be observed.

HOVELS—BUT NO HOMES.

The most shocking of all the differences is that which exists in housing. The English textile worker, generally, when he marries, has a house of at least four rooms. We

have seen Indian textile and other workers with even two families in one small, covered space, which only by the widest stretch of imagination could be called a room, and which it would be a mockery to call a home. We have seen people actually sleeping in the streets in preference to sleeping in the disgraceful and infamous chawls which exist in Bombay. It is mere justice to say of the employers that over and over again we saw "chawls," "bustees," or "lines" built by them, in close proximity to their factories, which were superior in every way to the chawls that were let by private owners to the workers who were unfortunate enough to have to rent them. The Development Department of the Bombay Government also had erected huge blocks of houses, very similar in outward appearance to the externally extremely solidly built and many-storied houses in cities like Berlin, but the interior of these buildings is on strongly orthodox traditional Indian lines. One room for a family, no private sanitary arrangements, a common tap for washing—these things exist even in the municipal buildings. My poor girl and I were horror-struck, driving back from the first meeting of workers we attended, when we almost ran over a child who was asleep on a rug in the street and was evidently intended to sleep there all the night.

That will give some idea of the terrible housing of the people. There were scores of people sleeping on the ground with, apparently, a very thin mattress for bed and a thin rug for covering. Words fail me to picture the squalor, the darkness, and the misery of some of the chawls we saw. There again, however, comparisons are difficult. I saw with my own eyes that many workers themselves apparently try to close out all fresh air and light from their dwellings, thus making even worse the vile conditions which exist. I had constantly to remind myself that it is not always possible to measure Eastern conditions with Western measures, but, even when every allowance is made for differences of climate, habits, tradition and religion, the housing of Indian workers is a disgrace and a blot on the record of any Government, whether British or Indian.

It is my intention to give, at the end of this general survey, detailed statements showing the wages of the workers and the number of hours worked per day. In this part of the general statement I desire to deal with the comparison between mills run, either wholly or partly, by

British capital and managed by British technical experts and those which are definitely Indian in capitalisation and—so far as possible—Indian in technical staff. I desire also to call attention to the relative position, as it appears in provinces or presidencies under what might be termed British rule, and purely Indian or Native States.

EUROPEAN AND INDIAN EMPLOYERS.

We certainly saw nothing which proved that Indian employers or Indian States gave better wages, conditions, or hours than European employers in British-administered territory. It is fairly safe to say that hours are longer and wages—as a general rule—are lower in Indian States than in the so-called British part of India. From my own observation, I should say that, generally speaking, the Indian capitalist does not err in the direction either of being more generous or more kindly to the workers than the European employer. That is putting the case very mildly indeed. I want to stress this matter, because, in the present state of India, when so many people are fighting—and quite justifiably fighting—for the day when an Indian administration will be possible in India, the workers may be led to think that only political freedom is necessary in order to redress their grievances. That would indeed be a fatal error. A powerful trade union organisation is even more necessary, if anything, in Indian states and in Indian mills, than in ordinary British states and British or European mills. This, of course, is a general statement to which there are exceptions. The delegation saw Indian mills and met Indian employers quite equal, in every way, to British mills or employers.

So far as the cotton trade is concerned, in its aggregation in Bombay, it was impossible for us to find what part of the capital could be called foreign, and what part could be called Indian. There is little doubt, however, that so far as an overwhelming proportion of capital is concerned, it is not held by non-Indians at all, but is held by Indians themselves. From the factories I saw I should say also that the general conditions are certainly no better in purely Indian concerns than they are where part of the capital or the technical management is in British, or other non-Indian hands. Rather the contrary is the case and the tendency—generally speaking—where purely Indian administration exists, is for the conditions to be worse.

ILLITERACY A STUMBLING BLOCK TO ORGANISATION.

So far as organisation is concerned, we found that the greatest difficulty that exists is in the lack of education amongst the workers themselves. The shameful neglect of the British and Native Governments to provide for the education of the people is responsible for the fact that it is practically impossible in India to-day to find a textile trade union organisation administered and controlled by the workers in the industry. One of the principal difficulties existing in one of the largest textile centres in India is that it is impossible to find collectors of contributions and members of the committee with the rudiments of education necessary to enter names and figures in a book and to read circulars which are issued. Until this state of things is altered, it is idle for either employers or anyone else to make too much of "outsiders" becoming officials of trade unions. How, indeed, can it be otherwise, when the poor worker himself has had absolutely no chance of getting the slightest education in order to fit him to manage his own affairs?

GOOD WORK OF TEXTILE EMPLOYERS.

In order that the truth may be spoken, and credit rendered where it is due, let me mention an extraordinary fact. It is precisely the great employers of labour in the textile trade who appear to be doing more for the education of the masses than either national or local governments. Over and over again, in the huge concerns that we saw in different parts of India, we noticed in the mill grounds, or compounds, schools that were being maintained by the employers for the purpose of giving instruction, first to the young persons—boys and girls—who were employed in the mills, and secondly, in many cases, to the younger children of the workers employed. The same thing applied to the provision of sickness benefit and medical treatment. Over and over again we found that there seemed to be absolutely no provision—or very meagre provision indeed—made by the authorities, but, judged by Indian standards, a remarkably good provision made by the employers. This state of things, of course, must be taken into account in trying to draw conclusions on purely economic matters. When one has found, for instance, what is being paid to a worker for a specific piece of work and can contrast the actual money paid for the same work in another country, one is still only at the beginning of the economic calculation.

There are many other factors to be taken into consideration, one of the principal being the very heavy expenditure incurred by some great firms in sickness and hospital provision, educational facilities, and the provision of social amenities in a way quite unknown in England, which, for almost every reason, is the country with which a comparison with India might be attempted, even if it be difficult to make.

THE ECONOMIC ASPECT.

The lack of education to which I have referred is, in my opinion, the greatest of all obstacles against a strong trade union movement amongst the textile workers of India, although the wages, which I shall give as a separate section, may appear scandalously low in comparison with European standards. When everything is taken into account—the method of living to which the workers are accustomed and the cost of food—there is really no economic reason why powerful organisations should not grow up. Certainly, there are no economic circumstances which are stronger against the workers forming organisations than the economic conditions which obtained in Europe at the beginnings of the trade union movement in this country. Neither, so far as one can judge, is there any inherent difficulty caused by the attitude of the employers' associations in the places we visited. As a matter of fact, generally speaking, one can say with confidence that if the Indian workers possess the desire to organise, neither their economic circumstances nor the opposition of the employers will prevent them. On behalf of the Government it is fairly safe to say that no exceptional measures are likely to be taken against the formation of trade unions which are definitely formed for the purpose of increasing wages, shortening hours, and working for the full economic and political freedom of their members.

COLOSSAL DIFFICULTIES:

The obstacles, however, which confront the men of good intentions who are trying to organise the Indian workers are tremendous. It is foolish not to see that differences of caste and religion and the lack of education are barriers that need lion-hearted men to surmount. The distances in India between centre and centre, too, are so enormous that I came to the conclusion that a national centralised textile workers' organisation in that country will need many, many years indeed to build. As a matter of fact, what is growing up is a chain of quite independent

organisations, officered and administered by non-textile workers of the educated classes, and in which it is often alleged that merely political and not economic interests are the main-spring of the actions of the founders of the unions. However much truth there may be in these allegations, I can but repeat that in the present state of lamentable ignorance of the Indian workers, due to the fact that Governments have never faced their responsibilities, there is no other way of organisation possible than by the help of good-intentioned men and women who possess the education necessary to deal with organisational tasks.

POLITICIANS AND THE LABOUR ORGANISATIONS.

It is practically certain that anyone belonging to the educated and leisured classes, who is keenly interested enough to give his or her time to the building of labour organisations, will almost certainly be a politician. There may even be cases where the politician will try to get an entry into the workers' movement for the purpose of furthering his own political ambition, rather than that of doing the work of the union to which he attaches himself. It would indeed be vain to expect that there will never be cases of that nature. One thing is certain, that I saw nothing which would cause me to believe anything but the very best of those Indians of culture and education who are giving their time, and spending their energies, in helping the workers to develop strong organisations. In a very highly technical industry like ours, it will be inevitable that men of the type I have mentioned, knowing little or nothing of the technicalities of the trade, will make blunders in details, and even serious mistakes in negotiations with employers. But even these defects are as dust in the balance compared with the workers remaining absolutely unorganised, without anybody to focus their grievances, and individually, of course, unable to secure redress in any grievance where the employer does not voluntarily accede to requests made.

CRYING NEED FOR EDUCATION.

Again, at a danger of incurring censure for continual reiteration, may I draw attention to the fact that the difficulties I have been speaking of would not exist if the workers themselves possessed the necessary education to administer their own affairs. Whatever may be the course of India and its working-people during the next few years, one thing seems to me absolutely certain: that is, that the biggest

boon that can be given to the Indian people at the present time is compulsory education for all children. In the course of a generation this would probably have a wonderful effect in improving the condition of the Indian workers. Only an infinitesimal number of them can read or write, and 60 millions of them are so-called "untouchables." Fancy 60 millions of people who are not considered worthy even of being touched by their own countrymen! This outstanding fact alone will show what a herculean task awaits those who in India are trying to form unions of the workers, so that the latter may advance themselves economically, physically, and morally. So long as present conditions exist, the workers will always be in danger of being used merely as pawns. Their only real guarantee will be found when they are able themselves to manage their own organisations and determine their own policy.

AMAZING FIGURES.

From figures supplied to us, it appears that less than 3 per cent. of the 247,000,000 people in British India are receiving elementary education. What this figure actually means if applied as a proportion to children and young persons I am unable to say, but it is fairly safe to assume that only an infinitesimal percentage of the children of parents who work for wages receive any education at all. In the Indian States of Baroda and Indore, great attempts have been made to carry through universal and compulsory education of children. It is true that there are many difficulties in the way even of native princes who desire compulsory education, in spite of their great powers over their peoples. In Baroda, for instance, there appears to be a huge deadweight of apathy and lethargy on the part of the people which is hampering the State authorities. It is a fact, however, that we saw in Baroda an "untouchable" child sitting on the same bench with children of other castes in an elementary school. Whether outside the schoolroom "untouchable" children are permitted to have the usual friendly intercourse of childhood or not I cannot say. What is evident, however, is that Baroda and Indore in particular are showing an example of progress in the educational field that British-administered areas might well emulate. The fact that only 3 per cent. of 247 millions are receiving elementary education is the greatest condemnation of any responsible Government. It is idle to say that things are better under British rule than they were previously under native rule. The real question is:

Are they as good as they might be? Good government, surely, consists in raising the intellectual, the moral, and physical standards of the people; so long as the people are allowed to remain in ignorance of the printed word, the responsible Government, whether native or British, cannot be absolved from blame.

HUMAN BEINGS TOO CHEAP.

To put it bluntly, the fact of the matter is that human beings are too cheap in India. Wherever one goes one sees things done that show how criminally cheap is human flesh and blood. Whether in mills, private houses, or the public streets, the same thing is to be seen. Just a little example will show what I mean. The very first day of our arrival in Bombay I saw six men carrying a piano on their heads, as if there were no wheels in the city and no more scientific way of working than to make men literally beasts of burden. One sees relatively huge staffs of servants kept in private houses because they are so cheap, will live on a few pence worth of cheap grain, and be satisfied with very little to wear. The textile mills are no exception. There again you find thousands of men doing, for very low wages, the work that much less numbers do in Europe for considerably higher wages.

I know that it may be urged on the part of many Indians that climatic conditions, the stamina of the workers, and the traditions and the habits of the people generally, make European methods of work impossible. I agree that the heat of India will probably prevent the individual worker from ever doing quite as much work as his European brother. I am also prepared to admit that you cannot apply the same standards absolutely in Europe and in India, but with the most generous allowance made for climate, traditions, and habits, the fact still stands out sharp and clear that precisely because the Indian can be purchased so cheaply in the market do the present conditions exist.

Judging from a rather limited inspection, much reading, and some calculation, I am extremely doubtful whether Indian labour is much more economical—if even it be any more economical—from the employer's point of view than European labour. I frankly admit that I was unable to get definite and precise information on the point; it is, however, very doubtful as to whether cheap Indian labour,

working long hours, badly fed, badly housed, badly educated, and weak physically, is, even as a mere economic and money proposition, better value than the more highly paid, better educated, and stronger European textile worker. In cases where we were able to find precisely what was paid for a given piece of work we did not find the Indian rates sensationally below English rates.

EMPLOYERS CLAMOUR FOR PROTECTION.

It is a significant fact that Indian employers, not only in the textile industry, but in other industries as well, are becoming more and more insistent on protective taxes, in order to safeguard their industry against the "foreigner." It is certain that the fabulous profits of years ago are not being realised to-day in the textile industry, but it may also be true that the traditions of the employers, being a tradition of fantastic profits, causes them to cry out, not because the industry is not a paying proposition, but because they are only making in the shape of real profits slightly more than is being made in other parts of the world. Wherever one goes in India one hears stories of fierce Japanese competition in the cotton trade. How much of this complaint is well founded, and how much in order that very much higher prices may be charged to the public, I am not in a position to say. I am inclined, however, to the belief that Indian mills, well-managed and administered, and capitalised at their real value, are not at all bad profit-making institutions, even in these days of so-called trade depression.

RIVAL UNIONS.

Speaking generally of organisation in India, we found a very regrettable state of affairs. In Bombay, in spite of the fact that the recent great dispute brought the workers together, there are still two Textile Workers' Organisations competing against each other. Madras is another example, and outside the textile workers' movements the same state of things is everywhere to be seen.

At the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras, there was a separate union, apparently run with the consent, if not with the active support, of the employers, and which was said to be managed and officered by the actual workers themselves. Side by side with this there was an independent organisation containing textile workers, which was officered by what are termed "outsiders," that is to

say, highly educated young men with no knowledge of the textile trade gained in the factory, and in which, owing to alleged dangers of victimisation, there was no free and open election of members of the committee. As a matter of fact, it was evident that the principal officers themselves selected the committee. The members of the delegation were confronted here with a very real difficulty. The organisation which was formed inside the two factories said that it was quite willing to join with the other organisation, but on certain well-defined conditions. The principal of these conditions was that the chief offices should be filled by men belonging to the trade, and whatever "outsiders" were brought in they should be brought in as advisers only and not as officials. It was evidently the opinion of the other union that the union formed inside the mills was not independent in action, but was run with the full consent and approval of the employers themselves, and that it was doubtful whether in case of opposition on the part of the employers the action taken by the union would be firm enough.

We could not, of course, take sides in these matters; there was a great deal to be said for the arguments put forth by both sides. A suggestion was made to both bodies that they should meet together without any preliminary conditions being laid down and talk matters over freely. I do not know the latest developments, but at the moment of our leaving Madras there seemed to be no possibility of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills' Union receding from its demand that the principal officers of the combined union should be men who knew the textile trade, or of the other union receding from its intention to have as its president Mr. Shiva Rao, an educated man who had never been, of course, a textile worker. Seething with political feeling as India is, particularly amongst its young men, it is quite possible that this kind of difference of opinion will take some time to surmount.

TRADE UNION CONTRIBUTIONS.

The unions that are formed in the textile trade fix the contributions of the members at such a low rate that real effective fighting organisations cannot be built up. I have already expressed the opinion that, economically, the difficulties of organisation in India are not greater than, if as great as, they were in Europe at the commencement of trade union organisation. Indeed the history of much of the trade unionism of Europe is very strikingly similar

to what is now going on in India. At the beginnings of our movement in Europe merely nominal payments were expected, and propaganda and reason were far more relied upon than provision for the financial support of the members in case of struggles with the employers. The highest contribution I found for any textile workers' trade union in India was about 4/6 a year, and the lowest about fourpence. No more than Europe, can India escape from a perfectly evident, even if cynical, fact. It is, that cheap trade unionism, that is to say trade unionism that tries to do its work on a few pence a year, will be "cheap" in its results. Reason, argument, propaganda, good-will, and enthusiasm are all very well in their way. Unfortunately, in the present state of society the workers' capacity to defend himself during a long stoppage counts often for far more.

FREEDOM OF MEETING AND PRESS.

We had absolute ocular proof that there is perfect freedom of meeting and Press, and that, whatever the political conditions may be, no restriction of liberty prevents the growth of trade unions. It would be a mistake, however, to apply European views of the twentieth century too absolutely to conditions in India. Fifty years ago in our own continent there were very striking analogies to the present Indian conditions. Our people were badly educated, down-trodden, and oppressed both by employers and Governments. From the point of view of Government and employers' opposition, European workers were infinitely worse placed sixty years ago than the workers of India now are. On the other hand, differences of custom, religion, caste, and race in India offer difficulties against which Europeans have not got to fight. It may safely be said also that, fifty or sixty years ago, regrettable as the state of development of the workers in Europe was, there was a higher standard of education and of hygiene than now exists amongst the workers of India. It is also well to remember that, when a people has been kept in ignorance, when it is uneducated, badly housed, badly clothed, and badly fed, its individual members have a tendency to become suspicious of each other.

OTHER HINDRANCES TO ORGANISATION.

Difference of religion played a great part in hindering the growth of our movement even in Europe. European differences, however, were of the lightness of down compared with the difficulties in India. Over and over again

we saw that even the dining accommodation for the different sects had to be kept separate; one caste will not even eat with another. How, then, can it be expected that all differences will be composed quickly, and an organisation, powerful, not only in solidarity of spirit, but in financial respects, will grow up?

Yet, in spite of the difficulties, the Indian worker has shown over and over again that, when he really feels an injustice, he is prepared to fight, and fight very bravely, to get what he considers to be justice. The great Bombay strike is merely one of a number in which Indian workers have shown a revulsion against tyranny and a determination to insist on better conditions which are indeed praiseworthy.

ARABIAN NIGHTS' REMINISCENCES.

It was deeply touching to find the implicit trust the workers generally seemed to have in the delegation, and the hope that our visit would lead to developments which would help them. The meetings which they attended were often reminiscent of the Arabian Nights. A platform arranged very primitively, a table draped with coloured cloth, coloured streamers in gay profusion, and an audience sometimes consisting of thousands of people sitting on the bare ground, were daily experiences of ours. It is very difficult indeed to describe one's feelings when looking down on thousands of men squatting on the ground, with faces that seem to express an infinite patience and resignation, quite different from the expressions seen on the faces of a European audience.

In almost all these meetings there was a total absence of women. That, indeed, is a mark of Indian life generally; the woman—particularly if she is a working woman—appears to be almost confined to her work and her home. One of the special duties of the delegation that I entrusted to my daughter was to get the utmost possible information as to the working woman's point of view, but alas, the investigations she was able to conduct were soon stopped, and the information she was able to obtain was never put down on paper. It is fairly safe to say, however, that whatever the life of the Indian worker may be, that of his wife is indeed very circumscribed. I speak with very great reserve about Indian conditions, because I am not at all certain that the Indian point of view may not be too difficult

for a European to understand. When I think, however, of the position of the "purdah" woman, she who must never come from behind the curtain, and must live her life, day and night, week after week, month after month, and year after year, in the few feet of space allowed in an Indian workman's home, it appears to me to be terrible.

Is it any wonder that fevers, plague, and infectious diseases play havoc, not only with the Indian population, but with the Europeans who go out to India? He would indeed be a benefactor who would teach the Indian people, not only to desire more room, more air, and pure water, but would fill them with a determination to insist on having these things.

LAUDABLE EFFORTS IN HOUSING.

I have already referred to the fact that in many cases the employers themselves are doing more to educate the people and to deal with evil conditions than the authorities whose work it ought to be. I now desire to enlarge on what I said about the housing of the people. Wherever the great employers of labour, either companies or individuals, have built houses in connection with their firms, there appears to have been a laudable attempt to give greater cleanliness, more air space, and better conditions than are found outside. Some of the textile firms, indeed, are small towns, not only in extent but in actual population.

Land seems to be relatively cheaper in India than in Europe, and in mere superficial area alone, mill compounds are much larger than is generally the case in Europe. The Sholapur mills and the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Madras, to mention no others, have to be seen to be realised. Small theatres, meeting rooms, concert halls, crèches, hospitals and schools are all found within the grounds of the mills. In the case of benevolent companies and generous individual employers, these institutions may become really pleasant, instructive, and helpful. It is easily seen, however, that in the case of employers who are not benevolent, the worker who lives in a house belonging to his employer does his purchasing in a store connected with the firm and comes to depend on his employer for everything that he has in the shape of recreation, treatment for illness, and education, may become little more than a chattel of the firm. It is my business, however, to present a perfectly fair picture of the conditions as I saw them, and I

am quite satisfied that the worker who is working for the large firms of which I have spoken is generally better housed, better treated, and lives under more hygienic circumstances than the countless millions of workers who have to rent their chawls or bustees from private individuals, work generally for less wages, and without the amenities of which I have just spoken.

NON-TEXTILE WORKERS.

The delegation had an opportunity of seeing other branches of workers and comparing their conditions with those of the textile workers. I think it is safe to say that the textile workers in India, in comparison with other workers in that country, have at least as favourable a position as that occupied by the European textile workers when compared with other workers in their own countries. Compared with European textile workers, of course, the Indian worker is in a much worse position.

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT.

The figures of wages will show that, generally speaking, the weavers were better paid than most of the other grades of workers. Traditionally, the weaver in India appears to stand higher in rank than most of the other grades, and this standing is generally reflected in the wages. Of the kind of looms of which a worker in England generally has four, we saw no factory where the Indian worker had more than two, and very often one. This is, as I already said, typical. Taking the factories from the point of view of height of the rooms, space, and ventilation, they are at least equal to the factories of Europe. The machinery is, with very few exceptions, of the latest and most up-to-date type and, whilst there was abundant evidence that—taken generally—European conditions were not being reached, we saw many concerns where, in every respect, the conditions were fully equal to the best European mills. The classes of goods made, too, were a revelation. I venture to say that none of the delegates thought that technical development had gone so far as it has done in India. Many of the manufacturing processes were fully equal to European standards, and in some cases the variety of yarns spun and cloths woven, dyed, and finished showed a range and variety which is probably not equalled by any individual European concern.

RECRUITMENT SYSTEM.

One of the principal economic disadvantages in the textile trade in India used to be the peculiar method of "recruitment" of labour for the mills. There was formerly a kind of continual running stream from the agricultural parts of India to the mills and from the mills back to the land. Low as the money wages in the mills are, they are still tremendously higher than the wages paid to agricultural workers. It is impossible in a report of this kind to deal with the peculiar patriarchal Indian life, which makes it so easy for one brother to take another brother's place, and for a constant exchange, as it were, between members of the same family to and from machine industry and the land. Information collected from all the industrial centres, however, proves definitely that this continual flow is being stopped and that the tendency now is for textile workers definitely to settle down in the towns or villages where the mills are built and to remain there. This, of course, adds enormously to the possibilities, in an economic sense, of the Indian textile industry. A continual flow of unskilled workers, with the constant outward flow of those who had become skilled, was evidently much worse for the employers than the present conditions. So, as a competitive factor, it may be stated definitely that, so far as the Indian textile worker is concerned, he is far more powerful now than he was 15 or 20 years ago. There is, of course, still a considerable flow from the agricultural parts, with a corresponding movement backwards to the land, but it is small as compared with former years.

PHYSIQUE.

It is extremely difficult to speak with any degree of certainty or assurance on the question of the physique of the workers in the textile industry. As a matter of fact, the general physique of the people varies very considerably between district and district, and race and race. Judging from the descriptions given to me by my friends of the workers in and about Darjeeling, there is a tremendous difference between the powerful and active mountain people and the people, say, of Madras and Bombay. To a European eye, the first sight of the textile workers of Bombay or Madras is extremely depressing. Owing to the Indian dress, a great deal of the body, of course, is to be seen. In Bombay, as a rule, the workers seem to be underfed, their bodies seem to be emaciated, and their legs are like spindles. The Madrasedee is perhaps a little better

developed, and, as one of the members of the delegation remarked, in Madras one sees the rudiments of development in the calf of the leg.

Again I must call attention to the fact that the European eye is not a safe guide to an absolute conclusion. The people who seemed to us to be—to put it mildly—under-developed, displayed an agility and lissomeness which was apparently out of keeping with their physical appearance. Infectious diseases, however, take a terrible toll of human life, and the infantile mortality amongst textile workers is frightful. India, of course, is different from Europe, and we must hold that fact in mind. Again, we must remember that in India a human being ages much more quickly than in colder climates. Marriages take place at a much earlier age, so that it would be folly to apply purely European standards. In spite of allowances made, it is probable that millions of lives could be saved by fresh air, cleanliness, and sanitation.

During and since the war, there has certainly been a tremendous advance made in many respects. Children do not work at such a tender age, the hours of labour have been decreased, general conditions have unquestionably improved. The age of marriage tends to become much higher, and a number of the old vicious practices seem to be dying out. When I remember, however, the villages inhabited by the so-called "untouchables"—the misery, the dirt, the rotting garbage, and the general air of dejection—I am appalled. There is a mountain of work waiting to be done.

CASTE.

I am satisfied that there has been an improvement in the lot of the factory worker, and that there is a slow improvement so far as the barriers between the castes are concerned. A large number of high-caste Indians are now working very hard for the uplifting of the lower castes. The task, however, is a terrible one, and he would be a foolish man who would predict a time when these depressed, oppressed, and despised people will be regarded as equal members of the same community. This caste question, of course, runs through all industry, and forms a problem which cannot be solved by outsiders. Governments, whether Indian or British, may help by not putting obstacles in the way; only the Indians themselves, however, can bring about a state of affairs in which all workers can

freely meet together, organise together, and become in every way equal to each other. No outside influence can, or even should, attempt to interfere in what must remain an Indian religious problem, to be solved only by Indians themselves,

HOPEFUL INFLUENCES.

There are two powerful factors which are doing much to prepare the ground for an improvement. The first, and at present more rudimentary influence, is that of compulsory education, which has now been introduced to a certain extent, in Baroda and Indore for example. Once children of all the castes are brought into the same school and taught from the same books, they may be trusted finally to break down, if not all the barriers, at least a considerable number of them. The second great movement, and in my opinion by far the more effective for the moment, is the industrial system itself. We saw many examples, some of them almost comic, of how the different castes kept to themselves even in factories, but we also saw and heard enough to prove that the old rigid Indian distinctions of caste tend to become effaced in the huge and complicated working of factories. Factory discipline and the necessity for men dove-tailing their work into the work of others, is apparently doing a great deal to break down customs which have endured in India for centuries. But old customs, particularly religious customs, die very hard, and it is for that reason that I am not too sanguine about the quick growth of a national organisation of textile workers in India.

CHILDREN DOPED WITH OPIUM.

Amongst the abominations which exist is one which we were assured over and over again is present to a fairly considerable extent. It is that where the married woman textile worker with children is too poor or too indifferent to pay another woman to look after her children whilst she is at the mill, the children are kept half stupefied by doses of opium. At many of the large mills there are crèches to which married women can take their children. We were assured that where those crèches did not exist the ordinary custom was for some old woman, for a very small payment, to look after a number of the children of the married textile workers. Where neither crèche exists nor friendly neighbour—nor desire to pay even if the friendly neighbour were there—then the poor mites are kept half-dazed by opium so

that they will not become a nuisance to the neighbours or endanger their lives by creeping out of the miserable chawls into the streets. I do not say that there is a very high percentage of these cases, but unfortunately evidence seems to prove that there are far too many of them.

THE MONEY-LENDER.

Another system peculiar to Indian factory life is the tremendous part that the money-lender plays. The employers generally pay wages monthly and in some cases not only has the worker to wait a month for his wages, but he has to hold two to four weeks "in hand" so to speak. That means that he may work for six or eight weeks before receiving any money at all from the employer. As he is generally not too well supplied with ready-money—people who come from the agricultural parts to begin factory work see very little of it—he has recourse to the professional money-lender. It has been said that these money-lenders do their work with the full acquiescence, and in some cases even assistance, of the employers. It is only fair to say that we had no proof whatever in any case of any employer showing too friendly feelings towards these money-lenders. On the contrary, over and over again did we meet cases where the employers had tried very hard to stamp the system out, but had usually failed owing to the ingrained habits of the workers themselves.

It is a curious anomaly that many of these money-lenders are not Indians at all, but belong to physically powerful tribes coming from the other side of the Indian frontier. These "foreigners" prey on the very vitals of the Indian worker. We saw with our own eyes a few of these types. They generally carry large sticks which they are said to use very freely in case the borrower attempts to escape his payments. Interest is based on so much per rupee per month, and often runs at the rate of 200 or 300 per cent. per year. As thousands of the workers get into the clutches of these men and never get out of them again, nearly all the wages generally go to the money-lender at the end of the month, who returns a certain proportion to them again on loan at excessive rates of interest.

POMPOUS CEREMONIES.

Another feature of the Indian textile worker's life that helps to keep him in subjection is the fact that such things as marriages in his family are celebrated with a pomp and

circumstance quite ridiculous in comparison with his financial position. We heard stories of whole families being crushed under the load of debt incurred by perfectly foolish borrowings for ceremonies of the kind I am describing. There is also the gravest reason to assume, although it is very difficult to prove, that in many factories it is the custom to pay huge bribes for the permission to commence work. In fact, it is alleged that in many cases there must be a similar monthly bribe in addition paid to some worker who is acting in some kind of authority in order to keep on working.

These again are matters which only a vigorous organisation can remove. I am satisfied that they are neither the fault of the Government, British or Indian, nor of the employers, speaking generally. They are customs that must be broken by the Indian workmen themselves.

CO-OPERATION ALMOST UNKNOWN.

In making our inquiries with regard to these money-lending transactions, we discovered an extraordinary fact. It is that apart from one or two concerns, partly or wholly administered by the workers in various factories, there seems to be little or nothing of workers' distributing co-operative agencies in India. The co-operative store which is known all over Europe, and which sells everything the workers desire for their personal needs or comfort, is practically unknown in the great States of India. It is a lamentable commentary on the condition of affairs that the only co-operatives we saw—outside one or two mills—were co-operatives which lent money to the workers at cheaper rates of interest than were charged by the Kabulis or usual money-lenders. No criticism can be more cynical than the fact, that amongst the great mass of Indian workers, co-operation, up to the present, is almost entirely confined to money-lending institutions.

A SUGGESTED CURE.

I am not trying to explain away national customs, nor am I going to pretend that the employers are guilty of conducting these money-lending swindles. I have already stated that some of them have made great efforts to stop them. A simple thing like a weekly pay-day, however, would probably do a great deal of good, and might have a very great effect indeed in preventing the large monthly borrowings that at present make the money-lender almost

literally the controller of the lives of many of the Indian textile workers. It was, of course, impossible for the delegation to get information which would definitely state in figures exactly to what extent Indian textile workers are injured by money-lending. As a matter of fact it proved exceedingly difficult to get statistics of any kind of a general character outside wages and hours of labour. Statistics of these latter matters have been prepared in the most exemplary way by the Government of Bombay, and these statistics and the information collected by the delegation will make it possible for me to give a résumé that will be a fairly clear and complete picture of the wages paid and the hours worked by the textile workers in the principal textile areas of India.

SOCIAL WORK AT SHOLAPUR.

Outside wages and hours, I have already explained that much of the social and hygienic work generally done under Government schemes in Europe is done in India by the employers. I think if I describe one of the best of these schemes, which is in existence at the Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Company's Mills, a clear idea of the scope of the social work of these huge concerns may be formed.

It was found at Sholapur, when the social welfare work was begun, that "harmful customs, antiquated habits, ignorance and illiteracy, all stand in the way of amelioration of the conditions of Labour by creating suspicion, prejudices and sheer inertia." These Indian social workers found that there were "enormous difficulties of uplifting a class of people whose lack of education and conservative instincts make them slow in adopting new methods of living." There certainly was some hesitation on the part of the workers in Sholapur to take advantage of the facilities offered. This hesitation was not due, apparently, to a feeling on the part of the workers that the facilities were provided by the employers with a hidden motive; it was simply due to inertia, the cleavages of caste, and even the suspicion of workers against each other.

The mills are typical of the very large factories of which I have previously spoken. The whole concern, with its housing accommodation and welfare institutions, covers about 168 acres of land, and provides work for 7,849 men, women, boys, and girls.

EDUCATION.

In the grounds of the mill there are schools which give elementary education not only to the boys and girls who work in the mills as half-timers, but to the other children of the workers employed at the mills. In 1926 there were 60 children belonging to the workers and 472 half-timers getting elementary education. I draw the conclusion from these figures that a certain amount of moral pressure had to be exerted on the parents in order to get them to allow their children to attend school. Particularly is this marked in the case of girls and women. As a matter of fact, there are classes for women, with a daily attendance of 33, but, unfortunately, the social workers report that "the attendance is not, however, quite regular owing to social customs, conservative habits, and prejudice against women's education." There is evidently a deadweight of prejudice against improvement and a disinclination towards progressive thought amongst the Indian workers, which will be very difficult to clear out of the way. There is a library and reading-room in connection with the firm, but only about 25 persons are taking advantage of these facilities. Twenty to twenty-five persons out of a total of nearly 8,000 is not a large number. It is always well to remember, however, that a library and reading-room is of little use to a man, woman, or child who has never had any opportunity of learning to read.

HEALTH.

There is also a dispensary with free medical treatment, served by a full-time medical officer with six compounders and dressers. A maternity home with ten beds also stands in the grounds, and it needs no argument to prove that expert medical help and the aid of midwives in India are matters of tremendous importance to the poor women of the working classes. Expectant mothers are given light work for some time before confinement, and are paid two months' full wages during this period. There is an allowance of half the wage for three weeks after confinement.

I have spoken before of epidemics in India, and it appears that during an influenza epidemic in 1918 there was a very large number of volunteers from the workers of the firm who helped in every way and delivered free medicines and nourishment. These men were given cash rewards and silver cups, evidently out of the funds of the firm.

There are three crèches at the firm, looked after by nurses and assistant nurses. The following short quotation I will leave to speak for itself: "When the babies are kept cleaner and healthier in the crèches, mothers, too, learn to take pains in looking after the cleanliness and health of their children at home."

There is a kindergarten school which is said to be breaking down the great shyness of Indian children, and is also "useful in keeping them away from their dirty and dark homes and bad surroundings." There are boy scouts; there is a gymnasium for physical training, and even groups for prayer. These groups sing prayers outside for about two hours. Judging from many opportunities we had of observation, it seems that almost the only recreation of the lower castes is the gathering together and the singing for hours on end of what appears to be to non-Indians the same words to the same tune. We were told that the depressed classes never sang anything except religious compositions.

In the grounds of the firm there is also a restaurant where the workers are said to get clean, wholesome and fresh food at cost price, and there is the nearest approach to a European co-operative stores that I have seen. This was begun in 1918 and is managed by a small committee elected by the members of the stores.

OTHER ACTIVITIES.

There is a kind of savings bank connected with the firm; also a dramatic club. Baby shows are held in the grounds. There is a technical school with spinning and weaving machinery. There is a small recreation garden and a vegetable garden from which fresh vegetables are sold to the operatives. There is a tiny zoological garden, a very small museum, and it is intended to set up a laundry which will cater for the workers in the mills.

There are three blocks of chawls belonging to the firm; in all there are over 700 rooms, accommodating over 2,000 persons. The rent of these chawls is said to be less than those owned by private individuals, but the rents paid are said to return 2% on the capital expenditure, after interest and depreciation on the capital expenditure has been met. What this means exactly I do not know, as I have no statement as to what the ordinary interest on the capital expenditure is.

There are also health lectures occasionally, delivered by competent persons in the lecture hall belonging to the firm.

THE FIGHT AGAINST INDEBTEDNESS.

One of the most interesting features is what is called by the firm an Amelioration Fund. This was started "with the idea of preventing our operatives from incurring heavy debts which it is difficult for them to repay owing to the high rate of interest." Loans are given from this fund to the extent of six months' wages, at $6\frac{1}{4}\%$ rate of interest, on occasions such as marriage, betrothal, thread ceremony, confinement, illness and funeral. These amounts can be repaid—I believe they are actually taken from the wages—in monthly instalments ranging from six to eighteen in number. In 1926 there were 247 loans advanced from this fund, totalling nearly 15,000 rupees.

The firm have tried to find exactly how the workpeople stand with regard to indebtedness. They collected statistics relating to 1,767 men, all of whom worked in the spinning department, and with wages all less than 25 rupees a month. Out of that number they state that nearly 1,100 had no debts, while 668 had debts which averaged 200 rupees each, with interest as high as 25%. No argument is needed to see what the condition of these 668 men is, particularly if they are heads of families—a debt amounting to eight months' wages, with an interest of 25%, is indeed a terrible burden. It needs no elaborate calculation to see that a person who may be receiving 25 rupees monthly, and has to pay four or five of them as interest on loans, is indeed in a parlous condition.

I have given this description at what I am afraid is great length, because I want my colleagues to have a clear idea of what a great textile concern in India is and how much wider its activities are than the generality of European textile concerns. As I have previously remarked, in making an economic comparison between Europe and India, the price paid for a given piece of work, although an important factor, is merely one of the factors to be taken into consideration.

RELATIVE COSTS OF PRODUCTION.

I now desire to elaborate what I have previously said about not being able to form a definite idea as to the Indian worker as an actual competitive factor, with his long hours

and low wages, as compared with his fellow textile worker in Europe and America. If, in India, strong trade unions had been able to arrange lists or tariffs with the employers, it would have been perfectly easy to contrast the actual prices paid for given pieces of work with those paid in Europe where lists or tariffs exist. Unfortunately, however, conditions in India do not lend themselves to this accurate comparison.

Speaking generally, there seems to be an attempt in every textile concern to arrange prices so that the average worker gets about the same average wage at whichever place he works. It needs no argument to prove that the proprietor of an old mill, with old machinery, indifferent technical administration, and indifferent overlookers and staff generally, must pay relatively a much higher piece-rate than the employer with a well-equipped, well-administered and technically efficient mill. It is perfectly obvious that if, in India, a weaver at a badly-equipped old mill can earn 30 rupees a month, which is the sum earned by a weaver in the very best mill, one employer must be paying a much higher piece-rate than the other. So the initial difficulty presents itself, that if you were able at one mill to get a most accurate comparison with European conditions, at the next mill all your calculations would be thrown out of gear.

From assurances given to me by men in responsible positions who are in a condition to judge of the relative costs of production in England and India, I am inclined to think that, on the whole, the wages-cost for the production of a piece of cloth from the raw cotton to the finished article is actually very slightly less in India than in England. In fact, I was assured by one man of great standing, whose word I have no reason to doubt, but whose name, obviously, I cannot give, that—on the whole—the wages-costs embodied in a piece of cloth in India were rather greater than those embodied in a piece of cloth in Lancashire.

As nearly every mill in India has a different standard, however, I frankly recognise the impossibility of making any definite statement, and have given this explanation in order to show how Indian circumstances prevent an accurate comparison being made with Europe.

CONFUSED MASS OF CONTRADICTIONS.

Another feature in Indian factories is the fact that in some mills the weaver will have two looms of anywhere

from 40 to 46 inches in width. In other mills the weaver may only have one of these looms, but the wages may approximate to those of the other district, where two looms to a weaver are customary.

In this confused mass of contradictions, judged from the European standpoint, there was no hope of getting an absolutely clear picture of labour costs. There are huge textile centres where every separate firm makes its own list of prices, where the conditions vary widely, where under any system of lists or tariffs, wages would vary very widely, but yet there is a great similarity in the wages earned. So I am afraid that I must say, with the best intentions in the world, no delegation could at present say dogmatically whether the hours worked and the wages earned in India mean a grossly unfair competition in a purely economic sense against the Western worker. Of course, we must hope and work for the day when the Indian worker will be much better paid, work much less hours, and be much better housed. These things are certain to come when the textile workers form strong organisations. But, when European employers tell us that low wages and long hours in India make it impossible for them to compete, we must accept their allegations with the greatest reserve, and decline to accept as a fact the statement that long hours and low wages in India make it necessary that lower wages should be paid and longer hours worked on the continent of Europe.

WORKERS IN VARIOUS SECTIONS.

The importance of India as a producer of raw material for the textile industry is apt to be underestimated. It is true that, so far as wool and silk are concerned, she does not manufacture largely and she has a very small number of people employed in working these fibres. As a matter of fact, in British India, which is the only part of India for which I possess statistics which allow me to speak freely, there are only 7,064 persons registered as working in woollen mills and 1,519 in silk mills. It would be a mistake to assume, however, that these figures, along with 1,018 engaged in miscellaneous textile industries and 765 working in the hosiery industry, are the only workers in these particular branches in India. In woollen, silk, miscellaneous and hosiery, there are many firms in the Indian or Native States, but I cannot say accurately, or even with any degree of accuracy, how many people they employ. There must be many thousands, but the total result, in comparison with

the great cotton and jute industries of India, is almost negligible. There are engaged in British India in cotton spinning and weaving 332,223 workers.

JUTE.

In jute, which in all other countries in the world plays a very subsidiary part to cotton and wool, there are actually 341,961 workers engaged in the spinning and manufacture of the textile raw material. India, as a matter of fact, produces nearly the entire jute crop of the world. This crop, even in India, is localised and is grown almost wholly in Bengal. I regret to say that I fell ill in Calcutta, and consequently was personally unable to make an investigation at all into the jute industry. As, however, the conditions in Calcutta and district were investigated not long ago by representatives of the Scottish Jute Trade Unions, I shall be able, with the help of their report and the report of my own colleagues, to give in the wages section a good idea of what is taking place there. I confine myself, for the moment, to the fact that India is almost the only producer of the raw material for the industry of which I am speaking.

RAW COTTON.

India is a very valuable contributor, also, to the production of raw cotton. All European textile workers engaged in the making of cotton goods are more or less anxious with regard to the future of the raw material of the industry. For many reasons, it is extremely bad for the industry and the workers in it, that any one country should hold almost a monopoly of the supply. Because of this many countries have tried to encourage in their colonies in different parts of the world the growing of raw cotton. Many of these experiments have not been as successful as was hoped—not because of the unsuitability of the soil—for nature seems to have provided suitable soil in overflowing abundance—but to the fact that where the soil is, the people to grow the crops are not present, and even where one finds both soil and workers there is not the necessary transport.

India is favourably circumstanced, in so far as she grows a very large proportion of the cotton crop that is needed for the production of the major part of the goods she manufactures. She is the second largest cotton producer in the world, and is forging ahead very rapidly indeed. The following figures that are available for the last five

years will show how rapidly India is becoming a more important producer of raw cotton. Here are the figures:—

Year.	Bales of 400 lbs. each.
1921-22	4,485,000
1922-23	5,073,000
1923-24	5,161,000
1924-25	6,088,000
1925-26	6,038,000

There is no possibility of getting figures for the 1926-27 crop for some time, so I cannot give an estimate of what will take place further. Even these figures do not give the total production of cotton; they deal only with that cotton which is definitely sold to mills and exported. Tremendous quantities are used domestically for hand-spinning, the padding of quilted coats, which are so often used in Northern India, and other purposes. When everything is taken into consideration, it is extremely problematic as to whether the actual growth of cotton does not reach more than six million bales.

Of recent years there has been a great improvement, not only so far as the larger area engaged in cotton growing is concerned, but in the yield per acre as well. Constant attention has been paid to the quality of the cotton, and Mr. B. C. Burt, in an article in the *Empire Cotton Growing Review*, estimates that at least two million bales of cotton are now produced in India which are suitable for replacing American cotton for many purposes.

EXPORTABLE SURPLUS.

There is an exportable surplus of better-class Indian cottons left after the needs of the Indian mills have been satisfied. India, of course, has to import higher-grade cottons for some of her work, but generally speaking, it may be said that she not only grows the cotton requisite for her own factories, but has an exportable surplus in addition. So, in her two great textile industries, cotton and jute, she has the great initial advantage of having the raw material at her doors. With the monopoly of jute, and self-sufficing so far as cotton is concerned, she begins with tremendous advantages. Apart altogether from the agricultural workers engaged in growing the crop, India employs in cotton ginning and baling nearly 150,000 workers, and in jute-pressing and similar work, some 32,800.

IMPORTS FROM BRITAIN AND JAPAN.

The importance of India as a consumer of textile goods to Europe, particularly to England, is perhaps not fully recognised. A few statistics taken from the Government of India's trade returns will show how tremendous are the quantities India imports. I make no apology for quoting the following summary made by the "Manchester Guardian" in full. Before I print the quotation, may I say that references made to Lancashire cotton cloth are invariably references to cotton goods made in England. It is simply because the industry is almost wholly concentrated in Lancashire that the words "Lancashire cotton cloth" have become equivalent to "English cotton cloth." The extract will also show that English manufacturers and merchants, as well as Indian manufacturers, are looking with anxious eyes on the progress of Japan. It is probably because of this anxiety that the United Kingdom and Japan are compared by the "Manchester Guardian." Here is the quotation:—

"The Government of India's detailed trade returns just received show that Lancashire cotton cloth made much more progress than Japanese in the eleven months of the fiscal year which ended with February. The total imports from the United Kingdom were 1,315,504,000 yards, an increase of 184,755,000 on 1925-6. The imports from Japan—the second largest supplier—were 214,970,000 yards, an increase of 14,489,000 on the previous year. The increase from the United Kingdom was thus nearly thirteen times as large as Japan's. The respective increases and decreases were as under:—

	United Kingdom.		Japan.
	Yards.		Yards.
Grey	41,679,000	3,459,000
Bleached	94,566,000	1,754,000
Coloured	48,510,000	12,784,000

The figures for February alone were not so satisfactory as this, the grey cloth total being nearly 12,000,000 yards less than last year, and nearly all this loss falling upon British trade. Bleached and coloured cloths, however, improved substantially upon last year's figures, while Japanese bleached cloths nearly disappeared and coloured cloths from the same country showed only a small increase. The following are the important figures in the returns for the two periods:—

(ooo's omitted.)

	February.		11 months.	
	1926-7.	1925-6.	1926-7.	1925-6.
	Yards.	Yards.	Yards.	Yards.
GREY, total	42,985	54,633	675,533	631,339
From United Kingdom	30,940	42,591	536,534	494,855
From Japan	11,409	11,629	135,253	131,794
BLEACHED, total ..	43,533	36,250	508,753	412,404
From United Kingdom	41,699	34,710	490,505	395,939
From Japan	30	367	2,633	4,387
Swiss	1,192	478	7,377	4,646
COLOURED, total .	34,140	29,206	405,034	330,311
From United Kingdom	25,242	19,880	288,465	239,955
From Japan	5,850	7,575	77,084	64,300
From Italy	859	423	14,832	9,306
From Holland	1,286	597	12,598	8,914

India's yarn imports showed a decline in February from 3,697,472 lb. to 2,529,300 lb. The United Kingdom's loss of trade was 439,228 lb., while Japan's was 806,228 lb. The figures for 11 months fell from 46,816,142 to 44,924,875 lb., but it is noteworthy that the United Kingdom's share increased from 14,023,692 to 18,349,502 lb., whereas Japan's fell from 30,848,829 to 24,157,414 lb., showing plainly that the course of cotton prices this season has been less unfavourable to British yarn than some recent seasons have been."

WAGES IN WOOLLEN MILLS.

Before turning to general remarks about the position in Calcutta, let me say that so far as we could ascertain, the wages of the workers in woollen mills, where these existed, were higher than in the working either of cotton or of jute.

CONDITIONS IN CALCUTTA.

The condition of affairs regarding housing of textile workers in Calcutta is similar to that in Bombay and other centres. The "bustee," or worker's dwelling, is even worse than the Bombay chawl. Again, however, it must be said that where employers have built dwellings for the workers, they are invariably better than those supplied by private owners at rents.

When Johnston and Sime, for the Scottish Jute Workers, investigated conditions in Calcutta, the mills were running short-time in most cases, and their statistics of wages are based on four days' work, or 36 hours' actual working. It is probable that so far as the jute mills are concerned, they have a higher percentage of European capital than is invested in the great cotton industry. Certainly, the Scotsman plays a greater part in the jute industry than the Englishman plays in the cotton industry. As regards the work done, it appears that at least three Indian workers are employed to do the same amount of work as one Scottish jute worker; in fact, many competent authorities place the ratio much higher than that.

FABULOUS PROFITS.

One of the most sensational parts of the report to which I have referred deals with the profits that were made between 1915 and 1924. The Scotsmen estimate that in ten years profits to the shareholders amounted to three hundred million pounds, equivalent to 90 per cent. per year on the capital. The most surprising thing, however, is the estimate that a profit of three hundred millions for three hundred thousand workers in the trade means, obviously, £1,000 per worker profit; the average wage was said to be about £12 10s. per year. Johnston and Sime, therefore, estimate that, as the average wage is about £12 10s. a year, and the profit per worker is £100 per year, the average annual profit is eight times as much as the wages bill. It is estimated that 60 per cent of the shares in the jute mills are held by Indians, so that so far as capital is concerned, the Indian, even in jute, outweighs the European. It is a fact, however, that effective management still rests in the hands of Britons—mainly Scotsmen.

Profits in the Indian textile industry have been so fabulous that even the workers themselves look upon what would be called a fairly high profit in a European factory as unsatisfactory and very low. Without criticising, may I just print the following statement from the Ahmedabad trade union, in order to show how even trade union officials look upon the present rates of profit. This is the quotation :

“ It is interesting to note that the actual situation as revealed by the published balance sheets for 1925 corresponds somewhat closely to the calculated estimate. Figures of the sale proceeds and cost of

production extracted from these balance sheets bear remarkable evidence of these fluctuations. Cotton, fuel, and stores consumed in 1925 are 17%, 1% and 1% less in value respectively than the consumption during 1924. Total profit of the mills whose balance sheets are available for comparison is about 14% higher than that of the year 1924, and works out at 19.5% on the paid up capital, against about 17% in the previous year.

“ This is by no means a result which can have a heartening effect on those who have a stake or interest in the industry.”

As I said, I am not at all criticising; I am merely showing that what would be considered extremely good profits in Europe are looked upon as being very low in India, even by some trade union leaders.

CALCUTTA AND COTTON.

In addition to jute, there is a certain amount of cotton spun and manufactured in and about Calcutta. There are roughly about a dozen cotton mills, where 13,000 workers—10,000 men, 1,700 women, 1,300 children—are employed. The wages in these mills are somewhat similar to those in the jute mills. There is little weaving of cotton in Bengal, nearly all the cotton being spun into yarn and sold as yarn. In the south of Calcutta, the workers prefer to work four days a week, as they generally have small patches of land and prefer to have one or two days free in order to cultivate these small plots.

COMPLAINTS OF MERCHANT TRADERS.

The delegation, whilst in Calcutta, made an effort to get to know what was actually taking place in the economic field. It appears that the merchant traders of Calcutta complain that English goods are being raised above the natural prices by artificial means, for instance, restricted production. The result of this is that Japan is rapidly taking the trade which was formerly done with England, because of the fact that she will sell much more cheaply than the English spinner and manufacturer will. Again, as I have so often said, it is extremely difficult to find what the facts are, and I can merely give the statements along with the authority and leave them to the judgment of the readers of this report.

HAND-LOOMS.

I have referred to the fact that cotton is often used in other ways than in the mills. According to a census taken in 1921, there were two million hand-loom in India, which used chiefly yarns supplied from spinning mills. The average production of these hand-loom is said to be about 100 pounds of coarse cloth per year.

TEA GARDENS.

The matters I have dealt with in this general summary are largely things on which I can speak personally. The rest of the members of the delegation not only visited the places I have hitherto mentioned, but were able to visit other places in addition. For instance, they went to see the tea gardens around Darjeeling, and found that there appeared to be no Government supervision as to the conditions of labour or the education of the workers. Wages varied from coolies at four annas a day to skilled men in the factories at 10 to 12 annas per day. Houses are provided free by the planters; the rents of these houses to non-workers on the plantations are four to five rupees a month.

TATA'S EXTRAORDINARY CONCERN.

Before turning to the other places at which textile mills were visited by the delegation, may I say that a visit was paid, for purposes of information and comparison, to the steel works of Messrs. Tata at Jamshedpur. This is one of the most extraordinary firms in the world. The ground on which the buildings stand was literally cut out of the living jungle. The firm owns 25 square miles of land. There are 120,000 inhabitants in Jamshedpur, but there is absolutely nothing in the shape of a City Council or any other public body representing the inhabitants and determining the condition of affairs in the town. The firm literally owns and controls the whole of the city. No trade union or any other kind of public meeting can be held without the consent of the employers. Water, sanitation, and all public services are owned and administered by the firm. It is true that there are a few privately-owned houses, but the land on which the houses stand is leased from Tata's.

The delegation reports that the wages paid are probably higher than in any other works in India. There is no question that as an industrial unit it is far and away the greatest in the country. The influence of the firm is

not only felt in Jamshedpur, but extends all over India, and is very powerful indeed in the legislative bodies. For years it has been able to get high protective taxes and general government help. There is a union of the workers in Jamshedpur which has over 5,000 members. This union is affiliated to the All-India Trade Union Congress. It appears to be well managed, not under the influence of any political party, and its affairs are administered by actual workers of the firm. The position of the firm towards the union may best be understood from the fact that the member signs a form giving the right to the firm to deduct his union contribution from his wages; the firm makes these deductions and hands the sum over to the union. It goes without saying that an undertaking of this kind, with all the functions of a City Council, would be absolutely impossible in any western country. The name of Tata is well known all over India, and all kinds of social service institutions have been heavily supported by members of the family and the firm.

BARBARIC SPLENDOUR.

In a country like India, where native princes for countless centuries have been used to displaying barbaric splendour in jewellery and clothing, there is, of course, a large amount of embroidery, particularly in gold and silver. We saw some of the most gorgeous productions imaginable made by workers who were working for very small wages indeed. It is, however, impossible to present anything like a picture showing even the average wages of embroidery workers or describing even the ordinary types of work. These workers are to be found working on a few handlooms collected together in a small place, embroidering by hand in the palaces of the great native princes, or working behind the counter in the shop of a small dealer. Their methods of working are so different from those of embroidery workers in Europe that it is impossible to make any comparison.

CAWNPORE,

In Cawnpore, the delegation found a large number of textile workers in very well-organised factories. The Cawnpore manufacturers, more than any others in India, try to deal direct with the individual customer. All the Indian papers are full of advertisements of shirts, clothing, rugs, and all kinds of textile materials sold by the firms. There are some housing schemes of the employers in Cawnpore which are very much above the general average of workers'

dwellings in India. Generally speaking, it may be said that Cawnpore stands well up in the comparison made between mills in different areas by the delegation.

BENARES AND INDORE.

Benares was also visited, and even in that old Hindoo sacred city there were some 10,000 weavers, but they were working on hand-loom. At Indore, the mills that were visited were very good and well managed. It is in this City and State that there is a system of compulsory education. There is no workmen's compensation law, however, and not far away from Indore there are mills working 13 hours a day. I have already explained that Native States are not amenable to the factory laws in what may be termed British-administered States, where the hours are restricted to ten a day. It is quite recently that the union succeeded in reducing hours of labour in Indore City to ten; as a matter of fact, previous to September, 1926, 12 hours were being worked. There is, however, no legal guarantee, in case the textile workers allow their union to decline, against the employers again reverting to 12 hours a day.

NAGPUR.

At Nagpur, the delegation again found mills which, so far as building and equipment are concerned, were fully equal to European mills; in fact, in one or two cases it is extremely doubtful whether European mills are either so hygienic or so well equipped. Again there is a textile workers' union with about 1,000 members, but it is not recognised by the employers. The contribution is only four annas a year, and obviously the work must be confined within very narrow limits.

HELP FROM ALL SIDES.

I will try to summarise the information received under three or four specific heads in different sections; but before closing this general statement I beg, on behalf of myself and all the members of the delegation, to express our very deep sense of gratitude for the extraordinary hospitality and helpfulness we found everywhere in India. From the drawing up of our itinerary by Mr. R. Bakhale and Mr. N. M. Joshi to our departure again from Bombay, we found a reception and hospitality which were both warm and boundless. It is true that the refusal to talk politics rather annoyed some of the very advanced Indian politicians; it

is also true that that refusal was very largely responsible for the very great willingness we found on all sides to give information. Whether we approached Government officials, the Prime Ministers of Native States, trade union officials, or employers' associations, the results were the same. Not a single mill we desired to visit did we fail to visit; when we asked for particulars of wages at firms, the books were invariably brought out; there was no attempt, so far as we could discover, to hide anything. There was every desire, apparently, to let us see the whole of the circumstances, with the faith that we would present a fair and unbiased report of what we saw and heard.

THE TASK BEFORE THE WORKERS.

It would be very easy in a country like India, by deliberately shutting one's eyes to the history and the traditions of the people, and by only hearing the statements of one particular school of thought, to present a horrifying picture of the circumstances. It would be perfectly easy to make violent attacks either on the Government or on the employers, but if one looks at the circumstances with a desire to be as impartial as possible, and compares what might be termed purely Indian conditions, either in Indian States or in agricultural areas, with the conditions obtaining in industrial districts, one must acknowledge there are two sides to the picture. There are problems for a growing trade union movement in India which can only be settled by the workers themselves. Neither the British nor even the Native Governments can break down a system under which a man who is born the son of a shoemaker must always remain a shoemaker; no Government action can destroy a state of things in which one man is not permitted even to let his shadow fall across the path of another man. It would be the height of folly to blind oneself to the obvious fact that the worker in India, unless he becomes organised and breaks down the divisions that exist between the workers, may probably be even more bitterly exploited under a purely Indian Government than he is at present.

SPIDER'S WEB OF PROBLEMS.

In a report like this it is impossible to speak of a certain inexpressible feeling that even a short time in India produces in the mind and the heart of a European. Trade union organisation and Labour political action are comparatively simple things in Europe, but in India, with its spider's web of criss-cross problems of religion, of tradition,

of method and work, the task becomes so complex as to appear at times perfectly hopeless. It is impossible to go to that country without becoming a hearty well-wisher of the Indian people, and without hoping that the terrible conditions which now exist may soon be improved. Again, I beg personally to thank all those, whether trade union officials, members and officials of employers' associations, technical experts, or Government officials, who rendered us every service possible, and tried to make our task in India not only easy but pleasant.

Section 2

Trade Unions in the Textile Trade

So far as it is possible to ascertain exactly, there were, whilst we were in India, some 20 different trade unions for textile workers. The total membership of these trade unions was about 32,000, of which 14,000 were in Ahmedabad, 6,000 in the Bombay Textile Labour Union, and 2,000 amongst the jute workers in Bengal. I use these figures with a certain amount of hesitation, because it is extremely difficult to say, not only what is a trade union in India, but also where such bodies are in existence. It seems to me, also, that 32,000 is a number which is scarcely likely to be accurate in view of the fact that Calcutta, Ahmedabad, and Bombay account for 22,000 in themselves, whilst there is a second union in Bombay which is said to have 3,500 members, some of whom, at any rate, are textile workers. As there are unions of textile workers in Madras, and as the two unions of which I have already spoken in that city must have a considerable number of members, it seems to me that 32,000 is less really than the number of textile workers organised in India. There are unions of textile workers in Nagpur, Cawnpore, Coimbatore, and in the State of Mysore in addition to those already mentioned.

DIFFUSED EFFORT.

The great difficulty is that, with the exception of Ahmedabad, there seem to be almost everywhere competing unions. The example of the region of Calcutta, with its swarming thousands of textile workers with only about 2,000 organised, and two unions for them, is perhaps the worst

example of diffused effort that can be found in India. I am afraid that very often political grounds are responsible for this fighting, and that the workers are often led to think that all India needs is political freedom in order that the worker may benefit. As a matter of fact, bad as the conditions now are, they would probably be infinitely worse in India if the political power were in the hands of Indian employers. It is very regrettable that the workers, even at the very inception of their organisation, should be split into separate camps.

LEADING ORGANISATIONS.

It is quite evident that the organisation of textile workers is strongest in Bombay, Ahmedabad, and Madras. I have already, in the introductory part of the report, dealt with the peculiar difficulties in Madras. It is fairly safe to say that in spite of the division that exists in Madras, the unions of textile workers that exist do have an effect on the working conditions of their members, and that the textile workers of the city would be much worse off if trade unionism did not exist. That is in spite of, and not because of, the unhappy split, in which one union says, "Get rid of your non-textile workers as officials, and we will join a united organisation," while the other organisation says, "There can be no talk of joint organisation unless we have the right to choose whoever we will, textile worker or non-textile worker, as head of our organisation."

In Bombay is to be found perhaps the nearest approach to a trade union on what, for want of a better name, I will call the European model. The union takes all textile workers as members, in whatever branch they work, and its business is done from five different centres. The membership cards are printed in Urdu and Marathi, and give details which are quite customary in Europe. There is also an active propaganda by means of big posters in prominent places in the mill areas. These posters give summaries of the work of the union, and invite all textile workers to join it. In the present state of illiteracy, unfortunately, both the cards and the posters lose a great deal of what ought to be their usefulness. There is a central Managing Committee which is really the authoritative managing body for the union. It consists of the principal officers and representatives of the workers in the proportion of one for each 200 members in any given mill. There are also committees in each centre or district, but the functions of these committees are purely advisory. There are also mill committees, and

the Central Committee's idea is to give the actual workers themselves the largest possible share in the management of the union. This is in striking contradiction to the position in the Madras Workers' Union, where even the Managing Committee itself is elected by the principal officers. I find it necessary to repeat again that the latter allege, as a reason for this procedure, that any election to the committee which was of a public character would be likely to result in victimisation of the members.

OBJECTS OF BOMBAY UNION.

The objects of the Bombay Union (I am speaking always of the larger of the two unions) are given as follows:

- “ 1. To organise and unite the textile workers in the City, Island, and Presidency of Bombay;
2. To secure to its members fair conditions of life and service;
3. To try to redress their grievances;
4. To try to prevent any reduction of wages, and, if possible, to obtain an advance whenever circumstances allow;
5. To endeavour to settle disputes between employers and employes amicably, so that a cessation of work may be avoided;
6. To endeavour to provide against sickness, unemployment, infirmity, old age, and death;
7. To endeavour to secure compensation for members in cases of accident under the Workmen's Compensation Act;
8. To provide legal assistance to members in respect of matters arising out of, or incidental to, their employment;
9. To endeavour to render aid to the members during any strike or lock-out brought about by the sanction of the Union.
10. To obtain information in reference to the textile industry, in India and outside;
11. To co-operate and federate with organisations of Labour, particularly textile labour, having similar objects, in India and outside;

12. To help, in accordance with the Indian Trade Unions Act, the working classes in India and outside in the promotion of the objects mentioned in this rule; and
13. Generally to take such other steps as may be necessary to ameliorate the social, educational, economic, civic, and political condition of the members."

It will be noted that in clause 9 there is definite provision made for aid to be given to the members during strikes or lock-outs. So far as I know, it has up to now proved absolutely impossible to lay down a definite and specific amount per week or month to which the member is entitled, but the principle is recognised.

A VERY MODERN GROWTH.

The oldest trade union in the textile trade is the Madras Labour Union, which was started by B. P. Wadia in 1918. The Ahmedabad Textile Workers' Union was started in 1920, and the Bombay Textile Workers' Union came even after that. It will be seen, therefore, that the unions are very modern growths indeed.

THE AHMEDABAD UNION.

While the Bombay Textile Workers' Union seems to be more on European lines than any other union, perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the strongest, union of textile workers is that of the textile workers of Ahmedabad. These workers are organised in the different sections and branches, but whilst the organisation is in separate sections, there is a very effective centralisation, and the General President and General Secretary apparently act for all purposes and for all the grades of workers. Each separate branch union, however, has its own meeting, and the members of the Committee are elected by the votes of the members. Frequent meetings of the workers are held in order to give every information possible, not only about the work of the unions, but also as to the possibilities of general improvements in the lot of the workers.

Complaints made by the members are quite freely dealt with between the employers and the officials of the unions, and there is the closest possible touch, apparently, between the head offices of the employers' association and the head offices of the workers' organisation.

According to the annual report of the union's work in 1925, there were 1,004 complaints dealt with during the year, 73 of which were left over from the previous year, and 931 from the year under review. Fifty-eight of these complaints were rejected by the Committee as unreasonable or trivial, and 790 were brought to a conclusion during the year. The Committee said that 616 were successfully dealt with, 36 were compromised, 16 were unsuccessful, and 64 were disposed of for reasons not given. These complaints were against bad administration in 35 per cent. of the cases, unjust penalties inflicted on workers accounted for 26 per cent., and complaints about wages and the method of payment of wages formed 10 per cent. of the total. There were also complaints regarding the health and safety of the workers, general conditions of work, hours, holidays, and miscellaneous matters.

The Union Committee is very much in favour of the formation of a Joint Committee of employers and workers in order more quickly to deal with the complaints received. The officials of the Union complain about the tardy procedure, and hope that in future it may be possible more quickly to deal with disputes of any kind that arise.

UNAUTHORISED STRIKES.

During 1925, there were 33 strikes in Ahmedabad, but not one of them was authorised by the Union. The following quotation from the report is enlightening:—

“ The strikes in Union mills were all unauthorised strikes. We can understand many of them in the light of desperate action to which workpeople were driven in consequence of inordinate delay in the settlement of complaints. But, for some of these, there was not the shadow of an excuse, and they could only be due either to sheer senselessness or wanton mischief. Whatever the cause, these strikes are a matter for deep regret and deserve severe condemnation.”

The Union relies, apparently, absolutely on arrangements between the employers and its officials, and there is absolutely no provision made in the rules for anything in the shape of a definite weekly or other payment in the case of strikes.

THE " UNTOUCHABLES."

Apart from its work in dealing with all kinds of complaints of the members, the Union seems to confine its benefits entirely to benefits of a friendly or social service character. It gives medical aid, and has two dispensaries and a hospital with accommodation for twenty indoor patients. It appears that the members belonging to the depressed or "untouchable" classes make a larger use of these services than any other section of the workers. The following quotation from the report will speak for itself as to the position of this class of worker:—

" It is natural, seeing that they have practically no access to most of the public institutions for medical help, and they have very limited private resources and facilities for the purpose."

AHMEDABAD AND EDUCATION.

The Union also conducts nine day schools and fifteen night schools, and in 1925 gave instruction to a total of 1,286 students. It also has the control and management of the day school and night school of the Bharatkhand textile mill, the employers meeting half the cost. The Union employ 78 teachers, 43 of whom possess qualifying certificates. A special part of this education deals with the physical condition of children, and the Committee are pleased with the success of their endeavours to cultivate the habit of regular bathing and scrupulous care of the teeth and nails. They regret, however, that the parents of the children do not provide them with adequate clothing. There is also a central secondary school and a nursery school. One of the most striking things about the Union is that apparently it draws a very large proportion of its expenditure on education from funds provided by the Millowners' Association. In the year under review, there was a total expenditure of 26,644 rupees, of which the Millowners' Association Swaraj (Home Rule) Fund paid 1,250 rupees a month; there were 60 rupees a month from the managing agent of a particular cotton mill, and private individuals gave 1,580 rupees.

There is a library and reading-room in connection with the Union, but, unfortunately, the daily attendance is only about ten. There is a weekly paper, called the "Majur Sandesh," and 5,500 copies are distributed weekly free of charge. This paper gives information about Labour movements in India and foreign countries.

GANDHI, THE DOMINANT SPIRIT,

It may be said that the soul and inspiration of the Ahmedabad Union is Mr. Gandhi, and the chief officers of the Union may fairly be said to be his disciples. When Mr. Gandhi returned to Ahmedabad after his release from gaol, he was presented with a purse of money by the working men, which he handed over to the Union, which in its turn utilises it for the hand-spinning of yarn to be made into home-woven cloth.

LEGAL AND MONETARY AID.

Legal aid is given by the Union, and 30 cases were dealt with in 1925. There are two cheap grain shops belonging to the Union, but at the time of the issue of the report in 1926 there was a danger that they would have to be closed down unless the cash purchases of the workers could be increased. There is a Labour Union Bank, which issues loans to the Union members at 6½%. Many of these loans have been advanced to pay for old debts, for which interest ranged between 75 and 120 per cent. Although this matter has been dealt with before, I cannot refrain from quoting, without any further comment, the following short passage:—

“ A system of petty advances to workpeople has been in vogue in a large number of mills for many years past. Some mills give weekly advances themselves, and, considering the prevailing conditions, the rate of interest charged by them cannot be called unreasonable. But in most of the mills the money-lender, who is in a majority of cases a Pathan, lends money at a rate which works out at a minimum of 300%, and is frequently as high as 1,000%. Authorities in some mills give facilities to the money-lenders for the collection of their dues.”

WHERE AHMEDABAD EXCELS.

I think it may safely be said that no union in India can even approach the Ahmedabad Union so far as its knowledge of the economic situation is concerned. The officials take a very lively interest in the daily quotations of cotton prices, and in every other quotation of prices dealing with the cotton textile industry. Information is also compiled with regard to the retail prices of foodstuffs and

the changes in the conditions of work and pay in the local mills. The Union also takes a very keen interest in the profits made in the mills. I have already given a short quotation from the report dealing with the profits obtained and showing how in India profits are looked upon in a different way from that in which they are regarded in Europe.

A SERMON FOR THE EMPLOYERS.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that because the Union has no Strike Fund and evidently tries its best to prevent strikes, it fails to speak out quite clearly with regard to the conditions. The following quotation I reproduce in full in order to show what the opinions of the chief officers of the Union are:—

“ Many powerful forces have been at work for long years to drag down the workman on all sides, and the wonder is, not that he is inferior in efficiency to foreign labour, but that he is still alive and working. Let alone considerations of humanity, if the millowners and the community had cared for the future of the industry, out of pure self-interest, they would long ago have provided every working family with a healthy dwelling, diffused as widely as possible knowledge of the laws of health, carried medical aid to every door, equipped every worker with elementary education of a useful and practical character, rescued him from the haunting vice of alcohol and released him from the ever-tightening clutches of the money-lenders. A very little in some and nearly nothing in the other directions has been done so far.”

ONE FOR THE WORKERS ALSO

But the workmen are admonished quite as much as the employers, and are told to offer the utmost possible co-operation with the latter, to obtain the maximum production at minimum costs. They are asked to do the best they are capable of in order to deserve the best treatment and the best remuneration.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

It is quite evident, in spite of the close connection between the employers and the Union officials, that even in Ahmedabad, almost exclusively Indian as it is in its

capitalist development, and with the spirit of Gandhi dominating to a remarkable extent, there is great room for improvement. Wages, housing, health, education, and indebtedness are all tremendous problems that have been scarcely touched yet by the work of the Union. In the short time the Union has been formed it would be perhaps unreasonable to expect more than has been done.

The other textile trade unions in other parts of India are sometimes confined to the workers in one single mill, and in no case can be said to be comparable in strength of organisation to the Union in Ahmedabad. I have already said that the highest contribution we have found was four annas per month—roughly 4½d. or 40 pfennig—and the lowest four annas per year. From the details given it will be seen that there is scarcely any possibility of a united textile workers' organisation joining with their comrades in the western world, but it may be that that consummation is nearer than we hope. In any case, we can keep in the closest possible touch and fraternal relationship with any textile workers' organisation in India which is willing, and hope that the time when we shall definitely belong to the same International organisation will soon arrive.

Section 3.

India as an Exporter and Importer of Textiles

Although in the general introduction I have given some statistics with regard to India and the textile trades, I think it best to devote this special section to a short description of India as a consuming nation. The facts I am going to give are taken from the report of the Department for Commercial Intelligence and Statistics for the year 1926. This Indian report shows the prodigious quantities of textile goods which are still imported for the teeming millions of India's population.

PRODIGIOUS IMPORTS.

In 1926, in cotton piece-goods alone, there was an import of 1,784 million yards. This stupendous quantity would wrap round our globe over 44 times. Although this

was an increase of 143 million yards over 1925, the value of the larger quantity was less by 20 millions of rupees than in 1925. Nearly the whole of this loss of 2 crores of rupees was on grey goods, bleached and coloured goods remaining almost stationary. Imports of cotton twists and yarns went up from 49 million pounds in 1925 to 52 million pounds in 1926, although again, owing to the fall in prices, 1926 quantities cost 7.31 lakhs, whereas the smaller quantity in 1925 cost 7.75 lakhs. (A lakh, of course, is 100,000 rupees.) Of these huge quantities of yarn, England supplied 21 million pounds in 1926, as against 16 million pounds in 1925; Japan supplied 28 millions in 1926, as against 31½ million in 1925. There was a noticeable rise in the quantities of raw cotton imported in 1926 of 14,300 tons. It is to be noted that, of the total imports of 30,800 tons, no less than 13,400 tons came from the Kenya Colony in Africa.

EXPORTS.

At the same time that India was importing these huge quantities of goods, she was also an exporter of raw cotton, mainly to Japan. She also exported, strange to say, 40 million pounds of cotton yarns, an increase of six millions pounds over the year preceding, but the value was less by 17 lakhs. India has tremendous shipments, of course, to China, and actually increased her exports of yarn in 1926 by some 50 per cent. over 1925. She also exported in 1926 no less than 179 million yards of piece-goods, an increase of 13 million yards over 1925, and an increase in value of one crore of rupees.

JUTE.

I have already referred to the fact that India has almost a monopoly of the growing of jute. Her exports during 1926 were 618 thousand tons, valued at 280 millions of rupees. Germany and Great Britain are the largest purchasers, and in 1926 the former purchased 158 thousand tons, and the latter 127 thousand tons. Of the jute bag—known as "gunny" bag—she exported 446 millions, although the value fell from 270 to 255 millions of rupees in spite of the fact that she exported eight millions more than in 1925. That India's trade is world-wide will be shown by the fact that whilst Europe took nearly all the raw jute, Australia and Chile between them accounted for well over 120 millions of made-up bags. She exported gunny cloth to the extent of 1,482 million yards, valued at 30 crores of rupees in 1926. This time, the United States

of America took the lion's share of the export, accounting for 987 million yards, whilst the Argentine Republic took 284 millions of yards. These figures are so colossal that it is only by sitting down and making a careful estimate of the total length of cloth and yarn produced that one can duly appreciate what the totals mean.

BOMBAY MILLOWNERS UNSATISFIED.

During 1926 it appears that the Bombay millowners were again very dissatisfied with the year that had closed; they reported heavy losses, and said that the year was even worse in many respects than 1925, in spite of the prolonged dispute which took place in the latter year.

WOOLLEN IMPORTS.

In woollens there was an import of $12\frac{1}{2}$ million yards, at a total value of 25,100,000 rupees. Of this total, Britain sent four million yards, Germany over a million and a quarter, France two millions, Italy three and a half millions, Belgium sent 645,000 yards, and Japan 988,000. The quantities again will show the tremendous importance of India in the world's economy. Particularly is India important to the textile workers of Europe.

ARTIFICIAL SILK.

India again is a great importer of artificial silk yarn, having increased her imports in 1926 from 1,826,000 to 3,167,000 pounds. Of this total, England exported to her 331,000 pounds and Italy 2,031,000 pounds; there was a tremendous drop in imports from England, and a tremendous rise in imports from Italy. In piece-goods made of artificial silk and cotton there was again a tremendous rise. In 1925, India imported nine million yards of cotton and artificial silk piece-goods; she paid for them 8,300,000 rupees. In 1926, she imported $29\frac{1}{2}$ million yards at a total value of 21,600,000 rupees. Among the countries supplying her with these goods were: Britain, $11\frac{1}{2}$ million yards; Italy, 9 million yards; Switzerland, 4 million yards; and Germany, 1,800,000 yards.

I have given these details and the quantities in order to show, not only how important India is to the textile workers of Europe and the rest of the world, but also how important Europe and the rest of the world may be to India.

Section 4.

Freedom of Workers to Organise

I have already said that there is perfect freedom of Press, and no Government hostility or legal barrier put in the way of the formation of trade unions. As the textile workers stand before the law in India, they are infinitely better placed than were their European colleagues at the beginning of trade union organisation in Europe. Nor are there on the part of the organised employers any definite attempts to prevent the formation of trade unions, such as have been seen in every country in Europe.

EMPLOYERS AND THE TRADE UNIONS.

As a matter of fact, it is quite evident that some bodies of organised employers actually favour the formation of trade unions, believing that the latter will prevent the very large number of strikes due to disputes which might easily be settled if a properly organised trade union existed to deal with the employers. That this opinion of mine rests on a solid foundation can be proved, not only by the assurances we had in India from scores of employers, but by official letters sent on behalf of employers to the Director of the Government Labour Office in Bombay. The following passage from a letter sent by the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association to the Labour Office will speak for itself:—

“ Gradual encouragement and development of trade unions on sound and systematic lines would doubtless facilitate the settlement of Industrial disputes on an amicable basis, and would further bring labour forces in India to the level of recognising and shouldering the responsibility of the enforcement of the decisions obtained on any disputes that may arise between the employers and the employes. This would also increase industrial efficiency and establish harmonious relations between capital and labour.”

Of course, there are districts where the Unions are not recognised by the employers; there are cases where employers say the union is merely used by political adventurers as a tool, and there are individual employers who would not be prepared to recognise any union except under absolute compulsion. Generally speaking, however, the employers seem to look upon the possibility of unions

forcing up wages and improving conditions with less fear than they have for the innumerable stoppages of work which now take place on what they contend to be frivolous grounds.

THE GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE.

The fact that the Government itself has passed an Act which legalises trade unions definitely and officially, is the clearest possible proof that the Government, as such, is rather favourable on the whole to the growth of trade unions. So, being free so far as Press, platform, propaganda, and law are concerned, there is no reason why trade unions may not develop. As a matter of fact, trade unions are springing up all over the country.

Before the war there were unquestionably in India a number of peculiar laws, dealing particularly with the workers in tea plantations, which treated workers who had entered into contract with employers almost as property of the latter. These laws, however, have come to an end, and in recent years there has been apparently "a broad and liberal-minded policy on the part of the Government." The passage in inverted commas is from an article by Mr. Shiva Rao, the President of the Madras Labour Union, and may be taken, therefore, as not overstating the facts. Recently the Government has been circulating proposals regarding the levy of fines and the payment of wages which are considered to be greatly in advance of what has existed up to the present.

Section 5.—Labour Legislation.

There is, in addition to the legalisation of trade unions, now a workmen's compensation for accidents, drafted very largely on the lines of the law existing in England. There is, of course, a difference in the sums which are paid in case of accident, but when the difference in wages between England and India is taken into consideration, the comparison is in favour of India. The scale of compensation is based on the average wages of the worker, but in the case of a fatal injury, the amount paid depends largely on the financial position of the family. For instance, in the case of the death of the head of the family, the compensation is much heavier than is paid for the death of a son or daughter whose wages are not the principal means of support of the

family, but are an addition to the family income. This compensation for fatal accidents is equivalent to 30 months' wages, but with a maximum of 2,500 rupees. In the case, however, of a son or daughter without any dependents, only 200 rupees are paid.

BENEFITS FREQUENTLY LOST.

As might be expected in a country where illiteracy is so great, there are frequent complaints that workers lose benefits they are entitled to under the law, because they do not understand even the very simple methods to be adopted in making claims. The growth, however, of organisation, and of the many organisations for social service, which, whilst not being trade unions, often attend to the interests of the workers, will probably reduce to a minimum the number of people who are not paid what they are legally entitled to.

HOURS.

I do not need to refer to the fact that in all British India the hours of labour are now limited to 60 per week in the factories. It must be definitely understood, however, that the laws for compensation for accidents, and the definite reduction of the hours of labour only have force in what is generally known as British India. In the States which are under Indian rule these laws do not apply; the Native States, so far as labour legislation is concerned, are far behind so-called British India.

FACTORIES ACT.

The most wide-sweeping changes have been made in the Factories Act which applies throughout British India. Not only have the hours been greatly reduced, but the position of children in the factories has been simply revolutionised. Before the war, children of the most tender age could be found about the factories working. It may not appear much to Europeans to speak of the raising of the age of children to 12 before they are allowed to work, but in India it represents tremendous progress. The present writer himself, in England, went to work at 10, and worked full time at 13. No child in British India can now work in the factory full time until over the age of 15. The Factory Acts also contain provision with regard to compulsory resting time. There has been a great interest taken in the problem of ventilation of factories and much progress made.

NO HEALTH INSURANCE.

At the present time there is nothing in the shape of a national unemployment fund or of national health insurance. For the moment, the lack of the former is not very serious, as, generally speaking, there is little or no unemployment in the cotton, and in the jute trade there has been short-time rather than unemployment. The lack of compulsory national health insurance, however, is a very serious thing for the workers.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

To sum up, it may be said that the workers are perfectly free to organise, that there is no special obstacle or difficulty in their way, and that the last few years have marked great development in labour legislation. The following quotation from an article written by Mr. Shiva Rao will show that active Labour opinion in India is hopeful with regard to the future:—

“ A good deal, doubtless, has been achieved through legislation, particularly by the Government of India. Radical improvements have been made in the Factories Act, and the Department in charge of Labour is unremitting in its efforts to bring Indian Labour the advantages secured by years of agitation in the West. A Workmen's Compensation Act is on the Statute Book, a Trades Union Act will shortly come into force.”

Section 6.—Wages of Textile Workers

BUCKINGHAM AND CARNATIC MILLS.

This is a very difficult section to compile because of the fact that the actual money paid as wages does not always represent the full earnings of the workers. An example will show how difficult it is to give particulars with scientific accuracy. At the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Madras, for instance, the firm pay wages for 10½ days per year as holidays. All persons who work at the firm for five years are entitled to 15 days' holiday with full pay; this is in addition to the 10½ days previously spoken of. The firm

works 58½ hours a week instead of 60, gives education to children, trains workers of the factory as foremen and managers, provides technical instruction or pays for attendance at Government classes with full wages to the employes whilst they are in attendance, and has an elaborate system of gratuities. When a boy begins work, he is credited at the end of each half-year with 5% of the amount paid to him in wages, and a bonus of another 5%, making 10%. If he works ten years with the firm, 10% of the wages he has earned during the period is then paid to him. He then begins on a system of 15% for seven years; if he completes that term he is paid the amount. The third period is for five years, and 20% is paid to him on the wages he has earned during that time. The firm makes certain payments in case of sickness (half-wages up to one month per year); they supply free medicine for workmen and their families, and houses at 1 rupee 8 annas per month.

There are a number of other interesting things done by the firm, but I am merely pointing out these things in order to show that the actual wages paid must not be taken to mean everything that the worker receives in every firm. My difficulty is, that there might be two firms together, both paying the same wages, but by special provisions made by one firm, one set of workers might be infinitely better off financially than the other. It would be as well, in studying these figures, always to bear these facts in mind.

IMPROVED POSITION.

There appears to be no doubt whatever that the post-war textile worker's position is much better than it was before the war. The President of the Bombay Textile Employers' Association claimed that wages paid were 93% higher than in 1914, and that in spite of the fact that hours had been reduced voluntarily from 12 to 10 by the Bombay Millowners' Association. ". . . This reduction of hours was made three years before the Government of India ratified the Washington Hours of Labour Convention. No reduction was made in the pay of the workers, and the net result was that piece-work payment for work done was now 130% higher than it was previous to 1914. In addition to this, during five years of prosperity, a month's wages were given each year to every worker."

ACTUAL WAGES.

I now turn to the actual wages. It is well in this connection to point out that there is a claim by one workers' organisation that up to 1921 real wages payments had only increased by 70%, and that the cost of living had gone up by over 200%. The two statements (i.e., employers' and workers') differ so widely from each other that I am going to give details of wages from the publication of the Labour Office of the Government in Bombay, issued in 1923. On the whole I believe these to be the most reliable figures provided up to date. The figures relate to over 194,000 people, or more than 80% of the workers employed in the centres dealt with. The wages were those earned in May, 1921, since which time there has been no radical change in rates; they are exclusive of overtime pay and any annual bonus, and can strictly be compared with wages that are now being earned. Permit me to say that the rupee is now $1\frac{1}{2}$ English shillings or $1\frac{1}{2}$ German marks; the anna is 16 to the rupee, and there are 12 pice to the anna. Here are the wages, showing the percentage of workers with their relative earnings, and the average daily earnings taken over the whole group. These wages, it will be noted, are for full-time working, that is to say, with the engine running 10 hours a day.

DAILY EARNINGS—MEN.

Percentage numbers of men whose daily earnings in May, 1921, fell within the undermentioned limits.

Centre	Percentage of men						Average daily earnings of those who worked full time
	Under 12 annas	Under 18 annas	Under 24 annas	Under 36 annas	Under 48 annas	Above 48 annas	
Bombay (City and Island).	4.8	35.3	23.8	27.2	5.2	3.7	Rs. 1 5 6
Ahmedabad ...	10.1	36.8	20.0	26.9	3.6	2.6	1 5 0
Sholapur	49.5	23.9	14.2	10.3	1.3	.8	0 15 11
Other Centres .	27.0	26.4	19.7	22.6	2.7	1.6	1 1 8
Bombay Presidency .	10.2	34.2	22.2	25.7	4.5	3.2	1 4 7

DAILY EARNINGS—WOMEN.

Percentage numbers of women whose daily earnings in May, 1921, fell within the undermentioned limits.

Centre	Under 8a.	8a. and under 12a.	12a. and under 16a.	16a. and above	Average daily earnings of those who worked full time	
					Rs.	p.
Bombay (City and Island)	5.7	34.0	48.3	12.0	0 10	9
Ahmedabad	2.7	36.3	48.0	13.0	0 12	1
Sholapur	91.6	7.7	.7	—	0 6	9
Other Centres	28.6	.9	15.4	13.1	0 10	1
Bombay Presidency	18.2	31.2	40.0	10.6	0 10	2

DAILY EARNINGS—BIG LADS AND CHILDREN.

Percentage numbers of big lads and children whose daily earnings in May, 1921, fell within the undermentioned limits.

Centre	Under 4a.	4a. and under 8a.	8a. and under 12a.	12a. and under 16a.	16a. and above	Average daily earnings of those who worked full time	
						Rs.	p.
Bombay (City and Island) —	15.2a	—	29.2 (.5x)	44.9	10.7	0 11	1
Ahmedabad...	5.4a	69.9 (68.4x)	19.8 (2.2x)	4.9	—	0 11	4
Sholapur.....	57.8a	18.6 (14.1x)	23.6	—	—	0 9	1
Other Centres	19.0a	60.0 (44.9x)	17.7	—	3.3	—	0 8 11
Bombay Presidency	9.6a	31.4 (29.5x)	25.5 (0.8x)	27.3	6.2	0 10	7

x The percentages in brackets relate to the number of half-timers included in the totals at these rates. a Half-timer. b Counting two half-timers as one full-timer.

WIDE DIFFERENCES IN EARNINGS.

It will be noticed that there are wide differences in the earnings between one place and another. If a comparison, for instance, be made between Bombay and Sholapur, the difference is remarkable. I call attention to two sets of figures only. Less than 5% of the men in Bombay get under 12 annas a day; there are nearly 50% in Sholapur who make

these low wages. Again, in Bombay, women who get less than eight annas a day form 5.7% of the workers; in Sholapur, no less than 91.6% of the women workers are working for less than eight annas a day. And yet, at Sholapur there are mills as fine as any in the world; in fact, there is one factory the range of whose products is enormous.

In order to make these figures more explicable, may I give details stating the different categories of workers in one or two mills? I am not giving the names of the mills—I scarcely think I am entitled to do so. In one mill, the wages are as follows for a full month's work:—

	Per month.
Blowing room:	
Ordinary worker	21 rs. plus 70%
Chief of the Department ...	55 rs. ,, ,,
His assistant	36 rs. ,, ,,
Winders	15 rs. ,, ,,
Frame tenters	32 to 33 rs.
Ring spinners	16 rs. 8 a. plus 70%
Mule spinners	35 to 40 rs.
Weavers	45 rs.

In another mill with spinning and weaving, the wages are:—

	Monthly.
Weavers	44-45 rs.
Winders	25-27 rs.
Loom overlookers	111 rs.
Head overlookers	165 rs.
Doffer	20 rs. 8 a.
Tape sizer	80 rs.
Assistant sizer	40 rs.

At a third place, weavers make as much as 86 rupees monthly, and the lowest wage is about 50 rupees. The average wages in the different departments of another mill are as follows:—

	Monthly.
Blowing-room	27 rs.
Card-room	26 rs.
Ring-room	27 rs.

In the same mill, weavers working on drop-box looms can get up to 70 rupees a month, and the lowest wage is 33 rupees.

At one of the finest mills in India, the following are the wages that are being paid for 26 days' work :—

Head loom-overlooker	229 rs.
Ordinary overlooker .	110 rs.
Weaver	53 rs.
Sweepers	13 rs. 8 a. as minimum wage.
Warehousemen	25½ rs.
Blow-room workers	27 rs.
Card-room workers ...	27 rs.
Frame tenters	35 rs.
Ring spinners	15-15½ rs. plus 70%, plus bonus of 8% for each full working week.

The individual wages at another firm are :—

	Per month.
Card-room :	
Ordinary workers	32 rupees.
Helpers	30 "
Loom overlookers	142 "
Weavers	47 "
Warehousemen	33 "
Cloth examiner	42 "
Winders	20 "
Ring spinners	24 "
Tape sizers	93 "
Assistant sizers	46½ "

It must be specially noted that " month " generally means a working month of 26 days. These details will show the relative position occupied by different workers in the industry, and the figures given from the official return cover a very large proportion indeed of the workers in the cotton trade in India.

Figures given to us by the Committee of the Bombay Textile Labour Union showed that for two looms the weavers got 25 rupees monthly for plain cloth, 25-30 rupees monthly for dobbies, and 60 rupees monthly when working one jacquard loom, 60 inches in width. The workers stated that the blowing-room workers generally got 27-28 rupees a month, and in the card department the wages were 25-26 rupees per month.

WAGES IN MADRAS.

The general average daily wages for all mills in the Presidency of Madras for 1925 were as follows:—

	a.	p.
Cotton weaver (man)	14	10
Boy assistant	5	1
Cotton spinner (man)	12	11
" " (boy)	5	1
Adult jute weaver	10	3
Boy jute weaver	2	6
Jute spinner (man)	8	6
" " (boy)	4	4

As, roughly, the position of the textile worker in Madras as compared with other workers is the same as in the rest of India, I am going to give the figures of the average wages of a number of other trades, to show the comparison that exists. Where the cotton weaver, for instance, gets 14a. 10p. per day,

	Rs.	a.	p.
the engine driver gets	1	4	10
" fireman	0	10	11
" fitter	1	2	4
" turner	1	1	10
" riveter	1	0	2
" boiler-smith	1	7	2
" carpenter	0	15	9
" bricklayer	0	14	7
" compositor (hand)	0	13	2
" printer's machine worker .	0	15	2

Unskilled labour, so-called, is very badly paid:

	Rs.	a.	p.
Cotton ginning (men)	0	7	6
" " (women)	0	4	7
" pressing (men)	0	9	8
" " (women)	0	5	10
Rice (men)	0	7	8
" (women)	0	4	8

UNSKILLED LABOUR.

These are all daily wages, of course. Whilst the wages of textile workers in different parts of India may vary widely, the relative comparison, as I said, remains the same, and the Madras example may be taken to cover the rest of the country.

AHMEDABAD.

At another typical mill, in Ahmedabad, the monthly wages were as follows:—

	Rs.	a.	p.
Blow-room	20	4	0
Card department	24	0	0
Frame department	31	12	4
Spinning	26	5	0
Winding	14	0	0
Warping	45	1	0
Sizing	43	2	0
Weaving	42	1	0
Calendar	31	0	0
Cloth department	35	0	0

There are mills in Ahmedabad where the wages are less; there are mills where the wages are higher; but I think the figures given are a fairly accurate guide to the rates paid to different types of workers.

WAGES OF JUTE WORKERS.

I will give a typical set of figures for a jute mill in Calcutta for four days' working. In the batching department, the average wages are about one rupee per day; in the preparing department, however, they are little more than 9 to 9½ annas; in the roving department, from 12 to 12½ annas; in the spinning department, about 14 annas; in the winding department, slightly higher; weaving, about 1 rupee 8 annas per day; and in finishing, roughly about half the wages paid to the weavers.

WAGES IN A NATIVE STATE.

Here is an example of the wages paid to the individual workers in a mill in a Native State:—

	Rupees.
Mixing men	13 to 17 per month.
Blow-room men	13 ,, 18 ,, ,,
Card strippers	12 ,, 15 ,, ,,
Grinders	13 ,, 21 ,, ,,
Tenters	13 ,, 15 ,, ,,
Drawing tenters	12 ,, 18 ,, ,,
Slubbing tenters	18 ,, 25 ,, ,,
Intermediate tenters	15 ,, 20 ,, ,,
Roving tenters	15 ,, 18 ,, ,,
Roving tenters (working two machines)	21 ,, 31 ,, ,,
Back tenters	13 per month.
Adult piecers	15 ,, ,,
Big boys	9 to 14 per month.
Half-timers	4 ,, 8 ,, ,,
Reelers, senior (women).	12 ,, 15 ,, ,,
,, junior (women).	6 ,, 8 ,, ,,
Winders (women)	9 ,, 12 ,, ,,
Warpers	22 ,, 35 ,, ,,
Sizing hands	19 ,, 30 ,, ,,
Drawing-in boys	16 ,, 28 ,, ,,
Weavers, two looms	25 ,, 35 ,, ,,
,, single loom	13 ,, 18 ,, ,,
Folding men	13 ,, 20 ,, ,,
Dyeing	13 ,, 18 ,, ,,
Bleaching	13 ,, 18 ,, ,,

Plus 10% for regular attendance.

Plus 10% bonus when declared.

Section 7.—Accurate Comparison of Wages and Conditions Impossible

I have selected this material from a huge mass of statistics as to wages which the delegation got together in India. I think the wages given are fairly representative of those paid generally in the industry, but accurate comparison is absolutely impossible. How compare, for instance, Bombay, where the weavers are running two looms, with Madras, where weavers, working on exactly the same type of machinery, have only one loom? The conditions inside the factories vary so widely that it is impossible to compare them with each other, much less to compare them as a whole with factories making the same materials in Europe. I leave to my readers the task of forming an idea as to what these wages actually mean

INDIAN AND BRITISH OUTPUT.

I have already called attention to the fact that it must not be assumed that the worker is doing the same work that European textile workers are doing for their wages. May I refer again to what Johnston and Sime said about the jute industry? It was that at least three times the number of people were employed as would be employed in Scotland, and that a great authority had put the proportion much higher even than that. The same kind of thing applies in the cotton industry. We found as many as five times as many people working in the card-room as are to be found working on the same machinery in a Lancashire mill. Certainly, we found four workers employed in Madras on work that would be done by one worker in Lancashire. Where automatic looms were used, as, for instance, in Madras, the proportion became even wider apart.

So, when the cruelly low wages are considered, they ought to be considered in due perspective, and with a knowledge of the work for which the wages are paid. It may be asked how the employers are able to get workers at these wages. The answer is, that India is a country, or more truly stated, an aggregation of countries, where agriculture, carried on in a primitive way, still occupies a vast mass of the people. The agricultural worker may be said to earn in actual money payments about one rupee per week. However extraordinary this may appear, it is the fact, and it accounts for the Indian being willing to leave the land and go to work in the factories.

Section 8.—Conclusion

I have had to compile this report under very great difficulties, which I am sure the Committee will appreciate. Owing to my illness and the regrettable tragedy which accompanied it, our papers were mixed together hopelessly and disarranged. Much of the material which was to be used in the report was either lost, or died with my daughter. I trust, however, that what I have been able to do will have produced in the minds of the members of the Committee the picture as it appears in my own mind.

A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE.

That picture is a curious mixture of light and shade. There are conditions so unspeakably vile in the housing of the people that one hesitates even to attempt to describe them. There are religious customs so different from anything existing in Europe that it is very difficult indeed for a European mind to understand them and to come to an unbiased decision. There are differences of temperament, differences of outlook, and even differences in conception which are impossible for an investigator even to pretend to understand unless he can spend a very long time on his investigations. But I am perfectly certain that whatever the factory industry is, whatever its trials are, or whatever its history has been, it is not all black. The factory worker evidently can, if he so desires, live a fuller life than the people of India could before the introduction of machinery driven by coal, oil, or electricity. Whilst in the villages, generally speaking, there appears to be little or nothing done in order to give an education to the people, there are in the towns certain facilities which will assure at any rate an elementary education to the man or woman who is determined to acquire it. The ordinary textile worker in India, whether man or woman, is no longer a chattel or serf. He or she has the opportunity of joining with other workers in a trade union organisation, and there is no law, at any rate in British India, which will interfere. In fact, as I tried to point out in India itself, the position is not so bad as it was in Europe at the beginnings of our own trade union movement.

Although I do not hope that next year or the year after there will be a National Textile Workers' Organisation in India, I am not without hopes that the next ten years will see at any rate a central co-ordinating organisation, which

will be able to affiliate to the International Textile Workers' Movement. I am certain that those who are actively engaged in the Indian textile workers' trade unions to-day would be delighted to be able to federate with us. I hope that when the day for federation comes, the Indian textile workers will receive the heartiest possible welcome from their fellow textile workers all over the world.