

India in 1926-27

A Statement prepared for presentation to Parliament in accordance with the requirements of the 26th Section of the Government of India Act (5 & 6 Geo, V, Chap. 61).

By J. COATMAN,

Director of Public Information

Government of India.



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PREFATORY NOTE.

The task of preparing this report for presentation to Parliament has been entrusted by the Government of India to Mr. J. Coatman, and it is now presented under the authority and with the general approval of the Secretary of State for India; but it must not be understood that the approval either of the Secretary of State or of the Government of India extends to every particular expression of opinion.

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APPENDIX I.

THE CONGRESS RESOLUTION (1926).

This Congress reiterates its resolve that the general policy of Congressmen in the Assembly and the various Councils shall be one of self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and of determined resistance to every activity, governmental or other, that may impede the nation's progress towards Swaraj. In particular, Congressmen in the legislatures shall

- (a) refuse to accept ministership or other office in the gift of the Government and oppose the formation of a ministry by other parties until in the opinion of the Congress or the All-India Congress Committee a satisfactory response is made by the Government to the National Demand;
- (b) subject to clause (d) refuse supplies and threw out budgets until such response is made by the Government or unless otherwise directed by the All-India Congress Committee;
- (c) throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposes to consolidate its powers;
- (d) move resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the advancement of the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial interests of the country, and for the protection of the freedom of person, speech, association and of the press, and the consequent displacement of the bureaucracy;
- (e) take steps to improve the condition of agricultural tenants by introducing and supporting measures to secure fixity of tenure and other advantages with a view to ensure a speedy amelioration of the condition of the tenants; and
- (f) generally protect the rights of labour, agricultural and industrial, and adjust on an equitable basis the relations between landlords and tenants, capitalists and workmen.

APPENDIX II.

Annexure containing summary of the conclusions reached by the Round
Table Conference on the Indian question in South Africa.

- I. Scheme of assisted emigration.—(1) Any Indian of 16 years or over may avail himself of the scheme. In case of a family, the decision of the father will bind the wife and minor children under 16 years.
- (2) Each person of 16 years of age or over will receive a bonus of £20 and each child under that age a sum of £10. No maximum shall be fixed for a family. A decrepit adult who is unable to earn his living by reason of a physical disability may, at the discretion of the Union authorities, receive a pension in lieu of or in addition to the bonus. The pension will be paid through some convenient official agency in India out of a fund provided by the Union Government to such amount as they may determine. It is expected that the amount required will not exceed £500 per annum in all.

In every case the bonus will be payable in India on arrival at destination or afterwards, through some banking institution of repute.

- (3) Free passage, including railway fares to port of embarkation in South Africa and from port of landing in India to destination inland, will also be provided.
- (4) Emigrants will travel to India viâ Bombay as well as viâ Madras. Emigrants landing at Bombay will be sent direct from the ship to their destination at the expense of the Union Government.

Survey and certification of ships shall be strictly supervised and conditions on the voyage, especially in respect of sanitary arrangements, feeding and medical attendance, improved.

- (5) Before a batch of emigrants leaves the Union, information will be sent to some designated authority in India at least one month in advance giving (a) a list of intending emigrants and their families, (b) their occupation in South Africa and the occupation or employment which they would require in India, and (c) the amount of cash and other resources which each possesses. On arrival in India emigrants will be (i) advised, and so far as possible, protected against squandering their cash or losing it to adventures, and (ii) helped, as far as possible, to settle in occupations for which they are best suited by their aptitude or their resources. Any emigrant wishing to participate in emigration schemes authorised by the Government of India will be given the same facilities in India as Indian nationals.
- (6) An assisted emigrant wishing to return to the Union will be allowed to do so within three years from the date of departure from South Africa. As condition precedent to re-entry, an emigrant shall refund in full to some recognized authority in India the bonus and cost of passage including railway fares received on his own behalf and if he has a family, on behalf of his family. A pro rata reduction will, however, be made (i) in respect of a member of the family who dies in the interim or a daughter who marries in Iudia and does not return, and (ii) in other cases of unforeseen hardship, at the discretion of the Minister.

- (7) After expiry of three years Union domicile will be lost in agreement with the proposed revision of the law relating to domicile which will be of general application. The period of three years will run from the date of departure from a port in the Union and expire on the last day of the third year. But to prevent the abuse of the bonus and free passage by persons who wish to pay temporary visits to India or elsewhere no person availing himself of the benefits of the scheme will be allowed to come back to the Union within less than one year from the date of his departure. For purposes of re-entry within the time limit of three years, the unity of the family group shall be recognised though in cases of unforeseen hardship the Minister of the Interior may allow one or more members of the family to stay behind. A son who goes with the family as a minor, attains majority outside the Union, marries there and has issue will be allowed to return to South Africa, but only if he comes with the rest of his father's family. In such cases he will be allowed to bring his wife and child or children with him. But a daughter who marries outside the Union will acquire the domicile of her husband and will not be admitted into the Union unless her husband is himself domiciled in the Union.
- II. Entry of wives and minor children.—To give effect to paragraph 3 of the Reciprocity Resolution of the Imperial Conference of 1918, which intended that an Indian should be enabled to live a happy family life in the country in which he is domiciled, the entry of wives and children shall be governed by the following principles:—
 - (a) The Government of India should certify that each individual for whom a right of entry is claimed, is the lawful wife or child, as the case may be, of the person who makes the claim.
 - (b) Minor children should not be permitted to enter the Union unless accompanied by the mother, if alive, provided that
 - (i) the mother is not already resident in the Union, and
 - (ii) the Minister may, in special cases, permit the entry of such children unaccompanied by their mother.
 - (c) In the event of divorce no other wife should be permitted to enter the Union unless proof of such divorce to the satisfaction of the Minister has been submitted
 - (d) The definition of wife and child as given in the Indians Relief Act (No. 22 of 1914) shall remain in force.
- III. Upliftment of Indian community.—(1) The Union Government firmly believe in and adhere to the principle that it is the duty of every civilised Government to devise ways and means and to take all possible steps for the uplifting of every section of their permanent population to the full extent of their capacity and opportunities, and accept the view that in the provision of educational and other facilities the considerable number of Indians who remain part of the permanent population should not be allowed to lag behind other sections of the people.
- (2) It is difficult for the Union Government to take action, which is considerably in advance of public opinion, or to ignore difficulties arising out of the constitutional system of the Union under which the functions of Govern-

ment are distributed between the Central Executive and the Provincial and minor local authorities. But the Union Government are willing:—

- (a) in view of the admittedly grave situation in respect of Indian education in Natal, to advise the provincial administration to appoint a provincial commission of inquiry and to obtain the assistance of an educational expert from the Government of India for the purpose of such inquiry;
- (b) to consider sympathetically the question of improving facilities for higher education by providing suitable hostel accommodation at the South African Native College at Fort Hare and otherwise improving the attractiveness of the institution for Indians;
- (c) to take special steps under the Public Health Act for an investigation into sanitary and housing conditions in and around Durban which will include the question of
 - (i) the appointment of advisory committees of representative Indians; and
 - (ii) the limitation of the sale of municipal land subject to restrictive conditions.
- (3) The principle underlying the Industrial Conciliation Act (No. 11 of 1924) and the Wages Act (No. 27 of 1925) which enables all employees including Indians to take their places on the basis of equal pay for equal work will be adhered to.
- (4) When the time for the revision of the existing trade licensing laws arrives, the Union Government will give all due consideration to the suggestions made by the Government of India Delegation that the discretionary powers of local authorities might reasonably be limited in the following ways:—
 - The grounds on which a licence may be refused should be laid down by statute.
 - (2) The reasons for which a licence is refused should be recorded.
 - (3) There should be a right of appeal in cases of first applications and transfers, as well as in cases of renewals, to the courts or to some other impartial tribunal.

IV. Appointment of Agent.—If the Government of the Union of South Africa make representations to the Government of India to appoint an agent in the Union in order to secure continuous and effective co-operation between the two Governments the Government of India will be willing to consider such a request.

APPENDIX III.

PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ.

Simla, the 29th September, 1926.

The following statement regarding the negotiations carried on by the Government of India with the Ceylon Government on the subject of fixing standard wages for Indian estate labourers in Ceylon and of certain other matters affecting them, is published for information.

- 2. When considering the question of allowing the emigration of Indian labour to Ceylon under the Indian Emigration Act, VII of 1922, the Standing Emigration Committee of the two houses of the Indian Legislature suggested that a basic wage should be fixed for Indian labourers which should be sufficient—
 - (a) to maintain a labourer in tolerable comfort according to his standard of living, regard being had to the fact that a male may have to provide for a family; and
 - (b) to allow a margin for savings, sickness and old age.

The Government of Ceylon were accordingly asked in October 1922 to institute an enquiry into the cost of living and the question of fixing such a basic wage. They entrusted the task to their Assistant Director of Statistics—Mr. Jones-Bateman. Through the courtesy of the Ceylon Government the Government of India were enabled to examine his report, which reached them in December 1923. They discussed it with the Standing Emigration Committee and their Agent in Ceylon, and informed the Colonial Government on the 9th July 1924 that they could not accept Mr. Bateman's conclusions, and suggested further investigation by a Committee of Inquiry on which the representatives of both Governments should be represented.

- 3. In response to this suggestion the Government of Ceylon appointed a Committee, consisting of the Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour in Ceylon, the Director of Statistics, Ceylon, the Agent of the Government of India in Ceylon, and four representatives of the planting community, to make inquiries and submit recommendations. The Minutes of the Meetings of this Committee were forwarded to the Government of India in April 1925. The Committee recommended—
 - (1) that the principle of a standard wage be accepted; and
 - (2) that assuming that an adult male or female labourer works for 24 days in a month and working child for 20 days, the following rates should be fixed as the standard:—

_	<u> </u>	 		Men Rupee cents.	Women Rupee cents.	Working children Rupee cents.
Low country				50	40	30
Middle country		•	•	52	41	31
Up country		•	• ;	54	43	32

The Colonial Government referred these proposals to the Associations of the Planting Industries concerned for their observations and also asked the Government of India for their views.

- 4. The proposals were carefully considered by the Government of India in consultation with the Standing Emigration Committee, the Government of Madras and their Agent in Ceylon. Although the rates recommended represented an advance upon existing rates of wages ordinarily paid to Indian estate labourers Ceylon, they did not appear to provide the required margin for savings, sickness and old age. They only seemed adequate to meet the current expenses of a labourer in accordance with the scales set forth in the family budgets prepared by the Agent of the Government of India in Ceylon and accepted by the Committee. The Government of India accordingly decided to suggest to the Ceylon Government that 10 per cent, should be added to the Committee's scale to provide the margin. This proposal was made to the Ceylon Government on the 21st January 1926, Meanwhile, the Planters' Association of Ceylon had brought forward proposals for setting up District Wages Boards, and the Colonial Government had suggested that their Controller of Indian immigrant Labour, Mr. T. Reid, C.C.S., should be deputed to Delhi to confer on the subject with the Government of India, accompanied by the Indian Emigration Agent. The latter proposal was -accepted.
- 5. Mr. Reid arrived at Delhi on the 2nd March 1926, and discussed the proposals made by the Government of India regarding the standard wage question. Certain other outstanding matters relating to the welfare of the Indian labour force in Ceylon were also discussed with him. On the wage question Mr. Reid put forward an alternative scheme on behalf of the Colonial Government. He claimed that the margin of 10 per cent, stipulated by the Government of India was approximately provided for in the difference between the standard wages which an adult labourer would earn under the scale of wages proposed by the Ceylon Committee of Inquiry and his actual cost of living, exclusive of that of dependents, calculated according to the budgets, adopted by them. The combined earnings and expenditure of an adult man and wife for the various typical tracts compared as follows:—

		 -				Earnings per mensem.	Expenditure per mensem.
						Rs.	Rs.
Low country .						21-6	19 57
Middle country	, ·•		•			22 32	20 55
Up country				٠,	.	2 128	21.40

He therefore urged that it remained only to make provision for non-working dependents and suggested that the requirements of the Government of India would be substantially met by the following concession in addition to wages:—

⁽a) An issue at the rate of one-eighth of a bushel of rice free every month to each working man; and

- (b) An issue of the same monthly to each widow with a non-working child.

 It was made clear that these free issues would be made to all qualified persons on the estate rolls whether they worked for a minimum number of days permonth or not. The cost to the planters of this concession was estimated at Rs. 30 lacs per annum.
- 6. Mr. Reid further stated that, in order to ensure that the initial rates of wages which would be fixed under statutory sanction on the above scale, should not be lowered in future without good cause, he was in a position to give an undertaking on behalf of his Government:—
 - (i) That the standard rates proposed by the Ceylon Government and including the additions referred to in (a) and (b) of paragraph 5 above, should not be varied in future except in harmony with variations in the labourers' cost of living as compared with such cost at the date of fixing standard wages.
 - (ii) That, should a serious emergency occur resulting in a demand for reduction of the above rates, and should the Ceylon Government desire to accede to such demand, the Ceylon Government would communicate their intention to the Indian Government and would undertake to effect no reduction in standard wages until the expiration of six months from the date of such communication of intention, save by the mutual consent of the two Governments.
 - (iii) That should the two Governments fail to come to some agreement regarding the proposed reduction of wages within the six months referred to, thereafter each Government would be free to take such action as it deemed necessary, without further consulting the wishes of the other Government.
- 7. The Government of India informed the Government of Ceylon on the 1st May 1926 that they were prepared to accept these proposals subject to certain conditions. For the words "as compared with such cost at the date of fixing standard wages proposed by Mr. Reid [see paragraph 6 (i) supra], they wished to substitute "as compared with the cost with reference to which standard wages were fixed." The idea was that the scale of standard wages actually fixed should, if necessary, take account of any upward movement in the cost of living which may have taken place since the Committee made their recommendations. The other conditions, which, it was understood, Mr. Reid was also prepared to recommend to the Government of Ceylon for acceptance, were:—
 - (a) The Government of India should have a reciprocal freedom of terminating the arrangement described above, in the event of circumstances arising which, in their opinion, justified an increase in wages over the existing standard rates and the Ceylon Government were not prepared to give the increase.
 - (b) Every Indian labourer should have a definite statutory option of working on standard time wages in lieu of piece work rates, if he so desired; and
 - (c) The new arrangement was brought into effect from the 1st January 1927 at the latest.

- 8. At the same time, the Government of India intimated to the Ceylon Government that the following subsidiary matters affecting the Indian labour force in Ceylon would require to be adjusted, if possible, simultaneously with the wage question:—
 - (a) Provision in the law for the full and regular payment to a labourer of all his earnings within a reasonable time;
 - (b) Improvement of existing arrangements for the health, accommodation and medical care of estate labourers;
 - (c) Increase of facilities for the proper education of their children;
 - (d) Prohibition of employment of children under 10 years of age; and
 - (e) Provision in law for the issue of rice of a prescribed quality and at a prescribed rate.
- 9. Intimation has now been received from the Government of Ceylon confirming in full the terms of the settlement arrived at with Mr. Reid. The Ordinance to give effect to the new arrangement has been prepared and will shortly be introduced. The Government of India have ascertained from their Agent that there has been no rise in the cost of living since the standard rates specified in paragraph 3 of this statement were proposed by the Ceylon Inquiry Committee nor is any such increase likely in the near future. They have, therefore, decided not to press for the acceptance of the verbal modification in the formula for varying rates of wage referred to in paragraph 7.
- 10. As regards the subsidiary points set forth in paragraph 8, the views of the Colonial Government are summarised below:—
 - (a) Payment of wages to Indian estate labourers.—It has been agreed to provide in law for the full and regular payment within a reasonable time and in any case not later than 10 days after the close of the month, of all earnings accruing to an Indian labourer under the conditions of his employment.
 - (b) Maternity benefits.—The Ceylon Committee of Enquiry recommended the continuance of the existing maternity benefits to female labourers. In a new "Medical Wants Ordinance," which the Ceylon Government propose to introduce soon provision has been made to improve existing benefits by prescribing that six measures of rice per week should be supplied free and a cash payment of Rs. 2 per week should be made to each female labourer giving birth to a child on an estate.
 - (c) Improvement of medical and housing arrangements.—The Government of India suggested that provision should be made in the Medical Wants Ordinance, requiring every estate with more than 750 Indians—men, women and children—to maintain a dispensary in charge of a trained apothecary and to employ a trained midwife. To avoid overcrowding in the lines on estates it was further proposed that provision should be made in the draft ordinance or elsewhere to improve the scale of accommodation for all labourers. The Government of Ceylon have expressed their agreement in general with these proposals and hope to give effect to them as expeditiously as circumstances permit.

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- (d) Educational facilities.—The Government of Ceylon have agreed to introduce legislation to prohibit the employment in estates of children under 10 years of age. In the meantime steps are being taken to increase the facilities for education on estates.
- (e) Issue of rice to Indian estate labourers.—The Government of Ceylon have undertaken to provide in the regulations to be issued under the Standard Wage Ordinance for the issue of rice of a prescribed quality and at a prescribed rate to Indian estate labourers to be made obligatory in law.
- 11. Settlement of minor details arising out of the various questions dealt with may possibly involve a slight delay in the introduction of the changes in regard to rates of wages and to other matters dealt with in the foregoing paragraphs. The Government of India have every hope, however, that the new arrangements will come into force soon after the beginning of 1927.

APPENDIX IV.

EXTRACT FROM THE JUDGMENT OF THE CHIEF COURT OF OUDH IN THE CRIMINAL APPEALS "RAM PRASAD AND OTHERS vs. KING EMPEROR," DELIVERED ON 22ND AUGUST 1927.

Before we consider the question of sentences, we propose to state in detail the findings, at which we have arrived upon the evidence. We find, that in the year 1924, certain persons in Bengal, amongst whom were Sachindra Nath Sanval and Jogesh Chandra Chatterii, entered into a conspiracy of a revolutionary nature. In furtherance of the aims of this conspiracy, Jogesh Chandra Chatterii came to the United Provinces to recruit and to organize the movement. One of the meetings at which the organization was discussed and developed was held at Shahjahanpur about July 1924. There may have been other meetings at other places in the United Provinces. This much is certain. After July 1924 the movement in the United Provinces took a concrete shape. The central organization remained in Bengal, whence the policy was directed and controlled. Considerable powers were delegated to a provincial organization, two important headquarters of which were in Shahjahappur and Benares. A meeting of this provincial organisation was held in some place in the United Provinces in October, 1924. Jogesh Chandra Chatterji was arrested in Calcutta, with the proceedings of this meeting in his possession. There may have been several other meetings of the provincial organization. The only other meeting which is proved to have taken place is the meeting at the residential quarters of Vishnu Saran Dublis in the Vaishya Orphanage in Meerut on the 13th and 14th September, 1925. It is not proved that there were activities in the United Provinces after the arrests of the 26th September, 1925.

The aims and methods of the conspirators are disclosed in a guarded manner in the "Revolutionary," and are disclosed specifically in the Rules of the Hindustan Republican Association. There is other evidence as to what these aims and methods were.

The ultimate aim is stated in the Rules as follows:---

"The object of the Association shall be to establish a Federated Republic of the United States of India by an organized and armed revolution."

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