

FACTORY LABOUR IN THE PUNJAB

Factory Labour in the Punjab

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WITH A FOREWORD BY

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Late Governor of the Punjab

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CONTENTS

CHAP.				PAGE
	PREFACE	vii
	FOREWORD	ix
I.	Introductory	1
II.	Factory-labour legislation in India		...	9
III.	The Factory-Labourer	...	...	35
IV.	Factories at Work	...	...	80
V.	Housing, Health and Home-life	...	...	119
VI.	The Supply of and Demand for Labour		...	134
VII.	Accidents and Compensation	...	...	146
VIII.	Trade-Unionism	...	...	164
IX.	Retrospect and Prospect	...	...	175
	APPENDIX A.—Statement of Wages		...	191
	" B.—Questionnaire for Family-budgets.			199
	" C.—Questionnaire for Factory-owners.			202
	GENERAL INDEX	...	...	205

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Carpet-weavers at work	...	...		<i>Frontispiece</i>
			PAGE	
Children in carpet-factories	...	...	...	22 (a)
Carpet-weavers	...	...	...	32 (a)
Master-weavers	...	...	...	46 (a)
The Gin woman	...	...	...	84 (a)
The Factory-labourer	...	...	...	98 (a)
The Beggar	...	...	...	136 (a)

PREFACE

An attempt is made in the following pages to study the economic condition of the factory-labourer in the Punjab. The ever-growing industrial unrest in the province has absorbed the attention of many and it is time that we should take stock of our economic position with a view to make or suggest further advances. Much of the material that appears in this book is based mainly on my personal investigations which I carried out both as an Industrial Investigator in the Punjab and as University Lecturer in Economics at Aligarh.

The book was submitted as a thesis for the Ph. D. degree of the London University in June, 1928, and is now published with a few alterations here and there. The pressure of University work and the preparation of a more comprehensive volume on Indian factory-labour have not enabled me to bring it up-to-date.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Mr. A. C. Subrahmanyam, Tutor in English, Annamalai University, who helped me considerably in reading the proofs and to Mr. P. K. Mahadevan, Tutor in Economics, Annamalai University, in taking upon himself the entire responsibility of preparing the index. Their work has been of the greatest value to me and, I hope, not valueless to them. I am also thankful to Dr. Gilbert Slater for taking a keen interest in this work and to Sir Edward Maclagan for adding a foreword to it. Last, but not the least, I am grateful to Sir Richard Burn, Sir John Maynard and Mrs. V. Anstey who carefully read the manuscript and helped me with many valuable suggestions.

Annamalainagar,
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AHMAD MUKHTAR.

FOREWORD

IN 1919 the Government of the Punjab appointed a Board of Economic Enquiry to serve as a centre for economic study and research outside the ordinary official channels. One of the happy results of this step was the selection by the Board of a few of the more promising local students of Economics to investigate economic problems in the province, and among the young men so selected in 1920 was Mr. Ahmad Mukhtar, the writer of the following thesis. Both as an Industrial Investigator under the Board, and subsequently as a teacher in the Aligarh University, he has kept himself abreast of economic problems in Northern India and has paid special attention to questions relating to industrial labour, supplementing his theoretical studies by frequent local and personal investigations, which give additional value to the opinions which he formulates.

The Punjab is not an industrial area and, so far as industrial legislation is concerned, development has hitherto followed the lines adopted for India at large and has been based on considerations which are common to India generally. The writer has accordingly examined the history of factory legislation in India and, in doing so, has taken the opportunity to dispel, on historical grounds, the common allegation that factory legislation in India was originally prompted, not by motives of humanity, but by the machinations of Manchester rivals. The treatise he has written is not polemical and there is much in what he says that makes one hope that, in the Punjab at least, the welfare of the factory population may be substantially advanced without the importation of political controversy. In the big strike of 1920, it was pitiful to see how the economic issues were obscured by the political and how the inevitable hardships endured by the strikers were prolonged by the encouragement of partisans who had quite other ends in view. The air has cooled since then, and it is to be hoped that the Ministers and the Legislators, with whom the supervision of industrial progress now rests,

will be able to enhance the welfare of the industrial classes without regard to extraneous considerations.

Their task will not in any case be an easy one. The problems dealt with in this treatise are not such as can be settled off-hand. The writer has, however, put forward in a thoroughly scholarly manner the historical basis and the economic data necessary for those who wish to approach the subject, and his own experiences and opinions provide food for earnest thought. The tentative legislation of 1881, 1891 and 1911 has been rapidly outclassed by the important measures of the last few years. We have now to cope not only with advanced opinion in Great Britain, but also with international pressure which is brought to bear on Great Britain and on India alike. Steps, which a few years ago seemed fanciful or ridiculous, are now accepted as essential, and still further proposals are put before us as ideals to which we shall soon attain. The enthusiast does not indeed have it all his own way. He has, of course, the financial interest, real and fancied, of the employers to contend with and he is confronted with the apathy of the official and comfortable classes—obstacles which tend to justify him in the discreet use of a certain amount of calculated exaggeration. At the same time, the industrial reformer is dealing with problems which cannot be isolated and which form part of issues extending far beyond the industrial sphere. Much that is emphasized in Mr. Ahmad Mukhtar's treatise—the importance of the inspecting staff, the bribery and oppression of the employers, the apathy and irregularity of the workmen, their illiteracy, their early marriages, their infant mortality, their insanitary surroundings and so forth—so far as it is true of the factory population, is equally, or almost equally, true of the population at large outside the factories. The problems, therefore, are in their essence much larger than mere factory problems. At the same time, the enthusiast can contend, and rightly contend, that the factories, while representing an epitome of the outside population, present a far more tangible and manageable field for experiment and for reform than the population at large, and indeed offer an opportunity for improvements which may, to some degree, influence the progress of the general community. As Mr. Ahmad Mukhtar has said in his

treatise, the three main obstacles with which we have to contend are poverty, disease and ignorance; and the contest against these, which may well enough appear hopeless in the country at large, becomes a more practicable proposition when we concentrate our efforts on the factory population.

Many of the points dealt with in the thesis are of a technical character and demand the consideration of experts. Many of the remedies suggested are such as would, a few years ago, have been looked on as startling. In some few cases, they may still be looked on as premature; but they have in every case been carefully thought out and are based on practical and sympathetic observation. The Punjab has been late in entering the industrial world and late in turning its attention to industrial problems; but it benefits from its opportunities of observing the development and the mistakes of other tracts and other countries, and it is not impossible, as indicated by Lord Chelmsford in his speech of 1920 which Mr. Ahmad Mukhtar has quoted, that the new start being made by India should in some respects at least be abreast of the most advanced European countries. If the treatise below can be utilized as providing the basis for a real advance in factory conditions, there is no reason why the Punjab should not become a model to other areas in the sphere so competently dealt with by the Author of the thesis.

188, West Hill; }
London: March, 1928. }

E. D. MACLAGAN



Carpet weavers at work

“No reform has yet been made in the sitting posture of the craftsmen while at work, although some means in this direction can be effectively employed”. (Page 32).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE Punjab is situated in the north-west of India. It takes its name from the five rivers (Punj=five, ab=water), which flow through it from north-east to south-west. The five rivers are the Sutlej, the Bias, the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jhelum. But the province lies roughly between the Jumna river on the east and the Indus river on the west. It is a wide stretch of plains lying almost directly at the foot of the Himalayas. Delhi formed part of it up to the 1st October, 1912, when it became the capital of India, forming a small province almost by itself.¹

The Punjab possesses a fair system of railway communications. The North-Western Railway main line from Karachi runs into the province from the extreme south-west. It sends forth several off-shoots at Samasata (Bahawalpur State). These run almost parallel with the great rivers touching another main line which connects Attock, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Ferozepore, Bhatinda and Delhi. Delhi and Lahore are also connected by a second main line which passes through Amritsar, Jullundur, Ludhiana and Ambala, almost following the Grand Trunk Road. These two main lines have several cross branches, and are linked up with the East Indian Railway and the Bombay-Baroda and Central India Railway which spread their net-work over the Central and South-Eastern Punjab. The Himalayan tract in the north-east is only served by the Kalka-Simla Railway. The Dera Ghazi Khan district and the Bahawalpur State East have no railways. The Western Punjab lacks transverse communication. The difficulties in bridging the rivers have thrown obstacles in the way of the establishment of railway lines from north-west to south-east. New schemes are under consideration. Some

¹This point is important and must be borne in mind when comparing statistics from the Punjab prior to 1912 with those after it.

railway lines are under construction and will be completed very soon.¹

The road communications are not satisfactory. The Grand Trunk Road passes through Karnal, Ambala, Ludhiana, Jullundur, Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwala, Jhelum and Rawalpindi, and is metalled throughout. It sends forth small metalled feeder roads throughout its length. There are numerous unmetalled roads but they are not useful for motor transport. In 1924-25, the Punjab possessed about 25,000 miles of roads (excluding village roads) of which 3,000 miles were metalled.

There are extremes of heat and cold on the plains in the Punjab. It is very cold at night in December, January and February, while the bright sunshine of those months stands diametrically opposed to the stuffy, smoky, foggy and damp climate of London during that period of the year. It is cool, refreshing and invigorating from mid-October to mid-March. April is pleasant in the shade. From May to September it is inordinately hot. The temperature in the shade then goes up to about 100° on an average, while it falls to 77° at night.

The thermometer records 70° on an average in the daytime in winter while the temperature comes down to about 44° at night in December and January. The following is the record of maximum and minimum temperatures for the Punjab in 1924² :—

—	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
Maximum	66.0	70.5	85.2	94.8	95.6	109.7	102.0	96.1
Minimum	42.5	48.4	57.1	67.2	69.8	81.8	83.2	80.2
—	September	October	November	December	Average for the whole year			
Maximum	91.5	91.5	80.8	69.4	87.8			
Minimum	74.2	63.3	50.6	46.4	63.8			

¹In 1919-20 the railway mileage in the Punjab extended to 4,441 ; there were then about 660 railway stations, or about one to every 50 villages and towns.

²Indian Weather Review—Annual Summary for 1924—Government of India Meteorological Department—Pages 110-111 (1926).

The Punjab is mainly an agricultural province. It is a country mostly of peasant proprietors, landholders and tenants. About one-half of the land in the Punjab is cultivated by the owners themselves.

The total population for the British Punjab comprises 20,685,024 people, and the area¹ in square miles is 99,846. The province ranks fifth in respect of total population in the whole of India as the following table² will show :—

Province (British territory only)	Population	Province (British territory only)	Population
1. Bengal	46,695,000	4. Bihar & Orissa	34,002,000
2. United Provinces	45,376,000	5. Punjab	20,685,000
3. Madras	42,319,000	6. Bombay	19,348,000

But it is very unfortunate in one respect. It is an acknowledged fact that industries tend to be localised near the raw materials and the main centres of transport. Coal³ produced

¹ British territory only.

² Punjab Census Report for 1921—Vol. 1—Page 26.

³ Coal is found in the salt-range of the Punjab. But it is not sufficient "to meet the demands of industries conducted on anything approaching modern lines." Report of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916-18)—Calcutta, 1918; Page 59.

The following figures give the production of coal in the Punjab from 1886 to 1925 (Statistics of British India—Commercial Statistics—Vol. 1, Calcutta, 1922; Page 88 for years 1886 to 1915 and Statistical Abstract for British India—1927—for years 1916 to 1925; Page 658)

Year	(average)	Tons, Quantity	Value, Rs.
1886—1890		16,000	...
1891—1895	do.	69,000	...
1896—1900	do.	83,000	...
1901—1905	do.	55,000	...
1906—1910	do.	55,000	...
1911—1915	do.	46,000	...
1916	...	47,449	3,27,395
1917	...	49,869	3,76,192
1918	...	50,418	5,70,281
1919	...	46,893	5,53,012
1920	...	58,078	7,10,743
1921	...	67,242	9,98,062
1922	...	67,180	9,98,690
1923	...	63,501	6,34,502
1924	...	80,422	7,00,681
1925	...	74,662	6,13,124

It must be remembered that the total quantity produced in British India in 1925 was 19,989,241 tons, its value in rupees being 12,10,35,228.

in the Punjab is rather inferior in quality and is found in the west. Iron appears in the north and oil¹ has recently been discovered in the north-west. Thus, these three raw materials lie far apart from one another thereby retarding the growth of industries.

Again, the Punjab is completely landlocked. It is bounded on three sides by thinly populated tracts. The United Provinces of Agra and Oudh lie on the fourth side and possess natural resources similar to those of the Punjab. Thus, her manufactured goods can cater to the demand either of her own people or of the foreigners. Her distant position from the sea acts as a tariff barrier against competitive imports. On the other hand, this factor is detrimental in as much as she is at a disadvantage with her rivals in foreign markets. The enormous freights stimulates production for local requirements and checks the export of bulky commodities meant for consumption abroad. There is, however, one remarkable redeeming feature. Water-power² appears in the Himalayas and can be

¹Report of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916-18)—Calcutta 1918—page 59. "There is no possibility of estimating the prospects of oil production and it would therefore be unwise to rely on this form of fuel to make up for the depletion of our coal supplies. The serious economic value of the oil-bearing areas in the Punjab is still far from being established as a commercial proposition".

The following figures relate to the production of petroleum in the Punjab from 1916 to 1925 (Statistical Abstract for British India—1927—Page 662) :—

Year.	Quantity (Gallons)	Value (Rupees)
1916 ...	183,814	... 18,456
1917 ...	619,517	... 77,525
1918 ...	750,807	... 75,129
1919 ...	114,330	... 14,361
1920 ...	51,492	... 9,708
1921 ...	60,236	... 15,087
1922 ...	7,862,315	... 18,40,579
1923 ...	11,805,010	... 29,51,252
1924 ...	11,383,440	... 28,45,860
1925 ...	8,047,200	... 20,11,800

It will be of interest herein to note that the total quantity produced in Burma, Assam and the Punjab was 289,606,542 gallons in 1925, its value in rupees being 10,29,51,666.

² Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, (1916-18)—Calcutta, 1918—Page 30 :—"The possibilities of the Punjab are, it is true, mainly agricultural .

productively utilized. Hydro-electric schemes are now afoot and, if successful, may give the province industrial and commercial advantages unsurpassed in the whole of India.

The industrial revolution has already taken a foothold in the Punjab. Large-scale production, a necessary consequence of the introduction of machinery, has been accompanied by centralization and monopolization of control in the hands of a few. It produced some disastrous results in the West and it is already apparent that this will be the experience of the Punjab. "The tramp", says Mr. Henry George¹, "comes with the locomotive, and almshouses and prisons are as surely the marks of material progress as are costly dwellings, rich warehouses, and magnificent churches". He further says, "The association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. It is the central fact from which spring industrial, social and political difficulties that perplex the world, and with which statesmanship and philanthropy grapple in vain".

Such ugly features alarm us and it is our duty to see that the evil economic aspects of industrial revolution are combated vigorously in the Punjab—nay, in the whole of India. We enjoy an enviable position in one respect. Before us lies the industrial history of the great powers of the world, of the battles they fought, of the reverses they suffered and of the victories they won. We can profit by their experience and take safer steps as we proceed.

The recent Punjab strikes unmistakably reveal that our economic organism is very far from being perfect. The average wage-earner's position is pitiable. He labours under several drawbacks. He is illiterate. The power and value of organisation are but faintly known to him.

¹ Henry George: *Progress and Poverty* (New Work, 1880); Pages 7 & 9.

But its industries are growing and are spread over many districts. This province possesses special advantages in respect of water power which are bound to tell in the future and its people exhibit a natural aptitude for engineering."

The Indian Tariff Board in its report on the grant of protection to paper and paper-pulp industries in India in the year 1925 intimated that the conditions were very favourable for the manufacture of paper from the Sabai grass in the Punjab (Jagadhri).

FACTORY LABOUR IN THE PUNJAB

Factory labourers are on the increase year after year. They numbered 52,648 in 1926, whereas there were only 25,689

Year	Total No. of Operatives. Average daily	Males		Females	
		Adults	Children	Adults	Children
1926	52,648	43,921	872	7,683	172
1925	53,533	44,566	1,072	7,791	104
1924	50,842	43,657	926	6,204	55
1923	49,110	41,995	1,467	5,551	97
1922	46,588	39,666	1,473	5,283	100
1921	42,428	36,706	975	4,692	55
1920	42,506	36,373	1,093	4,902	138
1919	39,066	32,573	1,033	5,251	203
1918	35,829	30,758	759	4,171	141
1917	31,964	27,818	857	3,211	78
1916	31,948	27,149	968	3,785	96
1915	29,720	25,518	931	3,098	173
1914	31,243	26,362	940	3,749	192
1913 ¹	31,709	27,053	725	3,864	67
1912	32,865	28,280	773	3,739	73
1911	28,184	24,034	673	3,456	21
1910	29,626	24,804	831	3,591	40
1909	28,679	23,643	945	3,885	206
1908	25,689	21,467	1,067	3,073	82

labourers in 1908. The above table classifies adults and children, both men and women, separately.

It will not be out of place to give below a list of registered factories² in 1926.³

I. Government and Local Fund Factories :—

(1)	Army and Railway Clothing	...	...	2
(2)	Electrical Engineering and Transforming Stations...	...	...	5
(3)	Forage Presses	...	...	1
(4)	Foundries	...	...	2
(5)	Gas Works	...	...	1

¹Since 1913, Delhi has been excluded. In 1912 there were 12 registered factories in Delhi employing 2,308 labourers on an average every day. In 1913 the number of factories remained stationary, whereas the average daily number of labourers decreased to 1,981. In 1914, the number of factories increased from 12 to 18 mainly owing to the inclusion of some factories which had previously been omitted from the list. The total number of labourers also rose to 2,539.

²For the definition of the word 'Factory' please see the next chapter.

³Annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act, 1911 in the Punjab for the year 1926—Pages iv to viii.

INTRODUCTORY

7

(6)	Ordnance Factories	...	...	...	4
(7)	Printing Presses	...	...	...	5
(8)	Railway Workshops	...	...	...	9
(9)	Saw Mills	...	...	...	1
(10)	Tanneries	...	...	...	1
(11)	Water Pumping Stations	...	...	...	3
(12)	Miscellaneous	...	...	...	6
Total...					40

II. All other Factories :—

(1)	Textiles	...	...	...	6
(2)	Engineering	...	...	...	14
(3)	Minerals and Metals	...	...	...	30
(4)	Food, Drink and Tobacco	...	...	...	63
(5)	Chemicals, Dyes, etc.	...	...	...	10
(6)	Printing	...	...	...	31
(7)	Processes relating to Wood, Stone, etc. (Saw mills, etc.)	...	...	...	9
(8)	Tanneries	...	...	...	2
(9)	Gins and Presses	...	...	...	342
(10)	Miscellaneous	...	...	...	1
Total...					508
Grand Total...					548

No reliable figures regarding the number of factories before 1897 are available.¹ Cotton ginning factories vary in importance from year to year: their number depends more or less on the vagaries of the seasons. Again, flour mills are abundant in the Punjab mainly because it happens to be a great wheat market.

In 1926,² cotton ginning and baling, which is a seasonal industry, employed 20,950 workers. The railway workshops came next with 13,895 operatives. The printing presses and textile factories engaged 3,031 and 3,027 persons respectively, while the flour mills gave employment to 1,326 wage-earners. These figures do not take note of a large number of workers who are employed in unregistered carpet factories, tanneries, sports

¹The annual reports on the working of factories in the Punjab prior to the year 1897 are available neither in the India Office, nor in the Punjab Government Secretariat, Lahore.

²Annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act, 1911 in the Punjab for the year 1926—Pages viii to xi.

and furniture works. It is estimated that labourers in carpet factories alone are not less than 2,225.

It should be borne in mind that workers in Government and local fund factories come to an important figure. They numbered 19,453 out of a total of 52,648 in 1926.

Initial attempts at legislation to safeguard their interests have been made by the Government of India. Chapter II deals with the genesis and history of Indian factory legislation. The succeeding chapters aim at a close study of the economic condition of factory workers in the Punjab, the nature of their employment, their houses and environments and all those factors which retard or promote their economic interests in life. Suggestions for possible avenues of improvements are made where necessary and practicable.

CHAPTER II

FACTORY-LABOUR LEGISLATION IN INDIA

THE progress of factory-labour legislation in India took the slow course of trial and error. There was a time when it was held to be exceedingly harmful both in the interests of employers and employees. Experience has shown that the legislative enactments in the cause of Indian labour have proved very beneficial. It is often difficult to determine what particular interests take the lead in fostering labour legislation in a country. In England and the United States of America, it was the humanitarian who was first fired to activity in the cause of helpless labourers. There, the genesis of labour legislation is clear enough. Much controversy has, however, centred round this point in India. It would be advisable to begin with a critical survey of the whole movement.

It was in 1874 that the first mention of capitalistic enterprises in relation to Indian labour appeared almost simultaneously in India and England. The Administration Report of the Cotton Department, Bombay, for the year 1872-73 was drawn up by Major Moore, the then Inspector-in-Chief, and contained an account of the condition of local mills. It was said that the poorer classes derived much benefit from them but that they were subject to some serious disadvantages. The hours of labour were unduly long and tiring. The work was very fatiguing in nature and women and children were yoked to their hard task without a weekly day of rest. Major Moore further added¹:—

“The physical wear and tear of the employed must, therefore, be serious and considerable, whilst it is useless to expect that greater consideration will be shown to the female and juvenile hands by the mill-owner, husband, or parent in this country,

¹Administration Report of the Cotton Department, Bombay, for the year 1872-73, page 6.

than has been established by and towards the same classes at home. In Great Britain, the legislature has found it imperatively necessary to fix the minimum of age and the maximum of hours for the employ of the above classes and, doubtless, they will shortly be so legislated for in this country; especially when it is considered that the women and children labour under the double disadvantage of a far weaker physique and a far less favourable climate . . .”

A letter from the Calcutta correspondent of the ‘London Times’¹ appeared in its issue of the 7th August, 1874. The writer, after describing the advances in manufacturing enterprises in India, concluded with the following remarks:—

“But it is on the labouring and lower agricultural classes that these new enterprises are telling alike for evil and for good. For evil, in as much as comparatively high wages, the employment of women, the Sunday holiday and the frequent grog shop combine to demoralise a class, destitute of education and moral training, or restraints of any kind. But, on the whole, the influence is for good. All the competition for the labour of these numerous factories within a restricted area has not yet appreciably raised the rate of wages. The factories . . . have been lately acting as preventives of famines, both by the wages they give to thousands of men, women and boys, and by the rice which they sell at a low rate in these times of scarcity. The time must come when factory laws will be necessary for the protection of both the labourers’ and the employers’ interests.”

Then followed Mr. Alexander Redgrave, H. M. Inspector of Factories, who, in his report for 1874, wrote²:—

“We see a cotton industry springing up in India extending with rapid strides and it behoves us to inquire whether that industry is carried on upon the old lines of the Cotton Manufacturer here; and if it is so carried on, as is the common report, by factories working 14 hours a day, it is well that legislation should step in while the industry is, so to speak, in its infancy and by wise and moderate regulations stop the growth of habits of long hours and of the employment of child labour . . .

¹ London Times, 7th August, 1874, page 3, column 3.

² Great Britain Parliamentary Papers 1875—Vol. 16—c. 1184—Page 30.

It is clear that this is a progressive industry and looking to what factory legislation has achieved in this country, may we not hope that the native workers of India may be spared the ordeal which our cotton operatives went through in former days, and that they may be permitted to enjoy the blessings of moderate labour, of ample time for rest and meals and of protection to children of tender years."

Academic discussions ensued. Mr. Helms read a paper on "the growth of the factory system in India" on the 7th May, 1875, at the Society of Arts' rooms in London. The main contents of the paper and the discussions that followed brought out the immense manufacturing possibilities that awaited India. But a timely warning was given by Mr. Robert H. Elliott in his letter to the 'London Times' in September, 1875. He said¹:—

" . . . The state of the case simply is that a population of about 250,000,000 people, who are content with wages at about 6d a day propose to manufacture more extensively and cheaply than a population of 30,000,000 with labour at, say, about 3 shillings . . . In conclusion, let me add that other English and also European manufacturers must be similarly affected by the competition with the cheap labour of the East; and, unless some unlooked for convulsions should arise, it is plain that all the wool of the Cape and our Australian colonies will one day be made up in India for exportation to Europe . . . "

These extracts show how the condition of Indian labour was slowly coming into prominence. The people who had thus far interested themselves in the affairs of India were in no way connected with Lancashire: at least no such charge was ever brought against them. They were moved to action from mere philanthropy and their anxiety to broadcast the inhuman conditions of Indian labour brought several humanitarians into the field.

The movement for factory reform was humanitarian in origin. But, from this stage onwards, it assumed a complex form. It is regrettable to note that the educated people of India have shown no desire to make an impartial study of the question

¹ 'The Times,' London, September 22, 1875—page 6, column 4.

and to shake off some of the exploded ideas of the past. Let us trace this history further and see how, if at all, it was influenced in its different stages.

An import duty of 5 per cent *ad valorem* on all articles including cotton goods had been in existence in India under the rule of the East India Company. This was raised to 10 per cent after 1857 but was reduced to 7½ per cent in 1864. The Lancashire manufacturers had made successive attempts to obtain its entire abolition. Representations were made to Lord Salisbury, the then Secretary of State for India, as a result of which Lord Northbrook, then Viceroy of India, was asked to give the whole question a favourable consideration. As this agitation for the repeal of the cotton duty was going on, the Press astounded the world by revealing the startling condition of labourers working in Indian factories. The commercial interests soon took up the cudgels on behalf of Indian workers as, they thought, their competition was unfair and would prejudicially affect their interests. And as Lancashire's words were always looked upon as inimical to the interests of India, their representations on behalf of Indian workers could not naturally be interpreted in their true light. Thus, the whole agitation was regarded in India as a veiled conspiracy of Lancashire to cripple Indian industries.

This was but natural. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with commercial bitterness and hatred, and a reasoned and conscientious view of the situation could not be expected at the time. But the prevailing opinion that any intervention with Indian labour conditions, prompted by the commercial interests of Great Britain, was bad, was not held universally. Dr. T. M. Nair's minute of dissent to the Indian Factory Labour Commission Report of 1908 gives an impartial view of the question. He says:—

“ In spite of some attempts made in certain quarters to draw the Lancashire red herring across the track of the Factory Commission, I never deviated from my fixed purpose of investigating things at first hand and of forming my opinions on the strength of what I saw and heard, rather than trusting to external inspirations to guide me in my inquiries. To me, personally, there

was no incentive to take any step which would, even to the smallest degree, handicap the industries of my native country in competition with Lancashire and Japan. But however much I, as a native of India, may be opposed to the influence of Lancashire in questions closely relating to the manufacturing interests of India, I cannot but admit that the result of Lancashire's interference has, on some occasions at least, been of considerable benefit to the Indian industries. The protection which factory women and children at present enjoy under the law, they owe, to a large extent, to Lancashire. The many abuses which we found to exist in connection with factory labour in India are certainly not of Lancashire's creation . . . Abuses are abuses whether they are pointed out by friends or foes."¹

It is a fact that abuses in Indian factories had attained huge proportions. The philanthropists and humanitarians were soon roused to a consciousness of their duty and commenced an agitation for the legal protection of Indian labourers. Lancashire utilised this agitation to secure a fair field of competition with India. Their participation gave a different colour to the movement for the superficial observer who began to look upon it as selfish and hostile.

There is one aspect of this controversy which should never be lost sight of. The Lancashire manufacturers were far ahead of their contemporaries in India in 1875 and had come to realise the importance which labour was daily acquiring. Labour was gaining force year after year and the first step to secure international consideration for it dates back to 1881. In that year, the Swiss Government made an attempt, although without success, to enlist the help and co-operation of other governments in this matter. The trend of events was nevertheless apparent. Labour problems were growing from a national to an international importance and it was clear that the unwholesome labour conditions of India would cast their evil influence not only upon their own country but upon the English and other workers as well.

Indian labour legislation has largely been passed as the result of international conferences. The Berlin Conference of

¹Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission (1907-08) ; London, 1908 ; Page 81. Minute of Dissent by Dr. Nair.

1890 was greatly instrumental in the amendment of the Indian Factory Act in 1891. Again, the Washington Labour Conference of 1919 was influenced in one of its conventions regarding prohibitions of night work for young persons by the Berne Draft Convention of 1913, and it has been largely responsible for moulding the course of labour legislation in our country.

While Lancashire's representations have been attributed to ill-will, Indians themselves have appealed to her for support and help for the workers in India. And, after all, what right have we to attribute motives to Lancashire when similar representations from English Trade-Unionists on behalf of Indian workers have been made at the instance of Indians themselves? In 1919, a memorial signed by Messrs. S. Saklatwala, K. S. Bhat and some Englishmen was submitted to the Right Hon'ble E. S. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, protesting against the proposed scheme for working-class houses in the city of Bombay as expounded and supported in the Bombay Legislative Council's meeting held on the 18th September, 1919 by H. E. Sir George Lloyd.

Only recently (1927), a deputation consisting of two members was sent out to India by the Workers' Welfare League of India in London to make a first-hand study of the condition of labour in this country. This will be very useful as a close study of Indian labour will create a solidarity in the interests of labouring classes both in England and in India.

At the outset Miss Carpenter, the renowned English philanthropist in India, played her glorious role faithfully and well. She invited the attention of the Secretary of State for India to the condition of Indian factories and urged governmental intervention on behalf of the workers.

The discussion on factory legislation in India was first taken up in the House of Commons on the 8th February, 1875, when Mr. Anderson (Glasgow) asked the Under-Secretary of State for India "if he is aware that an extensive factory system is growing up in India without any government supervision for the protection and health of the women and children employed; whether his attention has been drawn to statements that these women and children are systematically worked for sixteen hours

a day, and in many cases even including Sundays; and, whether the Indian Government will adopt some such factory legislation as we have in this country for the prevention of such evils before they attain greater proportions?"¹ Lord George Hamilton replied that representations had been received on the subject which was engaging the careful attention of the Secretary of State.

On the 30th July, 1875, the Earl of Shaftesbury, a great philanthropist and a vehement supporter of factory legislation in his own country, took up the case of Indian factory legislation in the House of Lords. He invited the attention of the Secretary of State to Mr. Redgrave's report and added:—

"Such interference proceeds from no jealousy of the rising trade of India—on the contrary, we rejoice at the growth of this trade; but we wish, while the system is yet young, to save India from all the difficulties and complications to which we have been subject in England. Nor am I stating my own view of the necessity of remedies. The natives are as anxious for interference as we are. My noble friend (the Marquess of Salisbury) shakes his head. Perhaps the masters in India are not anxious; I am speaking of the operatives and the children. I have been reading the Journal of the National Indian Association for the present month and they begin by rejoicing that a Commission of Inquiry has been issued... There is also a commercial view to this question. We must bear in mind that India has the raw material and cheap labour and, if we allow the manufacturers there to work their operatives sixteen or seventeen hours and put them under no restrictions, we are giving them a very unfair advantage over the manufacturers of our own country, and we might be undersold, even in Manchester itself, by manufactured goods imported from the East."²

The Marquess of Salisbury, in his reply, dilated upon the difficulties and remarked that the Earl of Shaftesbury was too sanguine when he said that the Indians welcomed the measure. "That is the precise difficulty with which we have to contend. There may be some persons who see the thing in the light in

¹Hansard's Parliamentary Debates—III series—February and March, 1875, 75.

²Hansard's Parliamentary Debates—III series—July and August, 1875, 211.

which we see it; but generally this proposal to limit the hours of factory labour is looked upon as a great conspiracy for the purpose of promoting the interests of Manchester manufacturers. There is no subject more commonly discussed, and writers in the native journals dwell on the wickedness of the English who are trying to stifle native manufacturers in India under the guise of philanthropy. I am, therefore, glad that my noble friend is coming forward in this matter for his philanthropy is, at all events, above suspicion . . . "1.

There is one point which I must emphasise once again at this stage. The people of India were largely illiterate in the nineteenth century. The factory-labourers lived in a semi-servile condition and were thus unconscious of their own importance in life. On the other hand, the factory-owners belonged to the educated classes and were naturally the first to realise the situation and raise a hue and cry. It was Miss Carpenter who first organised the agitation for reform in India and carried it in the face of several difficulties.

Meanwhile, the Secretary of State for India drew the attention of the Bombay Government to the grave abuses existing in the textile mills. A Commission was thereupon appointed by the latter on the 23rd March, 1875. Its personnel consisted of the following:—

- (1). F. F. Arbuthnot Esq., Collector of Bombay—President.
- (2). Hon'ble J. K. Bythel of Messrs. Gaddum & Co. (Director of New Berar Company)
- (3). Sir Munguldas Nathoobhoy, Kt., C. S. I (late Chairman of the Bombay United Spinning and Weaving Company)
- (4). Dr. T. Blaney.
- (5). Hon'ble Rao Sahib Vishwanath N. Mandlik (Vakil of the High Court).
- (6). H. Maxwell Esq., of Messrs. W. Nicol and Company (Director of the Prince of Wales Spinning and Weaving Company).

¹Hansard's Parliamentary Debates—III series—July and August, 1875, 211.

- (7). G. A. Kittredge Esq. (Messrs Stearns, Hobart and Company).
- (8). Morarjee Goculdas Esq. (Director of the Morarjee Goculdas Spinning and Weaving Company).
- (9). Dinshaw Manockjee Petit Esq. (Chairman of the Albert Spinning and Weaving Company).

It should be noted that all the Commissioners,¹ with the exception of the President and Dr. Blaney, represented the employer class. Mr. Kittredge left for England on the the 12th March, 1875, and consequently resigned his post as a Commissioner. The Commission was called upon to inquire into, and report on, the prevailing condition and system of management in the factories in Bombay and its vicinity with a view to rendering labour legislation feasible. It held ten meetings and inquired into the general working of factories, with a particular reference to the following:—

- (1) Dangers from machinery and the necessity for safeguards.
- (2) Working hours.
- (3) Factory children and their ages.
- (4) Holidays.
- (5) Ventilation.
- (6) Sanitary condition.
- (7) Education of factory children.
- (8) The necessity of factory legislation.

²The results of the inquiry of the Commission may be thus stated:—

“(1) As a rule, all the machinery is protected, but some portions may not be sufficiently protected. All the witnesses concur that protection of machinery is both necessary and desirable.

¹Dr. Blaney wrote in 1878:—“Mr. Arbuthnot, the Chairman and I were in favour of legislation, the other members were averse to it; but they were all pecuniarily interested in the local mill industry.” *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, April 4, 1879—354.

²Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Governor of Bombay in Council to inquire into the condition of operatives in the Bombay factories in 1875—Bombay, 1875—Page 2.

"(2) Eight years appears to be the general age given as that of the youngest children employed in the mills, but some witnesses have stated their age to be as young as five or six years.

"(3) The hours of work are stated to be from sunrise to sunset, with half an hour for rest in the middle of the day. In the longest days of the year, this would give about 13 hours of work a day, including the half-hour rest. In the shortest days, it would give about 11 hours. The children appear to be on the premises all the time alternately working and resting.

"(4) There are no fixed number of holidays for any factory during the year. One closes every Sunday in the year; others every other Sunday, and others still one Sunday in the month. In addition, native holidays are given. On an average, the factories work from 300 to 320 days in the year from sunrise to sunset.

"(5) The health of the operatives is stated to be good.

"(6) The ventilation in some factories is better than in others, and the Commission is of opinion that it has not received the attention it deserves from many of the owners.

"(7) Gratuitous schooling is given in a small way in two of the factories, but in none of the others.

"(8) On the question of the necessity of legislation the witnesses are divided but, on the whole, they may be considered as giving their evidence in favour of a simple and plain enactment dealing fairly with the subject and not entering into too much detail."

The Commissioners themselves were not unanimous in their recommendations. The Chairman and Dr. Blaney favoured legislation to be applied to the whole of India fixing hours of work of children and providing for the proper fencing of machinery.

Upon the receipt of the report of the Commission, further inquiries were made from the Collectors of Broach and Surat. Sufficient evidence was not forthcoming to strengthen the hands of the Government in introducing labour legislation and the Governor of Bombay refused to take any action in the matter.

He was of opinion that legislation would do more harm than good.

And now occurred the crisis. The Hon'ble Mr. Sorabjee Shapurjee Bengalee started a fresh agitation for factory-legislation. He drafted a Bill and sent it on to the Governor of Bombay in April, 1878. The Bombay Legislative Council, by a majority, considered that Mr. Bengalee had not succeeded in making out a case even for limited legislation. Consequently, the Governor-General of India refused to adopt the Bill.

Mr. Bengalee was however firm as a rock. This time he changed his tactics and appealed to Manchester for help. In a letter to John Croft, 86 Major Street, Manchester, he says¹:—

“ . . . I have, therefore, no remedy left but to try what can be done through English influence which, as a matter of course, is so potent with our governing classes . . . ”

If there was any doubt about the healthy effect of the movement for factory-legislation in India, the letter of Mr. Bengalee sets it at rest. Lancashire's influence was useful and even the humanitarians, like Mr. Bengalee and others, had to make use of the commercial force to gain their ends. Mr. Bengalee's appeal was successful. Several letters appeared in the 'London Times' in 1878² from persons experienced in Indian affairs and almost all of them denounced the prevalent conditions in Indian factories. The Earl of Shaftesbury was up once again. On the 4th April, 1879, he moved in the House of Lords³:—

“That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to instruct the Viceroy of India to take into immediate consideration the necessity of passing a law for regulating the labour of women and children in the mills and factories throughout Her Dominions in India.”

Viscount Cranbrook assured the noble Earl of the earnest

¹ 'London Times,' Friday, September 13th, 1878, page 10, column 1.

² 'London Times,' 18th September, 1878; 23th September, 1878; also October 1st, 1878, and October 3rd, 1878.

³ Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, April 4th, 1879, 349.

desire of the Indian Government to legislate for Indian factory workers. Upon this, the motion was withdrawn.

The draft Bill of the Government of India was based on Mr. Bengalee's Bill. It received the approval of all the local governments, and was introduced in the Legislative Council of the Governor-General of India on the 17th October, 1879. It was passed into an Act in 1881. It was applicable to all manufacturing premises using mechanical power, employing not less than 100 persons and working more than four months in the year. The employers were debarred from taking children below the age of seven. Children between seven and twelve were not to work for more than nine hours (actual) on any one day. They were also to have four holidays in every month. Adult labour was left to the mercy of free competition.

But it was soon discovered that the Factory Act of 1881 was inadequate to meet the situation. The children and women were not sufficiently protected. The sanitary conditions of factories were faulty. Ventilation was defective and machinery was in cases left unprotected. The Bombay Government in 1884 set up a Commission under the presidency of Mr. Mulock to consider the case for further legislation for Bombay. A Medical Committee was also appointed by them to report on the general health and conditions of mill-operatives. Its report was placed before the Mulock Commission for consideration.

The Commission were unanimously of opinion that any legislation in the interests of operatives should embrace the whole of British India. Following the lines of England, it was held that the labour of adult males should not be interfered with. The Commission unanimously came to the conclusion that no child should be allowed to work on any day before 7 a.m. or after 5 p.m. It was similarly resolved that women should not be employed before 6 a.m. or after 6 p.m. on any day. Both women and children were to enjoy an hour's interval for food and rest. The weekly holiday was also recommended for both women and children. The Commission was further of opinion that no factory ought to employ any child below the age of nine and that full time labour should not be exacted until the age of 14. It was also held that all factories in which ten or more than ten

women and children were employed and in which steam, water or other mechanical power was used, or where manual labour was exercised, should be brought under the operation of the Factory Act.

A separate note was appended to the report by Mr. S. S. Bengalee and Dr. Thomas Blaney, who laid great stress on protection to adult males in the matter of a weekly day of rest. They believed in a weekly holiday for all labourers, male or female, in addition to native holidays.

The report of the Mulock Commission was still under consideration when a memorandum from Mr. Jones (sometime Inspector of Factories, Bombay) appearing in the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Factories in the United Kingdom for the year 1886-87 created a sensation in England. It was alleged therein that the Bombay operatives were largely overworked, that the machinery was mostly unguarded, that the mill-managers were inefficient and sometimes withheld wages from their workmen and that many factories were inadequately ventilated.

Manchester showed uneasiness once again and petitioned the Secretary of State for uniformity of legislation in England and India, and suggested the appointment of another commission to inquire into the labour conditions of the country. The Government of India welcomed the idea and forthwith appointed a Commission (1890) with Major A. S. Lethbridge as its President.

The Commission visited Ahmedabad, Bombay, Cawnpore and Calcutta. It held 28 meetings, visited 34 factories and examined 96 operatives. It was of opinion that¹—

(1) "the limitation of the hours of work for women to 11 per day was, generally speaking, proper and sufficient. Exception was to be made in the case of women already working on moving machinery. Mr. S. S. Bengalee entirely disagreed with this exception;

(2) "there should be no separate class recognised by law as 'young persons' and that this difficulty should be met by raising the maximum age of children to 14;

¹Parliamentary Papers, 1890—91; Vol. 59; Pages 6-16. H. of C. Paper 86.

(3) "the extreme half-time work of a child must be fixed at $6\frac{3}{4}$ hours a day;

(4) "a weekly day of rest should be fixed for adult males;

(5) "there is nothing in the conditions under which Indian operatives work which calls for any legislative restrictions as to the hours an adult male may choose to work. Nor can we conceive any conditions which can ever call for state interference; and

(6) "between the hours of 12 and 1 p. m. every factory not working on the shift system and not obliged, for technical reasons, to work continuously, should be required to stop its machinery for full thirty minutes".

The Commissioners were greatly impressed with the manifold advantages which were likely to accrue to India from her industrial development and were of opinion that the steps taken to cope with the situation must be cautious and tentative. Many of the conclusions of the Factory Commission of 1890 were embodied in the new Factory Bill which was forthwith placed before the Governor-General in Council for consideration. The Bill was also influenced by the Berlin International Labour Conference of 1890 which was held to consider, amongst other things, Sunday labour, child labour, labour for youths and female labour.

At this stage, the Blackburn and District Incorporated Chamber of Commerce protested against the inadequate measures in the new Bill. An extract from their note dated the 6th February, 1890, addressed to the Secretary of State for India, will be very suggestive¹:

" . . . On fully considering the matter, it was found that great discrepancies appeared between the new Factory Act for India and the Factory Acts in force in England. The age at which a child becomes an adult in England is 14 years, whereas, according to the projected Indian Act, a child is to be considered an adult at about 12 years. The age below which a child in England is not allowed to work in mills is fixed by law at 10 years, whereas in India it is proposed to fix the age at nine years. The

¹ Parliamentary Papers, 1890—91; Paper 120—East India Factory Act.—Vol. 59, Pages 3 and 4.



“Children of ages varying from six years and upward are employed as apprentices and are kept in the workrooms all day alternately working and resting.” (Page 32).

hours worked by a child in England have been fixed at 5 hours whereas in India it is proposed to fix them at nine hours. The Indian Act proposes to fix four days' holidays or absence per month for women, whereas $1\frac{1}{2}$ days a week are allowed in England . . . This Chamber takes the earliest opportunity to express its alarm and disappointment at the proposed measure, and earnestly begs to draw the attention of the Secretary of State to the above grave discrepancies between the proposed new Indian Factory Act and the Factory Acts ruling in England, and craves that the Act now before the legislative council in India may receive further and fuller consideration."

The Under Secretary of State for India thus replied under date 26th February, 1890¹:—

"I am directed by the Secretary of State for India in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter . . . When the Bill, which has been laid before the Indian Legislature, reaches Viscount Cross, the remarks of the Chamber will be carefully considered by His Lordship in Council".

It is interesting to observe that no Local Government, except Bombay, advocated any amendment in the existing Act.² The Bill came up for consideration and diverse opinions were held about it. Mr. (afterwards Sir) Philip Hutchins clearly expressed the views of the Government of India. He said³:—

"I confidently assert that the Government of India would never consent to promote a Bill which would involve the sacrifice of the true interests of Indian manufacturers, or of the persons engaged in those industries, whether as mill-owners or operatives.

¹Parliamentary Papers 1890—91; Vol. 59—Paper 120—Despatches relating to the Amendment of the East India Factory Act—Page 4.

²The Punjab Government was in favour of the continuation of the Act of 1881. An extract from a letter by the Punjab Government to the Government of India dated the 29th October, 1888 (Parliamentary papers—Session 1889—Vol. 58, Paper 124, Page 48) will be useful herein:—

"There are at present very few factories within the meaning of the Act in the Punjab and the system of appointing magistrates of districts to be inspectors of factories has hitherto worked well in this province. . . .

"His Honour desires me to add that he does not consider it necessary, so far as this province is concerned, to modify the Act in the direction of stringency, or to legislate for the restriction of the hours of labour in the case of women and children, or for requiring managers of factories to grant one holiday in every seven days. In the Punjab there is at present no danger of factory hands being over-

Our sole desire is to do what is best for India, and quite independently of any outside pressure, we consider that the Bill is in itself good for India”

At this time some of the factory-operatives also woke up. The Hon'ble Mr. Nowrojee N. Wadia presented a petition to His Excellency the Governor-General of India signed by about 17,000 operatives employed in spinning and weaving mills in the city of Bombay.¹ It was said, “that in as much as it is necessary for the common interests of mill-owners and your petitioners alike that there ought to be a complete cessation of work every seventh day in a week, it should be enacted by law that factory hands be allowed one day of rest in a week. And, in as much as Sunday is universally admitted to be practically the most convenient day, Sunday might be declared by law to be the day of weekly rest”

The Factory Amendment Bill had created great anxiety amongst English manufacturers. Great pressure was brought to bear on the Secretary of State for India, whose anxiety is very well exhibited in the following telegram which he sent to the Viceroy under date 12th February, 1891²:— “I think it right to inform you of a preliminary question in Parliament for 17th instant. Extract begins:—Can Her Majesty's Government give assurance that the Government of India will pass Factory Amendment Act before Viceroy leaves Calcutta for Simla, and that Act will include as minimum rules adopted at the Berlin Conference regarding age, hours of labour, rest and refreshment?” After an exchange of views between the Secretary of State and the Government of India, the Bill was passed into an Act in 1891. It came into force on the 1st January, 1892.

Under the Factory Act of 1891, Sunday was generally fixed as a weekly day of rest. The age-limit of children was

¹ Gazette of India Extraordinary—March 24th, 1891—page 49.

² Parliamentary papers : Session 1890—91. Vol. 59—Paper 224—Page 3.

worked or not getting a sufficient number of holidays. Managers of factories would find it impossible to deal harshly in these respects with their employees and would certainly fail to get labour if they attempted to do so.”

³Gazette of India Extraordinary—March 24th, 1891, page 63.

raised to nine years, and no person could be treated as an adult employee until he exceeded the age of 14 years. The women were to work for eleven hours (actual) a day. The children were to be actually employed for not more than seven hours in any one day. Night work was prohibited to all except adult males and henceforth the Act was extended to factories employing simultaneously 50 or more persons a day. The Local Governments were, however, empowered to extend the operation of the Act or any of its provisions to factories employing 20 or more labourers.

But conditions soon began to change. The jute industry in Bengal was fast developing and it naturally evoked the jealousy of Dundee. The attention of the Secretary of State for India was drawn towards several irregularities in the working of textile and jute mills, especially the latter. The annual report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops in England for 1895 showed remarkable points of difference between English and Indian Factory Acts. Discussions ensued between the Secretary of State and the Government of India and, in December, 1906, the Textile Factories Labour Committee was appointed by the latter with Sir Freer Smith as its President. It was understood that, if the inquiries of the Committee established the existence of abuses in factories, a representative Commission would be appointed forthwith.

The Committee visited Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Madras, Delhi, Agra and Nagpur. It was for the first time that the Punjab was visited by a Labour Inquiry Committee. The Committee was of opinion that the factory administration was far from satisfactory. The system of inspection differed in the different provinces and it was thereby necessary that factories should be primarily controlled by one official under the supervision of the Department of Commerce and Industry. The Committee held that a distinct staff of medical inspectors should be appointed to look into and supervise the general sanitary conditions of the different provinces. Drastic reforms were needed in connection with the certificate of age and physical fitness. It was recommended that the certificate of each child should bear his thumb impression and an identification mark and that, before employment on full time, a medical certificate of physical fitness and age should be insisted upon. The Committee was of opinion

that circumstances did not call for any change in the minimum age for employment of children. Night work was to be prohibited for adult females.

Regarding adult male labour, the Committee considered that ¹“the period of employment in Indian mills, except those working on the shift system, should be fixed either between the hours of 5-30 a.m. and 6 p.m., or 6 a.m. and 6-30 p.m., that the engine should cease for half an hour between the hours of 12 noon and 2 p.m., that in mills working by day on the shift-system, the period of employment should, as at present, be between 5 a.m. and 8 p.m. provided that the actual period of employment for adult males shall never in any one day exceed 12 hours and that efficient means be taken to ensure that this restriction is duly observed”.

The Textile Factories Labour Committee thus noticed a number of drawbacks and were in favour of certain amendments in the Act. The Secretary of State, therefore, appointed a Commission with the Hon'ble Mr. W. T. Morison as its President to go through the working of different factories in India and report on the feasibility of further legislation. The Commission made a tour of the country and visited, amongst other places, Delhi, Amritsar, Dhariwal and Lahore in the Punjab.

The report, unfortunately, was not unanimous. The majority concluded that excessive hours were not worked except in textile and seasonal factories. “The mid-day interval of one hour is peculiar to the Punjab. In Amritsar and Lahore, the actual working hours vary from 11½ to 13 in the cold weather, and average 13¾ in the hot season. In Amritsar, the longest interval over which the working hours are spread is from 5-10 a.m. to 7-30 p.m.; in Lahore one mill works similar hours, but the other occasionally works up to 9 p.m. and has an average 13-hour actual working day throughout the cold season. The Dhariwal Woollen Mill works, on an average, only 9½ hours (actual) in winter and 11½ hours in the hot weather.”²

The Commission was of opinion that the law relating to

¹Report of the Textile Factories Labour Committee, 1906—Bombay, 1907—Page 13.

²Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission (1907-08), Vol. 1., Page 10.

half-hour interval was more often honoured in the breach than in the observance, and that the rules with regard to the employment of women were generally ignored. Women were usually over-worked. Children were also worked full time in entire disregard of the provisions of the Factory Act. Again, children under nine years of age were worked half-time.

The majority believed that no direct restriction on adult male labour was advisable. They were, however, in favour of an indirect restriction of their working hours by¹:—

(1) "the formation of a young persons' class, to comprise all young adults between the ages of 14 and 17, with working hours limited to 12 in any one day;

(2) "the reduction of the working hours of children from 7 hours to 6 hours;

(3) "the prohibition of the employment of 'young persons', women and children before 5-30 a. m. or after 7 p.m.;

(4) "the substitution of a compulsory interval after six hours' continuous work in place of the present mid-day interval; and

(5) "the assimilation of the restrictions placed upon the employment of women to those proposed for the young persons' class."

It was laid down that all seasonal factories excluded from the operation of the Act on the ground of their working only for four months in the year should be brought in at once and subjected to the factory laws. In consideration of the special circumstances of seasonal factories, women and young persons could be employed therein at night provided they did not work for more than 12 hours a day.

The Commission condemned the existing system of inspection in factories. According to them, the ex-officio inspectors had not the special knowledge necessary for the work. Therefore, full-time inspectors were suggested for the efficient administration of the Act.

¹Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission (1907-08)—Vol. 1—Pages 33 and 34.

Dr. Nair, a talented member of the Commission, added a minute of dissent to the report. Briefly, he was of opinion that:—

(a) adult male labour should be protected by legislation. Labourers were excessively worked, especially in the textile mills. The long hours of work had affected their health as well as brought down the supply of labour. He was against the creation of a class of 'young persons' and believed that the operatives suffered from want of combination. He suggested a 12-hour day for adults.

(b) women should be legally prohibited from work at night. He differed from the Majority Commissioners in their suggestion for "the raising of the hours of labour for women employed in factories from their present limit of 11 a day to 12, and the reduction of the present hours of interval or intervals amounting to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours to $\frac{1}{2}$ hour."¹

The Factory Labour Commission Report gave much scope for criticism in the press. A Bill was taken up and Dr. Nair's masterly minute of dissent had a great influence in shaping it. It was passed into an Act and received the assent of the Governor-General on the 24th March, 1911. It was brought into force on the 1st day of July, 1912.

Under the new Act, Local Governments were empowered to appoint inspectors and certified surgeons for factories in their jurisdiction. Rules were made for the health and safety of labourers, for the lighting and ventilation of factories, for the purity of water used for humidifying purposes, for the fencing of machinery and for the prohibition of the employment of women and children in dangerous work. The periodical stoppage of work at intervals not exceeding six hours was laid down by law. A weekly holiday² for all employees was enjoined

¹ Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission 1907-08—Vol. 1—Pages 104-105.

² Extract from the proceedings of a Committee convened at Simla in the Financial Commissioner's office (Punjab) on the 16th and 17th July, 1920 to consider the recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference at Washington (vide Bulletin of Indian Industries and Labour—No. 10; Page 106) :—

"The weekly holiday rule should be so far modified that the requirements of the Act may be met by giving at least two holidays in a fortnight, continuously if desired."

on different factories. Special attention was paid to the textile factories, the adult workers of which were not to do more than 12 hours work per day. Children were not to be employed for more than six hours in any one day. Further provisions related to notices and registers, to the power of making rules and to penalties and procedure under the Act.

It should be noted that the limitation of working hours for adult males under the Act was peculiar to India. In England, there was no such restriction by legislation. There, the working hours for adult males were regulated by trade-union action. The conditions of England were and still are different from those of India, and it has thus been found politic to come to the rescue of Indian male labour by a legislative measure.

But the Act of 1911 altered the working hours only of textile factories. This was apparently due to the fact that textile mills were uniform in type and, until recently, employed the largest number of labourers. It was thus easy to design a law applicable to all of them. Moreover, the Factory Labour Commission Report of 1908 showed that excessive hours were not worked except in textile factories.

The conditions changed greatly after 1914. More factories were started and absorbed a large number of people from rural areas. Divers abuses became visible, especially in smaller mills. The Industrial Commission Report of 1918 helped greatly to clear this point. Thus, an all-comprehensive law was necessary to safeguard the position of wage-earners. The angle of vision of the people had changed and the experience gained in working the Act of 1911 rendered some changes necessary. Moreover, the recommendations of the Washington Labour Conference of 1919 were largely instrumental in shaping the Factory Amendment Bill which came up before the Legislative Assembly in 1921. A further provision was also needed to control the artificial humidification of factories.

The Indian Factories Amendment Act was passed in

The Punjab Government was not very much inclined towards a compulsory holiday in every week. It favoured the idea of two holidays for every fortnight. This was because the Committee convened at Simla in 1920 was mainly influenced by interested persons.

January, 1922, and came into force from the 1st July, 1922. It was applied to all industrial establishments using mechanical power and employing not less than 20 persons. The Local Governments were empowered to extend the operation of the Act to factories working with not less than ten labourers, whether they employed mechanical power or not. The treatment of exemptions under the old Act was not satisfactory. The Act of 1922 exempted only mines from its operation, whereas formerly this was not the case. The principle of a 60-hour week was recognised for all factories, textile and non-textile, and the daily maximum was brought down to 11 hours. Child-labour was restricted to six hours a day. The minimum age of children was raised from nine to twelve years. This reform was absolutely essential and would certainly have been very valuable if these children had been subjected to compulsory primary education. The civilised world of to-day is in favour of a higher age limit, and it may not be long before 15 or 16 years may be accepted as the irreducible minimum. The upper limit for half-time labour under the Act was raised to 15 years. This gives an opportunity and should create a demand for facilities for technical and industrial training. The raising of age-limits would be a boon if compulsory primary education, supplemented by necessary technical instruction, is introduced at once. It can further be justified in a different way. My experience of Indian factory conditions shows that it is rarely that a labourer of more than 55 years of age is met with. Again, labourers of 40 to 55 years of age appear debilitated and nearly worked out. Thus it may be well imagined that a rise in the age-limits of children would result in greater longevity.

On the 1st February, 1923, the Hon'ble Mr. (now Sir) C. A. Innes came forward with a further amendment to the Indian Factories Act of 1922. Under it an employer could substitute for a Sunday a holiday on any one of the three days succeeding the Sunday. Again, the total number of working hours in a week was fixed at the maximum of sixty and the week was taken to commence from Sunday. This created a great difficulty which experience in the working of factories alone could bring forth to light. An example will make the whole situation clear. Suppose a religious festival falls on Saturday. The

factory-owner lets off his workmen and asks them to work on Sunday instead. They work ten hours daily but, in this particular case, they put in 50 hours in the first week and 70 hours in the second week because the factory week commences on Sunday. In the two weeks together they put in 120 hours. But they have worked 70 hours in the second week, thereby violating the law of 60 hours a week.

Therefore, Act IX of 1923 was passed by the Legislature to give effect to the desired alteration in the Act as it then stood. Along with other minor amendments, the following subsection was added, namely:—

“ where, in accordance with the provisions of subsection (i) any person is employed on a Sunday in consequence of his having had a holiday on one of the three days preceding that Sunday, that Sunday shall, for the purpose of calculating the weekly hours of work of such person, be deemed to be included in the preceding week.”

The next Amendment to the Factories Act came in 1926. The important changes which it embodied were:—

(1) The interval of rest for men working not more than $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day could be reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ hour at the option of the workers and the previous sanction of the Local Government.

(2) It was declared an offence for a parent or guardian to allow a child to work in two or more mills on the same day. This provision strengthened the hands of Local Governments in stamping out the double employment of children—an abuse which appeared greatly in certain industrial centres, notably Ahmedabad.

(3) The Local Governments were empowered to prevent the cleaning of machinery while in motion and to secure a better reporting of accidents.

It must not be supposed that factory legislation, as it stands, is quite perfect. The present Act applies to premises wherein mechanical power is used and wherein twenty, or more than twenty, labourers are at work. Section 2 of the Indian Factories Amendment Act of 1922 authorises the Provincial Governments to extend the operation of the Act to any factory

wherein not less than ten persons are working, whether mechanical power is used or not. The provisions of this section have been partly applied to cotton ginning and ice factories.

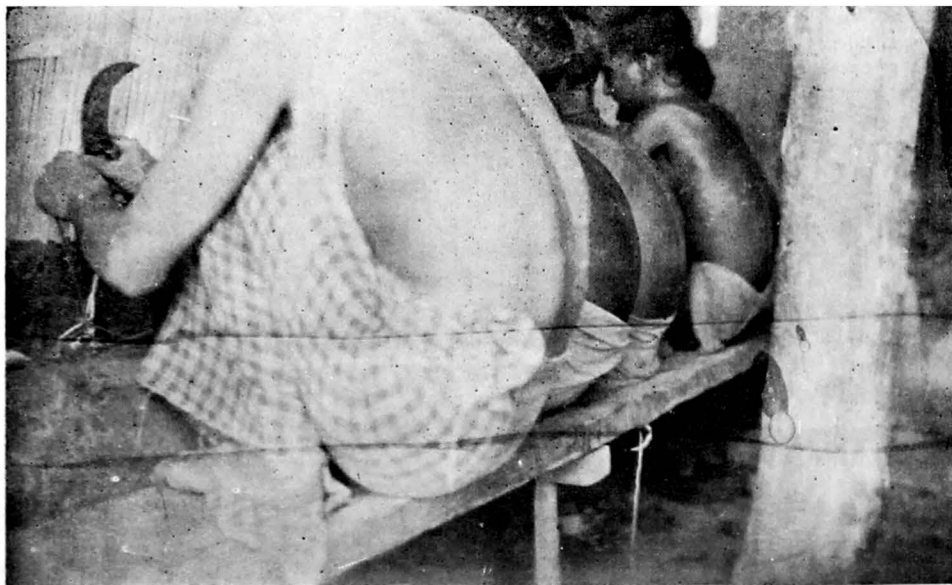
But there are a number of factories which employ hundreds of workmen without using any mechanical power. Carpet factories are an instance in point. It is estimated that, in the Punjab, about 2,225 workers are dependent on them and, of these, at least 15% are children between 6 and 12 years of age. The general condition of these factories can better be imagined than described. The defective sanitation, the unclean *kutchra* floor and the dirty yards all tell on the health and physique of the operatives. The workmen and apprentices are also excessively worked with sometimes no weekly holiday. They labour from sunrise to sunset and more than 90% suffer from stomach troubles and eye weaknesses, owing to the strain of the work and its usual prolongation and sedentary nature. No reform has yet been made in the sitting posture of the craftsmen while at work, although some measures in this direction can be effectively employed. The old conditions continue. Children of ages varying from six years and upward are employed as apprentices and are kept in the workrooms all day alternately working and resting.

The carpet factories afford no shelter in summer when the piercing rays of the sun fall on the workmen through un-enclosed archways. The extremes of cold in winter do their work relentlessly. The workman, clad as he is in his thin summer clothes, is exposed to the biting attacks of cold. He is not at rest even in the rainy season. The monsoon falls disturb him at his work when water sometimes pours in torrents through the open archways. It also sometimes trickles down the roof as through a sieve. Thus, our carpet manufacturer's life is one of continual hardship.

Some of these evils¹ were noticed by the Punjab Government as early as 1920. The following extract from letter

¹Extracts from the proceedings of a Committee convened at Simla in the Financial Commissioner's Office (Punjab) on the 16th and 17th July, 1920 to consider the recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference at Washington :—

"Mr. King proposed the inclusion of certain factories like the Amritsar carpet factories in the operations of the Act, although no power was used in the



“ They labour from sunrise to sunset and more than 90 per cent. suffer from stomach troubles, and eye weaknesses, owing to the strain of the work, and its usual prolongation and sedantary nature.”
(Page 32).

FACTORY-LABOUR LEGISLATION IN INDIA 33

No. 4788-S (C and I) dated Simla, the 27th August, 1920, from the Punjab Government to the Government of India as a reply to the latter's note No. 1-812 dated the 11th May, 1920, deserves notice:—

“As regards the extension of the definition of ‘Factory’ His Honour considers that the use of power in any form should not be an essential element of the definition. The case of the carpet factories in Amritsar is in point. This industry which is carried on under insanitary conditions (largely by the agency of children) should undoubtedly be brought within the scope of the Act.”

It is surprising that the Punjab Government, in spite of its knowledge of these evils, has not yet seen its way to bring the carpet factories under the Act. Similarly bad conditions prevail in unregistered tanneries in the Punjab. Their premises are dirty and insanitary. Ventilation is extremely defective and the working rooms are sometimes frightfully dark. The hours of work know no bounds; the workmen, mostly of the Chamar class, are the slaves of their masters. They can be called to work at any time of the day or night.

Sports Works at Sialkot present the same ugly aspect as regards working hours and the employment of children. Is it not therefore desirable that the Factory Act should be extended to all premises wherein ten, or more than ten persons are at work? Section 2 of the Indian Factories Act is clear on this point and its application in such cases is very desirable. The undue exploitation of labour in these industries is an established fact; and the sooner our Factory Act extends its meagre protection to it, the better it will be for the labourers and for the community at large.

The case for the extension of factory legislation becomes all the stronger when we find that these factories are not

workshops. He remarked that the employment of children in the factories and the over-crowded and ill-ventilated houses in which the work was being carried on necessitated the application of the Act. With regard to Mr. King's suggestion Mr. Scott, Director of Industries, proposed that a proviso should be inserted in the Act with the object of empowering the Local Government to enforce the provisions of the Factories Act in any factory whether power was used or not.”

Vide Bulletin No. 10 of Indian Industries and Labour. Pages 102 and 103.

generally whitewashed and do not possess cemented floors. Many of them do not have latrines or urinals. Drinking water is not stored in sufficient quantity and not more than thirty to forty holidays are observed throughout the whole year.

These glaring irregularities call for an immediate extension of the Factory Act.

CHAPTER III

THE FACTORY-LABOURER

THE factory-labourer in the Punjab is largely recruited from the villages. The ancient rural organisation of the province provided for a set of persons whose work was regarded as inferior. The advent of railways, posts and telegraph, brought about its disintegration, and the people were thus at liberty to leave their homes and seek their livelihood in the larger world beyond. Many small landholders were in difficulties. Their wasteful customs and small uneconomic holdings had thrown them into the clutches of the 'bania'.¹ They were thus expropriated and forced to make a living away from their homes. Others of the same class seek employment in factories in slack seasons. There are others still who, after the harvesting season is over, resort to factories as casual labourers. In addition, many artisans or craftsmen who could not hold their own under the stress of foreign competition have been won over to factories.

The number of native wage-earners in Punjab factories is much greater than those who have come from other provinces. Extra labour is largely recruited from the United Provinces and is employed mainly in cotton spinning and weaving mills.

The hereditary occupation of our factory hands is mainly agriculture. The homeless labourers, whether from the Punjab or outside, bring their families with them. But if a labourer has a home, his family ordinarily continues to reside in his native village. He regularly sends a portion of his income for its support and resorts to his rural surroundings off and on. The monotonous factory life exhausts his energies and he seeks an occasional relief from it by taking to agricultural work in the

¹The word 'bania' is generally applied to the Hindu money-lender.

open fields¹. As compared with his English brother, he is irregular in attending to his work. This is due to reasons beyond his control. But these will be discussed later.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS.

The proportion of males in the Punjab who live the allotted span of years and who do not enter married life is very small. The proportion of females is still smaller. Marriage is practically universal and is looked upon as a religious obligation. There is thus a tendency on the part of the people, rich and poor, to marry without regard to economic conditions. In the whole province 5.6 per cent of the males above 60, and 0.7 per cent of the females, have not been married according to the census figures of 1921. The following table² will give a percentage of unmarried men over 60 (excluding widowers) for each of the last four censuses for the Punjab population in general. It is a pity that separate figures for factory-workers are not available.

Religion	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Hindus ...	8.7	8.2	8.0	7.6	7.1
Muslims ...	5.1	4.1	4.0	4.5	3.8
Sikhs ...	10.0	9.9	9.8	10.1	9.0
Christians ...	8.7	2.9	3.1	3.8	2.9

The relative scarcity of females in different religions may prevent men from marrying. Amongst the Sikhs, for example, the number of females is comparatively small in proportion to males, and this accounts mainly for the relatively high proportion of unmarried men and

¹Margaret Read thus describes the Indian factory-labourer in her book "From Field to Factory" (Student Christian Movement—London, 1927)—Page 35 :—

"Talk to a factory-worker who is lethargic and heavy, doing monotonous work among noisy machinery, of his village, and his face lights up, and though there is sadness and the look of an exile in his face, it is obvious where his heart and most of his thoughts are. It is easy to get an impression of caged wild animals when looking round at the workers in a factory shed."

²Punjab Census Report for 1921—Vol. 1—Page 245.

the relatively low proportion of unmarried women amongst them. The following table¹ will throw much light on this point. It gives the proportion of females to every 1,000 males in the different religious groups.

Religion	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881
All religions ...	826	817	854	850	844
Muslim ...	843	833	878	871	...
Hindu ...	825	820	845	843	...
Sikh ...	764	746	779	784	...
Christian ...	782	707	580	465	...

One thing requires an explanation here. In the first three censuses, the European females were perhaps the only representatives of Christianity in their sex in the Punjab. The increase in their number in the censuses of 1911 and 1921 must be assigned to conversions from "the ranks of low-caste Indians".²

Marriage implies expense, which is often met by a loan from the 'bania'. Amongst workers recruited from low classes like the Chamar,³ Chuhra⁴ and others, women are actually sold. The prospective bridegroom or his parents are called upon to pay a price which is determined by the beauty of the bride and the social status of her family.⁵

The system of child marriage is prevalent to a slight extent amongst factory workers. My observations prove that, in not more than 2 per cent of cases, betrothal of children may take place when they are hardly five or six years of age. Marriage is celebrated much later, at the average age of 13 or 14 years. It is only in rare cases that children are married before the age of 9. The table given below shows the number of married

¹Punjab Census Report 1921—Vol. 1—Page 227.

²Ibid.

³A caste of men who work in leather.

⁴Sweeper.

⁵Rs. 50 is the rough average price for a wife calculated by the Author from amongst 175 different cases.

persons per mille in the year 1921.¹ These figures have of course been recorded as true of the population in general but do

Age-Periods	Male			Female		
	Hindus	Muslims	Sikhs	Hindus	Muslims	Sikhs
Under 5	2	1	...	3	1	1
5—9 (inclusive)	22	8	6	68	25	24
10—14	113	50	63	362	185	221
15—19	330	213	258	848	680	780

not necessarily represent the actual state of affairs. They suffer from one grave error. The word 'marriage' has been greatly misrepresented. It should be borne in mind that the consummation of the marriage is deferred till the time of the *muklawa* ceremony. In the interval the bride remains with her parents and the *muklawa* is celebrated when she attains the age of puberty. Thereafter she comes to stay with her husband. But the *muklawa* may be celebrated in some cases before the girl comes of age. The bride may find herself in the bridegroom's family even before the age of ten.

A special census was carried out in the Punjab in 1920-21 "to obtain data for discussion of the problems of the effect of the duration of marriage on fertility, of the size of the family, of the age of the woman at marriage, of the effect of primogeniture on longevity and the like."² The Government was aware of the misinterpretations that the term 'marriage' had given rise to. Due notice was taken of the consummation of the marriage; and figures collected under this safeguard for 166,419 families for showing the percentages of the ages at which women had been married and had gone to live with their husbands are given below³ :—

¹ Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. 1—Page 246.

² Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. 1—Page 247.

³ Punjab Census Report 1921—Vol. 1—Page 251. " . . . It must be remembered that when we find that 15% of women were below the age of ten at marriage this denotes that these girls had been married civilly at a very young age indeed and had actually come to reside in their husbands' home, (though not necessarily to cohabit with them) before the age of 10."

All Castes	Below 10	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40 & Over	Total
All classes	15.2	36.3	31.7	10.9	3.5	1.4	0.6	0.4	100
Caste-Group I (Clerics mainly) ...	22.5	41.5	25.7	6.2	1.9	0.8	0.8	0.6	100
Caste-Group II (Agriculturists mainly) ..	13.4	35.1	23.7	12.0	3.5	1.5	0.5	0.3	100
Caste-Group III (Traders mainly).	14.7	43.4	31.0	8.7	2.2	0.6	0.3	0.1	100
Caste-Group IV (Artisans mainly) ..	13.4	37.1	32.7	11.2	3.4	1.3	0.6	0.3	100
Caste-Group V (Menials mainly) ..	17.7	35.5	30.1	11.1	3.3	1.3	0.5	0.4	99.9
Caste-Group VI (Criminals mainly) ...	13.4	33.9	31.7	11.5	5.9	2.0	0.9	0.6	99.9

The number of families for which facts and figures were collected may be grouped as under¹ :—

Caste Group.	Total Number of families in the Group.
1. Clerics	... 16,611
2. Agriculturists	... 74,813
3. Traders	... 11,879
4. Artisans	... 7,649
5. Menials	... 31,832
6. Criminals	... 23,635
	166,419

The factory-labourers are recruited largely from the 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th caste-groups, and the results obtained above may also apply in their cases. This condition of affairs is rather deplorable, and only a general enlightenment of people

¹Punjab Census Report 1921—Vol. 1—Page 248.

can bring about reformation in the direction of late marriages. It is satisfactory to note that there is "a tendency during the last 40 years to postpone the age of marriage."¹

The average labourer looks upon his wife as a child-producing machine. He acts on the dictum "Be fruitful and multiply." The Hindu believes that his soul cannot rest in peace unless and until he has got a son to perform the necessary religious ceremonies after his death. So he goes on, and if he happens to have only daughters at the start, is prepared to marry a second wife to procure at least one son. The Muslim labourer, on the other hand, is absolutely ignorant of his true religious dogmas. He believes in polygamy, though it is true that he rarely marries a second wife. In these circumstances, it is difficult for the labourer to exercise marital restraint, or to put an artificial limit on the increase of his off-spring. He understands religion in his own way and considers it a great sin to control birth.

Thus, with the impoverished resources of the labourer, birth-rates and death-rates are both high.² The mothers are ignorant of primary hygienic principles. Bad midwifery also cuts down their number as well as of that of the new-born babes. The administration of opium to fretful children by their worn-out mothers and their mal-nutrition also add to the high death-rate. My personal observation is to the effect that not less than 90 per cent of the mothers working in factories regularly dope their babies. It is interesting to note that Amritsar, Ludhiana, Lahore and Ferozepore cities consume annually 100 lbs. of opium per 10,000 inhabitants.³

LITERACY AND EDUCATION.

The labourers are mostly illiterate. The following table⁴ sums up literacy by age, sex and religion, for the people in general. Separate figures in relation to factory-operatives are not available:—

¹Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. 1—Page 245.

²In the year 1926, the birth-rate in the Punjab was 39.7 per mile and the death-rate was 34.8.

³C. F. Andrews : Opium evil in India; Page 18.

⁴Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. 1—Page 297.

Religion	Number per mille who are literate										Number per mille—5 and over who are literate in English			
	All ages 5 and over		5—9 inclusive		10—14 inclusive		15—19 inclusive		20 and over		Total	Males	Females	
	Total	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males				Females
All religions.	45	74	9	6	2	53	12	98	17	94	9	7	12	1
Hindu ...	68	113	11	9	3	82	15	144	21	142	10	9	16	1
Muslim ...	22	37	4	3	1	29	5	52	8	48	4	3	6	...
Christian ...	120	140	9	32	44	73	105	144	119	189	103	96	116	69
.. (European etc.) ...	914	905	933	Not available								862	888	822
.. (Indian) ...	40	46	34	Not available								19	22	16
Buddhist ...	113	206	18	...	...	53	...	146	16	271	23	8	15	...
Jain ...	296	506	47	34	15	334	76	567	73	653	44	30	55	1
Sikh ...	59	93	13	5	2	69	19	116	27	117	13	7	11	...
Parsi ...	732	723	740	474	273	643	720	643	750	766	831	580	623	513
Jew ...	278	273	280	...	...	...	...	...	...	375	500	222	273	143

This table evidently shows that, of all persons of ages 5 and over, only 45 per cent were returned as literate in the census of 1921. Literacy is defined as meaning that a person "can write a letter to a friend and read the answer to it."¹ Of the literate persons, only 7 per 1,000 were literate in English. The Muslims, though forming about 55 per cent of the whole population, are very backward in education. The percentage of literate persons amongst them comes to 2'2.

But the value and importance of an educational system can be tested by its literate adults, *i.e.* persons over the age of 20. The above table shows that, in this class, 94 per mille are literate amongst males and 9 only amongst females.

These figures are very alarming and point towards the importance of mass-education. The condition of factory-labourers is extremely deplorable. There are very few facilities for their education but even those that exist do not draw the attention of the working-classes. This is mainly due to the fact that they are extremely poor and are not in a position to afford extra expense for the education of their children. Dhariwal is,

¹ Punjab Census Report 1921—Vol. I—Page 288.

perhaps, the only industrial centre in the Punjab where labourers have two flourishing high schools near at hand. Still the number of their children receiving education therein totalled a mere 20 in May, 1927. It may be mentioned that the number of factory-labourers then working in the local woollen mills stood at about 1,000.

Our labourers belong hereditarily to different occupations and the figures¹ of literacy per mille for them for the census of 1921 will not here be out of place.

Serial No.	Caste	Census 1921
1	Agriculture ...	23
2	Hunters (Mahtam) ...	4
3	Artisans ...	26
4	Criminal Tribes ...	3
5	Others (Barwala, Bhrai, Jhiwar, etc.) ...	13
6	Priests and Devotees ...	117

It is clear that the factory-workers are largely illiterate. Literacy is often met with in the rank of skilled workmen. But the number of such operatives as can read and write the English Language is like a drop in the ocean.

ECONOMIC CONDITION.

An inquiry into the economic condition of our labourers may be conducted either on an intensive or on an extensive method. The extensive method consists in collecting information regarding income, expenses, etc. from a large number of workers. The intensive method rests mainly on a careful study of a number of representative working-class families—families which may represent the largest number of workers in the particular field selected for investigation.

It is difficult to select representative families in the Punjab. The labourers belong to three main religions—Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. The Muslims are extravagant

¹ Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. 1—Page 293.

in habits, at least comparatively. The Hindus lean to the other extreme. The Sikhs cannot easily be classed in one or the other division. Again, among the workers, there are castes and sub-castes which differ from one another. Thus, intensive enquiry is fruitless. It is difficult to lay a finger on representative families. It is still more difficult to study their condition closely, especially when they are bound to misconstrue the motives of the investigator at the very start.

The same difficulty exists in an extensive inquiry. It was early in 1920 that I was appointed an Industrial Investigator under the Punjab Government Board of Economic Inquiry, and was called upon to inquire into the economic condition of factory operatives in the province. My inquiries were confined to workers earning Rs. 50 per month or less and related, amongst others, to the following factories:—

- (1) Mela Ram Cotton Mills, Lahore.
- (2) Gayan Mills, Lyallpur.
- (3) Badami Bagh Mills.
- (4) Shahdara Flour Mills.
- (5) Mohammad Ismail Maula Bux Flour Mills, Lyallpur.

I collected a large number of family budgets in the light of the draft questionnaire given in Appendix B and submitted them with my report in September, 1920. The questionnaire, as is quite evident, was a very exhaustive one and dealt with the different economic aspects of a labourer's life.

Ever since 1920, I have been busy investigating the conditions of factory-labourers. In March, 1927, I was allowed leave of absence for two terms by the University of London in connection with my research work on 'Factory-labour in the Punjab'. I spent my last summer in India, and made a tour of the different provinces intensively studying, of course, the economic condition of factory-labourers in the Punjab. This time, I drew up another questionnaire, a draft copy of which appears in Appendix C and, with its help, collected a mass of evidence bearing on my subject. Dr. Rawley, Director of Industries, Punjab, was kind enough to arrange for my visits to different factories some of which are the following:—

- (1) R. B. Boota Singh & Sons, Rawalpindi.
- (2) Messrs Spedding & Co, Jhelum.

- (3) R. B. Ganga Ram & Sons, Lahore.
- (4) Punjab Government Tannery, Shahdara.
- (5) Pioneer Flour Mills, Lahore.
- (6) K. S. Mistri Asmatullah, Factory-Owner, Lahore.
- (7) North-Western Railway Workshops, Lahore.
- (8) Egerton Woollen Mills, Dhariwal.
- (9) Banktेशwar Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills,
Amritsar.
- (10) Punjab Sugar Works, Amritsar.
- (11) Lahore Electric Supply Co., Lahore.
- (12) Municipal Water Works, Lahore.
- (13) Sheikh Ghulam Sadiq Carpet Factory, Amritsar.
- (14) The Oriental Carpet Manufacturing Co., Amritsar.
- (15) Harkishan Sugar Mills, Amritsar.
- (16) The Sotlej Flour Mills, Ferozepore.
- (17) The Attock Oil Company, Rawalpindi.
- (18) The Jallo Rosin Factory.
- (19) The Punjab Portland Cement Factory, Wah.
- (20) The Carbonic Acid Gas Co, Sujanjore.
- (21) Ramzam Iron Works, Batala.
- (22) Crown Foundry & Iron Works, Batala.
- (23) Municipal Workshop, Lahore.

I also examined the condition of unregistered carpet and other factories and registered ginning mills—the former in 1927, and the latter in the winter of 1925.

Regarding family budgets, I must point out at the outset that reliable and trustworthy information is difficult to secure in the present stage of our advancement. The diversity of creeds, the great variation in the number and ages of dependents and last, but not the least, the great communal tension that prevails in the Punjab create difficulties which an investigator cannot easily overcome.

The factory-labourers are illiterate. Those who can read and write their own vernaculars are a minute minority. I have met thousands of labourers and have not so far come across a single family which was in the habit of recording its expenses. Accurate information is only possible if the labourers keep a systematic account of their income and expenditure. Even the educated community in the Punjab has not yet realised the

necessity of keeping systematic accounts. Probably not more than one person out of every 2,000 literates records his expenses.

Under these conditions, misstatements and discrepancies are bound to occur. The purchase on credit of the necessaries of life by the working-class introduces complexities of its own. The task of the investigator is hard—very hard indeed. He collects information, the very accuracy of which rests on the assumption that the labourers remember their accounts and do not in any way overstate them. The assumption itself is wrong and the results which our family budgets can give mainly point towards certain tendencies rather than to actual truths. Nevertheless, with all these reservations, some results of my enquiry may prove helpful.

First, as regards incomings. My inquiries show that wages are generally paid monthly with one to two weeks always in arrears. The periods of wage payment in the different factories of the Punjab may be shown in a tabulated form below. These figures ¹ were collected by the Government of India and relate to the end of the year 1924.

Kind of Factory	Period of Payment	Waiting Period
Cement Works	Monthly ...	7 days.
Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories	Do. ...	7—10 days.
Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills.	Do. ...	15 days.
Engineering Works	Do. ...	15 days.
Flour Mills	Do. ...	10 days
Printing Presses— Some Salaried Employees ...	Do. ...	15 days.
Rice Mills— Permanent Staff	Do. ...	one day only.
Contracted Labour	Weekly ...	} 10 days.
Temporary Labour	Daily ...	
Iron and Steel Works	Monthly ...	7—10 days.
Sugar Mills— Permanent Staff	Monthly ...	} 7—10 days.
Temporary Staff	Fortnightly ...	
Tanneries— Permanent	Monthly ...	} 7--10 days.
Temporary	Fortnightly ...	

¹ Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour, Government of India. Bulletin No. 34.

This table clearly shows the lack of uniformity in the payment of wages. The period of payment differs from district to district and industry to industry: even in the same industry, there may be different periods of wage payment.

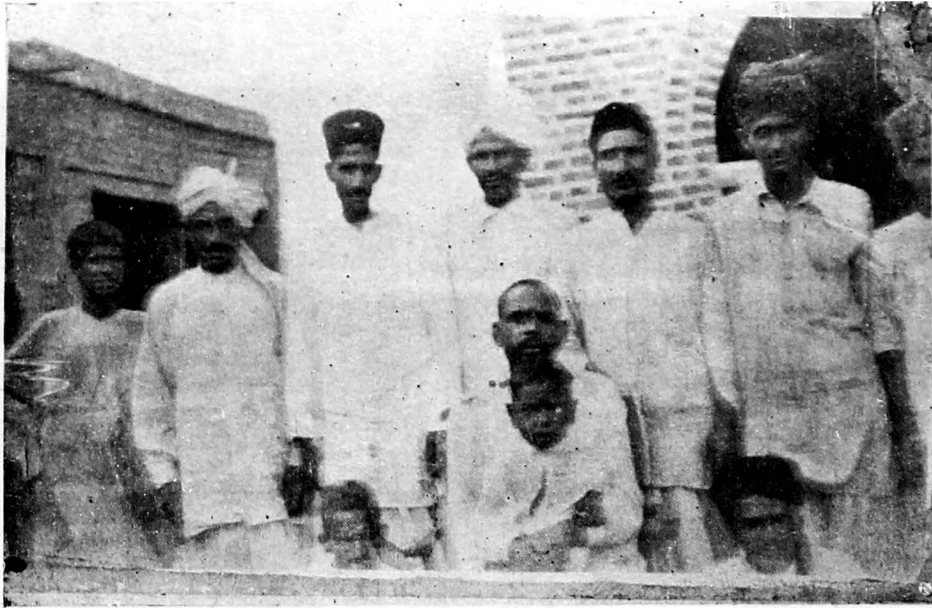
The 'waiting period' greatly affects the labourers. There are wide variations in it in the smaller and less organized industries. But, in larger establishments, regularity of payment is the general rule. Still, small variations may happen on account of the occurrence of holidays.

The above table brings out one thing clearly. It is evident that the length of the waiting period is in proportion to the length of the period of payment. Monthly wages are paid less promptly than fortnightly wages, and the waiting period in the case of weekly wages is less as compared with fortnightly wages. Daily wages are generally paid on the same day or the day following.

Some points should be borne in mind in this connection. Theoretically, a small factory can pay wages more promptly than a large firm. Each worker is known to the master and the system of payment is consequently simple enough. Again, piece-rate wages necessitate mathematical calculations and can be paid less promptly than time wages. If the calculations are intricate, the waiting period will necessarily be long. Thus it has been seen that different classes of workers in the same factory are paid on different days.

For skilled workmen, whose services are indispensable and whose wages cannot be otherwise calculated, wages are paid and reckoned by the month. They are usually on the permanent staff and are paid for Sundays and other holidays. For ordinary unskilled labourers, wages are reckoned by the day—*e.g.*, eight annas a day—and paid by the month. Nothing is paid to them for Sundays and other holidays. Labour recruited from Reformatory settlements is generally unskilled and is on the daily list. It is, however, paid after every four days, wherever possible. This is due to the intervention of the Government on their behalf.

Piece-wages are introduced wherever it is possible to judge the output of a man accurately. This is the direct influence of



"The Master-weavers employ their own staff—usually young children—and pay them in any way they please". (Page 47).

NOTE.—In the middle is seen the Contractor with a child in his lap.

the introduction of machinery. For example, weavers in spinning and weaving mills get monthly wages calculated on the piece-wage system.

In some cases, *e.g.* in unregistered carpet factories, the work is on contract. The proprietor advances sums averaging Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 to the master-weavers under an agreement drawn up beforehand. The master-weavers employ their own staff—usually young children—and pay them in any way they please. The looms, the sheds, the material and all are provided by the proprietor. Thus, the process of exploitation filters down from master to weaver, and from weaver to worker or apprentice. This exploitation is detrimental to the interests of the master-weaver—still more so to the small children who work from sunrise to sunset on a miserable pittance. But it is highly lucrative for the proprietor who gains huge profits at the expense of his workmen. In outlying carpet factories at Sujampur, Batala and Nurpur, the proprietor deals direct with a contractor who is provided with the necessary raw material. The conditions of work are drawn up beforehand and the contractor prepares loom-sheds and all other things for master-weavers who enter into a separate contract with him. Young children are brought in by master-weavers; and exploitation herein involves a slightly larger process.

The table¹ given below shows the variations in the wages of workers from 1916 to 1926. It does not show any real improvement except for five types of skilled labourers—Oilman, Mochi, Reeler, Press Compositor, and Press Distributor. An increase in nominal wages may not do any good to a community if it is followed by a great rise in the price of foodstuffs. The prices of foodstuffs were very high during the war years (1914-19), and the workers were at a loss even with the augmentation of their money-wages. They were hit hard in some cases. Prices were at the highest point in 1920. The movement from 1920 to 1925 was, however, a double improvement as money-wages rose though prices fell.

The factory-owners reaped huge profits during the War. But the lack of combination prevented the operatives from

¹ Annual Reports on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab from 1916 to 1926.

	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916
Skilled Labour—											
Per month.											
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Engineer—											
1st Class	—	—	—	—	—	—	150	120-250	150-400	90-150	80-150
2nd Class	—	—	—	—	—	—	120	90-130	70-140	70-135	60-125
Engine Driver	44	43	40	38	35	30	30	25-45	20-45	20-80	15-40
Boiler-man	33	30	28	25	25	25	25	20-33	20-30	20-30	15-26
Blacksmith	44	44	40	36	35	35	35	25-40	25-40	25-40	15-35
Fitter	64	60	55	53	50	50	50	40-60	40-60	40-60	30-60
Carpenter	46	45	43	40	35	35	35	25-45	25-45	25-40	20-40
Oilman	37	37	34	26	20	20	20	11-15	11-15	11-15	11-16
Mochi (Leather worker)	45	40	35	33	33	30	30	20-30	20-30	30	—
Spinner	25	25	28	25	20	20	20	18-25	18-25	18-20	18-20
Weaver	41	40	40	35	40	40	40	40	40	30	—
Dyer	23	22	20	23	30	30	30	30	30	30	—
Beeler	22	20	22	20	15	15	15	12-15	12-15	10-18	—
Press-Compositor	43	43	36	36	25	25	25	16-30	15-30	15-30	20-31
Press-Distributor	22	20	18	18	15	15	15	10-15	10-15	10-15	8-14
Unskilled Labour—											
Per day.											
	As.	As.	As.	As.	As.	As.	As.	As.	As.	As.	As.
Coolie (opener)	16	16	16	16	16	15	1	12-16	12-15	10-12	8-12
Coolie (man) on gins	8	8	8	8	8	9	8	7-8	7-8	7-8	5-8
Coolie (woman) on gins	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	5-7	5-7	5-7	4-6

getting their due. A large number of persons was wanted for the successful prosecution of the War from 1914 to 1919. This led to scarcity of labour for factories. The decrease in its supply and an increase in the demand for it owing to munition-work and the manufacture of other articles resulted in a rise of money-wages. But this rise was more than counter-balanced by an increase in prices. Many labourers were just living on the 'poverty-line'.

Even before the commencement of the 'Great War', the wage-earners as a class did not enjoy a good position. A rough approximation of the economic condition of skilled labour may be had from the following table¹ :—

Year	Price of Wheat per maund* in Rupees	Average Monthly Wages in Rupees	Wages of Artisans in maunds of wheat
1901	2-8-0	18-0-0	7-20
1902	2-4-0	19-8-0	8-86
1903	2-4-0	18-4-0	8-11

¹ Punjab Census Report for 1921—Vol. 1—Page 48.

² A maund of wheat is equal to 82.236 lbs.

Year	Price of Wheat per maund in Rupees	Average Monthly Wages in Rupees	Wages of Artisans in maunds of wheat
1904	2- 0-0	18- 2-0	9.06
1905	2- 8-0	21- 4-0	8.50
1906	2- 8-0	22- 8-0	9.00
1907	2-12-0	24- 0-0	8.73
1908	4- 0-0	30-14-0	7.72
1909	3-12- 0	27- 0-0	7.20

These figures relate to the skilled labourers and are only confined to the years 1901-1909. All the same, they show very clearly that real wages remained almost the same though money-wages greatly varied. The unskilled labourer has been in a pitiable plight all through. The table¹ given below will elucidate the point still further.

Class of Labour	Daily Wages in annas			Increase per cent.		Wages expressed in maunds of wheat per month.		
	1909	1912	1917	1909-1912	1912-1917	1909	1912	1917
Iron and Hardware ...	12	16	17.5	33	9	6.0	9.4	7.7
Brass and Copper ...	16.75	16	18	-4½	12½	8.3	9.4	7.9
Carpenters ...	15.5	18	19.75	16	10	7.7	10.6	8.7
Cotton Weavers ...	4.25	6.25	9	47	44	2.1	3.7	4.0
Masons and Builders ...	15.25	17.25	19.5	13	13	7.6	10.2	8.6
General Unskilled ...	6.25	7	8.75	12	25	3.1	4.1	3.9

Variations in wages generally show a lag compared with prices. The price of wheat was lower in 1912 than in 1909 and 1917. The purchasing power of wages was then comparatively high. Throughout the period, however, the nominal wages have been rising steadily except in the case of brass and copper workers.

But the value of the table on page 48 is problematical on account of great variations in classification. For example, an assistant and a chargeman mistri are generally classed as fitters, but the former may earn only Rs. 15 per month, while the latter

¹ Punjab Census Report, 1921, Vol. 1—Page 70.

may be receiving Rs. 75. The difference in nomenclature is sometimes very great. The word 'mistri'¹ does not signify the same sort of worker from factory to factory. In some cases workers engaged on entirely different processes receive one and the same name and *vice versa*.

Throughout my investigations into the conditions of labour this point has been uppermost in my mind. There appears no way out of it except that of giving a detailed list of wages in different factories. Needless to add that some of the very advanced factory owners resented this inquiry on my part. In certain cases I had to look up these lists in the files of the Inspector of Factories for reference.

A wage-census is extremely important at the present stage of our advancement. The Workmen's Compensation Act has come into being since 1924, and the Commissioner, the Insurance Companies and the labourers are all interested in it. In fact, Workmen's Compensation would be a farce without a true wage-census published from time to time. Will the Central Government move the legislature in this matter? Care must be taken that the wage-census includes real wages (*i.e.*, money wages plus all the allowances either in kind or in money) and takes note of holidays or other off-days enjoyed by the workmen.

The wage-sheets appear under Appendix A. They do not and cannot claim perfect accuracy. Far from it. They indicate roughly the variations of wages from place to place. For example, at Sujānpore, an ordinary labourer earns 6 annas a day whereas his fellows get about 12 annas daily at Amritsar, and 10 annas per day at Wah. The same unskilled workman earns at least Re. 1 a day in the building industry at Amritsar, Batala, Lahore and Rawalpindi. Again, the carpenter working in the Sujānpore mills gets about one rupee a day. The same carpenter receives Rs. 1-12-0, Rs. 2 or even Rs. 2-4-0 at Amritsar, Lahore and Rawalpindi. He earns much more as a day-to-day worker in the building industry. A fitter gets Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 per month at Pathankot, Rs. 30 at Sujānpore, whereas he is capable of receiving more than

¹ It is also known as 'maistry' in some parts of India.

Rs. 60 at Lahore, Rawalpindi or Amritsar. An indigenous tanner gets 5 to 6 annas a day at Wazirabad. He earns much more—twice as much, I should say—in Shahdara. But he stays at Wazirabad, and seems content with his lot. It should be remembered in this connection that the retail prices of articles consumed by the labourers do not show much variation from place to place, owing mostly to the activities of the shrewd middlemen.

This difference of wages may be accounted for in several ways. The workman wants to be near his kith and kin. He prefers lower wages at home to higher wages abroad. This is one of the several factors which prevent, other things remaining the same, an equalisation of wages for the same work in different factories. The Punjabi is no doubt an enterprising emigrant but he, like all human beings, has got his limitations. He wants to improve his position but no reliable information about external conditions is available. Sooner or later, an epidemic occurs and a labourer is bereft of all his near and dear ones. He has none to look after. He takes a risk—a heavy risk—and goes out for work. After a year or so, he comes back as an agent or contractor with happy news for his co-villagers. Some persons display their willing readiness to accompany the adventurous labourer. This is generally how the Punjabis have emigrated to far-off colonies and this is how they sometimes move from place to place in search of high wages.

A greater or less equalisation of wages would have been attained by this time if factory conditions had been what they ought to be in the different parts of the province. In the next few chapters it will be shown that the working of our factories is far from satisfactory. There is very little attraction for labourers in distant factories and differences of wages for similar work must therefore remain very marked.

When all is said and done, it remains true that the labour-market is the poorest of all markets. It deals in labour—labour of human beings. "A man cannot be standardised, nor can population be increased or decreased to conform to the economic force of supply and demand. He is not readily transported."¹ This is so because the labourer is a human being and, like all

¹Solomon Blum: *Labour Economics*; Page 188. New York, 1925.

human beings, he is swayed by feelings for home and locality. "It costs to pull up stakes, especially in the case of a family."¹ He cannot easily move in response to economic changes. These and other causes account for the variation of wages from town to town in all the countries of the world. But the conditions here are greatly accentuated partly by illiteracy, ignorance and disorganisation and partly by bad factory conditions and environments.

There are sometimes wide differences in the wages of similar workers in the same factory. This may be due to experience or to skill and dexterity in the work. For example, there are fitters and fitters. In the Lahore Electric Supply Co., fitters draw wages ranging from Rs. 33 to Rs. 110 per mensem. Again, black-smiths in the same Company get Rs. 1-8 to Rs. 2-8 per day. The differences in wages can also be accounted for by the amount of influence and recommendation which a labourer can bring to bear on the factory manager or proprietor in the absence of trade-union organisations. Sometimes the relatives of employers are promoted without the requisite qualifications. This creates heart-burnings amongst the workers. But this is of no avail as they have no common means of ventilating their grievances.

There is one thing which must be specially mentioned. One of the foremost difficulties in the way of the skilled workers is their ignorance of the English language. A factory manager at Amritsar told me that a second-class engineer was drawing Rs. 250 p.m. under him in 1926. A new and more forceful plant was introduced soon after and, as the old engineer did not know sufficient English to pass a higher examination, a new first class engineer was appointed over him on Rs. 150 per mensem under strict orders from the Factory Inspector. The new engineer, as I was told, was very incompetent. Still, his services had to be retained as no one else was then procurable on the same pay. Will the Government consider the advisability of holding these tests in the Urdu language?² This will surely prove useful to the workers.

¹ Solomon Blum : Labour Economics. New York, 1925. Page 188.

² There is, no doubt, a dearth of books on Engineering in Urdu but this defect can be easily remedied if the Government encourages the translation of suitable text-books in this language.

This example clearly illustrates the anomalous position of some of our skilled hands.

During the last ten or twelve years, factory occupiers in some districts have been in the habit of forming pools among themselves with a view apparently to lessening competition for labour. This prevails mostly in ginning factories. I invite the special attention of the Government to this serious drawback and suggest that all combinations in restraint of labour should be at once stopped.

Several other forces work against the factory-labourers. They are unscrupulously treated. They are even flogged, as for example in carpet factories. There the apprentices whose ages vary between six and nineteen years are shoe-beaten for every mistake, however trifling it may be. They are flogged when the master-weaver loses his temper—nay, they are even struck with knives and bricks. During the course of my investigations in 1927, I came across four cases in which the apprentices had been knocked on the head either with a stick or a knife. Corporal punishment exists all over in registered as well as unregistered factories. The manager or the proprietor wields the power of a magistrate and sometimes perpetrates inhuman acts. This makes factory work extremely distasteful.

The labourer's services are secured either through co-workers, mistris, contractors or directly. More usually they are secured direct through information supplied by co-workers.

Labourers are either employed from day to day according to the daily needs of the factory or they are ordinary full-time workers. In either case, their wages are in proportion to the number of days put in by them. Whenever an ordinary full time labourer wants to go on leave, he is called upon to leave a substitute without whom he cannot go. Sometimes extra labourers are kept by the employer to replace absentees and men on leave.

Above these two ranks of labourers stand the foremen who are experienced and skilled mill-hands. It must here be mentioned that the full-time worker brings a certain amount of skill to bear on his work and is placed above the casual labourer. The foreman is a full-fledged skilled worker and is often remunerated for holidays.

The factory manager controls all classes of labour. He puts each man in his proper place. He marshals the forces under his command and tries to get the best possible results from his organisation. The managers of well-established mills in the Punjab are generally Europeans and Anglo-Indians. Smaller mills are in the hands of Indian managers.

In factory management, the Hindus and Sikhs are slowly coming to the front. "The Khatri and Aggarwal castes together furnish owners and managers of about half the total number of industrial establishments in the Punjab."¹ The Muslim lags behind both in ownership and in management. There were 55 Muslim (Sheikh) owners and 60 Muslim (Sheikh) managers according to the Industrial Census of 1921. These figures are not complete in themselves as 21 registered factories were omitted from the Census record. Moreover, the scope of the industrial census was wide as the term 'industrial establishments' included all concerns in which at least 10 persons were employed on any normal working day between the 14th March and the 14th May, 1921. It is evident, however, that the Muslim is far too backward in this respect partly because he is poorer and less educated than his Hindu and Sikh brethren, and partly because the great communal tension—now slowly moving along and now bursting forth into volcanic eruptions—offers very little opportunity for him to work his way up.

A word about the manager's qualifications. What kind of a person ought he to be? And, further, do the conditions in the Punjab conform to that standard? Mr. Hartland Seymour thus describes² the manager's qualifications.

"It is of course essential that he be an expert organiser; it is, similarly, essential that he has been trained in engineering or whatever industry in which he practises as manager. It is desirable that he shall have been 'through the mill' from apprentice to foreman. He needs more than this though, to be an efficient manager. His job it is to co-ordinate labour, skill

¹ Punjab Census Report, 1921. Vol. 1. Page 367.

² Industrial India—Vol. I, No. 1—August, 1921—Page 31—Article on "Principles of Modern Management."

and materials in their correct proportion, correct order, and in such a way as to produce at a reasonable cost a marketable article for which there is a demand.

“His technical skill and knowledge will enable him more readily to appreciate the difficulties with which his subordinates are likely to be confronted, and his organisation must be well-defined, but at the same time it must be elastic enough to permit of any changes in manufacturing process or routine without disruption and throwing out of gear the manufacturing unit.

“Very often the capable manager is the man who has worked himself up from the shops by attending technical schools, who has studied sociology and human relationships and psychology, and who also has a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the industrial history of his trade and of his country.”

These, then, are the qualifications which are expected of a manager. I feel sorry to say that the conditions in the Punjab do not come up to this standard. It is in the small number of well-organised limited liability companies that the managers possess these qualifications to a small extent. In partnerships or private factories, the manager is sometimes no better than the labourers themselves, except for influence.

It is a fact that the workmen receive low wages but the further trouble is that they do not, and often cannot, derive the maximum advantage from them. A certain amount of money goes as a tip to the co-workers who bring them into the factory. The mistri, too, keeps his eye on them and takes off a certain percentage from their wages every month. In fact, the very promotion of our worker depends on the confidence which he can command with his immediate superior, which is further dependant on the amount of money doled out as a bribe. Nay, I should go a step further and say, that the very employment of the wage-earner and its further continuance depends on the goodwill of the mistri which a few annas can safely buy. Generally speaking, a man earning Rs. 20 a month is expected to pay 2 to 4 annas every month to the foreman.

The factory proprietor or manager has not time enough to pay wages direct to his workers. He entrusts this duty to the cashier who, dealing as he does with a large number of work-

men, makes a fortune for himself. His commission, illegal as it is, decreases with the augmentation of the income of his client and is generally confined to the category of unskilled labourers. The skilled operatives are practically immune. It is a pity that the factory proprietors—almost all of them—plead ignorance of this. I have found only one employer—a mill-owner at Amritsar—who, knowing the evil ways of cashiers, paid out the wages personally.

The bonus system in the Punjab is an exception rather than the rule. Wherever a bonus is granted, it is small as compared with the profits made. There are a few factories—Dhariwal Woollen Mills, Amritsar Sugar Mills, etc.—which allow small bonuses to their employees in times of prosperity, but there are no hard and fast rules to regulate them.

The worker labours under several disabilities. Fines are imposed on him for faults, real or fictitious. The faults may be trivial. They may be due to some misunderstanding on the part of the foreman or the manager. But they may also be genuine. No enquiry whatsoever is ever made into the nature of the fault and the defaulter for it. The fines are imposed at the sweet will of the manager. The worker cannot make himself heard. He dare not try. There are no rules and regulations for the levying of fines and the worker, when he is employed, is not aware of them. Suddenly, on the pay-day, he realises that some deduction has been made from his wages. He feels the loss but it is only in very rare cases that he raises his finger against his master. In a Government factory, the manager told me that, under instructions from higher authorities, he could not fine any worker. He could, however, do the same thing in a more hard-hearted manner. "Whenever I am displeased with a worker", he said, "I sack him". "This is my general practice, and I hold fast to my guns."

In the case of a factory at Sujapore, two days' wages are deducted for every day of absence without notice. In a factory at Lahore employing about 292 persons daily on an average, I was told that fines were imposed in very rare cases for gross negligence. Still the total amount of fines came up to Rs. 226 in 1925-26, and Rs. 241 in 1926-27. The fines accrued to the general revenues.

Fines are arbitrarily imposed on the workers for coming late to their work. I have elsewhere said that the Punjab workers suffer from over punctuality. Some workers may be late but this will always be the exception rather than the general rule. It is no doubt true that the enforcement of discipline is essential to keep down the wilful absence of workers. Their absence causes loss to the factory. But it is also possible that the workers have not been given any other chance of securing leave. Some absence cannot be avoided; and so fines should be inflicted only in rare cases, after all necessary warnings have been duly given.

Fines are generally considered as revenue. I came across only one instance in which they were utilised on workers' sports. It is desirable in the circumstances that ordinary mistakes or mistakes due to the inherent weaknesses of labourers as human beings should not necessitate a monetary penalty. These mistakes should be ignored, at least at the start. Nevertheless, warnings should be given to the defaulter and, after the patience of the manager has been often put to the test, a small fine may be imposed.

Before a fine is actually levied, the labourer should be called upon to explain his conduct and, if the explanation is satisfactory, no disciplinary action should be taken. If, however, he is fined, an appeal should lie to a higher authority who should hear it conjointly with a labour representative. A permanent Appeal-Board, with representatives both of capital and labour, should be feasible in every factory.

But all this implies power which the worker does not possess. We naturally come to the conclusion that his position cannot be strengthened unless he learns to organise himself. But, before that comes, it is necessary that he should be made to understand the procedure he may have to adopt in cases of fines. The most essential thing herein is the formulation of rules. A definite code of rules should be drawn up in consultation with the employees. They should be duly approved of by the Factory Inspector, hung up on the notice board for the information of labourers, and enforced with their co-operation. Foremen should be instructed to explain clearly these rules on different occasions to the labourers under their charge. The labourers are poor

and fines, as a matter of fact, should not exceed a certain portion of their wages. I suggest that they should not exceed a day's wage in one month and should compulsorily be utilised on their social activities.

In almost all factories workers are employed overtime, whenever necessary. I will show later on that the working hours are already too many. Consequently, overtime work should never become the rule as it is at present in our factories. And when the labourer works overtime, he should in no case get an overtime wage at less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ of his ordinary wage. Now-a-days overtime wages are generally reckoned at the ordinary rate. In a large number of factories, overtime work is not paid for. In a factory in the Gurdaspur district, overtime workers are allowed the privilege of leaving the factory earlier next day in proportion to the extra time put in by them.

One thing more. The contract of work is an unwritten one. The day-to-day labourer can leave at any time without serving a notice. He may equally be dismissed in his turn at any moment. For permanent wage-earners, the duration of notice to leave service varies. In some cases the notice required is fifteen days. The poor worker is not aware of it and loses his wages if he leaves without a formal notice. The following table sums up the total loss which the labourers incurred in the shape of forfeiture of wages for want of notice in a factory in the Gurdaspur district during the year 1925-26. It must be borne in mind that the total number of workers in the factory stood at the average figure of 50. Thus, the total loss of wages to workers in one year came up to about Rs. 40/5/-. It went into the pockets of the employer.

Period—August, 1925 to July, 1926

1.	One labourer getting	Rs.	11/-	P.M.	lost	4	days'	wages.
2.	"	"	11/-	"	"	6	"	"
3.	"	"	11/-	"	"	12	"	"
4.	"	"	11/-	"	"	5	"	"
5.	"	"	9/-	"	"	14	"	"
6.	"	"	10/-	"	"	30	"	"
7.	"	"	25/-	"	"	12	"	"
8.	"	"	11/-	"	"	11	"	"
9.	"	"	11/-	"	"	6	"	"

But let us look at the other side of the picture. The employer can dismiss his worker without ceremony. The worker is poor and cannot go to the law courts for the redress of his grievances. Throughout my investigations, I came across only one instance in which one month's wages were given to a person who was summarily dismissed. It may have been due to the fact that the person concerned was a factory manager and knew all about the forms of law.

The unskilled as well as the partly skilled labourer can be dispensed with at once. The case with a fully skilled labourer is different. He may or may not be served with a notice. In a factory in the Lahore district, the skilled hands serve on individual contracts duly drawn up beforehand. They are usually bound down for a period of five years before which they cannot leave. The employer, on the other hand, can bid them good-bye by serving a notice of three months. Very curious indeed! lest the worker should deceive his master, he is called upon to deposit a guarantee fund which is either paid down, or collected by a regular monthly deduction from wages during the course of a year. The guarantee fund amounts to three months' wages.

Irregular and summary dismissals create heart burnings and the arbitrary nature of factory employment must needs continue, in the absence of any labour organisation. It is in the fitness of things that employers should explore every possible avenue of employment before the order of dismissal is issued. This is never done in our factories and the sooner it comes to pass, the better for all concerned.

Enough has been said as regards the income of workers—the credit side of the balance-sheet. Let us now look at the debit side, and see how it stands. My inquiries show that an average labourer's family consists of 41 persons. There are no statistics available to show the great mortality amongst working-class people. Very many children die in the first year of their lives. The various epidemics find a ready prey in them. They have no reserve to fall back upon. The factory-doctor, wherever he exists, dances attendance on the clerical staff and scarcely cares for the operatives. He is moreover not highly

paid. In some cases he gets the meagre sum of Rs. 5 as a monthly allowance; in others a little more. It is only in a few highly organised industries—*e.g.* Attock Oil Company and Dhariwal Woollen Mills—which are supervised by Europeans, that a whole-time qualified physician is met with.

But even then, the factory-labourer does not seem to derive any advantage. He is prejudiced against the western system of medicine. This may be due to ignorance; but it is a fact. Thus, the labourer, when he falls ill, goes in for a nature cure and leaves himself to his fate. He may have to support himself alone, or a huge family. In either case, his living is from hand to mouth. He knows that he will be starved if he keeps away from work. He tries to shake off his lethargy and pretends to be well. He attends the factory even in days of slight illness. It is only when the fever is high or the ailment serious, that he stretches himself on a mat on the floor which is his only bed. Even then, he is not removed to a hospital or to a segregated quarter. He lingers on and spreads infection to others. He may recover in course of time, or he may succumb to his disease. But, before he bids farewell to this world, he makes the last struggle for existence. He consults some quack, if available. Otherwise, the factory-doctor, if any, is approached. He may be inefficient, in fact he generally is, and may book the patient off to the other world promptly.

This is true of the labourer who has practically nothing in his pocket. But, at the time of illness, he may have a few silver chips with him. Or, when he is seriously ill and becomes despondent, he may approach the factory-manager for the realisation of his wages. The manager receives him cordially. He does not desire that any casualty should be reported from his area and is willing to see him off bag and baggage.

The labourer himself labours under certain prejudices. He wants to be near his kith and kin in days of serious illness, and loses the least possible time in hastening towards his home. If he recovers, he may come back once again. Otherwise, nothing more is heard of him. This is how the factory worker stands.

It has been established beyond doubt that he prefers to be

treated by a *hakim*.¹ Unless his mental outlook changes, it is absolutely essential that factories should be enjoined by law to keep a whole-time or a part-time physician to treat him free. The Punjab University holds annual examinations for "Hakim Haziqship."² Diplomas are awarded to successful candidates and it is certainly very easy for factory-owners to procure the services of efficient physicians. I, therefore, propose that every factory employing 50 persons or more should keep a whole-time physician. Factories employing less than 50 labourers should be called upon to keep a part-time physician who may treat the patients and devote at least two hours daily for them. There should be one physician for every 200 labourers.

It may be noted in passing that a Hakim Haziq³ will be cheaper than a physician trained in the Western School of medicine. His services, if whole-time, cannot cost more than Rs. 80 per mensem—a negligible sum in relation to the total expenses of a factory. The local boards can also come to the rescue of the factory-owners by a special recurring grant for the hospital.

A factory-doctor is essential especially in a tropical country like ours. My experience proves that the number of patients goes up six or seven-fold, and even more in some cases, in malarial seasons as compared with normal times. In a factory in the Gurdaspur district, labourers generally suffer from fever, stomach and bowel complaints. The number of patients therein came up to about 120 on an average every day in 1926-27, whereas the total number of labourers working in the mills was about 1,000.

In an Amritsar factory, the number of patients in the malarial days is four times as large as on normal occasions. Similarly, in a Chheherta factory the number of patients in the malarial seasons is six times as high as in ordinary days. In a cotton mill at Amritsar, the number of patients in malarial days is fifteen to twenty times as high as in normal days.

In a factory at Shahdara, no doctor is provided for. A

¹This term is generally applied to a physician well-versed in the old school of medicine.

²A Diploma in the old school of medicine.

³A diploma holder in the old school of medicine.

mere Rs. 20/- p.m., as the manager told me, is set aside for the doctor but none could be had even for an hour daily on such a meagre salary.

Before we proceed to further discussion, let me analyse the expenditure of factory-workers on main groups of commodities. The analysis, it must be remembered, is based on budgets that I collected in 1920 and 1921 and is given below:—

1. Food	...	...	...	...	68'50
2. Clothing	...	...	...	...	11'80
3. Fuel and Lighting	...	...	...	...	5'12
4. House-rent	...	...	...	...	2'50
5. Medicines	...	...	...	...	'60
6. Luxuries (Tobacco, Country-liquor, Charas, Bhang, Opium, etc.)	...	...	...	...	5'20
7. Services (Barber, Laundry, etc.)	...	...	...	...	2'20
8. Travelling	...	...	...	...	2'00
9. Education	...	...	...	...	'02
10. Charities	...	...	...	...	'34
11. Miscellaneous (Soap, Stationery, etc.)...	...	...	...	...	1'72
					<hr/>
				Total	100'00

My investigations were confined to cotton spinning and flour mills and related to labourers who earned Rs. 50 or less. Another investigator who devoted his attention almost entirely to the North-Western Railway workshops, Lahore, and collected 547 family budgets thus expresses himself:—

“My calculation then showed that 37% of the labourers under my study were living below jail standard, 12% were earning just subsistence wages, 18% of the families were earning just above the bare subsistence level, Rs. 2-14-4 being the surplus per family. This certainly betrayed poverty of income and resources.

“I have considered food-scales allowed in the jail as the bare subsistence allowance which was just sufficient to maintain a man and no more.

“The table is a survey of 547 families showing deficits or surpluses both as calculated according to jail standard and as estimated from their budgets.

Group	Range of Income	Number of Families	Average No. of Members per family	Deficit or surplus according to jail standard		Estimated deficiency or surplus as calculated from their budgets		Estimated indebtedness per family.						
				Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus							
				Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.							
1	Rs. per monsem 20 & under	50	2.5	10	7	6	...	4	0	5	...	164	9	6
2	25 "	42	3.6	8	11	8	...	6	15	1	...	181	13	7
3	30 "	47	3.5	1	13	5	...	0	13	9	...	168	12	0
4	35 "	48	4.1	1	3	5	...	0	7	0	...	270	0	0
5	40 "	61	4.1	...	...	...	...	3	1	11	...	316	13	7
6	45 "	47	4.7	...	...	...	...	3	3	5	...	485	7	3
7	50 "	41	4.8	...	...	...	...	6	6	7	...	405	8	10
8	55 "	41	5.6	...	...	...	...	10	14	6	...	757	14	0
9	60 "	21	5.7	...	...	...	...	14	6	4	...	402	2	8
10	65 "	32	5.4	...	...	...	...	20	1	1	...	264	7	9
11	70 "	22	5.2	...	...	...	...	28	7	2	...	609	6	0
12	75 "	23	6.5	...	...	...	...	22	2	9	...	629	4	0
13	80 "	17	6	...	...	...	...	29	8	9	...	430	13	4
14	85 "	12	5.9	...	...	...	...	38	9	1	...	478	9	1
15	90 "	5	6.8	...	...	...	...	40	6	4	...	1010	0	0
16	95 "	11	5.8	...	...	...	...	42	4	3	...	987	8	6
17	100 "	5	7	...	...	...	...	44	3	1	...	1172	0	0
18	100 & above	22	6.4	...	...	...	...	74	6	8	...	925	5	0

"There could be no more deplorable picture of poverty. Under such economic distress, labour could not help resorting to any desperate means to keep the wolf away from the door."

...¹ "Conditions with respect to food were still worse. ..."

The following table given by the same investigator shows the monthly consumption of milk, meat and ghee per family:—

Range of Income (per Month)	Number of Families	Consumption of Meat per family	Consumption of milk and ghee per family
Rs. 20 & under ...	50	Rs. 0 9 7	Rs. 1 10 9
" 30 & " ...	89	0 14 9	2 5 11
" 40 & " ...	109	2 0 3	3 8 6

¹Indian Journal of Economics Vol. VII, Part II—Serial No. 24.—October, 1926; Pages 103-106.

Range of Income (per Month)	Number of Families	Consumption of Meat per family	Consumption of milk and ghee per family
" 50 & under ...	88	2 6 8	4 11 11
" 60 & " ...	62	2 9 11	7 7 11
" 70 & " ...	54	3 7 0	9 2 4
" 80 & " ...	40	3 6 7	10 9 2
" 90 & " ...	17	5 1 7	13 7 4
" 100 & " ...	16	5 2 8	15 4 8
" 100 & above ...	22	6 1 9	19 4 0

The mill-hand falls into the clutches of the bania soon after he begins his work in the factory. My enquiries showed that 62% of the labourers were in debt. In two mills at Amritsar the percentage was as high as 79.

The amount of indebtedness is influenced by various circumstances. If a bania is a shopkeeper with his shop located near the quarters of the workers, all sorts of facilities to run into debt are easily given with the result that the labourer gets entangled with no hope of early recovery. Or the workers' quarters may be few and far between. They may be scattered over different areas; the workers may have been accommodated in groups in private houses as, for example, in big cities like Lahore and Amritsar. In such cases there is no hope for the money-lender-shopkeeper. The bania comes and pays a casual visit. He gets into touch with workers and encourages some of them who are reliable in his eyes to take loans. He asks them to approach him for help at any odd hour, and advises them to spend extravagantly on marriage and death ceremonies. This is done and loans are contracted for various purposes and under various pretences. My enquiries prove that the main causes of indebtedness are the following:—

- (1) Marriage.
- (2) Illness and death.
- (3) Repayment of debt inherited from parents.
- (4) Insufficient wages and unemployment.
- (5) Intemperate habits.

Marriage comes first in order of importance. In 40% of cases, it is marriage that brings the labourer into debt. Loans

are contracted for its due celebration, and, in some cases, for the actual purchase of the wife. Funeral ceremonies also entail a huge monetary sacrifice. The priests have to be fed and various rites have to be performed. This is possible only if the money-lender accommodates.

The money-lender is usually a bania. He keeps his accounts in a loose running sort of *bahi*¹ which can be easily tampered with. He is sometimes very crafty and is much too shrewd for the ignorant labourers.² The profession of money-lending is honourable in itself but, if it transgresses the limits of honesty, there is no end to the troubles which it may bring in its train. The rate of interest charged is generally high: in some cases it goes up to as much as 300 per cent per annum. One anna per rupee per month is a common rate. The state of affairs is indeed alarming and intervention from Government in limiting the rate of interest will be greatly welcomed.

There are a large number of lenders who have not adopted money-lending as a profession. The factory-labourers are often accommodated by one of their own class. Money is lent out in small sums of Rs. 5/- or thereabouts. No accounts are regularly kept and maintained by the labourer-money-lender, as he should be called. He realises his interest every month and so long as this is paid regularly, no difficulty arises. When any borrower

¹ The indigenous account book of the bania.

² One instance from a rural area in the Punjab will depict the petty money-lenders in their true colours.

"In my own village there is a poor Zemindar who, in order to pay his land-revenue, borrowed a sum of Rs. 7 from the money-lender of the village. As the borrower was quite illiterate, he did not know what he wrote in his accounts. After some time, to his utter dismay and astonishment, legal proceedings were taken against the poor debtor by the wily money-lender for the recovery of Rs. 700 The suit was dismissed in the lower court and, in the appellate court, the appeal was accepted and the decree of Rs. 700 passed."

(Vide Punjab Legislative Council Debates, 12th December, 1925; speech by Syed Mohd. Husain, Page 1778.)

Report on the working of the Co-operative Societies in the Punjab for the year ending 31st July, 1925, page 5—Foot Note by the Registrar:—

"As an instance of the need for understanding accounts, take the Rahti system of Gurgaon. Each sum of Rs. 10 owed by the debtor is a Rahti, and is paid in 12 monthly instalments of one rupee. This looks simple and appeals to the ignorant borrower, but the rate works out at 44 per cent. Interest from 37½ to 304 per cent is charged on instalments in arrears. The system is appropriately called the Rahti (perpetual) loan."

refuses to pay, he is threatened in ways more than one; but usually in the form of violence, and the money lent is thereby extracted from him.

The factory-labourer is also sometimes financed by the vagrant pathans who come down from the frontier for purposes of trade adopting money-lending as a secondary profession. They realise money from the borrower at the point of the *lathi*.¹

The money-lender usually advances money at exorbitant rates of interest. Why? He knows that there is a great risk in the undertaking. The labourer may run away as he does in certain circumstances. He may die or he may in the long run prove utterly incapable of the repayment of the debt. A regulation fixing the rate of interest at a maximum of 12% will bring very good results in its wake. The extravagance of factory-labourers will be partly checked as it will then be impossible for the bania to advance money without reliable security.

The figures given above display the very low standard of living which our workers enjoy. There has been, no doubt, an almost imperceptible progress of late. Still, their expenses on education are nil or negligible. Medicines and charities,² too, account for an extremely small proportion of their expenditure. A large part of the income is spent on foodstuffs.

The standard of living may be described as the aggregate earnings of the population divided by the total number. But it is something more than an arithmetical calculation in as much as it gives rise to many subtle questions as to the distribution of money income. It relates to the division of income into necessities of life, conventional necessities and luxuries. For each class of labourers, a certain amount of money is essential for maintaining its members. In addition, it is necessary to have more than a bare minimum if efficiency is to be maintained. The result of my investigations clearly shows that the standard of living of the factory labourers is low. The worker's earning-power has increased slowly and steadily but there has been only an imperceptible change in his condition, especially in that of the unskilled labourer.

¹ The lathi is the lower part of the stem of the male bamboo, about 6 feet long, some times loaded with metal.

² These are largely religious gifts.

The expenses of labourers are rather disproportionate. An increase in their earning capacities is attended by an increased consumption of luxuries, adding nothing to their efficiency. Moreover, a large number of labourers are so seriously addicted to the use of bhang, charas, opium and liquor that they would try to curtail some of the necessaries of life for a passing pleasure. As a result, physical and intellectual degeneration has set in amongst them owing, no doubt, in part to their intemperate ways of life.

A large portion of their income is spent in country-liquor immediately after the pay-day. Many of the workmen in some mills absent themselves for a day after the receipt of their wages. The factory work thereby suffers. The manager of the Mela Ram Cotton Mills, Lahore used in 1920 to close his mills for 24 hours after the pay-day because it was sometimes impossible to carry on the work with a small number of operatives. But this accentuates the situation still further. The workers—one and all—are let loose to give free play to their inclinations.

Much may be done by example and persuasion. I cannot at this stage help mentioning the great moral influence wielded by a factory—owner at Amritsar over his employees. He is pious and virtuous and has been successful in greatly reforming his workmen in spite of the fact that the labourers in the neighbouring mills are unaffected. It is very difficult to quote the precise amount of money the factory labourer spends on luxuries. It is still more difficult to quote the average figure as it is the average of extremes. Further still, it is the male population which is addicted to charas, bhang, opium or liquor. Women, generally, do not drink. I have shown that more than 5 per cent of the money incomes of classes within the range of my inquiries in 1920 and 1921 was spent on luxuries. In the case of the lowest class of workers, the percentage is still higher. The consumption of alcoholic drinks brings down the productivity of workers and impoverishes their resources. The following table will throw much light on this point. It was prepared by me after personal interviews with the 507 operatives concerned.

Pioneer Flour Mills, Shahdara (1920)

Department	Total No. in the Department	Drinkers (including charas, ¹ bhang ² and opium—takers, etc.)	Smokers
Mistris	2	1	2
Fitters	5	...	5
Drivers	2	2	2
Workshop-men	6	5	4
Cleaners	18	8	17
Washermen	2	2	2
Packers	24	14	23
Rulemen	4	1	3
Oilmen	2	2	2
Pallahdars	20	5	18
Coalmen	3	1	3
Firemen	2	...	2
Women-workers	10	...	10
Cobblers	2	1	2
Bagsmen	2	...	2
Total	104	42	97

Rustomjea Flour Mills, Badami Bagh (1920)

Mistris	2	1	2
Rulemen	9	6	8
Pipemen	33	20	30
Pallahdars	24	17	19
Workshop	13	...	13
Total	81	44	72

Mela Ram Cotton Mills, Lahore (1920)

Department	Total No. in the Department.	Drinkers (including charas, bhang and opium takers.)	Smokers
Reeling { 22 men	53	10	22
{ 31 women		2	31
Blow-room	14	4	14
Carding	22	10	22
Drawing	21	16	20

¹ Hemp-leaves.

² The exudation of the flowers of hemp collected with the dew and prepared for use as an intoxicating drug (it is said, by persons running through a field of ganj with leathern aprons). Urdu, Hindi and English Dictionary: Platts—London, 1884.

Mela Ram Cotton Mills, Lahore, (1920)

Department	Total No. in the Department	Drinkers (including charas, bhanga and opium takers)	Smokers
Slubbing ...	8	6	8
Intermediate, etc.	13	5	12
Roving ...	30	15	28
Engine-room ...	22	6	20
Ring ...	53	14	50
Mule ...	86	36	84
Total	322	124	311

Out of 507 men and women, 41% drank or took opium, charas or bhanga, 95% smoked. The consumption of drink usually takes the form of an immediate expenditure of about 3% of their wages on country liquor on the morning following pay-day. It is enough to intoxicate. By the afternoon the effects have worn off and the worker spends the evening shopping. Workers from the United Provinces drink more heavily than the Punjabis. It must be remembered that the above list included only those persons who declared themselves or who were otherwise seen as confirmed drinkers and smokers. There must have been many more besides who felt shy of disclosing their habits and who could not in any way be detected. The following table¹ gives the consumption per 100 of the population in general in gallons or seers (as the case may be) of country spirit, opium and hemp-drugs from 1915 to 1926 :—

Year	Country Spirit (Distilling Area)—Gallons	Opium Seers	Hemp Drugs Seers
1925—26	1'31	'18	Charas '05—Bhang '43
1924--25	1'31	'11	Charas '05—Bhang '40
1923--24	'58	'16	Charas '06—Bhang '35
1922--23	'90	'16	Charas '07—Bhang '39
1921—22	1'45	'18	Charas '08—Bhang '37

¹ Reports on the Excise Administration in the Punjab ; 1916-1926. Imperial Returns No. V.

Year	Country Spirit (Distilling Area)--Gallons	Opium Seers	Hemp Drugs Seers
1920—21	2'67	'25	Charas '12—Bhang °31
1919—20	2'78	'26	Charas '11—Bhang °48
1918—19	2'53	'27	..... °58
1917—18	2'03	'29	..... °60
1916—17	1'83	'31	..... °59

Illicit distillation is on the increase year after year. No figures of illicit consumption are available. It should be noted that cheap German whiskies are at present displacing country-liquor and our workers are slowly taking to them.

The question of intemperance is indeed very serious. All the principal religions prohibit the consumption of liquor. Still, it is easy for the labourers to fall a prey to the liquor-shop dealer from the facilities which the latter provides with his shop near the quarters. The result is that a large number of them indulge in intoxicants on several occasions in addition to an immediate expenditure after the pay-day. Smoking is a habit with the workman and entails a sacrifice of about half a pice per day.

Gambling is another vice to which the labourers are addicted. I made searching inquiries into the condition of a mill at Amritsar in May, 1927, and was led to the conclusion that 60 per cent of the unskilled labourers gambled injudiciously. There were cases in which some labourers had lost five or six rupees at a time. A large number gambled in a few annas; but, even then, the sum lost or gained represented an appreciable portion of their wages.

Intemperance, gambling and other social vices which have corrupted the factory-labourer could be easily brought under control through counter attractions. Temperance societies and societies for the promotion of scientific knowledge exist all over in big towns. They have so far confined their attention to the city population. It would be a boon if such societies were to extend their activities to the factory-areas.

They could bring the labourers round by popular lectures, by night schools, by educative cinema shows and by temperance canteens. An experiment in this direction is well worth trying. Again, all liquor shops situated close to factory areas should be at once closed. It must be carefully borne in mind that gambling, drinking, or even ignorantly spending money on useless pursuits of life brings down the actual standard of living of the labourer who is addicted to one or all of these evils.

The factory population, on the whole, is sunk in poverty. Their living is practically from hand to mouth. So long as the labourer is capable of carrying on his daily calling, the family manages to make both ends meet, though not easily. But as soon as he falls ill, debts are incurred and, after this source has been completely tapped, starvation begins. Living in this miserable plight, it is but natural for some of these half-starved labourers to take to burglaries and night-looting. Their sad economic condition directly accounts for it.

There is one more trouble in their way. Near their houses exists the shop of a bania, who advances them all the necessaries of life on credit realising the price on the pay-day. He sells at rates dearer than those of the market, and makes a huge profit by greatly adulterating the food-stuffs. To illustrate this, I must state the instance of a factory shopkeeper who was once selling *atta* (wheat flour) at $6\frac{1}{2}$ seers per rupee when the same, or rather a superior, quality could be had in the market at $7\frac{1}{2}$ seers for a rupee. Again, the labourers buy their provisions in small instalments and pay high prices accordingly.

This evil can be checked in one way. The labourers are now paid every month (with about 7 to 15 days' wages in arrears). It must be laid down by law that weekly payment of wages should in future be made for workers earning less than Rs. 50/- per mensem. Weekly wages will enable poor labourers to buy things for cash rather than on credit and thereby to pay lower prices for the same articles. Moreover, the labourer will be sufficiently independent to make his purchases in the cheapest possible market. Credit purchases make him over-liberal: he buys much more than his scanty means allow.

One great utility of weekly payments is that they can help labourers to distribute their money uniformly throughout the month and thus obtain the maximum satisfaction from their purchases. Prudence and foresight can play their part usefully and well, when the period of purchase extends over one week rather than over one month. In the case of monthly wages, a relatively larger portion of wages is spent a few days after their receipt, leaving only a small margin for the remaining part of the month.

The workers live on credit and pay exorbitant rates of interest to the money-lenders. Moreover, their wages are usually in arrears for more than a week, sometimes, for more than a month at the time of strikes. Their payment is withheld and the poor labourers are greatly harassed.

With a view to removing some of these difficulties Mr. Chaman Lal introduced a Bill in the Legislative Assembly on the 23rd September, 1924, for the weekly payment of wages to workmen, domestic servants, and other employees. The Bill was circulated to the various Local Governments and interested bodies for opinion. The Punjab Government said:—

"Inquiries have shown that the introduction of a compulsory weekly payment system would not be popular either with employers or with workers . . . Its adoption would involve an enormous increase in clerical work, and the difficulties of its application to departmental or local funds staff working in remote areas are obvious. Further, the payment of illiterate labour is a laborious process and the institution of four pay-days a month would seriously affect the interests of the employer in respect of the waste of working time involved . . . In certain industries the loss of time might be shifted to the workers thus reducing their total wages . . . Under the present system the custom has grown up of workers meeting their private commitments monthly; a system of monthly payment enables them to meet these commitments and even in some cases to effect small savings. If weekly payments are made there is a real danger that a greater proportion of each worker's pay will be spent on petty extravagances, the saving possible out of the weekly wage being too small to act as any inducement

economy. Apart from the difficulty of securing the safe custody of any such savings, the result would probably be that all, except the most thrifty, would constantly find themselves in difficulties".

The Bill no doubt suffered from some drawbacks. It was of a too comprehensive nature but it does not mean that the experiment ought not to have been tried within the small and manageable field of factory workers. The Provincial Governments and the employers of labour were opposed to the Bill, which was with-drawn by Mr. Chaman Lal. Sir Bhupendra Nath, however, assured the House that "he would inquire into cases where the payment of wages had been delayed to the workers and present a Bill to cover such irregularities if they existed."

It is no doubt true that the weekly payment of wages would necessitate certain adjustments. The employers are afraid of losing their interest and do not want any compulsion to be brought to bear upon them. The measure is nevertheless useful and deserves wholehearted support from the enlightened public. Some of the literate labourers realise its need, and the North Western Railway Union, Lahore, extended its support to the Bill when it was circulated for opinion.

But it must be understood that the weekly payment of wages cannot solve the whole question. It can be aptly said that a proportional and scientific expenditure is in a way the crux of the whole labour problem in the Punjab. Says Dr. Marshall¹:—

"A rise in the standard of life implies an intelligence and energy and self-respect leading to more care and judgment in expenditure, and to an avoidance of food and drink that gratify the appetite but afford no strength and of ways of living that are unwholesome physically and morally. A rise in the standard of life for the whole population will much increase the national dividend and the share of it which accrues to each grade and to each trade."

The difficulties of our labourer necessitate the appointment of a welfare worker. The last few years (1919-1927) have shown

¹ Marshall: Principles of Economics—London, 1922. Vol. 1, Book VI, Chapter XIII. Page 689.

that there is something essentially wrong with industry. Large-scale production, it is true, has advantages of its own. Its main drawback lies in the fact that the individual worker is now far removed from the employer, and that his interests are thereby apt to be overlooked.

The employers in the western world have, of late, directed their attention to the human factor in industry. It has been recognised that the factory and factory-workers are inseparably connected with each other, and that any improvement in the latter leads to a more or less proportional improvement in the former. Welfare schemes have done an invaluable service to labourers in England, and it is believed that they will grow from more to more.

“Welfare work consists of voluntary efforts on the part of employers to improve, within the existing industrial system, the conditions of employment in their own factories.”¹ Industry has an obligation to discharge towards the workers. This idea has taken a firm grip of the western employers and is now making a steady headway. The War of 1914 greatly accelerated the welfare movement in England, and it now stands as an integral part of industrial organisation. Again, the Workers' Revolution in Russia has set the employers of Europe thinking about placating labour, and, whereas formerly it was a benevolent and charitable act, it is now looked upon as a duty.

The welfare worker holds an important position. “He is usually responsible for seeing that workers are placed in jobs for which they are physically and temperamentally fitted, and that they have opportunities for training and development of initiative. He may be responsible for seeing that all legal requirements regarding employment are carried out for co-operating with the Factory Certifying Surgeon with regard to the medical examination of young workers, and for seeing that the working conditions and general environments are as good as the firm can afford to make them. He is consequently responsible for first aid, canteen and cloak room arrangements,

¹ E.D. Prond : *Welfare Work* ; London, 1916. Page 5.

and often has a great share in promoting facilities for education and recreation."¹

The question now arises "how far have our factory-owners in the Punjab tried to imitate their brethren of the west in this important matter?" I must plainly admit that an overwhelmingly large majority of them have very little to their credit. Welfare work of an extremely elementary nature has taken root in some factories, mostly those controlled by Europeans. But even there, it is looked upon not as a duty but as a benevolent measure, pure and simple, and that too merely an eye-wash.

There are not more than five factories in the Punjab which try to promote, though to a small extent, the educative and recreative tendencies of workers. Medicines are freely distributed in some mills. But this alone does not constitute welfare-work. Besides these, there is the creation of harmony, the co-operation of management and workers in industry. This appears through the works committee, where representatives of employers and employees meet together for the discussion of common aims and objects.

Real progress is impossible without the genuine co-operation of workers. How far have the Punjab mill-owners secured it? It is only in the railway workshops in Lahore that a works committee has been set afoot of late. It is still in its infancy and nothing definite can be predicted about its future.

The mill-owner reigns. He often treats the factory-workers as his private servants and extracts extra work from them. He sometimes assumes the role of a dictator and uses abusive and filthy language to them. Let me point out that we cannot achieve a solid and substantial success in industry unless and until the worker extends his good-will to the master. And, here, patience is required. Evil conditions of the past and present have bred suspicion and distrust amongst mill-hands, and these will take a long time to disappear. Still, genuine and disinterested attempts are sure to bear fruit sooner or later. Will the mill-owners wake up before it is too late?

¹ Welfare work in Industry, Edited by E. T. Kelly; London—1925—Pages 7 and 8.

A welfare-worker, to repeat once again, is an extremely necessary adjunct of a wise and successful industrial organisation. A large factory can procure his services all for itself. Smaller factories, situated in a particular area, may combine together and do the needful.

Welfare work in the Punjab can safely proceed on the following lines:—

(1) Canteens. Our workers, if alone, prepare their own meals. Otherwise, it is the wife or any other female member who cooks his food. A few crumbs of dry bread, if available, constitute our worker's breakfast. The food prepared in the morning is carried generally to the mills, where it is taken at the mid-day interval in some nook or corner. It generally consists of loaves of bread, which are supplemented once or twice a week with cooked vegetables or meat.

Mess-rooms exist nowhere. When the mid-day syren is sounded, the operatives are seen taking their meal here, there and everywhere. Some flock under the shade of a tree, while others squat in the corridors or stairs. Others still are found having their meal near their place of work.

In some factories, the workers are turned out into the open at the mid-day interval. They generally go to their quarters if they have any, or pass the time under shady trees. Their condition is pitiable in the rainy season. They run about from place to place for shelter till the interval is over.

In general, there is no shed for the workers for the taking of meals. Is it not necessary that a canteen should be started in every decent factory and cooked food supplied to workers at cost-price? This will be very economical for them and is sure to prove popular. It is said that caste prejudices stand in their way. For myself, I do not believe this. The Muslim workers have no such prejudices. The Hindus and Sikhs eat freely together, and if canteens for Hindus and Muslims separately are started they will indeed prove useful. Care must be taken that canteens are comfortable and well-ventilated. They should be made as cool as possible in the summer season.

Having been deeply sunk in poverty and drudging along in this condition for a long time past, the workers have almost no

idea of the elementary rules of sanitation. Their habits are not clean. They look very rude and rough, though they carry a kind and charitable heart within. It is necessary that instruction in rules of health, diet and sanitation should be imparted to them. This will prove highly useful.

Employers should interest themselves in and give financial aid to any social agencies which may crop up for the uplift of the labouring classes. The worker should be taught to regard himself as a member of a respectable body. He should be instructed to have more self-respect. Any attempt made in this direction will surely benefit the master as well as the worker.

(2) Cleanliness. I shall mention in the next chapter that smaller mills are never properly whitewashed: some of them appear to have been whitewashed ages ago. The floors are invariably unclean. Some of them are not even cemented. Walls and passages accumulate a great amount of dust.

The workers themselves look listless. Their clothes are generally dirty, and, in summer days, very bad-smelling. This, combined with the unclean factories, leaves a depressing effect on the worker. Cleanliness is godliness and any improvement in this direction is sure to be amply rewarded.

(3) Regular medical examination through physicians and dentists. Some organised firms have physicians, whole-time or part-time, attached to them, but a thorough medical examination of workers has nowhere been undertaken. Moreover, there is not even a single factory in the Punjab which has a dentist for the benefit of workers. Neither has the Government realised this necessity so far. Doctors, I must repeat, are a sheer necessity, and workers must be regularly examined by them.

“First Aid to the Injured” classes may also be started in different factories through an enlistment of the help and co-operation of the Red Cross Society. Accidents in modern industry are inevitable and the rough handling of wounded men by untrained hands can better be imagined than described. In my opinion, antiseptic dressing for wounds should be made compulsory

on factory owners as it is found that slight injuries grow dangerous when unattended. Accidents in the Punjab are alarmingly high; yet there are not more than five or six factories which may have provision for first-aid.

(4) Now-a-days, workers in the Punjab are recruited haphazard. There is no judicious appointment. This is one of the many reasons which account for the ever-shifting tendencies of our labourers. "Much of the tragedy in the life of the worker has been connected with the casual way of entering the factory which has been in vogue and the careless apportioning of the work when once engaged".¹ Welfare work can surely aim at a wise selection of workers and avoid unnecessary waste which goes on in the factories at present.

The mill-owner takes things easy. It is no doubt true that the workers are illiterate. Still, a certain amount of interest can be created in them by a regular course of lectures, and the new wireless broadcasting can help them immensely. The average labourer does not know anything at present about the condition of the industry he is engaged in. He is in fact ignorant of everything except his own little process that goes to maintain the members of his family.

Lectures can surely awaken him from his torpor. They should be so arranged as to give him the chance of understanding the whole mechanism of his factory from beginning to end. The geography of the factory, the manufacture of the product, its marketing abroad, and all other problems directly or indirectly bearing on it should be explained and illustrated by lantern slides.

Also, sufficient records should be kept of the name, home address, date of birth, date of appointment, trade-union membership, etc. etc. of the different labourers. Again, their efficiency and progress, their absence and causes thereof should be regularly noted.

These are some of the duties which may safely be taken up by the welfare-worker. It must be remembered that his success depends mainly on the co-operation which he receives from the

¹ Vide Kelly and Haskins : Pamphlet on 'Foundations of Industrial Welfare.'

mill-owner. But it is also dependent upon his personal qualifications. The welfare-worker must be highly paid. He must possess a staunch character, a keen sense of justice, and a sound sense of proportion. He must also be good tempered—a quality which will count high towards success in his work.

CHAPTER IV

FACTORIES AT WORK

THE total number of factories in 1926 under the Amended Factories Act stood at 563 in the Punjab. The table¹ given below shows the gradual increase that has taken place during the last sixteen years :—

Year.	Total number of factories in the Punjab.	Factories actually working during the year.	Number of factories which remained closed	Year.	Total number of factories in the Punjab.	Factories actually working during the year.	Number of factories which remained closed.
1926	563	548	15	1917	191	171	20
1925	541	527	14	1916	184	170	14
1924	465	434	31	1915	187	163	24
1923	434	399	35	1914	201	197	4
1922 ^a	366	325	41	1913 ^b	224	204	26
1921	297	261	36	1912	234	208	23
1920	285	257	28	1911	268	205	60
1919	247	230	17	1910	262	228	34
1918	203	176	27				

The great conflagration of 1914 held out high hopes for us. But the Punjab was not well prepared to avail itself of the golden opportunities thereby offered. Trade remained slack until 1916, when conditions took a favourable turn. New

¹ Annual Reports on the working of factories in the Punjab from 1910 to 1926.

^a The Amendment Act came into force in July, 1922. One provision of the new Act was that Local Governments were empowered to control factories with ten labourers or more, whether mechanical power was used or not. This power was not exercised in 1922.

^b The year 1913 and after do not include Delhi.

cotton-ginning factories came into being, but the pooling arrangements of employers kept the number of those actually working at a rather low figure. On the other hand, the War necessitated the increase of manufactured goods incidental to a campaign. The Dhariwal Woollen Mills were working at their greatest capacity. Shell-making and other munition works increased the number of operatives in the Railway Workshops. Thus, it may be safely said that the increase in the number of factories partly reflects the industrial advancement of the Punjab. But this apparent increase must in part be attributed to the gradual extension of the Factory Act.

Sanitary Conditions

The increase in the number and size of registered factories has given rise to several acute problems. Under the Factory rules, all the inside walls and ceilings of rooms, passages and staircases are required to be limewashed at least once a year. Annual lime-washing was very half-heartedly taken up by mill-owners at the start. Perennial factories, employing 50 persons or more, show a satisfactory advance in this direction. Smaller factories lag behind—nay, they violate the law as far as possible. My experience shows that many of them have not been lime-washed for several years. The iron foundries at Batala are a case in point. Seasonal factories have little regard for the law. Their condition is extremely unsatisfactory, and some of them do not show even a pretence of whitewash.

Rubbish and debris generally accumulate in the premises of factories, large and small, and very little is done to remove them. This is especially true of ginning mills, oil mills and iron foundries. Drainage is very defective. The cleansing of floors in small factories is generally overlooked and the place set apart for drinking water is not kept in a drained condition.

Drains carrying sewage water sometimes are not constructed with impermeable material. They are not regularly flushed or connected with the main drainage of the town. This defect is conspicuous in some of the mills at Lyallpur, Sheikhpura, Gujranwala, Gujrat and Rawalpindi districts.

Latrine accommodation is not always sufficient. Neither is

it hygienic. The floors are not always cemented and waste-water very often is not led away to the main drains. It is at times allowed to stagnate and produce a sickening effect all round. In some factories, latrines are not often cleaned. Again, worn-out pans are not always replaced. According to the Punjab factory rules, the following scale has been laid down ; this scale was also recommended by the Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1907:—

	Seats
Where the number of operatives does not exceed 50 ...	3
Where the operatives are more than 50 and do not exceed 150 ...	4
Where the number of operatives exceeds 150 but does not exceed 250 ...	5
Where the number of operatives exceeds 250 : one seat for every 50 or fraction of 50.	

I believe that this scale does not work satisfactorily. It has been several times observed that all latrines are occupied at a time when a number of persons are on the waiting list outside. I have consulted some medical men on this point and have come to the conclusion that the standard of one seat for every thirty persons is necessary. Separate urinal accommodation as well should be provided to avoid unnecessary waste of time by the workers.

In some factories, men and women are both at work. Separate latrines, screened from those of men and at a reasonable distance from them, should be set apart for women-workers.

Proper conservancy is necessary in latrines. Putrefaction sets in very early in the summer and the rainy season, and a vigilant attention to hygienic and sanitary principles becomes all the more necessary at such a time. I suggest that the duties of municipal sanitary inspectors should be extended in one direction. They should be placed in part under the Factory Inspector and called upon to inspect factories with a view to suggesting and enforcing elementary rules of sanitation.

A plentiful supply of good drinking water is a necessity. It is inordinately hot in summer and there are not many mills

which keep a supply of cool water. In a large number of cases, the water-tap is fixed in an open space where the scorching heat of summer does its work: the tap water is lukewarm. Tap-water is not available in some areas. It is there that the main trouble arises. A well is dug, but its water is not periodically examined. Moreover, small pools of dirty water collect round the brickwork and its continual trickling down pollutes the well water. Where it is not possible to supply tap-water or where the public water-supply is intermittent, Factory rules enjoin a storage of drinking water at the scale of one gallon per head. My visits to different factories have convinced me of the insufficiency of this supply. I have consulted some experienced medical practitioners on this point and have been told that, under the above conditions, every factory should begin its work with a storage of water at the scale of two gallons per head every day.

Ventilation

The ventilation¹ of factories was very unsatisfactory at first. Since 1911, some serious attempts have been made to bring about an improvement. The atmosphere in textile mills was excessively humid and gave out an offensive odour even as late as 1920, when I first took up the investigation of labour conditions. The state of affairs is still far from satisfactory. The cotton-ginning factories² present another distressing problem. The atmosphere in these is dust-laden, and affects the health of labourers adversely. Cotton ginners can be easily recognised from a host of other workers by their unhealthy appearance. They are expected to be busy at their work for at least ten hours (very much more

¹ Annual Report on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab for the year 1914; Page 3:—"I attach great importance to ventilation in the factories open to my inspection. In my opinion, it is even more important than excessive hours of employment; for work in a vitiated atmosphere, even for short periods, is far more exhausting and damaging to the health of the operatives than long working hours in the open air. In my opinion consumption, which is so surprisingly prevalent in India, is mainly due to the disregard of ventilation."

² Annual Report on the working of the Indian Factories Act, 1911, in the Punjab for the year 1922; Remarks of the Financial Commissioner and Secretary to Government, Punjab, Page 1:—"Ordinary measures for the improvement of ventilation have, however, proved inadequate in the case of cotton ginning factories, the dust-laden atmosphere of which is a serious menace to the health of the workers."

in some cases), and when they come out of the factory after a day's labour they are almost speechless. The dusty atmosphere affects their eyes and throat and lowers their vitality. A large number of workers earn their livelihood in ginning factories, and 90 per cent of them are women and young children. My enquiries show that consumption is largely prevalent amongst them, owing, no doubt, to insanitary conditions of work.

The Majority Commissioners of the Indian Factory Commission of 1907 were not unfavourably impressed with the then existing system of ventilation in factories. They believed that ventilation was excellent except in cotton textile factories. I am afraid this remark could not have been safely made as early as 1907. The condition of Punjab factories is still far from satisfactory, the more so in textile and ginning mills. The Inspector of Factories, Punjab, thus expresses himself in his annual report for 1914 (Page 4):—

“ . . . I have no doubt whatever, that conditions of work in spinning mills do cause deterioration in the physique of the workers. They are undersized, jaded, and generally unhealthy in appearance, which is due, in my opinion, partly to bad ventilation but mainly to the strenuous working conditions obtaining in a spinning mill. Children are particularly stunted and poorly developed.”

The problem of ventilation has received much attention of late from the Government. In 1923, the Factory Inspector and the Director of Public Health were deputed by the Punjab Government to inquire into the condition of cotton-ginning factories. Their report is suggestive and is reproduced below¹:—

“In accordance with Government's note, a discussion took place between the Director of Public Health and the Inspector of Factories on the subject of cotton-ginning factories, and the possibility of devising some means of improving the conditions under which women work in them.

“Ginning rooms have been visited by the Director of Public Health and the Factory Inspector, and whilst it is very

¹ Annual Report on the working of the Indian Factories Act, 1911, in the Punjab for the year 1923—Pages 3 and 4.



The gin-woman (and her child) taking an interval of rest.

" Cotton ginner can be easily recognised from a host of other workers by their unhealthy appearance ". (Page 83).

evident that the dust is excessive and the health of workers must be affected, the problem of keeping down the dust is difficult to solve.

“Mechanical devices in the shape of exhaust boxes and pipes leading out of the ginning-room, at the end of which an exhaust fan is fitted, have been designed, but in going into the cost of erecting this exhaust plant it was found to be so heavy as to cripple the industry. The scheme of making every factory-owner instal such a plant was decided to be impracticable.

“Nose and mouth masks have been got out from Europe and an experiment was made in one factory. Women would not wear the masks at all, and the men would only wear them for the time a Factory Inspector was looking on: the scheme of distributing the dust masks to all factories was dropped as being useless.

“The conclusion arrived at was that little or nothing could be done to improve conditions: the only person capable of making conditions better was the worker herself; ginning-rooms were all well-ventilated and fitted up with windows at every few feet on both sides of the room; the workers close these windows or fill them up with cotton; therefore, if any improvement in working conditions in ginning-rooms is to be forthcoming it must come from the workers themselves.”

It was a hasty conclusion indeed. The labourers are incapable of improving their condition single-handed. Their illiteracy and ignorance are a great stumbling block in their way. But they are always prepared to take up a suggestion and act on it, provided it is impressed on them sympathetically and is shown to be practical. It is true that our gin-workers do not like nose and mouth masks, but it does not imply that we should give up the attempt in despair. Much may still be done by way of persuasion, and I am confident that the plan is bound to succeed if it is handled by sympathetic persons. The labourers could be easily won over, especially when many of them are already in the habit of covering their noses and mouths with pieces of cloth. Again, it is true that they stuff up the windows with cotton. The ginning mills are at work in winter and it is only natural on their part to block the windows

when they shiver from cold for want of woollen clothes. Attention has no doubt been directed by a few mills towards keeping the windows and doors open. This attempt has not borne fruit so far, although the Factory Inspector speaks highly of it in his annual reports.

In newly established factories, the windows and doors have been so arranged as to get the greatest possible amount of light and air. Skylights have been erected in some cases, and roofs have been raised in others. Exhaust fans have also found their way in a few instances, and thus pioneer steps in the right direction have already been taken.

But the main problem still remains unsolved. I know the ways of mill-owners in the Punjab. They are, on an average, very conservative in their ideas and do not think highly of a scheme which entails a monetary sacrifice. I suggest that the Punjab Government should form a small committee of experts to inquire into the state of textile mills and ginning factories and to recommend some practical means of overcoming the glaring defects. These, if rigorously put into force, will prove highly beneficial to the labouring class. Insufficient ventilation reduces both physical and mental alertness. It will be shown later how the degeneration of our labourers has set in and the sooner some steps are taken to check it, the better for them.

An effort was made in 1924 to keep out of ginning rooms all those persons who were not actually employed. This order was resented by the employers and by the employees, though on different grounds. The proprietors seem evidently to have been hit hard. It appeared difficult for them to exploit child-labour. The women workers, on the other hand, felt aggrieved inasmuch as they could not, according to new orders, carry their young babies into the factories. The order was justified.¹ But the question is, how far has it been put into practice? The order remains a

¹ Annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab for the year 1917—Page. 2:—

“Children continue to be employed in ginning factories to an undesirable extent, and in very many cases without the prescribed certificate. In some cases, women workers bring very little children with them whom they cannot conveniently leave at home. Such children are generally too young to be presumed to be workers, but their presence in the factories is obviously undesirable.”

dead letter and the ginning mills defy it with a courageous heart. Young children are carried into the factories and their health greatly suffers.

The Inspector of Factories, with his present staff, does not seem to be able to cope with the situation. His recent reports may serve as an eye-wash but these glaring drawbacks are easily discernible by an acute observer. Much depends on inspection. But of this, later on.

The state of things now in vogue in the seasonal factories would have been impossible in an advanced country like England on account of the force of public opinion. The Punjab labourers have no voice in the factory affairs. Compulsory provision must therefore be made for some sort of exhaust fans in ginning factories. A kapas-opener would go a long way to assist the ginning-room workers. It removes a great deal of dust before the kapas are ginned, and it would not be too much to expect that the Local Government will make its use compulsory.

Lighting

The lighting of factories was originally unsatisfactory. The passing of the first Factory Act in 1881 empowered the Local Government to adopt measures for the improvement of the then existing conditions. Perennial factories show a satisfactory advance in this respect. Ginning factories, not provided with electric lights, are poorly lighted. This increases the risk of accidents, and early attention by the Inspector of Factories must be paid to this evil.

Hours of Employment and Rest Intervals

The excessive employment of women and children is found more or less in small factories. Well-organised factories try to remain within the pale of law. The seasonal factories show little respect for it and violate the rules of working hours and employment of children as best they can.

The labourers are generally overworked in small factories. In ginning mills, in iron foundries, and in several other petty

mills the working hours extend to about 12 per day.¹ The notice of working hours is sometimes not affixed and attendance is also taken irregularly.

Sometimes, the petty masters are so unscrupulous as to put ahead the hands of the factory clock half an hour or so in the morning. When the machinery is set to work, the hands are adjusted so that, after the expiry of the day, the workers have put in much more work than could legally be expected of them. The midday interval of an hour is similarly tampered with and, by personal inspection, I have found that, by regular practice in ginning factories and in small iron-works, it does not mean more than 40 minutes, rest to the operatives.

When I put forward this result of personal experience, I do not mean that all the proprietors are guilty of it. Such things never occur in well-managed and well-established factories. It is only the petty industrialist who stoops to them, and numerous instances of these irregularities may be found in ginning factories.

The cotton ginning factories work excessively long hours, mainly on account of the pooling arrangements amongst them. Factories in one district, or in one town, combine together. Some of them are kept closed, and the remainder worked at full pressure even when the cotton crop is in plenty. Such was especially the case in 1916. These conditions still persist. The pooling system should be declared illegal forthwith inasmuch as it is pernicious from the social point of view.

¹(a) Annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab for the year 1926 ; Page 5.

"Seasonal factories are reluctant to observe regular hours of work."

(b) Annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab for the year 1922 ; Remarks of the Financial Commissioner—Page. 2:—A persistent tendency to disregard the provisions of the Act which regulate working hours in factories is observed. Owners of seasonal factories are the worst offenders in this respect, and the reduction of working hours provided for by the Amending Act is particularly resented, not only by them but by factory-owners generally."

(c) Annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act, 1911, in the Punjab for the year 1916, Page 1:—

"Though the cotton season was a comparatively good one, a large percentage of the ginning factories existing in the province were kept closed—usually owing to pooling arrangements—but those actually at work worked at full pressure in most districts."

The average factory-owner wants to have his own way. He is very hard-hearted and likes to work his labour beyond the legal maximum of 60 hours a week. The gradual extension of the Factory Act has set him thinking and he is prepared to migrate to native states where no labour-law prevails. "During 1924, one factory in Multan district was removed to an Indian state for the purpose of evading the provisions of the Indian Factories Act, whilst another in Lyallpur district is expected to be removed next session."¹

This is a new danger altogether and, unless some drastic steps are taken against it, it is bound to have an injurious influence on labour conditions in the British Punjab. It appears necessary that the Factory Act should be made obligatory on Indian states. They may be called upon to accept the Act or pass similar measures for their own territories.

Holidays

One holiday in every week is enjoined on every factory. Exceptions, under the Act, have been made by the Local Government in the case of cement works, ice factories and electric generating stations.

Before criticising the law as it stands, I must point out that a large number of factories work on Sundays and other holidays in defiance of the Act. Ginning mills, oil mills, sugar mills and iron foundries generally work on many holidays. Some flour mills are equally unscrupulous. It is only when the factory is under company management that Sundays are generally observed as holidays. In private mills, the word of the proprietor is law and statutory regulations are all set aside when personal and selfish interests come in.

A weekly holiday is a necessity and its due observance is essential in the interests of labour. Here, one pertinent question arises. Why has exception been made in the case of some factories? What fault have the workers therein done that they have been deprived of a weekly day of rest?

¹Annual report on the working of factories in the Punjab for 1924—Page 11.

It is said that some work necessitates continuous production for technical reasons and it is thus impossible to observe any day as a period of rest. But this is no fault of the labourer and he should be secured a six day week, although the factory works continuously for seven days. In some factories like the sugar and ice factories, the interval of rest is not granted. The work is of an intermittent nature and the labourer gets enough leisure every day. This is sensible enough but there appears no justification in with-holding a weekly day of rest. Failing a weekly day of leisure, each permanent worker should be entitled to privilege leave on full wages for at least one month in the year.

Employment of Children

No child under twelve years of age can be employed in a factory. But, if he exceeds the age of twelve, he cannot work unless and until he carries a valid certificate or a token thereof of age and fitness round his body. These rules are in conformity with the Factories Act, but they are very seldom scrupulously observed by mill-owners. Children above 12 years of age seldom carry a certificate in smaller mills. The illegal employment of younger children still continues. It is understood that the second visit of the Inspector is unlikely and, after the first inspection is over, every possible attempt is made to prolong the working hours, and to employ children illegally. But this does not mean that the violation of law is impossible or unlikely before the first inspection. A breach of rule means a small fine for which a factory-owner cares little. Thus, he goes on openly defying the law and, after the Inspector has paid his usual visit, he waxes bold in his attitude.

The table¹ given below shows the number of children employed in factories in different years:—

¹ Annual reports on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab from 1908 to 1926.

Year.	Total number of male children employed.	Total number of female children employed.	Year.	Total number of male children employed.	Total number of female children employed.
1926	872	172	1916	968	96
1925	1,072	104	1915	931	173
1924	926	55	1914	940	192
1923	1,467	97	1913 ¹	725	67
1922	1,473	166	1912	773	73
1921	975	55	1911	673	21
1920	1,093	138	1910	831	40
1919	1,033	203	1909	945	206
1918	759	141	1908	1,067	82
1917	857	78			

The employment of young children in factories presents different problems.² It is an undeniable fact that the mill-youths look listless, pale and puny as compared with children of the same age reading in a vernacular school. The stuffy atmosphere and the din of mills produce an unhealthy effect on them. This will be clear if we look at it from a different point of view. In the year 1925, the certifying surgeons examined 1,580 children. They rejected 460 children out of these on the plea that they were either under twelve or over fifteen years of age. Forty-five were pronounced to be medically unfit for labour in factories whilst thirty certificates were cancelled when children were found incapable of work on re-examination. Thus, 30 children, who were declared medically fit in 1924, were incapable of proceeding with their work in 1925. There must have been some more besides who never appeared before the

¹ The years 1913 and after do not include Delhi. In 1912, there were 12 registered factories employing 140 male and 3 female children in Delhi.

² Annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab for the year 1916—Page 3.

“ . . . the conditions under which children work, especially in spinning mills, cannot fail in the long run to result in the physical deterioration of the factory-labourers.”

certifying surgeons for examination and about whose fitness or otherwise nothing could be safely asserted.

The certifying surgeons do not take any interest in the welfare of mill-children when granting certificates to them. A civil surgeon—an Englishman—told me last year that no fee was paid for the examination of factory children, and that it was impossible for the government to expect a thorough medical examination in their case.

These are stern realities. Many children, now working in mills as half-timers, would certainly be pronounced unfit if they were to undergo a proper medical test.

The average daily number of children employed in factories amounted to 1044 in 1926. The minimum age-limit has, of late, been raised to twelve years. Some of the factories still employ children under 12 and it appears reasonable that this evil should be rooted out by stern measures. The Inspector of factories, while admiring the work of the Deputy Commissioner of Lyallpur, in his annual report for 1918 (pages 2 and 3), says:—

“He took an active interest in inspection himself . . . and instituted 102 prosecutions against 9 factories of which 96 were successful, and fines totalling over Rs. 5,000/- were inflicted. He claims that, as a result of his stern measures and frequent inspection, immense improvement was effected and, undoubtedly, these fines must have exercised a strong deterrent effect. After his transfer at the end of the year, however, in one factory alone 14 children including 4 under 9 years of age were found working illegally long hours.”

Inspections

The hours of employment and rest-intervals, the observance of holidays, the enforcement of sanitary conditions and the fencing and guarding of machinery all rest on a proper administration of factory law. The amount of protection given to the labourers is determined not by the number of labour statutes, but by the extent to which their provisions are enforced.

Judged by this standard, I must plainly say that the administration of the Factory Act is not quite satisfactory

in the Punjab. In the first place, a very large number of factories are inspected only once a year. Factories which are visited thrice or more than thrice a year represent an extremely low figure. The following table¹ will throw much light on the point:—

Year	Total No. of factories inspected	Once	Twice	Thrice	More than three times	Total No. of inspectors	No. of factories not inspected
1926	512	403	97	12	...	...	36
1925	479	353	101	20	5	6	48
1924	378	211	147	18	2	6	56
1923	366	153	145	40	23	6	33
1922	305	136	117	35	17	1	20
1921	242	148	67	16	11	2	19
1920	121	104	14	2	1	1	136
1919	105	62	24	12	7	1	125
1918	65	53	7	4	1	1	111
1917	72	43	20	5	4	1	99
1916	149	69	50	25	5	1	21
1915	149	85	41	17	6	1	14
1914	187	133	41	10	3	1	10
1913 ^a	139	92	38	8	1	1	65
1912	163	92	53	10	8	...	45
1911	155	59	74	18	4	...	50
1910	193	88	56	31	18	...	35
1909	201	81	58	45	17	...	58
1908	209	44	61	52	52	...	55

In addition to ex-officio inspectors.

District officers as ex-officio inspectors.

Before 1913, the inspection of factories was carried on by many authorities, the Director of Agriculture and Industries, the Director of Land Records, District Magistrates, Civil Surgeons, Assistant Commissioners and others. This system was unsatisfactory in so far as the ex-officio inspectors had not much time to spare for a vigilant supervision of industrial establishments. The Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1907 condemned the system and suggested the appointment of permanent whole time inspectors for different provinces. The number of inspections fell after the publication of the report,

¹ Reports on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab for the years 1908-1926.

^a The year 1913 and after do not include Delhi.

presumably owing to the caustic remarks of the Commission,¹ and it was not until 1913 that a whole-time inspector was appointed in the Punjab to bring about a uniformity and continuity of policy in carrying out the provisions of the Act. An Assistant Inspector was added in 1921 but his post was abolished shortly after. From 1923 onwards, five industrial surveyors were entrusted with the duties of inspecting factories.

It is evident from the above figures that the number of inspections is absolutely insufficient to cope with the situation. The illegal employment of young children is the rule rather than the exception. The men and women, especially the latter, are excessively overworked. Annual white-washing is seldom carried on in small factories. Sanitation is bad. Machinery is not sufficiently safeguarded and muster-rolls are not properly kept. These are some of the many drawbacks which an industrial investigator comes across.

But the annual reports of the Factory Inspector do not reveal all of them. Ventilation is reported to be fairly good. Lavatories are satisfactory. Gin-women are declared robust and healthy. Water storage and general sanitary conditions are adequate. Machinery is well guarded. These are some of the impressions which the blue books leave on the reader. The general reader breathes a sigh of relief and concludes that our labourers are on the high road to progress. It is only when he comes down from his high plane and casts a deep and inquisitive look into things that he feels discontented. All that glitters is not gold.

The mill-owners are very shrewd in their ways.² Some of them close on hearing the likelihood of an inspection in order to

¹ Report on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab during the year 1912; Page 1:—

“There has been some diffidence in making inspections owing to the absence of an expert inspector and the condemnation by the Factory Commission of amateur inspections.”

² Margaret Read:—From Field to Factory; London, 1927. Pages 41 and 42:—

“A Factory Inspector in North India made a night surprise visit to a cotton mill to see if any children under nine (this was before the new Factory Act of 1922 raising the age to 15) were being employed at night. His wife was stationed at one side exit, myself at another and he went in by the main door. As soon as

avoid searching enquiries. Others sometimes appoint an ordinary clerk as a nominal occupier to take the whole responsibility on himself. Sometimes, paid chowkidars¹ are on the look-out for the inspector and inform their managers as soon as he alights from the railway train. This system is prevalent in the mofussil. The factories situated in one particular area sometimes combine together and keep one common watchman who is always on duty on the railway station or on the main road. Immediately after a signal is given by the watchman, the factories are either closed or the young children illegally employed are shunted off. When the factory-inspector comes, he finds everything in order and goes back satisfied, little thinking that the clever occupier has concealed every violation of law from his eyes.²

This chapter is a fit place for a brief discussion of factory-conditions on the health of operatives. It is said that our mill hands are inefficient and shirk continuous work. The Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1907, much influenced by interested evidence from mill-owners, arrived at a similar conclusion. It reported that "the Indian factory worker is in general incapable of prolonged and intense effort. He may work hard for a comparatively short period but, even in such cases, the standard obtained is much below what would be expected in similar circumstances in any European country. His natural inclination is to spread the work he has to do over a long period of time, working in a leisurely manner throughout and taking

¹ Watchmen.

² By the way, I must mention that it was easy for me to get into touch with the real working of factories. No one knew me in the mofussil. It was thus easy to lay a finger on the manifold defects, whereas the same thing could not have been possible for the factory-inspector.

he was recognised by a foreman, a whistle blew and a crowd of small boys dashed out of the side doors, some to be caught and held. The Inspector then found many more hidden away under bales of cotton. The foreman took it as a matter of course. The Manager, a European, was fetched from his house and, when confronted with the catch, scratched his head and said "Caught this time." Half a dozen of the smallest youngsters were taken off to the city to wait till morning when a doctor could see them. Having no birth certificates, they had to be certified by the doctor as being under age before any case for prosecution could be made out. This instance is somewhat typical of the constant evasions of the law which go on, bringing despair to the factory inspectorate, and earning the title of exploiters for the factory owners."

intervals of rest whenever he feels disinclined to further exertion."

It is believed that, in the Punjab cotton mills, the average millhand wastes ¹ about an hour and a half every day in addition to the midday interval of one hour and so reduces the normal working day of ten hours to eight hours. One mill-owner at Amritsar went so far as to say that the time wasted in loitering about extends to not less than three hours and a half. The complaints lodged against the operatives may be briefly summed up as below :—

(1) They are not punctual in the morning when the engine starts. My experience proves beyond doubt that this accusation is absolutely unfounded. The labourers, in fact, reach the factories long before the proper time: some of them wait for two or three hours before the engine whistles.

(2) They attend to calls of nature twice or thrice during the working hours.

(3) They leave work for smoking and drinking, three or four times a day.

(4) They take their food in the working departments during the mill-hours.

(5) They sometimes go about the machinery without looking to their proper business.

The last four points are in the main true. But in so far as facts and statements tend to a depreciation of the factory-worker, they must be accepted only with discrimination. I have watched the operatives at work very carefully, and know perfectly well that they cannot help wasting some time under the present circumstances. They feel that they are overworked and underpaid and try to while away their time. Again, the climatic conditions are unfavourable and it is extremely difficult for workers to resist the temptation to sleep in summer during the

¹ Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18—Calcutta, 1918 ; Page 160:—

"It was generally agreed that mill-hands loiter away much of the time during which they are nominally at work, one or two prominent factory-owners stating that the operatives did not actually work for more than eight hours out of the twelve at present permitted by the factory-law".

working hours of the mill. According to the manager of a factory it is "damned hot in summer . . ." in his mills. The workers go about their task in the last two hours of the working day as if they were intoxicated. The factory-hours are rather long. The supervision is not keen either, and it is no matter for surprise, therefore, if the labourers loiter about and lie down instead of working.

The summer season glides away and the dry cold of winter takes its place. The poor labourers cannot afford woollen clothes. They close the windows and doors, if possible, or stuff them up with cotton (wherever procurable) with a view to seeking shelter from the biting cold. Under the conditions it is advisable that cooling arrangements, supplemented by electric fans (wherever possible)¹, should be introduced in summer and heating arrangements in winter.

The strain of factory-work stands as a bar to the improvement of the condition of the workers and militates against the creation of a permanent labour-class. "A tired person is literally and actually a poisoned person—poisoned by his own waste products. But so marvellously is the body constructed that, like a running stream, it purifies itself and during repose these toxic impurities are normally burnt up by the oxygen brought by the blood, exerted by the kidneys, destroyed in the liver, or eliminated from the body through the lungs. So rest repairs fatigue."²

"This balance is kept true and fatigue is repaired just as long as it remains within physiological limits ; that is, as long as activity is balanced by repose, when the noxious products of activity are more quickly eliminated and tissue is rebuilt. Just as soon as the metabolic equilibrium is destroyed, the organism becomes clogged by its own poisons, exhaustion results, and health is impaired. The physiological normal phenomenon of fatigue becomes pathological, or abnormal exhaustion."³ Our factory-

¹ Pages 27 and 28 of Bulletin No. 14 on "Factory Construction and Installation in Bengal" by A.T. Weston, Deputy Director of Industries . . . issued by the Government of India:—"In a local government factory . . . the installation of fans has proved a great advantage . . . in the activity of the men and the cleanliness and accuracy of their work."

² & ³ Vide *Fatigue and Efficiency* by J. Goldmark, New York, 1912 ; Page 13.

worker carries on his work even in times of illness. He knows his own responsibilities and persists in work till he is thoroughly played out. A baseless and unfounded charge is sometimes levelled against him. It is said that ". . . Indian labour is content with a very low standard of comfort. This secured, the Indian workman, speaking generally, takes advantage of the greater earning power given to him by increased wages to do less work, and shows no desire to earn more money by working more regularly by improving his own efficiency".¹ Nothing could be farther from the truth.

It is true that his expenditure is more or less disproportionate, unscientific and injudicious, but it is absolutely untrue that an increase in his wages does not act as an incentive to further work. Is it a fact that the people of India are given to the habit of hoarding?² So much fuss has already been made about our hoarded wealth in the press as well as on the platform. How is it possible to support it when thousands of workers are averse to work which is sure to bring more money? I know from personal experience that an average factory-labourer goes to work even in times of illness. He lives from hand to mouth, and knows that starvation will soon stare him in the face if he stops work.

There is one thing more. The labourer is overworked. The factory conditions tell heavily on his health and he marches off the field in a state of exhaustion. This is the main reason why the turnover of labour is far too great in cotton weaving mills as compared with other factories.

Women are physiologically weaker than men. Moreover, they possess a particular sex function—the bearing of children. The burden of factory life weighs more heavily upon them than upon men. This makes necessary a certain period of rest before and after confinement. The Punjab women-workers can

¹ Report of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916—18)—Calcutta, 1918—Page 151.

² Indian year Book 1927. Times of India Press, Bombay—Page 397 :—
"Tradition says that he hoarded coin under the ground. . . ."



The factory-labourer

"The labourer is overworked. The factory conditions tell heavily on his health . . ." (Page 98.)

ill afford to enjoy a reasonable period of leisure. In the circumstances, it is natural that their health should be impaired. This results in an increase of infantile mortality, a decrease of birth-rate, and an impaired future generation.

I have already stated that the labourer carries on his work even when ill. My investigations show that the permanence of labour is more or less dependent on the area of recruitment and the conditions of work. The turnover of labour will be very small if the factory is situated in a rural area and if its environments are sanitary and attractive.¹ In a factory at Sujanpore the average absence of an operative every month was $\frac{1}{2}$ day in 1925-26. It was higher in May—the harvesting season—when it rose to one day per labourer per month. It gradually went down in June and July. In August and September—malarial months—it rose as high as 1·6 days per labourer per month. In another mill, labour is mainly recruited from rural areas near by. Skilled labour is housed in quarters which are very sanitary. The average absence per operative comes up to only $\frac{1}{3}$ day per month. It rises, though very little, in the harvesting and malarial seasons. The average period of absence increases when the mill becomes dependent partly on local and partly on outside labour and when its conditions of work are unwholesome. It is at its maximum in cotton textile mills which recruit labourers mainly from the United Provinces.

In a cotton mill at Amritsar, about 10 per cent of the workers are absent every day. The average period of service of a labourer in a Sujanpore factory is about seven years. The majority of workers in a factory in the Lahore district have been there for many years. In another factory near Rawalpindi, the average period of service is about four years. But the labour turn-over is high—very high—in urban areas. In a mill at Amritsar, the average period of service is as low as a year and a half and it is less than 10 months in another mill situated close by.

The more or less migratory character of labour may be accounted for by one or more of the following reasons:—

¹ The figures that follow were collected by me in 1927 from the registers of factory-owners.

(1) Bad and unhealthy environment. The Punjab factories, as I have described above, are not models of sanitation. Far from it. The environment is very bad in certain cases and the labourer, if not homeless, tries to keep his family in his native village where they can breathe a freer air. His wife and children are a great attraction to him, and the farther they are situated from the factory the greater will be the period of absence.

(2) A large number of labourers move on to the fields in the harvesting season. They shift to rural areas because they can earn much more on land in that period. An ordinary labourer gets 6 annas daily at Sujaspore. He gets 8 annas to 10 annas in villages in the harvesting season. But, sometimes, he may not leave the factory even in such tempting conditions for fear of losing his permanent job.

(3) Indiscriminate hiring and summary dismissals also do their work. Workers are often put on tasks which are not suited to them. Dismissals thereby take place, and result in much waste of time and energy both to the employers and to the employees. This could be avoided if the labourers were selected on some scientific principle.

(4) Labourers are subject to general debility and slow fever and go back to their native villages for recuperation.

(5) Long working hours and distasteful factory conditions also account for the tendency of labourers to shift from factory to factory.

(6) Some of the unwholesome habits of labourers are also responsible for their absence. A large number absent themselves from spinning mills on the day following pay-day. An improvement in this direction—a reform in their habits and ideas—would surely go a long way in bringing down the period of absence.

(7) There is no permanence of tenure for the labourers. To begin with, there is a very large list of day-to-day workers all over. They can be turned out at any time at the will of the manager. Skilled labour, which enjoys a more or less perman-

ent tenure, is also retrenched in anticipation of bad market conditions. This is a regrettable feature of factories in the Punjab and, unless some material improvement is made in this direction, not much can be done to slow down the tendency towards migration of labour. The statement of the general manager of the Tata Iron and Steel Company to the Indian Industrial Commission in 1917 is well worth consideration:—

“ Our employees come from all parts of India. We afford a source of continuous employment all the year round to a great many people, our total number of employees being 15 to 16 thousands, the majority of whom, before our works started, mainly followed agricultural pursuits, which entailed intermittent and uncertain occupation.”

The conditions in Tata works are not ideal. Still, they have got a permanent and steady labour-supply on account of good houses, continuous employment, attention to sanitation, recreation and education of workers.

(8) Frequent diseases in the Punjab increase the rate of absence and turn-over of labour.

(9) Most of the workers are unskilled. Thus, they can take to work in any factory.

One point needs special emphasis at this stage. Wherever a factory is situated in a rural area, the labourers try to stick to it, however bad its conditions and environments may be. The above features make their appearance when factories become dependent partly on rural and partly on urban areas, and are situated close to one another in or near a city.

It is now easy to conclude that the amelioration of the condition of factories will have a healthy influence on the workers. It is impossible to describe the precise influence which factory conditions exert on the operatives. Indirect inferences may, however, be readily drawn. I have rarely seen a labourer above 45 years of age working in a spinning and weaving mill. It is said that he retires to his village to enjoy his well-earned rest—a far fetched idea, of course. The

labourer lives from hand to mouth throughout his life and there is no possibility of the creation of a reserve for utilisation in old-age. Thus, it would not be contrary to truth if we conclude that unfavourable factory conditions adversely affect longevity. The labourers are conservative in their habits, and like to return to their villages to die amongst their nearer and dearer ones as soon as they fall seriously ill. Thus, cases of influenza, malaria, plague, or consumption which ought otherwise to have been reported from the factory area are put down haphazard in the village registers. It is therefore difficult to trace the connection between factory conditions and ill-health. Moreover, the labourers are not medically examined when they join a factory. Nothing is known of their life-history and, when cases of consumption and other diseases occur, it is not easy to trace their origin. I think that a periodical medical examination of all workers should be enjoined on large employers. We stand badly in need of factory medical inspectors to go round and study the different cases closely. Cases of consumption and other respiratory diseases often occur, and it is necessary to know whether they are due to the environments of the factory as such or to external circumstances. I have come across labourers suffering from respiratory diseases and, after questioning them about their life-history from a layman's point of view, I have been forced to the conclusion that they are due mostly to bad factory conditions.

Some indirect inferences from the bad factory conditions of the Punjab may be drawn in one way. I took the weights and heights of 238 labourers—skilled and unskilled—in some of the Punjab mills in 1927. Of these 238 labourers, about 149 had been in service for more than five years and about 200 had been working in the same factory for not less than 3 years. I also took the weights and height of 495 prisoners in a few of the Punjab jails. The results are given below, and they establish beyond doubt that the health of an average labourer is not comparable with that of an average prisoner. It need hardly be mentioned that the comparison is only a rough and ready way of measuring results. The labourers and prisoners are not on the same level. The latter are not free. They get bare subsistence and their life is in no way attractive: cases of

corruption and abuse of power sometimes occur in the jails.¹ In spite of all these drawbacks, they enjoy good health compared with the factory operatives, indirectly proving thereby that factory conditions are partly responsible for the deterioration of the health of workers.

It must here be mentioned that I have deliberately excluded the cotton mills, which are in a lamentable condition, mainly because they are dependent for work largely on outside labour. The jail population consists mainly of the Punjabis and it can thereby be fairly representative of factory labour in the Punjab.

Jail A

Number of each Height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
4	60 to 61	117 $\frac{1}{2}$
3	61 to 62	111 $\frac{1}{2}$
6	62 to 63	110 $\frac{5}{8}$
11	63 to 64	114
24	64 to 65	121
29	65 to 66	125 $\frac{1}{2}$
32	66 to 67	127
42	67 to 68	134 $\frac{1}{2}$
23	68 to 69	134 $\frac{3}{4}$
15	69 to 70	141
7	70 to 71	138 $\frac{1}{2}$
3	71 to 72	146
...	72 to 73	...
1	73 to 74	136
Total 200	60 to 74	About 127'6

¹ Proceedings of His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab in Council, Home (Jails) department, No. 15163, dated the 2nd June, 1924—See Report on the Administration of the Jails in the Punjab for 1923—Page 4.

“This is not to say that the administration of the Punjab prisons, like every other branch of the administration, is not susceptible of great improvement, or that untiring vigilance is not required to prevent corruption and the abuse of power within the jails. . . .”

Jail B

Number of each Height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
1	60 to 61	95
5	61 to 62	103 $\frac{1}{8}$
5	62 to 63	116
10	63 to 64	119 $\frac{1}{8}$
12	64 to 65	121
18	65 to 66	124
12	66 to 67	126
11	67 to 68	126
7	68 to 69	141 $\frac{1}{8}$
9	69 to 70	145
3	70 to 71	133 $\frac{3}{8}$
2	71 to 72	135
Total 95	60 to 72	About 123'8

Jail C

Number of each Height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
2	60 to 61	105
3	61 to 62	111
8	62 to 63	115 $\frac{3}{8}$
16	63 to 64	118 $\frac{1}{8}$
13	64 to 65	122
17	65 to 66	127 $\frac{1}{8}$
17	66 to 67	132 $\frac{3}{8}$
14	67 to 68	131 $\frac{1}{8}$
7	68 to 69	137
3	69 to 70	141
...	70 to 71	...
1	71 to 72	147
Total 101	60 to 72	About 126'2

Jail D

Number of each height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
3	60 to 61	102
4	61 to 62	109
11	62 to 63	111 $\frac{1}{2}$
10	63 to 64	112 $\frac{1}{8}$
16	64 to 65	110
18	65 to 66	130 $\frac{1}{8}$
18	66 to 67	126
10	67 to 68	131
4	68 to 69	135 $\frac{1}{2}$
3	69 to 70	134
1	70 to 71	164
1	71 to 72	164
Total 99	60 to 72	About 127'5

Factory A

Number of each height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
2	60 to 61	99
3	61 to 62	101 $\frac{1}{8}$
12	62 to 63	109
27	63 to 64	122 $\frac{2}{8}$
38	64 to 65	116
16	65 to 66	123
6	66 to 67	120
2	67 to 68	128
3	68 to 69	123 $\frac{1}{8}$
...	69 to 70	...
...	70 to 71	...
3	71 to 72	144
Total 112	60 to 72	About 118'5

Factory B

Number of each height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
5	60 to 61	96 $\frac{2}{3}$
...	61 to 62	...
1	62 to 63	100
5	63 to 64	101
4	64 to 65	106
3	65 to 66	118 $\frac{1}{3}$
1	66 to 67	111
2	67 to 68	123 $\frac{1}{4}$
1	68 to 69	120
...	69 to 70	...
...	70 to 71	...
...	71 to 72	...
Total 22	60 to 72	About 109'3

Factory C

Number of each height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
...	60 to 61	...
...	61 to 62	...
3	62 to 63	116
3	63 to 64	116
4	64 to 65	111 $\frac{1}{4}$
2	65 to 66	119
3	66 to 67	117 $\frac{1}{8}$
...	67 to 68	...
3	68 to 69	144 $\frac{1}{8}$
1	69 to 70	140
1	70 to 71	134
Total 20	60 to 71	About 124'7

Factory D

Number of each height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
...	60 to 61	...
1	61 to 62	102
1	62 to 63	112
1	63 to 64	90
1	64 to 65	105
1	65 to 66	110
2	66 to 67	112
2	67 to 68	126
...	68 to 69	...
...	69 to 70	...
...	70 to 71	...
...	71 to 72	...
Total 9	60 to 72	About 108'1

Factory E

Number of each height	Height in inches	Average weight in lbs.
2	60 to 61	102
5	61 to 62	100
8	62 to 63	110
9	63 to 64	105
11	64 to 65	105
9	65 to 66	115
6	66 to 67	120 $\frac{1}{2}$
1	67 to 68	120 $\frac{1}{4}$
4	68 to 69	132
2	69 to 70	134 $\frac{1}{4}$
1	70 to 71	125
3	71 to 72	122
Total 61	60 to 72	About 116 lbs.

The average weight of labourers taken all in all comes up to about 115·3 lbs, whereas the average weight of prisoners has been estimated at 126·3 lbs. This evidently proves that, man for man, an average prisoner is surely better off than an average factory labourer. Will it not therefore be advisable to come to the rescue of the labourers and shorten their working hours at least from sixty to fifty-four per week by law? I was perhaps the first industrial investigator in the Punjab who advocated a reduction in working hours to a maximum of ten per day in a report made to the Punjab Government in 1920. This has almost come to pass. The maximum number of hours has been fixed at eleven per day and at sixty per week. I now suggest that a further reduction should be made as early as possible. It will be of interest to note that the Punjab government was in favour of an eight-hour day for women workers as far back as August 1920.¹

The question requires a detailed consideration and experiments in this direction can easily be made by the government which happens to be a great employer of labour. Shorter factory hours have exercised a healthy influence in the West. They have also enabled workers to come from a longer distance and thereby diminish the congestion of dwellings near the mill area.

Long working hours produce harmful effects on the physical and mental capacities of workers. "The problem of hours has undergone a fundamental change through the introduction of large scale factory production and the growing concentration of our population in cities. Men and women can work relatively long hours at work which is interesting, which calls upon their various energies, which gives some opportunity for creative self-expression. Work which is repetitive, monotonous, and conducted under the confining indoor conditions of even the best industrial plant, especially where the plant is located at a

¹ Letter No. 4788--S (C & I), dated Simla, the 27th August, 1920, by the Punjab Government to the Government of India as a reply to the latter's letter No. 1-812 dated the 11th May, 1920—"Personally, the Lieutenant-Governor would like in this province to see an eight-hour day prescribed for women as a maximum." Bulletin No. 10 of Indian Industries and Labour—Page 96.

distance from the home of the workers, makes much more exacting physical and nervous demands."¹

The Age of Machinery has brought about fatigue. Under fatigue "the physiological processes become pathological; the normal instruments of life become agents of death."² Fatigue is furthered by the speed and complexity of machinery, by the monotony of work, by the introduction of piece work and overtime conditions. It is induced by the roar of machinery which naturally distracts attention. It accumulates with progressive hours of work and brings about industrial accidents. No attempt has so far been made to find out the connection between fatigue and the time of accidents in the Punjab factories. A study in this direction is well worth the attention of research scholars.

It is an admitted fact that long working hours have largely resulted in the deterioration of our workers. The ideal length of working day for each industry in the present stage of our advancement is relative to the conditions of that industry. Even now some factories work for 10 hours, some work for 9½ hours, while a few have a continuous working day of 8 hours.

It is universally admitted that reasonably short working hours do not bring down the output per man. They may result in an increase of output. "The outstanding feature of the 8 hour day is the steady maintenance of output. The outstanding feature of the 10 hour day is the decline of output. Under the 8 hour system, work with almost full power begins and ends approximately on schedule and lost time is reduced to a minimum. Under the 10 hour system, work ceases before the end of the spell and lost time is frequent."³ As the Indian Factory-labour Commissioners said in 1908, "Where the hours are short and supervision is good, the operatives can be trained to adopt fairly regular and steady habits of working; where the hours are long and the discipline of the factory is bad, the

¹ President's Second Industrial Conference Report, 1920—quoted by Edie in his Principles of the New Economics. U.S.A., 1922—Page 112.

² Fatigue and Efficiency by J. Goldmark; New York, 1912—Page 14.

³ U. S. Public Health Bulletin, Washington-February, 1920—160—Page 26.

workers will idle through the time and take frequent intervals away from the work.”¹

The shortening of the working day will put an end to much idling and loitering on the part of workers. Under proper safeguards they may be made very steady in their habits. When the hours of work are brought down as, in the course of time they must be, the following system of passes may be adopted to check the loitering habit of workers as they move from the factory to the dispensary or the lavatory and *vice-versa*. This will require a certain amount of literacy without which the scheme cannot be given a practical shape.

<p style="text-align: right;">No :—</p> <p>Name of Factory :</p> <p>Dispensary (or Lavatory) Permit.</p> <p>Department :—</p> <p>Name of Labourer :—</p> <p>Time of leaving :—</p> <p>Signature of foreman :—</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">No :—</p> <p>Name of Factory :</p> <p>Dispensary (or Lavatory) Permit.</p> <p>Time of leaving :—</p> <p>Next visit (In the }</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">case of dispensary } only)</p> <p>Signature of Person in charge</p>
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But I must sound a note of caution at this stage. It is possible that shorter hours may involve intensification of labour and may thus be dearly bought. Thus, “the real question of leisure is a question of spare human energy rather than of spare hours.”² The question, I must repeat once again, requires a detailed study and the sooner it is taken up for investigation by a Government Committee, the better for all concerned.

Our workers are uneducated, and greater leisure, attainable through shorter hours, could be utilised by them in acquiring the rudiments of knowledge. Single-handed; they are incapable of anything. Aided by Government and social workers, they could surely achieve much. Adult schools, popular lectures on hygiene, educative cinema shows—these are all useful and could certainly improve the vision of our workers and raise their standard of living.

¹ Report of the Indian Factory-labour Commission, 1908. London, 1908-Vol. 1, Pages 21 and 22.

² Hobson : Work and Wealth—New York, 1914, Page 233.

Leisure creates great potentialities for social uplift. The poet, the man of science, the philosopher—in fact, every man is at his best in his leisure hours and it is here and here alone that a stimulus can be given to his inventive and creative tendencies. Under the present industrial conditions, leisure supplies the much needed counterpoise to the monotony of machine and enables the worker to awaken his neglected faculties and work them up to a proper standard.

It has been shown how instructions have been issued of late to exclude outside children from coming into the factory. Children of two or three years cannot be left at home and it is thus necessary that they should be protected from the undesirable consequences of factory life. I think every factory employing women should compulsorily provide creches under the supervision of a trained nurse. This will be a boon to women-workers. It is also advisable to appoint qualified medical women to inquire into the condition of women's work before and after child-birth, and to help factory-owners in instituting maternity schemes.

The question of the provision of maternity benefits dates back to the year 1919 when the first International Conference met at Washington. A Convention was then passed that the employment of women six weeks after confinement should be legally prohibited, and that they should be at liberty to leave their jobs six weeks before confinement without fear of dismissal. The Convention also provided for maternity benefits.

The Government of India did not give their consent to this convention but agreed, on the other hand, to submit a report on the question. This was done and it was regretted that the time for legislation of this nature had not come. It was, however, hoped that voluntary schemes of maternity benefits would soon be launched by enlightened employers in India.

On the 23rd September, 1924, Mr. N.M. Joshi introduced a Bill in the Legislative Assembly to prevent employers from dismissing women six weeks before confinement and to provide for maternity benefits. The Maternity Benefit Bill was humanitarian in nature and its application, besides others, was suggested to the factories under the Indian Factories Act. The Bill was

circulated by the Government of India to employers, Local Governments, and others concerned. The public at large favoured the scheme. It was, however, objected that the maternity benefits would place a burden on the industries of India. It was also feared that the employers would dismiss permanent hands to avoid the payment of maternity allowance.

Some of the Local Governments opposed the Bill while others supported the principle, if not all the details. The opinion of the Punjab Government is well worth consideration in this connection. They said:—

“Female labour is employed in the Punjab only to a very limited extent, and the number of factories which employ permanent female labour throughout the year is negligible. Women who take up factory work are, for the most part, employed in seasonal cotton ginning factories; their employment is casual, and changes frequently during the short cotton-ginning season of about four months. The nature of their piece-work in spinning mills allows women sufficient freedom for their maternal duties.

“It will thus be evident that there is at present practically no scope for maternity benefit schemes in the provinces.”

The number of women workers in the Punjab is no doubt very small but this should facilitate, rather than obstruct, the task of Government in instituting compulsory maternity schemes. These would surely go far to bring about some permanence and stability in women's labour.

But the Government of India opposed the Maternity Bill on the following grounds:—

(a) It was said that the compulsory abstention from work of expectant mothers could not be enforced as they would be easily won over by un-registered factories.

(b) The right to leave work six weeks before confinement was dependent on the production of a medical certificate. The paucity of lady-doctors in India would check the smooth working of maternity schemes.

(c) Expectant mothers did not find any difficulty in securing employment after confinement.

These arguments do not apply with equal force in all the provinces; least so in the Punjab. The number of women-workers is small and a handful of lady-doctors would solve the whole difficulty. The condition of the labour market in the Punjab is not favourable; and I can say from experience that the women have to accept low remuneration on their return to work after confinement. This evidently proves that there is not much scope for them in unregistered factories.

After a heated debate, the Bill was thrown out by the House. In the absence of any statutory provision, it is advisable that enlightened employers should set an example and institute voluntary schemes of maternity benefits.

Poor as the labourers are, they must not be allowed to stagnate. 'Poverty' is infectious and, in the absence of any preventive measures, it is bound to grow from more to more. Acquiescence in poverty is cowardly, and the struggle against it a human virtue.

The prevalent conditions of factories bring down the output of our workers. But they are not sometimes to blame for it. They have to deal at times with old and worn-out machinery¹. Machinery is imported from the West. Improvements are effected in it from day to day and it is difficult for our industrialists to be quite up-to-date. Again, the material, which our workers handle sometimes, does not compare favourably with that used in the West. This fact has been corroborated by factory managers during my investigations in the Punjab. For example, a great defect of our Indian cotton is the shortness of its fibre. Climatic conditions, too, stand in their way and long working hours put an undue strain on their muscles.

The workers are still rural in their habits. They require constant attention while at work which, however, is not available.

¹ Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission, 1908, London, 1908—minute of dissent—Page 85 :—“ In a memorandum submitted to His Excellency the Marquis of Lansdowne, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, in 1889 by the mill-operatives of Bombay, it was stated that “ it has been said to the detriment of your petitioners that an Indian mill-operative is not as hardworking as his brother workman in England . . . the sole cause of this . . . is the bad machinery and the bad raw material used in the mills . . . The breakage in the thread is so continuous here on account of the bad quality of the cotton that mill-owners are compelled to employ more men.”

Some managers are no better than the workers themselves. The workers have no doubt gained in skill and dexterity of late; but their environments are dull and do not arouse any enthusiasm in them.

Comparisons are often made of the industrial efficiency of our workers with the industrial efficiency of the West. It is a mistake to indulge in them. Unless and until the real wages of our workers come up to the standard of the western world, and unless and until their social environments change, it is a folly to talk of the inefficiency of Indian labour. It is said that "so far as spinning was concerned, one Englishman could do as much as two Indians."¹ Evidence before the Indian Factory-Labour Commission of 1907 all tended towards the depreciation of the industrial aptitude of Indian workers. This is, no doubt, true to some extent but the statements, as they stand, have to be taken with a grain of salt. The mill-owners wanted to defend their long working hours by running down the employees and the facts and figures collected by them might well be misleading.

Our labour compares favourably with that of Japan. "In Japanese factories, the aggregate of employees is still fully threefold of what would be considered necessary for the same work in England."²

But there is a fair field of improvement for our workers. They are recruited from the agriculturist class which has won a world-wide reputation for industrious habits, and there is no reason why they should not make steady headway in their new walk of life when environments take a healthy turn.

No systematic record-keeping exists in our factories. Needless to say that it is coming into prominence in the West. In the Punjab, on the other hand, the human factor in industry has been greatly ignored. It is the name only of the wage-earner that appears in the factory books. But even that is sometimes wrongly written. When the worker is absent from his work no notice is taken of him. There are no separate records to show his wages or his efficiency rate.

¹Mr. Leslie of Messrs. Greaves Cotton & Co., Bombay, in his evidence before the Indian Factory-Labour Commission of 1907-'08. Vide Indian Factory-Labour Commission Report—Vol. II—Evidence—London, 1909, Page, 62.

²The Evolution of New Japan : Cambridge Manual Science Series, 1913—Page 99.

India has been linked up with the rest of the civilised world through international conferences and it is essential that she should know and realise her own position. This is only possible through systematic record-keeping. Factory owners, as my experience of the Punjab shows, object to these records because they labour under the delusion that they are expensive. Really, they are not. They add to the efficiency of workers and decrease the cost of production for the factory. For example, the question of the tendency of workers to shift their place of employment frequently has never been closely examined. I have shown elsewhere that this can be accounted for by several reasons—unhealthy factory environments, bad houses, insufficient wages, sickness, accidents etc. If systematic records were maintained of each one of these factors and if an honest attempt was made at removing them, the output of labour would certainly increase. The workers may possibly object to these records since they would be inquisitorial in nature. But their prejudice can be easily overcome if they are handled by sympathetic persons. I commend the following draft records¹ to the notice of mill-owners in the Punjab.

I

Employees' Record

Name:	Caste:	No:
Present Address:	Names of Relatives working in the factory } }	Date of Applica- tion } }
Home Address:		
Department:		Age:

Date of Appointment	Punctuality	Ability	Conduct	Health.

¹ These draft records have been modelled with modifications and changes on those in use in some of the English factories that I visited in 1926, 1927 and 1928. The article of Miss Broughton (now Lady Chatterjee) on Labour Records in Factories in the Journal of Indian Industries and Labour for Feb. 1922 was also helpful to me in framing the above draft-records.

II

Efficiency Rate Record

Name :

No :

Months	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	etc.	etc.
January							
February							
March							
April							
May							
June							
July							
August							
September							
October							
November							
December.							

III

Employees' Weekly Wages Record

Name :

No :

Occupation :

Left :

Address :

Engaged :

Week ending	Rs.	As.	P.	Week ending	Rs.	As.	P.
1				14			
2				15			
3				16			
4				17			
5				18			
6				19			
7				20			
8				21			
9				22			
10				23			
11				24			
12				25			
13				26			

Total 1st quarter ...

Total 2nd quarter ...

Similarly, for the third and the fourth quarter.

IV
Labour Turn-over

Month	Total number employed in the factory.	Number of employees who left.	Left voluntarily.					Dismissed or discharged.			Percentage rate of men leaving the factory.	
			Illness.	Bad treatment from mill.	Bad factory conditions.	Leaving place altogether.	Other reasons.	Bad health.	Incapable or careless.	Retrenchment of employees.		Unsatisfactory.	Other reasons.
Jan. ...												
Feb. ...												
March ...												
April ...												
May ...												
June ...												
July ...												
August ...												
Sep. ...												
Oct. ...												
Nov. ...												
Dec. ...												
Total ...												

V

Monthly return of cases reported to the Factory Hospital

Month.	1. Men :		2. Women :		3. Male Children ;		4. Female Children :							
	Numbers employed.	Respiratory tract	Digestive tract.	Circulatory system.	Central nervous system.	Special sense organ.	Locomotive system.	Skin.	Influenza.	Malaria and other fevers.	Infectious diseases.	Accident and Septic cases.	Total number of sickness cases.	Percentage rate of sickness.
January ...														
February ...														
March ...														
April ...														
May ...														
June ...														
July ...														
August ...														
September ...														
October ...														
November ...														
December ...														

Note for guidance.—Plague, Malaria and Cholera should be given separately.

Our factories possess no cloak-rooms. In one mill, light baskets are hung over the workers' heads to serve as receptacles for their clothes. It is a direct insult to their self-respect but they have got accustomed to such indignities by years of subjection. Will the mill-owners arrange for separate cloak-rooms in their factories?

Before I close, I must reiterate the necessity for a very rigorous enforcement of the Factory Act. If the present staff¹ is not adequate to cope with the situation, and I think it is not, let it be increased. "It is easy to disgust people even with a good law if that law is fraudulently or sluggishly administered."²

¹ Remarks of the Financial Commissioner and Secretary to Government, Punjab, in the annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab for the year 1922; Page 2:—"With a small inspecting staff, evasions of the law are almost impossible to detect . . ."

² Solmoon Blum: *Labour Economics*—New York, 1925—Page 79.

Margaret Read: *From Field to Factory*; London, 1927—Page 41:—

"But it is one thing for a Government to have good factory laws and another to have them carried out, especially when there is little or no public opinion in favour of their observance, and no trade-union organisation to stand behind them. The factory inspecting staff is far too small, the distances are immense, and many factories cannot be visited even once a year."

CHAPTER V

HOUSING, HEALTH AND HOME-LIFE

THE housing of factory labourers is a problem by itself. They live partly in quarters—one-room tenements—built particularly for them and partly in villages and towns.

The quarters are sometimes very close to the factories. I noticed this at Lyallpur, Amritsar and a few other places. In some cases, the distance between the quarters and mills is not more than ten feet. Such was particularly the case with a flour mill at Lyallpur when I first visited it in 1920. The result was that the particles of dust and flour from it covered things round about, and put the inmates to much inconvenience. They generally covered their mud-rooms with torn-off rags and sack cloth from all sides. These precautions were not of any use: they were, on the contrary, harmful to the health and physique of those women who, on account of social and religious customs, were ever pent up in them. The whole bodies of the occupants of these tenements were always covered with a thick coating of flour and dust. Their throats and eyes naturally could not escape, thereby rendering their bodies feeble and weak.

Factories, when situated a long way from towns, generally provide accommodation for their wage-earners. Herein, the skilled workers naturally get a preferential treatment as compared with unskilled hands.

The rooms generally possess little or no ventilation. Ventilation implies the supplying of fresh air to a room for the purpose of improving its conditions as regards the comfort and healthfulness of its occupants; and a system of ventilation comprises any arrangement of special apparatus for bringing about this result. Vitiating atmosphere lowers the vitality and thereby increases the susceptibility to disease. It decreases both the physical and mental capacity for work. Impure air causes a feeling of weariness or drowsiness, and is usually

accompanied by a dull headache. From this, one can learn the disastrous consequences of the absence of any ventilation for an overwhelmingly large majority of factory labourers.

In a large number of factories, quarters are provided by the employers; but they are usually insanitary and unhealthy. The rooms are small in dimensions and are let to workers individually or in batches. Labourers with families are given separate tenement-rooms.

These rooms generally vary between 8ft. x 8ft. x 8ft. and 10ft. x 10ft. x 10ft. in dimensions. In some cases they are very small. Some rooms have a verandah on one side. The verandah is sometimes covered to serve the purpose of a kitchen or a kitchen and lavatory side by side. They are, in certain cases, built back to back—an admittedly grave sanitary defect.

The workmen's rooms measure 11ft. x 10ft. x 10ft. in a carpet factory at Amritsar. In a factory in the Gurdaspur district, the general body of workmen are accommodated in one-room quarters which measure 12 ft. x 10ft. x 12 ft. Some of the single-room tenements in a mill at Amritsar measure 12ft. x 10 ft. x 10 ft. while others are 10ft. x 10 ft. x 10 ft. In a factory in the Lahore district, quarters for superior staff are good and comprise of two rooms, 14ft. x 14ft. x 14ft. each, with a small bathroom, kitchen and lavatory attached to them. The inferior quarters comprise one-room tenements measuring about 10ft. x 10ft. x 10ft. They are never whitewashed and are reserved for inferior staff and labourers. They are made of mud and their appearance, both from within and without, is simply shocking.

The quarters, wherever specially built, are more often made of bricks than of mud. They generally constitute one room either with or without an open common yard. More often, the quarter is nothing but a single-room tenement.

Whatever the dimensions of the quarters may be, it is a fact that they are extremely congested. On a rough average three to four labourers live in a small room. But there are a large number of cases in which six, seven, or eight men may be herded together in a room 10 ft. x 10 ft. x 10 ft. In a factory in the Lahore district, I observed that all the unskilled hands—

about seventy in number—were living eight in each room 10 ft. x 10 ft. x 10 ft. The rooms had no ventilation and looked dark even in the broad day-light. Similar was the case of a tannery in the Gujranwala district and of a factory in Rawalpindi which I visited in 1927.

Ventilation is provided by the Dhariwal Mills in the quarters and is probably adequate. But, as a common practice, the illiterate labourers paste over all openings with mud. This is my personal observation and I think that it is due to their poverty and to their ignorance of hygienic principles—more especially to the former. They are poor and cannot go in for wool in winter. Not that alone. Their bedding even is not sufficient to protect them from cold at night. The result is that all holes are stuffed up with rags or pasted over with mud. The same condition continues even in summer when, it is believed, the closing up of ventilation keeps the rooms cool.

Our workers possess a remarkable power of adaptation. They raise little objection to dark and dingy quarters. I remember having actually lighted a lamp in the broad daylight to examine the internal state of a few quarters at Lyallpur in 1920.

So much as regards workmen's quarters built close to the mills. A very large number of labourers live in cities or villages. The condition in villages is no better, but there are some redeeming features of rural life which are conspicuous by their absence from city slums.

The urban streets, inhabited by our workmen, are generally narrow—in cases, only four feet wide. The houses present a dull and dreary look. Some of them are situated in narrow alleys, others in confined courts which admit sadly too little sunlight and air and which are often separated from the main street by dark covered passages three or four feet wide.

The streets in which the slums abound present a strange spectacle. Cows and buffaloes—owned by Gujars and others who live there—are often seen arrayed in a line. Their owners have no yards to accommodate them in and so tie them up with ropes in the streets. This adds immensely to the dirt and filth.¹

¹ The sanitary condition of the interior parts of Amritsar and Lahore cities beggars description. An overwhelmingly large number of houses exhibit the usual characteristics of slums.

The windows of these city slums are generally dilapidated. The holes in the walls are stuffed with rags in winter. The following remarks made by the District Officer, Amritsar in 1921 are very suggestive¹:—"There are at this time nearly 4,000 regular labourers working in 79 industrial establishments in this city. Nearly 500 of these are permanent labourers, the others are constantly changing. The average number at normal time is 3,000 and rises to nearly 5,000 in the busy season. The labourers working in trade marts are generally unskilled. As for their housing conditions, permanent labourers are sometimes provided with free quarters by the factory-owners. Nearly all outside labourers have got free quarters; other labourers live in such houses as they can afford to rent; skilled labourers generally living in healthier surroundings than the unskilled. A great number live in narrow lanes. Their social status is low; an ordinary *baboo*² getting Rs. 30 per mensem in an office claims superiority over a skilled labourer, who is earning Rs. 100 monthly. The condition of unskilled labourers is still worse, the most fortunate among them get free quarters to live in factories and mills; others hire common shops in batches of ten or twenty. The remaining are houseless and sleep their night away on platforms of closed shops."

This description quite fits in with the conditions of Jullundur, Lahore and Rawalpindi. Many ordinary labourers are houseless and are seen lying down on the public roads at night. Their bed is the metalled pavement below and their shelter from cold and mosquitoes is the vast blue starry sky which hangs over us all.

Casual labourers go in for residential shops in an out-of-the-way corner, where no other accommodation is available. They live in batches, and these shops are as congested as the city-slums. A special city-building census was held in the Punjab in February, 1921. The enquiry was confined only to four cities—Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur and Rawalpindi. A summary of its results is given below³:—

¹ Punjab Census Report for 1921—Vol. 1—Page 369.

² Clerk.

³ Punjab Census Report—1921—Vol. 1—Page 135.

Serial No.	City.	No. of buildings with an average per inhabited room of				
		2 persons or less than 2	Between 2 and 3 persons	Between 3 and 4 persons	Between 4 and 5 persons	More than 5 persons.
1	Lahore	14,810	5,300	3,471	2,101	3,647
2	Amritsar	5,296	1,069	511	260	411
3	Jullundur	2,332	693	334	126	154
4	Rawalpindi	1,953	602	350	161	204

These figures relate to the whole urban population. The condition of factory operatives was not examined separately, but they undoubtedly fall in the last three divisions of buildings.

Workmen's houses generally have uneven and uncemented floors which are, of course, used to sit or lie on, as usually no furniture is used. City-slums are never whitewashed. An apology for whitewash exists in factory quarters but this, too, vanishes when, in winter and rains, firewood and charcoal are burnt inside.

Waste water is many a time thrown inside. Pools of water in this way collect gradually percolating through into the damp and unsavoury soil below. The windows and doors are usually kept closed and the labourers remain pent up in their cells after the factory hours. There is very little privacy and no home-life. The rooms are used for all purposes, the few household utensils (earthen and metal), the clothes, the beds and the firewood are all stored there.

These houses do not possess any plinth; in some cases, they are much below the level of the public roads. Thus, water collects in pools during rains outside and an important problem of drainage is how to get rid of the surface water during the monsoon.

No separate baths are provided for workers in any factory. Men and women go to the nearest tank or well, however dirty and unwholesome it may be. Muslim women take their baths in their rooms. The need for baths can hardly be over-emphasized. They are an absolute daily necessity in a tropical country and should be provided by local municipalities or the factory-owners as soon as possible.

Lighting is generally conspicuous by its absence in the neighbourhood of factories. This should be done by the municipality or the factory whichever be responsible for it.

The habits of our uneducated workmen, in general, are unhygienic. They throw household refuse and filth into the open yard in front, or cast it from the window (if any) into the public street. If quarters were visited before and after occupation, the difference would be at once visible.

Some of the Muslim women remain behind the veil. The factory owners generally take no notice of their religious scruples and erect no enclosure walls for them. The result is that the workmen themselves make small enclosures either with the help of stray bricks or gunny bags, whichever be easily procurable. When these two things are not available, a long sheet of patched-up rags is hung over the doorway. The consequences are self-evident. The health of women, as also of their husbands, is impaired. The latrines in such cases are located just close to the door and the stench thereby produced impairs the health of the residents close by. It is necessary under the conditions that due notice should be taken of the religious sentiments of labourers. The North Western Railway Workshops at Lahore and the Sugar Mills at Amritsar (Chheherta) have made a move in this direction. Care must be taken that the enclosures leave an open space before each house.

There is no system of through ventilation in working men's quarters in general. Its absence affects the physique of workers. Their health is very indifferent. Their children grow feeble and look pale and half-starved.

The area adjoining their quarters is not generally kept clean and stagnant pools of water are often found there. These have practically no outlet except when they overflow their banks in heavy rains. They are generally covered with a thick greenish brown slime, and, during the scorching heat of summer, give out an unpleasant odour. These places are the breeding centres of mosquitoes, including those which carry malaria. The poor wage-earners and their children fall an easy prey to it, thus becoming feeble and timid in body and mind.

Such drawbacks can be promptly put an end to by a proper system of drainage and we cannot conceive of a more dangerous

agent to the health and vitality of labourers than such epidemics. The trouble does not end here; for I have often noticed that small children play in these pools and it is therefore no wonder to hear of such a huge infantile mortality in the Punjab.

The noteworthy feature herein is the inability of municipalities to rise equal to the need. Several cases of dirt and filth gathering round the quarters of workmen have been referred to them, but practically very little has been done to remove these legitimate causes of complaint. I happened to look into the office-records of some mills during my tour of the Punjab, and was greatly struck to find the indifference displayed by the municipal committees and district boards to the representations made by mill-owners on behalf of their workers in matters of health and welfare. Sanitation is one of the foremost needs of the Punjab, and any reform taken in this direction is sure to be accompanied by good results.

The lavatories attached to the quarters are insufficient almost everywhere and do not generally possess cemented floors. These are at times situated very close to the dwelling area and are not provided with drains for the outlet of water which, dirty and impure as it already is, is absorbed in the earth and produces an unhealthy atmosphere all around. Sinks are sometimes provided but they are never regularly cleaned.

But this is not all. There are instances in which no provision whatsoever is made for latrines. The workers are asked to go far into the open fields—sometimes at a distance of a mile and a half—to ease themselves. This gives rise to hookworm disease, so noxious to human beings. The employers alone are not to blame for it. The city-fathers, who stand forth as their representatives, while away their precious time in vain communal bickerings, attempting nothing, achieving nothing. Public lavatories and urinals should be set up at convenient places very early. The present system of latrines is bad and unwholesome. "Septic tanks" are far superior and should be substituted wherever feasible. They are known in many parts of India. In the Punjab it is only the Milne Memorial High School, Dhariwal, and a few other places which possess them. The device is simple and economical, and I look forward to the day when it will be common in the Punjab.

One great need of our workmen is pure water. They are not within easy approach of tap-water wheresoever it exists. Well-water is commonly used by them but it is not so sanitary and pure. Wells, again, are not kept clean and it often happens that pools of stagnant water are found adjacent to them. In this way, any percolation that takes place is bound to find its way through the old brick-work into the wells. It is but natural that, under such conditions, the terrible epidemics that invade the country should take a heavy toll of the lives of people living in insanitary environments.

The local boards can come to the rescue of our workers by supplying them with tap-water free and in abundance. In places where pipe water cannot be had, the municipalities may be called upon to keep wells free from contamination.

The present generation of workers is, in short, very badly housed. Its vitality is low, and, consequently, its power of resistance small. It is a universal law of nature that all living beings adapt themselves to their environment, and I am afraid that the indifference of the public will result in a gradual decay of the working population.

It is a fact that wherever insanitary conditions prevail, a high death-rate is prevalent both among infants and adults. The following table sums up the death-rate per mille of the population in the Punjab during 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925 and 1926¹.

	1926.		1925.		1924.		1923.		1922.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Under 1 year	219.14	197.69	193.37	176.59	219.18	199.57	218.61	198.84	169.99	153.37
1 & under 5 years	53.22	52.53	44.70	44.31	68.21	68.85	58.77	59.39	39.57	38.02
5 "	15.34	17.34	11.90	12.64	27.01	24.28	11.23	13.11	7.43	7.76
10 "	16.64	21.39	12.32	15.71	21.29	31.69	10.24	14.25	6.51	1.18
15 "	23.13	29.52	16.32	20.96	25.82	35.06	11.31	16.61	7.60	10.03
20 "	18.05	21.38	13.38	15.77	20.58	24.90	11.58	14.94	7.88	10.02
30 "	20.15	23.59	14.64	16.86	24.32	29.56	13.57	17.20	9.83	11.76
40 "	28.69	30.27	23.69	24.21	34.00	38.02	20.06	21.98	14.75	14.72
50 "	39.80	42.29	32.76	33.31	46.85	51.17	28.08	29.46	21.09	20.30
60 and upwards	65.78	73.85	61.59	47.82	60.52	60.84	61.06	68.65	50.41	52.06

¹ Report on the Public Health Administration of the Punjab for 1924—Page 7 for 1922, 1923 and 1924.

Also report on the Public Health Administration of the Punjab, 1926 for the years 1925 and 1926—Page 5.

This table includes only registered deaths. Many deaths however escape registration. It is a pity that separate figures for factory-labourers are not available. The table refers to the population in general. The year 1922 was more or less normal as plague or malaria did not then break out. 1923 and 1924 were rather abnormal. Normal conditions were resumed in 1925 owing to the quiescence of plague and fever. Plague broke out again in 1926 and accounted for an increase of death-rate in that year.

These figures display a very high death-rate among children below one year of age. The total number of children who died within the 1st year of their life was 173,844 in 1926, thereby showing an increase of 19,532 as compared with 1925. "The total death-rate per mille for this group calculated on the census enumeration of 1921 is 208,58 as against 185,15 for 1925 and 192,15 for the preceding five years. Calculated on the total number of births during the year, the infant mortality rate was 203,43 per 1000 births compared with 187,71 in 1925. Ordinarily, deaths under one year constitute one fifth of the total deaths of the province and deaths under one month one half of the total deaths under one year but this year fractions are little more than $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ respectively."¹

Several causes—small-pox, measles, malaria, fever, diarrhoea, dysentery, infantile debility and malformation including premature birth, respiratory diseases, and convulsions—account for infantile mortality. The rate of infant mortality for slum areas is not given. All the same, it is evident that it must be alarmingly high. In October, 1922, a Health School for the training of health visitors and maternity supervisors was established by the Lady Chelmsford's League (Punjab Branch). It was recently provincialised. The activities of our maternity supervisors are confined for the present to cities; but even there, the factory labourers do not seem to derive any advantage out of it, mostly because of their ignorance. Throughout my tour in the Punjab, I did not come across even a single instance where a factory worker had been helped in this direction.

¹ Report on the Public Health Administration of the Punjab for the year 1926—Page 5.

The field for social work is very wide; the social workers are however few in number. No definite figures appear about maternal mortality amongst factory-workers, but it is evident that they must be high. Our women are generally attended in their period of confinement by *dais*—indigenous midwives—who have had no regular training in their profession. They are very unclean and unhygienic in their habits. “Clothed in voluminous dirty garments, their arms are decorated with innumerable glass bangles; their fingers covered with shoddy rings end in dirty finger nails. Their apparatus consists chiefly of a large tobacco pipe of the *hookah* variety, a dirty old knife, and a small oil lamp, the oil of which serves indiscriminately both for burning and oiling the hands for vaginal examination. A few scraps of rags or old wool pulled out of a mattress and some string complete the outfit,”¹

This, then, is the real state of affairs and serious attempts are necessary to bring it under control. The Victoria Memorial Scholarship Fund started by Lady Curzon in 1904 is a step in the right direction. The Lady Chelmsford All-India League for maternity and child welfare was founded in 1920 with a fund of eight lakhs.² The Indian Red-Cross Society has been established since 1921 and aims at child welfare and the improvement of public health. These central institutions are doing useful work; but they have as yet only touched the fringe of the problem which so greatly affects the masses in the country. Their funds are rather small and, unless supported by local bodies, they cannot be expected to re-organise the indigenous midwifery practice in India. Voluntary help seems badly in demand. But social agencies cannot work their way up unaided. It is the duty of the Government and the local boards to pay immediate attention to this question and grant liberal financial aid.

In his annual report for 1922 (pages 88 and 89) the Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India says:—“Infant mortality is a sensitive index of the health conditions, especially as regards general sanitation under which the people live; it is these conditions which require attention if any real

¹ Report of the Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India for the year 1920, Calcutta, 1922—Page 60.

² About £60,000.

influence on infant mortality and on the health of a nation is to be exercised. That close on a quarter of the total deaths should be in infants is a clear indication that a clean environment—the first essential of health—is neglected. Infants respond to the nature of the environment more readily than human beings at later periods of life; and a rise in the percentage of infant death to total mortality means that the epidemic diseases which affect adults to a greater degree have been less prevalent.”

But adults are also greatly influenced by their environment. The total number of deaths registered in 1926 “amounted to 749,392 of which 392,382 were of males and 357,010 of females, the resulting rates being 36·5, 35·0 and 38·3 respectively. The corresponding rates for the preceding year were 30·0, 28·9 and 31·2, and the average rates for the previous quinquennium 31·3, 30·1 and 32·8.”¹

“Of the provincial death-rate (36·5), 21·3 was due to fevers, 5·5 to all other causes,² 2·8 to respiratory diseases, 5·3 to plague, 0·9 to small-pox, 0·5 to dysentery and diarrhoea, 0·3 to injuries and 0·004 to cholera.”³

It is now clear that, side by side with other necessary reforms, an improvement in the housing condition of labourers and other poor classes is very badly needed. Any step taken in this direction is sure to prove very effective. Poverty of resources and bad housing conditions affect the different communities in the Punjab in varying degrees. The death-rates are the lowest among the Indian Christians; they are higher amongst the Muslims; and they are the highest amongst the Hindus. The following figures for infantile death-rates classified according to communities will be instructive:—

	1925.		1926.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Hindus	209·50	193·38	238·21	211·53
Muslims	181·85	165·33	205·25	187·23
Indian Christians	174·08	140·73	207·21	175·39

¹ Report of the Public Health Administration of the Punjab for 1926—Page 3.

² The quotation is right although it may be argued that the words “5·5 to all other causes” could have been suitably placed at the end of the sentence. These words evidently refer to diseases other than those mentioned above.

³ Report of the Public Health Administration of the Punjab for 1926—Page 3.

It may be of interest to note that England was confronted with the same problem as late as the end of the 19th century. With the advent of the present century, persistent efforts have been made to bring down the rate of infant mortality. These have succeeded admirably. At the end of the 19th century, the average death-rate of children below one year of age in England and Wales was more than 150 per thousand births. Between 1901 and 1910, the rate of infant mortality went down to 128. By the end of the year 1915, it stood at 110. It went still further down to 90 in 1916-1920. It was 75 in 1924 and 1925 and 70 in 1926. The results attained are no doubt very commendable and it is expected that the rate of infant mortality will be still further reduced in future years¹. Improved sanitation, combined with other causes, has brought about a corresponding decrease in the average annual death-rate in England. Whereas in 1871-80 it stood at 21.4 per 1,000 living, it has steadily gone down in each succeeding year so much so that it stood at 13.8 per 1,000 living in 1919².

The physical welfare of expectant mothers and born babies is one of our foremost duties. The work can be undertaken with success by the Local Government and voluntary agencies and should proceed on the following lines:—

(1) There should be a sufficient supply of maternity homes for the normal confinement of women-workers who live in very ugly and insanitary quarters, or who cannot be confined in their homes. Sometimes, more than one family lives in the same room and it is advisable that expectant mothers, living under such circumstances, should be removed to a maternity home during their period of confinement.

(2) There is no provision for home-nursing of ailments connected with pregnancy and for the diseases of infants of workers. Early attention to this is needed.

¹ Vide Annual Reports of the Ministry of Health in England.

² First Annual Report of the Ministry of Health 1919-20 (England); Page 43. It should be remembered that the birth-rate and death-rate have both declined in England. The average annual birth-rate in 1871-80 was 35.4 per 1,000 living. It stood at 18.5 in 1919.

(3) Sometimes, the expectant mother is penniless, and this is generally the case amongst women-workers in factories. In such cases, sufficient nourishment should be provided for them as well as for the poor nursing mothers.

(4) A large number of lady doctors should be appointed in different areas and entrusted with the task of extending the maternity and child-welfare programmes.

Midwifery service should also be very greatly extended, so that each woman may be in a position to avail herself of a trained midwife in her confinement.

This is not all. Maternity schemes and child welfare work are very useful indeed, but no substantial progress is possible without a sanitary home-life. The mean age of the population in the Punjab stands at about 25 for both males and females. Judged from European standards, the figure is very low although it is high as compared with other Indian provinces. Sanitary houses will improve the physical and mental outlook of our workers and lay the foundation of true national happiness.

Public health is one of our foremost needs, but it is further partly dependent on good houses. I have observed that the accommodation for factory workers is limited and is bad and insanitary. I am of opinion that factory-owners should provide sanitary quarters for them as far as possible. They cannot, however, be forced to do so by law: it has never been so in England.¹

It must be borne in mind that we live in a tropical country and insanitary houses here can wreak a far greater havoc than in a temperate or a cold climate. An improvement in houses can be brought about in one of the following ways:—

(1) The Local Government may float a loan and build quarters handing them over to the workmen at a little above cost-rental;

(2) or, alternatively, the government may finance the

¹Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916—18, Calcutta, 1918—Vol. I—Page 157. “. . . So far as we have been able to discover, in no country have employers been compelled by law to house their labour.”

factory-owners and some philanthropic institutions at a reasonable rate of interest and encourage them to provide sanitary accommodation for workers. It can render further assistance by giving land free, as is often done in the case of private individuals. Or, it may buy land and hand it over for the building of workers' quarters on long lease.

Owing to great congestion in urban centres, it is essential that the government should have some control in future in the location of industrial establishments and their general housing plans. These should be thoroughly scrutinised before factories are established.

Our industries are still in an infant stage and it would hit our manufacturers hard if they were compelled to make provision of quarters for their employees. Compulsion in this direction would be unjust and undesirable, the more so, as it has never been exercised anywhere in the world.

The educated labourers are opposed to the creation of landlord employers. They were turned out bag and baggage at a moment's notice in the great railway strike of 1920, and they still recollect the bitter memories of that historic event. The railway strike of 1920 was the first great outburst of labour in the Punjab. There was no union; it was still in the making. Moreover, the workers had just passed through the terrorism of martial law days. Under these conditions, it was no wonder that the labourers were frightened and left their houses promptly under various threats.

The old days have rolled by and it is difficult—nay, impossible—to repeat the atrocities of the past. Trade-unionism will grow slowly and steadily, and the landlordism of employers may not after all be so bad. But they should be legally prohibited from expelling workers from their quarters in the case of a strike.

I personally think that the above two schemes would go hand in hand. Let me emphasize that our workers stand badly in need of good houses—let the agency for their construction be what it may. "Good houses mean the possibility of home-life, happiness and health; bad houses spell squalor, drink, disease, immorality and crime; and, in the end, demand hospitals, prisons and asylums in which we seek to hide away the

human derelicts of society that are largely the result of society's own neglect . . ."¹

Suitable accommodation will enable labourers to live with their families, which will, in turn, exercise a healthy influence on their morals. Their attendance in factories will become steadier, thereby adding to their efficiency and creating a permanent labouring class.²

¹ Sir George Lloyd and Hon'ble Edward Wood: *The Great Opportunity*—London, 1918, Page 82.

² Indian Industrial Commission Report : Minutes of Evidence, 1916—18. Vol. I, Page 66. Evidence of the Hon'ble Mr. L. P. Watson, President of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce :—“ I have noted, however, with feelings of extreme satisfaction and it has been noted by other employers of labour, that the comparative cleanliness and orderliness in their home-lives, which has been secured to a percentage of the workmen by the erection of model villages, has been reflected in their work, and I am very sure that the skill and efficiency of the labourer is to a very great extent dependent upon healthy, cleanly and orderly home surroundings, whatever his caste or creed may be.”

CHAPTER VI

THE SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR LABOUR

THERE is a general complaint of the shortage of labour in the Punjab.¹ Inadequacy of labour is reported in Amritsar, Sialkot, Sheikhpura, Lyallpur and Muzaffargarh districts. But this statement is quite unwarranted. The employers sometimes want to engage men at the pre-War rates of wages, regardless of the fact that the prices of articles have gone up since 1914 and made it difficult for the workers to make both ends meet. Wages generally rise in sympathy with the rise in prices, and any attempt to evade this tendency must drive the labourers to other fields making the number of those available for employment seemingly low. I cannot help here alluding to an incident, in a mill at Lahore in 1920, to which I was an eye-witness. It was about the middle of June in that year that I visited the factory as an Industrial Investigator. As soon as some of the workmen realised my sympathetic attitude, they came weeping and said that the manager was trying to deceive them by giving low wages as compared with those previously agreed upon. The manager admitted that he had been instructed by the proprietor to reduce wages below the agreed amount.

This is something very novel indeed, and displays the high-handedness of employers in their treatment of the employees.²

¹ Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. I.—Page 369.

² Report of the Indian Factory-Labour Commission, 1908—Vol. I—London, 1908; Page 20. "The Indian operative is fond of change; he prefers to wander from mill to mill rather than remain settled; and the slightest causes are apparently sufficient to determine him to leave one employer in favour of another. We have operatives who have travelled from one industry . . ."

This statement does not fit in even with the present conditions of the Punjab. The labourer suffers indignity at the hands of his master, and the slightest causes indeed do not make him shift from place to place. He likes a settled life, but feels disappointed wherever he goes. It is the factory-owner who is largely responsible for the so-called shifting attitude of the labourer, and not the labourer himself.

On these occasions, the employees find it out too late sometimes to go elsewhere. Their information regarding market conditions of labour is very vague and indefinite, and it is difficult to take a risk especially when, with their elastic standard of living, they can accommodate themselves to their changed circumstances. Thus, it dawns on us that the fact of workmen not being readily available, at the old rates of wages, cannot be taken to indicate scarcity of labour supply. The emigration of labourers to far off colonies and to other provinces in India is a contradiction in point. In the census for 1921, "549,386 persons born in the Punjab were enumerated outside the province, of whom 530,899 were enumerated in other parts of India."¹ The details of emigrants outside India may be thus tabulated.²

Country where enumerated	Punjabis
Hong Kong	... 1,192
Kenya	... 4,823
Sudan	... 16
Nyasaland	... 20
Tanganyika Territory	... 326
Straits Settlement	... 1,877
Federated Malay States	... 7,789
Unfederated Malay States	... 1,373
Ceylon	... 174
Cyprus	... 122
Southern Rhodesia	... 15
Somaliland Protectorate	... 125
South Africa	... 186
Fiji	... 449
Grand Total ...	<u>18,487</u>

Sometimes, factory-owners are in league with one another and make the world hard for the labourers to live in. During my visit to a mill at Amritsar in May, 1927, the manager confessed that he never took in a labourer, who had been dismissed

¹ Punjab Census Report, 1921. Vol. I.—Page 142.

² Note that the figures given in the table relate to the whole province including Indian States.

by another similar factory situated at a distance of about 40 miles. These two factories are the only ones that produce the same commodity in the Punjab. It is, therefore, difficult for a dismissed worker to make both ends meet unless, of course, he decides to take to a different calling altogether at a greatly reduced wage.

This is one of the many instances that I have personally witnessed. In a mill at Lahore in 1927, I was struck to find the women-workers sitting under the unbearable summer sun sorting wool. There was no shed provided for the purpose, and the poor women, inarticulate as they already are, had to seek a temporary and farcical shelter from the sun by taking off their head-gear and spreading it over their heads with the help of stray sticks. Not only that. The factory-owner who, with his beard and all, appeared holy and pious, came down upon some workers with the roar of a lion and abused them mercilessly. It was a clear case of defamation. The women felt it, but they must tolerate these abuses as they have to keep themselves going.¹ The Director of Industries, Punjab related a case to me in May, 1927. A labourer was mercilessly beaten by his master in 1926. He came to the Director who, of course, declared his inability to lend him a helping hand. Nothing could be legally done by the Director. He had, however, a friendly talk over the affair with the master concerned and persuaded him to pay one hundred rupees as compensation to the injured worker.

¹Report of the Indian Factory-labour Commission, 1908—Vol. I. London, 1908, Page 19:—

“The position of the operative has been greatly strengthened by the fact that the supply of factory-labour undoubtedly is, and has been, inadequate; and there is, and has been, the keenest competition among employers to secure a full labour-supply. These two main causes, the independence of the Indian labourer owing to the fact that he possesses other and congenial means of livelihood, and the deficient labour supply, govern the whole situation.”

I take strong exception to these remarks of the Indian Factory Labour Commission of 1907-08. Labourers, then, did not sleep in a bed of roses. They worked excessively long hours. They suffered insults patiently. Why? This was because they were not united and had very few alternative “congenial means” of earning a livelihood. Only those conversant with Indian conditions realise the sufferings of the poor. Thus, it is clear that labourers do not command an independent position.

Regarding deficient labour-supply, I have given definite proofs in this chapter to contradict the above point. I have shown that there is a great potential supply of labour even at present, when the country is more industrialised than it was in 1907.



The Beggar

“They choose the path of least resistance and are sometimes prepared to live on alms as free beggars rather than go to factories as servile workers.” (Page 137),

SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR LABOUR 137

These are some of the causes which reduce the supply of labour in our factories. Moreover, the housing conditions of our workers are extremely unsatisfactory. It has been shown that they are herded together like sheep in dark and insanitary one-room tenements. Again, their standard of living is elastic and low and they prefer an independent living, however meagre, to the dull, monotonous, hard and tiring life in factories. They choose the path of least resistance, and are sometimes prepared to live on alms as free beggars rather than go to factories as servile workers.

There is a great potential supply of labour in the Punjab; 60·5 per cent of the population depend on agriculture for their maintenance. Only 39·5 per cent are dependent upon other sources of livelihood. The table¹ given below will be instructive in this respect :—

Punjab (including Delhi)

Class and sub-class	Population supported	No. per 1,000 of the population
A. Production of raw materials	15,213,502	606
(1) Exploitation of animals and vegetation ...	15,191,205	605
(2) Exploitation of minerals.	22,297	1
B. Preparation and supply of material substances ...	7,044,618	281
(3) Industry ...	4,834,248	193
(4) Transport ...	487,660	19
(5) Trade ...	1,722,710	69
C. Public Administration and liberal arts ...	958,411	38
D. Miscellaneous ...	1,884,529	75
(6) Persons living on their income ...	63,915	3
(7) Domestic service ...	639,103	25
(8) Insufficiently described occupations ...	572,934	23
(9) Unproductive ...	608,577	24

¹ Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. 1, Page 352.

The miscellaneous class accounts for 7.5 per cent of the population. Of this, professional beggars, forming part of the unproductive class, alone number 585,186. These people throng in cities and towns and extort money from people by various devices. Their utilisation in factories would add immensely to the productive powers of the Punjab. In addition to beggars, we have a large number of sadhus, prohats, mahants, mullas, majawars, and others, especially in the sub-Himalayan tract where they form 20 per mille of the total population.¹

The criminal tribes also form a large class by themselves. They lead an unsettled life, and are a menace to the peace and security of the province. The total number of registered persons in the end of the year 1926 was 12,192. Of these, 9,010 were amongst the settled and 3,182 amongst the wandering tribes. The Punjab Government has of late begun the humane policy of the reclamation of these tribes and it is expected to prove fruitful in the long run. Appreciable results have been attained already.

But much remains to be done. These gangs still pass at pleasure from district to district, oftentimes leaving a trail of undetected crime behind. It is essential that sufficient restrictive settlements should be provided for them all over the province until they have learnt to lead a quiet, reformed and settled life. They would thus be able to become useful members of society, and add greatly to the serviceable labour-force of the country.

The existence in trade of a large number of middlemen, whose functions could easily be discharged by a smaller number, provides another possible source of labour-supply for our growing industries. This profession is very much overcrowded. It contains 1,722,710 persons and comprises 69 per 1,000 of the population. The protective policy adopted by the Government of India has given much satisfaction to those living on bare subsistence, and has held out to them hopes of absorption in other walks of life.

Of these 1,722,710 persons living on trade, the money-

¹ Sadhus, prohats, mahants, mullas, majawars are religious devotees; the first three are Hindus by religion, while the last two are Muslims.

lenders, the banks, the brokers, the commission agents and others alone accounted for 192,245 persons including their dependents. The census returns for 1921 report a decrease of 10·4 per cent money-lenders ever since 1911. Mr. Calvert believes that this is mainly due to the growth of co-operative credit institutions. The money-lender, according to him, is disappearing slowly but steadily. Such being the case, we have another avenue for the recruitment of our industrial force. Again, small shops, that exist at present in our towns, are uneconomical. They entail much waste of labour and time, and a great amount of potential labour would be set free if they were supplanted by large stores.

Enough has been written on the different sources from which labour could be drawn for the steady industrialisation of the Punjab. There are further avenues which could be safely tapped with advantage. The Department of Agriculture has of late evinced some interest in the improvement of cultivation. The Royal Commission on Agriculture has collected a valuable mass of evidence on the subject of Indian agriculture, and it is hoped that their report will be of immense use to us. The improvement of agriculture¹, which is now sure to come about very soon, will set free a large number of workers for employment in factories.

Moreover, the Workmen's Compensation Act, which has lately been put into force, will exercise a healthy influence. It will create a certain amount of security for the workmen. The knowledge that they will be adequately protected in their hour of trouble will surely prove attractive to those in search of employment.

A word about the educated community. The unemployment problem stares them in the face, and their position of late

¹ Calvert: *Wealth and Welfare in the Punjab-Lahore, 1922*-Page 171:—
 “. . . it is clear that a large amount of labour could be spared from the fields if those remaining could be induced to put forth greater exertion, and this can, probably, best be effected by insuring them a full and adequate return undiminished by the exorbitant demand of the usurer.”

Indian Fiscal Commission—*Minutes of Evidence, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1923*. Page 132. The Honourable Mr. Harkishan Lal said before the Indian Fiscal Commission:—“The numbers are so great in agriculture, and the number required for industries would be so small compared to the population that I cannot conceive a stage when agriculture would be affected by industrial growth.”

has become very precarious. It is said that the educated people of to-day shun manual labour and are averse to factory work. This is true to some extent; but their aversion is based on a sound reasoning. They are prepared to take to an honourable livelihood; but they hate a life of wretched and miserable dependence. As factory conditions improve, these people will surely accommodate themselves to their changed environments.

This is not all. Some literate persons do certainly hate factory life. But a large number of them are anxious to get in and are not given a fair trial by employers. The latter know that they cannot stick to unwholesome conditions, and are sure to raise a hue and cry against the unnatural state of affairs created by mean selfishness and conservatism. They do not want the labourers to unite, and it is against their immediate financial interests to accommodate the already discontented but educated community.

Enough has been said to prove that there is a great potential supply of labour in the Punjab¹. One serious allegation is levelled against the labourers: it is said that their whole life is regulated by caste. Let us look at this point minutely.

The institution of caste possesses a great historical importance; but conditions have undergone a great change, at least in the Punjab. Now-a-days, caste turns largely on occupations and its old rigidity lingers no longer.² It is, as may be aptly said, in the melting pot. Under the stress of foreign competition and the import of new and renovating ideas, the hard and fast rules of caste, which previously distributed and locked up the whole population into cast-iron compartments, no longer hold their original sway. And now, it is amongst the higher people that a greater or less rigidity of caste still persists. Caste is malleable

¹ Extract from the evidence of Punjab Paper Mills Co., before the Indian Tariff Board (Vide Indian Tariff Board Enquiry regarding the grant of protection to the paper and paper-pulp industries—1924). "The labour is indigenous. It is always available in sufficient quantity except at harvesting season which occurs practically at the end of the grass-cutting season."

² Industrial Punjab: Latifi: Longmans Green & Co., 1911. General introduction, Page 12 "Nowhere in India is the caste-system looser than in the villages of the Punjab . . ."

amongst the lower classes. Mr. Middleton, Superintendent of the Census operations for 1921, lays the whole blame of the so-called rigidity of caste on the Government. He thus expresses himself:¹—

“ . . . I had intended pointing out that there is a very wide revolt against the classification of occupational castes, that these castes have been largely manufactured and almost entirely preserved as separate castes by the British Government. Our land records and official documents have added iron bands to the old rigidity of caste. Caste in itself was rigid amongst the higher castes but malleable amongst the lower: we pigeon-holed every one by castes and, if we could not find a true caste for them, labelled them with the name of an hereditary occupation. We deplore the caste-system and its effect on social and economic problems, but we are largely responsible for the system that we deplore. Left to themselves, such castes as Sunar, Tarkhan and Lohar would rapidly disappear and no one would suffer. The large number of people, who have refused to record any caste at this census, is a sign of progress and the breakage of customary bonds; it is no reflection on the administration of the census.”²

It is said that caste tendencies in the Punjab have restricted the active freedom of labour. It is no doubt true that the illiteracy of people, their poverty and disorganisation, their abysmal ignorance of external affairs, their family affection and love of home have rendered their position very precarious and prevented them from making a full use of their opportunities. But, allowing for their drawbacks, we find a great mobility from one place to another.

I have examined a large number of factories and workshops in the Punjab and know thoroughly well that our labourers are highly responsive to changes of circumstances and conditions.

¹ Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. I, Page 343.

² “As an institution, caste plays a far less important part in the social life of the people than in other parts of India.” Imperial Gazette of India—Punjab. Vol. I, Calcutta, 1908—Provincial Series—Page 43.

The following figures, which were collected by me in 1920, will speak for themselves:—

Name of Factory	Total number of workers.	Punjabis.	Total number of residents of the district where factory was located.	Number of those belonging to other provinces.
1. Mela Ram Cotton Mills, Lahore ...	317	81	45	236
2. Colony Flour Mills, Lyallpur ...	52	24	...	28
3. Gayan Mills, Lyallpur ...	47	26	...	21
4. Bustomji Mills, Badamai Bagh ...	81	37	18	44

Of 695 workers in the Banktेशwar Cotton Mills, Amritsar in May, 1927, only 71 belonged to the Punjab. The Punjabi wants more wages and dislikes the trying conditions of cotton mills.

The above figures clearly show that there is a distinct mobility of labour from district to district and even province to province. The carpet factories at Amritsar, Sujapore and Batala attract labour from the adjoining areas, while the Dhariwal Woollen Mills are mainly dependent on labour drawn from the neighbouring hills ¹.

By the term 'mobility of labour' is meant "the degree of facility with which, in response to any inducement, labourers move from one employment or place to another."² The movement of progressive societies is from status to contract and has been followed by an increase in the mobility of labour.

¹ I would here like to mention that no registers showing the native places of workmen in the Punjab are kept by the proprietors. It is thus extremely difficult and troublesome to prepare such tables, as every operative has to be approached personally for this purpose. It took me a long time to collect the necessary figures.

² Palgrave's Dictionary of Political Economy. Vol. II—London, 1923. Page 525.

SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR LABOUR 143

Mobility of labour is not confined within the area of the Punjab alone. It has come to stay throughout India and the different provinces have taken to it. The following tables¹ will throw some light on it:—

Place of Origin of Skilled Employees

Birth-place	Total No. of workers (males)	Total No. of female labourers
Punjab ...	24,664	542
<i>Outside Punjab :</i>		
Delhi ...	18	...
United Provinces ...	2,468	227
Bengal ...	76	...
Bombay ...	100	1
Madras ...	12	...
N. W. F. Province ...	253	3
Nepal ...	6	...
Outside India (England) ...	72	...

Place of Origin of Unskilled Workers

Birth-place	Male labourers	Female labourers
1. In the Punjab Province or State ...	21,042	2,780
(a) Districts of employment ...	11,130	1,426
(b) Other districts ...	9,912	1,354
2. Outside the Province ...	3,685	632
(a) Delhi ...	81	4
(b) Baluchistan ...	...	...
(c) United Provinces ...	2,976	579
(d) Bengal ...	2	...
(e) Bombay ...	63	...
(f) Madras ...	...	...
(g) N.W.F. Province ...	544	42
(h) Nepal ...	19	7
3. Outside India (England) ...	3	...

¹Punjab Census Report, 1921—Vol. I—Pages 403 and 404.

These figures relate to industrial labour in general. They prove beyond doubt the very small part played by women in the industrial regeneration of the Punjab. There were 7,855 females working in the different registered factories in the province in 1926. A great part of the female labour is not very productively employed. Mr. Calvert writes¹:—

“There is a vast waste of female labour due primarily to custom and prejudice. In most other countries, the proportion of female labour to the whole is high; while its efficiency is equal to the tasks performed; the contribution to the national dividend resulting from this forms an appreciable part of the whole. If there were in western countries a movement aiming at the exclusion of female labour from all except purely domestic tasks, that movement would endanger the whole economic fabric and, if successful, would involve those countries in ruin. The Punjab discards what in England and elsewhere is an absolutely necessary element in the maintenance of their civilization. The fact that there are tribes, such as Brahmins and Rajputs, which do not allow their womenfolk to work in the fields is alone sufficient to explain their poverty. The work of women as clerks and shopkeepers, posts and telegraph operators, factory hands, etc., and in connection with the fish industry, market-gardening, etc., has no counterpart here. In the course of generations, the loss from this waste alone must have made material progress impossible. No European country could maintain its present standard of living without the assistance derived from female labour.”

Mr. Calvert's remarks appear suggestive indeed. To me, however, they look like an exaggeration of the real state of affairs. It is true, no doubt, that a large number of women in cities observe *pardah*. In villages, women assist the men in the fields. The women, who remain behind the veil in cities, are busy for a portion of the day in their household tasks. As soon as they are free, they take to some light task, supplied to them by middlemen. They are in this way busy at some thing or other from morn till eve. Their standard of living is generally low, and, as they want to supplement their family incomes, they are

¹H. Calvert: *Wealth and Welfare in the Punjab—Lahore, 1922. Page 207.*

prepared to work on meagre wages. Moreover, they have no organisation of their own. They are also illiterate and liable to be exploited by shrewd middlemen. We thus find that there is a wastage of female labour in the Punjab. But it is not so great nor of the same character as Mr. Calvert depicts.

His remarks suggest that the women in the Punjab idle away their time—an unwarranted statement, of course. Mr. Calvert, perhaps, forgets that, in England, women numerically exceed men. Many men remain unmarried and women have thus to earn their living in different callings.

Indian women are very active in their own sphere of life. Their domestic activities are so valuable and unending that they have never looked upon themselves as useless. They hold an important position in the house, although they are helpless when called upon to grapple with the external conditions of life which require some literacy and organisation on their part. This domestic work itself has a great material value in the economics of every nation. In England, wives with home structure, similar to that of the average Indian wife, scarcely ever think of going out to work, nor can they spare time and energy for it.

CHAPTER VII

ACCIDENTS AND COMPENSATION ¹

THE use of machinery has brought in accidents, unknown and unheard of before. Some of these are inevitable under the present conditions, and it is our duty to bring them down as low as possible.

It is only in the last few years, that a lively discussion has been aroused in the West in relation to the question of industrial accidents. Industrial accidents mean death, a permanent, or a temporary disablement. In other words, they occasion loss of lives and result in the crippling and maiming of many. They further imply loss of wages, the expenses of training incurred on labourers replacing the injured employees, the up-keep and maintenance of industrial wrecks and the decrease in the earning capacities of disabled workers. Industrial accidents, in one word, mean waste—waste of money as well as of human energy. What are their causes ?

It is often said of our workers that they attribute accidents to the ruling of fate or *Kismet*. This evidently means that they are of opinion that accidents are engineered by the mysterious power of God and that no measures, however effective, can bring them down. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Our labourers can surely lay the forefinger at the immediate cause of an accident; but, helpless and downtrodden as they are, they seek consolation by resigning themselves to the Almighty God. "It was so destined to be", they generally say; but it never means that they assign any ill-will to God or look upon *Kismet* as the originating cause of accidents.

Accidents are partly due to the want of adequate safeguards against dangerous machinery. "In point of fact, no less

¹ Words or passages in this chapter which are given within inverted commas, and which are not expressly acknowledged, are taken from the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act.

an authority than Mr. Gerard Bellhouse, Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories, recently at a 'Safety-First' conference at Olympia, London, stated that, while he was not desirous of minimising the importance of the provision of adequate guards for machinery, experience had proved that two-thirds of the accidents reported by factory inspectors did not involve machinery at all, and that, of the remaining third, not more than one third could have been prevented merely by better safeguarding. It follows, therefore, that whatever may be accomplished by that provision, the reduction in the accident rate to be effected by this means alone can only represent a very small proportion of the whole. It is implied, therefore, that not more than ten per cent accident reduction can be anticipated by the provision of safeguards."¹

Accidents are mainly accounted for by the psychological factor: they are due to the carelessness of the worker. The worker may become forgetful of risk on account of some extraneous influence. This may divert his attention and result in his thinking of something else.

Carelessness of workers may be due to several causes. It may be due to miscalculation or an erroneous judgment. It may be deliberate, as when a person intentionally does not take the necessary precautions when at work. This may be due to the pleasure of excitement which the experiment affords, but it nevertheless results very often in fatal accidents.

The psychological factor mentioned above may take the form of ignorance on the part of the worker. He may not have any knowledge of the risk involved in a kind of work, and he may succumb thereto. Last, but not the least, the worker may have been largely overworked. Long working hours, low wages, bad factory environments and insanitary houses may have brought about his deterioration in health and he may therefore go about his work in a half-conscious state.

It is thus evident that, if ideal conditions were to prevail in industry, if proper safeguards were taken against dangerous

¹Article on Industrial Accidents by Mr. E. J. Wallace (formerly Personal Manager to Messrs. E.G. Wrigley & Co. Ltd, Birmingham) in "Industrial India" Vol. 1—No.2—September, 1921—Page 101.

machinery, and if the psychological factor were altogether eliminated, industrial accidents would be reduced to a negligible minimum. But, human beings as we are, our institutions can never be perfect. Ideal conditions cannot actually prevail. We thus come to the conclusion that, under the present system of industry the sovereign remedy for our problem lies in the advancement of mass education and in the formation of a definite code of "Safety-First" devices, as an essential concomitant of our industrial organisation.

It must be remembered that the movement against industrial accidents is a business proposition. Every accident involves a levy on capital. It costs something to the employer. He may have to pay compensation for death, for temporary and for permanent disablement. The introduction of 'Safety-First' devices brings down the number of accidents and results in some saving to the employer. Losses of wages are reduced to a minimum. Much time, which would otherwise have been lost, is saved and utilised productively. The efficiency of the workmen increases. They are saved the pangs of hunger and demoralisation, and they put more heart into the work.

There is another aspect of 'Safety First' devices. They are altruistic in nature. Human life is precious and every attempt, however costly, should be made to save it. A line of policy should be drawn up and rigidly enforced with the co-operation of workers. Notices should be put up at every conspicuous place as well as at the place of danger, and the workers thereby warned against risk.

Safety-First appliances are useful both to the employers and to the employees. But they do not put an end to the trouble. Accidents occur in various ways. There are a number of factories like railway carriage shops where the labourers handle large quantities of paint. There is thus a great risk of lead-poisoning and it is necessary that the hands should be thoroughly cleaned before food is taken. Many of the workmen are rather careless. To many, the idea itself is new. Special regulations are therefore necessary to guard against this danger. No case of death by lead-poisoning has been so far officially reported. This is due to the peculiar

position of the labourer, and does not imply that there has been no mortality from this cause.

The worker retires to his village (if any) when he contracts a fell disease. In this way, cases of sickness and death which ought to have been reported from the factory area are sent up through the rural agencies as indigenous to them. Moreover, the employer himself is anxious to see a diseased and disabled worker off. Thus, the mental state of the labourer and the personal interests of the factory-owner work in the same direction. The result is that things take a course different from that recorded in the blue-books. In many cases, accidents occur without being duly communicated to the proper authorities.

Accidents in factories remain almost at the same level. Stern measures are necessary to bring them down before any improvement can take place. The table¹ below gives the number and percentage of accidents officially recorded from 1905 to 1926. As hinted above, their actual number must have been much more than what the annual reports on the working of factories show. The factory-owners try to suppress facts as far as possible. Warnings are given. Fines are inflicted. But this malpractice still persists. The main reason is that the amount of fine imposed in each case is so small that it can never have a deterrent effect on the employers.

Year	Number of persons injured.				Average per 100 operatives employed.
	Fatal	Serious	Minor	Total	
1926	15	20	488	523	'99
1925	20	20	416	458	'85
1924	17	15	488	520	1'20
1923	9	34	363	406	'82

¹Annual report on the working of factories in the Punjab for 1922--Page 7.—“The one instance during the year, where a warning was not sufficient to meet the case, was that of a serious accident due entirely to the neglect of the factory-owner. The accident was not reported and was only discovered during an inspection. Apart from the irregularity of not reporting the accident, the factory-owner and manager tried to cover up the accident and afterwards got the injured person to sign a document saying that the accident never occurred. These facts, after much trouble and time, were brought to the notice of the Court with the result that all the accused were convicted and fined Rs. 50 each.”

Year	Number of persons injured.				Average per 100 operatives employed.
	Fatal	Serious	Minor	Total	
1922	8	26	286	320	'69
1921	13	36	277	326	'77
1920	14	23	202	239	'56
1919	17	38	186	241	'62
1918	18	19	123	160	'44
1917	8	38	165	211	'61
1916	11	13	166	190	'59
1915	6	21	167	194	'65
1914	11	53	163	227	'72
1913	13	72	146	231	'73
1912	7	61	196	264	'80
1911	8	46	204	258	'90
1910	8	35	309	352	1'19
1909	9	32	250	291	1'00
1908	6	25	254	285	1'10
1907	14	25	212	251	'89
1906	9	32	238	279	1'00
1905	11	25	206	242	1'12

These accidents¹ are due sometimes to the carelessness of the workmen and sometimes to the negligence of the factory-owners and managers.² As regards the first, steps have already been taken of late to educate the employees in the use and necessity of Safety devices. Progress in this direction is rather slow, but it is bound to have a good effect if consistently insisted upon by the Factory Inspectors. The operative does not understand the full value of guards and other Safety devices, unless practical demonstrations are given to him. In 1925, an attempt was made to show the workers the utility and significance of guards. The experiment proved successful, although the half-hearted co-operation of employers did not bring about

¹ Annual reports on the working of factories in the Punjab from 1905 to 1926.

² Annual report on the working of factories in the Punjab for 1922, Para 5:— "A noticeable feature of the accidents in the railway workshops is the number of minor accidents to the eyes of workmen; 26 accidents were reported affecting eyes of workmen in the Moghulpura workshops alone: these presumably could have been avoided if workers had been provided with glasses."

the desired results. They are at times easy-going and their tendency is to introduce cheap methods and materials regardless of efficiency.

The following table sums up the number of legal proceedings taken each year from 1915 to 1926 against factory-owners in the Punjab to enforce the guarding of machinery. ¹

Year	Total number of legal proceedings against factory-owners to enforce the guarding of machinery only
1926	13
1925	25
1924	6
1923	10
1922	...
1921	... Owners were given a reasonable time to make up deficiencies revealed by inspections. No prosecutions this year.
1920	37
1919	16
1918	...
1917	2
1916	5
1915	1

According to the Factory Act, the persons attending to transmission machinery are strictly enjoined to put on close-fitting clothes. The average operative is hardly mindful of precautionary measures and is invariably seen moving about in his loose trousers or dhoti and turban. The result is that he gets entangled in machinery very often, and it is not a matter for surprise to hear of accidents from this cause. ² Some stress is now being laid on the use of close-fitting clothes and on the exclusion of unauthorised persons from the engine and boiler-rooms. But things are not proceeding satisfactorily. I have often noticed engine-drivers and boilermen taking their young

¹ Annual Reports on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the Punjab from 1915 to 1926.

² Annual report on the working of factories in the Punjab for the year 1924, Page 6:—"Warnings to factory-occupiers, that they are responsible to see that their workmen wear tightly-fitting clothes when on duty, were issued in almost every report and, in a few cases, prosecutions were instituted against persistent offenders."

children with them to the place of work where they are sometimes left alone to take care of themselves.

The workers are very often fond of loose dress, and it requires a great deal of persuasion to wean them from this habit. An over-whelmingly large number of labourers seems to shun close-fitting clothes and nothing but a rigid enforcement of discipline can persuade them.

The unscrupulousness of factory managers is also a factor. I have often come across cases in which unskilled operatives have been set to work at machinery on coolie rates. This evil prevails vastly in ginning-factories, where raw hands are put in charge of kapas-openers, saw-gins and the like, resulting, as a matter of course, in frequent accidents.

Sometimes, factories are hurriedly built and set to work before even the factory inspector receives an intimation of their existence¹. Thus, an abysmal ignorance of factory-law, coupled with a desire to make money, wreaks havoc. It appears reasonable that factory-owners should, in future, be required to possess a licence showing that their factory was in order before they began the work.

Other accidents are due to the cleaning of machinery while in motion or to the work of replacing belts or moving pulleys with loose clothes on.

In the face of this alarming number of accidents, compensation in some form appears a necessity. Voluntary compensation has been in existence in the Punjab, although to an extremely slight extent. Some stray cases have no doubt come within my hearing—cases, in which small amounts of money were doled out to dependents of workmen either in the event of their death or their disability to work. But voluntary compensation has never been systematic. It was purely philanthropic in character, and generally took the form of a monetary provision

¹ Report on the working of factories in the Punjab for the year 1911, Page 2:—"Distillery, Amritsar. A fatal accident was caused by the tin-roof of the store-godown being blown away in a dust storm. The facts have not been fully reported, and an enquiry is being made."

Ibid—for 1912—Page 2:—Amritsar, Central workshop, Public Works Department:—"The fall of a katcha wall of an old godown under demolition caused the death of . . ."

towards the funeral ceremonies of the deceased. It is said that, in certain instances, a provident fund was in vogue. It was created out of unpaid wages and fines, and went to maintain the disabled workers.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that there are generally no records with factory-owners to prove the definite amount of money that they have so far spent on charitable compensation. They have been and still are very slow in adopting Western methods of accountancy. Many of them still keep their accounts in the crude old way, and make a cursory mention of their charitable awards in their books. It is, of course, impossible for one conversant only with the Urdu and English languages to decipher them. Some factory-owners, on the other hand, do not keep note of these things at all. It is, however, an established fact that monetary aid to the injured has been in existence, though to a very small extent. The Indian Factory Commission of 1890 also came to a similar conclusion. One thing stands out clearly. Compensation, in the form and type mentioned above, has not been universal and compulsory.

As far back as 1855, an Act, known as the Fatal Accidents Act, was passed by the Government of India enabling dependents of a wage-earner to sue the employer in the event of the former's death. The Act suffered from several drawbacks and thus remained a dead letter. A suit in a civil court implied expense and waste of labour for several days. The dependents of a dead workman could ill afford to have it. Again, they lived with the employer in a semi-servile condition and could hardly dare to raise their fingers against him. Some of the legal technicalities also stood in their way. For example, a factory-owner was responsible for the results of his negligence, but he was not responsible for the results of his manager's negligence. Again, if a labourer used a machine which was evidently dangerous, he was understood to have undertaken the risks involved and could not claim compensation for an accident.

It must be clearly understood that workmen in the Punjab have not, till lately, made themselves heard on this point. They have been absolutely dumb on account of their sad economic condition. It was in 1920 that the change came. The North

Western Railway workmen went on strike followed by others, and it was then and then alone that the question of compulsory compensation was debated. Sir George Barnes, while speaking on the strike situation in 1920 at Lahore, announced the decision of the Central Government to consider the subject of Workmen's Compensation.

A circular letter was shortly after issued in this connection by the Central Government to all Local Governments and Administrations for opinion. A wide publicity was given to the subject and people appeared unanimously in its favour. Burma was the only province which sounded a note of dissent on the oft-repeated plea of dissimilarity of conditions in India and in England. The important employers were, one and all, in favour of industrial compensation.

In the meantime, the Factory Act of 1922 enjoined the courts to pay compensation to disabled workers or their dependents out of fines collected from the factory-owners for breach of the factory law. This provision was evidently inadequate. The Compensation Bill was at last introduced in the Central legislature, and passed into an Act in 1923. It came into force in the Punjab from July, 1924.

The Workmen's Compensation Act has been specially designed for India, with special reference to its difficulties. The country is large. Its conditions vary from place to place. The labourers are illiterate, disorganised and poor. They are in their heart of hearts agriculturists. I have shown above that this is very largely due to the unwholesome conditions of factories. But, whatever the explanation may be, the fact stands. The number of qualified medical practitioners in India is very small. Last, but not the least, our industries are in a nascent stage and can ill afford to carry on their work under any financial handicap.

These are the several difficulties which stand in our way. Due attention has been paid to all of them and the Act has been so modelled as to render its working as smooth as possible, at least in the present stage of our economic advancement.

The Indian Workmen's Compensation Act applies to the

whole of British India, Berar and the civil and military station of Bangalore. It covers only a small portion of workmen. To quote the statement of Objects and Reasons prefaced to the Bill on its first introduction in the Indian Legislature:—

“Two criteria have been followed in the determination of “the classes to be included :—

“(1) that the Bill should be confined to industries which are more or less organised;

“(2) that only workmen whose occupation is hazardous should be included.”

The following classes are excluded from the operation of the Act:—

(1) The first class comprises persons “whose employment is of a casual nature and who are employed otherwise than for the purposes of the employer’s trade or business.”

(2) The second exception relates to persons who get more than Rs. 300 per mensem. They are not eligible to the advantages of the Compensation Act unless they are employed on “manual labour”. “Manual labour is not the same as manual work; nearly every one works with his hands in some form or another. The question is, whether the work is mainly of a physical type, or whether brain work or specialized skill enters into it *in any large degree*. The last words have to be added, as it is obvious that practically all work involves some skill, or the exercise of some brain work, and in England where an analogous provision exists (Section 13 of the British Act), regard is had to the predominant factor. Thus, a tram driver is not a manual labourer, nor is an engineer running a factory-engine, though the man who stokes the engine fire is employed on manual labour. In view of this explanation, it seems doubtful if there is any manual labourer in India whose wages approach Rs. 300 a month, so that it is fairly safe to assume that, if a person gets more than Rs 300 a month, he is not a workman unless he is employed on the railways”.¹

Factory-workers have been brought under the operation

¹ The Indian Workmen’s Compensation Act—VIII of 1923—by A. G. Clow. Edition 1924. (The Pioneer Press, Allahabad). Page 17.

of the Act. But the word 'factory' is to be understood as in Section 3 (a) of the Factories Act. This section reads as follows:—

“Any premises wherein, or within the precincts of which, on any day in the year, not less than 20 persons are simultaneously employed, and steam, water or other mechanical power or electrical power is used in aid of any process for, or incidental to, making, altering, repairing, ornamenting, finishing, or otherwise adapting for use, for transport or for sale any article or part of an article”.

Under Section 3 (b) of the Factories Act, the Local Governments have powers to extend the operation of the Act to any factory, wherein not less than ten persons are at work, whether mechanical power is used or not. It must be clearly understood that the workers in such factories are not entitled to the privileges of the Compensation Act.

Again, a workman, as far as the Compensation Act goes, must be either a manual labourer or employed on wages. Thus, apprentices, who do not receive any wages, do not come in the category of 'workmen' and are not eligible to any compensation.

Compensation to be paid under the Act will vary with the wages of the workers. Hence, it is necessary to have an exact idea of the word 'wages'. This would include all payments in money and all payments or concessions which are capable of being measured in money. Some privileges—*e. g.* hospital, school, etc.—cannot be estimated in money and cannot therefore be added to the wages of workers.

Section 2 (3) of the Act empowers the Central Government to extend its provisions to any occupation of a hazardous nature. This has already been availed of in the case of van-peeons, sorters, guards, and inspectors in the railway mail service who have been brought under the privileges of the Compensation Act.

We have now seen the cases in which the employers are liable to pay compensation in the event of an accident. They cannot evade their liability by entering into a separate contract

with the workmen. Section 17 of the Act is definitely intended to safeguard the position of illiterate, poor and helpless labourers. It reads:—

“Any contract or agreement, whether made before or after the commencement of this Act, whereby a workman relinquishes any right of compensation from the employer for personal injury arising out of or in the course of the employment, shall be null and void in so far as it purports to remove or reduce the liability of any person to pay compensation under this Act.”

Compensation money may be paid to the workman direct, or it may be deposited on behalf of the workman with the Commissioner appointed under the Act. The employer may adopt either of these alternatives, but, in cases of fatal accidents, the money must in all cases be deposited with the Commissioner who will dole it out to the person or persons entitled under the Act.

A word about the circumstances in which compensation is payable. Section 3 (1) is clear on this point. “If personal injury is caused to a workman by accident, arising out of and in the course of his employment, his employer shall be liable to pay compensation in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.” It should be remembered that compensation is made payable only for the results of an injury, and not for the injury itself. But, what is an accident? Section 3 (2) of the Amendment Act, to be mentioned later on, indicates that, in certain cases, the contracting of occupational diseases comes under the category of ‘accidents’. It reads:—

“If a workman, employed in any employment involving the handling of wool, hair, bristles, hides, or skins, contracts the disease of anthrax, or if a workman, whilst in the service of an employer in whose service he has been employed for a continuous period of not less than six months in any employment specified in Schedule III, contracts any disease specified therein as an occupational disease peculiar to that employment, the contracting of the disease shall be deemed to be an injury by accident within the meaning of this section and, unless the employer proves the contrary, the accident shall be deemed to have arisen out of and in the course of the employment.”

Excepting the occupational diseases, an accident must fulfil these two conditions.

(1) It must be unforeseen, and not deliberate or intentional.

(2) It must be sudden, and not a slow and long-drawn-out process.

Further still, the accident must have arisen "out of and in the course of employment." This means that "if, when the accident occurs, the workman has any duty to the employer, if he is in any way subject to the employer's control, he will normally be acting in the course of his employment."¹

But a claim for compensation may not arise, even if the accident takes place in the course of employment. The exceptions are:—

(1) No compensation is payable "in respect of any injury which does not result in the total or partial disablement of the workman for a period exceeding ten days." Slight injuries are thus excluded as, otherwise, there will be great risk of malingering on the part of workers and huge administrative expenses on the part of the Government and the employers.

But, if the injury exceeds ten days, compensation is paid for the remaining period and not for the 'waiting period of ten days'.

(2) The second exception relates to the "workman having been at the time thereof under the influence of drink or drugs." The burden of proof lies on the employer, and, if he can establish that the accident would not have occurred had the worker not been intoxicated, he is exempt from the payment of any compensation. But other workmen involved in the accidents are eligible for compensation.

If the accident is due to "the wilful disobedience of the workman to an order expressly given, or to a rule expressly framed, for the purpose of securing the safety of workmen", no compensation is to be paid to the wilfully disobedient workman. But, like the last exception, other labourers involved in this accident are fully entitled to compensation.

¹ A. G. Clow: Indian Workmen's Compensation Act. Allahabad, 1924—Page 48.

(3) The third exception refers to an accident due to the "wilful removal or disregard by the workman of any safety guard or other device which he knew to have been provided for the purpose of securing the safety of workmen."

The scales of compensation vary with the nature of the injury due to an accident as well as with the age of the injured party. They may be grouped under four headings:—

(1) Fatal Accidents—If an adult workman dies as the result of an accident, the compensation amounts to his thirty months wages, subject to a maximum of Rs. 2,500 and a minimum of Rs. 240. If a minor is killed, the compensation is a rigid sum of Rs. 200. This variation in the scales of compensation for a minor and an adult is due to the fact that the former will generally have no dependent, whereas the latter is expected to have a family to maintain.

Compensation money, in cases of death, is always to be deposited with the Commissioner who will distribute it among the workman's dependents. Section 2 (d) means by 'dependent' "any of the following relatives of a deceased workman, namely, a wife, husband, parent, minor son, unmarried daughter, married daughter who is a minor, minor brother or unmarried sister, and includes the minor children of a deceased son of the workman, and where no parent of the workman is alive, a paternal grand-parent".

(2) Permanent Total Disablement. This is caused when:—

(a) a workman is permanently incapacitated from "all work which he was capable of performing at the time of the accident,"

(b) a "permanent total loss of the sight of both eyes" is effected;

and (c) a worker sustains "any combination of injuries specified in Schedule 1 where the aggregate percentage of the loss of earning capacity, as specified in that Schedule against those injuries, amounts to one hundred per cent".

Compensation in permanent total disablement amounts to 42 months' wages in the case of an adult, subject to a maximum

of Rs. 3,500 and a minimum of Rs. 336. It is equal to 84 months' wages in the case of a minor, subject to a maximum of Rs. 3,500 and a minimum of Rs. 672. The minor, being a minor, is expected to live longer than an adult, and hence the scale of compensation in his case is more liberal.

(3) **Permanent Partial Disablement.** It indicates such disablement as reduces a workman's earning capacity in every employment which he was capable of undertaking at that time". The general scheme of compensation in this case is that it should be proportionate to the loss of income undergone.

(4) **Temporary Disablement.** Section 2 (I) (g) defines it as "such disablement as reduces the earning capacity of a workman in any employment in which he was engaged at the time of the accident." No compensation is payable for the waiting period of ten days, after which half-monthly payments are to be made by the employer. These are to continue for a period of five years, provided the labourer does not recover till then. Half-monthly payments are to be equal to $\frac{1}{4}$ of his monthly wages in the case of an adult, subject to a maximum of Rs. 13. In the case of a minor, they are to be equal to one third of his monthly wages, subject to a minimum of Rs. 4. But if, during the period of disablement, the minor attains 15 years of age and becomes an adult, his half-monthly payments are to be increased to half his monthly wages.

As soon after the accident as possible, a notice is to be served by the workman or his dependents on the employer giving his name and address, the cause of the accident and injury received therefrom and the date on which the whole thing happened. The time of notice is indeed very important. It is to be given as soon as practicable and before the labourer has left off the factory in which the accident occurred. As the masses of our labourers are shrouded in ignorance, the Commissioner appointed under the Act can admit a claim "if he is satisfied that the failure to give the notice was due to sufficient causes."

Again, if a labourer, seriously injured through an accident, goes away to his home without offering himself for medical examination by a doctor appointed by the factory-owner and

dies in the meantime, power has been granted to the Commissioner to allow compensation, if he thinks fit.

The Indian Workmen's Compensation Act will prove a boon to the factory labourers. It will make their position secure, and go a long way in steadying the conditions of labour and in removing its migratory nature. Industrial life will become more attractive and labourers, secure in their position, will become more efficient, thereby adding immensely to the sum-total of wealth in the country. The employer will also benefit, the more so as there will be a steady and continuous source of supply for his factory.

It is believed that the Act, besides providing compensation to the worker, will act as a deterrent to the evil ways of the mill-owners. They will, in future, think twice before they employ unskilled hands on dangerous machinery. The trend of events is in favour of labour and one thing is pretty certain. The employers have now been put on their guard, and a large number of factories have insured against risks under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

The Act was amended in 1926 under inspiration from the International Labour Conference held at Geneva in 1925. It was amended to include compensation in connection with occupational diseases.

Our workers are ignorant and illiterate and much surely depends on the Commissioners, who have been awarded immense powers under the Act. They must be men of unimpeachable character, and must possess high judicial capacity. Letter No. L 859, dated the 4th July, 1923, from the Secretary, Department of Industries and Labour, Government of India, addressed to the different Local Governments thus expresses itself :—

“ Under the Act the Commissioner has been invested, in some instances, with wide discretionary powers. He will have complete discretion, for instance, in regard to the distribution of compensation among dependents (Section 8). He has power to refuse acceptance of agreements (Section 28), and such provisions as those contained in Section 6 and Section 11 (4) require the exercise of judgment in matters in which the law itself will

give him little assistance. The intention of the Act is that the Commissioner should not content himself merely with the decision of such disputes as come before him in his judicial capacity. He should take a part in preventing the occurrence of disputes, and should be generally responsible for the protection of the rights of the parties. When a dispute occurs, it will be frequently desirable that he should visit the place of occurrence and settle the matter on the spot."

The Workmen's Compensation Act has been in force in the Punjab since July, 1924. The claims which have been so far advanced under it are low indeed. This can be accounted for by several reasons. The labourers are not as yet conversant with the procedure to be adopted in a compensation claim. The Act is quite new and the procedure is so long-drawn-out that the labourer always stoops to accept a small monetary sum from the master rather than bother to sue him. Moreover, it is difficult for him to pay for the services of lawyers in anticipation of the realisation of compensation money. Not only that. It is difficult for him to prove his case by direct evidence. His colleagues, who may otherwise have helped him, are afraid of losing their jobs, and desert him at an hour of need in dread of the employer.

The Inspector of Factories possesses no power of interference in a compensation case. Nevertheless, he was approached by the labourers in several cases, and his humane interference was greatly resented by the employers as well as by the insurance companies. The Inspector has to inspect factories—a tough task indeed. And it is not possible for him to give advice to the workers on different points: he is not expected to do so according to law.

Thus, it is necessary that the Government should enjoin Labour Bureaus, suggested by me in the last chapter, to interfere on behalf of the illiterate masses. It must be clearly understood that the Compensation Act cannot be productive of good results, unless and until the workers are backed up in their legitimate claims by the Government as custodian of the interests of the people.

458 accidents occurred in the Punjab in 1925. Of these,

20 were of a fatal nature. 22 cases related to permanent disablement, and 416 cases were of the nature of temporary disablement. Out of the total of 458 accidents, it was only in 392 cases that compensation to the amount of Rs. 11,680 was given. No compensation was given in the remaining 66 cases. The claims, in some of them, were either not advanced or, if advanced, were not admitted by the employers. Again, some accidents amongst them were the direct outcome of the negligence of labourers.

The Commissioner appointed under the Act does not seem too busy with his work. In suits dealt with by him, "two cases were withdrawn; one dismissed for non-appearance in the court; six admitted by employers, one allowed in part; one transferred to another court, and two were under disposal in the courts."¹

Our employers are generally conservative and look askance at every new thing. But, as education spreads, they will realise the utility of the Compensation Act. They will then understand that labour plays an important role in the economic advancement of a country and deserves encouragement from all concerned.

The workers will also slowly avail themselves of the opportunities provided under the Act. But this may take a long time and an acceleration in this direction can only come about as a result of the creation of labour bureaus which our province stands so badly in need of.

The administration of the Compensation Act cannot be of much avail unless a radical amendment is made in one direction. I propose that the cases of factory-labourers should be taken up free of charge by the Government Pleaders. This will greatly facilitate the task of the workers and enable them to get the best they can out of the Act.

¹ Annual Report on the working of the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act in the Punjab for 1925.

CHAPTER VIII

TRADE-UNIONISM

IN the foregoing chapters, the condition of factory-labourers in the Punjab has been depicted in its true colours. It is evident that they are helpless, and cannot make any headway unless they combine for the purpose of advancing their common interests.

England has attained her present stage of advancement after a long series of controversies. She has had several bitter experiences to undergo before she effected a real material improvement in her economic position.

Our factory-labourers are agriculturists at heart. Unless adverse circumstances prevail, they are not prepared to associate themselves permanently with the monotony and hardships of factory life. Their sad plight demands something of us—a guidance in the right direction. The formation of trade-unions is expected to go a long way in ameliorating their condition.

A trade-union, according to Webb, "is a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the condition of their working lives."¹ Thus, from this definition, the spasmodic or passive outbursts of workers against specific grievances are ruled out, and it is upon their common interests that trade-unionism centres itself. The first and the last object is the condition of work and if it is lost sight of, trade-unionism no longer remains.

An organised trade-union movement requires two prime elements for success—literacy and co-operation. It has been clearly shown that the literate labourers form a very small

¹ Webb, Sidney & Beatrice; *The History of Trade-Unionism*, Page 1. Edition 1920.

minority. But the illiterate majority are conscious, at least to a small extent, of their own interests. The second item of success is co-operation. It can no doubt grow and flourish, when the workers have got common interests at stake. The large scale production of to-day brings a vast number of labourers under one roof. This tendency has established itself in the Punjab, thereby making it possible for the wage-earners to come closer together and co-operate with one another in their joint claims. There are a number of difficulties in the way of labourers, and it will be long before they achieve their desired position in life. Trade-unionism in the Punjab will consequently be a process of slow growth.

Some of the literate factory-labourers have long since realised the necessity of combination. The recent strikes in the Punjab have definitely proved the existence of this feeling. The great railway strike of 1920 was organised by the well-known leaders Messrs. Miller and Khan. A union was formed, though for long it was not recognised by the authorities. The result was very encouraging. According to the secretary of the Railway Union, there was an all-round increase of wages ranging from 40 per cent to 100 per cent. There was another strike of the North Western Railway employees in 1925. It was declared by Messrs. Miller and Khan without the due consent of members on the 26th March, 1925, and was restricted almost entirely to the illiterate Indian subordinates and low-paid staff. The number of men affected was 11,487. There was personal animosity and ill-feeling amongst the chief workers. The consequences were evident. The whole affair was a hopeless failure and resulted in the unemployment of several strikers.¹ The strike resulted in the loss of 374,234 days to the workers and its immediate cause was the summary dismissal of a fitter at Rawalpindi Loco Shops. It must be remembered that strikers suffered untold hardships. In 1920, they were thrown out of their quarters bag and baggage and were malterated in several other ways.

¹ 'Railway Herald'—December 24th, 1926—Page 8.—"Resolution No. 27—Resolved that the agent be requested to issue orders providing employment to those men who were discharged on account of unrest in 1925 in preference to outsiders as these men have sufficiently suffered by this time and now sympathetic consideration is desirable to win their affection."

During the course of this strike and after, the uneasy and discontented elements raised their heads in other parts of the province also. A strike occurred in the Bhawani Spinning Mills in 1920. Another strike broke out in the same year in a Sujanpore factory for an increase of wages. The strikers, forty-five in number, were never taken back and new hands were substituted instead. Three strikes, due mostly to a decrease of general wages, took place in a cotton mill at Amritsar in 1921, 1922 and 1924. All of them failed, the total loss to workers was roughly estimated by the factory-owner at Rs. 4,800.

There have been two strikes in the unregistered carpet factories at Amritsar and Batala during the last six years. The immediate demand was an increase of wages which was, of course, never complied with. There has been only one strike in the Egerton Woollen Mills, Dhariwal. It broke out in 1920 and never brought success to the workers. Wages had been steadily rising in the War years. In 1920 began the fall of prices and this compelled the manager to enter into a new contract with the newly employed labourers. This brought about a strike of old workers who returned to duty after the expiry of four days.

Two strikes occurred on the East Indian Railway in 1921 and 1922—the first commenced at Jhaja on the 19th December, 1921, and came to an end on the 6th January, 1922; the second began on the 2nd February, 1922, at Tundla and ended in the second week of April, 1922. Both strikes failed. They involved 347 men in the Punjab, who lost 9,826 days. The average number of days lost per man was 28.

These are some of the few instances of labour outburst which I have been able to collect either from newspapers or from authoritative persons in the course of my investigations. The Government of India began to collect information on the subject of labour strikes early in 1921. The figures are now available for 1921 and 1922 and may be thus tabulated:—

Punjab ¹

Year	No. of Disputes	Numbers involved	Days Lost	Demands					Results				
				Pay	Bonus	Personnel	Leave and hours	Others	Successful	Partially Successful	Unsuccessful	Not known	In Progress
1st Quarter of 1921 (Punjab and Delhi) ...	4	1,610	77,660	3	...	...	...	1	...	2	...	...	2
2nd Qr. of 1921.	2	1,300	55,800	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
3rd Qr. of 1921.	1	1,800	5,400	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
4th Qr. of 1921.	1	300	5,700	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Jan. to Dec. 1922.	1	347	9,826	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...

Strikes, threats of strikes and even pretences of strikes took place here, there and everywhere. But, except the railway strikes that broke out between 1920 and 1925, strikes lasted for only two or three days on an average.

With few exceptions, the strikes generally arose from a demand for an increase of wages, the demand being due, in its turn, to the high cost of living resulting from the Great War. Some features of these strikes, as I have been able to gather from my tour of the Punjab, may be thus summed up:—

(1) The strikes were frequent in 1920 and 1921. They spread like an epidemic in these years. In certain cases, a notice extending over a day or even a few hours was given. Sometimes, no notice was given at all.

(2) The grievances of the workers were, generally speaking, not clearly stated. But they usually centred on the point of low wages, which was very often supplemented by bad houses, and maltreatment by superior staff or the employers.

(3) Their claims in some cases were very extravagant.

(4) There was no effective organisation amongst them. The loss from strikes to workers was really great. It is impossible

¹ Journals of Indian Industries and Labour, 1921 and 1922.

to measure it in terms of money. Unsuccessful strikes bring about a loss of wages and a consequent demoralisation of the workers.

Strikes create insecurity in industry. It should be remembered that our labour unrest differs essentially from that of Europe. There is as yet no clearly defined class consciousness as we find in the West. Our labourers have still to fight for small concessions, sometimes for things which the Western employer looks upon as a duty.

The railway strike of 1920 was more or less organised. The workers persisted and carried the day. The Railway Union continued its work with undiminished ardour. It was soon split up by petty quarrels and bickerings, and it was not until 1927 that it emerged successfully from this internal strife. The Railway Union survives—a solitary emblem of industrial unity and co-operation in the province. It has secured for the employees the right of collective bargaining, which was conspicuous by its absence before 1920. It has allowed them the use of leave and passes to meet together and discuss ways and means of ventilating their grievances. They can now demand formation of a Conciliation Board for the settlement of their just rights and claims. Again, their gratuities cannot be forfeited, while they are on strike. The gratuity regulations have also undergone a change. The workers can claim their gratuities after putting in only two years' service, whereas, formerly, thirty years was the covenanted period. Mistresses and drivers have been put on a monthly scale of pay. The building of quarters, more spacious and sanitary, is in contemplation for the future. These are some of the advantages which the Railway Union claims for its members. It has now steered clear of the storm which beset it in 1920 and 1925 and is now on the high road to success.

It is clear that trade-unionism, if nurtured in a proper spirit, renders inestimable services to all concerned. When the labourers are organised, their wages are set by the competitive principle and the individuals thereby greatly suffer. Unionism brings about social consciousness. It elevates the

¹ Railway Herald—Lahore, February 24th, 1927.

status of workers and favourably affects the settlement of their wages.

But unionism may, especially in a province like the Punjab, become an easy tool of communal hatred and discord in the hands of selfish leaders. It may also inflict financial loss, if it is misled. For reasons like these, it was necessary that legislation should step in to foster a healthy growth of trade-unionism and thereby promote education and co-operation amongst workmen. Trade-unionism, run on sound lines, is advantageous to all-employers as well as employees. It generally has its motto, "Give to capital its just rights and to labour its due reward."

An agitation for a Trade-Union Act began in 1920 when several British M.P.'s, with the Secretary of the "Workers Welfare League of India" in London, waited in deputation upon Mr. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India. An assurance was given by the latter to the effect that trade-union legislation would be soon introduced in the Central Legislature of India.

Thenceforward, the question became one of great public interest. In March, 1921, Mr. N. M. Joshi sent in his resolution¹ for trade-unionism in the Indian Legislative Assembly. This resolution was very important since it touched the status, rights, and privileges of workers in the country. The Hon'ble Sir Thomas Holland opposed it. He admitted that trade unions were inevitable and should be defended in their legitimate aims and objects. But the number of trade-unions existing in the country was much too small. "There are some associations, it is true, in this country, but possibly they could be counted on the fingers of one hand, that have a clearly-stated constitution and a recognised membership with audited accounts . . . The English Legislation, which Mr. Joshi quoted as our guide, is not only legislation which we dare not undertake in India, but

¹ Mr. Joshi's resolution regarding legislation for registration of trade-unions was as follows:—"This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he should take steps to introduce at an early date in the Indian Legislature such legislation as may be necessary for the registration of trade-unions and for the protection of trade-unionists and trade-union officials from civil and criminal liability for bona fide trade-union activities." Legislative Assembly Debates—Vol. 1, Part. 1—1921. Page 486.

legislation which would never be passed in England if a Bill were put before Parliament to-day.”¹

Sir Thomas Holland suggested that the few unions that existed could be registered under Act VII of 1913, which provided for the registration of associations formed for promoting commerce, science and charity without any claim or pretence of a dividend. A heated debate ensued and the following resolution, as amended by the Hon'ble Sir Thomas Holland, was passed by the Legislative Assembly:—

“This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he should take steps to introduce, as soon as practicable, in the Indian Legislature, such legislation as may be necessary for the registration of trade-unions.”²

On the 15th September, 1921, Mr. N. M. Joshi asked the Government the date on which they proposed to introduce legislation for the registration and protection of trade-unions. Mr. A. C. Chatterjee (now Sir A. C. Chatterjee) replied that the question was under consideration and that a Bill would be introduced in the spring of 1922, if possible. The Government took long to make up its mind and it was as late as January, 1925, that the Trade-Union Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly. A fierce discussion raged round it. It was passed into an Act in 1926 and came into force in the Punjab from the 1st May, 1927.

The Act is designed to meet the comparatively simple needs of a young movement in this country. It has been made to foster the growth of trade-unions on right and sound lines. It gives immunity to registered trade-unions from civil and criminal liability. The statement of Objects and Reasons contained in the Bill, as it was originally introduced in the Legislative Assembly, says:—

“Under the existing criminal law an agreement to do an illegal act is itself a criminal offence. ‘Illegal act’ includes all acts which provide grounds for civil offence. Thus, for example,

¹ Legislative Assembly Debates—March, 1921—Pages 491 and 492. Vol. 1 Part. 1.

² Ibid. Page 506.

two men, who agree to persuade workmen to break their contracts with their employers, are guilty of criminal conspiracy. The clause, which is similar in its effect to the corresponding provisions of the English law, protects trade-unionists from prosecutions for criminal conspiracy where the agreement into which they have entered is not an agreement to commit an offence."

Then, there is the immunity from civil action. I again quote from the statement of Objects and Reasons:—

"The first part of this clause (clause 18) corresponds to Sections I and 3 of the British Trade Disputes Act, 1906, and protects trade-unions and their officers and members from certain civil actions. An important type of action which this clause will prevent is a suit arising out of the persuasion exercised on trade-union members and others to join in a strike where that strike (as is frequently the case) involves breach of contract on the part of the workmen."

There are no restrictions on the objects a trade-union may pursue. But there is a definite provision that the funds of a registered union must be utilised on certain specified trade-union objects. A political clause has been inserted in the Act. But the clause found its way as a result of the deliberations of the Select Committee. It was urged that the political clause was absolutely essential to awaken the labourers and to enable them to spend their money in securing the candidature of their representatives on political bodies. The argument was in a way plausible and members of trade-unions have been allowed to 'contract in', *i.e.* to contribute to the political fund if it exists. It is, of course, understood that contribution to that fund is not a necessary condition of admission to the union. It must be understood that there are differences of opinion, even in England, about the utility of a political fund from a purely trade-union point of view. Our workers are mostly illiterate and require a great social and economic improvement in their condition before they can stand forth and declare their judgment on broad political principles. Mr. Appleton may be aptly quoted herein¹:—

¹ Trade-unionism by W.A. Appleton (London, 1923)—Pages 53 and 54.

“The old trade-unionists declared by their methods that they organised to secure the best possible wages and the best possible conditions. If, they said, we include other objects, we may attempt too much, and we are likely to accomplish too little. While the issues are simple, all our people can understand and voluntarily give their allegiance, but when these issues become complex and demand the sacrifice of traditional beliefs, and the acceptance of religious or political dogmas disintegration or compulsory adhesion is invited.

“The old folks were right. They mostly are, because they reason from experiences endured as well as from knowledge acquired. Their policy consciously aimed at missing one of the troubles which beset modern trade-unionists. To-day, indeed, there are many thousands who feel that the disintegration which threatens trade-unionism is the penalty for having mixed up the issues arising out of employment with those arising out of national and international affairs; who believe also that it is difficult to obtain the maximum improvement in wages and working conditions, if half one's time and resource are given to promoting internal or external revolution.”

Mr. Appleton is evidently not against the use of political rights by trade-unions. But he insists that the main motive of “maintaining or improving the condition of their working lives” should never be lost sight of by trade-unionists. He expressed himself in very clear words, while reviewing the scope of trade-unions, before the Royal Society of Arts in 1922. He said¹:—

“I have been asked whether a trade-unionist ought not to use his political as well as his trade-union arm and my answer is unequivocal ‘yes’. But he should, in developing the political arm, see that the trade-union arm is neither tied up, nor broken, nor withered. He should also be careful to see that it is not used to cut out his own stomach”.

Unions are no doubt essential for the labourers and are a necessary growth of the modern organisation of society. But any great diversion from the primary motive of “maintaining or improving the condition of their working lives” would prove suicidal. It is hoped that the social leaders will realise the

¹ Labour Gazette, Bombay—September, 1922—No. 1, Vol. II—Page 27.

force of this argument and steer clear of all useless political controversies.

There is another point of principle according to which the accounts of a registered trade-union are to be duly audited every year. Lastly there is a provision under which not less than half of the total officers of a registered trade-union shall be persons "actually engaged or employed in an industry with which the trade-union is concerned" subject to a proviso that the "Local Government may, by special or general order, declare that the provisions of this section (section 22) shall not apply to any Trade-Unions or class of Trade-Unions specified in the order". This clause clearly recognises the infancy of the trade-union movement in this country and the comparatively uneducated condition of the workers. It is thus essential that the outsiders should come in to help the trade-unionists in the execution of their task. But the number of external officers has been limited to one-half of the total number of officers. This is based on the principle that the worker is the best judge of his own interests and that it is very desirable that he should have ample opportunities of educating himself in the safe conduct of trade-union affairs.

The Trade-Union Act has now come into force, and it is time for the social workers to come in and educate the factory labourers. It is an established truth that the Punjab, with other provinces of India, will derive a great benefit from the healthy growth of the trade-union movement.

But mistakes must occur, and we should not feel shy in rectifying them. The Railway Union, Lahore, which has probably been registered under the Act by this time, started an English weekly from Lahore in 1926. Its motto is:—

"Rise, awake, and workers of the world, unite!"

"United we stand, divided we fall. An injury to one is an injury to all".

Grand words indeed! They are expected to rouse the working classes. They are intended to infuse a spirit of enthusiasm amongst the dumb masses. Will they succeed in their object?

The Railway Union may, through its English weekly¹,

¹ Its name is "Railway Herald".

make itself heard by the authorities—the employers of labour. But it will represent only the small educated community. It cannot awaken the masses. It would have been far more useful if the organ of the Union had been conducted in Urdu—the Court language of the province. The Editor frankly confesses the illiteracy of the workmen in his issue of the “Railway Herald” dated the 24th December, 1926.¹

The Workmen’s Compensation Act is now at work in the country. The Punjab operatives are greatly handicapped inasmuch as they cannot yet fully avail themselves of the opportunities provided under it. It is hoped that the formation of trade-unions will prove a boon to them. These will help them in the advancement of their legitimate claims and the ventilation of their just grievances.

¹ “No doubt the railway employees are mostly illiterate.”

CHAPTER IX

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

THE much talked of harmony between the employers and the employees in the nineteenth century exists no more. The series of strikes that have occurred during the last few years bring out this fact clearly.

But strikes alone do not comprise the whole labour unrest. It is the real economic condition of workers and their state of mind which signify their unrest. Several things are necessary to measure it. In a preceding chapter, an account was given of the income and expenses of labourers. It has been shown that their condition is far from satisfactory. Malnutrition, lack of education, insanitary housing, insufficient and inefficient medical attendance and bad working conditions result not only in a high-death-rate, but also in physical and mental degeneration.

The average worker in the Punjab is inarticulate, and it is impossible for a superficial observer to know all that he thinks. A brief interview or even a cursory talk is not enough to reach the depth of his feelings. He has long been under the oppression of petty officials. In his rural capacity, he has been kept in dread by the patwari, the naib-tahsildar, the tahsildar, the ubiquitous policeman and others. He has developed an inquisitive nature and suspects all investigators at the start. Little by little he gives out his mind, but, even then, it is very difficult to collect all the data necessary for our purpose.

The chief difficulty of our wage-earners is that very little or nothing at all is left after the bare necessities of life have been paid for. In an appreciably large number of cases, debts are incurred with a far-off hope of repayment. Poverty—grinding poverty—is, in short, their main problem.

Some of the habits of our workers are wasteful and uneconomic and it is necessary that the lessons of self-help, thrift

and co-operation should be imparted to them. This is possible through the organisation of co-operative stores which can be safely held up as instruments of social reform. It is a pity that the Punjab co-operative department has not so far extended its activities towards the factory-labourers. "Up to this time, the progress of co-operation in the Punjab has been only one-sided. Our activities in the field of co-operation are mainly confined to the credit branch almost to the exclusion of several other branches equally useful, if not more. Every branch of co-operation has its own valuable advantages. If the genuine co-operative spirit with an inculcation of self-help, identity of interests, and such other virtues is attained, there is nothing lost, in my opinion, by the extension of credit societies. The development of other forms of co-operation is another step in our economic reconstruction and advancement."¹

Co-operative stores have not been a success in the Punjab; mainly because they were started amongst students and others who did not realise their importance so acutely as our factory-labourers do. An experiment in this direction will amply repay the activities of the Co-operative staff.

The retail co-operative stores deal primarily in distributive trade. They meet the requirements of the members and supply pure and unadulterated goods at reasonable prices (generally market), distributing the profits thereby made in proportion to the purchase of each member. Slowly and gradually, these retail stores can be federated into national wholesale stores, eliminating still further the profits of middlemen. The retail co-operative stores can pool their demands through this wholesale organization and reach the manufacturers direct.

The Consumers' Movement has been of great help in England. It has actually tended towards the reduction of prices and helped in the amelioration of economic conditions. Under competition from consumers' societies, the private traders have been forced to bring down their prices. "But the indirect and unconscious control exercised by the co-operative movement is far more extensive than this and far greater than is generally

¹ See Author's *Co-operative Movement in the Punjab*; Aligarh, 1923—Page 107.

recognised, as is shown by the extremely valuable investigation made by the Co-operative Section of the International Labour Office and published in 1926. To give only one of the examples mentioned in it—a test carried out by the Co-operative Society of the Orne (Normandy). The prices of some thirty articles of common consumption were noted on the same day at small grocers' shops, multiple stores and a large Paris firm at different places in which the Society had opened shops, and compared with those of the Society. On the day the Society was opened, the prices charged by the private traders averaged 31 per cent above those of the Co-operative Society. Five months later, they were only 22 per cent higher; six months later they were only 11 per cent higher. But on the latter date they were still 30 per cent higher in the two chief towns of the district where the Society did not open."¹

This influence on the prices of articles is very far-reaching. Co-operative stores lower prices for members and thereby add to their purchasing power. In other words, they are tantamount to an increase of wages. It should be remembered that trade-unionism and co-operation are complementary to each other. Whereas the former raises the standard of living of workers by raising wages, the latter adds to it still further by lowering down the prices of articles. The two are necessary adjuncts of each other and can work hand in hand.

Co-operative Stores, when started amongst our factory workers, will prove a boon to them. But they must be supplemented by co-operative credit institutions. It is no doubt true that the turn-over of labour is high in our factories but, as our conditions improve, this tendency to shift from place to place will surely receive a check. As labour settles down, the different workers will be bound together into a stronger union. There will then be enough scope for the organization and development of co-operative credit institutions.

The goal of our political destiny has been definitely outlined as responsible government and it is up to us to train people in

¹ W. E. A. *Outlines of Co-operation* by A. Honara Enfield (Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 1927), Page 19.

self-governing institutions. The vast field of co-operation and trade-unionism offers an inestimable opportunity for the social worker.¹ These societies offer an unequalled training ground for self-government in the best and truest sense. They are perfectly democratic. The members are called upon to exercise their vote with proper caution. They watch and safeguard the interests of their society and learn to subordinate personal interest to general weal, to form judgments outside the routine of their daily lives, and to accept the rule of the majority.

Co-operation and unionism are very much allied in certain respects. Their aim and ideal are to uplift the lives of workers. Even social reforms may be achieved by mutual consent as by checking extravagance, by the prohibition of alcohol, by levying penalties for gambling and by imparting education for the raising of mental outlook.

Our workers are not trained from their early life to one particular task as a means of livelihood. They lack permanence, the more so as the factory conditions present a dreary outlook. They do not generally enjoy the benefit of a provident fund or of a pension scheme. They live from hand to mouth and, when they die, their dependents carry on a wretched existence. It is thus desirable that all the well-established factories should establish provident funds for permanent workers on the lines now in vogue with the municipal and district board service.

For a very large number of labourers, employment is unstable and uncertain. Its continuity may extend from one day to a few years. As Lescohier says, "unemployment undermines his physique, deadens his mind, weakens his ambitions, destroys his capacity for continuous, sustained endeavour, induces a liking for idleness and self-indulgence, saps self-respect and the sense of responsibility . . . sends him to work worried and underfed; plunges him in debt."² Under such conditions, a labourer can never attain efficiency. Security of work directly conduces to efficiency, and no substantial results can be achieved without it.

¹ See Author's "Co-operative Movement in the Punjab"—Aligarh, 1923—pages 85 and 86.

² Lescohier :—The Labour Market. New York—1919. Page 107.

The uncertain conditions of work in the Punjab breed disloyalty in the worker. Everything is regulated from the cash-nexus point of view and the interests of workers are often trampled under foot. Under these circumstances, it is foolish to talk of the harmony of interests between the employers and the employees.

The great gulf, which seems to separate the employer and the employee, can be greatly abridged if factory conditions improve. Lord Chelmsford thus expressed himself in 1920 in opening the Central Legislature¹:—

“I would earnestly impress upon employers the necessity for sympathetic consideration of the claims of labour. It has too often proved the case that employers, after a long and ruinous struggle, have been forced to concede claims that they might have allowed with honour and with profit as soon as they were presented . . . Workers are beginning to demand not merely the right to live in comfort, but a living interest in their work. This is a claim that must be taken seriously, and I see no reason why we should not make our new start abreast of the most advanced European countries. So long as Indian industry was organised on a small scale, the close personal contact between the master and each of his men secured intimate, if not harmonious, relations. With the inevitable growth of great factories, this contact has become impossible, and there is a tendency to allow the bond between employer and employed to become a purely commercial one. It is essential that machinery should be devised which will re-establish under modern conditions personal contact and good understanding.”

The worker should not be looked upon as a tool, but as a human being. The average employer in the West has realised the importance of this point and is now doing his best to afford the employees an opportunity of making themselves heard and of influencing the policy of their employers. The mechanism devised to accomplish this object is the ‘Works Committee’ which is now looked upon as an essential element of success in industry. The Works Committee can help to organise labour.

¹ Proceedings of the Legislative Council in India. Part II; 1919-20—20th August, 1920. Pages 9 and 10.

Our factory-labourers, as I have repeatedly pointed out, are very backward in every respect and an impetus is needed to awaken them to the realization of their helpless condition. The Works Committee can undoubtedly discharge this function very efficiently. It is a pleasure to note that the Railway Workshops, Lahore, have recently established a Works Committee. Will the other employers follow suit?

Uncertainty of employment exists all over the world—especially in the West. It is responsible for a large amount of economic waste, and it is the realisation of this weakness that has led the Western reformers to come to the rescue of the workers by several ingenious devices—by old-age pensions, by insurance against unemployment, sickness and accidents. But, where these do not exist, trade-unions take the place of the State and stand by the worker in his hour of need. He is looked after to some extent in the periods of sickness and unemployment.

Trade-unionism is in its infancy in the Punjab. There is only one well organised union—the North Western Railway Union—so far. Poverty is rampant in the country. Beggary has assumed huge proportions, and factory-labour is groaning under several hardships. It is advisable that the Government should forthwith appoint a Committee to enquire into the economic condition of workers with a view to making practical proposals to meet needs which are met elsewhere by such measures as poor law, minimum wage law, old age pensions and insurance against sickness and unemployment.

Before I proceed further, I must sound a note of warning to employers. They are very hard task-masters and keep the workers in dread. They look mainly to their gain and dismiss the employees when their profits begin to shrink. “. . . . When an employer gauges his industrial success by the amount of profit he makes, he reminds me of a man who measures the perfection of his car by the amount of lubricating oil required to keep it running. There is no advantage whatever but actual waste in using more lubricating oil than need be. Equally, there is no advantage to the community at all, but actual injury in any profit being more than bare minimum that is required to keep the machine going. In future, we shall judge a business

by its efficiency in production. We do not estimate the achievements of a doctor by the amount of his fees, but by the extent of his cures. Similarly, the business-man will be judged by his efficient fulfilment of his function of production, and not by his profits which are merely the lubricating oil allowed him at present but which, in the interests of efficiency, must be reduced to a minimum.”¹

The factory-owners must realise their partnership with the workers and do the best they can to help them. They must steer clear of the storm which beset the Western employers during the last three-quarters of a century, and which they are now trying to ward off by social work and welfare schemes. Our employers have still to learn a great deal from Western capitalists. One example will do. In the railway strike of 1919 in England, the shareholders issued the following statement² to the press:—

“We, the undersigned, being shareholders or beneficiaries through shares in companies, wish to state publicly that we are convinced that the claims of the workers to wages making it possible for them to live a full and free life, come before the claims of shareholders to dividends. We will therefore support such a reorganisation of the present industrial system, as shall bring about the highest good of the workers and the best interests of the community, and are prepared to accept whatever personal loss shall arise through such re-organisation.”

At present, there is no system in vogue in the Punjab whereby surplus labour in one part may be shifted to areas of greater demand. In consequence, there may be dearth in some parts and plethora in other parts at one and the same time. Thus, Industrial Labour Bureaus should be started in every Division, being linked up in their turn into an Industrial Labour Department for the whole province.

But an Industrial Labour Bureau may be a source of danger. It may be instrumental in supplying cheap labour to some favoured employers. It may also help in breaking a strike by

¹ Sidney Webb: *The Root of Labour Unrest—An address to employers and managers*, 1919.

² Quoted by Wadia and Joshi: *Wealth of India*. Page 358.

importing the services of outside labourers. Hence, strong trade-unionism seems to be a necessary adjunct to a labour bureau. This does not mean that initial steps should not be taken towards the creation of Labour Bureaus and the Federated Labour Department for the whole province. Trade-unionism will grow slowly and steadily and their select officials, as also the representatives of the employers, may easily be co-opted on the Bureaus.

A labour bureau cannot succeed if its duties are relegated to a clerk who sits down and prepares a list of the unemployed. Competent persons should be appointed to study the wants of each Division and arouse trust and confidence in all concerned.

This has been done in the case of registered criminals in the Punjab. They are placed under the control of Extra Assistant Commissioners in different settlements and are greatly assisted in finding employment.

The Provincial Labour Department should be federated into a national employment service controlled by the Government of India. England and Canada are the only two countries which have a national employment service. Germany helps and subsidises local organisations. The Federal Employment Service in the United States of America took its birth during the last War. These organizations have, one and all, been accused of favouritism. It may be true to a degree but it is a fact that they have rendered valuable service on the whole. They act as a mitigating factor in the unemployment situation of their respective countries.

The Punjab has no such institution as the Labour Bureau in Bombay, nor does it possess an Industrial Intelligence Officer as we find in the Bengal presidency. Late in 1919, a Board of Economic Inquiry was instituted under orders from the Punjab Government. It was split up into two sections—rural and urban—and held its first sitting in December, 1919. It was then unanimously decided that the Board should :

1. lay down lines of economic investigations ;
2. co-ordinate the results of economic inquiries ;

3. encourage and direct economic study and research; and
4. publish economic material.

The Board consists of 26 members—ex-officio and nominated—and has of late been declared a non-official body. The rural section has already published some results of its inquiries. The urban section has not much to its credit although it is now showing signs of increased activity. Some industrial investigators have already submitted their observation on labour in the province and a few more are expected to follow suit.

The Board of Economic Inquiry is still in its infant stages and the time has now come when it should extend its activities in different directions. I suggest that the urban section of the Board should take the form of an Industrial Labour Department, and, besides co-ordinating with the other proposed labour bureaux and provincial labour departments in the matter of unemployment, observe the following as its main objects:—

- (1) It should collect information regarding the real social and economic condition of industrial workers;
- (2) It should record the movements of food prices;
- (3) It should encourage and promote good-will between the employers and the employees;
- (4) It should maintain a record of industrial disputes with special reference to wages; and
- (5) It should play an important role in the settlement of industrial disputes.

As factories increase in number and size, Conciliation Boards will become a necessity. Before a strike actually breaks out or even when it is in full swing, Conciliation Boards can render invaluable service.

Again, it has been shown above how wages vary from place to place and factory to factory. In some cases, they are much below the subsistence level. Herein, the Government can establish Trade Boards and help the poor and unorganised workmen who, for lack of combination, cannot advance their economic interests. The Trade Boards can be called upon to fix minimum rates of wages wherever they find that the current

rates in some industries are exceptionally low as compared with those in other employments.

There is one thing more to which I must now turn my attention. I have been emphasizing all through that our factory labourers suffer from three main difficulties—poverty, disease, and ignorance. The first two have been discussed elsewhere at great length. The third requires further consideration.

I have observed that our workers are at present shrouded in a mass of ignorance. The Punjab population as a whole is largely illiterate; only 74 per mille of the men and 9 per mille of the women are estimated to be able to read and write. The expenditure on education amongst the workers is exceedingly small. It is conspicuous by its absence in the lowest class, and it increases as the family income increases. It is not necessary here to mention the great loss which lack of education brings in its train. Education is an asset without which no community can make any headway. "The elements of educational problems can be simply stated. They are to secure for the children of to-day, who will be the men and women of to-morrow, such training, physical, intellectual and religious as may fit them to make the best of their own lives and, in doing so, to serve the nation to the best advantage . . . Initiative, self reliance, judgment, character—these are among the chief ends of education and one of the principal tests by which the State's success in the educational field must always be examined is the extent to which it has resulted in fostering these qualities."¹

Thus, education² is essential for factory-labourers. As

¹ Sir George Lloyd and Hon'ble Wood: *The Great Opportunity*. Pages 89-91; London, John Murray, 1918.

² Minutes of evidence to the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18, Vol. I. Page 10. Witness No. 3. R. B. Sultan Singh; "The late Mr. Gokhale, quoting an eminent German professor, well pointed out that no real economic or social development of a people is possible without the education of the masses. Such education is the foundation and necessary antecedent of increased economic activity in all branches of national production in agriculture, small industries, manufactures and commerce; it leads to a more equal distribution of the proceeds of labour; and it ensures a higher level of intelligence and a larger capacity for achieving social advance among the people. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this question in the present state of India."

Dr. Marshall says,¹ "A good education confers great indirect benefits even on the ordinary workman. It stimulates his mental activity, it fosters in him a habit of wise inquisitiveness; it makes him more intelligent, more ready, more trustworthy in his ordinary work; it raises the tone of his life in working hours; it is thus an important means towards the production of material wealth."

Our educational system is defective and requires much of overhauling. As far as possible, elementary education must become preparatory² education. It should initiate the student in the three R's and create a practical industrial bias in him through social agencies. The Co-operative Department is taking some interest in the affair. In some places, societies of parents have been organised to enable the members to carry out schemes of compulsory primary education. It has been made obligatory on all members of such societies to send their wards to school for full four years' course or to pay a penalty in default.

The Punjab Government has also evinced some interest of late in the education of the depressed classes. The latter have an unanswerable claim on the assistance of Government, and some institutions directed mainly towards their uplift have come into existence. I, however, look forward to the day when the class distinctions so obvious in the Punjab schools will give place to saner and healthier views of life.

The Compulsory Education Act was passed in 1919. It is divided into two parts. Part I deals with the general procedure. "Any local authority may resolve, by a majority of two-thirds of the members present at a meeting specially convened for the purpose, to propose that Part II of this Act shall be applied to the whole or any part of the area within the local limits of its authority." A special education cess may be levied

¹ Marshall: Principles of Economics. Book IV. Chapter VI. Page 211, 8th Edition—(London, 1922).

² Report of the Industrial Commission (1916-18), Calcutta, 1918—Page 96 :—
"A factor, which has tended in the past to delay the progress of Indian industrial development, has been the ignorance and conservatism of the uneducated workman. The evidence tendered by employers was almost universally in favour of labour, both skilled and unskilled, that had at least received a primary education. This is given in countries with which India will have to compete and is a *sine qua non* in this country also."

for this purpose; but, before the provisions of the Act are enforced, the final sanction of the Local Government is necessary. The Local Government reserves to itself the right of exempting classes or communities from the operation of the Act, the withdrawal of areas from its operation and the reduction and discontinuance of the education cess.

Under Part II, "it shall be the duty of the parent of any boy residing within such area, who is not under six and not over 11 years of age, to cause such boy to attend a recognised school for primary education." Further provisions refer to the reasonable excuses for non-attendance: to school accommodation, equipment and staff; to penalty for neglect by parent and to the unlawful employment of boys.

It is no doubt true that, since 1919, the keynote of the educational policy of the Government has been the reduction of illiteracy. At the end of the year 1925-26, "compulsion had been introduced in 42 towns and 451 rural areas, and the result in most of these areas has been that the percentage of boys at school, out of the total of those who ought to be at school, has risen very considerably, that attendance is more regular, and that the period of school life is rapidly being prolonged."¹ It is a pity that the Act applies only to boys. The time has come, when an earnest attempt from the Government in the direction of compulsory education for girls in certain select areas will bear good results. Domestic environments are still far from satisfactory and, unless the surroundings of childhood and youth are improved, no permanent good can be attained. It is the influence of the mother that is all-pervading in the early days of a labourer's life. The condition of the future generation can therefore be immensely improved by women's education, which includes training in hygiene and sanitation.

But the compulsion implied in the Education Act is only of a nominal character. Moreover, the Government has not as yet made any serious attempt at educating the factory-labourers. The minimum age for work in factories has been raised to 12 years, but nothing has been done to introduce free and compulsory education amongst them.

¹ Punjab Administration Report 1925-26. Lahore, 1927,—Page 115.

It is sometimes said that the factory-owners should provide free education for their employees. It has nowhere been the case: the Government imparts the necessary elementary education everywhere. However it must be confessed to their credit that some factory-owners are prepared to contribute their humble quota.¹

Literacy² is an asset for a progressive community; and the habit of reading should not be allowed to rust. It is essential that public bodies should seriously consider the question of establishing small reading rooms and libraries in the different parts of towns. An attempt of a similar nature, undertaken by the employers in the interests of employees would prove very fruitful. The wage-earners will be justified in looking for active help from factory owners who make huge profits from the output of cheap labour in normal times.

An attempt at educating the adults should not be ignored. In the case of workers, who spend ten hours and even more in a factory, night schools may not be a success. But some factories already work for eight hours; the working hours in others are sure to come down either spontaneously or through legislation. Thus, night schools, if run by sympathetic hands, are likely to be a success.

Side by side with night schools, an effort should be made towards the establishment of Sunday schools. Almost every factory closes on Sunday, which is celebrated as a weekly day of rest. It would be in the fitness of things to try this experiment. I had a talk with some educated labourers during my tour in the Punjab last summer. They are very hopeful

¹ Report of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916-18), Calcutta, 1918, pages 96 and 97:—"But we are not prepared to declare that the education of their labour is a duty of employers as such, and while we strongly endorse the views of employers of labour regarding the fundamental necessity for providing some form of primary education for the artisan and labouring population, we are opposed to any scheme that would compel individual employers to provide such education. This is a duty which we think rightly devolves on local authorities or on government. . . . and we need only support the proposal that when private employers, undertake this task, they should be assisted in every possible way including the allocation of grants-in-aid by the local governments."

² Education—The Socialist Policy: R. H. Tawney (London 1924), Page 13:—

"If we are to avoid strangling the next generation in the red tape of the last, we must at every point ask ourselves how far the organisation which we have inherited corresponds to the realities of human development which it is the business of education to assist."

of the success of such a scheme and the earlier it materialises, the better for the community.

Regarding industrial education, I am of opinion that middle schools, in future, should have an industrial and technical side and include a course of carpentry (including drawing), design and the use of hand tools. Education in the Punjab is slowly tending towards this direction, and this is sure to prove helpful to the people at large.

As our industries progress, there will be a greater and greater demand for skilled fitters, turners, moulders, etc. The Government should try to combine 'industrial school' and apprenticeship, thereby enabling the boys to spend half the time in shops and the other half in schools acquiring ordinary academic education. The Maclagan Engineering College, Moghulpura, commenced work partly on this principle on the 1st October, 1923. It is doing useful work although no special facilities have been provided for the sons of factory-workers. The Railway Technical School, Lahore, continues to prosper and imparts free education to the children of artisans.

The factory-owners, on their part, should seriously take up the training of promising labourers in higher work. There is usually no provision for apprenticeship in our factories¹—an element which is necessary for success in our present industrial situation. Every avenue should be explored to improve not only the skill but also the prospects of the workmen.

In some Government works, preferential treatment² is still accorded to Anglo-Indians and Europeans as regards remuneration and allowances. In some cases, Indian apprentices are not

¹ Report of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916-18); Calcutta, 1918. Page 103:—"Above the skilled workman is the maistry or foreman, and the provision for training such men is hopelessly insufficient. We were forcibly struck, when visiting the large railway and private workshops throughout India, with the almost complete absence of Indians from the ranks of foremen and chargemen—the non-commissioned officers of the great army of engineering artisans."

² Ibid. Pages 104 and 105:—"Railway workshops are in many cases already receiving European and Anglo-Indian apprentices, to whom some degree of technical training is given with the object of enabling them to obtain posts as foremen, or in special cases, even higher appointments. There is, however, a noteworthy absence of provision for the middle-class Indian. We consider it of great importance that the conditions of training should be such as the educated Indian

often taken. This grievance comes mainly from workers employed in railway workshops. Let us hope that no such discrimination will be made in future. We are on our way towards responsible government, and such useless distinctions create ill-will for nothing.

Labour is growing in importance day after day and separate representation has already been accorded to it in the Punjab Legislative Council.

To conclude, The factory-labourer in the Punjab is poor, very poor. His labour is often sweated and underpaid. He is badly fed, badly clothed and badly housed and is subject to occasional epidemics. He is also ignorant and disorganised. Let me point out that his low-paid labour casts a malignant influence on the Western world. "Bad conditions of labour in one country operate with fatal effect in depressing conditions of labour in another."¹

Does the English workman like to bring down his standard of living owing to adverse labour conditions in the East? Surely, he does not. He has become accustomed to a particular standard of livelihood, and is not prepared to lower it voluntarily. But he will have to succumb if he remains palpably indifferent to the affairs of the other parts of the world. We want to achieve our purpose not by bringing down English labour, but by improving and elevating the degrading conditions in our country.

The English labourer has become half-conscious of this fact of late. His knowledge of things is only hearsay; but he has begun to display some practical interest. The Workers, Welfare League of India in London has been founded with a view to protecting the interests of Indian workers and to keep the British in touch with their condition. Its aims are:—

(a) independently of all political aims or movements to advocate the institution in India of provision for the welfare of

¹Lord Robert Cecil in Daily Chronicle, February 15th, 1919. Page 1, Column 4

youth will consider consistent with his sense of self-respect; for, if this is not satisfied, we shall be depriving ourselves of a most promising field of recruitment. The arrangements made for Indian apprentices are at present inadequate and the stipends paid them during the period of training and the salaries offered on its completion are very much lower than the corresponding amounts in the case of Europeans and Anglo-Indians, a fact which is largely responsible for the failure of the better educated Indians to take advantage of these courses."

the working population, equivalent to, if not identical with, that granted to the workpeople of Great Britain; and

(b) to propagate among the democratic bodies of Great Britain the general principle that Orientals have the same claim to human rights as Occidentals, including the right to organise and form trade-unions.

I have been told that a deputation consisting of two members has been sent out to India by the Workers Welfare League to make a first-hand study of the condition of Indian labour. This will be very useful as a close study of Indian labour will create a solidarity in the interests of labouring classes, both in India and England. Since 1919, the year of the Washington Conference, India has been permanently linked up with the external world and has gained greatly therefrom.

But the advantage from an equalisation of labour conditions is not one-sided. It is mutual. A rise in the standard of living of the Indian labourer will increase his purchasing power and thereby reflect on English industries and English labourers

A movement towards World Unionism is already on foot. Let me hope that it will soon materialise and attain a force commensurate with its magnitude of work. There are two questions before our labourers to-day—how to live and how to live well. English labour will, I believe, lend necessary support towards their speedy solution.

APPENDIX A.

Statement of wages in some Punjab factories as collected by the Author in his tour:—

Factory A.

1. Engineer (1st class)	Rs. 275, Rs. 125 and Rs. 110 p.m.
2. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 145 p.m.
3. Engine Drivers	Rs. 65 and Rs. 55 p.m.
4. Fitters	Ranging between Rs. 52 and Rs. 110 p.m.
5. Firemen	Ranging between Re. 1-1 and Re. 1-10 per day.
6. Oilmen	Re. 1 per day.
7. Carpenters	Re. 1-14 per day.
8. Blacksmiths	Re. 1-8 and Rs. 2-9 per day.

Factory B.

1. Ordinary unskilled labour	Rs. 18 to Rs. 22 p.m.
2. Skilled Labour	Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 p.m.
3. Worker on Shaving Machine	Rs. 38 p.m.
4. Worker on Splitting Machine	Rs. 75 p.m.

Factory C.

1. Oilmen	Rs. 20 p.m.
2. Ironsmiths	Rs. 50 do.
3. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 135 do.
4. Firemen	Rs. 32 do.
5. Khanchiman (centrifugal)	Rs. 22 to Rs. 27 do.
6. Fitters	Rs. 22 do.
7. Sievemmen	Rs. 18 do.
8. Ordinary unskilled labourers	Re. 0-12-0 daily.

Factory D.

1. Engineeer (2nd class)	Rs. 115 p.m.
2. Engine Driver	Rs. 45 do.
3. Fitter	Rs. 64 do.
4. Firemen	Rs. 40 do.
5. Oilmen	Rs. 22 do.
6. Carpenter	Rs. 37 do.
7. Mochi (Cobbler)	Rs. 35 do.
8. Chowkidar	Rs. 18 do.
9. Opener or Press Coolies	Re. 1-4 per day
10. Coolie (woman on gins)	As. 7 do.

Factory E.

1. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 150 p.m.
2. Engine Driver	Rs. 50 do.
3. Fitter	Rs. 90 do.
4. Fireman	Rs. 40 do.
5. Oilman	Rs. 30 do.
6. Carpenter	Rs. 50 do.
7. Blacksmith	Rs. 40 do.
8. Mochi	Rs. 50 do.
9. Chowkidar	Rs. 20 do.
10. Opener or Press Coolies	Re. 1 per day
11. Coolie (woman on gins)	As. 6 per day

Factory F.

1. Engineer (1st class)	Rs. 195 p.m.
2. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 50 do.
3. Engine Drivers	Rs. 35 to Rs. 60 do.
4. Fitters	Rs. 30 to Rs. 60 do.

5. Firemen	Rs. 24 to Rs. 35 p.m.
6. Oilmen	Rs. 20 to Rs. 35 do.
7. Carpenters	Rs. 25 to Rs. 40 do.
8. Blacksmith	Rs. 35 to Rs. 55 do.
9. Mochi	Rs. 25 to Rs. 35 do.
10. Weaver	Rs. 35 to Rs. 60 do.
11. Spinner	Rs. 20 to Rs. 28 do.
12. Dyer	Rs. 19 to Rs. 24 do.
13. Chowkidar	Rs. 15-8 to Rs. 23 do.
14. Opener or Press Coolies	As. 10-6 to As. 13-6 per day
Factory G.	
1. Engine Driver	Rs. 70 and Rs. 45 p.m.
2. Fitter	Rs. 50 do.
3. Fireman	Rs. 38 do.
4. Oilman	Rs. 20 do.
5. Carpenter	Rs. 40 do.
6. Blacksmith	Rs. 60 do.
7. Mochi	Rs. 53 do.
8. Press Distributor	Rs. 40 do.
9. Press Compositor	Rs. 30 to Rs. 47 do.
10. Chowkidar	Rs. 19 do.
11. Opener or Press Coolie	Rs. 15 to Rs. 18 do.
Factory H.	
1. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 90 do
2. Engine Driver	Rs. 35 do.
3. Fitter	Rs. 50 do.
4. Fireman	Rs. 35 do.
5. Oilman	Rs. 18 do.
6. Mochi	Rs. 35 do.
7. Chowkidar	Rs. 20 do.
Factory I.	
1. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 150 do.
2. Engine Driver	Rs. 110 do.
3. Fitter	Rs. 35 do.
4. Fireman	Rs. 30 do.
5. Oilman	Rs. 60 do.
6. Carpenter	Rs. 45 do.
7. Chowkidar	Rs. 16 do.
Factory J.	
1. Miller	Rs. 350 p.m.
2. Engineer	Rs. 150 do.
3. Head Fitter	Rs. 107 do.
4. Fitters	Rs. 51 do.
5. Spoutman	Rs. 20-8 do.
6. Mistri	Rs. 120 do.
7. Whirl Scourer	Rs. 19 do.
8. Rulemen	Rs. 27 do.
9. Purifier Room	Rs. 18 do.
10. Cleaner	Rs. 19 do.
11. Carpenter	Rs. 88 do.
Factory K.	
1. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 150 do.
2. Engine Driver	Rs. 40 do.

3. Fitter	Rs. 25 p.m.
4. Fireman	Rs. 33 do.
5. Carpenter	Rs. 60 do.
6. Blacksmith	Rs. 50 do.
7. Chowkidar	Rs. 16 do.

Factory L.

	Minimum per day Rs. as.	Maximum per day Rs. as.
1. Leading Fitters (Mistris)	3 0	5 8
2. Fitters	1 4	2 8
3. Apprentice Fitters (Europeans)	0 14	1 8
4. Apprentice Fitters (Indians)	0 8	1 2
5. Turners	0 15	2 8
6. Drillers	0 12	1 12
7. Slotters, Planers.	1 6	2 8
8. Shapers	1 4	2 4
9. Masons	2 0	2 8
10. Trimmers and Belters	1 14	2 0
11. Oilmen	0 14	1 12
12. Drivers	1 8	2 0
13. Firemen	1 8	1 8
14. Mill Wrightmen	1 8	2 8
15. Blacksmiths	1 4	2 8
16. Hammermen	0 14	1 2
17. Carpenters	1 4	2 8
18. Painters	0 14	2 8
19. Batteryemen	2 0	2 0
20. Coolies	0 10	0 12
21. Coolie Jamadars	1 1	2 8
22. Moulders	1 0	2 8
23. Core-Makers	0 7	2 8
24. Fettlers	0 8	2 0
25. Tuyer Cleaners	1 6	1 7
26. Chowkidars	Rs. 15 p.m. to Rs. 20 p.m.	
27. Chowkidar Jamadars	Rs. 22 p.m. to Rs. 25 p.m.	

Factory M.

1. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 500-0 to Rs. 650-0	p.m.
2. Shift Chargeman	Rs. 185-0 to Rs. 350-0	do.
3. Boiler House Chargeman	Rs. 185-0 to Rs. 350-0	do.
4. Engine-Driver	Rs. 65-0 to Rs. 105-0	do.
5. Fitter	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	per day
6. Fireman	Rs. 30-0 to Rs. 50-0	p.m.
7. "	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 3-0	per day
8. Greasers	Rs. 20-0 to Rs. 30-0	p.m.
9. Greasers	Re. 0-14 to Re. 1-2	per day
10. Blacksmiths	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	"
11. Coolies	Re. 0-10 to Re. 1-2	"
12. Winders	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	"
13. Masons	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	"
14. Wiremen		
15. Painters	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	"

FACTORY LABOUR IN THE PUNJAB

16. Turners	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	per day
17. Pump-Drivers	Rs. 30-0 to Rs. 50-0	p.m.
18. Chowkidars	Rs. 15-0 to Rs. 20-0	p.m.
19. Jamadar	Rs. 21-0 to Rs. 28-0	p.m.
20. Apprentices (Literate)	Rs. 50-0 to Rs. 90-0	p.m.
	& Rs. 50-0 to Rs. 120-0	p.m.
21. Linemen	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	"
22. Mistris		
23. Jamadar Coolies	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	"
24. Switch Board Attendants	Re. 1-4 to Rs. 2-8	"

Factory N.

1. Mistri	Rs. 30-0	p.m.
2. Coolies	Rs. 0-6	per day
3. Turners	Rs. 40-0	p.m.
4. Factory-Manager	Rs. 200-0	p.m.
5. Fitters, Carpenters & ironsmiths	Rs. 30-0	p.m.

Factory O.

1. Head Chowkidar	Rs. 28-0	p.m.
2. Chowkidar	Rs. 20-0	p.m.
3. Mason	Re. 1-12	per day
4. Dyer	Rs. 110-0	p.m.
5. Another Dyer	Rs. 52-0	p.m.
6. Coolies	Re. 0-8 to Re. 0-14	daily
7. Firemen	Re. 1-8-6	daily
8. Fitters	Re. 1-0 to Re. 1-12	daily
9. Blacksmith	Re. 1-8	per day
10. Turner	Re. 1-12	"
11. Carpenter	Re. 1-12	"
12. Carding Jamadar	Re. 1-10	"
13. Carder	As. 13-0 to Re. 1-0	"
14. Mochi	Re. 1-3	"
15. Spinning Jamadar	Re. 1-8	"
16. Spinners	As. 8-0 to Re. 1-0	"
17. Reelers	As. 6-0 to As. 7-0	"
18. Teasers	As. 12-0 to As. 15-0	"
19. Teasing Jamadars	Re. 1-15	"
20. Mender	Re. 1-4	"
21. Packer	Re. 1-0	"
22. Winders	As. 7-0	"

Factory P.

	Rs. A.	
1. Engine-Driver	.. 40 0	p.m.
2. Ropeman	.. 33 0	"
3. Oilman	.. 21 0	"
4. Fireman	.. 30 0	"
5. Mechanics	.. 40 0	"
6. Blow-room	.. 18 0	"
7. Carding Tenters and Lap Carriers	.. 18 0	"
8. Drawing Frame	.. 22 0	"
9. Slubbing Frame	.. 23 0	"

	Rs.	A.	
10. Intermediate Frame	.. 20	0	p.m.
11. Rowing Frame	.. 18	0	"
12. Substitutes			
13. Sweepers	.. 16	0	"
14. Whole-Time Doffers	.. 11	4	"
15. Half-time Doffers	.. 6	4	"
16. Mistris (Carding and Spinning)			
17. Mule Minders	.. 28	0	"
18. Mule Piecers	.. 23	0	"
19. Bobbin Boys	.. 16	4	"
20. Reelers	.. 35	0	"
21. Bundling	.. 25	0	"
22. Baling	.. 17	8	"
23. General Departments	.. 17	8	"
24. Ginning			
	As. 7 per day for women.		
	As. 12 per day for men.		
25. Winders	.. 35	0	p.m.
26. Warpers	.. 28	0	"
27. Sizers	.. 45	0	"
28. Drawers	.. 28	0	"
29. Weaving Jobbers	.. 85	0	"
30. Finishers	.. 18	0	"
31. Weavers	.. 50	0	"
32. Calenders	.. 20	0	"
33. Bleachers and Dyers	.. 17	8	"
34. One Manager and Engineer	.. 500	0	"
Factory Q.			
1. Engineer (1st class)	Rs. 275-0		p.m.
2. Engineer (2nd class)	Rs. 175-0		"
3. Drivers	Rs. 44-0 and	Rs. 38-0	"
4. Oilman		Rs. 23-0	"
5. Blacksmith	Rs. 51-0	Rs. 45-0 and	Rs. 38-0
6. Fitter Coolie			"
7. Firemen	Rs. 36-0		"
8. Coalman	Rs. 23-0		"
9. Ordinary Labourer	As. 12-0		daily
10. Fittermen	Rs. 24-0		p.m.
11. Pressmen	Rs. 23-0		"
12. Bag-wash	Rs. 23-0		"
13. Supervisor	Rs. 48-0		"
14. Head Pan-man	Rs. 215-0		"
15. Pan-man	Rs. 85-0 and	Rs. 70-0	"
16. Pan-Coolies	Rs. 28-8 and	Rs. 32-0	"
17. Centrifugal Supervisor	Rs. 25-0 to	Rs. 42-0	"
18. Centrifugal Workers		Rs. 23-8	"
19. Mill Manager		Rs. 175-0	"
20. Assistant Mill Manager		Rs. 100-0	"
Factory B.			
1. Master-Weavers	Rs. 40 p.m. on an average.		
2. Adult Males	Rs. 20 "		
3. Children under 12	1½ to 4 annas a day		

4. Children between 12 and 15	About Rs. 12 p.m.
5. Head Dyer	Rs. 88 p.m.
6. Other Dyers	Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 p.m.
7. One Driver and Engineer	Rs. 60 p.m.
8. Fireman	Rs. 35 "
Factory S.	
1. Engineer	Rs. 900 p.m.
2. Superintendent	Rs. 440 "
3. Assistant Superintendent	Rs. 125 "
4. Head Fitter	Rs. 105 "
	Overtime allowance Rs. 15 p.m.
5. Drivers	Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 p.m.
6. Firemen	Rs. 30 p.m.
7. Boiler Cleaners	Rs. 20 "
8. Oilmen	Rs. 17 "
9. Coalmen	Rs. 17 "
10. Engine-Cleaners	Rs. 18 "
11. Sweeper	Rs. 12 "
12. Gate-Keeper	Rs. 20 "
13. Well Chowkidar	Rs. 20 "
14. Sub-station Fitter	Rs. 130 "
15. Coolie	Rs. 18 "
16. Electrician	Rs. 70 "
17. Electrician Coolie	Rs. 20 "
18. Chowkidar	Rs. 19 "
Factory T.	
1. Foreman	Rs. 110 p.m.
2. Chowkidar	Rs. 20 "
3. Fitter	Rs. 66 and 52 p.m.
4. Fitter Tinsmith	Rs. 50 p.m.
5. Turner	Rs. 67 "
6. Junior Turner	Rs. 35 "
7. Carpenter	Rs. 60 "
8. Moulder	Rs. 67 "
9. Coolies	Rs. 20 "
10. One boy Coolie	Rs. 10 "
Factory U.	
1. Factory Superintendent	Rs. 168 p.m.
2. Transport Clerk	Rs. 80 "
3. Factory Foreman	Rs. 100 "
4. Storekeeper	Rs. 60 "
5. Laboratory Assistant	Rs. 42 "
6. Laboratory Attendants	Rs. 22 "
7. Laboratory Cleaners	Rs. 20 "
8. Resin Foreman	Rs. 41 "
9. Turpentine Foreman	Rs. 30 "
10. Turpentine Coolie	Re. 0 11 0 to Re. 0 12 0 per day
11. Rosin Foreman	Rs. 33 p.m.
12. Rosin Assistant	Rs. 25 "
13. Rosin Stocking Coolie	Re. 0 12 0 per day
14. Head Distiller	Rs. 99 p.m.
15. Fitter	Rs. 45 ,
16. Fitter Coolie	Re. 0 14 0 per day

17. Maintenance Carpenter	Rs. 60	p.m.
18. do Blacksmith	Rs. 55	"
19. Maintenance Coolie	Re. 0 14 0	per day
20. Maintenance Water-carrier	Re. 0 12 0	"
21. Sweeper	Re. 0 8 0	"
22. Boiler in charge	Rs. 80	p.m.
23. Boiler Fireman	Rs. 26	"
24. Boiler Apprentice	Re. 0 14 0	per day
25. Resin Collection Coolie	Re. 0 12 0	"
26. Vacuum Plant Cleaner	Re. 0 12 0	"
27. Firewood Coolie	Re. 0 12 0	"
28. Ash removal	Re. 0 12 0	"
29. Gas Engine	Re. 0 12 0	"
30. Cinder Collection	Re. 0 12 0	"
31. Mason	Rs. 2 4 0	daily
32. Saw-Machine Mistri	Rs. 40	p.m.
33. Saw-Machine Coolie	Re. 0 12 0	daily
34. Distillers	Rs. 82, Rs. 45,	Rs. 35 p.m.
35. Assistant Distillers	Rs. 40, Rs. 35,	Rs. 35 p.m.
36. Lagging		Rs. 33 p.m.
37. Rosin Shed Foreman		Rs. 30 "
38. Dipping Coolies		As. 12 daily
39. Vacuum Plant		As. 12 "
40. Chowkidar		Rs. 18 p.m.
Factory V.		
I. Power Generating Department		
1. Drivers	Rs. 2-6 to	Rs. 3-0 per day
2. Assistant Firemen		Re. 1-8 per day
3. Oiler, Power House		Re. 1-2 "
4. B. H. Aspitman		Re. 1-0 "
5. Coolies		As. 10-0 "
II Slurry Production Department.		
1. Fitters		Rs. 2-7 per day
2. Motor-Man	Between Re. 1-2 and	Rs. 2-8 per day
III. Clinker Production Department		
1. Fitters	Rs. 2-4 to	Rs. 3-0 daily
2. Motor-Man	As. 10-0 to	Rs. 2-8 daily
IV. Cement Production Department.		
1. Miller		Re. 1-10 daily
2. Oiler		Re. 1-2 "
3. Cleaner		As. 8-0 "
4. Mortor-Man		Rs. 2-2 "
V. Cement Packing Department		
1. Male Coolies		Re. 1-0 "
2. Coolies		As. 10-0 "
VI. Laboratory Department		
1. Calcimetres		Re. 1-0 "
2. Testers		As. 8-0 "
VII. Raw Mill Department.		
1. Cleaners		As. 10-0 "
2. Khalasis		Re. 1-8 "
VIII. Stores.		
1. Cobbler		Re. 1-2 "
2. Chowkidar		As. 9-0 "

IX Workshop

1. Fitters		Rs. 2-4	per day
2. Moulders	Re. 1-0 to	Rs. 3-0	"
3. Turners		Rs. 2-8	"
4. Blacksmith	As. 10-0 to	Rs. 2-8	"
5. Blacksmith Coolies	As. 8-0 to	As. 10-0	"
5. Carpenters	Re. 1-8 to	Rs. 3-0	"
7. Coolies	As. 8-0 to	As. 10-0	"

X Masons

Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2-8 "

XI Khalasis ..

As. 12-0 to Re. 1-4 "

XII Superior Staff (Permanent)

1. Manager		Rs. 1,050	per month
2. Engineer		Rs. 928	"
3. Works Foreman		Rs. 700	"
4. Chemist		Rs. 425	"
5. Accountant		Rs. 400	"
6. Assistant Engineer		Rs. 262	"
7. Assitant Foreman		Rs. 125	"
8. Laboratory Assistant	Rs. 40-0 to	Rs. 112	"
9. Chief Time-keeper		Rs. 92	"
10. Assistant Time-keeper	Rs. 35-0 to	Rs. 72	"
11. Store Keeper		Rs. 77	"

APPENDIX B.

The following questionnaire was used by the Author for the collection of family budgets of factory-labourers in 1920 and 1921. The results obtained therefrom appear in Chapter III.

I. Family:—

- (a) What religion?
- (b) How many persons in Household?
(State sex, age and relationship with the labourer)
- (c) How many children have died and from what cause?
- (d) What is the state of health of each member?
- (e) What other dependents (a) living with family, (b) living elsewhere?
- (f) District of origin of the labourer.

II. Family Income:—(Average monthly income for the preceding year).

- (a) What was labourer's monthly wages? How much commission?
- (b) What other wage-earners were there in the household? What relations were they to the labourer? And what were their occupations?
- (c) What was the average monthly wage of each wage-earner?
- (d) What additional monthly income (e.g. from property) was obtained and from what source?
- (e) What were the receipts in kind during the preceding year and what was their approximate value?
- (f) How many hours' work a day?
- (g) Is work regular or intermittent?
- (h) State days of unemployment during the last year.

III. Housing.

- (a) Is house separate or a tenement?
- (b) Is it owned or rented?
- (c) What is the rent?
- (d) Does the labourer pay for repairs? If so, how much does he pay?
- (e) Is there any sub-tenant? If so, how much does he pay?
- (f) How many rooms? And what are the dimensions of each.
- (g) State use of each room.
- (h) Is house made of brick or mud?
- (i) How are rooms (i) ventilated (ii) roofed and (iii) lighted?
- (j) Describe furniture of each room. Describe flooring.
- (k) What bathing arrangements are there? Describe conditions of surroundings.
- (l) What sanitary arrangements are there?
- (m) Where is drinking water obtained from?
- (n) Is there any accommodation for live-stock?
- (o) What livestock is there?
- (p) Is there any yard? If so, is it private or common to several houses?

IV. Food:—(Average monthly last year).

- (a) State number of meals taken by family per day.
- (b) State kind of food consumed (e.g., fish, meat, wheat, ghee, rice, sugar, vegetables, milk oil, etc., etc.).

- (e) State quantities of each ordinarily consumed per month by the family.
- (d) State expenditure on each article of food per month, including salt and spices.
- (e) When are bills for various articles of food paid?
- (f) Mention whether bought cooked or not.
- (g) At what intervals are various kinds of goods bought?
- (h) State kind and monthly cost of fuel for cooking.
- (i) What was the expenditure on cooking utensils or pottery last year?
- (j) What arrangements are there for storing food (a) raw materials, (b) cooked food?
- (k) What arrangements are there for washing cooking utensils?

V. Lighting arrangements.

What is the nature and cost of artificial lighting? If lamps are used, state kind of oil used.

VI. Services:—

- (a) What is the monthly cost of barbering for the family?
- (b) What is the monthly dhobi (laundry) bill?

VII. Clothing:—

- (a) Give details of clothing bought for family last year.
- (b) Give details of shoes bought last year.
- (c) State cost of each article (if home-made, give cost of material and making up).
- (d) Were any clothes handed down by dowry to the family?
- (e) Were any gifts of clothing received during the year? If so, from where?
- (f) Give details of any expenditure on clothes-mending and shoe-repairs.

VIII. Education:—

- (a) Has the labourer read any language? If so, which?
- (b) Can he write any language?
- (c) Can any of the family read or write?
- (d) What is the expenditure on education of children? And where are they educated?

IX. Medical Attendance:—

- (a) Give cost of any medical attendance to the family during the last year (including medicine).
- (b) Mention disease or ailment for which medical attendance was obtained last year.
- (c) What were the qualifications of the physician?
- (d) Is the civil dispensary made use of? If not, why not?

X. Ceremonies:—

- (a) Give list of ceremonies in the family during the last four years.
- (b) What was the cost on each occasion?
- (c) Mention any ceremonies which were attended outside family circle and any expenditure incurred thereon.
- (d) Has any member of the family been to a place of pilgrimage? State the cost.

XI. Amusements:—

Give details of expenditure during last year on fairs, tobacco, drinks, betel-nut, etc., etc.

XII. Entertainment of Guests.

Give details and cost of entertaining guests or other hospitality (not already included under other heads).

XIII. Charities or Presents:—

Mention expenses, if any.

XIV. Savings:—

What was the amount actually saved last year? How is it utilised?

XV. Mention any expenditure on sundries not included in above heads e.g. stationery, stamps, soap, etc.**XVI. Indebtedness:—**

- (a) Give total amount of any debts.
- (b) How were they incurred?
- (c) What is the amount of debts repaid last year?
- (d) What is the amount of monthly interest due?
- (e) What is the amount of interest actually paid last year?
- (f) What is the security offered to the bania by the labourer?

APPENDIX C.

The following questionnaire was framed by the Author in April, 1927, and copies of it were circulated amongst the factory-owners in the Punjab. The scheme was later on dropped and the Author himself collected a mass of material in the light of this questionnaire in his tour of the Punjab in 1927. The results of the enquiries thus made appear in the foregoing pages.

For Factory-owners only.

I. Business:—

- (a) State your business. When was it started?
- (b) Give the total number of your employees classified as under:—

(I)	Adults (male)
(II)	Adults (female)
(III)	Children (male)
(IV)	Children (female)
(V)	Total
- (c) Give the number of skilled as well as unskilled labourers under you.
- (d) Have you got any apprentices? If so, state duration and the kind of training given.

II. Contract of work:—

- (a) How are labourers employed? Direct or through contractors?
- (b) If through contractor, state the commission paid.
- (c) Is contractor an independent man or in your employ?
- (b) What is the length of notice for bringing the contract to an end on both sides?
- (e) State the average period of service of labourers under different categories.

III. Working Hours:—

- (a) State the number of working hours in your firm per week and per day.
- (b) Are the workers engaged overtime? If so, how long and at what periods? How is overtime wage reckoned?
- (c) Does any labourer work on Sundays or other holidays?
- (d) State the number of holidays including the weekly day of rest which the workers receive every year.

IV. Wages:—

- (a) How are they calculated? By piece-work or day-work, or any other way.
- (b) Are wages paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly?
- (c) Are the employees paid any bonus in addition to wages? Are their wages cut down in any way?
- (d) Are wages paid in money? State the amount and value of payment, made in kind. (eg. house free of rent, free oil, fuel, etc).
- (e) State your rules in regard to fines on workmen.
- (f) If the worker leaves without notice, are his wages forfeited wholly or partially? If so, where do they go? State the amount of unclaimed or forfeited wages during the last two years.

(g) Give the rates of wages in different categories in as much detail as possible.

V. Strikes and Lock-outs:—

(a) State the number of strikes and lock-outs in your factory ever since its establishment.

(b) State causes of the same.

(c) Give dates of commencement and termination.

(d) State the number of employees directly engaged in the disputes as compared with the total number at the time in your factory.

(e) Describe the number of workers who were thrown out of employment but who were not directly engaged in the dispute.

(f) Give the amount of loss to the employers in each strike.

(g) Give the total amount of loss in wages which the workers (strikers and non-strikers) suffered during the period of strike.

(h) What was the result of the strike?

(i) What was the attitude of other employers towards the dispute?

(For Chambers of Industries only).

(j) Give the total amount of money spent by your Association on different strikes.

(k) How was it spent? With what end in view?

(l) State the number of establishments connected with your Association.

VI. Medical:—

(a) What arrangements exist in the factory as regards medical relief? Is there any physician attached to the factory? If so, state his qualifications, and the number of hours put in by him for his patients.

(b) State the number of patients treated by him every day on an average. What is the most prevalent disease or diseases? State causes, if possible.

(c) Is there any indoor ward for the patients? If so, state the number of patients in it on an average every day.

(d) State the amount of money spent by the factory on medicines, on the doctor's salary and on compounder or dresser, if any.

VII. Water:—

(a) Is there any supply of cool water in the factory for the workmen?

(b) Where is the water obtained from? Is it filtered or not?

VIII. Education:—

(a) What is the total number of literate labourers? Describe under the following heads:—

(i) Male

(ii) Female.

Note:—The term literate refers to a person who can both read and write any language.

- (b) Is any school maintained by the Factory? If so, state the total number of students. State as well the courses of instruction and the kind of training imparted to students.
- (c) How many teachers are there in the School? What is the qualification of each?

IX Housing:—

- (a) Are quarters supplied to workmen?
- (b) State total accommodation.
- (c) Give dimensions of a typical room. Is it white-washed or not? Is floor cemented or not? Is it ventilated? If so, how?

Give full details bearing on this question.

X. Miscellaneous:—

- (a) Is any cinema show maintained by the employers for their workmen?
- (b) Where do the mill-hands stay during the mid-day interval? Is any park or shed provided for this purpose? When and where do the workers dine at the time of rest, i.e., mid-day interval?
- (c) Are First-Aid appliances maintained by the factory proprietor?
- (d) Has the mill proprietor been ever punished (fined or warned) for a breach of law? If so, state the exact fault.

Note:—The answer should relate to the last five years, i.e., 1922-26.

- (e) Are the workers given to loitering in the working hours of the mill? If so, state the amount of time wasted in this way daily by each wage-earner.
- (f) State the number of latrines in the premises of the factory. Also give the number of urinals.
- (g) State the number of sweepers especially set apart for keeping the latrines and urinals clean. What are their working hours?
- (h) Discuss the effect of factory conditions on the health and efficiency of workers.
- (i) What is the general temperature of your mill during the working hours? Is it steam-heated during winter? Are there any cooling arrangements in the summer season? If so, describe their nature.
- (j) Are you in favour of a working day of nine hours? Give reasons for your answer.
- (k) Was the employer ever dragged into court by the worker? If so, on what grounds, and with what results?
- (l) State your grievances, if any, against the workers.
- (m) Give details, if any, of insurance of labour on your part against risks under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

GENERAL INDEX

A

- Accidents—
 definition of, 158.
 statistics of in Punjab, 149, 150.
 causes of, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 152.
 evils of, 146.
 compensation for—Voluntary, 152,
 153, legal. *see* workmen's Compensation Act.
 Anderson, 14.
 Andrews C. F., n. 40.
 Appleton W. A., 171, 172.
 Apprentices in factories, 188, 189.
 Arbuthnot F. F., 16.

B

- Bahi, 65.
 Bellhouse Gerard, 147.
 Bengalee, Hon'ble Mr. Sorabjee, 19, 21.
 Bhat K. S., 14,
 Blaney Dr., 16, 17, 18, 19, 21.
 Blum Solomon, n 51, n 52, n 118.
 Board of Economic Enquiry, Punjab,
 182, 183.
 Broughton Miss, 115 n.
 Budgets family, 44, 45, 49, 62, 63, 64.
 Bythel Hon'ble J. K., 16.

C

- Calvert, 139, 144, 145.
 Carpenter Miss, 14, 16.
 Carpet factories—
 bad condition of, 32.
 case for inclusion in the Factories
 Act, 33.
 Caste, 140, 141.
 Cecil Lord Robert, n 189.
 Chamanlal, 72, 73.
 Chatterjee Sir A. C., 170.
 Chelmsford Lord, 179.
 Child marriage among factory wor-
 kers, 37, 38, 39.
 Children in factories—
 age of employment of, 17, 18, 20, 22,
 25, 30, 32, 90, 92.
 certification of, 25, 90, 91, 92.
 double employment of, 31.
 education of, 18, 30.
 hours of work of, 20, 22, 25, 27, 29
 30.
 Clow A. G., n 155, n 158.

- Compulsory Education Act, 1919, 185,
 186.
 Conciliation Boards, 183.
 "Contracting in" in Indian trade
 unions, 171.
 Co-operative stores, 176, 177, 178.
 Cranbrook Viscount, 19.
 Creches
 Creches in factories, 111.
 Croft John, 19.
 Cross Viscount, 23.

D

- Dais, 128
 Dinshaw Manockjee Petit, 17.
 Drinking water, supply of in factories,
 82, 83.

E

- Enfield A. H., n. 177.

F

- Factories—
 definition of, 156.
 cloak-rooms in, 118.
 latrines in, *see* latrines.
 lighting in, 87.
 sanitation of, 17, 20, 81, 82, 83.
 statistics of in Punjab, 6, 7, 80.
 ventilation in, *see* ventilation.
 Factory-doctors, necessity of, 59, 60,
 61.
 Factory inspection, 27, 28.
 history of in Punjab, 93, 94.
 defects of, 94, 95.
 Factory labourer—
 complaints against, 96, 98.
 conditions of employment of, 58, 59.
 cruel treatment of, 53.
 economic condition of, 42-73, 175.
 expenditure of, 62, 63, 64.
 health of, compared to prisoners,
 102—108
 housing of, *see* housing.
 illiteracy of, 40—42, 184.
 indebtedness of, 64, 65, 66.
 inefficiency of, 95, 96, 114.
 intemperance of, 67, 68, 69, 70.
 migratory nature of, 99, 100, 101.
 recruitment of, 35, 39,
 social and religious customs of,
 36—40.

Factory labourer—(Continued.)
social vices of, 70, 71.
supply of and demand for, 134—145.

Factory labour commission—
(Bombay), 1875, 16, 17.

1884, 20, 21.

Indian, 1890, 21, 22, 153.

1907, 26, 27, 82,

84, 93, 95, 109, 114.

Factory legislation Indian—

genesis of, 9,

history of, 9—34.

nature of, 11, 13, 19.

Factory Act of 1881, 20, 87.

Factory Act of 1891, 24, 25.

Factory Act of 1911, 28, 29.

Factory Act of 1922, 30, 154.

Factory Act of 1926, 31.

Factory manager, qualifications of,
54, 55.

Fatigue, 97, 109.

Fines in Indian Factories—

arbitrary nature of, 56, 57.

necessity for regulation of, 57, 58.

Freer Smith Sir, 25.

G

George Henry, 5.

Goldmark J, n 97, n 109.

H

Hakim, 61,

Hamilton Lord George, 15

Helms, 11.

Hobson, n 110.

Holidays, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25,

30, 31, 89, 90.

Holland Sir Thomas, 169, 170.

Hours of work in factories, 17, 18, 26,

27, 28, 29, 30, 87, 88, 89, 108, 109,

110.

Housing, 119—133.

Hutchins Sir Philip, 23.

I

Industrial revolution, effects of, 5.

Industrial education, 188.

Infant mortality in Punjab, 126, 127,

128, 129.

Infant mortality in England, 130.

Innes Sir Charles, 30.

J

Jones, 21.

Joshi N. M., 111, 169, 170.

K

Kelly E. T., n 75, n 78.

Kismet, 146.

Kitteridge G. A., 17.

L

Labour adult, regulation of hours of
20, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Labour bureau, necessity of in Punjab
181, 182.

Labour conference, Geneva, 161.

Washington, 29, 111, 190.

Latif, n 140.

Latrines, in factories, 81, 82.

in houses, 124, 125.

Lescohier, 178.

Lethbridge, A. S. 21.

M

Machinery, safeguards against, 17, 20
21.

Marshall Alfred, 73, 185.

Maternity benefits, bill for the intro-
duction of in India, 111, 112, 113.

Maternity welfare, 130, 131.

Maxwell H., 16.

Middleton, 141.

Mitra Sir B. N., 73.

Mistri, 49, 50, 168.

Montagu E. S. Rt. Hon'ble, 14, 169.

Moore, major, 9.

Morarjee Gokuldas, 17.

Morison, W. T., 26.

Muklawa, 38.

Mulock, 20.

Mungaldas Nathoobhoy Sir, 16.

N

Nair, T. M., 12, 28.

Northbrook Lord, 12.

P

Pardah, 14.

Proud E. D., n74.

Provident fund, the necessity of in
factories, 178.

Punjab—

climate of, 2.

physical features of, 1.

population of, 3.

railways in, 1, 2.

roads in, 2.

R

Railway Union Lahore, 173, 174.

Read Margaret, n36, n94, n118.

Records—

the necessity of in factories, 114, 115.

models of, 115, 116, 117.
 Redgrave Alexander, 10, 15.
 Report of the Indian industrial commission, 96, 98, 131, 133, 185, 187, 188.
 Rest interval in factories, 20, 22, 27, 28, 31, 88.

S

'Safety first' devices—
 necessity of, 148.
 advantages of, 148.
 Saklatwala S., 14.
 Salisbury Lord, 12, 15.
 Shaftesbury, the earl of, 15, 19.
 Strikes in—
 Punjab, 165, 166, 167, 168.
 features of, 167, 168.

T

Times, London, 10, 11, 19.
 Trade boards, desirability of in Punjab, 183, 184.
 Trade unions—
 definition of, 164.
 necessity of, in India, 164.
 objects of, 172.
 Conditions for the success of, 164, 165.
 audit of the funds of, 173.
 officers of, 173.
 political objects of, 171, 172, 173.
 benefits of, 168, 169.
 Trade Union Act—
 Indian, 1926.
 genesis of, 169, 170.
 privileges conferred by, 170, 171.

V

Ventilation—
 in factories, 17, 18, 20, 21, 28, 83-87.
 in houses, 119, 120, 121, 124.

W

Wages—
 definition of, 156.
 payment of, 21, 45, 46, 47.
 differences in, 50, 51, 52.
 weekly payment of—
 bill for, 72, 73.
 case for, 71, 72, 73.
 monthly payment of—
 case for and against, 72, 73.
 Wage census, need of, 50.
 Wallace A. J., 147.
 Webb S., 164, 181.
 Welfare work—
 case for, 73, 74.
 lines of progress of, 76, 77, 78.
 in Punjab, 76.
 Welfare-worker—
 duties of, 76, 77, 78.
 Qualifications of, 79.
 Women in factories—
 and dangerous work, 28.
 hours of work of, 21, 25, 28.
 and night work, 25, 28.
 Workmen's compensation Act,
 Indian—
 genesis of, 153, 154.
 scope of, 155, 156.
 exceptions to, 155, 156, 158, 159.
 conditions of compensation, 158.
 scales of compensation, 159, 160.
 procedure under, 160.
 Workmen's Compensation Act,
 Indian—
 commissioners under, 157, 159, 160
 163.
 advantages of, 161.
 amendment of, 161.
 defects of, 162, 163.
 Worker's welfare league of India
 aims of, 189, 190.
 young person's class, creation of, 21,
 27, 28.

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Factory Labour in India

(Published by the Annamalai University)

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