

REPORT
OF THE
Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

VOLUME III.

PART C.

**(Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar
Labour Enquiry Committee by Employees
and their Organisations.)**



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METALLURGICAL.

MEMORANDUM NO. 1.

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Tata Workers' Union, Jamshedpur.

As a result of the settlement arrived at between the Tata Iron & Steel Co., Ltd., and the Tata Workers' Union, on the 4th June 1938, it was agreed before S^r. Subhas Chandra Bose, President, Indian National Congress and Hon'ble Babu Shree Krishna Sinha, Prime Minister, Government of Bihar and previously desired by the management in their letter no. L/2914/38, dated 5th/12th May 1938 (copy enclosed—Appendix 1) that the following demands of the workers be referred to the Labour Enquiry Committee. In pursuance of the same, we beg to submit this Memorandum for your consideration. These demands should, therefore, be considered as a subject matter of the above-mentioned settlement left over to be decided by the Labour Enquiry Committee. This should, therefore, be treated as special matters to be decided earlier and not deferred with matters of general nature.

REVISION OF GRADES.

Most of the jobs in the works are non-graded. As for the few graded jobs, we shall deal with them later. In the non-graded jobs, a worker's rate is fixed and he has to work for the same wages for years, although in the meantime his efficiency increases many-fold. All jobs should, therefore, be graded whereby a worker should start on the minimum rate and by periodical or annual increase rise to the maximum.

It is not desirable that a man should have to work on the same rate all along—might be till his retirement—while during these years his family encumbrances usually increase many times. Consequently it becomes very difficult for the man to maintain his family properly. The whole family remains ill-fed, ill-clothed and the children receive no education. In other words it may be said that the nation is degenerated by this system. It may be argued by the employer that in Europe and other industrially developed countries this system of "Fixed Rate for Fixed Job" has been adopted and is running on well. But then, their rates are so high in comparison with those of ours, that their workers can accumulate

sufficient money for their future provisions before they are encumbered. Besides this, they get various kinds of other supports from the State and Employers, viz., sickness insurance, unemployment dole and old age pension. With these aspects in view, we beg to demand that a graded rate for each job be introduced and that a committee consisting of the representatives of the Tata Iron & Steel Co., Ltd., Tata Workers' Union and the Government be formed to examine and fix up details of rate. This Committee shall submit their report to the Labour Enquiry Committee for their final approval within a month's time.

Besides this, there are grades in some posts in certain departments, as for instance :

1. Brick Laboratory.
2. Chemical Laboratory.
3. Some sections of Metallurgy.
4. Fuel.
5. Works Guards.
6. Clerks—both in General Office and works.
7. Stores.
8. Motor Shed.
9. Electrical Department.
10. Medical, etc.

When scrutinizing the grades of these employees, it will be found that in most cases they are quite inadequate. As for instance, clerks have to start on Rs. 35 only. It will be agreed that it is very difficult to meet one's bare expenses with such low wages in a costly place like Jamshedpur. (Attached, please find a separate Memorandum from the clerks through the Union—Appendix 2).

The Chemical Laboratory grade is too low in comparison with the responsibility and difficulties of the work. Graduates in Science are being appointed on Rs. 35 only. The Chemists of the Government Laboratory here are getting much higher wages (their grade being Rs. 150 to Rs. 400 per month) though they have to do less difficult work under less strain. Our demand for production bonus for sections of the Chemical

Laboratory, Inspection department, Physical Laboratory, etc., which are directly connected with the productive departments as the Mechanical and Electrical Staff are, was turned down on the ground that they were to look after the quality of the production rather than the quantity of it. If it be so, they should adequately be paid. Appendix 3 shows the comparative grades of Chemists here and the Chemists of other places in India.

As regards the rates of the Works Guards, Motor Shed, Main Stores and several other departments, the grades are too low.

The question of Mines requires particular attention. Those places have all through been neglected. The minimum wages there have lately been increased to annas 5 for males. Even then, the rate is much lower than the minimum rate of un-skilled labour in Jamshedpur. Similarly, rates for other jobs also are much lower than those at Jamshedpur. When the labourers applied for raising of the rates to a level, it was said that they got free quarters and the living was less expensive. It is not a fact that the cost of living is less there. If the costs of the necessities of life in Noamundi or other Mines and Jamshedpur were compared, it would be found that in most cases the Jamshedpur prices were lower. And as for the free quarters, the Company was compelled to extend this temptation to induce sufficient skilled hands to go to the most backward and unhealthy places where most of the mines are situated.

Through an incessant propaganda of the Company an impression has been created outside Jamshedpur that the Tatas pay higher wages than other firms. But if actual figures are taken, the fact will be found to be otherwise. The average wages of the workers of the Tatas are even lower than the average wages of the workers in the textile industry of India (as shown in Appendix 4).

In all countries the average wages of metallurgical workers are considerably higher than almost all other industries. We have compared the average wages of Iron and Steel Industries with those of textile in different countries (Appendix 4). Tatas' ratio with the wages of textile industry in India is the lowest.

The position may be judged in another way. Certain jobs here comparable with similar jobs of other industries do

not carry better wages—viz., (1) chemist, (2) clerks, (3) physical laboratory men; (4) fitters, *khalasies* and (5) electricals, etc.

2. GENERAL INCREASE.

• Due to the above facts, particularly due to the system of "Fixed pay for Fixed Job", most of the workers have not received any increase in their wages since the last 10 years or more. But their encumbrance has increased to a very great extent. The flourishing condition of so many credit societies of this place is a definite proof of their daily increasing encumbrance. To remove this undue and unreasonable hardship to the workers, a general increase of 20 per cent on the average, should be granted without further delay. The lower rated men should get higher percentage of increase.

It may be mentioned here that although the condition of the industry is flourishing and the production has much improved due to the increased efficiency and diligence of the workers, their wages have not increased.

3. REVISION OF LEAVE RULES.

An unusually wide difference exists in the matter of leave between the monthly and the daily-rated employees. The daily-rated men are given only 2 weeks' leave (privilege) per year of completed service; whereas the monthly-rated men get one month's leave, besides 5 days casual leave in a year. Monthly-rated men enjoy, in addition, 3 months' furlough after 7 years of completed service. This differentiation is quite artificial. If the privilege leave is given mainly for recuperation of health, it is as needful, if not more, to the daily-rated men as to the monthly-rated employees. Two weeks' leave for a worker is too low. In most cases the entire leave period is spent here in sickness, and in many cases, it does not even cover the period of one's sickness. Consequently leave without pay is very common among the daily-rated men, which can be verified from the attendance register.

There is yet another bad aspect of this inadequate leave. As the workers cannot afford to lose their pay, they try to continue their duties until they are bed-ridden. As a result, workers' health is shattered in many cases. Examination of the position reveals no basis for this differentiation of monthly-rated and daily-rated employees. So we demand that all employees, including the "Weekly", should be placed under "Monthly" category to enable them to enjoy all the benefits of a monthly-rated employee.

4. RETIRING GRATUITY RULES.

The Company grants gratuity on completion of 20 years' service at the rate of half month's wages for every year of service, not exceeding 12 months' wages on the whole. We consider this to be unreasonable. It is not possible for most of the employees to continue for 20 years in the hard and hot job of a steel works. The Calcutta Corporation, whose jobs are much lighter, grants half month's wages per year of service after the employees complete 15 years of service as gratuity. So we consider that one month's wages per year of service, after the completion of 15 years' service is quite reasonable.

We suggest the following changes also in the Gratuity rules :

- (1) Rule 3—In case of disputes, the interpretation of the rules should be left over to a Justice of the Patna High Court whose decision should be final. The Company's Agent being a party, his decisions should not be final.
- (2) Rule 7—It should be obligatory to the company to pay Gratuity when the employee fulfils the conditions and if he is not discharged for gross misconduct.
- (3) Rule 8—If any employee has earned gratuity before his pay exceeds Rs. 500, he should be considered eligible.

It was mentioned in the Rules circulated to the employees, that they would not get any gratuity if they joined any strike. The clause has, however, been omitted from the gratuity rules embodied in the "Report on the conditions affecting the Labourers of the Jamshedpur works of the Tata Iron & Steel Co., Ltd."

5. REVISION OF GENERAL PRODUCTION BONUS.

General Production Bonus is meant for those who help production directly or indirectly. But many employees coming under this category are not paid general production bonus.

The Mines and Colliery employees directly help production by working on and despatching ores and coal; but no bonus is granted to them. Their claim is as strong as that of any other employee getting this bonus.

The clerks inside the works are a part and parcel of the departments producing or helping production. When the employees of those departments get bonus, there is no reason why these clerks should not get it.

∴ The General Office clerks and Town Staff also should get this bonus, as every employee, whether inside or outside the works, more or less, helps production. It may be mentioned here that the claim of a section of the General Office clerks has already been conceded to.

General Production Bonus increases with the increase in monthly production, but the Company does not pay on any increased production over 50,000 tons. This upper restriction is quite unreasonable and should be removed.

6. REDUCTION OF HOUSE AND LAND RENT.

(i) *House Rent.*—The Company has increased the house rent abnormally. As for example, the original rent of H/6 type was Rs. 8 per month. Then, it was increased to Rs. 12 and afterwards to Rs. 15 in 1932. After the electric installation, the house rent has again been increased to Rs. 18-12-0. That is, the rent of the H/6 type has been increased by 135 per cent. The rent of the R-N Type in Bistupur was increased from Re. 1 to Rs. 2-8-0; from Rs. 1-2-0 to Rs. 1-10-0; from Rs. 1-4-0 to Rs. 2-12-0 and from Rs. 1-6-0 to Rs. 2-14-0 in 1930. These rents were afterwards reduced by 40 per cent. That is, formerly they increased the rent by about 150 per cent and then gave a flat reduction of about 40 per cent, thereby still maintaining an enhanced rent of about 110 per cent.

It might be mentioned here that these quarters are more than 25 years old and no improvements have still been made on them, in spite of the repeated requests from the Labour Organisations.

To avoid pronounced opposition, old tenants have not been subjected to enhanced rents. New occupants have to pay the higher rent. The number of quarters being abnormally inadequate and no private quarters being available, intending occupants are compelled to pay this increased rent. When an occupant changes his quarter either to a different type or the same type, he has to pay the increased rent.

The rents of the newly built houses are also fixed at a higher basis. We are not aware of the basis for fixing of rents. We asked the Management for information but we were

not supplied. So far as we know, the Company recovers the invested capital within 10 years. The following fact will illustrate. In the Mines, annual rent of the shops built by the Company is about 10 per cent of the outlay. Also the Company has completed negotiations to acquire, at valuation price, the ownership of the Club Houses built with their sanction; and they agreed to let out the same at an annual rent of 10 per cent of the valuation cost, and declined to reduce the rental in spite of requests, which conclusively shows that the basis of rent is 10 per cent of the outlay.

Coming to capital outlay, it was unnecessarily too high owing to the uneconomic policy of not inviting tenders from Building Contractors. The practice had been to distribute the construction work among local contractors annually. In 1929, suggestion for calling tenders was given by the Labour Organisation, to minimise building cost and consequent reduction of rent. But it was not accepted till Sir A. R. Dalal took charge of the Management.

We demand that the house rent of the older types be considerably reduced and the rent of new types be fixed on the basis of capital recovery in 50 years.

In this connection we may mention that the capital invested on many of the old quarters has been already recovered.

It should be noted here that the rents of the quarters of the Tinsplate and other subsidiary companies are much less than those of the Tatas (Appendix 5).

The Company has agreed recently not to increase house rents on account of electric installation in future.

Our demand, therefore, is that the recurring installation charges of the electrified quarters be abolished and also that there be no increase of rent following alterations for the purpose of sanitation, water-supply or construction of latrines.

(ii) *Land Rents*.—There are two kinds of land rents:

(1) One for the residential quarters, and

(2) the other, for the land in the Market area.

(1) The lease terms for the residential buildings are adverse to its lessee and one-sided, as a result of which, private parties or employees find no incentive for building houses. Besides, the whole area being under the Municipal and Administrative control of the Tata Iron & Steel Co., Ltd., no one can build and own a house independent of the Company's control. We feel, therefore, that if the lease terms are

favourably modified, the housing problem in the Town will be solved to a great extent. During 30 years of Company's existence, they have not built sufficient houses to meet the demand even of a fraction of the employees. They should have given alternate incentive and facility to workers to build their own cottages in the *bustees*; and condition of *bustees* should have been accordingly improved. But instead of adopting this course, the Steel Company have been increasing monthly land-rents in *bustees*, which have already been too high. There is no *pucca* or lease right in the *bustee*, occupancy being monthly; and rent has now been increased by 60 per cent.

(2) The rent and *salami* for the land in the Market Area has been gradually increased by many hundred per cent. The important plots are allotted by auction bid and the highest bidder gets the plot. As a result, a plot of 5 or 6 *kathas* of land fetches a leased *salami* as high as Rs. 10,000 and over. We should mention here that the shops built by the Company are also allotted to the highest bidders. Some of these small shop rooms were rented accordingly at Rs. 75 per month. Due to the heavy establishment cost, these shops were closed and afterwards the Company was compelled to reduce the rent. These high *salamies* and high rents are recovered from the residents of this place—the labourers, through high commodity price.

The higher cost of living at Jamshedpur is the outcome of this policy to a great extent and the living cost will not be reduced until the system is overhauled. The workers suffer, businessmen find difficulty in running their business, while the Company makes a big profit at the cost of the labourers and businessmen. The annual report to the share-holders illustrates the point. A big income in the Town Administration is shown to be derived from this source.

We think, the Company has no right to make any profit out of the town. The Government acquired the area, from the Dhalbhum State for the development of the Industry and not to help making a *Zamindari* business on profit.

Consequently we demand that land rent be reduced to a nominal sum and no *salami* be imposed; also the rents of the Company's shops be reduced, so that the cost of living is lowered. We should like to point out here that, as at present, a big share of the wages goes back to the Company in the shape of house-rent, *salami* (realised through high commodity price) and similar other items.

APPENDIX 1.

THE TATA IRON AND STEEL COMPANY, LIMITED.

GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE,

JAMSHEDPUR.

5th—12th May, 1938.

Ref. no. L/2914/38.

The Secretary,

Tata Workers' Union,
Jamshedpur.

DEAR SIR,

With reference to your letter of the 4th May, enclosing a summary of discussion at a meeting held between Professor Bari and myself on the 19th April, at the outset I may mention that the meeting was primarily called in connection with the Sheet Mill situation which was very unsatisfactory up to that date. I reviewed the whole Sheet Mill situation again, since we started operating five days a week from the 4th of April. I informed Professor Bari that, since that time, the men were working very slow and production had dropped by 50 per cent. I further stated that the terms of settlement arrived at the Directors' Bungalow between Mr. Dalal and Professor Bari, when Mr. Thadani and myself were present, were not being implemented and unless the men resumed normal working, we would be forced to consider closing down the Sheet Mill. I further stated that as orders were coming in satisfactorily, we would be prepared to operate 16 shifts a week beginning on 18th April 1938 and would depend upon the good faith of the men to carry out their duties as in normal time. I also impressed upon Professor Bari the defiant attitude of the men. After the Sheet Mill question was settled, Professor Bari wanted to discuss some other matters of a general nature. A list of general demands was submitted, a copy of which is enclosed. I informed Professor Bari that these demands should not be considered at present and that they had better wait until Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Committee had investigated the matter and issued their report. In this connection I showed Professor Bari an extract from a confidential letter which Mr. Dalal had written to me where it was stated " Any other demand that they may put forward should be left for consideration after Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Committee had

reported". However, Professor Bari urged giving some consideration to item no. 5—permanency of temporary hands. I stated that the question of privileges of temporary employees was reviewed only last September and I gave him a copy of the printed notice. Another additional copy is enclosed for your ready reference. I stated, however, that I would look into this question further.

2. Then, certain other grievances of the Bar Mill and Merchant Mill men were discussed and I promised Professor Bari that I would consider the matter and let him know what I could do.

3. I had not the slightest impression that after the meeting on the 18th April terminated, the discussion would be taken as a case of any "terms" agreed upon in connection with anything except the Sheet Mill where I agreed to the operation of the 16 shifts beginning at once. The meeting was specially meant to discuss the Sheet Mill question with Professor Bari, and although we discussed several other matters in a general way, as indicated above, I am now extremely surprised to find that this has been taken and openly announced as "terms" agreed upon in connection with other matters. Professor Bari held a meeting near the Tatanagar Station on the 18th where he made certain statements. A report of these statements was sent to me. When I received this report, I specially asked Mr. Thadani, the Deputy Commissioner, to arrange for an interview for me with Professor Bari, as I wished to discuss some of the statements made by Professor Bari in the meeting of the 18th. Unfortunately, just when I started discussing on the afternoon of the 20th a phone call was received from Mr. Price, Superintendent of Sheet Mill, that there was a *hartal* in the Sheet Mill. I sent for Mr. Price and also for Mr. Kutar and you will recall, we discussed the Sheet Mill affairs in the presence of Mr. Price and Mr. Kutar for a long time. I had to cancel an urgent meeting I had at 6-30 and as it was getting late, unfortunately, I could not discuss Professor Bari's speech with him. We promised to meet again the next day. Professor Bari went to Mosaboni early next morning and from there left for Patna.

4. In regard to the summary of discussion as a whole that you have forwarded to me, I regret to have to say that it contains many mis-statements and I give below my recollection of the discussion that took place.

5. *Sheet Mills*.—(1) When Professor Bari pressed for 17 shift operation, I stated that normal Sheet Mill operation consisted of 16 shifts only. We had operated from time to time 17 shifts when orders were very heavy but under the present circumstances 16 shift operation was more than sufficient for the amount of orders we had on hand or were likely to get in the near future.

(2) Professor Bari pressed for the starting up of no. 8 Mill which had not operated for a long time and submitted that most of the spare hands were unable to earn more than their rate of annas ten per day as there was no room for acting due to the excess of regular force men. I informed Professor Bari that no. 8 Mill could not be started immediately due to want of the required number of men. I said that most of them were on leave and unless we had the required number of men, no. 8 Mill could not work. I, however, promised to send for the men who were on leave and start no. 8 Mill as soon as men were available.

(3) As regards the complaint of junior spare hands getting preference over old hands, I promised to look into such cases if brought to my notice.

6. *Bar Mill*.—As regards Bar Mill, the statement made in your summary is not correct. What I said was that I would look into the matter of these Bar Mill men who were temporarily promoted when the 10" Mill started operation but when the 10" Mill ceased working, they reverted to their original jobs and rates. I also promised to ask Mr. Kutar to look into the question of the amount of orders on the 10" Mill and said that if conditions warranted, we would consider making these temporary relief gang men permanent relief gang men.

This is being looked into.

7. *Merchant Mill*.—The question of some men getting six and seven offs in the Merchant Mill was discussed and I promised to look into this. There was no question of increasing the rates of the lower paid workers in the Merchant Mill. Professor Bari complained of the treatment of the men by Mr. Palamkote and gave a list of men who had been threatened by Mr. Palamkote. I asked Mr. Kutar who was present there to look into the matter personally. As regards preferential treatment complained of by Professor Bari, I promised to look into the cases forwarded to me.

8. *General increase, leave, reduction of house and land rents.*—I said that matters like general increase, leave reduction of house-rent, land-rent should be left over for the present and Labour Enquiry Committee findings should be awaited. After a short discussion, Professor Bari agreed to the proposition.

9. *Gratuity.*—I explained that this matter had already been taken up on several occasions by the Labour Federation and the Agents had decided that no further revision of the gratuity scheme at the present time could be considered. Mr. Dalal had also stated that even assuming that the Tata Gratuity scheme was not as favourable as the gratuity scheme of some other Company, taking into consideration the sum total of all the privileges that the Steel Company gave to its employees, it could be safely asserted that the privileges enjoyed by our employees were very much better than those enjoyed by employees of any other Company in India. In view of this Mr. Dalal had definitely decided that he would not consider any revision of the gratuity scheme.

Revision of Bonus Schemes :

10. *Departmental Production Bonus.*—I do not remember any such discussion on the subject of production bonus. I said that production bonus was given to certain key-men in some of the departments and from time to time it was being extended, as the Management considered it necessary. I do not believe the Steel Company will ever consider extending this bonus to all employees. It is not done anywhere else in the world.

11. *Profit-Sharing Bonus.*—I forward herewith a copy of the Profit-Sharing Bonus Scheme from which it will be noticed that the bonus paid is entirely dependent upon the dividend distributed to the share-holders. It is too early to talk about the profit-sharing bonus for the year 1937-38 as the accounts have not yet been completed and the Annual General Meeting where this will be decided will be held sometime towards the end of June. I do not remember Professor Bari pressing for three months' bonus to be paid this year and I never agreed or promised to put the matter up to the Board of Directors.

12. *General Bonus.*—I do not remember Professor Bari pleading any such discussion on the subject. At Professor Bari's request, I promised to send him a schedule governing

the payment of General Production Bonus. A copy of this has already been sent to the Secretary, Tata Workers' Union. A note is, however, enclosed showing the class of employees to whom this General Production Bonus is payable.

13. *Reduction of Electrical charges.*—Professor Bari informed me that the Tinsplate Company were charging only 6 pies per unit while we were charging one anna per unit from our employees. I said I would look into the matter and advise him as to what we could do in this respect.

14. *Permanency of temporary hands.*—Professor Bari referred to the temporary hands in the operation departments. He admitted that temporary men were necessary for construction jobs and after the construction jobs were completed, the temporary hands might be dispensed with, but if the operation departments carried temporary men for a period of over a year, it meant that those temporary men were necessary to the departments and I promised to look into the whole thing.

15. *Increase in the weekly labour rates.*—I stated that last September the weekly labour had been given an increment in their rates and the wages we pay are higher than what prevail in the district. The only question brought up by Professor Bari was the question of Office Boys whose cases I promised to look into.

16. *Recognition of the Union.*—I agreed to recognise the Tata Workers' Union forthwith pending registration of the Union.

Yours truly,

THE TATA IRON & STEEL CO., LTD.,

J. J. GHANDY,

General Manager.

JJG. KVN.

Enclosure: As per list attached.

NOTICE.

1. In view of the production obtained during the first year of Tariff Protection and of the results which it is now seen can be obtained if our labour works steadily and energetically to obtain them, the Board of Directors of the Company have decided to introduce a scheme for the payment of bonus on production to Indian labour.

2. The bonus on production will be paid monthly from the month of April 1928 and thenceforward as soon as the details are settled.

3. The bonus will be paid to all men drawing less than Rs. 300 per month or Rs. 10 per day whose work contributes to the production obtained and who have been in the Company's employ for at least six months.

4. The men on the lower rates of pay will receive a higher bonus in relation to their wages than those on the higher rates.

5. The bonus will be based on the total monthly finished production from each producing unit and the works as a whole. It will be reduced if the production falls below a certain figure and increased if it rises above that figure. It must be understood that unless certain results are obtained, the Company cannot afford to make additional payments to labour and that the payments will depend upon these productions being obtained. The standard figure of production for each unit and the works as a whole will be published with the details of the scheme.

6. The total amount of bonus will be approximately Rs. 10 lakhs per annum for the production expected by the Company.

7. The General Manager will immediately work out the full details of the scheme for the payment of this bonus and these will be announced later.

8. There will be no reduction of wages in consequence of this production bonus being given.

9. The Company trust that the men will, by their zeal and hard work, recognise this direct increase in their earnings and the opportunity to still further increase to their wages by greater efficiency.

By order of the Board of Directors
of the Tata Iron & Steel Co., Ltd.,

C. A. ALEXANDER.

The 14th April 1928.

WHAT THIS MEANS.

1. It means that the Company will pay approximately five weeks' wages per year extra to employees drawing under Rs. 300 per month or Rs. 10 per day who have been in the Company's employ for at least six months and who are actively engaged in works operation, maintenance and construction, providing we obtain the tonnage of finished steel already estimated several months ago could be produced. This is subject to the statement made in paragraph 4 of the notice. This tonnage for the following two years is as follows:—

Year 1928-29	...	...	475,000
1929-30	...	...	535,000

That these tonnages are easily possible can be seen from the fact that during the past six months the total finished tonnage has averaged over 40,000 tons per month and over 38,000 tons, deducting the product obtained from imported billets; and at the same time the tonnage for February and March was reduced by at least 10 per cent due to departmental strikes. With additional facilities and additional equipment being installed, the above tonnages can easily be obtained and should be exceeded.

2. The bonus scheme will in no way interfere with the schemes of re-organisation now going on in the various departments.

3. There are many points to be settled in working out the details and introducing this scheme and in doing so the General Manager will be glad to consult with the Labour Association and receive their suggestions.

C. A. ALEXANDER,

General Manager

The 14th April 1928.

TERMS OF SETTLEMENT.

Dated the 4th June 1938.

3 STAYS.

1. The Company to give an additional half-a-month's bonus so as to bring the total bonus to three months, instead of two-and-a-half months as contemplated.

2. The question of the revision of departmental bonus, including cases of men in the Electrical and Mechanical Departments working in producing departments, to be put up for further consideration between Mr. Bose, Professor Bari and the Company within three months.

3. Electrical charges to be reduced from one anna to half anna. The Company to introduce points for electric lights to all lower rented quarters within the course of three years except for such quarters as the Company intends to demolish or to quarters supplied free of rent. The Company undertakes to introduce such points to the extent of 33 per cent in the course of this year.

4. The Company agrees to make temporary men, other than those on Construction Works with one year's continuous service, permanent.

5. The question of the extension of the General Production Bonus to all workmen to be left to be raised before Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Committee.

6. The question of the revision of the Gratuity Rules to be left to be raised before Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Committee but in the meantime, men should not be forced to retire under the Rules.

7. The Company decline to consider alteration of the basis of the profit sharing scheme from dividends declared to profits earned.

Professor Bari and the employers undertake to co-operate with each other in getting rid of turbulent elements in Jamshedpur.

A. R. DALAL,

4-6-1938.

ABDUL BARI,

4-6-1938.

GENERAL DEMANDS.

1. General Increase ... An all round increase should be given on graded scale; less for the highly-paid workers and more for the lowly paid workers.
2. Revision of Gratuity Rules. After the completion of 15 years' service, one month's pay per year should be given. And in those departments where health is much affected such as Gas Plant, Open Hearth, Duplex, Sheet Mills, etc., 12 years service should entitle to the benefit.
3. Revision of Bonus System. (A) Production bonus should be paid to all workers in equal basis including Foreman, etc. Production bonus should be paid to the Mechanical and Electrical staff also.
(B) Profit-Sharing bonus should be calculated on net profit and not on the dividend paid.
(C) General Bonus should be paid to all the staff of the Company including Clerks, Town Engineering men, *Rejas*, *Coolies*, Sweepers, Office-Boys, etc.
4. Reduction of Rent ... There should be a general reduction in the house-rent, land-rent and electrical charges.
5. Permanency of the temporary hands. All temporary hands whose service has exceeded over 3 months should be made permanent.
6. Increase of rates for the weekly labour, etc. The rates of the *Rejas* should be increased from 0-7-6 to 0-10-0, that of *Coolies* from 0-8-9 to 0-12-0, office boys' rates should be increased to 0-8-0. The sweepers and sweepresses should be given an increase. This labour should be given all the privileges enjoyed by the monthly-rated workmen.
7. Leave ... All the daily rated workmen should be given the same kind of leave like that of the monthly paid workmen.
8. Recognition of the Tata Workers' Union.

APPENDIX 2.

Memorial from the Staff of the Ministerial and Time-keeping Sections

of

The Tata Iron and Steel Co., Ltd., Jamshedpur.

Through the auspices of the Tata Workers Union, Jamshedpur.

As adopted in the General Meeting of the Clerical and Time-keeping staff held on Wednesday, the 28th of December 1938.

We, the Ministerial and Time-keeping Staff of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Ltd., beg to submit the following memorial concerning our grievances.

2. *Preamble.*—This Section of the Steel Company's organisation, though much devoted and conscientious in the discharge of their duties and forms a very important structure in the Company's administration, has been unfortunately the neglected child all this while, receiving only a step-motherly treatment from the authorities that be, radically different from what is meted out to their other so-called technical or practical workers.

3. Ways and means for the amelioration of the conditions and to have a better status recognised, have been engaging our very anxious moments from as far back as 1922. Though some attempts were made by the Steel Company, in the troublous days of 1928-29 to bring about a change in the conditions, it has worsened the position instead of brightening it.

4. Re-organisations that were passed for the other sections of the workmen staff along with that of the clerical in 1928-29, were since subject to several revisions and were much improved upon; but the clerical re-organisation has been left in the lurch.

5. An exhaustive and carefully drawn up memorial was presented to the Management in July 1930, sponsored by no less a person than Sri Jut Subhas Chandra Bose, who was the President of the Labour Association then, for a review. And at the specific instance of the Management, a delegation consisting of representatives from among us waited on the General Manager in September 1930, led by Mr. W. V. R. Naidu, who was then the Secretary of the Labour Association; and they had prolonged deliberations with the chosen officers of the Steel Company. *We were then given hopes that the points submitted, would have their careful and very early consideration.* Perhaps, either due to the depressed times that followed

subsequently, or due to lack of attention to these "step-motherly" children of the Steel Company, nothing has come out so far.

6. Lately, there were several individual and collective representations made to the Management of the Steel Company in this regard with no better result.

7. The whole question was, however, recently reviewed in several meetings of the clerical unit of the Steel Company, in the light of numerous representations received and to bring the Company's clerical organisation in line with what obtains in all modern industrial institutions and consistent with the responsibilities it involves, we submit this case for consideration. In doing so, we can do no better than reiterate below from the printed memorial, dated the 22nd July 1930, *which was framed after a very careful and mature consideration of the conditions obtaining here, compared with elsewhere and which forms as Appendix "A" to the present one.*

8. At the outset, it will not be out of place to recall that, at a time when the Company passed through very critical times, owing to trade depression, we stood by the Company and sufficiently helped it to tide over the difficulty, by even refraining from drawing upon its resources and pressing for grade increments; and we are sure that the Management of the Company is well aware of our co-operation in those days. We naturally felt, at the time, that our response would be adequately rewarded in better times and our status in the organization given better recognition.

9. The Company have, however, successfully passed over the cloud of depression which hovered over its horizon in 1930—33, and have entered now into prosperous times and it cannot be gainsaid that the present position of the Company is in no small measure, due to the *closest co-operation* and the *most conscientious endeavours* that have been and are still being put forward by the clerical staff *so devotedly.*

10. The recent revision of grades sanctioned to the Supervisory Staff in several departments of the Steel Company as well as for some of the offices for the senior cadre (as in the Accounts Department), is an indication that the Management has since thought fit to review their previous decision in regard to the fixation of grades. And the *clerical staff of the Sales Department* of the Steel Company, *though contributing much less than what their brother clerks at Jamshedpur do under more exacting conditions, have been also given a better status than what it obtains here.*

11. *Grades.*—The grades as fixed in 1929, for the clerical section, as already pointed out in the foregoing, due perhaps to very tense labour situation then prevailed, were framed without bestowing sufficient consideration to the individual merits or the standard of living in Jamshedpur in comparison with that in other cities, much less to what it obtains for the ministerial staff in other establishments, such as Railways, Corporations or other Government offices. (A chart showing the costliness of Jamshedpur as compared to other places, taken from statistics published by the Government, is enclosed to the present memorial as Appendix " B " and " B-1 ".) Besides, no attention was paid then to the nature of work entrusted to a clerk nor to the responsibility bestowed on each; but the *grade was given to individuals merely basing it on the salary* which any particular individual might be *drawing at the time*, whatever be the *nature of his work* or *his seniority in the organization* as a whole. And this has also been admitted by even responsible officers of the Steel Company itself in some references which to quote only a few are given in Appendix " C " to this memorial.

12. Furthermore, an invidious distinction was made then in differentiating clerks into junior clerks and clerks: and time-keepers as junior and senior time-keepers, although in the actual discharge of duties (and we are sure that every Section Head will testify to this), that there is absolutely no warrant for such a distinction.

13. The clerical scheme which rules now, was more than once expressed by the Management in 1929-30, to be only as experimental measure; but in spite of several representations having been made since, it has not been reviewed.

14. This has resulted now in more than 50 *per cent of the staff* in the lower categories of the clerical organization *having been blocked* on the small maximums pertaining to their respective grades *in spite of their several years of service*; and owing to disproportionate allotment of seats and even the subsequent abolition of quite a few posts in the higher cadre, it has also resulted in *several having no scope* for move-ups *unless in a few privileged offices*.

15. The new grades embodied in the aforesaid memorial, dated the 22nd July 1930, and which are quoted below for ready reference, were drafted out, after mature consideration and thought in line with other organizations.

16. *Present grades* (as in force from 1929):—

(A) CLERICAL SECTION.

Junior clerk—Rs. 35—3—50	...
Clerk—Rs. 55—4—75	...
Senior clerk—Rs. 80—5—100	...
Typist—Rs. 55—4—75	...
Steno.-typist—Rs. 70—4—90	...
Chief Clerk "A"—Rs. 110—5—130.	
Chief Clerk "B"—Rs. 120—5—160.	
Chief Clerk "C"—Rs. 150—10—200.	

Very short span in each category. No particular limitation of bar from one grade to the other. So much so, quite a lot have been blocked at the maximum for several years. Other shortcomings are enumerated elsewhere under paragraphs 11, 12, 14 and 19.

(B) TIME-KEEPING SECTION.

- (i) Time-keeper "A"—Rs. 35—3—50.
- (ii) Time-keeper "B"—Rs. 55—4—75.
- (iii) Assistant Head Time-keeper "A"—Rs. 55—4—75.
- (iv) Assistant Head Time-keeper "B"—Rs. 80—5—100.
- (v) Head Time-keeper "A"—Rs. 80—5—100.
- (vi) Head Time-keeper "B"—Rs. 110—5—130.

Similar shortcomings as under (a) above. Categories are (ii) and (iii) and nos. (iv) and (v) though carrying different responsibilities, have same grades of salaries.

Proposed Grades (as submitted in 1930 and being re-affirmed here):—

Clerks—Rs. 40—5—60—10—100
Typists—Rs. 55—5—60—10—100*
Stenographers—Rs. 75—10—175
Senior Clerks—Rs. 110—10—150
Chief Clerks "A"—Rs. 160—10—200.
Chief Clerks "B"—Rs. 210—10—250.
Comptometer Operators.†
Time-keepers—Rs. 40—5—60—10—100.
Senior Time-keepers—Rs. 110—10—150.
Head Time-keepers—Rs. 160—10—200.

*Card punchers should be classed with typists.

†Since the Comptometer operators carry at present the same grade as Stenographers, they should be treated equally in the proposed revision, and all machine operators brought in the same line.

- (a) A clerk after reaching the maximum of Rs. 100, after a bar of two years be automatically promoted to Senior clerk's grade.
- (b) Typist (if he can handle clerk's work) after reaching the maximum of Rs. 100 after a bar of two years, be automatically promoted to senior clerk's grade.
- (c) Time-keeper after reaching the maximum of Rs. 100 after a bar of two years be automatically promoted as a Senior Time-keeper.
- (d) In-charge of Godowns should not be fixed in a lesser grade than that of a senior clerk.
- (e) A clerk, who already has put in a service of four years, be fixed at a rate not less than Rs. 60 per month.
- (f) A clerk, who has already put in a service of ten years, be fixed at a rate of not less than Rs. 75 per month.
- (g) Those that are already in service getting less than their grades of pay be at once raised to the starting rate of the grade herein mentioned.
- (h) Designations should be fixed according to the nature of work each is doing.
- (i) Tahsildars of Land Department be treated as outdoor clerks and fixed in the grades mentioned.

17. *General Production Bonus.*—We presume the principles on which the General Production Bonus is distributed to the Staff do not contemplate exclusion of any section, whether physical or mental workers, who contribute though indirectly, to the increased output, shipments, sales, etc. In these operations, the part that the ministerial staff play, cannot be lightly set aside. The *several foremen* and other officers, who are considered to be responsible for the production *cannot, we feel, be able to do so without our active co-operation.*

18. It is an *anomaly that a production clerk* who merely records production figures in a few administrative offices and *a time-keeper* who merely checks attendance or *a store clerk* who simply issues stores, *should get the bonus* although they are *not physically concerned in the production and the vast*

majority of other clerks who either directly or indirectly assist in the operations, *should be excluded* from the benefits. As regards Departmental Bonus or Shipping Bonus, wherever it obtains, a clerk, though at the desk, virtually contributes to the production or shipment in a more substantial measure than what a practical worker could otherwise achieve. It is, therefore, only legitimate that he submits his humble claim *for a little share in the achievements effected by his superior exertions.*

19. *Promotions.*—Though promotion, on the basis of seniority, still obtains in a few offices, not because of any high technical order, the Steel Company's Management have adopted for a few other departments a different principle of advertising, departmentally, posts that fall vacant. We are sorry to remark that the *underlying principle* involved even in this procedure, viz., of affording chances of promotions to the clerks according to their merits and/or seniority, *is very often overlooked.* Further, in effect this procedure is rendered nugatory by selecting by direct recruitment ex-railway employees, passed technical students and even outsiders to fill the higher posts that seldom fall vacant and which can be ably filled in by senior members of the existing clerical staff. We may be permitted to state here, in brief the way in which this procedure is defeated by the respective departments, when advertising for the posts.

- (a) When clerks are required, a knowledge of type-writing is insisted upon.
- (b) When typists and senior clerks are wanted, a knowledge of stenography and accountancy is mentioned.
- (c) When chief clerks are required, proficiency in type-writing and shorthand is insisted upon notwithstanding the fact that there may be stenographers and typists already in that particular organization.
- (d) A clerk working in one department, if he succeeds in getting a chance in any other department, in spite of the restrictions mentioned in the advertisements, he is put to uncalled-for tests and is, curiously enough, expected to pick up work on the very day he joins the post.

20. We, therefore, suggest the following :—

- (a) *If a wholesale centralisation of the clerical staff is not possible, at least in departments where work done by the clerks is of a similar nature and where such departments can be constituted into groups or units, carrying uniform grades, consolidated lists of the ministerial staff in the said units be made out. Whenever vacancies occur in any of the departments in that particular group or unit, the first man in the seniority list be automatically promoted, probationary period of a month or two being fixed if necessary and confirmed after giving him a fair chance. This procedure is being successfully adopted in all Government and Railway offices and there is no reason why it should not be equally successful here. But such units, if deemed absolutely necessary, should be as few as possible and should carry more or less equal force and grades applying uniformly in all the Steel Company's offices here or outside.*
- (b) To enable the clerks in the respective departments constituting a unit or a group to get acquainted with the work of that particular group or unit, *proper manuals be drawn up outlining the work and the procedure that relates to such groups so that a uniformity may obtain and the staff not confused by the hundreds of circulars that are in the files from the commencement of the Company's operation up to the present day. Every modern office elsewhere, has such an office manual and it is very long overdue for the Steel Company, to have one such.*
- (c) The *higher positions in the ministerial cadre in any Unit be not filled up by direct recruitment without giving sufficient chances to those who are in the seniority lists in the clerical ranks as a whole.*
- (d) The promotions, in whichever units, be uniform all through and *not as at present somewhere 10 per cent of the salaries every year (which is even out of proportion to the present grades for "A",*

“ B ” and “ C ” grade chief clerks), *as against no increment* for several years together in other departments.

21. *Higher Grade Allowance.*—According to the rules which were in force until recently, higher grade allowance used to be given to persons who acted in such grades for periods of 14 days and over. Under the revised rules, the Supervisory staff (Foremen, etc.) and clerks have been placed on the same footing. Yet, though the foreman on daily rate, secures higher grade allowance if he acts for periods of less than 14 days or even a day for the matter of that, a clerk who is placed in the same category is precluded from the benefits of higher grade allowance unless he acts for one full month. In view of the recent increase in work in every office of the Steel Company, and the very limited staff that obtains, it will not be improper if we suggest that the minimum period required for a clerk to secure the benefits of higher grade allowance, be reduced to 14 days as formerly.

22. *Working Hours.*—The clerical staff all over, is never called upon to work for more than six hours *without jeopardising their mental efficiency.* We, therefore, naturally find that in all Government concerns, Railways and even industrial firms, the clerks have their working hours from either 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. or 10-30 A.M. to 5 P.M. with half an hour interval in between 1 and 2 or 1-30 to 2 P.M., as the case may be. We suggest that hours of work for the clerks in this Steel Company be also regulated in line with those obtaining elsewhere. If it is considered necessary that some of us should work differently to suit particular conditions, such of the staff may be given timings, say from 8 A.M. to 11 A.M. and 2 P.M. to 5 P.M.

23. *Holidays.*—We need hardly stress on this point as it is an accepted policy in all industrial institutions to grant half a day “ off ” on Saturdays and complete holidays on Sundays, besides all these holidays falling under the Negotiable Instruments Act; and this concession has already been extended to the clerical staff in the Sales Department. But, being alive to our responsibilities in a concern of this magnitude and operations, it may be taken as unjustified if we make a general request for the grant of all the holidays under the Negotiable Instruments Act. But we feel that, besides giving us uniformly half a day on Saturdays and full day on Sundays, holidays be given on occasions like Xmas, New Year’s day, Id,

Durga Pujah, etc. And where for any practical reasons, such is not possible in any few particular departments such staff be given compensatory leave on any other week-day following.

24. *Casual Leave*.—We are, at present, entitled to only five days casual leave. This is inadequate compared to the conditions of work here and also to the number of days granted to those similarly placed in other concerns. In consideration of the above and the fact that we are practically foregoing the holidays falling under the Negotiable Instruments Act, we would request to be allowed fifteen days casual leave instead of five days as at present.

25. *Sick Leave*.—Whenever any member of the clerical staff falls unfortunately ill, the grant of leave to him becomes an absolute necessity and it has been recognised elsewhere in other concerns as separate from other leave. We submit, therefore, our case for a similar privilege, working, as we do, under particularly trying conditions.

26. *General*.—In order that the Steel Company may be enabled to make satisfactory arrangements in leave vacancies, it is suggested that a relieving staff be attached to every unit or group of departments consistent with its demands. At present, no such relief facility obtains in casual vacancies; and in longer periods, even if relief is given, from the nature of their being fresh from school, they are not at all helpful, so much so that the existing remaining staff have to shoulder all the work.

27. The shortage of houses in Jamshedpur is a recognised fact. We realise that the Steel Company is doing its utmost in solving this difficulty. But the present classification scheme in the matter of allotment of quarters, put the clerical staff in a very unfavourable position in view of their low status. Even if one puts in any number of years' service, by reason of his comparatively low salary, he *does not get a decent footing in the classification ladder*. It is, therefore, suggested that the *classification* in respect of claim for a quarter *for the clerical staff be more liberal*.

28. The high revised rental that prevails for the Company's quarters for a decent house is also another factor which we submit for serious consideration.

29. While Check Houses (for the Time-Keeping Staff) and Shop Offices in several departments have been improved since our memorial, dated 1930, there are several more with

corrugated-sheet roofing which offers very uncomfortable place to work at, especially in summer months. We submit that these be all remodelled on the same lines as early as possible.

30. Another important point which we submit for immediate attention is the *proper re-survey and right apportionment of clerical staff* in each department consistent with the increased work and also *the proportion of senior to junior hands* which, by the way, is most disparing in a few offices, and the *whole clerical organisation be kept under one Controlling Authority to administer uniformly* to all the sections under its control.

31. Though the conditions of work in the Steel Company *are decidedly more strenuous* than in a Railway or Corporation office, we enclose herewith in the form of Appendix "D" and "D-I" the service privileges obtaining in Bengal Nagpur Railway and the Calcutta Corporation for the clerical staff which *are much superior to even* what it obtains at present in the Steel Company.

32. In conclusion, believing as we do in appeals and constitutional agitations, we pray that our case *which already has undergone serious default*, and which as a result, is giving us all grave concern, *be kindly given early consideration and redress.*

JAMSHEDPUR :

The 28th December 1938.

APPENDIX " A " .

Memorial of Grievances of clerks of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Ltd., Jamshedpur.

J. L. KEENAN, Esq.,

General Manager, Messrs. Tata Iron and Steel Co., Ltd.,
Jamshedpur.

Through The Labour Association.

Dear Sir,

We, the Clerks of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Ltd., beg to submit the following representation with the request that you will be pleased to consider the same favourably and thereby redress our grievances which are of a long standing nature. Majority of us are serving in this Company from a long period and have spent the best part of our lives in the service and development of this Company. When we joined this Company we trusted that our conditions of life would be improved by the increased years in the life and prosperity of the Company. But the same hopes were in vain. During the time of last re-organization we hoped that our long-standing expectation would be fulfilled by way of sanctioning a suitable grade in consideration of the high standard of living of this place and the status of this Company and in comparison to the scales existing in other concerns. These hopes also dwindled at the notification of the grading scheme that was introduced in the year 1929. Then we immediately put in our protest to the Management through the President of the Labour Association to the effect that the grades that were sanctioned were unsatisfactory. We were assured that the said grades had been fixed as an experimental measure and they were subject to revision after a year. Now it is more than a year but no improvement in the original scheme has yet been announced. We, therefore, consider that we should move your goodself to remind you of your assurance mentioned above with the hope to the betterment of our lot. We beg to reiterate that the present scales of pay and grades are unsatisfactory and inadequate and not compensatory to the work we are performing individually. At the last re-organisation scheme a number of senior as well as competent hands were thrown in lower grades and juniors and less competent men superseded by the favour

of some of the immediate officials concerned. Several of us submitted separate representations to secure justice over these supersession cases but we failed to get any redress. We, therefore, assembled ourselves in a meeting specially called for the clerical staff under the auspices of the Labour Association and appointed a Committee to investigate the conditions and scales of pay in vogue in other industries and Government Department and to form a scheme suitable to this place for the consideration of the Management. This Committee prepared a report on 2nd February, 1929, which was confirmed at this year's clerical meeting, dated the 22nd July, 1930. We reproduce below the report of the Clerks' Committee regarding time-scales suggested for the commendation of the Company. We may mention that these scales are of a minimum standard in comparison with the scales existing in other concerns of India and also in consideration of the high cost of living of this place (as admitted by the Bihar and Orissa Government in their recent reports) and also in consideration of the fact that the Government and Railway employees here are given special allowance for this place to meet the high cost of living. We, therefore, humbly pray that the Company will be gracious enough to sanction the said scales with effect from this financial year.

Clerks—Rs. 40—5—60—10—100.

Typists—Rs. 55—5—60—10—100.

Stenographers—75—10—175.

Senior Clerks—Rs. 110—10—150.

Chief clerks (A)—Rs. 160—10—200.

Chief clerks (B)—Rs. 210—10—250.

Comptometer Operators—Rs. 60—6—120.

Time-keepers—Rs. 40—5—60—10—100.

Senior Time-keepers—Rs. 110—10—150.

Head Time-keepers—Rs. 160—10—200.

Clerks after reaching the maximum of Rs. 100 after a bar of two years be automatically promoted to Senior Clerk's grade.

Typists (if can handle Clerk's work) after reaching the maximum of Rs. 100 after a bar of two years be automatically promoted to Senior Clerk's Grade.

Time-keepers after reaching the maximum of Rs. 100 after a bar of two years be automatically promoted to Senior Time-keepers.

Grades of Sectional Heads of General Offices and personal Assistants of worksite offices be left to the discretion of the Management but when a vacancy occurs Chief Clerks should have the chance.

In-charge of Godown should not be fixed in a lesser grade than that of Senior Clerk.

A Clerk who already puts in a service of four years be fixed at a rate not less than Rs. 60 per month.

A Clerk who has already put in a service of ten years be fixed at a rate not less than Rs. 75 per month.

Those that are already in service getting less than their grades of pay be at once raised to the starting rate of the grade herein mentioned with effect from 1st April 1930.

Designations should be fixed according to the nature of work.

Tahsildars of Land Department be treated as outdoor clerks and fixed in the grades mentioned.

Apart from the grades and scales of pay we have few more grievances of important nature which we produce below for your favourable consideration.

Working Hours.—The present working hours in General Shift (from 7 A.M. to 11-30 A.M. and 1-30 to 5 P.M.) for the Clerks are unsuitable to their convenience as well as not paying to the Company for the reasons mentioned below:—

Clerks are otherwise called as Ministerial staff. This ministerial staff is more employed in Government, Banks, Railways, Corporations and Big Firms. In such concerns always they work not more than six to seven hours a day and that too at a stretch, i.e., generally they start their work from 10 to 11 in the morning and work up to 4 to 5 in the evening. This privilege is given to them as they cannot get sufficient time at their disposal to attend to their domestic affairs. As mental workers we should not be expected to work more than six hours a day. Even the Sales office at Calcutta is having this privilege. Taking into consideration the extremes in all the three seasons here, it is only reasonable that although we are not given more

concessions, we should at least be brought in line with those of Government, Banks, etc., in this respect. The fact that these Clerks are provided with quarters in this scattered town at such long distances from the places where they are working and consequent trouble experienced by them in going to works twice and returning back twice with an inadequate recess of two hours under the scorching sun in summer and heavy rains in monsoons cannot be lost sight of. We can assure that much more work can be outturned in continuous shift than in break shift with two hours intervals. This advantage has been recognised by efficient officers.

We, therefore, suggest that the working hours be altered to a general shift from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. with an interval of half an hour for tiffin sometime convenient between 12 and 2.

Sundays and Government Public Holidays.—It is a well-established practice in many concerns to allow complete holidays on Sundays and other Government holidays and two hours less work on Saturdays. We do not think it much necessary to elaborate this item as the reasons are best known to the authorities. Although we do not claim for all the days allowed by the Government, we can perhaps fairly claim at least those that would come under the Negotiable Instruments Act, as are allowed by such Trading concerns like the Banks, etc. As for Sunday work, clerks in worksite are still worse off on account of their coming regularly on Sundays and sometimes alternately, in spite of the various circulars issued by the Management. Even at present there is practice in one of the Departments where this privilege is well recognised and those attending on Sundays and working up to 11-30 A.M. get full attendance and also a day's special leave which can be accumulated and availed of at the convenience of the officer-in-charge. The fact that this privilege is allowed, is quite enough to prove that the Management have recognised this privilege and hence we request that this be extended to the Departments where there is no such practice.

Acting Allowance.—The system of allowing acting allowance to lower grade Clerks in place of higher grade Clerks is in practice in majority of the worksite offices. But in some cases, although the management's ruling is quite clear and definite, difficulty is experienced by employees to get the minimum of the grade of the place where he is allowed to act. In General Offices and Time-keeping Department there is no practice of granting acting allowance.

Further, the minimum period of fourteen days which has been fixed is too high and therefore we pray that the system of granting allowance should be enforced for all the Departmental clerks including General Offices and the period qualifying for acting allowance should be a minimum of seven days and not fourteen days and chances always should be given to the next man in position.

Outdoor Clerks should get allowances for even a day as at present.

Promotions.—This is another important item which requires careful consideration in the interest of both the employees and the Steel Company as the defects in this respect are the root causes of discontent.

The practice in vogue in respect of granting promotions at present is as follows:—

If a higher rated post falls vacant in a big office containing staff of over five men, chance is always given to one of those of that office irrespective of whether he has long service or not because he would naturally suit to the job on account of his working in the same office. This practice has resulted in short service men getting promotions very often, while there are people working in other offices, other than the office where the post falls vacant, though they have put in longer service than those claiming promotions, their claims for such posts, if applied for, are being rejected on the ground that they are strangers to the nature of work, as they would naturally be, on account of their not having a chance to have themselves trained to suit such positions.

Further, most of the Clerks are given certain work which they have to carry on, without a change throughout their full period of service. As for instance, Production Clerks, Time-keepers, Establishment Clerks, Typists, and some Clerks in Accounts Department, etc. They should have a change. This principle of having a change was recognised by employers like Government, Railways, etc., and they transfer their staff often not only to give a change to their staff but with the idea of training their staff also, to suit themselves to different natures of work and thereby tending to efficient organization.

If the Management here also would try to put such practice of training into effect, surely the genuine grievances of old and senior employees could be easily redressed by considering their

claims to higher positions. The nature of work here for Clerks is absolutely similar to that of Railway Workshops and Head Office Clerks as well as that of other industrial concerns such as every department requires a Receiving and Despatching Clerk, an Establishment Clerk, Works Order Clerk, Filing Clerk, Production Clerk (Mills, B. Furnace, Open Hearth, Duplex Plant, and Coke Ovens) and a Typist, Departments of similar nature be grouped into divisions. Clerks there be given chances to work in different jobs, seniority lists be made out, according to service and merit of the men and chances of promotions be given according to seniority lists.

Employment of relieving staff is also of importance in this connection to suit the position of Clerks in the works whenever vacancy occurs or whenever a permanent incumbent has to proceed on leave.

Increments.—The recent ruling issued by the Management that number of days absent or on leave without pay would not be counted as service for qualifying increment be kindly withdrawn.

Further, parties concerned in promotions, transfer, change of designation and increments be notified in writing.

Gratuity and Old Age Pension.—In view of the fact that most of us have put in long service on little earnings and could make no provision we request definite schemes for Gratuity and Old Age Pension be introduced immediately.

Daily-Rated Clerks.—The Management, since the introduction of giving General Production bonus have started changing designations of the clerks concerned with production and entitled to bonus and putting them on daily rate (standard) depriving them of the grades recently introduced as per Clerical scheme. It was not fair on the part of the Management to withdraw the existing privileges while recognising their bonafide for general production bonus. Recent changes of Main Stores staff, Departmental Time Checkers (who are in no way different from Time-keepers of General Time Office) are clear proofs of this. Therefore, it is requested that all those whose work is of clerical nature should be graded and those concerned with production should have the privilege of drawing general production bonus.

Re-Survey of Offices.—It is not uncommon in many of the offices that the existing staff is finding it very difficult to cope

up with the daily routine work efficiently on account of various rulings issued by the Management daily and consequent increase in work. This can be proved from the fact that most of the worksite offices are being additionally manned by the workshop staff to assist the permanent Clerks. This evidently decreases the efficiency of the office. It is, therefore, suggested that some responsible officer with some representative of the Labour Association be deputed for the work of making a close study of the office and fixing up staff according to the work so that the Clerks there may not be put to overwork.

Overtime Bonus.—In several of the offices, Clerks are made to work overtime exceeding the ordinary limits allowed in the Factory Act but they are not given bonus as the Clerks do not come under the Factory Act. This is not just. The Management are urged to give the staff who work overtime the benefit of overtime bonus. Otherwise the clerks should not be made to work such overtime and extra staff be employed to meet the pressure of work.

General Production Bonus.—The General Production bonus being a profit sharing scheme should be extended to all.

Leave.—(a) *Casual Leave.*—Casual leave is generally allowed in other industrial concerns including Government Departments up to 15 days in a year whereas we get only 5 days. Therefore, we request that we should also get 15 days a year or at least 14 days as allowed in the Bengal-Nagpur Railway.

(b) *Sick Leave.*—Sick leave is generally allowed on half pay in other concerns including Government Departments and Railways.

Same privilege be extended to the Clerical staff.

(c) *Availability of Leave.*—Though the Company has provided certain provisions for privilege and casual leave still a large number of employees do not get the same at the time of necessity for want of sufficient relieving staff. We, therefore, suggest that 5 per cent relieving staff be maintained as a whole to work in place of those who have to be on leave, etc.

Grievances of Time-keepers and Outdoor Clerks.—The revision of scales of pay for time-keepers have already been embodied in our proposals along with the scales of pay suggested for Clerical staff. We mention here some grievances which need early redress.

Off days.—The Time-keepers and outdoor Clerks have to work full 365 days in a year and do not get any rest as given to some clerical staff of other departments.

Availability of Casual Leave.—Although the Company has provided the privilege of casual leave, no opportunity of availing the same is given as their work is not being managed without overtime in place of an absentee.

Supply of water-proof and winter coats.—These staffs particularly have to expose themselves to the inclemencies of weather such as severe cold and rain while discharging their duties and as such it is necessary that they should be provided with rain and winter coats.

Protection of Check Houses and Shop Offices from severe heat, wind, rain and cold weather.—The Check Houses and Shop Offices being built of galvanised sheets, the staffs are feeling much inconvenience due to the extreme heat in summer, severe cold in winter and wind and rain in rainy weather. As such it is necessary for the Management to rebuild the Check-Houses by raising permanent structures on improved conditions instead of the present dilapidated temporary structures of corrugated sheets which are not desirable both in the interest of employees and employers. These staffs are working in isolated places and responsible duties of maintaining attendance of the staff are entrusted to them.

Further, the Time-keepers having to deal with mobs of workers, they need certain protection. We suggest that one Watch Guard and telephone connection be provided for each Check House to meet these exigencies.

Re-starting of the Commercial Night School.—The provision of a good Commercial School is a necessity in this big town where the Steel Company employs as many as 1,000 clerical workers. We request, therefore, that a first class Commercial School having classes daily at night and charging nominal fees be conducted.

Allotment of Quarters.—The salaries of Clerks being low the comparative standard for allotment of quarters as against the employees in general should be lowered in their cases.

In conclusion we fervently hope that the Management will be pleased to discuss these matters with our accredited representatives of the Labour Association and dispose off the items sympathetically.

For which act of kindness we shall ever remain most grateful and pray for the prosperity of the Company.

We beg to remain,

Dear Sir,

Your most humble memorialists,

THE TISCO CLERKS, TIME-KEEPERS, ETC.

JAMSHEDPUR :

22nd July, 1930.

APPENDIX " B ".
 AN EXTRACT FROM " INDIAN FINANCE " DATED 15TH JANUARY 1938.
 Cost of living (India).

Centre.	Base year.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	January.	February.	March.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Bombay	1937-38	1914	104	106	107*	108*	108*	108*	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	100	100	101	101	102	103	104	103	104	104	104
Ahmedabad	1937-38	1927	75	76	77	76	77	76	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	69	69	71	71	72	72	72	73	74	74	73
Bhopalpur	1937-39	1923	73	73	73	73	73	71	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	68	71	70	70	71	74	74	74	70	73	72
Nagpur	1937-39	1927	63	62	63	65	65	66	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	58	58	58	59	59	60	58	60	61	61	60
Jubbulpore	1937-38	1914	59	60	63	63	63	60	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	53	54	55	57	60	58	58	59	61	61	59
Patna	1937-38	1914	97	101	103	105	106	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	105	99	99	99	104	99	96	95	99	101	98
Muzaffarpur	1937-38	1914	95	95	96	95	98	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	83	93	94	95	95	98	100	95	90	95	94
Monghyr	1937-38	1914	98	100	100	101	102	98	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	100	103	103	104	103	102	104	104	98	98	99
Jamshedpur	1937-38	1914	100	104	105	106	107	106	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	102	109	108	110	109	109	109	118	105	104	103
Jharia	1937-38	1914	97	100	101	102	104	102	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	100	103	104	103	111	110	109	106	97	95	99
Ranchi	1937-39	1914	85	87	90	93	89	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1936-37	...	86	91	93	96	90	95	89	86	88	88	88

APPENDIX " B-I ".

ADVANCE ", dated Sunday, 3rd July, 1938.
LIVING COST AT JAMSHEDPUR.

PATNA, JULY 1.

According to the figures collected by the Department of Industries, Bihar, Ranchi continued to be the cheapest centre for a workman to live in, while JAMSHEDPUR CONTINUED TO BE THE DEAREST.

During the month, the cost of living *showed a rise* of 1 point each at Patna and Ranchi and fall of 2 points at Monghyr and 1 *point at Jamshedpur* while it remained stationary at Muzaffarpur and Jharia.

The percentage of fall below the pre-war normal period was 17 at Ranchi, 11 at Muzaffarpur, 6 at Monghyr, 3 at Jharia, 2 at Patna and 1 AT JAMSHEDPUR.

APPENDIX "C".

(1)

*Extract from letter no. PVT/42, dated the 25th April 1931,
from the Controller of Accounts, addressed to the General
Manager, Messrs. The Tata Iron and Steel Company, Ltd.*

"

You are already aware of my views on the grade scheme which I have briefly put down in the note forwarded to Sir P. Ginawala. Unfortunately, to my mind the grade scheme was formed without any detailed consideration of the disadvantages to the Company, and the result is that you will always be bothered with applications of this nature. Grouping of certain individuals into various grades *was not done according to the merits of the individuals*, but the grading was done according to the rate of salary which the employees were drawing at the time; thus an individual who was drawing say Rs. 45 was put into the grade of Rs. 35—3—50. To point out extreme cases, individuals, drawing Rs. 50 were included in the grade of Rs. 35—3—50 as the Company at the time could not afford to pay a large amount by way of increments and could not therefore put some of these men in the higher grade of Rs. 55—4—75."

(2)

Similar comments were also made by other officers in the following references:—

(a) GSL//662, dated 25-3-30. G.S./G.M.

(b) 2473/41, dated 3-8-31, G.M./Bombay Office.

APPENDIX " D ".

Conditions of service for clerks as in the Calcutta Corporation.

(As obtained from the Employees' Association, Calcutta.)

Salary.—Starting salary of a clerk Rs. 40 p. m. After one gets through the Departmental Examination, he gets Rs. 50 and goes up to Rs. 150 by annual increments.

Leave.—**PRIVILEGE LEAVE:** 1 month which can be accumulated up to 4 months.

MEDICAL LEAVE: 2 kinds (1 with 1/2 pay and the other with 1/4 pay) to the extent of 2 years.

CASUAL LEAVE: 10 days in a year, not cumulative.

HOLIDAYS: As under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

COMPENSATORY LEAVE: given where any member is required to work on holidays or Sundays.

PROVIDENT FUND: 1 month's salary in a year deducted from the salaries and an equivalent amount contributed by the Corporation. After completion of 5 years' service one is entitled to the full benefit of the fund even on dismissal or on ground of insubordination unless he is dismissed on the ground of dishonesty, embezzlement, etc.

GRATUITY: 1/2 a month's salary for each year of service on the completion of 15 years' continuous service.

WORKING HOURS: 10-30 A.M. to 5 P.M. with an interval of half an hour for tiffin. Attached to the Corporation office there is a tiffin room, well equipped with furniture, utensils, lights and fans, etc., at the cost of the Corporation.

GENERAL: The Corporation Employees' Association has been given a well-equipped room for its office, and the Corporation gives an annual grant of Rs. 650 for the upkeep of the library of the Employees' Association.

The Corporation has also given Rs. 5,000 to the Association for building sanatorium at Madhupur and Deoghar for the use of the staff requiring change of climate, or taking health resort. A nominal sum of Rs. 5 is taken from those of the staff who take to such resort, simply for the maintenance of the sanatorium.

A Death Benefit Fund with two classes of membership with a subscription of Re. 1-2-0 and Rs. 2-4-0 respectively and with Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 guaranteed for the respective classes of membership, is also functioning.

(The salary and grade given in the foregoing are only for the junior members of the staff who evidently carry one designation as " clerks ".)

APPENDIX " D-I "

Grades of the different categories of the Ministerial Staff in the Bengal Nagpur Railway offices.

(As obtained from the Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union.)

A-B.	Rs. 33—4—65	} With a bar at Rs. 65 for two years.
	70—4—90	
C.	95—5—120	
D.	130—10—170	
E.	180—10—220	
E. Spl.	230—10—300	

(Other service conditions, though not specifically given in the communication received, like Casual Leave, Festival Leave, Sick Leave, etc., are more or less in line with what it obtains in the Calcutta Corporation—See Appendix " D ").

APPENDIX 3.

Comparative list of grades in different Laboratories.

	Rs.
Tata Chemical Laboratory—	
Sr. Chemist	160—10—200
Chemist	100—5—150
Shift Foreman-Chemists ..	95—5—130
Junior Chemists	60—5—90
Laboratory Assistants ..	35—4—55
Alipur Test House—	
Chemical Assistants ..	150—15—300—20—400
Government Laboratory, Jamshedpur—	
Chemical Assistants ..	150—15—300—20—400
G. I. P. Railway—	
Chemist	150—10—300
Laboratory Assistants ..	80—5—100—10—150
E. I. Railway—	
Chemists	130—10—250
Customs House, Calcutta—	
Chemist	130—10—250
Calcutta Corporation—	
Analysts	150—15—300—20—400

APPENDIX 4.

Comparative wages statistics.

INDIA.			GERMANY.			UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.		
Hourly rate in rupees.			Hourly rate.			Hourly rate.		
(Average skilled and un-skilled.)			(Average skilled and un-skilled.)			(Average skilled and un-skilled.)		
Rate.	Textile.	Ratio Tata Textile.	Iron and Steel. (1936.)	Textile. (1936.)	Ratio. Iron and Steel Textile.	Iron and Steel Rolling Mills, etc. 1938.	Textile.	Ratio. Iron and Steel Textile.
Below Rs. 250.								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
*Rs. 0-150	Rs. 0-152	Rs. 0-987	86-6 Reichspfennige	58-3 Reichspfennige	1-48	-826 Dollars	-412 Dollars	2-0
(Ref.—Report on the condition affecting the labourers of Jamshedpur Works of the T. I. and S. Co., Ltd., page 54.)	Ref.—Year book of Labour Statistics, page no. 157.		Rs. 0-58	Rs. 0-39		Rs. 2-40	Rs. 1-19	
			Ref.—Year book, page no. 139.	Ref.—Year book, page no. 138.		Ref.—Year book, page nos. 149 and 150.		

* (a) Average earning including departmental bonus and general bonus and leave pay is Rs. 0-190.

(b) Average earning including profit-sharing bonus along with the items under heading (a) is Rs. 0-209.

Ratio of (a) earning with the Textile is 1-25.

Ratio of (b) earning with the Textile is 1-37.

APPENDIX 4—concl'd.

- Comparative wages statistics—concl'd.

GREAT BRITAIN. (Hourly rate.)			HUNGARY. (Hourly rate.)			JAPAN. (Hourly rate.)		
Iron and Steel Smelting, Rolling, etc.	Textile.	Ratio. Iron and Steel Textile.	Iron and other Metallurgy 1936.	Textile.	Ratio. Iron and other Metallurgy. Textile.	Metallurgy. 1938.	Textile. 1938.	Ratio. Metallurgy Textile.
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1928 : 1·25 Shilling Rs. 0·860	·79 Shilling Rs. 0·54	1·57 ·91	53 Pengos	35 Pengos	1·51	·404 Yen	·171 Yen	2·36
1935 : 1·37 Shilling Rs. 0·94	·70 Shilling Rs. 0·48	1·96	Ref.—Year book, page no. 155.			Ref.—Year book, page no. 159.		
Ref.—Year book, page no. 154.								

APPENDIX 5.

Statement showing comparative house rents.

Type of quarters.	Tata.		Tinplate.		Extra facility.
	Original rent.	Enhanced rent.	Original rent.	Enhanced rent.	
1.	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
RN ...	1 2 0	2 10 0	...	...	.....
RN 1 ...	2 4 0	2 4 0	2 12 0	2 4 0	.....
RN 2 ...	...	...	3 12 0	2 8 0	.....
M 2 ...	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 4 0	3 8 0	.....
M 3 ...	...	...	6 8 0	4 0 0	.....
M 4 ...	...	...	7 8 0	5 0 0	.....
L ...	4 8 0	7 0 0	...	...	.....
L 2 ...	7 0 0	9 0 0	11 8 0	8 0 0	With water and Electric installation.
L 3* ...	8 8 0	8 8 0	9 8 0	7 8 0	Electrified.
	9 0 0	9 0 0	...	...	.....
H 6 ...	8 0 0	{ 12 0 0 15 0 0 18 12 0 }	...	...	.....
Old G ...	12 8 0	18 12 0	20 0 0	14 0 0	.....
New G ...	...	...	...	...	.....
G 2* ...	12 8 0	19 0 0	...	...	.....
G 4 ...	21 0 0	28 4 0	...	15 0 0	.....
H (Bistupur) ...	7 8 0	16 0 0	...	...	.....
N ...	1 0 0	2 8 0	...	...	.....
RM ...	1 6 0	2 14 0	...	...	.....
A ...	27 8 0	{ 35 0 0 45 0 0 }	...	...	.....
Grain stores ...	2 2 0	3 4 0	...	...	.....

* Rent of end quarter is Rs. 9.

APPENDIX 5—contd.

Type of quarters.	Tata.		Tinplate, Co.		Extra facility.
	Original rent.	Enhanced rent.	Original rent.	Reduced rent.	
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
RN ...	1 2 0	2 10 0	...	...	.....
RN 1 ...	2 4 0	2 4 0	2 12 0	2 4 0	.....
RN 2 ...	...	...	3 12 0	2 8 0	.....
M 2 ...	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 4 0	3 8 0	.....
M 3 ...	...	...	6 8 0	4 0 0	.....
M 4 ...	...	...	7 8 0	5 0 0	.....
L ...	4 8 0	7 0 0	...	...	.....
L 2 ...	7 0 0	9 0 0	11 8 0	8 0 0	With water and Electric installation.
L 4* ...	8 8 0	8 8 0	9 8 0	7 8 0	Electrified.
	9 0 0	9 0 0	...	...	.....
H 6 ...	8 0 0	{ 12 0 0 15 0 0 18 12 0 }	...	...	.....
Old G ...	12 8 0	18 12 0	20 0 0	14 0 0	.....
New G ...	...	...	...	...	.....
G 2 ...	12 8 0	19 0 0	...	...	.....
G 4 ...	21 0 0	28 4 0	...	15 0 0	.....
H (Bistupur) ...	7 8 0	16 0 0	...	...	.....
N ...	1 0 0	2 8 0	...	...	.....
RM ...	1 6 0	2 14 0	...	...	.....
A ...	27 8 0	{ 35 0 0 45 0 0 }	...	...	.....
Grain stores ...	2 2 0	3 4 0	...	...	.....

* Rent of end quarter is Rs. 9.

APPENDIX 5—concl'd.

Tinplate Company's house rent.

	Old rate.			New rate.		
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
G 4 new ..			..	15	0	0
G type old ..	20	0	0	14	0	0
L 2 (with water and electric installation.)	11	8	0	8	0	0
L 4 (Electrified) ..	9	8	0	7	8	0
M 4 ..	7	8	0	5	0	0
M 3 ..	6	8	0	4	0	0
M 2 ..	4	4	0	3	8	0
RN 2 ..	3	12	0	2	8	0
RN 1 ..	2	12	0	2	4	0

MEMORANDUM NO. 2.

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee by the
Tata Workers' Union, Jamshedpur.

We beg to state that we have already submitted a separate memorandum dealing with a few particular matters mutually agreed by the Company and the Tata Workers' Union to be left over for your early treatment. In the present memorandum we have attempted to deal with general matters, and have not stressed on the items already dealt with in the previous one. Instead of attempting precise reply to the Questionnaire according to its order, we have found it convenient to arrange the matters dealt with in different groups according to its scope and offer our criticism and suggestion thereon. Our dealings of different groups have sometimes been a bit elaborate according to the importance of the subject matters. Besides, we have not always treated the subject according to the order in which Questionnaire were arranged. But instead, we have itemized them according to our convenience.

Trade union.—At present there are four Trade Union organisations at Jamshedpur, including the nominal ones :—

- (a) Labour Association.
- (b) Labour Federation.
- (c) Metal Workers' Union.
- (d) Tata Workers' Union.

The Labour Association was started in 1920 along with the first strike of the Tata Workers. During the strike five men were shot dead and several others severely injured. The strike was settled on the Management introducing service rules providing leave, Provident Fund, etc., and granting general increase of wages. Two years later a second strike took place, which was called off by Dewan Chamanlal, on the Management agreeing to refer the points at dispute for settlement to a Conciliation Committee consisting of representatives of the workers and Management.

The Committee never met, as the Management refused to accept the personnel from the workers side, and it was a clever manoeuvre of the Management who did not think it necessary to respect the pledge as soon as the work was resumed. On

top of that the Management started vigorous repression. Victimisation and threatening of all active workers followed, till the matter was taken up by the leaders of the Swaraj Party, the late Deshbandhu C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, when the question of granting tariff protection came up before the Central Assembly. The Company agreed to accept the recommendations of a Conciliation Board with late Deshbandhu C. R. Das as Chairman. When, however, the recommendations were placed before the Tata Board of Directors, the latter declined to accept them particularly the clause regarding the recognition of the Union unless its, the then Secretary, Mr. Sethi, was removed. Deadlock ensued and Deshbandhu Das died shortly afterwards. After some-times, Mahatma Gandhi was approached to intervene. He personally came to Jamshedpur and effected a settlement guaranteeing recognition of the Union. Formal recognition, however, was accorded after further delay and representation by the organization.

After a short period, men's grievances began to be overlooked. Personal and group grievances accumulated till signs of unrest became visible during the close of 1927. Early in 1928 in protest of the callous attitude of the Company demonstrations and sporadic *hartals* followed, Rev. C. F. Andrews, President of the Labour Association intervened and settled a number of short departmental strikes and secured the grant of General Production Bonus. This, however, did not satisfy the workers and therefore, the departmental strike still continued till the Company declared a lock-out during the close of May 1928. The Labour Association could not immediately join the *Hartalists* as they were bound by the terms of a settlement arrived at shortly before. Mr. Manek Homi, an ex-employee of the Tata Company and a pleader of the local court became, at once, the leader of the movement and after continuing the struggle for sometime, approached Srijut Subash Chandra Bose to come and guide the affairs. When Srijut Subash Chandra Bose came here, he was urged to accept Presidentship of the Labour Association as Rev. Andrews had already left for Europe. On his acceptance of presidentship of the Association and on his appeal, the entire labour force joined the *Hartalists*. Soon afterwards, the Company was compelled to come to terms. A settlement was reached and the men resumed work in the middle of September 1928. Mr. Homi however, dissatisfied at his leadership being at stake, stood against the settlement and vigorously worked

to establish his supremacy for personal ends as disclosed through subsequent events. With his followers, he immediately started a rival faction under the name of Labour Federation. The Management also negated a number of important terms of settlement which immediately created suspicion in the minds of the workers and directly strengthened Mr. Homi's move. Srijut Subash Bose continued to represent men's grievances and pressed on the Company to concede a reasonable grant in matters of wages, etc. As a result, minimum wages for unskilled workers was raised to Re. 0-8-0. The political situation of the country, during the period, made it impossible for Srijut Bose to stay in Jamshedpur and get the terms of settlement given effect to and adherents of Mr. Homi grew in number through ceaseless propaganda on one side and Company's half hearted policy on the other. During the time, rivalry between the organisations became very keen. Labour Association office was raided in broad day light and some members assaulted. Within a very short time, the Company bent down to Mr. Homi's pressure and recognised his organisation and encouraged dual unionism. Company's role in relation to labour organisation has been one of divide and rule since this time. They employed their resources openly to weaken the Labour Association and strengthened the Federation by undue favouritism. When the Labour Association became actually weak due to the above policy and more particularly to the imprisonment of its President, the Company set to crush the Labour Federation. There was an internal quarrel between two groups of Federation, over embezzlement of its funds by its President, Mr. M. Homi. A number of cases were filed with the help of the Tata Company and ultimately Mr. Homi was convicted to a long term of imprisonment. Two of the important workers of the Federation were externed subsequently, and its fund amounting to about Rs. 50,000 was held out by the Government on an injunction suit filed by some Federation Members. The fund which was contributed by the workers of Jamshedpur is still lying with the Government.

Meantime Srijut Bose who came out of jail, represented grievances of the men, particularly of the Jamadoba Colliery workers, but failed to evoke any reasonable response from the management and he had to advise the men once again to strengthen themselves in order to wrest their legitimate demands. At this period, *goondaism* reigned supreme in Jamshedpur. Srijut Subash Bose presiding over a mass

meeting at the G. Town maidan was assaulted by some of the *goondas* who were generally used at this period to break all workers' meeting.

Another meeting held by the Federation men under police protection was tried to be broken by the *goondas*, a number of whom were chased, arrested, and hauled up in the Court. Mysteriously, however, the case against these *goondas* was dropped while some of the Company's high officers were transferred from Jamshedpur. Soon afterwards Srijut Subash Bose was again imprisoned. Taking advantage of the situation, the management dismissed the Honorary Secretary and some active workers of the Labour Association. A period of demoralisation and inaction followed. As both the labour organisations had been suppressed, the Company felt the necessity of starting a subsidized labour organisation, in order to white-wash the mis-deeds and to create a wrong impression outside that the Company encouraged Trade Unionism.

Thus the Metal Workers' Union came into existence. But in spite of the Company's blessings, it failed to attract the workers. Meantime, repression on the 'remnants' of the Labour Association continued. Its Secretary was openly assaulted in his office with the remaining active workers, a suit was filed by the Company against the Labour Association in violation of the understanding, to administer the final stroke. The case, however, was ultimately withdrawn at the intervention of Srijut Rajendra Prasad, Nilkanta Das and Subash Chandra Bose.

It will be clear from the above that the Company directed its energies to suppress the genuine Trade Union Movement and practically succeeded during this period. But their endeavours to popularise the Metal Workers' Union miserably failed. It shows, workers were fully conscious of their rights and interest but were subdued by superior forces to give expression to their feelings. The state of affairs continued until the middle of 1936 when the changed condition of the country paves the way for the revival of the movement. At the end of the year Congress propaganda in connection with the Parliamentary election roused mass consciousness afresh. Taking advantage of the situation, Labour Association made an endeavour to renew organisational activities and as a first step ran its candidate, Mr. John to contest the election to the Labour seat on the Congress ticket. The Company also ran its own candidate and spent lavishly in propaganda and other connected matters. The failure of the Company's candidate

proved conclusively of the growing solidarity of the workers. Mr. M. Homi who appeared on the scene once again at this stage and successfully contested the election, caught imagination of the people and for a time controlled the labour activities. His fall was, however, equally abrupt as men, very soon, became suspicious of his bona fides and rightly so, as he, openly, began to support and side with the Company as against the vital interest of the workers. His role became clear during the crisis at the Sheet Mill in March last year, when working days in the department were considerably cut down, affecting the earnings of the men very seriously. Revolt of the workers against him and his organisation was complete and soon afterwards, men rallied round the Tata Workers' Union which was started in April, 1938, with Professor 'Abdul Bari as its President. As a matter of fact, the Labour Association merged in the organisation. The new organisation, from the very start, had to carry on a ceaseless struggle on account of the stiff attitude of the management at the earlier stages and vacillations during the later days. Under pressure of circumstances, they agreed to the terms of a settlement arrived at with the president of the Union, the president of the Indian National Congress and the premier of the Province of Bihar, but have since been utilising every opportunity to flout the terms. We enumerate below a few of our charges in support of the above statement—

- (1) The Union enjoys effective recognition but a very large proportion of the day to day cases, represented by the Union are not given proper and prompt attention.
- (2) The Departmental Production Bonus was not given proper effect to, as a number of men of various departments were left out of the benefit and proper scale in the Sheet Mill and some other departments was not introduced.
- (3) Representations regarding the defects in the Medical Department and inadequacy of the medical staff were not heeded to.
- (4) Departmental heads often threaten workers for preferring representation through the Union.
- (5) Above all, the Company and its various departmental heads are persistently trying to undermine the Union, by effecting a breach in the rank of the labour and by other ingenious methods.

In short, what the Company concedes with one hand is snatched away by the other. It is due to this reason that there is no permanent peace in the industry between the employers and the workers' Union.

It is, therefore, prayed that the Committee may direct its serious attention to this aspect and try to devise means to effect a permanent peaceful relation between this important industry and its very conscious and responsible labour.

Coming to the subject of the men victimised during the year 1930 to 1933, we demand that these workers be immediately re-instated with full compensation.

We also beg to claim that the fund contributed by the Tata Workers and lying with the Government, as referred to above, should be made over to the workers through its accredited organisation after taking workers vote by a ballot which may be arranged by the Government.

Recruitment of Labour.—There has been well deserved criticism against Tatas machinery of recruitment. The objection that has been aptly raised by the Whitly Commission against recruitment being entrusted to a single individual is equally applicable to Tatas Labour Bureau. As a matter of fact, it is not a Bureau but a highly centralised one-man-show. The baneful effects of such power being centralised in one man can hardly be overestimated. We have been pressing since long to replace the arrangement by a more democratic and broad-based one. We repeat our demand that the appointments should be made by a committee consisting of three or five Superintendents of Departments changing periodically, who shall not accept recommendation from any of the Office Staff of the Bureau.

It is highly regrettable that the recruitment through 'C' class apprenticeship is guided by the cardinal principle of favouritism to a particular community, which absorbs a great percentage of the positions to give undue preference to members of this community, superior positions are often reserved exclusively for them and cases of undeserved super-session are too frequent to require enumeration. If promotion or recruitment to high positions is governed by such misguided policy, efficiency is bound to suffer. Further, disorganisation to certain extent is bound to follow as a result

of discontentment among the deserving men who are thus superseded. In recruitment and promotion, this kind of short-sighted policy must be stopped.

Temporary Labourers.—On representation of the Tata Workers' Union, the management agreed to take those temporary workers under the permanent category, who completed one year's service. As there is a large number of temporary men and vacancies are distributed amongst them by rotation, very seldom a temporary man gets chance to complete a continuous years service and therefore, under the restriction, he may not be taken to the permanent category. Then again there is a construction gang who work on maintenance and renewal jobs throughout the plant. As such, the department is a permanent one and the force also work for years together. But even then, those men are taken as temporary workers. Certainly, there is no reason to deprive these men of the benefits of permanency.

We, therefore, urge that the break period for the first category of men should be overlooked and after an aggregate service of 12 months they should be regarded as permanent hands and the entire force of the Construction Department should be taken to the permanent category.

Condition of Employment.—The Works Service Rules for the uncovenanted staff of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Limited, comprise of rules governing (1) Leave, (2) Acting Allowances, (3) Accident Payment and (4) Dismissal.

1. *Leave.*—In memorandum I, we have submitted our demands regarding the change of leave rules. Further, we claim that leave provided to the workers must be allowed to be accumulated without limit in contravention of the clause 2 of the Works Service Rule and such leave once earned shall not be forfeited.

The General Manager in his Circular no. L/8092/37, dated the 23rd/29th October, 1937, defined the rules regarding payment of salary in lieu of leave.

The Union claims that all leave due to a worker is his well earned right and as such the Company should have no option to penalise a worker by forfeiting the same and the Company having agreed to the principle of payment of salary.

in lieu of leave, all leave money, due to a worker shall have to be paid at the time of his discharge.

2. *Acting Allowance.*—Regarding the existing Rules for Acting Allowance, we have no comments to make, till all the posts in the workshop are graded.

However, the clause 3 of the Rules for acting allowance, disqualifying the superior or the clerical staff for any acting allowance, if he does not act in the higher grade for one month or more is quite arbitrary and without any justification. (The Union wants to press upon the point that, like daily rated men, the monthly rated staff also be paid acting allowance on higher grades when they undertake the responsibility even for one day or more.

The clause 6 of the existing Rules states that workmen as defined in Rule 2(iii), i.e., all employees on daily wages shall draw the full wages of the higher posts, if acting in such a post for any one day or more unless for exceptional reasons to be stated by him, the General Manager, directs a lower rate of remuneration to be paid. The practice followed is the exception instead of the rules which have become an exception, i.e., the practice of giving a lower rate of remuneration, while acting on higher grades, is in vogue and in a few cases only the full wages are given. We demand that full acting allowance, i.e., the full wages of the superior job in which the man is acting be always given without any restriction.

4. *Dismissal.*—There shall be no dismissal by the employer unless there is very grave reason for the same. Reason, e.g. "Service no longer required", should not be considered as a sufficient reason of discharging a man. If the employer can justifiably discharge a worker under the above reason there will be no security of service. There were some cases of discharge on the above ground from the Works Engineering Department in which no reasons of discharge were given and yet the posts were not abolished. Some of the men affected in the above incident had over 20 years of service.

While the existing Service Rule is thus subject to various criticisms, for improvement, we demand that if any alteration is proposed, the Union should be consulted for its opinion previous to any such alteration is given effect to.

Sick Leave.—Privilege leave is meant for recuperation of general health and for tour and should not, therefore, be exhausted to cover sick period. Besides, as a worker, when he is fit, directs his energy for the benefit and development

of the industry, the Company should also take the responsibility of bearing the man's expenses when he falls sick.

We, therefore, demand full pay for the sick period.

Wages.—The cost of living at Jamshedpur is known to be very high. It is higher than that in Patna, Jamalpur, Jharia and many other industrial centres in the Province. The Tata Iron and Steel Company have made tremendous progress, particularly during the last 10 years, due to the increased efficiency of men. Workers, however, have not been proportionately benefited during this industrial prosperity. Considering the high cost of living, increased initial efficiency and prosperity of the industry, we urge that a minimum wage rate be fixed for Tata Workers in all the categories, namely, unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled, at the following rates: the unskilled Re. 1 per day, and semi-skilled Re. 1-4-0 per day.

On necessity arising to revise the minimum wage, the matter should be placed before a Joint Committee of the representatives of Labour, Employer and Government.

Working Hours.—In all countries there is a tendency to reduce the working hours. At the beginning it was thought that less hour of work is only beneficial to the workers. But since the latter part of the last century, systematic experiments are being carried out in this direction.

The main basis of these experiments were on Industrial Fatigue and the relation between hours of work and the output.

The result of these experiments definitely shows that the maximum production and efficiency are not on long hours worked. Amongst a good number of experiments we cite a few cases here.

(a) (1) In 1893 a very important experiment was undertaken by Salford Iron Works, Manchester. They had 54 and later 53 hours of work and the working hours of the trial period were 48 hours. The following were the results of experiment—

- (1) Under the 48 hours work, production increased.
- (2) Though the piece workers lost lightly during the year, their falling off diminished as the year advanced, showing a steady adaptation to the altered condition of work.

- (3) There was great improvement in the lost time. Under the 53 hours system the time lost averaged 2.46 per cent and under 48 hours system it only averaged 0.46 per cent.

(Ref.—“ Industrial fatigue and the relation between hours of work and output with a memorandum on sickness ” by Lord Hendry Bentick.)

(b) Mr. Frank Shridan of the Bureau of Labour reported in 1905 on the work of two battleships—one with 8 hours shift and the other with ten hours day work.

The average output per hour of a man working 8 hours shift was 24—28 per cent greater.

(Ref.—Above book, page 36.)

From these experiments it was definitely proved that shorter hours of work to a certain limit give:—

- (1) Better production for the employers.
- (2) Less absentees.
- (3) Due to less amount of fatigue, gradual improvement of health of the workers.
- (4) Improvement in lost time.
- (5) Increase in efficiency and power of judgment.
- (6) Less number of accidents.

Germany made a full investigation on item (6) and the following table shows that during the year 1887, the highest accident rate, for all industries, occurred between 10 and 12 in the morning and 5 and 6 in the evening.

Hours.	Accident.	
	No.	Per cent.
Mornings.		
6 to 7	435	2.82
7 to 8	794	5.16
8 to 9	815	5.29
9 to 10	1069	10.37
11 to 12	1590	10.31
12 to 1	587	3.81
1 to 2	745	4.84
2 to 3	1037	6.73
3 to 4	1243	8.07
4 to 5	1178	7.67
5 to 6	1306	8.48

(Ref.—Above book, page 43.)

On the basis of these experiments, the working hours in most countries are lowered to a great extent.

We submit a table here showing the working hours adopted in different countries. Of course, the working hours sometime vary with industries and local conditions—

Year.	Country.	Daily.	Weekly.	Fortnightly.	Monthly.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1938	Germany	7.62	...	...	...
		7.70			
		7.73			
1937	Estonia	8.04	...	...	...
		8.05			
1938	United States	...	32.2	...	...
			34.3		
			34.5		
1938	Finland	...	...	96.4	...
1938	France	...	38.9	...	...
			38.7		
			38.6		
1937	Hungary	8.77	...	...	...
1938	Italy	...	...	...	156
					157
1938	Japan	9.82	...	...	...
		9.92			
1938	Poland	43.4	...	...	...
		44.0			
		44.1			
1937	Sweden	47.1	...	...	...

(Ref.—Year Book, pages 85 to 87.)

These figures are all taken for industries. But in India the working hours in industries are more than those of other

countries. About 72 per cent of industrial workers, work more than 48 hours a week. (Ref.—Industrial Labour in India, page 218.)

Tata's working hours also belong to this category. The following are the working hours in Tatas :—

Workers in continuous Department (in Shifts) 104 hours per fortnight.

Workers in non-continuous Departments (in Shifts) 48 hours per week.

At present in Europe and other countries the working hours shown in the above table are considered suitable whether any attempt has been made to find out if less hours of work than mentioned above are not uneconomical to the industries except in America.

It has been proved by experiment that fatigue starts long before the workers complete 8 hours work.

We quote below the work done in this line in a correspondence office.

The head of the office divided the day into 3 periods of approximately 2½ hours each and found the percentage of work done as follows :—

Time.	Percentage of work done.
9.30 to 12-00	40.00
1-0 to 3-30	31.85
3-30 to 6-00	28.15

(Ref.—Industrial fatigue and.....by Lord H. Bentick, page 34.)

The less amount of work in the later hours will not only be found with the ministerial staff, but the same result will be seen with the industrial workers also.

We state below the similar results with the industrial workers.

Period.	I Output.	II Output.
1st Hour	114	2,032
2nd Hour	167	2,123
3rd Hour	160	2,282
4th Hour	157	1,922
5th Hour	139	1,663

First of set work was soldering tin and the second one was of pasting on labels. The workers were unconscious of the observation.

These figures show that the outputs start to show effect of fatigue from the 4th hour and from the 5th hour the drop is very high.

Consequently until any experiment is done with working hours less than 8, it is very difficult to say what working hours would be best suited here.

Mr. Henry I Spooner says in his booklet "Industrial fatigue in its relation to maximum output" (page 24) "There cannot be a doubt that the best length of working days varies in different trade and in the same trade under different conditions, and circumstances; thus workers engaged on light or purely mechanical work in well ventilated and efficiently lighted shops can, for example work longer hours with less fatigue than smelters or furnace men, who labour in sweltering and vitiated atmosphere. Further, an industry carried on in a town may require a shorter day than a like industry located in country; but it is generally possible to determine scientifically by fatigue studies, what length of working day is on the whole most advantageous to both parties in the circumstances, best for the workers because it allows them to recuperate their strength day by day and best also for the employer because he profits by the employees' increased capacity for work".

In view of this statement we should not depend on the experiments done in Europe and America. The conditions here are very different from those countries. We are to work in high heats in the summer which the people of Europe or America cannot think of. Many workers here died due to heat stroke. Our living and housing are so poor in comparison with those of the countries of Europe and America that the fatigue of the workers here must be much more and earlier than the workers of those countries.

We beg to suggest that the Government should open a department or appoint a committee which will carry on experiments on fatigue to find out what will be the best suited working hours for different industries in the Province.

We think, considering all points, that the result of such experiment will show that by reducing the working hours to

6, the employer will not lose anything but it will rather be profitable to him also.

In this matter of fatigue, we beg to mention another point for consideration.

The town is extended to a great extent. And the area of the factory also is very big. Consequently most of the workers have to cover a long distance to reach their working place, some times more than 4 or 5 miles. As a result, most of the workers get fatigued before they start work. It is harmful both to the employer and worker.

We suggest that a tram service should be started by the Company to carry the workers to and from their places of work.

We should mention here that the workers in the General Shift at Jamshedpur have to work in 2 periods with an interval of 2 hours for their meals in the mid-day. The workers have to come home and go back to duties again. So they have to walk long distances four times by which they undergo unnecessary fatigue. If a straight shift is fixed it will be beneficial to both the workers and the Companies.

Employees of the Works Hotel have to work 16 hours a day. It, certainly, violates provisions of the Factory Act as the Works Hotel is situated within the Factory and is a part thereof. It is a pity that neither the management nor the Factory Inspector has so far thought fit to bring the working hours of these employees to a level with those of other branches of the works. From the humanitarian point of view, the over-work and its consequent strain should have been stopped long before.

Utilisation of minerals.—In connection with the opening of a department to fix up and control working hours, we beg to take the opportunity of suggesting a question of great national interest.

The minerals, coal and oils, are considered to be an asset of a country, but at present there is practically no machinery to control the handling of these properties. Any private individual can take the lease of a mine and work, sell or do anything with it as he likes. The owner of a mine tries to earn maximum amount of money within a short time. In most cases he does not care whether the mine is spoiled for further exploitation or not.

The minerals are sold to any part of the world without consideration of our country's need, or preservation for the future.

As for instance, Manganese Ore is not found in other countries excepting U. S. S. R., South America and few other countries. Consequently there is heavy demand for this mineral. People from all countries are trying to purchase. But the Government exercises no control in the matter.

We think that time has come when the Government should take steps in the following directions.

(1) *Nationalise the Mines.*

Government should acquire all mines. They will either work the mines or exercise full control on the party given lease of the mine in the matter of operation, distribution and export.

(2) *Improve the minerals.*

(a) The Government should encourage authorised bodies or undertake themselves to improve the ores by modern ore dressing methods.

(b) To carry on research to find out how best the rejected staff can be profitably utilised. For example, the refuses of the Iron Ore Mines are thrown away mainly because of their fineness, though in many cases they contain high percentage of iron.

Factories Act.—Factories Act provided for periodical offs for the purpose of rest and recuperation. But instead of doing good it has definitely added to the worries of the workman by curtailing his earnings as the employers do not pay for the off days. Certainly, that could not be the intention of the legislators. Clearly what they meant was off-days with pay so that the workmen could have a chance to enjoy the holiday. We are receiving incessant complaints from the workmen against these compulsory offs for reasons already stated. After the off-day, the workman sets to work the renewed energy and certainly puts up higher production. We, therefore, urge that the compulsory factory off-days should be paid.

Rationalisation.—Rationalisation of plant is necessary in order to keep pace with modern development, and hard competition. But by rationalisation workers are thrown out of job. By rationalising, the Steel Company has not replaced

the old plant by a more mechanised one, but has added such plants to the existing old ones in most cases. Hence no reduction of staff has been necessary. When the old Rolling Mills were abolished as a result of rationalisation, a lot of oldest and most experienced workers were sent home on compulsory leave for indefinite period. Only a portion of these men could afterwards be absorbed in other departments and often on highly reduced rates.

Rationalisation is, therefore, viewed with mixed feelings. It should at any rate be adopted with caution. More mechanised plants should only be installed where production has to be rapidly increased. But in so doing existing workers should not be thrown out of employment, or put to any kind of inconvenience and suffering.

Therefore, it should come as a supplementary process and not to replace the existing plants, in other words, the results of rationalisation should benefit not only the employer but the workers as well by affording greater rest and higher income.

Rest House, Creches and Tiffin room.—The Factories Act provides for rest house for general use and creches for children of women workers. There should be well equipped, well furnished and commodious rest room for workers' use during interval. There is none in the works. We demand erection of rest houses at different convenient points.

The existing creches for the use of the children of the women workers are inadequate for the purpose. As women workers work at different points far away from one another, a number of creches should be provided at different convenient places in the factory.

Most of the workers in shift duty and quite a good number in general duty get their meals from home to be taken in the works. In absence of any dining room, workers have to take their meals under the shades of trees or in uncrowded corners mostly in bad environments. We would, therefore, suggest a number of dining rooms at different convenient places equipped with bath, wash-tubs and tables.

Trade Union.—It should be made obligatory on employers to accord effective recognition to a Registered Union. And once a Registered Union is so recognised, another Union shall not be recognised unless the latter represents the majority of the workers.

Trade Disputes Act.—The Trade Disputes Act should be so amended as to provide for appointment of (a) Court of Enquiry, (b) Board of Conciliation; (c) Conciliation Officer on the application of one or both of the parties either before or during the progress of a strike or lock-out.

Compensation Act.—There should be amendment of the Act making it obligatory on the employer to provide easier jobs for partially and permanently disabled men whether or not they have received compensation. The amount of compensation should be doubled the present scale. In case of death, which is not a very frequent event and consequently not a heavy burden on the employer, the compensation should be equal to 42 months wages and the clause restricting the amount to a sum “ not exceeding Rs. 4,000 ” should be eliminated.

As the Company's doctor very often happens to be identified with the management and therefore, is an interested party, the estimate of the nature of injury to establish extent of compensation should not be made by him. The matter should be referred to the nearest Government doctor.

In cases of minor injuries through accidents, incapacitating the injured for work for a few days, Company's doctor often certifies him fit for immediate resumption of work. All doubtful cases should, therefore, be referred to the nearest Government doctor whose decision should prevail.

In cases of temporary disablement, payment of compensation at full rate of wages should start from the very day of accident.

Housing accommodation.—The Whitly Commission observed very rightly that in a place like Jamshedpur employers have an obligation to furnish housing accommodation to their employees. But the building programme of the Tatas has been abnormally slow to meet the demands. Early in 1930, when the Whitly Commission visited the place the Tatas had completed the building of about 5,000 quarters. In ten years since, when the Company had its most prosperous days, they did not complete even another 1,500 quarters. And at present they have met about 25 per cent of the demands. Besides, private enterprise for building quarters has not been encouraged.

Bustees with standard sanitary conditions, have not been laid to attract workers to build their own houses. Nor has there been any incentive given by way of reducing land rent

or removing restrictions on renting, transfer or sale of houses. Then again, there is abnormal restriction on lease allotment of plots for building private quarters. We demand a speedier programme for building of houses of improved types with modern sanitary and hygienic arrangements to be taken up to provide houses to 60 per cent of the employees within the next two years. And also we want that greater facility be given to workers to build their own houses on the available land in the town proper.

Dismantling of old and insanitary types of quarters.—There are certain types of quarters, built years ago which do not conform to the modern hygienic and sanitary standards. Among these may be mentioned *R. N. Type*, “*Gole Khulies*” at Bistupur, “*Ramdas Bhatta Quarters*”, and *C. Town Quarters* and *Gosala R. N. Types*. The new *T. R. Types Quarters* built at various places are quite unsuitable and should either be dismantled or remodelled to conform to the standard.

The sweepers quarters need elaborate improvement, e.g., cementing the floors, proper walling of the cooking places, providing bars for the windows, etc.

Bustee improvement.—Although there has been great demand for land in the *bustees* and already there has been steadily growing increase of income from land rent, there has been no improvement even of the thickly populated *bustees* such as Koiladungri, Naya Line Mohulbera, East Plant, Kasidih, Ranikudar, Bhuiodi in respect of sanitary arrangement, provision of lights and roads.

The *bustee* with its dirty heaps of refuse, its *kutcha* drain and obnoxious odour due to absence of latrines, its rugged lanes, its crowded taps and absence of light, all put together present a striking contrast to the well-laid out better parts of the town. We demand that planning of the *bustee* be improved, roads be constructed with *pucca* drains, proper lighting and more water taps with better flow be provided, outside common latrines be constructed and proper sweeping and cleaning be arranged.

Further the lease condition for land in *bustee* should be thoroughly altered. The terms of agreement providing summary demolition (miscalled ejection), compulsory payment of 25 per cent of sales proceeds of the houses, heavy taxes in the form of payment on rent proceeds are very stiff and

advantageous to the Company alone leaving the tenants at the entire mercy of the landlord Company. Even for slight addition, alteration, and necessary periodical repair to the existing structure whether in the *bustee* or in the town proper, the tenants have to wait for long, for necessary permission and sometimes permission does not come till the season is over and if for emergency, any alteration or repair is carried out, without previous sanction, the tenant concerned is severely dealt with, often with ejection. The lease terms should, therefore, be reasonably amended so as to afford adequate protection to tenants and thereby encourage private buildings. We also urge that there should be a proper machinery to control the rate of rent charged by private owners, as the rent charged by such owners is abnormally high.

Education.—Education is by far the greatest need of the industrial worker both in his own interest and in the interest of his employer. We feel that Trade Unionism cannot be established on a firm footing unless workers are educated to a certain extent to realise their responsibilities to the community and to the industry. An uneducated worker is apt to think in terms of himself or not think at all. Industrially, educated worker is worth much more than an uneducated one. In modern age of industrial development intricate machinery is indispensable. Educated worker will pick up its handling and method of operation quicker. We, therefore, feel that it pays the employer to educate his workers. Government certainly has its share of responsibility. Therefore, we urge that intensive compulsory arrangement be made to educate the adult industrial population of Jamshedpur in the same way as children.

There being only one high school for boys with accommodation of about 700, lot of employees are refused admission, while there is yet a good number who do not seek admission owing to the school being at a great distance from the various parts of the town. We, therefore, demand that at least two more high schools, and a first grade college be established. The number of high English schools be increased and located in different convenient parts of the town. The number of primary schools is too inadequate for the number of children of school-going age. There is a crying need in every thickly populated *bustee*.

Recreation.—In view of the hard life of the Steel Workers, there is imperative necessity of easy amusement and recreation. For the purpose, workers', institutes and reading rooms

should be provided in different parts of the town and in *bustees*. Parks with children's corners be laid out in different parts of the town.

Indebtedness.—There is a high degree of indebtedness among the workers of Jamshedpur. The flourishing condition of about 400 *Kabulies*, a lot of Marwary money-lenders in addition to indigenous Banking Houses at Jugsalai, a large number of Credit Societies and banks go to show the growing indebtedness of the population, who are mostly industrial workers. The reason of indebtedness may be classified as under :—

- (a) Inadequate wage level as compared to the high cost of living providing no marginal saving for emergency or bad days.
- (b) Abnormal high rate of interest.

The ways of the money-lenders are manifestly mischievous. Not only do they charge exorbitant interests taking advantage of the helpless condition of the borrower but they often get the debtor to sign a blank document. They continue to extract very high percentage of interest (36 to 150 per cent), and when the debtor is exhausted and can no longer pay interests, money suit is filed, not for the actual principle borrowed and accrued interest, but for a much inflated amount; and for this purpose the blank document is filled in accordingly. The money-lenders often beset the factory gates and the debtors' *bustees* during payment period and use threats, abusive language and violence to extract abnormal dues from the debtors.

We suggest the following steps to fight indebtedness :—

- (a) General raising of the wage level.

It is very often that the actual cost of a worker's own maintenance is not properly estimated and the average wage figures sometimes satisfy a critic. In the Open Hearth, Duplex, Sheet, Bar and other Rolling Mills, etc., workers are compelled to take large quantity of substantial food both during duty hours and at home. The average cost for the above, for every individual worker comes to nothing less than Rs. 30 a month. The wage level should be considered in the light of the above facts and raised accordingly to give the worker a fair chance to maintain himself and his family and leave some margin for bad days and emergency. Since the wage-level is far lower than that, many workers have to run into debts.

(b) There should be a comprehensive Act restricting rate of interest to a maximum of 9 per cent per annum, and liquidation of all debts of industrial workers, whose monthly earnings do not exceed Rs. 100 and who have already paid an aggregate sum equal to the principal (by instalment towards interest or otherwise), penalising, besetting, use of threat, abusive language or violence and taking of signature of debtors on blank documents.

Prohibition.—Lot of miseries are due to the habit of drinking. It accounts for indebtedness, breaking of family life, immorality, ill-health, etc. There is no denying the fact that drinking habit is rampant in Jamshedpur as in other industrial towns. Easy accessibility has added to the excessive drunkenness. It is a happy thing that Congress Government has taken upon itself the task of fighting this evil. We strongly urge, therefore, that total prohibition be introduced; and as an interim alternative, the number of drink shops be reduced and existing ones be closed during the payment period and one week after it.

Medical aid.—Although it appears from outside that there is an elaborate arrangement of medical aid, but considering from the point of demand, it is quite inadequate. Both at the main and the branch hospitals, crowds of patients have to wait for several hours to get the prescription renewed and medicine served.

The number of regular doctors is much below the need. Quite a large number of apprentice doctors are maintained on the role who not being in the pay of the Company even after years of apprenticeship, naturally do not feel responsible for the very important task. There is inadequacy of doctors, nurses and compounders, specialists for diseases, although the Company is said to be spending a considerable amount on medical arrangement. Eye disease in the Steel Factory is a common feature, but there is no ophthalmic specialist in the whole of Jamshedpur, to meet the growing demands.

The Tata Workers' Union took a very serious view of the utter inadequacy of the medical arrangement and strongly represented the matter before the Management and although discussions were held, no result came out of it. Instead of increasing the number of doctors, the Company has raised the hospital-duty hours of the existing doctors, realising that enhanced hospital-duty hours will adversely affect visiting duty,

to patients at home. The arrangement, therefore, should at once be discontinued. The Company should also afford more adequate facility to the doctors for visiting patients, by providing a few more duty cars for the purpose. We, therefore, strongly urge that more doctors including a few specialists in eye, teeth, and heart diseases and gynecology be appointed, both to relieve crowding in out-door dispensary and for the treatment of special diseases. A number of nurses, preferably Indians, and compounders should also be appointed to meet the situation. Due to inadequacy of beds in the in-door hospital a large number of patients, even including employees, are refused admission. Urgent cases are often accommodated in the verandah where they remain exposed to heat, rain, and cold. We demand that the in-door hospital be extended to provide more beds to meet the growing demand.

We beg in this connection to draw your attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the Government hospital at Sakchi, in respect of equipment and stock of medicine. This hospital has a very limited number of in-door beds which is too inadequate for the growing demands of the town, where, due to frequent quarrels, serious and fatal injuries happen very often. The number of beds, staff and supply of medicines should be considerably increased here. The Tata Workers' Union issued a list of questions to elicit information bearing on the important items on social and service condition of the workers. About 10,000 workers have submitted their replies, which are being summarised. The summary, which will convey an idea of these important matters, will be submitted during the course of the next few days.

**SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORANDUM TO
MEMORANDUM NO. 2.**

**Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee by the
Tata Workers' Union, Jamshedpur.**

We beg to detail below a few of the more serious matters that brought about a strained relation recently between the Management and the Tata Workers Union.

1. After the settlement with the Management in June last, as referred to before, the Company agreed to revise the Departmental Bonus Scheme within three months. But they deferred the matter for seven months, creating serious tension and discontentment among the men. In the interest of workers' solidarity, the Company was asked not to encourage any other labour organisation to which they agreed. But they did not even adopt an indifferent attitude. They actively encouraged Mr. Homi, to revive his activity and carry on false propaganday against the Tata Workers' Union. Further, the Company's high officials directly identified themselves with moves calculated to undermine the Tata Workers' Union. Sir A. R. Dalal himself presided over a sports function arranged by the Zamindar Party in Burma Mines, which used to be widely known as an anti-union organisation.

2. *Victimisation for becoming members of the Union.*— Some nurses of the Main Hospital enrolled themselves as members and put up their grievances. Following this, they were immediately suspended and dismissed on flimsy pretexts.

3. On the representation of the Union, for increase of wages of Sheet Mill men, the Company definitely told that no increase could be thought of. The Union accordingly intimated the applicants and the Sheet mill men generally. Surprisingly enough, immediately afterwards, the Company granted increase to 62 men of the Department. It was apparent that the Company did not want to have the Union's influence and popularity discounted, particularly in the Sheet Mill, where it happened to be very high. Company's move resulted in a huge demonstration. Men came in a procession to the Union Office to record their dissatisfaction. And it was with great difficulty that the men could be pacified.

4. The same mischievous policy was adopted in the Electrical Repair Shop.

5. When men of the other department, encouraged and tempted at the increases granted to some men in the Sheet Mill and the Electrical Repair Shop, agitated for increase, they were cleverly told that the Union had agreed that there would be no increase.

6. The executive members of the Union were being oppressed. Some of them, putting up with their relations, were ejected from the relation's house, at the instigation of the Company. Important and active workers of the Union, of the Sheet Mill Department, were denied further opportunity of "Acting in Higher Places" and thereby were deprived of the benefit of getting acting allowance.

7. Grievances of the Hotel Workers, forwarded months ago, had not been given attention to. But on the eve of the Labour Enquiry Committee's visit, the men were suddenly asked to be satisfied with one concession, e.g., reduction of working hours from 16 to 9. When the men declined to waive their claims to further service benefits, they were sternly asked to accept the said one concession at the pain of dismissal. When the men wanted to refer the matter to the Union for its decision and advice, they were similarly threatened.

8. Works Guards, who became members of the Union, were threatened with dismissal, if they did not immediately resign membership of the Union. Representation of the Union Secretary equally met with stern refusal to reconsider the matter. To avoid an immediate crisis, which might develop into a strike, the Union rather preferred to advise the men to resign membership. Subsequently men were made to sign a pledge undertaking not to join the Union.

9. Cases forwarded by the Workers' Union on the day-to-day individual and collective grievances were not properly disposed of by the Management in order to create misgiving against the Tata Workers' Union.

These were piled up, till the Union became hopeless after sending reminders. Being despaired, the matter was discussed in a mass meeting; the Company, suddenly, became conscious of the neglect and in an omnibus communication conveyed unsatisfactory decision on about two score cases. On the question of revision of Profit Sharing Bonus Scheme, the

Managing Agent took a very adamant attitude, maintaining that the Company would rather risk a strike than compromise on the Profit Sharing issues.

These are some of the important grievances that culminated in serious misunderstanding and strained relation between the parties.

The Committee will earn the gratitude of the workers if they can induce the Company to give up their anti-union attitude in general and thereby help to establish a peaceful relation.

MEMORANDUM.

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee by the
Tinplate Workers' Union, Golmuri.

Instead of supplying short replies to the questionnaire issued by the Labour Enquiry Committee, we have found it convenient to deal with the subject-matters intended to be traversed by the said questionnaire in a more elaborate manner in the present memorandum. Besides, the consideration of limited scope of the Labour Union for collecting accurate figures has also influenced us to adopt the latter course. In our treatment of the subjects, there has also been a departure from strict observance of the order in which the questions under different groups were arranged. We hope, however, that these may not create any difficulty in proper appraising of facts.

It should be noted that under the head 'General' we have attempted to deal with matters of general importance of comprehensive character, and criticism therein does not necessarily apply to any particular concern unless it is precisely so mentioned.

A.—A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INDUSTRY AND THE UNION.

The Tinplate Company of India, Limited, first of its kind in this country, was started as a private Limited liability concern, with Tatas and Burma Oil Co. as the only share-holders, and commenced operation at Golmuri in 1922. Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co. have since been its Managing Agents. A very large number of Welshmen and Americans were recruited as covenanted staff to work as experts for almost every department and for works management.

During the first few years of its career, the Company no doubt, had to face the initial difficulties that attend a new industrial venture undertaken in a thoroughly unexplored region. But quick assimilating propensity of Indian labour at Jamshedpur, application of expert knowledge of progressive mechanisation of other countries, further necessary capital investment through debenture loan and tariff protection, very soon placed the industry on a firm footing; and before long, brought satisfactory surplus profit. Unfortunately at this stage, that is, about the middle of 1928, unrest became visible among the workers owing to their unsatisfactory service and living conditions.

During this period, labour movement throughout India made a progressive headway, and a pronounced revolt took place among Tinsplate workers also, against the long-standing unsatisfactory service condition. The Tinsplate Workers' Union was formed and they began constitutional agitation to get their grievances redressed. Owing to the repressive policy adopted to meet the unrest, a strike broke out on the 7th April 1929, which lasted for over 9 months, during which workers admirably held out in spite of untold suffering and repression. Many of the foremost National leaders of the country visited Golmuri, and helped and guided the activities of the workers during the strike. The Indian National Congress for the first time thought fit to officially take cognisance of an Industrial strike and lend its wholehearted support to it. Naturally, therefore, the then Bureaucratic Government of Bihar lent its manifold supports to the employers to break the strike. Eventually, the strike had to be liquidated after a long struggle. Thereafter the Union continued a nominal existence. Since then and till the middle of 1937, the labour movement in Tinsplate was practically non-existent. Taking advantage of the changed conditions of the country, and rising general mass-consciousness following the parliamentary election, leaders of the movement renewed their activities, and in the middle of 1937, revived the Union. Membership was enrolled afresh. Men's existing grievances were discussed and formulated. Copies of the same were forwarded to the Management of Tinsplate, and the Government department of Labour. As nothing was done to redress the grievances, unrest and strong agitation followed. The Management replied by victimisation of a number of important Union workers. Meantime a Union was simultaneously started under the auspices of the Management but workers took a bold stand and refused to join this pseudo-union, and be caught in the trap. Agitation centered round the recognition of the union, reinstatement of the victimised hands and grant of reasonable profit-sharing bonus on the lines of Tatas and other serious grievances. In spite of sincere and sustained efforts of the union, no settlement could be reached, and serious unrest among the workers followed, till at last the company closed down the works finally on the 2nd May 1938. The Lockout continued for 72 days. During the period the Company tried its utmost to resume work with newly-recruited labour but they failed. They were then obliged to end the deadlock by agreeing to settle the dispute through a conciliation Board, appointed by the Government of Bihar. The

appointment of the Conciliation Board was announced and normal work was resumed on the 14th July. The Board visited Jamshedpur on the 5th October and completed its labour on the 19th October. The Union, in its memorandum to the Conciliation Board, referred to all previous grievances, along with those arising out of the lockout, and prayed for the redress of them at once. The Board, however, intimated that they would prefer to go through and settle the more urgent grievances, viz., effective recognition of the Union, reinstatement of victimised hands, problems arising therefrom, and the question of the profit-sharing bonus, leaving out other matters and grievances to be dealt with by the Labour Enquiry Committee.

We, therefore, beg to deal with all the items of grievances in this memorandum, and submit that the same may be adequately dealt with, with a view to eliminate possibility of any future complication.

B.—SERVICE CONDITION.

(1) *Recruitment*.—As at present, recruitment is done on the recommendation of the foreman or the departmental superintendent. The practice is liable to give rise to favouritism and corruption.

(a) We demand that men be recruited through the labour exchange, controlled by the Union who will maintain a register of the applicants, and send a copy periodically to the management. Preference will be given to the senior claimants with necessary qualifications. So long as this method is not adopted :—

(b) The General Manager shall personally supervise recruitment, in consultation with a Union representative. In the latter case, close check should be exercised on the foreman or the departmental head against exclusive employment of his nominees and relations.

(2) *Security of Service*.—In an industrial concern, particularly when the Union is not very strong, generally employers suspend or dismiss men according to their own necessity or whim. Most Unions have to fight the employer at the initial stages on this very vital issue as workers' organisations have to zealously guard the security of service of their constituents, while the employers very often lightly suspend or dismiss a man and thereby pave the way for a sustained conflict often

involving heavy financial losses to both sides and dislocation of industry. Against this possibility, we beg to suggest (a) introduction of legislative measures restricting employer's power of dismissal and heavy punishment; (b) introduction of a permanent system of issuing charge-sheet to the workman committing offence for his explanation in defence. (c) Reference of all cases of proposed dismissal to a permanent Labour Commissioner, if one is appointed, who should give his award after hearing the management, the Union and the man reported against.

(3) *Grade System, Promotion and Uniformity of Rates.*—All jobs should be graded with reasonable maximum and minimum rates. A new recruit should be appointed on the minimum rate and gradually rise to the maximum, within a period from seven to ten years according to the skill and experience the job requires and vacancies in higher places should be filled in by a man in the next lower grade or in the next lower job excepting only where expert scientific or technical academic qualification is required. Our argument is based on the fact that a man during his tenure gathers greater efficiency and skill, and there should, therefore, be proportional increased value for the increased efficiency and skill resulting in greater and better output. For example, the job of the Fitter-Helper should have an initial rate, say Re. 1 rising to Re. 1-8-0 in four years. If there is a vacancy for a Fitter carrying say Rs. 2 a day, this Fitter-Helper ought to get the job and his place filled in by the next in the rank and so on; and the vacancy created in the bottom of the last category should be filled in by a new recruit.

There should be no difference in rates of different men in the same job having same service period. Rate for all men should be uniform.

Tatas Sheet Mill is comparable to Tinplate Works with the exception that the Sheet Mill workers have to handle heavier materials. But extra exertion there, is easily compensated by absence of higher skill and craft required for finer tinplate production. Rates and production Bonus in Sheet Mill are much higher than those in Tinplate. Jobs being similar; we demand considerable rise in the rates of Tinplate jobs, to bring it up within reasonable comparison with Sheet Mill earnings.

(4) *General Increase.*—Although, increase of one anna and two annas was given to the men in March 1937, the rates of

Tinplate workers still remain far lower compared to those in Tatas in the similar jobs as referred to above. The average rate of wages of employees in Assam Oil Co., Ltd. (another subsidiary show of Burma Oil Co.) is also higher than the Tinplate average. We, therefore, demand an immediate general increase of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent distributed in a sliding scale from 5 per cent to those getting Rs. 150 and over, to 15 per cent to those getting lowest wages.

(5) *Restoration of Previous Rates.*—Since the starting of the industry, the Company was paying uniform initial rates in all jobs till 1929; and after the strike of 1929 was over, they carried on a drastic re-organisation, cutting down rates of various jobs and individual workers. This reduction of former rates was unreasonable inasmuch as the rates originally given to Indian Tinplate workers in each job were based on a comparative per capita per job production of Welsh and other Tinplate workers in foreign countries. Therefore, when the workers had assimilated the craft and skill, during operation of seven years, there was no reason to reduce the original initial or maximum rates. Besides, when after the collapse of 1929 strike more than one-third of the men became unemployed and were thrown in miserable condition, they were eager to snatch at any job at any rate. Men who, before the strike, were getting Rs. 2-12-0 were now taken on afresh, say, on Re. 1-8-0. Many of them have not yet reached their previous higher rates. It was surely injustice done to many helpless experienced men.

(6) *Continuity of service of re-employed 1929 strikers.*—During and after the strike, quite a lot of these strikers were taken back to jobs. They were, however, treated as fresh employees with previous service broken. We demand that services of those old workers appointed during and after the strike be regarded as continuous.

(7) *Re-employment of 1929 strikers still unemployed.*—The company did not absorb into its service the unemployed 1929 strikers, although quite a lot of inexperienced new hands were recruited. Recently, on the representation of the Tinplate Works' Union, the Management agreed to take back as many of these men as were required from time to time. The process will take years to absorb all. Therefore, we suggest that some more effective method be adopted to re-employ these men quickly.

(8) *Acting allowance.*—Acting allowance should be given universally to all workmen working in a superior place whether

in the same job or a higher job, and the rate of acting allowance should be exactly the difference between the rates of the two jobs. As at present, acting allowance is sometimes paid and sometimes not, and even where it is paid, it is often not paid at the rate of full difference. For example, say, when the difference of two rates is 12 annas the acting man often receives an extra 6 or 8 annas.

Besides the above, if an absentee man's quota work is done by his other co-workers (as is often done in the Tinsplate Company where spare hand is always not provided), his entire wages should be divided among these co-workers.

(9) *Provident Fund*.—Provident Fund rules of the Assam Oil Company (another branch of the Burmah Oil, Co.) entitles a man to full quota of company's contribution after 5 years. We demand that the Tinsplate Provident Fund rules be similarly amended.

10. *Leave with pay*.—As at present, men are given two weeks' leave with pay in the year. As men are mostly engaged in arduous and hot jobs, they should get longer recuperative leave. We demand, therefore, that all men be given one month's privilege leave in the year.

We also demand that all men be, henceforward transferred to monthly-rated categories without effecting their earnings.

(11) *Sick Pay*.—A man so long in the company's service must be maintained by the industry to whose progressive development he directs his energies. Even when he becomes invalid, the position is not altered; therefore, men should get full pay during sickness if certified to be sick by the medical authorities. The Assam Oil, Co. (a sister industry) grants half pay for first 7 days of each sickness and full pay thereafter up to 90 days in all per year. We demand the same privilege here.

(12) *Gratuity*.—Normally, under the climatic conditions of our country, workers cannot continue sustained work for more than 12 to 15 years in intricate, hard and hot industry like the Tinsplate. During prolonged absence from country home, workers become detached from their landed and other possession at home. Already workers in Jamshedpur have become a permanent industrial local population. Therefore, in absence of any other possession the worker must fall back, in his old days or when he is incapacitated, upon his own earnings.

and savings. We, therefore, demand that there should be a system of gratuity payment on retirement at the rate of one month's wages for every completed year on the completion of 12 years' service.

(13) *Fixed minimum days of work.*—In a costly place like Jamshedpur and with their present income, the average workers find it difficult to lose even a single day's wages. We, therefore, demand that 28 days work be guaranteed in a month for all workers.

(14) *Intensification.*—Since the re-organisation as referred to above, men have been complaining of intensified work in every job in every department. In most cases one man was eliminated for every four men. After revival in 1937, the Union put up a strong agitation against heavy intensification and succeeded in getting a few more men appointed in the Pickling, Cold-roll, and Warehouse departments. Recently the Management have recruited some more hands for the Shearing and Opening departments. Even then complaints are persistent that men in some departments do not get time for meal and relaxation during 8 hours of continuous work, particularly when some men happen to be absent. In the Tinsplate Co., no improved mechanisation has been introduced since 1929. Therefore, making allowance for increased efficiency of workers and increase in the total number of force, there is no other factor except intensification responsible for such heavy increase in production. We are strongly against this kind of intensification which denies normal "offs" for meals and relaxation and turns human beings into machines for non-stop production. The intensification has been highest in the departments from Shear Opening to Cold roll. We, therefore, demand that more men be taken on to avoid necessity of high intensification.

15. *Interval for food during shift duty.*—In many departments interval for food was not given till the union started strong agitation. Even now when interval is given, its effect is negatived by the accumulation of work which, the man enjoying interval, has to clear during his shift or after duty-time without extra payment for the same. So, interval for meal and relaxation is given in the name only because it results in further intensification or late-working. The worker often, therefore, prefers to forego his meal and work through. In these departments, spare hands should be provided to relieve men for means so that there may not be any accumulation of work resulting in intensification.

(16) *Reduction of Working Hours.*—Although we are not in possession of experimental data of industrial fatigue and of increase of efficiency attained through reduction of hours of work, it is a fact that legislative restriction of longer hours of work, has resulted in satisfactory increase in output. It has, therefore, been definitely economical for the employers. We suggest, therefore, that further experiment be made to introduce 36 hours week of 6 days of 6 hours each. This will necessitate introduction of 4 shifts day.

C.—GENERAL.

(1) *Housing accommodation.*—There are only about 600 company's quarters and 200 temporary *kutcha* huts and *pucca* houses built by workers themselves in the Tinsplate *basti* against the requirement of 3,300 men. Although the Company, has been building new quarters, the progress so far has been too inadequate to meet the demands. Men whose claim was registered three or four years ago, have not yet got a quarter. It is not easily possible to get rooms on hire and most of the men, without quarters of their own, have to leave back their families at home. This tends to increase immorality, disease and consequent indebtedness among the workers. Besides when two or more families share the same quarter, congestion follows and sickness, mortality, particularly child mortality rate increases. We, therefore, urge for speedier programme of construction providing accommodation at least to 60 per cent of the employees within the next two years.

In the Tinsplate *basti* men erecting their own huts were assisted by grants of loans by the company, which has now been stopped. We recommend that system to be continued and further area to be developed for *basti* purposes and men to be encouraged by loans to build their own houses. Restriction to let out portion of one's own hut on rent, and restriction on free sale of the hut be removed. The company has recently introduced a system of agreement to be signed by such tenants of the *basti* undertaking to sell off the house to a Tinsplate worker within 24 hours, or give vacant possession to the company of the house in exchange of Rs. 40, on the worker-tenants' termination of company's service. We hold this to be illegal; and the company should be directed to give up this method. Further, the ground rent should be reduced particularly in Tata *basti* where rent has been raised. *Bastis* should be further improved by the introduction of outside common latrines, primary schools and free reading rooms.

(2) *Minimum Wages.*—It is well known that the cost of living in Jamshedpur is abnormally high. It is certainly higher than in Patna, Jharia, Jamalpur, and many other industrial centres of the province. On the other hand, industries in Jamshedpur have made satisfactory financial progress during the last decade. The living condition of the working-class, however, has not only improved but deteriorated on comparison. There is no saving to fall back upon in bad days, and indebtedness has increased. As observed before, Jamshedpur has a settled population with industrial tradition and higher initial efficiency and skill. In determining wages for workers, this factor should not be lost sight of. Therefore, taking into consideration the high cost of living, initial efficiency of workers and strong financial position of the industries, a fixed minimum wage should be prescribed. This will eliminate possibility of recruiting labour at a very low rate, as the permanent unemployed at Jamshedpur offers easy recruiting at employer's own term. Our calculation of minimum wages is based on average workers requirements to maintain a family of four (self, wife, and two children) with average diet, house rent and clothing. That comes to (Rs. 20 and Rs. 3 and Rs. 5)=Rs. 28 per month. Food cost, necessarily, increases for skilled and semi-skilled workers. We therefore suggest the following minimum wages:—

1. Unskilled (Men and Women) ...	1	0	0	per day.
2. Semi-skilled Do. ...	1	5	0	,,
3. Skilled Do. ...	1	12	0	,,

(3) *Medical aid.*—There is a general complaint against the medical arrangement of the Tinsplate Co. It was once maintained that the management were not bound to provide medical aid to the employees. We, however, hold the opposite view and that very strongly, for the obvious reasons (i) that in a colonial place like Jamshedpur where private medical aid is not easily available and private practitioner's certificate is not recognised by the Company, the whole responsibility of providing medical facility should devolve upon the employer, (ii) that a very high percentage of diseases is directly or indirectly traceable to the effect of industrial occupation, and (iii) that there are numerous cases of accidents met with during duty-hours. When all these points are taken into consideration, employer's responsibility for providing free and efficient medical aid becomes unavoidable.

The average attendance in Tinplate outdoor Hospital is too high to be adequately dealt with by two doctors, one of whom has to go out to visit patients at home, particularly those in superior position. It should be admitted that the doctor's function cannot be satisfactorily discharged by a compounder. It should also be the interest of a far-sighted employer to get patient-employees cured as early as possible to maintain efficiency and organisation in the industry. Therefore, in self-interest as well as in moral obligation and from humanitarian point of view, medical arrangement should be perfected and made easily available by the appointment of at least two more qualified doctors to the Tinplate Medical department.

(4) *Contract system.—Its abolition.*—We have long been voicing our strong disapproval of contract system of work in permanent jobs in the works. Loading and unloading of materials from the wagons, carrying coal to furnaces and boilers and raw materials to departments and box-making in the Warehouse Department are some of the permanent jobs entrusted to the contractor. Spare labour for departments to work in place of absentees, is also supplied by the contractor. The contractor who is a middle man and must have his margin, employs labour on a much lower rate. Besides, these men have no security of tenure nor guarantee of continuous service even during the week. They are also deprived of other service benefits although they may happen to be working for the company for over a decade.

We, therefore, demand that the contract system of work inside the factory be totally abolished, and the entire force absorbed by the company in the departments, with continuity of service.

(5) *Rest house, creches, and Tiffin Room.*—Many workers do not come home during the interval and a rest house would really benefit them by providing rooms for rest. Men on shift duty and those who do not come home during interval have to take their meals inside the factory. A tiffin room, properly equipped with tables and chairs, and a bath room with wash-tubs should, therefore, be provided. Creches for the children of the women-workers is also an urgent necessity. The Whitley Commission recommended introduction of the same, years ago; and Factories Act provides for Rest House and creches. There should be, however, no further delay to introduce the same compulsorily.

(6) *Education—Adult and children.*—Experience in trade union movement urges us to demand one thing more than anything else for the industrial worker for his future well being. It is compulsory adult education. We feel that the workers cannot realise their responsibilities unless they are educated to certain extent. No doubt, education can be had in various ways : but the scope being limited, the workers must be taught to read and write so that they can be acquainted with new ideas, and events taking place here and abroad. The progress and the well being of the industry also depends to a large extent on the sense of responsibility of the worker. Certain amount of education equip a man better to handle intricate machineries and regulate its process, so much needed for progressive development of Industries in modern times. Educated labour is an asset to the industry indeed. We, therefore, urge on the employers and the Government alike to discharge their respective share of responsibility to educate adult workers and make an intensive arrangement for the purpose. We suggest that primary schools be started in each *basti* to impart lessons in reading and writing and then in history, current events, elementary science and mechanics.

Although there is arrangement for children's education, we consider that it is still inadequate. There being only one High School at Jamshedpur, employees' wards have often to be refused admission. There should be more high schools to relieve congestion. Middle and primary schools are also much crowded. There should be more primary schools particularly in thickly populated *basties*, viz., Tinsplate *basti*, Koiladungri *basti*, etc.

(7) *Indebtedness and Prohibition.*—Indebtedness is a vice and quite a high percentage of the Jamshedpur workers have fallen victim to it. As observed before, among the causes may be enumerated (a) low wage level in comparison with high cost of living, (b) spend-thriftiness born of want of education, (c) high percentage of rate of interest, (d) immorality and drink-habit.

We have urged for the raising of wage-level to enable workers to make some saving to fall back upon during times of need, viz., sickness, marriage and death, annual payment of land rent at home or repair of house, etc. We have also advocated intensive arrangement for adult education. We suggest that an Act should be passed penalising extortion of more than 9 per cent of interest and other usurious methods.

Generally, interest is charged between 12 per cent (by banks and co-operative societies) to 150 per cent by the *Kabuli* and *Marwari* money-lenders. Once a man gets into debt owing to a reasonable necessity, he is damned for ever, as greater portion of his earning goes out of his pocket as interest to the creditor and he remains ill-fed and ill-clothed with his family and gets into further debts to meet his current expenses. Protective legislation is, therefore, an urgent necessity. We beg to draw your attention to the important fact that the very beneficial intention of Act IX of 1937 amending section 60 of the Civil Procedure Code has been negatived by the wily money-lenders. The Act provides against attachment of any portion of a monthly salary below Rs. 100; but, by a twisted interpretation of the clause, the money-lender now attaches the entire salary. The Act should be amended to provide proper checks.

We have pressed for provision of housing facility to enable workers to live with their families which minimises chances of immorality.

We also demand total prohibition to be introduced as early as possible and abolition of 75 per cent of the drink shops immediately and closing of the remaining ones during payment period, as an interim measure.

It is needless to say that drink-habit brings in greater portion of misery to a worker's home. There is no denying the fact that drink habit in Jamshedpur, like other industrial places, is abnormal. There is no other possible course than prohibition to cope with this abnormal situation. If money-lenders are controlled, prohibition enforced, living with family facilitated and wage level raised, the chances of indebtedness will be minimised and a peaceful life to the workers almost guaranteed.

(8) *Anti-Trade Union Activity—its suppression.*—Before long, most of the employers here looked suspiciously towards the trade union movement and employed all resources to crush it. Their efforts were successful to a great extent during the period between 1930 and 1936. It seems that some of the employers have changed their out-look but it is certain that some have not. They abhor healthy development of trade unionism and collective bargaining. Therefore, if they agree to recognize workers' union under pressure of circumstances, they only wait to crush the movement at a more convenient moment. For the purpose, they start their own pseudo-unions, and subsidise unions or its so-called leaders to create divisions among the

workers and destroy their solidarity, little realising that healthy trade unionism is a boon to the industry. In Jamshedpur, the employers employed bad-characters to threaten worker-members of the union and to suppress them in various ways. For the growth of healthy trade unionism, it is imperative that legislation should be undertaken, compelling employers to grant effective recognition to the unions representing majority of the workers, to give up encouraging rival unions and never to employ bad-characters for the purpose of anti-union activities.

(9) *Labour Legislation. Factory Act.*—Due to prevalence of occupational diseases, it has become necessary to have expert medical examination to ascertain liability on the industry to victims of such diseases. For example, recently a man in the Hot Mill Department of the Tinsplate, working on the furnace, while on duty, suddenly lost his eye-sight through a flame-flash. It has been maintained that it was no case of accident compensation; but all the same, the poor man has sustained serious and permanent injury. Another man developed an incurable pain on the back-bone and cannot stoop. There occurred similar peculiar cases of disease in the pickling and acid plant.

We, therefore, urge that a Medical Officer with expert knowledge of industrial diseases be appointed by the Government with power to inspect factories to investigate into and allocate responsibility for the above and similar cases. Intricate cases of accidents should be referred to him at the first instance.

Number of prosecutions under the Factories Act has been rather low in the province. We suggest that the Government may not overlook or miss even a single case of possible prosecution.

To keep up a constant vigilance, the number of Factory Inspectors should be increased and the Factory Inspectors should maintain touch with labour organisations.

“ Off ” days provided for by the Factories Act should be paid.

(10) *Trade Disputes Act.*—The Trade Disputes Act should be amended so as to provide for appointment of either—

- (a) a Court of Enquiry,
- (b) a Board of conciliation, or
- (c) a Conciliation Officer,

on the application of one or both the parties to the dispute to settle it before, during or after a strike or lockout.

(11) *Workmen's Compensation Act.*—The Act should be so amended as to provide for :—

1. Appeal to the Sessions Judge and finally to the High Court against the judgment of the Compensation Commissioner whenever the party so wants.
2. Obligation on the part of the employer to employ to an easier job a partially permanent-disabled worker even after he has received compensation for such disablement.
3. Payment of compensation at double the present rate.
4. In case of death, payment of forty-two months' wages without limit at four thousand rupees as at present.
5. In cases of temporary disablement, payment of full wages from the date of accident.
6. Medical Examination of the injured by nearest Government doctor or by any other qualified medical man to certify injury and recommend percentage rate of payment of compensation. The Company's Medical Officer, being more or less dependant, should not be authorised to discharge such function.
7. Payment of compensation in all cases of accident irrespective of cases except when the injured is drunk and is warned by the Foreman against handling a particular machine under such drunken condition.

(12) *Legislation for compulsory education.*—There should be legislation making it compulsory for adult workers to attend institutions started for their education.

(13) *Legislation to protect indebted workers.*—There should be comprehensive legislation to control money-lending agencies limiting the rate of interest to 9 per cent per annum, prohibiting attachment of whole or part of wages under a certain amount and penalising aggressive money-lenders using abusive language, threat or physical force and besetting at factory gates or at workers' quarters.

SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

Mr. J. N. Mitra,

Deputy President, Tinplate Workers' Union,
Golmuri, Jamshedpur.

1. *Employment Agency.*—In our main memoranda we stressed the necessity of importing some amount of control to the recognised Workers' Unions on the process of recruitment of workers for the industry. Since the Labour Enquiry Committee met at Jamshedpur, our experience in dealing with the various managements of the local industries (after settlement reached with several of them) has strengthened our previous opinion regarding Union's control on the employment machinery. It is a known fact that during strikes and industrial disputes, managements receive support from a section of loyal workers. Unfortunately in Jamshedpur, a large section of these loyal supporters happen to be drawn from bad characters. We find that in drawing new recruits in vacancies, preference is freely given to the relations and nominees of these loyal workers, to the detriment of deserving candidates without such connections, many of whom happen to be previous employees of the company, since resigned or eliminated through previous strikes. Besides, claims of relations of other employees (other than loyals) are often superseded. This being the position, we reasonably demand that the recognised workers' union should be represented on the employment agency to enforce strict impartiality and adherence to merit and similar other important considerations.

A mixed board consisting of members of the management, head of the department requiring recruits and representatives of the Unions should consider the candidate's petition for appointment.

2. *Premises for recognised unions.*—All land in Jamshedpur, Moubhandar, Musabani and in similar other industrial places in the district belong to the owners of the industry. As such, it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible for the Unions, to secure land to build their own premises or rent

quarters to house their offices and their non-employee office-bearers, unless each owning company consents to lease out land or houses in its property. Our experience shows that the companies, particularly in recent times, do not agree to rent their buildings or lease their land for such purposes. On the contrary, recently they have been putting obstacles in getting private houses on rent or any of its employee's rented quarter to be used for Union purposes.

We demand, therefore, that the industrial proprietors of land should be asked to render housing facilities to the recognised Unions when such Unions apply for the same and are prepared to pay the usual rents.

3. *Medical*.—In our main Memorandum we stressed the necessity of enlargement of medical facilities to the workers and their families. Almost all the managements here are averse to private medical practitioners. In many cases, they have definitely shewn to be hostile. A tenant of a *basti* was ordered to eject his sub-tenant who was a private medical practitioner. The Companies must, therefore, *compulsorily* discharge the fullest responsibility of supplying efficient and adequate medical help to the employees and their families.

We request that legislation be recommended in this direction.

4. *Workmen's compensation*.—We have fully dealt with this matter in our main Memoranda. Cases have been brought to our notice since, of deaths occurring from no accident but from sudden undiagnosed diseases either in the works itself or after being removed from works to the hospital. Managements generally in such cases, advance the plea that these are deaths due to normal causes. We are emphatically of opinion that such deaths must be due to untraced occupational diseases or due to certain shock received unnoticed. There are other instances of deaths occurring from accidental injuries received during occupation in the works but not reported to the company's medical heads or to the departmental heads, through ignorance or otherwise. We recommend that the Workmen's Compensation Act be amended to provide for fullest compensation for death or incapacitation in such cases.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee,

Jointly by

1. The Copper Corporation Workers' Union, Maubhandar.
2. The Copper Corporation Mines Labour Union, Mosabani.

“ The Indian Copper Corporation was formed in July 1924, with a capital of £2,25,000, with operation confined to Mosaboni area.

Development operations were hampered through lack of funds and in 1926, the Management of the Indian Copper Corporation was taken over by Anglo-Oriental and Investment Trust, Limited. Debentures for £3,50,000 were issued. The base capital supplied for the erection of Power Plant, concentration Mills and Smelter on the north side of Subarnarekha river. It was known from the commencement, that there was not sufficient market for refined copper in this country for the output which it was expected to be obtained. The Board of Directors had originally decided to instal a Rolling Mill for the production of yellow metal sheets and circle in India. In 1930, this Rolling Mill was erected and in 1932, a further debenture of £1,25,000 supplied funds to increase production by 50 per cent. This extension of Plant was completed in October 1933 and production from that time onward increased year by year.”

(EXTRACTS FROM NOTE OF THE COMPANY.)

It will be seen from the above that the Company started in 1924, with a capital of £2,25,000, a sum too inadequate for the purpose of smelting copper ores under modern methods with improved machinery. So after a couple of years of mining operation, the company found it impossible to continue successfully and so raised a debenture of £3,50,000 in the year 1927, when concentration mills and smelter could be set up at Moubhandar near Ghatsila. Further debenture of £1,25,000 had to be raised again in 1932, to enable raising of production to a profitable higher level. It is to be noted that the Company started with inadequate capital; and for the first eight years of its existence, it could not set up proper machinery to fully exploit the possibilities. Since the increase of output, the company was established on a firm footing and immediately surplus profit was made available to declare a dividend which

starting with 2½ per cent in 1933, by gradual rise, jumped up to 15 per cent in 1937. The shareholders earned more than three per cent on their investment on the average, including the years rendered unproductive through inadequacy of capital. The share value of the concern rose to 400 per cent in 1937, and even today, at the dull state of market, it is quoted at more than 200 per cent. The debenture holders finding it more lucrative, got most of their debentures converted into ordinary shares of the same value.

Thus in the course of a few years time, the Indian Copper Corporation which started with a small capital, attained to a strong and stable financial position through efficiency of labour force coupled with a systematic reduction of wage cost. The wage level was gradually lowered, while efficiency of labour continued a steady improvement. This will appear from the following figures. In 1932, total production of refined copper and yellow metal was 9,880 tons and the total cost of labour was Rs. 9,26,526, i.e., an average of Rs. 93.8 per ton. In 1935, the average wage cost of production was brought down to Rs. 75.5. In 1936, it further went down to Rs. 74.2 and in 1937, to Rs. 72.8 after deduction, of course, of an amount of £24,000 (spent exclusively on development scheme). The total labour cost was reduced by about 25 per cent and no increase was granted to the old hands. The average earning of the worker came down to Rs. 23.4, in 1937, from Rs. 29.3 in 1935. As for the efficiency of the workers, we quote below from the address to the Board by Sir Godfrey Butler Fell, the chairman of the Board of Directors, reprinted from the financial times of June 1933:—

“ I have already endeavoured to convey to you the high opinion which I formed about the ability, energy and loyalty of your staff in India, and I hope that you will allow me to communicate to Mr. Woakes, the General Manager, Indian Copper Corporation, Limited, and to all the members of its staff as well as to all classes of Corporation's employees, a message of appreciation from you of their good work and of the result they have achieved.”

It is interesting to note that when the company was gradually prospering, economic and social condition of the worker was deteriorating proportionately, in spite of the greater efficiency resulting in huge saving of the company. The difference of the cost of production in 1932 and 1936 is roughly about Rs. 20 per ton, and for a production of 18,000

tons in 1936, the company clearly saved Rs. 3,60,000 in labour cost alone, when the total gross profit of the Company in that year is calculated at 301 lacs and in 1937 at Rs. 231 lacs. During these years of phenomenal prosperity, the Company did not improve the financial conditions of their labour in any way, although they paid huge dividends and equal percentage of bonus to covenanted staff. Demands of workers for a general increase, provident fund, leave with pay, production or special bonus, reduction of house rent were totally turned down.

In recent months, particularly after the strike started, the Company has been complaining about the poor quality of ore. While those in Mosaboni have depreciated a little in percentage, i.e., from 2.97 per cent, other richer ores are being opened in Dhaboni, Badia and Latia. One should not lose sight of the fact that with the improved and up-to-date machinery, much poorer ores are being exploited at profit in America. The Indian Copper Corporation are said to possess 30 years of Ore Reserve. So the workers' demand for better service condition, increased wages and other financial considerations is irresistible.

In order to understand the view-point of the workers in matters relating to their grievances, we beg to present the following facts.

Since the inception of the company the workers of the Mines at Mosaboni and also of the Factory at Moubhandar have not been favoured with any concession, usually available to the industrial workers of the locality. There was discontentment brewing among them since long. As a result, the workers united and formed an Union a year ago, after a short strike of the unskilled labourers. The Union placed the grievances of the workers before the Management and pressed for its redress for several months. The Union was recognised and renamed as the Mosaboni Mines Labour Union on the 16th March 1938. Simultaneously Moubhandar workers also set up their separate Union called the "Copper Corporation Workers' Union" on the 6th December 1937.

Both the Unions have been registered and recognised by the Corporation, and both the unions are guided by responsible Trade Unionists, Professor Abdul Bari being the president of the Mosaboni Mines Labour Union and Mr. J. N. Mitra, president of the Copper Corporation Workers' Union at Moubhandar.

During the first eleven years of its operation, the Indian Copper Corporation had no such pronounced labour trouble although discontent was growing due to insecurity of service, and other unsatisfactory service and living conditions. In October 1936, there was a strike of the unskilled labour owing to reduction of their wages by about 20 per cent. About six months later, there was yet another strike which was suppressed by the intervention of the Military Police and promulgation of section 144. In August 1937, there was unrest and trouble again owing to a branch of the Labour Federation of Jamshedpur being started there. The branch of the Labour Federation of Jamshedpur, however, could not carry confidence among the men and the Copper Corporation Workers' Union came into existence at Moubhandar in December 1937. The Mosaboni branch of the Labour Federation also became lifeless owing to its president, Mr. Homi's vacillating tendency and with the abrupt dismissal of its Vice-President, Mr. Jagannath Prasad. On the 14th March 1938, there was a *hartal* and on the 16th March 1938 a new Union under the name of Mosaboni Mines Labour Union was formed. Immediately afterwards a list of grievances and demands was forwarded to the Management and to the Government. The Company failed to redress the grievances and began to adopt dilatory tactics to shelve the burning questions. On the 20th April 1938 a worker named Murgesan was assaulted by the Main Shaft Engineer and a Tea Boy was summarily dismissed. A *hartal* followed which developed into a strike and lasted up to the 11th July 1938. At last the dispute was referred to a Conciliation Board appointed by the Government of Bihar which gave its award on the 17th November 1938. The terms of settlement arrived at by the Conciliation Board provide for a joint Committee of the Management and Union both at Moubhandar and Mosaboni, to go into all cases of disputes and grievances of workers and settle them amicably. The Unions in both places have been experiencing great difficulty to translate the above award into action owing to the aggressive spirit of the management. The management, it seems, have not profited by the lessons of the last strike which resulted in heavy loss both to themselves and to the workers. The Union will be grateful to the Labour Enquiry Committee if the latter can successfully persuade the management to a change of heart and thereby establish amicable relations between the parties concerned.

Besides, the Conciliation Board concerned itself with the immediate problem of settling the dispute and its immediate

causes, i.e., recognition of the Union, re-instatement of the victimised workers, leave with pay, provident fund and profit sharing bonus. They left out from their consideration all other grievances and demands of the workers including most urgent ones, to be more thoroughly examined and settled by the Labour Enquiry Committee. We, therefore, beg to discuss these grievances in the memorandum and submit that these may receive due and sympathetic consideration of the Committee.

Due to the strike at Mosaboni, and partial lock-out and uncertain conditions in Moubhandar, and its consequence, we could not forward elaborate replies to the questionnaire, we are, therefore, dealing with the different groups of questions concerning the economic and social conditions of the workers.

Service Condition.

(1) *Recruitment*.—Since the last strike was over, recruitment is carried on by the Company's Labour Officer who invariably selects men related to or recommended by either the blackleg labour of the strike or those still clinging to Homi's defunct Federation. The aim, evidently is to create and keep up a permanent tension among the employees. The same policy of encouraging the handful of followers of the defunct branch of the Federation obtains also in Moubhandar. We, therefore, urge that recruitment should be controlled by the General Manager himself and a representative of the Union.

(2) *Security of service*.—Practically speaking there is no security of service either at Moubhandar or Mosaboni. We have forwarded a long list of dismissed and suspended men to the Ministry of Labour. The case is increasing every day. An ingenious method adopted since the past few months, particularly at Mosaboni, is to examine the health of the worker on his return from home on leave by the Medical Officer who in many cases, declares such men unfit for further service. These men mostly happen to be Madrasees who took a distinctly active part during the strike and thus, came to the bad books of the Mosaboni management. If this mischievous tactics is not checked sooner, the old strikers will be thrown out of service. In Moubhandar, one Lala Dada was unreasonably dismissed months ago and in spite of continuous representation, the management refuses to reinstate him. Recently another worker, Joy Singh of the Rolling Mill, has been summarily dismissed and similarly, in spite of repeated representation, the management remains adamant. The

General Office clerks at Moubhandhar are kept under constant terror of dismissal, as they happened to represent their grievances, particularly against the highhandedness of and ill-treatment by the Chief Accountant through the workers' Union. Under the circumstances, we demand that security of service be guaranteed by passing of Labour Legislation restricting employers power of dismissal, long suspension and demotion; and by introduction of charge-sheet system and finally by making it compulsory for the management to refer to the Labour Commissioner or Government Labour Officer all such cases of heavy punishment.

(3) *Grade system. Promotion and Uniformity of Rate.*—There is no grade system and uniformity of rates for the same job. On examination you will find variety of rates for the same job. Promotion is governed by favouritism. The Labour Officer has directed his attention towards a number of communities and both new appointments and promotions have been reserved for them. This is to create a division in the rank of labour. A lot of efficient workers do not get any encouragement through promotion or increase of rates. Black-leg labour, recruited a few months ago during the strike, are being unduly favoured with rises. We, therefore, demand that all increment of wages and promotions should be guided by consideration of seniority and efficiency. There should be uniformity of rates in the same job.

(4) *General increase.*—There has been no general increase since the inception of the Company except one given to the men getting up to rupee one and annas eight a day as a result of the award of the Conciliation Board. Our figures appended herewith will show that there has been very high lowering of the cost of production from year to year through the efficiency of men. Besides, the rate of wages is exceptionally low, particularly in places like Moubhandhar and Mosaboni where cost of living is very high. We, therefore, demand a twelve and half per cent increase on the wage bill on sliding scale, more to the lower paid men and less to the higher paid.

(5) *Acting allowance.*—Acting allowance is not allowed. We demand that the acting allowance at the full rate of difference between the lower rate and the rate of the higher job where the man acts, be given in all cases.

(6) *Leave with pay.*—Two weeks' leave with pay has recently been awarded by the Company, as a result of the

Union's persistent representation. Both considering the arduous nature of mining work underground and in the Rolling, and working in dangerous jobs such as, Reveratory Furnace, etc., you will find that it requires at least a month's wage to recoup one's health. We urge that the same may be granted.

(7) *Gratuity*.—Due to the arduous nature of the work both underground in the mines and at the factory, particularly in the smelting departments, reveratory furnace, boiler, etc., men cannot work for more than fifteen years in the copper works. Labour is drawn from various parts of the country and being long away from home lose contact with and become dispossessed of the home properties. Owing to low rate of wages, they cannot save much. We, therefore, demand that there should be a system of gratuity payment on the retirement of service. This should be paid at the rate of one month's wages for every completed year of service on completion of twelve years.

(8) *Intensification*.—There has been gradual intensification both at the Mines at Mosaboni and the smelting plants at Moubhandhar. For almost the same number of men in both the places the production has been increased by 100 per cent. This 100 per cent increase cannot be attributed to efficiency. Particularly the output at the mines has been more than doubled. As the percentage of copper has decreased, more quantity of ore is needed to get one ton of refined copper. Besides, the depth has been increasing year by year, making it more difficult to work underground. Taking all these facts into consideration, we arrive at a rough idea about the increased volume of work. In many places, particularly on the Rolling and Smelting Plant men do not get the very necessary rest pause. We demand that more men should be appointed to provide spare hands in these jobs. More relief should be provided underground. It has been complained that underground men have often to walk more than half a mile to drink water and then they have to complete their quota of work. These cases of intensification should be eliminated.

(9) *Interval for food*.—It is a very great disadvantage to the workers that men do not get interval for taking food underground nor food is allowed underground. A man has, therefore, to work at a stress for eight hours without food. This is really inhuman. Men should be allowed to take food inside and proper intervals should be granted for taking food.

(10) *Reduction in working hours.*—For underground and hard work in the Rolling Mill, Boiler, Power House, Reverberatory Furnace and Converter and Roaster Plant, hours of work should be reduced; or at least rest interval should be given for half an hour after every hour of work.

(11) *Housing accommodation.*—In Mosaboni about 20 per cent of the workers are housed in the Company's quarters and at Moubhandar about 30 per cent of workers occupy Company's houses. A small percentage of the workers is drawn from the adjoining villages. Over 60 per cent of the men have to find accommodation either with friends or relations or to build *kacha* huts or to pay high rent to a private landlord. In a colonial place like Moubhandar or Mosaboni the employer must be held responsible to provide housing accommodation to the employees. While the Company made huge profits and gave large sums of dividends to the shareholders, the poor workers could not even find a shelter to rest their heads in. Besides, the quarters provided by the Company are of unsatisfactory nature. In the rainy season, water leaks through the roof and owing to the thin walls, summer heat becomes abnormal inside the room.

In the *busti*, land rent is too high and no roads and sanitary arrangements have been provided. We demand that at least 60 per cent of the men should be provided with quarters and improved *bustis* should be provided to the workers to build their huts in. The company should provide loans on easily recoverable system for building purposes.

(12) *Minimum Wage.*—The wages given to the unskilled and skilled labour, both at the Mines and the Factory are too low to provide sufficient maintenance to them. We have shown above that the efficiency of the men has greatly increased. The company has been making higher and higher profits. The cost of living is high. We, therefore, urge that a minimum wage scale at the following rate be fixed :—

	Rs.	a.	p.	
(i) Un-skilled	0 12	0 per day.
(ii) Semi-skilled	1 2	0 per day.
(iii) Skilled	1 8	0 per day.

Men appointed as unskilled labour should not be made to work in the place of skilled labour unless the former is so promoted and given higher rates. It is a general complaint at Moubhandar and Mosaboni that men appointed as *coolies* are made to work in places of semi-skilled labour.

(13) *Medical aid.*—Medical aid is insufficient. In both places patients have to wait long before they get medical attendance. From the nature of work there are frequent accidents. There should, therefore, be more doctors and compounders. Medical aid should be free. At present, all workers have to contribute to the maintenance of the Medical Department. The European Medical Doctor is unnecessarily kept on a high salary. With this money, at least six very qualified Indian Doctors can be engaged. Equipment in the hospital is very meagre. In a place like Mosaboni or Moubhandar the employer should be compelled to undertake entire responsibility for furnishing adequate and efficient medical aid. There should be one qualified woman doctor for Mosaboni and Moubhandar. There is only one nurse at each place who also is dismissed frequently and very often no nurse is attached to the hospital.

At Mosaboni, the Medical Officer has been declaring a number of men returning from home as unfit for further duty. It is alleged that the management desire that particular men should not be retained in the Company's services. The Government Civil Surgeon of the district may kindly be advised to take the matter up.

(14) *Rest-house and Creches.*—Rest-house and tiffin rooms inside the factory at Moubhandhar and on the surface at Mosaboni should be provided to enable men to take rest or food during interval. Creches should also be provided for the children of the women workers at both the places according to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour.

(15) *Education.*—At both the places, Middle English Schools should be provided for the education of the children of the workers. The existing primary schools do not meet even the elementary requirements.

Further arrangements should also be made for the education of adult workers. Education creates responsibility and higher sense of duty among men. It also helps to grasp ideas for proper handling of modern machineries. Thus spread of education among adult workers results in increased efficiency among workmen. It is, therefore, profitable to the company to get the adult workers educated. The management should, therefore, make some arrangement for education of adults.

(16) *Prohibition.*—It is needless to stress on the evils of drink habit, particularly among uneducated workers. We,

therefore, urge that the Government should introduce prohibition both at Moubhandar and Mosaboni.

(17) *Employers' attitude towards Trade Union.*—The management has throughout been suspicious and hostile towards the Trade Union movement. There was a time when on the slightest suspicion of having Union tendency a man was dismissed and “camped-out”. It was through successive struggles and strikes that the workers could establish their Union. But even then, as soon as the Union was formed, the management started repression, as a result of which there were *hartals* and lastly a strike at Mosaboni. There was partial lock-out in Moubhandar and the workers had to put up a grim struggle for months. The Union tried in vain to bring about peaceful relation. But their correspondence to London Office also could not bring a good result. After the termination of the strike, when it was normally expected that the management would change their policy towards the Union and respect the terms of settlement arrived at the Conciliation Board, not much improvement has been in evidence. Rival unionism is being encouraged in both the places. The remnants of the dead Labour Federation are being encouraged to revive their activity. The then, strike-breakers are always favoured with increases and transferred to more suitable places. Union's representation on day-to-day grievances, particularly against punishment, etc., is not given proper consideration. If the Union presses for due promotion of a deserving group, it is never considered. But some concession is often shown at the recommendation of the few remaining adherents of the Labour Federation, although the Company knows very well that the Labour Federation has hardly been following worthy ways. In short the company's policy has been to favour the adherents of a particular Union and to repress the members of the others. We submit that the Company should be compelled to discontinue this policy, otherwise serious discontent, that is now accumulating, will burst out any moment with the previous disastrous results.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Cable Workers' Union, Golmuri.

1. *A brief history of the Cable Workers' union and its past activity.*—To redress the very serious grievances of the Cable workers in respect of their living and service condition, the Cable Workers' Union was formed for the first time in 1928. After a brief existence for over a year, the activities of the Union had to be suspended, owing to the general set-back of the movement following country-wide repression then prevailing. The Union was not formally wound up and it carried on a nominal existence, till it was revived as a reconstituted body on the 4th September 1937. The minimum demands and the urgent grievances were formulated and placed before the management immediately afterwards. Through long waiting, men became impatient and a tense feeling ensued. The management replied by taking drastic actions. Five of the workmen were, consequently, dismissed and many others suspended. At last, after two protest *hartals*, the management declared a lock-out on the 9th May 1938, which continued upto the 1st January 1939. On the 2nd January, normal work was resumed following an understanding between the Workers' Union and the management to refer the points of dispute to the Government of Bihar for settlement through a Conciliation Board. Subsequently, both the parties agreed to settle the dispute by mutual discussion, which ultimately took place on the 21st February 1939. In the said discussion, effective recognition of the Union, general increase and reinstatement of five victimised hands were gone into and settled. Prior to the aforesaid lock-out, the Company had made an announcement promising introduction of a system of provident fund, leave with pay and maternity benefit. Details of provident fund and leave with pay were placed during this discussion. The terms of settlement, as agreed between the parties, were referred to the Board of Directors and are now awaiting their final confirmation.

This settlement, however, had to leave out such important problems as minimum wages, raising of the rate of different jobs according to the increased efficiency, provision of housing

accommodation, compulsory scheme of adult education, sick-pay, all round production bonus, gratuity benefit, etc., etc. We are, therefore, discussing these items in the present memorandum and embodying our demand thereto.

2. *A brief history of the Company.*—In this connection, it will be interesting to give a brief history of the growth of the Indian Cable Company, the first of its kind in India. The Company was established about the middle of 1922 with a nominal capital of 18 lacs of rupees. The initial paid up capital of the Company was too low and it had to be raised twice; it now stands at 27.88 lakhs. It should be noted that the plant even now lacks in modern machineries and equipments in use in the United Kingdom and other cable producing parts of the world. The production, therefore, has been hampered; and progress and development of the industry largely checked. When the initial difficulties attending a new enterprise, particularly under unfavourable climatic condition, were overcome after the first few years of its operation, the Company began to make steady profit. In the year 1936, the net profit was Rs. 74,975, in the year 1937 Rs. 3,88,030 and in 1938 Rs. 1,77,737.

The Company is said to be catering to about 12 per cent of India's needs; and therefore, there is every possibility ahead provided proper equipment is arranged for. Much of the Company's alleged difficulties to pay higher wages similar to those paid by the Tatas and the Tinplate is, therefore, due to the deficiency in equipment of the plant.

3. *Recruitment.*—Recruitment is, in general, done by the foreman or departmental heads, giving opportunity of corruption and favouritism. The recruitment should be supervised by the Manager himself and a representative of the Union.

4. *Security of service.*—Most of the misunderstanding and the struggle between the employers and the employees has its origin in summary dismissal and other kinds of punishment meted out to the workmen. If a charge of offence is brought against a worker, the Works Manager should personally make preliminary enquiry and then either drop the matter or issue a charge-sheet to the worker reported against. But this is not generally done in most industries. Employers seldom realise that no labour organisation can tolerate the extreme mode of punishment, namely dismissal, under whatever name it may be carried. Through summary dismissal a man is suddenly

thrown on the street with his family. There can be no justification in the measure and a Trade Union has to fight it tooth and nail. We demand that security of service must be regarded as the basic point to build up a good relation between the management and the workers and for industrial peace. We recommended that through legislative measure, the employers be controlled against summary dismissals; such matters as disobedience and similar other offences should be dealt with jointly by the representative of the management and the Union. Cases of disagreement should be referred for arbitration. In short the Union must have effective recognition.

5. *Punishment*.—Workmen are often penalised (suspended or dismissed) for slight offences. A recommendation of a departmental head on a *chit* is enough for a man being thrown on the street with his helpless family. No charge-sheet is made out. Accused worker is not asked to explain his conduct or deny the charge against him. The management hardly realises the consequence of undeserved dismissals and suspensions. Our experience is that during troubled times one unjust or abrupt case of punishment results in direct action involving huge loss to both sides.

As suggested above, alleged cases of offence should therefore, be reported to the manager and a copy of the charge should be sent to the Union. Either the man himself will send his explanation or the Union will make enquiries and forward its findings to the joint body of the management and the Union-work-sub-committee to dispose off the matter finally.

Dismissal should be considered as “ Capital Punishment ” in the industry and should, therefore, be eliminated or avoided as far as possible.

6. *Wages*. (a) *Reduction of Wages rate*.—Taking advantage of the permanently unemployed labour in Jamshedpur, the management of the Cable Company have reduced the wage-rate by 30 per cent since 1930 and thereby brought down the already lower standard of living of the Cable workers. The reduction of rate has taken place in individual cases also. For example, a man dismissed for a light offence, when re-employed even after a week, generally gets a much lower rate. Both these kinds of reduction of rate should be stopped.

(b) *Rise in Wage rate*.—The wage rate in the Indian Cable Company is too low in comparison with those prevailing in other local industries, although the cost of living is the

same throughout. Consequently, the standard of living has become very low and workmen live in permanent debt and poverty. Average wages per month in Tata Iron and Steel Company, Limited, are Rs. 47-7-0, in Tinplate Company Rs. 43-3-0 and in Indian Steel and Wire Product, Company, Limited, Rs. 24-10-0, whereas those in the Indian Cable Company, Limited, are Rs. 23-9-0 only. So it will be justifiable to demand a rise in wage rates for all jobs, and consequently to all workmen, particularly, in view of the fact that the labour cost per ton of production has been brought down from Rs. 30-8-0 in 1932 to Rs. 8-9-0 in 1937 (vide appendix "A") and the company is now on a firm financial basis and thus able to bear the additional cost. There should also be uniformity of rates for different men in the same job and consequent raising of the lower rate to its higher level.

7. *Promotion*.—No doubt, promotion is governed to certain extent by consideration of efficiency. But in absence of any criterion or a competitive test, it is difficult to detect deficiency among certain individual workers and promote one on the plea of efficiency. This also tends to favouritism of the departmental in-charge who recommends promotion. Duration of service must also be considered an important factor and the senior man, if found able to carry out the higher job, should have the prior claim to promotion. No new recruit should be appointed to the higher job which should be filled in by promotion and new recruit, if required, should join the lower stratum of the ladder,

8. *Acting allowance*.—Principle of giving acting allowance is a sound incentive for undertaking greater responsibility. The Cable management have so far been unique in not granting acting allowance to the men working in superior position temporarily. This method is unreasonable and unwise. We demand that acting allowance be given to all employees working in superior places until they are permanently transferred to the position on higher wages. The acting allowance should be exactly the difference between the rates of the two jobs.

9. *Grade system*.—Quite a good number of men have been working since the starting of the Industry, 15 years back. In absence of a system of grade promotion, a large number of men have been receiving the same wages as they started. Meantime, their efficiency has increased many-fold and their encumbrance also has largely increased. It is only proper,

therefore, that they should receive graded higher wages. We demand, therefore, that the jobs be graded guaranteeing maximum rate after a period of seven years. We suggest that the details be worked out by a committee consisting of the representatives of the management, the labour and the Labour Assistant to the Ministry, who shall submit their report to the Enquiry Committee within a fortnight from its appointment.

10. *Bonus*.—Introduction of production bonus by the Tatas in 1928 resulted in enhanced production, while introduction of Profit Sharing Bonus gave further impetus for still higher production. Other industries such as the Indian Steel and Wire Product and the Tinplate have introduced the system resulting in greater contentment to the workers and rise in production. There is no reason why the Cable management should not profit by introducing the system. On the contrary, absence of the system results in discontentment. We, therefore, press for the introduction of a scheme of Production and Profit Sharing Bonus.

11. *Minimum wages*.—After examining the available data regarding the cost of living, efficiency of men, and the financial position of the Cable industry, we recommend that the minimum wages be fixed for all men and women workers. We suggest that the minimum wages for unskilled workers should be fixed at 12 annas, semi-skilled at Re. 1, and skilled at Re. 1-4-0 per day.

12. *Leave with pay*.—A visit in the Cable works will conclusively show that men have to work under abnormal condition of heat and noise. In apparently easier jobs also brain work is too severe. Recuperative holidays, at least for one month in the year, are, therefore urgently called for as against 14 days now sanctioned.

13. *Sick pay*.—Sick pay as a rule should be universally sanctioned. In the Indian Cable Company, where the wage-rate is too low, men continue, as we have observed before, a hand to mouth living. They cannot afford to lose even a day's wages. They, therefore, risk greater danger and continue to report to duty even during the first stages of fever or such illness. The result is that condition grows worse and men lose their health. If sick pay is granted on medical officer's recommendation, necessity for work under such condition will disappear. When general health condition is thus improved, production is bound to rise. The employers will not be the loser by granting sick pay.

14. *Compulsory leave with pay.*—At times, number of men are sent home for a period extending upto a month owing to mechanical or electrical break-down of the plant, boiler inspection, want of orders, or shortage of raw material. We claim guaranteed continuous work subject to the provision of Factory Act, particularly, in a continuous process industry like the Indian Cable Company. If the works be closed, payment should be made.

15. *Intensification of work.*—Intensification which is a common feature in most of the industries here, has been at its worst in the Cable industry. When production has increased by over 250 per cent since 1930, operatives have been reduced from 26 to 18 in the Crossely Block, from 4 to 2 on the Longitude Machines, 2 to 1 on the Larmuth Machine and Small Strand and so on. Even allowing for efficiency resulting in per capital production, we maintain that intensification has been in the proportion of 1 to 3. This serious matter should be thoroughly enquired into and method of harmful intensification stopped.

16. *Shift.*—There are multiple and overlapping shifts, so much discouraged by the Whitley Commission. Then again, men have to work on difficult shift termination at 3 o'clock in the morning. There should be a thorough re-adjustment of shifts converting them into simple and convenient ones. A chart (Appendix "B") will show the number of shifts at present.

17. *Maternity benefit scheme.*—The maternity benefit scheme should be amended as per recommendation of the Whitley Commission; that is, four weeks' leave with full pay before the date of delivery and four weeks after should be granted. There should be no restricted clause denying benefit to those not completing a prescribed period of service with the Company.

18. *Gratuity.*—With present intensification of work, men become incapacitated after continuous work in an industry for about 12 years. With the low wage-level of the Cable Company, and the high cost of living in Jamshedpur, workers cannot save anything to fall back upon in their old days or when they become incapacitated for further occupation. We therefore, demand that a gratuity payment on the basis of one month wages for every year of completed service be given to every employee on retirement after he has served the Company for 12 years.

19. *Housing accommodation.*—The Indian Cable Company has so far provided with 130 quarters accommodating 189 employees out of a total of 850 workmen in the factory. The details of the quarters are as follows :—

Type of quarters.	No.	Occupants.	Rent per month.		
			Rs.	a.	p.
A Type (Single)	8	8	8	0	0
B Type „	10	10	4	0	0
M Type „	28	27	5	0	0
R. N. Type „	24	24	2	4	0
C. Type (Double)	40	80	No rent.		
Kutchu C. Type	20	40	„		
	130	189			

The Company has thus provided housing accommodation to about 20 per cent of the employees. It is also to be noted that the quarters so far built, particularly C. Type and R. N. Type ones are below the standard of Jamshedpur. It is desirable that each man should be provided with a quarter so that he can live in family circle which results in better health condition and morality. The housing problem should be tackled in two ways. (A) The Company should build and provide rented quarters to at least 60 per cent of its employees. Thus it has to build yet another 200 quarters. Certainly, the quarters now to be constructed should be of better hygienic and sanitary condition. (B) Other 40 per cent of the men should be encouraged, with easy building loan, to construct their own houses in the Company's *bustee*. Space in the small *bustee* owned by the Company has already been exhausted. It should, therefore, arrange for lease for another big *bustee* to accommodate at least 3 hundred houses. The sanitary condition of the *bustee* should be improved with roads, drains, lights, latrines, clubs and primary schools.

20. *Education.*—Education is the most important point, which requires immediate and serious attention of the Government. Unless education can be provided to the adult workers to a certain extent, much of the good work done by the Union or Welfare Organisation is wasted. It is equally incumbent on the employers to educate their employees. Unless workers are educated, they cannot handle intricate machineries necessary for development of industries. They have thus to lose the experienced old workers and recruit educated but raw,

workers to fill up vacancies where educated men are required. Vigorous drive should be made for the education of the adult workers. There is also lack of arrangement for the education of employee's children in the Cable Company area. Not even a fraction of the children of school-going age has provision for education and can seldom secure admission in the neighbouring Golmuri School which itself is congested owing to the rush of the children of the Tinplate Workers. One more Primary School is, therefore, urgently needed to accommodate intending children.

21. *Medical Aid*.—Arrangement for medical aid of the Cable Company is inadequate. The Dispensary is situated within the works and no medicine is available before 7 A.M. and after 5 P.M. and nobody can attend the Hospital outside the duty-hours without obtaining previous permission. Besides, for complicated cases more qualified doctors have to be called from Jamshedpur at the patients' cost. We demand that the Hospital be remodelled, properly equipped and removed outside the Factory and if the Company does not appoint a more qualified doctor, the cost of expert medical consultation should be borne by it.

22. *Rest house, creches and tiffin room*.—There is no accommodation inside the works for taking rest during the intervals. In hot weather and rainy season, men have to take shelter under the trees. We, therefore, strongly urge on the Company to provide creches as recommended by the Whitley Commission.

We also strongly urge for the erection of a Tiffin Room where during the interval for food men, on general and shift duty, can take their meal at ease. In absence of a dining room men have to take their food at odd places in objectionable environments.

23. *Indebtedness*.—The low wage of the Cable Workers is a particular reason of their heavy indebtedness. In absence of any Co-operative Credit Society or facility of getting easy advance from the Company, men have to borrow money from the blood-sucking money-lenders such as *Kabulies*, *Marwaries*, etc., at an incredible rate of interest varying from 36 per cent to 100 per cent. So, once a man is entangled into debts, owing to an unavoidable item of expenditure, such as, marriage, *Shradh*, repair of houses or paying off of land-rent at home, he can never get out of the mesh. He is doomed for ever. Interest takes away greater portion of his small income and

he goes on starving with his family. We suggest that a Co-operative Credit Society be immediately started and further arrangement for proper education be made and all grog-shops be abolished. Total prohibition supported by intensive adult education is needed to protect the workers from indebtedness. On top of all these, a comprehensive Act controlling the practice of usury and high-handed extortion and realisation of exorbitant interest, should be passed in the line of the Central Province Debtors Protection Act of 1937 and Debtors Safety Act of Bengal.

24. *Workmen's compensation.*—We recommend that Workmen's Compensation Act be so amended that the workman becomes eligible to receive his full daily wages beginning from the date of accident. We further recommend that men partially disabled should be taken back to lighter jobs even after they have received compensation.

APPENDIX A.

Total Progress Report of the Wire Mill Department of the Indian Cable Company, Limited, from April 1931 to March 1937.

	Total Production Tons.	Total Wages. Rs.	Labour cost per Ton. Rs.
April 1931 ..	79.9	2443.4	30.58
May 1931 ..	77.4	2628.4	33.97
June 1931 ..	52.9	2611.2	49.37
July 1931 ..	48.6	2292.1	47.67
August 1931 ..	72.0	2122.9	29.48
September 1931 ..	56.1	1327.0	23.65
October 1931 ..	94.4	2608.7	27.33
November 1931 ..	75.5	2200.2	29.14
December 1931 ..	100.5	2328.3	23.17
January 1932 ..	126.3	2881.7	22.81
February 1932 ..	168.8	3507.0	20.77
March 1932 ..	109.1	2624.6	24.24
Total ..	1061.5	29,595.5	27.88
April 1932 ..	120.2	2701.7	22.47
May 1932 ..	175.3	3772.7	21.52
June 1932 ..	102.4	2227.7	21.75
July 1932 ..	59.0	1834.2	31.08
August 1932 ..	82.2	1942.1	23.62
September 1932 ..	107.6	2066.2	19.20
October 1932 ..	103.0	2113.6	20.52
November 1932 ..	124.3	2315.7	19.62
December 1932 ..	91.1	2107.5	23.13
January 1933 ..	89.4	2006.0	22.44
February 1933 ..	115.0	2014.7	17.5
March 1933 ..	117.0	2467.3	21.09
	1286.5	27,569.4	21.43
April 1933 ..	125.1	2466.3	19.71
May 1933 ..	185.0	2886.7	15.6
June 1933 ..	158.2	2653.1	16.17
July 1933 ..	128.5	2479.9	19.29
August 1933 ..	144.8	2578.5	17.8
September 1933 ..	99.9	1975.1	19.77
October 1933 ..	178.2	2334.7	13.1
November 1933 ..	181.1	2372.9	13.1
December 1933 ..	144.6	2325.9	16.08
January 1934 ..	133.7	2369.1	17.72
February 1934 ..	75.3	1915.4	24.11
March 1934 ..	155.2	2277.9	14.67
	1709.6	28,535.5	16.69

	Total Production Tons.	Total Wages. Rs.	Labour cost per Ton. Rs.
April 1934 ..	126.9	2078.2	16.38
May 1934 ..	139.2	2110.9	15.16
June 1934 ..	142.0	2077.9	14.63
July 1934 ..	221.5	2686.1	12.12
August 1934 ..	213.3	2407.2	11.28
September 1934 ..	187.4	1982.7	10.58
October 1934 ..	262.2	2339.7	8.92
November 1934 ..	196.0	2145.5	10.95
December 1934 ..	353.1	3070.4	8.69
January 1935 ..	444.8	3694.4	8.30
February 1935 ..	360.2	3267.9	8.91
March 1935 ..	392.5	3437.5	8.71
	3039.1	31,298.4	10.29
April 1935 ..	473.6	3677.4	7.76
May 1935 ..	481.7	4292.6	8.91
June 1935 ..	490.0	3892.4	7.94
July 1935 ..	477.9	4541.5	9.5
August 1935 ..	331.9	3548.9	10.69
September 1935 ..	265.6	3055.5	11.5
October 1935 ..	327.8	3282.1	10.01
November 1935 ..	218.1	2871.9	13.17
December 1935 ..	154.1	2063.4	13.38
January 1936 ..	198.6	2428.9	12.23
February 1936 ..	298.4	3302.9	11.07
March 1936 ..	299.2	3476.4	11.62
	4016.9	40,433.9	10.06
April 1936 ..	345.5	3476.375	10.062
May 1936 ..	348.471	3437.89	9.859
June 1936 ..	237.417	3022.122	12.729
July 1936 ..	196.58	2658.34	13.523
August 1936 ..	241.58	2772.94	11.478
September 1936 ..	269.64	2516.4	9.332
October 1936 ..	339.57	3686.5	10.856
November 1936 ..	168.78	2542.46	15.064
December 1936 ..	343.58	3117.254	9.072
January 1937 ..	275.37	2665.946	9.681
February 1937 ..	302.527	2689.068	8.888
March 1937 ..	396.498	3522.309	8.884
	3465.513	36,107.604	10.42

APPENDIX " B "

Shifts.	Working Hours.
' A ' Shift (a) (48 hours a week) ...	From 6-45 A.M. to 11-30 A.M., 1 P.M. to 5 P.M. On Saturday—6-45 A.M. to 11 A.M.
(b) (54 hours a week) ...	From 6 A.M. to 11 A.M. and 12 noon to 5 P.M. On Saturday—7 A.M. to 11 A.M.
' B ' Shift (54 hours a week) ...	From 5 P.M. to 9 P.M. and 10 P.M. to 4 A.M. On Saturday—12 noon to 4 P.M.
' C ' Shift (a) (48 hours a week) ...	From 6 A.M. to 11 A.M. and 11-30 A.M. to 2 P.M.
" (b) " ...	From 6 A.M. to 11 A.M. and 12 noon to 3-45 P.M.
" (c) (54 hours a week) ...	From 6 A.M. to 3 P.M. (with $\frac{1}{2}$ hours interval).
' D ' Shift (a) (48 hours a week) ...	From 2 P.M. to 10 P.M. ($\frac{1}{2}$ hour interval).
" (b) " ...	From 3-45 P.M. to 8 P.M. and 9 P.M. to 1-30 A.M. On Saturday—10-15 A.M. to 2-30 P.M.
" (c) (54 hours a week) ...	From 2 P.M. to 11 P.M. ($\frac{1}{2}$ hour interval).
' E ' Shift (a) (48 hours a week) ...	From 10 P.M. to 7 A.M. ($\frac{1}{2}$ hour interval).
" (b) (54 hours a week) ...	From 10 P.M. to 7 A.M. ($\frac{1}{2}$ hour interval).

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Wire Products Workers' Union, Jamshedpur.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE COMPANY.

The Indian Steel and Wire Products, Limited, was started in the year 1926 under the proprietorship of Mr. Indra Singh, who purchased the factory at three lacs of rupees, and started with six or eight Nail Machines, producing about 150 tons of nails per month, Wire Mill, one big bench of 12 drums, three small benches of 8 drums each and a very small Pickling Department, producing about 250 tons per month, a small scale Galvanizing Department which used to run for not more than 6 to 8 days a month, a Barbed Wire Department with one machine which used to run very seldom and a small Machine shop. In the above departments people used to work very hard. Employment was non-continuous and irregular. It depended entirely on small and irregular market orders. Men would be sent back if no orders were in hand. So, none could expect more than 15 days of work in a month. During the period the company used to purchase unfinished wire from outside as they had no Rod Mill of their own. Steadily the small industry developed till it expanded to a big nail producing plant equipped with Rattler and Shipping section turning out from 600 to 700 tons per month and Wire Mill Department producing from 2,000 to 2,200 tons per month.

2. *Labour Organisation.*—The Wire Products Workers' Union came into existence to give expression to the general discontent and grievances of the employees and secure redress of the same through collective bargaining through constitutional means. The service condition is unsatisfactory. Ill-treatment to the workmen by the supervising staff is intolerable. Union was established in August 1938. Immediately, a list of genuine grievances was formulated and forwarded to the management for redress.

(3) *Service conditions of workers.*—(a) *System of appointment.*—In case the company wants any new hands, it puts up a notice and the Managing Director selects the man and trial is taken. In most of the cases, the selection is made

from among the relatives and nominees of the supervising staff. Workmen working in this company for six or eight years do not get a chance for the appointment of their relatives. So, we urge that preference be given to the relatives of the old employees at the time of recruiting new hands.

(b) *Punishment.*—Whenever men are suspended or penalised in any other way, no proper enquiry is made before and only the Foreman verbally intimates that on such and such reported charge, so and so is suspended or sent home. No explanation is taken. In the Rod Mill the procedure is yet more whimsical and unjust. For nothing the German Officers would ask a man to go home without any kind of enquiry. They would not even give instruction to the Time Office to give the 'check' back. If one insists, one would be cursed, threatened and even pushed out. We demand that there should be no punishment without previous enquiry and charge sheet be given to the man for explanation and the Union be fully satisfied with facts, for such a punishment.

(c) *Promotion.*—Promotion is rare in this company. Whenever any vacancy to a higher job occurs, chance is given to the relatives and favourites neglecting the most efficient desirable men in the job concerned. So we urge that favouritism in promoting men to any post must stop and senior and able man of the department concerned should get the higher post for which he is experienced and capable.

(d) *Compulsory leave.*—Compulsory leave is given to all the workmen in case of failure of power, even men on duty are sent home. Men on Nail Machine, Wire Mill, Pickling, Wire Mill Shipping, Rattler, Galvanizing and Barbed Wire Departments are given compulsory leave (without pay), some times for weeks together in case of Boiler repair, want of acid and due to shortages of supply of wire from the Rod Mill which is not drawn and stored up previously. In the Wire Mill section recently, a new rule has been introduced due to which the whole of the department gets 25 Trolleys of raw wire to draw. It takes 4 hours to finish so the remaining 4 hours are made absent to all the workmen of the Department; thereby these workmen are getting a permanent compulsory leave of 4 hours every day. Compulsory leave is given in the Rod Mill, Shipping, Billet pushing and loading side where men are sent home, on the plea that there is less work. Thus on many days poor workman comes from places four or five miles off, both during the day and night but has to go back home disappointed although the Rod Mill is a huge profit producing department.

The whole Rod Mill is down during furnace repairing when all the workmen are given compulsory leave except a few hands. In the Rod Mill Department, when wire reel is rolled, half of the shipping Cooling-Bed workmen are given compulsory leave. Therefore we demand that the system of "compulsory leave" and "sending home" be stopped at once.

(e) *Intensification*.—In the Rod Mill a number of men have to work double duty. In the Hot Mills, as the work is hard, men work with periodical rest, without which they cannot work. But in transporting hot rods from the yard and some other jobs, men do not get interval for rest and have to work for 8 hours. If workmen refuse to work in continuous strain, being physically unable to work, they are suspended and threatened with dismissal. In some places, when the men finish their job at the Hot Mill, instead of giving rest, they are asked to bring wood from a distant department for the furnace; thus they are deprived of rest required to get ready to take up the next turn of work on the hot jobs. In the shipping yard of the Rod Mill, the *coolies* are made to load a number of wagons irrespective of 'Hour' limit. Often they have to work much more than 8 hours. In Nail Machine packing section people are given contract; consequently, they have to work hard and extra hours. These kinds of intensification of work affect vitality and longevity of the workmen to a great extent. We demand that intensification of work be stopped to save the lives of the workmen.

(4) *General increase of Wages*.—Since the starting of the company, neither a general increase nor a justifiable regular periodical increment has been given. Increment is given only to the favourites and relatives of the officers. If others have to be given a rise, favourites and relatives are sanctioned higher increase as compared with the rest. As for instance, recently some workmen were given increment. The most deserving hands were given at anna 1, annas 1-6 and annas 2; whereas the favourites were given much more. Some men, mostly favourites, often get an annual rise while there are many who do not get any increase for years together. So we urge that a regular systematic impartial increment must be given to all the workmen of the industry particularly in view of the fact that the rates of similar jobs in the Tata Iron and Steel Company and Tinplate Company are much higher.

The profits of the company are comparatively much higher than those of the above companies. So we demand a general increase of 25 per cent to the low rated workmen and 10 per cent to those getting above Rs. 100 per month.

(5) *Privilege leave with pay.*—Three different systems of privilege leave with pay:—(1) for monthly rated men; (2) for daily rated men and weekly paid men. Monthly rated men get one month privilege leave, five days casual leave and two days festival leave with pay. Secondly, the daily rated men get 14 days privilege leave and 2 days festival leave. The privilege leave is not allowed to be taken for more than one month at a time though there is rule that it can accumulate up to three years. Thirdly, the weekly-rated men get no leave at all; even festival leave is not granted to this category of workmen.

Considering the hard work done in this Company, we demand one month's privilege leave with pay for all the workmen including the weekly rated people as the work of these weekly rated workmen is hard and exhausting enough like that of daily-rated workmen and it is indispensably necessary for recouping and revitalising their health which wears out and damps down due to a year's continuous hard work.

So, we strongly demand that all the weekly-rated workmen should be made daily-rated because though these workmen work year after year with all other employees of the company, they are not entitled to enjoy the benefit of the Provident Fund which is the only saving to fall back upon in old age. The weekly-rated workmen do not enjoy the benefit of the Credit Society of the Company. Due to their exclusion, these poor men are some times compelled under pressure of need to go to usurious money-lenders who take a very high rate of interest and thereby the poor people get into trouble.

(6) *Gratuity.*—Normally under the climatic condition of our country, workers cannot continue sustained work for more than 12 to 15 years in intricate, hard and hot industries like Wire Products. During long absence from home, workers lose contact with their landed property and other possession at home. Therefore, in absence of any other possession, workers must fall back in their old age on their savings. We, therefore, demand that there should be a system of gratuity payment on retirement at the rate of one month's wages for every completed year on completion of 12 years' service.

(7) *Fixed minimum days of work.*—In a costly place like Jamshedpur and with their present rate of income the average workers cannot afford to lose even a day's wages. And moreover, in this Company, "Rod Mill" runs from the Sunday night-shift keeping other departments idle. We, therefore, demand the introduction of 28 days work in a month for all the workmen.

(8) *Bonus system.*—Though this company makes an abnormal profit, comparatively higher than other sister industries and its character of work is similar to that of other companies, we do not get any sort of 'Bonus' in our company, while other companies, like Tata and Tinsplate, give 'Bonus' to their workmen.

We demand, therefore, a General Bonus system giving at the rate of 25 per cent of the pay to all workmen.

Production Bonus in our company is given to some workmen of the production departments without any definite rate. We demand that this Production Bonus should be given to all the workmen of the productive departments at a reasonable percentage. Profit Sharing Bonus should be a reasonable percentage of the gross profit of the year.

(9) *Grade system.*—As there is no grade system there is no fixity of initial rate and of that at other stages. Then there is no uniformity in rate of different men on the same job. Rate of jobs is much lower than those in Tinsplate and Tatas. So, we demand that all jobs should be graded with a reasonable minimum and maximum rate of the job concerned and gradually it should rise to the maximum within a period of eight to ten years. A regular periodic increment is highly essential. As the family of the workmen expands, the expenditure and maintenance charge of the family with the children increases. One more legitimate sight of workmen for increment is that, as days pass on, they become more experienced and efficient and thereby give better and more service to the employer.

(10) *Sick pay.*—A man in company's service should be looked after by the Industry when through work or otherwise he is invalidated. And this sort of invalidity due to sickness is very natural as the work is extremely exhaustive. Therefore, men should get full pay during sickness, if certified to be sick by any medical authority.

(11) *Compensation.*—If any workman meets with accident inside the work then the number of days he is unfit to work must be paid for in full and in case of any perpetual invalidity of some part of the body caused by the accident, the full valuation should be given. In this company, nothing is given to the workmen for the days they remain in hospital and unfit to work. Cases of perpetual invalidity are some times not paid and some times, even when paid it is not paid in the same proportion to all for the same case.

So, we demand that compensation must be given to the employee for the injury and defect caused by accident inside the company, without violation of any of the cases.

(12) *Acting allowance*.—Acting allowance should be given universally to all workmen working in a superior place whether in the same job or higher job and the rate of acting allowance should be exactly the difference between the rates of two jobs. At present acting allowance is paid in some places only. Where it is paid it is not paid at the rate of full difference. For example, say, when the difference of two rates is Re. 1; acting man receives an allowance of annas 8.

Besides the above, if an absentee-man's work is done by his co-workers (which is a daily happening in the Wire Products) the absentee-worker's wages should be divided among those co-workers.

(13) *Minimum wage*.—Cost of living in Jamshedpur is high. Men are getting into debts when all the industries of Jamshedpur are making abnormal financial progress from the last decade. There is no savings of the workmen to get help during bad days. So in time of fixing up minimum wage rates of the workmen, three points must be kept under consideration.

- (a) High cost of living.
- (b) Efficiency of workmen.
- (c) Strong financial position of the company.

This will stop the method of recruiting and giving men a low rate at the sweet-will of the employers, as it is an open truth that the starving labourer accepts whatever rate is offered to him by the employers irrespective of his qualification, experience and hardness of the job.

We demand that the following rates of minimum wage would be introduced :—

	Rs.	a.	p.	
Unskilled (Both men and women) ...	1	0	0	per day.
Semi-skilled (Both men and women) ...	1	4	0	„
Skilled (Both men and women) ...	1	12	0	„

(14) *Piece work system*.—This system exists in the Nail Machine Department and Wire Mill Department except in the case of a few fitters. These people are paid a low rate *e.g.*, annas 12, annas 14, Re. 1, Re. 1-4-0 and Rs. 1-8-0. Due to

this piece work system wages are unevenly distributed from Rs. 30 to Rs. 100. This wide gulf of difference in pay for the same kind of job is due to favouritism of the supervising staff which is possible in piece work system. The Provident Fund of these workmen is cut according to their low fixed rate of Rs. 20, Rs. 26, and Rs. 30 but the average monthly pay they get is from Rs. 30 to Rs. 100. Thereby they are losing a considerable amount of benefit out of the Provident Fund of the company. When they will get gratuity it will not be paid at the rate of their average pay per month but will be paid according to their low fixed rate; so here also the workmen will lose a very high amount. In case of death due to accident or accidental injury inside the works, the compensation they will receive will be calculated according to the low rate. The Privilege Leave they get is with the low rate of pay.

So we demand that this system of work should be abolished at once.

(15) *Restoration of previous job.*—Some workmen of the Wire Drawing Department have been transferred to the Galvanizing Department on the ground that they are all of weak health and there is no work. But we see that 80 per cent of these transferred hands are strong enough to work in their previous jobs and as regards the plea of no work, we know that there are new men who are given chances in the Wire Mill Department on several jobs.

So we demand that these old employees should be taken back immediately to their former department wherefrom they have been transferred only with the idea to give chances to the favourites and relatives of the supervising staff.

(16) *Housing accommodation (Town and Busti).*—There is no housing accommodation for the workmen in this company. Labourers come daily from very distant villages to their duty. Thus, in chilly winter, hot summer and stormy rainy seasons they come to their duty. So, we demand that all the workmen should be provided with shelters in two different ways; one town arrangement and other *busti* arrangement.

This *busti's* land must be company's own, and plots of land should be given, with a loan of certain amount to enable the needy and unsheltered poor workmen to build their "Kholee". There must be sufficient water-supply, lights and roads in the *busti*. As there is no proper medical aid in this company, so provision for proper medical treatment must be

made with a small indoor hospital like that of the Tinplate and this must be situated in between the Town and the *busti*.

There is no arrangement to give education to the children of the employees. So we demand from the employers and the government that schools for giving compulsory education to the children must be arranged immediately. Labour (male and female) should be given education in their leisure time. We expect this from the Bihar Government as a vehement illiteracy campaign is in progress in this province.

(17) *Rest House and Creches*.—Though there is a clear provision of rest house and creches in the Factory Act, the management has made no such arrangement yet for want of which *rejas* (female labourers) undergo great difficulties with their tender children. Poor labourers cannot take their meals at comfort. So, we demand for an immediate adequate arrangement of the same.

(18) *Anti-Union activities of the Management*.—Since the Union started from last August, 1938, and in spite of its legitimate and constitutional activities to remove the grievances of the workers through collective representation, the management was bent upon crushing the Trade Union movement in various ways as mentioned below :—

(a) As soon as the Union was formed and Trade Union activities began by putting forth the legitimate grievances of the workers before the management for removal the company indirectly, started anti-union activities. Active members of the Union were persuaded to cease connections from the Union, but being unsuccessful to allure them in this way, the management went so far as to coerce and threaten them through the supervising staff. Some men were won over by allowing handsome increase to their wages, thus trying to bring a split amongst the wage earners. No increment has been given to men, who are active members of the Union, though their claim is overdue. The supervising staff very often does propaganda inside the works to undermine the Union and tempt the workers saying that the Union cannot do any good unless they favour the workers.

(b) Having failed to counteract the Union activities by the above method, the management resorted to direct action.

At first they suspended some important members of the Union without any rhyme or reason. It may be mentioned here that seven months ago one of our Committee members was suspended on the mere plea that he would be called back after proper investigation; but till now, he is being kept outside the works.

Another Committee member who had been working satisfactorily for more than one year, one day addressed a meeting ventilating grievances and the next day he was transferred from his lucrative job to a hard and strenuous one, beyond his physical capacity and now he is sitting idle. The next drastic step to curb and set back the Union activities was taken by the management by arbitrarily discharging three prominent workers on 5th December, 1938, including the General Secretary of the Union, without any charge sheet. They were verbally informed not to go to work any more. In this way the management is causing strained relation between labour and capital.

ENGINEERING.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The East Indian Railway Labour Union, Jamalpur.

Jamalpur is one of the biggest labour centres in the Province of Bihar. The total strength of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour employed here is above 7,000, excluding the clerical and supervising staff. The Jamalpur Workshop was originally established by the old East Indian Railway Company, Limited (now defunct) who managed its affairs up to the end of year 1924 when on the 1st January 1925 the Government of India took over its management and entrusted it to their Railway Department. Thenceforth the local workshop is being managed by the Railway Board through the Agent (now General Manager) of East Indian Railway.

The transference of administration from the hands of a British Company into the hands of the Government of India was acclaimed by all sections of the employees as they were fed up with the rank display of favouritism, etc., to the Europeans and Anglo-Indians by the Company and step-motherly treatment of the Indian Employees (especially the labour). They had cherished the hope that the Government of India would ameliorate their condition, provide better amenities and grant more facilities and privileges. In the state management, the distribution of "Revenue" or income would be in such a manner that the labourers would have greater access to it and the overhead class a lesser access than the case was during the Company's "regime". In short, they had anticipated that under the fostering care of the state, the Jamalpur Factory would be converted into an ideal or exemplary workshop and the Indian Section of the Jamalpur Town will be considerably improved. They were quite ignorant of the fact that the fate of the lower paid labourers would not be bettered at the hands of a bureaucratic Government whose predilections were naturally in favour of the privileged and higher paid staff; the labourers now had such a bitter experience of that "grim" fact that they now prefer the good old days of Company's Administration even with all its evils and injustices.

The Railway Board (with state), however, did not take any hasty step and a few years lull was given to the labourer before launching colossal attack on their pay or privileges. The Board acted with diplomacy and adopted the policy of divide and exploit by the pursuance of their ingenious policy. The Railway Board achieved extraordinary success, so much so that there was not a single strike although the service condition of the labourers was considerably worsened.

However, things have now come to such a pass that the present state of affairs will not last long and a great upheaval is imminent if nothing is done to improve the situation. It is gratifying to note that the Indian National Congress has taken cognizance of the exigency of the Labour problem, "an unfathomable abyss". It had envisaged in its election Manifesto of the last general election a policy and a programme in respect of industrial worker. To be precise, the programme or policy can be interpreted to be as follows:—

"To secure to the Industrial labourers (1) a decent standard of living, hours of works and condition of labour in conformity as far as the economic conditions of the country permit, with the international standard (2) a suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and the workmen (3) protection against the economic consigencies of old age sickness and unemployment (4) right of worker to form unions (5) the right to strike for the protection of their interest."

To implement the assurances given in the Manifesto, the Government of Bihar (a Congress Government) have appointed a Labour Enquiry Committee to enquire into the problems of the industrial workers (Railway, too, and Industry) of the province. The prolonged neglect of the cause of labourers by the bureaucracy-ridden Government in the past had reduced their conditions to one of extreme distress but the aforesaid assumption of the Indian National Congress gives us hope that the Congress Government can succeed where the bureaucracy has failed. It is, therefore, worthwhile to suggest some ways and means for redress of grievances of the labourers.

To be short, the Government and employers (in the case of Jamalpur both are the same) should strive for removing the inferiority complex of the "labourers". The workers have to achieve at least the following ends and the Government should extend their help in the matter. They have got:—

- (1) to improve their earnings so that they may raise their standard of living which is nothing but miserable,

- (2) to remove their indebtedness,
- (3) to educate their children and to educate themselves as far as possible,
- (4) to improve their social habits and to give up the habits of drink;
- (5) to find ways and means for their occupation in healthy activities during leisure hours and to reduce hours of work,
- (6) to remove certain beliefs and superstitions which are a drag on their abilities and efficiency,
- (7) to protect themselves from the economic consequences of unemployment, sickness, old age, etc.

As we are concerned with the Jamalpur Labour mainly, so we shall confine our observation on the above said points in respect of Jamalpur Workshop staff only.

(1) *Earnings*.—The earnings of Jamalpur staff are very low in comparison with the earnings of their brothers in profession employed in other railways. Nay, not only that; even in the workshops of the East Indian Railway at Lilloah and Lucknow labourers are paid much more than their Jamalpur brothers. The East Indian Railway has two Locomotive workshops at present, one at Jamalpur and the other at Lucknow. A skilled workman at Lucknow is generally paid Rs. 40 to Rs. 70 per month whereas at Jamalpur hardly 400 skilled workmen get Rs. 40 to Rs. 54 and the rest 3 thousands of them draw only Rs. 18 to Rs. 38. (Lucknow staff are mainly daily rated; hence their monthly pay stated above is approximate, subject to slight fluctuation, but the staff at Jamalpur are all monthly paid). To get some specific example of the difference between the pay of Jamalpur staff and Lucknow staff two witnesses of G. I. Foundry and Brass foundry may be examined. A few moulders have been transferred from Lucknow to Jamalpur and the difference can well be found out by comparing their pay with Jamalpur moulders.

It may be contended on behalf of the authorities of the local workshop that such differences were introduced by the old company and not by the Railway Board or the Government of India and as such they cannot reduce the pay of Lucknow staff or Lilloah staff. In this connection it may be mentioned that the Railway Board revised the scale of pay of Jamalpur

Workshop staff in 1930, but they did not care to raise their pay so that it might be brought on the footing of Lucknow or Lillooah staff.

A very atrocious scale of pay called the Revised Scales of Pay (1934) has been introduced into the Railway and is applicable to all railway workers appointed on or after the 16th July 1931. Even in this scale of pay, Jamalpur Workshops have received step-motherly treatment, which will be clear from the following figures:—

Approximate no. of sanctioned post of skilled and semi-skilled.

Labour.

Revised scale of pay.	In Jamalpur.	Lucknow (Char-bagh.	Lillooah.	Lucknow Alambagh
44-2-80 ...	2	1,700	185	405
30-1-40 ...	400	(Pracketed 3 grades).	2,500	(2 grades bracketed.)
22-1-28 ...	3,000	...	3,200	...
17-1-27 ...	1,500	...	...	1,300
15-1-21 ...	1,800	...	...	...

Unskilled labour.

	Jamalpur	Lucknow C. B.	Lillooah.	L. K. O. Alambagh.
Number ...	1,000	400	800	450
Scale of pay ...	Rs 13-1-17	Rs. 15-1-18	Rs. 13-1-21	Rs. 15-1-13

The classification is not on fair and equitable basis.

(It may be noted in this connection that Jamalpur Workshop is the biggest workshop of this Railway.)

From an analysis of the proportion of scales of pay it will be clear how Jamalpur labour is treated by the Railway High Command. In Bihar, labour is cheap; so why will they pay more? This is not so. No impartial persons can deny that Jamalpur labourers are given neither just nor equitable pay and therefore, an enhancement of their pay and scale is warranted. But instead of enhancing the pay, the authorities have decided to reduce the pay of new recruits.

The Railway Command appears to be very jealous of the pay which the local labourers receive and as such they have introduced the aforesaid Revised Scales of Pay by which the workers have been hit hard. The following table will make it clear:—

Skilled Workers.

Approximate posts.	Old Scales of pay. Rs.	Revised scales of pay. Rs.	Percentage of reduction.
400	42—3—54	30—1—40	26%
3,000	18/22—2—38	22—1—28	26½%

The above-said Revised Scales of Pay (1934) is applicable to all staff appointed on or after 16th July 1931 who are called "New entrants". The Government of India are pursuing a very objectionable policy, i.e., the policy of discriminating between the old employees and "new entrants" and thus exploiting the labourers by taking advantage of their weakness. Even in the last economic depression, when old scales of pay were in full force, only 10 per cent emergency cut was introduced and that too only 6½ per cent in case of those who were getting less than Rs. 100. But now they want to reduce the pay of those who are to get even less than Rs. 50 by 26 per cent. There can be no justification for this reduction. It is really very absurd to think that a skilled workman will have to spend his life on a wage of 11 annas to 14 annas per day. Another absurdity of the revised scale may be ascertained from the fact that the scale of a semi-skilled workman has been fixed at Rs. 17—1—27. So according to this scale a semi-skilled fitter or mechanic will get Rs. 27 per month and a skilled fitter or mechanic will get Rs. 28 per month only. Does the Government of India want to introduce "communism" amongst Jamalpur labourers? Otherwise why is there such a nominal difference of pay between semi-skilled and skilled workmen? By this we do not mean that high scales of pay have been fixed for semi-skilled workmen. Their grade, too, requires substantial enhancement. We have only exposed the fallacy of the revised scale of pay which appear to be more whimsical than reasonable.

The petty clerks have also been hard hit by the revised scales of pay. In the Company's time, grade V of clerks was fixed at Rs. 28—4—80; but only after a few years' of taking over management by the state, the grade was reduced to Rs. 28—3—52. There are roughly five grades of clerks.

No. of sanctioned grades.	Old scale. Rs.	Co-ordinated Scale.	Revised scales of 34. Rs.
Grade I	200—10—250	..	130—10—180.
Grade II	126—8—150	..	100—10/2—120.
Grade III	105—5—120	90—0—0	65—5—85.
Grade IV	84—4—100	75—0—0	} 30—3—45/3—60,
Grade V	28—4—80	28—3—52	

From the above it will appear that the Railway authorities have amalgamated the last two grades of clerks, viz., Grade IV and V and decided on a common grade with a reduction of 40 per cent from the old scale and 25 per cent from the co-ordinated. In addition to these, there are time-checking and material-checking clerks. At Lucknow, time-checkers' grade is Rs. 40—3—70 but at Jamalpur it is Rs. 24—2—40 old and Rs. 30—3—45 revised. We, therefore, suggest the following clerical grades:—

				Rs.
Grade I	...	...	...	160—10—200.
Grade II	...	...	...	126—8—150.
Grade III	...	...	...	105—5—120.
Grade IV	...	...	...	45—5—100.
Time checkers	...	...	...	40—3—70.
Material checkers	...	...	...	40—3—70.

It may be noted in this connection that Material checkers or Time checker clerks or other clerks are appointed under the same qualification although their nature of work is different, but the Material checker and Time checker clerks are subsequently absorbed as clerks. Hence corresponding scales have been proposed.

Water tax from subordinate staff are not charged but in the Rampur Colony, residents (clerks, etc.) are being charged (@ Re. 1-8-0 per month for two taps and Re. 1 for one tap) every month. This has caused great hardship and should be discontinued at once.

Now to the scales of pay of workmen.

It must have been ascertained from the family budgets that every workman has to support on the average, 5 members. Hence, we cannot recommend a minimum wage less than Rs. 20; for that will provide only Rs. 4 per head. From the above circumstances, we propose the following scales of pay, for the workmen:—

		Rs.
Unskilled	...	20—1—30 (coolies, office menials).
Semi-skilled	...	30—2—42.
Skilled directly recruited or promoted from apprentices.	...	42—3—60 E. B/5—75.
Skilled promoted from semi-skilled.	...	42—3—60 E. B/5—75.
Chargemen	...	85—10—125.
Trade Apprentice	...	10—2—20.

PAY FOR LEAVE AND HOLIDAYS.

The following Leave Rules are in force at present.

Rule 1.

Item I.—Those in service prior to 1st January 1923 on a pay of Rs. 20 or above and members of Provident Fund.

- (1) 15 days casual leave in a year.
- (2) Privilege leave to the extent of 1/11th of duty subject to a maximum of 4 months at a time.
- (3) Sick leave for 3 years.

Item II.—Those getting below Rs. 20.

- (1) 15 days paid holidays in a year only.

Rule 2.

Those in service from 1st January 1923 to 31st December 1934.

Pay.	Leave allowed.
(a) Rs. 45 and over	... As described in Rule I item (1) (No paid holidays).
(b) Over Rs. 30 and under Rs. 45.	(1) 15 days' casual leave on full pay. (2) 15 days' sick leave on full pay. (3) 15 days' casual leave on half-pay. (4) 15 days' sick leave on half-pay. (No paid holidays).
Rs. 21 to 30 per month	... (1) 15 days' casual or sick leave on full pay. (2) 15 days' casual or sick leave on half pay. (No paid holidays).
Under Rs. 21	... Pay for 15 days' workshop holidays only provided they have completed one year's service.

Rule 3.

Those in service from 1st January 1925 to 31st August 1928.

All labourers irrespective of pay. Pay for 15 days workshop holidays only.

(This is the worst rate.)

Rule 4.

Those in service from 1st September 1928. (New Leave Rules). -

Below Chargemen (i.e., workmen).	Length of service.	Amount of leave.
	(1) Less than 3 years.	Nil.
	(2) 3 years and over but less than 10 years.	10 days in any one calendar year.
	(3) 10 years and over but less than 20 years.	15 days in one calendar year.
	(4) 20 years and over ...	20 days in one calendar year.

(Note.—The leave enumerated above is in addition to the pay for 15 recognised workshop holidays.)

Leave on medical certificate :—

Length of service.	Leave.
10 years and over but less than 20 years .	15 days in a calendar year or 60 days in all.
Over 20 years	30 days in one calendar year or 120 days in all.

From the above it will appear that the leave rule of the East Indian Railway Company which applies to staff who were in service prior to 1923 was much better than that introduced by the State. The old leave rules may again be introduced with the modification that the leave described in rule 1, item (1) shall be allowed to all staff irrespective of pay and designation supplemented by 30 paid holidays in a year.

Passes and P. T. Os.

The grant of free passes and Privilege Ticket Orders to the Railway servants has been a very old convention and it has been a singular boon to the Railway employees; but it appears that the administration now wants to deprive the employees of this privilege too.

(1) By a Circular in 1936, the grant of free passes for dependents relatives was abolished. In these days of unemployment a vast majority of wage earners have dependent relatives in their families in addition to their wives and children. Hence to deny the dependants' inclusion in their "passes" has hit them hard in as much as, if they propose to

make a trip either for sight-seeing or pilgrimage, they must take them (dependants) by paying fares or cancel their own trip due to family obligations.

(2) The period of eligibility for complimentary free passes (which are the only consolation to the retired servants as there is no system of granting pension) has been extended from 25 years' service to 30 years. This has also vitally affected the labourers, not only those who have already retired but also those who are in service. There was no rule to the effect that the age of the recruits, at the time of appointment must be below 25 years and as such numerous persons were engaged at an age exceeding 25 years for whom it was or would be impossible to complete 30 years' service before their superannuation which must be on attaining 55 years of age.

Hence the above-said restrictions should be modified at once.

(3) Inferior staff are not allowed passes in ordinary circumstances for themselves or their family members for sight-seeing purposes or for pilgrimage. This discrimination against them is very undesirable and sooner the restriction is withdrawn the better.

(4) Even in respect of "free passes" discrimination has been made against "New-entrants" who are on Revised Scales of Pay. The following table will make it clear. This is very undesirable and should be stopped, for the New entrants are paid smaller wages than staff on old scale of pay.

Number of pass	Staff on old scale of pay.	Staff on Revised Scale of pay.
2 single journeys	... 1 year	Over 2 years.
4 single journeys	... Over 5 years	Over 10 years.
6 single journeys	... Over 15 years	Over 20 years.

(5) Total number of passes to be granted in a calendar year has been reduced from 8 single journeys to 6 single journeys.

Hence we suggest that the Pass Rule which was issued in the Circular of the Secretary to the Agent, dated 22nd October 1935 should be re-introduced, with this modification that pass for dependants be issued to all irrespective of pay. Date should be extendable.

Privilege Ticket Order.—Previously every employee of the Railway was entitled to any number of Privilege Ticket Orders

(an order by virtue of which the holder is entitled to get ticket at the rate $\frac{1}{2}$ price) for home railway (E. I. Railway) stations, plus 4 single journeys (or 2 return journeys) over foreign railways (or for family members over home railways). But by the newly framed rules, the issues of P. T. Os. have been restricted to 12 single journeys (or 6 return journeys per year including 4 single journeys over foreign railways or for family members). This drastic curtailment of the issue of P. T. Os. has adversely affected the labourers as they are generally lower paid staff and as such cannot afford to purchase tickets at full rates for their journeys which must be at least 24 in a year. We, therefore, suggest that the old rule may be re-introduced.

1. *Promotions.*—This is a general complaint of the employees, especially labourers that promotion is not given according to merit or seniority and “favouritism” rules supreme in this matter. It is also alleged that authorities are bribed by junior hands for getting promotion by superseding the claims of their seniors. To prove this is very difficult but it must be admitted that there is some truth in this allegation. If evidence is taken on this point, it will throw some light on the matter. Promotion must be according to merit and seniority.

The promotion of genuine skilled workmen to the category of skilled and of unskilled to that of semi-skilled is very rare and far between. A semi-skilled workman generally remains semi-skilled for his whole life and an unskilled workman unskilled. Skilled workmen are generally directly recruited and not even 25 per cent of them are appointed by promotion from the ranks of the semi-skilled workmen. This policy is very harmful and should be discontinued.

2. *Indebtedness.*—Jamalpur Labourers are very heavily indebted; both to the Railway Co-operative Credit Society and to outside money-lenders. Almost all the *Kabulis*, Sikh money-lenders, etc., of Jamalpur who are modern Shylocks and who charge very exorbitant rate of interest, thrive on them and devour major portions of their (labourers) income. These money-lenders do not realize their dues by legal means but they often do it by the “*Danda* cult” at shop gates on pay days. The rate of interest which is charged by the private money-lender varies from 36 per cent to 150 per cent per annum. It is also prevalent amongst few money-lenders that they get handnotes of double or triple amount of the sum actually lent or advanced executed.

The early removal of the burden of indebtedness of labourers is not only a necessity but a desideratum. A debt conciliation board or any such machinery as the Government may consider desirable should be constituted for the area.

3. *Education.*—Jamalpur workmen have to educate their children so that they (children) may turn out to be more happy and contented workmen than they themselves had opportunities to be. Not only that, it is not too late for them, even to educate themselves. Otherwise, how can we expect best of efficiency from illiterate workers?

But, alas! nothing has been done by the Railway Administration in this direction. Not to speak of adults' school there is not a single school of the Railway where free primary education is imparted to the children of the employees. No doubt there is one High English School and two middle English schools but in the High English School over which Railway wastes much money, students (mainly employees' children) have to pay school fee more than what is prescribed in the Education Code or is charged in any private or public school. There is no special concession for the children of the lower paid staff or the labourers.

This question should not be neglected any more and the administration must make arrangement for the free primary education of the employees' children and arrange for the education of the employees too, by opening night schools and adult literacy centres.

4. *Social habits and drinks.*—Local labourers have to improve their social habits and to give up the habit of drink to which they are, unfortunately, addicted. By spread of education, their social habits will improve. The Government of Bihar should enforce prohibition in this area at once so that the drink evil may stop.

5. *Beliefs and Superstition.*—Labourers have certain beliefs and superstitions which are a drag on their ability and efficiency. Such beliefs or superstitions are an outcome of ignorance and they will be liquidated with the spread of education amongst them and their children.

6. *There is no lodging arrangement for workers. Hours of works and utilising leisure hours.*—At present the normal working of the Jamalpur workshop is 45 hours a week (8 hours on week days and 5 hours on Saturday) and any period worked in excess is granted overtime. But this period should be

reduced to 40 hours a week (7 hours on week days and 5 hours on Saturday). This 45 hours a week was introduced by the old East Indian Railway Company, some five or six decades ago and there has never been any improvement in it. As the workshop is owned by the state, it should introduce 40 hours a week so that other employers may also follow suit. (40 hours a week is prevalent in almost all foreign countries whereas in this country it is 54 hours a week). This reduction will increase the leisure hours of the workers,

How the working class is to spend its leisure hours! It is a question that is very difficult to answer.

Provision should be made for open spaces, gardens, parks, etc.; provision for health activities too should be made, such as *akharas* for physical exercise and wrestling and grounds for outdoor sports. Outdoor sports should be encouraged and financed by the administration. Some sort of amusement and entertainment is also necessary. For this purpose, radio sets should be installed at places. That will serve educational purpose too. Lectures by prominent people who are expert on subjects, should be arranged at times and lectures by magic lantern may be given, cinema cars may be introduced to give instructive shows on labour problem, machinery, etc. Free reading rooms and libraries should be provided. Workmen's Institute should be opened free without delay.

Before any such things are done, arrangement should at once be made to provide a rest hall, a tiffin room, with restaurant and bath hall inside the works for the convenience of the workers during "meal hours". It is very necessary, as at present they have to undergo great difficulties. They have to take meals on the road side just near drains emitting foul smell.

Housing accommodation of labourers at Jamalpur is very inadequate. Practically speaking, the Administration has done nothing in this direction. Although a vast majority of workers are residents of suburban villages and come to Works daily by workmen's train, yet a fairly good number of them reside at Jamalpur town and the Administration should make arrangement for their housing, for, they, at present, reside in rented holdings which are very congested and unhygienic. Arrangement for free filter water-supply should also be made in their colony. At least 700 to 800 houses should be built. At present even some workshop sheds (e.g. of the P. W. Foundry, Brass Foundry, Rolling Mill, etc.) are very low

and in summer season workmen are literally burnt beneath them. Their height should be raised at least to the level of the newly constructed Erecting and Boiler shop without further delay.

Arrangement for electric fans during summer season and for heaters during winter season should be made. If air conditioning plants could be installed, so much the better.

Medical help.—The Railway Administration maintains a big hospital under a highly paid gazetted Medical Officer but the hospital is of very little practical use to the employees, especially the labourers. At least it is not so popular amongst the lower paid employees as it should have been. The dealing of the doctors with labourers is not at all amicable, for they care only for higher paid staff and neglect the poor. According to a rule framed by the Administration, labourers getting less than Rs. 50 per month can call a sub-assistant surgeon even at their homes (which must be within a mile from the hospital) without giving any fees. But this rule has been given a decent burial by the doctors as they do not go to attend any labourer without accepting fees. This statement can be testified by taking evidence of employees on this point. It is stated that the Railway doctors are not for the labourers but for the officers and the highly paid clerks.

The timing of the hospital is also inconvenient to the employees. It generally corresponds with the timing of the workshop or offices. So, if the family members of any employee fall sick, he can hardly get help from the hospital as he has to go to work at 7 A.M. and the hospital opens at 8 A.M. to 9 A.M. So, he can hardly take medicine or prescription in the morning, unless he takes leave which he cannot do continuously for 10 or 15 days. In the evening he comes out of work at 4 P.M. while the doctor leaves the hospital before 4 P.M. (in the General Hospital). Thus, he is obliged to go to an outside medical practitioner who is available at all times and whose dealings, too, are very courteous.

The Railway doctors are allowed to do private practice. This privilege has corrupted them, for they demand fees even from the employees of the Railway, though it is prohibited. The Railway doctors should not be allowed to do private practice. This practice of collecting fees has made them so greedy that they often coerce the employees for fees. According to the rules, each employee (labourer, too) who reports

sick must produce sickness certificate and also fitness certificate from the Railway doctor. If, on any account, an employee falls ill and undergoes treatment of any registered medical practitioner of the town and presents himself before the Railway doctor for obtaining fitness certificate, the employee is rebuked, cursed and harassed by the Railway doctor as he has not been paid the money paid to outside doctors. No certificate is countersigned or accepted. This fact may be ascertained from the employees by taking evidence on the point. The doctors who attend to ailing labourers are all sub-assistant surgeons (L. M. Ps. only). The M. Bs., more qualified doctors, attend to higher paid staff only.

In times of epidemics, doctors and compounders do not go to labour *mahallas* to vaccinate or to inoculate the family members of the employees, not even in the town of Jamalpur what to speak of distant villages. When an employee reports a case of cholera or any other epidemic in his family, the responsibility of the Railway doctor ceases by signing his quarantine leave papers only. He (the doctor) does not care to go to the worker's house and render help unless his fee is assured which must not be less than that of a private practitioner.

We, therefore, suggest that a branch dispensary should be opened near Gate no. 6 (Central Gate) but outside the Workshop and should remain open during leisure hours (in the morning from 6 A.M. to 9 A.M. and 11 A.M. to 12 noon and in the evening from 4 P.M. to 8 P.M.). There should be provision for two doctors, two compounders and dressers. In time of epidemic arrangement should be made to vaccinate or inoculate the family members of the employees at their homes. Some subsidised doctors may also be appointed or some of the local doctors may be subsidised. During slack period the doctor should give lectures, with magic lanterns, on domestic hygiene, food nutrition, prevention of epidemics, etc. Certificates from registered doctors should be accepted for purposes of sick leave and fitness.

7. Protection against the economic consigencies of old age, etc.

Gratuity.—There is no provision for granting old age pensions, etc., only gratuity is granted at the rate of half month's pay for every one year's completed service. The sum so given is very inadequate and as such full one month's pay for every one year's completed service should be given by way

of gratuity. In case of death and where the employees die leaving minor children or widow, special compassionate gratuity should be allowed equal to two months' pay for every one year the employee concerned left to complete in attaining the age of his superannuation. This concession should also apply to the staff who are retrenched.

Provident Fund.—The inferior staff are not allowed to become members of the Provident Fund. This restriction should be abolished at once.

The fixed interest on Provident Fund deposit has been reduced for the new members who will join Provident Fund from March 1938 onwards. This discrimination against new members should be discontinued.

Machinery for settlement of disputes.—There is no suitable machinery to settle the disputes between the workmen and the supervisors, nor there is any officer to enquire into the grievances of the workers. The appointment of a labour officer and a Dispute Conciliation Board consisting of 2 non-officials (the President and the one selected by the President and the D. C. M. E.) and one official (D.C.M.E.) will remove the want.

Forming of Unions.—Though direct threats are not held out to workers for joining unions yet formation of union is not welcome or patronised. The authorities do not recognise the Union without great difficulties. To some of the officers the word union is a red rag and the worker who organises any union, becomes their eyesore. The recognition of the union which is organised with the help of outsiders is deferred on the ground that the union is dominated by outside elements. This attitude of the authorities should be changed and unionism amongst the workers should be encouraged by the authorities. Rules should be made which the employer must be bound to follow. The Labour Union should be recognised at once.

Administration of Staff Benefit Fund.—The Railway Administration maintains a Staff Benefit Fund but the distribution is not satisfactory. The major portion of the Fund is spent for the benefit of higher paid staff though lower paid staff are in need of greater help.

Arrangement should be made for the equitable distribution of the Benefit Fund by a Committee elected by the workers.

Employment.—The procedure of recruiting staff is very defective. Racial favouritism or corruption in respect of engagement of labourers is prevalent here which should be stopped forthwith. This can be obviated only by the appointment of a Recruitment Board consisting of the District Magistrate, the President of the Union and the D. C. M. E. A waiting list must be maintained. The one maintained is defective. The list should be supplied to Labour Union.

General Behaviour of the Supervising Staff towards labourers.—It is noted with great regret that in spite of the change of time and in spite of good working on the part of labourers, the treatment meted out by some members of the Supervising Staff towards them is far from satisfactory. In their general meetings, the labourers have indicated their grievances against several Foremen and Chargehands, but nothing appears to have been done. On the other hand, persons have been victimised for exposing such behaviour on the part of the Foremen. Some rules regarding this should be framed so that Foremen, Chargemen, etc., recognise the labourers as their full-fledged fellow workers and not as so many black slaves.

Labour decreased.—Due to the closing of Steel Foundry and having steel goods on purchase, the number of labour has been decreased. Unemployment and bread problem being so hard here, Steel Foundry should be started. No work of the Iron Foundry or the Signal Shop should be done on contract system but through our own labour.

Supervising Staff.—The supervising staff is more than necessary. It may be noticed that in the time of the Company when the number of labour was large, the number of supervising staff was not so great. But now, though the number of labour has decreased, the number of supervising staff has increased. Figures may be had from the D. C. M. E. Besides, to effect economy the pay of the supervising staff should be brought down as it is too high.

Right of workers to strike for the protection of their interest.—The employers as well as the Government should recognise the right of workers to strike for the protection of their interests. By this we do not mean that workers should be given the privilege of resorting to strike every now and then on flimsy grounds or for the fulfilment of their "unjustifiable" demands. Strike should be resorted to only in special circumstances when all other peaceful methods of settlement have failed.

Workers of any category should not be victimised for joining strike unless the strike in question has been declared illegal by an impartial Board, appointed by the Government for the purpose and due notice has been given to the strikers to start work unconditionally. Victimization should be resorted to only when the aforesaid procedure has been followed and strikers have still refused to come to works. In this connection mention may be made of the last strike of the Jamalpur Workshop which took place in the year 1921-22 in which wanton discharge or dismissal of innocent workers was the order of the day. Black legging was vigorously encouraged and all staff against whom the "spies" complained whether out of malice or personal jealousy were discharged without assigning any reason or giving them an opportunity to explain their conduct. It is hoped that the strike tragedy of 1922 is now a thing of the past and will never be enacted in future. At least the Provincial Government will not be a party to that sort of repression of labour. The committee is requested, if possible, to get a list of the persons victimized, i.e., discharged, and to get them re-appointed if not considered ineligible by judging individual cases. Next comes to our mind the tragic incident of 1930 in which workers were the target of firing by the Provincial Armed Police Force, as a result of which several workmen were killed and many injured. The manner in which the above said incident was pushed up and finally dropped was very undesirable and should not be repeated in future. No public enquiry was held; no compensation was paid to the dependants of the workers who were killed as a result of the firing. It may be noted in this connection that those who were killed were practically innocent labourers who were going out of the factory after 16 hours on completion of their day's work. Those were the days of non-co-operation movement and the fault of the worker, as alleged by the Police, was that the local labour had sympathised with the non-co-operators. The above incident has terrorised the workers in such a way that they hardly venture to reveal their heart-felt grievances and seek their redress lest they should again be fired on by the Police or victimized by the authorities.

It is hoped that the Government of Bihar will assure labour by expressing regret for the above-said tragedy of firing on peaceful workers and do the needful to ensure their love and sympathy.

Recruitment.—Every year the recruitment of Apprentice Mechanics and Trade Apprentices is done, the former for the

appointment of supervisors (chargemen) and the latter for skilled workmen on completion of their apprenticeship. In the appointment of the former (i.e. apprentice mechanics) unjustifiable weightage is given to Anglo-Indians and Europeans. So much so that 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the total apprentice recruits in a year belong to the above said communities. This should not be allowed to continue and only the statutory percentage, i.e. $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of each community, as specified by the Central Government, should be strictly enforced.

The Railway Administration seems to be both to ensure equitable territorial representation amongst its supervising ministerial and superior services. The line of East Indian Railway passes through these Provinces namely Bengal, Bihar and the United Provinces. Not to speak of the Railway Station-staff, even in the Jamalpur Workshop one community dominates the clerical services. If the higher grades are analysed the matter will be even worse. Bihar must get its due share, if not preference over other communities, specially when the Supervising and superior services are dominated by the European and Anglo-Indians. The extent to which their services have been Indianised, the personnel has gone to people of other provinces with which the Railway has only indirect connection. Fair proportion should be ensured for this province.

In the recruitment of special class apprentices who are to fill the Superior Services, the matter is even worse. It is hoped that this will not be allowed to continue and some arrangement will be made to ensure representation from Bihar.

Franchise.—The local labour has been allotted a seat in the Bihar Legislative Assembly along with the labour of Monghyr Factory. Even in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council a nominated seat was allotted to this Workshop and though the number of constituencies or seats in the Assembly have considerably increased, yet the local constituency has been combined with Monghyr. It is hoped that the matter will be reviewed and a special seat will be given to Jamalpur along with another seat to Monghyr.

As the Railway is a Federal concern, it is hoped, a seat will be allotted to the Jamalpur Workshop in the Federal Legislative Assembly.

Reduction of Work and Staff.—The Railway authorities instead of expanding their works here are decreasing them.

They have shifted Chief Electrical Engineer's office, Chief Mechanical Engineer's office, etc., from here to Calcutta on administrative grounds. They have abolished the Steel Foundry, Points and Crossing Shops. When the Tata's and other steel concerns are making huge profits, the Railway authorities thought it fit to abolish them so as to make purchases of British steel and provide employment to British labour instead of Indian labour.

Manufacture of the various parts and tools of locomotive is not being encouraged. It should have been their policy to increase the manufacture of spare parts and tools of locomotives and other tools and plants so that within a few years they might be able to manufacture complete locomotives and India might be relieved of the burden of purchasing locomotives from foreign countries. It may be noted that parts manufactured in the time of the Company are now being purchased from foreign countries and not manufactured locally. It is hoped that the Railway authorities will change their outlook and policy and in future, Jamalpur Workshop will increase day by day till at last it is converted into a real Locomotive Workshop instead of the present locomotive repair workshop.

A very large number of the staff (labour) were retrenched in the year 1931 who have not been appointed as yet. Even if some of them have been appointed, they have not been given their former rates of pay.

It is hoped that their former rates of pay will be restored and the retrenched staff taken back early.

**Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee**

By

The Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union, Adra.

A.—Nature and recruitment of labour.

1. (1) <i>Adra Loco—</i>			
Officers	...	...	16 (Supervising Staff.)
Clerks	...	...	12
Work people	{ Men	...	700
	{ Women	...	18
Total	...	...	<hr/>746
(2) <i>Adra Wagon Shop—</i>			
Officers	...	...	2
Clerks	...	...	4
Work people	{ Men	...	219
	{ Women	...	7
Total	...	...	<hr/>225
(3) <i>Adra Power House—</i>			
Officers	...	...	5
Clerks	...	...	4
Work people	Men	...	74
Total	...	...	<hr/>83
(4) <i>Adra Engineering Workshop—</i>			
Officer.	...	...	1
Clerk	...	...	1
Work people	Men	...	103
Total	...	...	<hr/>105
			<hr/> Total <hr/> 1,159

2. (a) Permanently-settled	...	...	1,159
(b) Migratory	...	...	Nil.
3. Adra Loco	...	...	34 per cent.
Adra Wagon Shop	...	...	69 per cent.
Adra Power House	...	...	73 per cent.
Engineering Workshop	...	...	70 per cent.

4. To the information of the Union, the workers in the Factories mentioned above are mainly drawn from the province of Bihar.

5. Adra Loco	...	...	40 out of 746.
Adra Wagon Shop	...	...	1 out of 231.
Adra Power House	...	...
Adra Engineering Workshop	...	...

Remedy (i) to discourage direct recruitment in higher grades.

(ii) To relax the rule of 10 days absence after which the workers are discharged without notice irrespective of the length of service or circumstances.

		1936.	1937.
6. Adra Loco	(a)	6	4
	(b)	...	...
	(c)	3	10
	(d)	...	...
	(e)	20	26
Adra Wagon Shop	(a)	...	...
	(b)	...	...
	(c)	1	...
	(d)	...	...
	(e)	1	1

7. (b) Workers are directly recruited by the Management.

8. (a) Direct recruitment in the lowest ranks only is preferred.

(b) Vacancies in the higher grades should necessarily be filled by promotion from the lower ranks. This suggestion is made with the object of securing uniformity in the matter of recruitment and to encourage experienced hands in the matter of promotion.

This will also remove the dissatisfaction at present prevailing largely amongst the workers.

9. No such list is maintained by the Administration for the purpose of recruitment.

10. See reply to question 9.

11. Yes. In order to check any abuses or corrupt practices in connection with recruitment, a Board of Appointment with equal number of members both from Administration and the Union is suggested.

12. Yes. Please see reply to Question 11.

13. No casual labourers are employed.

14. No.

B.—Conditions of employment.

15. Yes. The following are the Service Rule Books :—
Establishment Manual.

Agreement Form B. N. 48.

B. N. 136.

16. Yes. There is provision for training of Apprentices Running Grades I and II in Loco and Carriage Sheds.

17. Yes.

18. (i) At present an employee is discharged after 10 days' absence, which period should be extended to one month.

(ii) Medical certificate produced by an employee from a Private Medical Practitioner (not necessarily a Registered Medical Practitioner) should be accepted by the employer.

19. There is no proper system of granting leave to workers. The kinds of leave granted to workers are :—

(i) Leave with pay.

(ii) Leave without pay.

(iii) Casual leave.

The following Leave Rule Books govern the grant of leave to workers :—

(i) Company's Old Leave Rules.

(ii) Company's Fundamental Leave Rules.

(iii) Leave to Menial and Inferior Staff.

20. Yes. The Leave Rule Books mentioned in Question 19 govern the grant of Sick Leave also.

21. Women are employed but they do not enjoy Maternity Leave.

22. Yes. Company's Provident Fund Rules, but there is no old age pension.

23. Sundays are only given to workers other than those on shift duty.

The workers on shift duty in the Loco Shed, Adra, do not generally enjoy the twenty-four hours continuous weekly rest.

No festival holidays are granted.

25. Standing Orders or Rules are brought to the notice of the workers through notices.

26. Cases of indiscipline are dealt with according to the Rules for dismissal and discharge but formally a charge sheet is served and explanation obtained thereto.

27. A charge sheet is given to the worker in cases of offences warranting discharge or dismissal and to those who have more than ten years' service.

28. There are various kinds of punishments, viz., caution, warning, reprimand, reduction of pay, stoppage of increment, etc., but ever since the introduction of the Payment of Wages Act, the workers are generally reduced in pay for indefinite period for an offence which previously used to meet with light punishments, such as fines, etc.

29. Yes; but not the system of compulsory leave. There is no system or procedure laid down for punishments other than fines, which punishment is immune for reasons stated in Question 28.

31. Unauthorised absence for a period less than ten days is treated as leave without pay and for a period in excess of ten days the worker is discharged without any consideration of the length of service and circumstances. But in Adra Loco-shed, if a worker is absent, he is kept off duty for some more days and no pay is given.

32. There is no established procedure for dealing with late attendance of monthly paid staff and such cases, therefore, solely rest with the official concerned according to his discretion.

33. Fines recovered from the workers are credited in a Fund, called a " Staff Benefit Fund ".

34. The normal working hours are—

(i) from 7 hours to 11 hours, and
from 13 hours to 17 hours.

(ii) The working hours for shift duty workers are—

0-8 hours.

8-16 hours.

16-0 hours.

Adra Workshop and Power House—

7-11 hours.

12-16/30 hours.

(a) Shorter hours of work are not favoured for night shifts, extra wages are preferable.

For strenuous and hazardous jobs, number of workers should be increased.

But in practice the workers in the Adra Loco-Shed are detained till the completion of the work allotted to them but they are not paid over-time for any additional time so worked.

35. Adra Loco-Shed and Power House—Four shifts.

Workshop and Engineering Workshop—One shift.

36. Out of the four Railway factories at Adra, Adra Wagon Shop and Engineering Workshop are worked during the day and Adra Loco-Shed and Adra Power House are continuous process factories, having an exclusive day shift and three other shifts covering 24 hours. In the two continuous process factories, a rest day, not below 24 continuous hours, is required to be given every week, but in Adra Loco-Shed rest days are sometimes denied. It is complained that rest days are in certain cases not granted for weeks.

The shifts are detailed against Question no. 34.

37. No, it is not desirable as it is not possible in Railway factories.

38. Overtime is sometimes worked in the Adra Wagon Shop and Adra Power House by daily-rated staff. The majority of the staff in the two workshops are daily-rated.

Their overtime is calculated on the basis of daily hours and daily rates.

39. In the other two factories all the staff are monthly-rated.

They are sometimes made to work in excess of normal working hours.

There is no system of overtime payment for such periods. In a few cases compensatory periods of leave are given. This may be considered as an evasion of the Factories Act, and the non-payment of overtime.

Running staff, such as Drivers, Shunters, Firemen, *Khalasis* who are deputed to work on locomotives attached to Loco-Shed, Adra, are eligible for overtime as per the Company's Locomotive Overtime Rules. The same is calculated on a monthly basis excluding from the total hours of duty, 208 hours as not counting for overtime.

There is no maximum and minimum limit for daily working hours.

40. No.

41. Information is not available.

D.—Conditions in factories.

43. In cases of accidents, whether serious or minor, enquiry should be held immediately (say, within six hours) to find out whether the accident was due to worker's own negligence or otherwise.

E.—Wages.

51. Workers should be given additional pay for the work done during holidays and on Sundays and for any work done outside the working hours.

52. No. For works during the night, 25 per cent above the ordinary rate should be paid.

53. It is desirable to convert the daily-rated workers into monthly-paid on the basis of 30 days. Such a conversion would bring additional advantages in respect of other privileges such as Provident Fund, Gratuity, etc.

56. At present deductions on account of the following are made from the wages of a worker which hardly leave anything for subsistence. The deductions should be restricted to 50 per cent of the monthly wage of a worker.

Provident Fund,
Fines,
Conservancy Cess,
Institutes,
Schools,
Urban Bank Loans,
Death Benefit Funds, etc.

59. At present the workers in some categories have different minimum wages for different places, which in some cases is not a living wage.

60. The minimum wage should be so fixed that a worker will have three square meals a day for a family of at least five, with six sets of clothing.

Education for the children should also be taken into account and proper dwelling conditions and at least some saving to meet unforeseen expenses on account of sickness.

61. A committee, composed of three members from the Legislature and three members from the Trade Union Congress, should be appointed to fix minimum wage and to revise the same.

G.—Welfare work.

70. The Railway Administration has established schools in big centres wherein the children of the workers are given education along with the children of outsiders.

III.—Housing.

84. No. The lower grade workers are least cared for, so far as housing accommodation is concerned.

87. Yes.

92. Yes.

93-94. No.

103. Yes, the Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union, 1921.

104. Yes, 1926.

105. Yes, 1922.

106. The Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union is recognized by the Railway Administration.

107. The recognition of the Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union was withdrawn in 1937 following a general strike in 1936-37.

108. Yes.

109. It is affiliated to the All-India Railwaymen's Federation and the All-India Trade Union Congress.

110. Yes, as solidarity of the workers cannot be achieved by more than one Trade Union on the Railway.

111. The total number of members in the Union is 29,000 and it constitutes a large proportion of workers of Adra in its membership.

112. The Executive Committee is composed of—

(a) President.

(b) Vice-President.

(c) Secretary.

(d) Treasurer.

(e) Members.

No outsider is in the Committee and all are employees of the Railway except the President.

114. No.

115. No, but it is desirable.

116. The existence of an organized Trade Union will help in dealing with labour and in improving the wage level.

117. No.

K—Industrial Peace.

118. There were two strikes, one in 1927 and another in 1936-37.

119. The one in 1927 lasted for eighteen days, from 19th February 1927 to 8th March 1927, and in 1936-37 for sixty days, from 14th December 1936 to 10th February 1937. Both these strikes were settled by negotiation in the victory of the workers.

120. The notice of strike detailing the grievances will follow. (*Not received.*)

121. The strikes were successfully settled.

122. The terms of settlement brought all the workers back to their work.

123. Funds were raised to support the strikers.

124. The loss to strikers was the wages for the period.

125. No facility is given.

126. No.

127. No. The cases are arbitrarily settled without any regard for the interest of the workers.

128. Yes. The Arbitration authority should be composed of equal number of representatives from the Administration and the Trade Union selected by both the parties. The selection of the Chairman should unanimously agreed to by both the parties.

The decision of the arbitration should be binding on both the parties, enacted by Law.

130. No.

131. When strike becomes inevitable, a Board of Conciliation should be formed immediately at the request of either of the parties. The authority to apply for a Board of Conciliation on behalf of the Trade Union should be the President of the Union, duly authorised by the Central Council of the Trade Union.

135. The present Machinery provided by Provincial Government for the administration of the various Acts and for dealing with various matters affecting the workers is inadequate and it is felt that more powers are necessary for them to have adequate control regarding the workers under the Railway Administration.

Factories Act.—The submission of a monthly return of working hours in each of the factories is the only requirement under the Bihar Factory Rules. The working hour regulations for Railway workers insist on rosters being tabulated, worked to and exhibited in conspicuous places within the premises of the Werks concerned.

If provision is made in the Bihar Factory Rules for the maintenance and submission of rosters in addition to the monthly working hours return, it would be more in the interest of the workers and also lessen the possibility of harassment and abuse of the Act.

No provision has been made in the Bihar Factories Rules requiring the Inspectors of Factories to make direct enquiries from the workers or the Trade Unions about any grievances, so that, at present, the workers or the Trade Unions have no legal access to the Inspectors for the redress of any grievances.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Kumardhubi Workers' Union, Kumardhubi.

Kumardhubi is situated at a distance of 15 miles from Asansol and 25 miles from Dhanbad, the Subdivisional Headquarters. There are three firms in this station viz., Kumardhubi Engineering Works, Limited, the Eagle Rolling Mills and the Kumardhubi Fireclay Silica Works, Limited. We shall take up each factory separately and give a short account of it, but in passing, we may note that all the above 3 firms are managed by Messrs. Bird and Company, Calcutta.

The Kumardhubi Engineering Works, Limited, is an engineering firm dealing in (1) casting iron, brass and steel materials, (2) construction works of bridges, blast furnaces and many kinds of machinery and iron works constructions. On an average it employs about one thousand men, the number increasing according as orders arrive. The labour employed is both local and from outside. The local labour is generally of the unskilled type except the moulders of the Foundry and the machinemen in the Machine Shop who come from Chirkunda (a distance of one mile), Barakar (a distance of two miles), Kulti (a distance of 4 miles) where the Indian Iron and Steel Works, Limited are situated and Asansol. This labour would be about 50 per cent of the total. So far the labour from outside is concerned, it represents the whole of northern India, if not the whole of India. There are Punjabis and Peshawaris, employed as khalasis, people from the United Provinces, Bihar and Bengal working in all the various departments of skilled work, Boilermen from Noakhali (East Bengal) and other skilled workers from Orissa, extreme south of Madras and from Eastern Bengal.

The Eagle Rolling Mills manufacture ms. Rounds, Flats and Bars by rolling system and employ about 350 men. This mill has a special peculiarity of its own in that it employs nearly all outside labour. We can roughly divide the labour here in three departments, the Furnace, the Rolls and cooling beds and the Iron Yards. In the Furnaces, the majority of the labour consists of Madrasis from Pondicherry and men from Monghyr and Jamalpur (Bihar).

In the Rolls, most of the men are Madrasis and Jamalpuris while some come from Azamgarh and Jaunpur. In the Iron Yards department, however, where the work consists of carrying of bars and other rolled production, the labour is nearly all *Bilaspuri*.

Fire Clay Silica Works.—This work produces different kinds of clay and Silica Bricks. About 1,400 men and 400 women workers are working here. Out of the 1,400 male workers, the majority come from the district of Gaya and Monghyr (Bihar) and belong to the depressed classes. There are Ahirs and Rajputs as well. Out of the 400 female workers almost all belong to the local villages and come from a class of untouchables known as *Bouris*. The male labourers may easily be divided into the following classes:—

1. The *Khalasis*—Who work in the burning kilns.
2. The Moulders—Who mould bricks of different varieties.
3. Setters—Who set bricks in the kilns before firing.
4. The handling labourers—

Women labourers are mainly engaged in handling works i.e., to carry things from place to place.

There are also carpenters, fitters, masons, etc.

From the above it is well nigh apparent that about 70 per cent of the labour here is migratory and not settled in or about this industrial centre. The results flowing from this are that most of us and especially the lower rated men, by whom we mean those who are getting less than a rupee, remain single leaving the families and other relatives at home. It necessitates, naturally, keeping up two establishments and going back to villages at least once a year, if not more. In many cases most of us have cultivation, though very little, and it requires attendance at least twice a year by us. Naturally enough our attention is always diverted which acts as an obstacle in the progress towards high efficiency. We believe that both in the interest of labour and capital, as also for the advancement of industry, it is essential that industrial workers should try to make this industrial centre their home. But we feel that with the present income of our average low-paid labour brethren, it is absolutely impossible to settle and this brings us to the question of what is the income of the lowest paid workers and what is the minimum expenditure of a family of that type.

Under the terms of the settlement awarded by Mr. Jagat Narain Lall, Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Bihar, last April, the minimum rate for labourers has been fixed at annas 8 for males and annas 6 for females in all the three factories. Let us analyse the monthly income arising from this rate. The minimum number of hours worked in these factories is 44 hours a week, that is to say 5 days of 8 hours, 1 day of 4 hours and one day rest, while the maximum is 54 hours, viz., 5 days of 10 hours, 1 day of 4 hours, or 6 days of 9 hours each. The minimum and maximum earning of annas 8 a man as per this calculation amounts to Rs. 2-12-0 and Rs. 3-6-0 per week respectively or in other words Rs. 12 and Rs. 14-8-0 per month respectively. We would, therefore, urge and desire to impress upon the Hon'ble Members of the Committee that this is nothing but a mere pittance, not even sufficient to meet the barest necessities of the wage earner himself. If the Committee take the trouble of looking into the account books of the local bazar shop-keepers from where most of us get our supplies, it will appear that even the bare food of simply rice and pulses and salt amounts to Rs. 1-8-0 to Rs. 1-12-0 per week per head, thereby leaving the lowest paid workers a margin of Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 per month. We pause, and request the Hon'ble Committee to consider, if there can be a state more appalling. How can one be expected to maintain his wife and children on Rs. 4 or even Rs. 6 even if the worker were to maintain himself on the *starving rations* quoted above?

And then, be it remembered that, nearly all of us are engaged in rather hot or heavy iron work and, therefore, have to work under trying conditions. It will be a complete and utter ruin to our constitution and health if one were to work on the *starving rations* mentioned above and therefore, every one of us has to take some nourishing food such as meat, milk or *ghee*. That mounts up the expenses and the result is that it is hardly possible to scrape Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 even for our *starving* family. Moreover, for those of us who come from outside, it becomes well nigh impossible, with the travelling to and back from our homes, to save anything at all. It is to be remembered that in the above accounts we have not mentioned the account for clothes, which also are liable to more wear and tear in these works than elsewhere; and this item is a constant source of drain on our slender earnings.

These factors, to a great extent, also account for the general indebtedness amongst us. Slender as our incomes are,

in order to relieve temporarily the burden of the family demands in the shape of clothes, food and other unexpected requirements in the family, as marriages or deaths or other religious ceremonies, it becomes incumbent on us to meet them by taking loans. These set the ball of debts rolling which once begun hardly ever stops.

We will, however, speak more of this later. Suffice it to say that this low and starving wage is the chief reason of indebtedness.

The question, therefore, arises as to what is the remedy. We feel that in the present state of trade union development when the movement is not yet sufficiently strong and when labour leaders from the ranks have hardly yet arisen, it is incumbent on the Government, as the guardian for the welfare and uplift of labour, to intervene and settle a minimum wage that would ensure both a rise in the standard of living and sufficient and better food and clothes for labour.

In our opinion, the minimum wages should be so regulated as to provide the worker with wholesome food, comfortable housing and sufficient money to provide for the maintenance of his wife and children as an ordinary citizen and be an inducement for his settling down in the locality. We have, therefore, prepared a chart (Appendix I of this memorandum) showing what, in our opinion, should be the lowest requirement of a family of four persons, at the same time ensuring the above ideals. In our calculation it comes up to Rs. 42 per month. At first sight the amount may appear startling to the present notions, but if the chart is carefully studied, it will be found that it is based on the barest necessities of life and we doubt whether any man can challenge it as even being above par.

A point may be raised as to whether the industry can afford to pay the above amount. We are not unmindful of the fact of competition that our factories have with others, of the capital outlay that they have to sink for quarters and other necessities of the station. But the fact remains that with this pittance which is the rate of the majority of our workers, an advance in wages is extremely necessary. If the Government and the industrial concerns really desire the establishment of industrial centres, the creation of a race of industrial workmen so essential to efficiency, the increase of efficiency, the raising of the worker's standard of living which is miserably low, in short if to make the industrial worker an asset to the nation and the industry, it is essential that wages should be so

regulated as to ensure sufficient food for his family in the place of his adoption so that he may turn his mind away from the distractions of his native home and put his whole soul and body together for the progress of the industry. This, apart from the economic reason, is another reason for the increase in minimum wages.

We have given our best and anxious consideration to the whole case of the increase of wages. We have also considered the present state of affairs of our firms so far as it lay in our power and we feel that it may not be possible for the firms to grant the minimum wage of Rs. 42 as we claim is necessary. But, after all this we have come to the conclusion that with a little economy and reduction in top-heavy charges, it is possible to increase the present rate of minimum wages. We, therefore, claim and respectfully urge the Committee to recommend an increase in the present rate of wages so that the monthly earning of the lowest paid worker may come to Rs. 25 a month without which it is hardly possible to live the life of a man.

Security of service.—This is a most vital point affecting labour and we draw the attention of the Committee pointedly to it.

The one charm that stands above all in Government service and other state owned concerns is that from the moment the individual enters the service, he feels he is settled in life and has taken up an avocation which will continue to his old age. This security, so essential to efficiency, is engendered by the fact that so long as he goes on doing his duty faithfully, he stands no risk of being the victim of any whim or fancy of any particular officer. He also believes that dismissal from service will be the last resort and that also after a lot of sifting enquiry not only by one official but by several has been made, after he has had a full opportunity of saying what he has to say in defence.

We regret to say and we would respectfully point out to the Committee that this is the crying need of the day which needs remedying. Workers do not feel secure in their jobs and cannot take it to mean that it will last their life time unless they are able to please the foremen or their superior *mistri*. There is no system of elaborate enquiry or even summary enquiry in writing, and the power of accuser and judge both being in the departmental head, it is liable to be misused and misapplied. Moreover, from the smallest to the biggest

offence the only punishment is dismissal fines having been abandoned after the Payment of Wages Act has been introduced. It will thus be seen that there is no security of service and the worker is in constant dread of dismissal, even for the most venial offence, if the *mistri* or foreman so desires (there being no other system of punishment in vogue) and that dismissal is also done without any sifting enquiry of which there can be any record for appeal to the higher authorities.

We desire to emphasise that this is what may be called the day to day grievance of labour and failure to remedy this sows the seed of discontent which, boiling hidden, soon becomes a seething mass of discontent and disaffection and bursts out over an apparently minor cause and thereby causes industrial unrest.

We would, therefore, urge that all desirous of industrial peace should set their minds to this problem and evolve some means whereby the worker is assured of a guarantee of service and of a fair trial, in case of fault. We would suggest that in every case a regular enquiry should be held, statements recorded, the worker should be given an opportunity of showing cause upon receipt of a notice in writing asking him to show cause, and then the departmental head should pass orders. All these matters should be recorded in writing so as to enable the Manager or other superior authority to judge from the materials on the record without consulting the foremen or departmental head. We would also urge that the union, where there is one, or in its absence the worker or some one on his behalf, should have the right to represent the case before the manager before final orders are passed by the management. We would also urge that special provision should be made so that dismissal may be resorted to in extremely serious offences only and no other.

Provident Fund and Retiring Gratuity.—The need for these benefits cannot be doubted or seriously challenged by employers or the Government. As we have stated above, the work in these factories is so hard and trying that having regard to climatic conditions, the average life of an industrial worker here is 15 years after which he begins to decline. From the poor wages he has been receiving he is hardly able to save anything and indeed it is cruel that after working for the best part of his life, he retires, unwillingly in most cases as his value decreases in the eyes of the employers, without even the barest means of sustenance for himself and his family. He is himself illiterate and unless his well wishers intervene and force some

compulsory saving by way of Provident Fund, there is no hope for him in his old age. The desire of the worker to submit voluntarily to compulsory saving is apparent from the fact that workers here have an ambition to be put on monthly pay, simply because it means the addition of one more privilege, namely, Provident Fund. We would also urge that there should be provision for the grant of a lump sum after a certain period of service, during which he has faithfully discharged his duties. This would not only make him attached to the firm but also would mean a gesture of good will and reward for the faithful discharge of duties. We may, in passing, note that our employers have, in certain cases, granted pensions or gratuity to certain of their employees but we would urge that they should extend this privilege to all and make it a rule. We, therefore, urge that provision be made for a system of Provident Fund and Retiring Gratuity. It may also be stated that such benefits are prevalent in the surrounding factories such as Kulti and Burnpur and therefore, the fact that it is not granted here is a serious cause of discontent amongst us.

Bonus or Profit Sharing Scheme.—We have some hesitation in pressing this point because, one of the factories has been so long running at a loss. We should not, however, be considered to have given up the point, for we maintain that some sort of profit sharing scheme should be introduced. We would also urge that Production Bonus should be given to the workers of the Engineering Works as it is being given to those of the Rolling Mills and the *khalasis* of the Silica Works.

Privilege leave with pay.—Since the last strike settlement, according to the terms, privilege leave for 15 days with pay, and 15 days without pay on completion of one year's continuous service has been awarded. We would urge that, as most of us are outsiders and have family affairs at home to settle, the privilege leave should be one month with pay and a week's casual leave with pay should also be granted, per year. The power to accumulate this privilege leave should also be allowed.

Sick leave.—The next question we would like to raise is the question of provision for sickness. There is no doubt that it is a real requirement. We are thankful to the firm for the maintenance of a hospital at this station, but the wages generally paid make it impossible for most workers to get through more than a very short period of illness without borrowing. The worker has to make arrangements for his own

food during the period of sickness while he gets no pay. Indeed, sickness is an important contributory cause of indebtedness and often, at times of greatest need, the worker may find himself destitute of resources, unable to take proper measures to restore his health and in difficulties regarding even the means of subsistence. The situation is alarming, as nearly everyone here, specially during June to September, is laid up with fever and cough entailing considerable financial stress upon him. Even the Labour Commission strongly recommended the need of sickness provisions. We, therefore, urge upon the Committee to take steps for provisions for sickness by way of sick pay or some other scheme which may enable the worker to recoup his health which constantly breaks down in these works owing to trying conditions and hard work.

Housing.—Before discussing this problem we desire to give, in brief, a survey of the existing accommodation. In this station there are 3 types of quarters provided for labourers. (1) Single-room 10 feet square *plus* a verandah in front, 5 feet wide, in lines called "*Dhowrahs*". There is no privacy and having regard to Indian customs and conditions, it is not possible to keep a family. Some of them are back to back *Dhowarhs*, thereby admitting no light or ventilation inside the room, if closed. We are grateful, however, to the firm for initiating a scheme of ventilation, lately, but we would urge that this type of quarters is absolutely unsuitable for an Indian family, having no courtyards, latrines or kitchen, and that it should be abolished. (2) The 2nd type of quarters are constructed by building a compound wall 10 feet \times 10 feet in front of the room and verandah mentioned above. This type, though it remedies the defects of non-privacy, still retains the vital defects. (3) The 3rd type is a double-roomed quarter with kitchen, latrine and washing place. This type, specially the latest one, can be said to be a comfortable one and we would urge that this should be the type of quarters required. If, however, the firms are not in a position to provide the above kind of accommodation, we would suggest that in any case the quarters of the lowest paid workers should consist of at least a living room, a verandah in front, a kitchen, latrine and washing place, surrounded by a compound wall. Although the firms have provided and are providing new quarters, yet overcrowding, in the lower ranks, is still very large and we request the Committee to consider this question and make recommendations for speedy extension.

Drinking water.—This is another pressing need. Water, at present, is supplied from a reservoir which has been an old coal quarry; but it is insufficient to meet the needs of the people. The other important complaint regarding this is that it is not fit for drinking purpose, and the large majority of us have to bring water either from some well or boil the tap water before drinking it. There are two rivers close by, viz., the Barakar and the Khoodia. We would, therefore, urge that the water for drinking should be supplied from the above two sources or if that is not possible the present water-supply should undergo improved methods of filtration. Kumardhubi has a population of nearly 5 thousand people and we think that it is sufficient to attract the notice of the Government to this question. And we would request the Government through the Committee to step in and settle this water problem in case the Company express their inability to tackle it successfully.

Sanitation.—We have nothing of importance to complain about this except that necessity for more latrines is felt.

Lighting.—We regret to say that although the colony is old enough, provision for lights on roads, at least, has not been made. This is a long-felt necessity and we would request the Committee to make recommendations for installation of lights on roads so that the whole area may be fully lighted up.

Medical Aids.—Before detailing our need under this head, we think that we shall be failing in our duty if we do not express our gratefulness to the firm for their maintaining a good hospital for the benefit of the people, and for giving free medical facilities. We, however, think that there are certain things which yet require to be done in order to ensure the full benefits of medical aid. On its indoor side the present hospital contains only a surgical ward and that also only for the treatment of those surgical cases which arise out of injuries received in the factory. There is no provision for non-surgical cases and even serious cases of illness have to be treated in the insanitary condition of the homes of the workers. There is also no provision for the treatment for maternity cases or other diseases of women. We, therefore, claim that the firm should provide indoor treatment both for those surgical cases which do not arise out of accidents in the factory as also for non-surgical cases that require treatment in a hospital. A lady doctor and a maternity ward are also extremely necessary and facilities are, as a matter of fact, overdue in view of the award of Mr. Jagat Narain Lal on this point.

Amusements.—It goes without saying that it is extremely necessary that some provision for mental recreation to relax the strain and fatigue of the worker after his daily toil should be had and a want of this has led the worker into the evil habit of using intoxicants and gambling. We need not dilate further on this point but we heartily desire that the Government should adopt means for the mental recreation of the worker as is being done by the United Provinces Government.

Education.—The need for this cannot be too greatly stressed. That there is rampant illiteracy and that it is the chief drawback in the advancement of trade unionism, nay that it acts as stumbling block in every sphere of advancement of labour, is a fact that has been stressed time after time by those who have studied the labour problem of India and we can only repeat it. We would further like to say this by way of elucidation that this want of literacy on the part of our fellow brethren has been the chief cause of the rising up of a group of leaders who, if we may be allowed to say so, exploit us for their own selfish ends and personal gain and do not work out of a sincere desire to help us in achieving our ends. Apart from this, disability in wages, in health, in organisation, and in several other directions is too patent to be told. We feel that it is the bounden duty of a Government which has the welfare of the poor labourer of this country at heart, as well as of the employer who feels for labour and who would like to deal with a strong yet reasonable labour union, to join hands and strive to remove this disability in as short a time as possible. We, therefore, hope that the Committee will give its most serious and anxious consideration to this aspect and evolve ways and means for a speedy liquidation of illiteracy among workers. Reverting to local conditions, we may state that although there are Hindi, Urdu and Bengali Upper Primary Schools, need for higher education than the above standard is urgently felt. Indeed Mr. Jagat Narain Lal in his award has recommended the idea of having a Middle English School here but as yet nothing has been done. Another point of importance that arises locally is the following. As previously stated the Eagle Rolling Mills which came from Pondicherry brought with it a large number of Madrasi workers. These workers have practically settled down here with their wives and children and have little or no intention of returning back to their homes. For the education of their children a Tamil section has been opened but we regret to say that it is not officially recognized by the Government, nor does it

receive any aid from the district board as is the case of the other schools that get aids. We request that the Hon. Committee recommend to the Government for the official recognition and grant of status and aid to the said school, the more so in view of the recent decision of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Committee, in his decision in the Bengali-Bihar idispute. We would also urge that the primary education should be free and compulsory.

*Removal of Evil Habits (Drinking and Gambling, etc).—*As representing the grievances on behalf of labour, it is with great pain and remorse that we take up this point. Want of facilities for recreation, rampant illiteracy, loosing of social bounds by reason of want of strict rules of society, disintegration of the family bond by reason of the worker being far off from wife and children have each and all contributed to the loosing of morals and the adoption of the evil habit of drinking, etc. We are ashamed to say that in some sections of our brethren the evil is too deep and has led to indescribable bad results. Indebtedness is one of them. At the same time, we cannot but lay a considerable portion of the blame at the door of the Government whose excise policy and more specially the outstill system has been the ruin of most of our brethren. We, therefore, strongly advocate total prohibition in labour areas and also an extension and strict enforcement of the gambling acts in those areas.

Indebtedness.—We have tried in the preceding paragraphs to outline the various causes that result in our indebtedness. We need not expand that point any further but we would like to say that over 97 per cent of us are in debts. It is true that the Co-operative Society has, to some extent, minimised the burden of heavy interest, but the credit of labourer is limited to very low amount. The highest amount that labourer can get from the Co-operative Society is Rs. 100 only and the present rules so provide that unless his amount of debt is fully cleared up, the member is not entitled to a further loan of even a pice. Moreover, not all the labourers have the privilege of being members of the society and naturally enough they take recourse to other professional money-lenders. Of these the *Kabuli* is most atrocious, charging interest at $-\frac{1}{6}$ to $-\frac{2}{-}$ in the rupee and realising it at the point of the *Lathi*. The curious part of it is that the debtor may have paid a sum equal to three times the principal by way of interest only but the loan remains all the same. The other class is the professional *Mahajan*, as

also some of our own workmen, who also charges the same exorbitant rate of interest. We have carefully investigated this point and we have come to the conclusion that the average man goes to the *Kabuli* or the professional money-lender for running requirements and small amount of cash. We think that, if some means is devised to enable the worker to meet the small and unexpected demands for which he goes to this money-lender, it would considerably ease the debt problem.

Reductions.—We have purposely kept two points at the end of this memorandum for the purpose of dealing with them in detail as they are most important from our point of view; one is the question of reductions and the other the question of Trade Disputes and the method of their settlement. We proceed to deal with the former.

The Engineering Works and the F. and S. Works work more in the value of contract-companies and as such employ labour in quantities when work comes, and dismiss people as soon as work decreases. We submit that this becomes serious cause of discontent amongst us. In the first place, there is no hard and fast rule about the method of reduction, it nearly depending upon the will of the departmental heads. In the second place, men employed permanently also come under reduction in the ordinary way. Thirdly, it loses the sense of security in the worker as he may be laid off at any moment and made to seek for his living elsewhere or sit idle depending on chance of being taken back if and when work comes. And last of all, it gives a long rope to the departmental heads to dismiss whomsoever they like or whomsoever they have been displeased with for personal reasons under cover of shortage of work. For all these reasons, we urge that there should be no reductions. If work decreases, the work should be so spread as to allow the men to work by turns and continue in service. The firm has recently explained its policy in this matter by saying that in case of shortage of work, they would employ double the number of men required and give them work by turns, but that those who were in excess of this arrangement would be dismissed. We submit that this should not be done but that those in excess should continue to be on the rolls of the firm and given leave or told to seek leave for a long period or till such time as there is no chance of work. This will remove a serious cause of discontent and keep the worker attached to the firm and its fortunes. Secondly, we would also urge that the system of sending out men should be regulated upon

the length of service and new men should go rather than old men. We request the Committee to give their anxious considerations to this point to remove this long-felt grievance.

Trade Dispute.—As we are sufferers from the effects of a strike last year and therefore, have gone through all the stages of a strike, we feel that it is necessary to ventilate our views on this subject. In a separate article, our Secretary has related how he had joined the Labour Federation of Mr. Home at the time of the strike and the reasons that led him and most of us to secede therefrom. We have come to the conclusion that trade unionism cannot flourish under the leadership of autocratic leaders and it is extremely necessary that leaders should arise from the ranks of labour. For this education is a necessary element, sound leadership and safe custody and disposal of finances of the union is another, while the constructive aspect of the labour uplift is yet another important factor. We feel that trade unionism which is yet in its infancy at present should have the paternal care of the Government and should slowly progress along right lines under its shadow. Provision should be made for the checking of union funds so that it may not be frittered away at the sweet control of the official and necessary amendments in the law should be made in that direction. At the same time, the law about auditing by the members of the union or some firm of auditors is not sufficient and it should be so amended as to require the auditing to be done by Government auditors; and registrations of the union or its cancellation should rest upon the report of the auditor also.

In the matter of trade disputes, we would also urge that at the present moment, while the growth of trade unionism is at a low ebb, Government should frame such legislation that trade disputes may be settled by reference to arbitration by some outside authority under the aegis of Government, before either the employer or employees are allowed to take to direct action. This would ensure industrial peace and alleviate the sufferings of workers in a strike which they are compelled to resort to even in the case of day to day grievances. In our opinion, some legislation on the lines of the recent Bombay Trade Disputes Act would be highly desirable. To summarise our demands we claim that:—

1. The minimum earnings of every worker should be at least Rs. 25 a month,
2. Security of service,

3. Provision to be made for Provident Fund and Retiring Gratuity,
4. Bonus or Profit-sharing scheme to be introduced,
5. More housing accommodation and houses of better type,
6. Better provision of drinking water,
7. Lighting of roads,
8. Extension of Hospital by providing medical ward, maternity ward and appointment of a lady doctor,
9. Amusement facilities,
10. Adult and children's educational facilities,
11. Removal of evil habits viz., drinking, gambling, etc.,
12. Indebtedness and its removal,
13. There should be no reductions in the manner as done now,
14. Trade disputes and their settlement on the lines of the Bombay Trade Disputes Act.

In concluding we thank the Committee for taking the trouble of asking for our grievances. We fervently hope that our grievances will be redressed. We also beg to state that should the Committee feel disposed to question us orally on any point, our representative will be too glad to give evidence.

APPENDIX I.

Analysis of minimum requirements of a family consisting of four members.

Fooding.

			Re. a. p.	
Rice, 6 <i>Chhataks</i> each per meal	...	...	0 2 3	per day
<i>Atta</i> 6 <i>Chhataks</i> each per meal	...	...	0 3 0	„ „
Pulses 2 <i>Chhataks</i> each per meal	...	...	0 1 0	„ „
Sugar and Sweets	...	...	0 2 0	„ „
Meat and Fish	...	...	0 1 0	„ „
Milk and <i>Ghee</i>	...	...	0 2 6	„ „
Vegetables and Fruits	...	...	0 1 0	„ „
Oils	...	...	0 1 0	„ „
Salt	...	...	0 0 1½	„ „
Tea	...	...	0 0 3	„ „
Other Foods	...	...	0 1 0	„ „
Fuel and Lightings	...	...	0 1 0	„ „
			1 0 1½	

Other necessities.

		Rs. a. p.	
Clothings	...	0 2 6	calculated on daily basis.
Beddings and Household materials.		0 0 3	„
Hair Cutting, Washerman and Soap, etc.		0 0 6	„
Tobacco	...	0 0 6	„
Travelling to and from native place.		0 0 6	„
Interest on debts	...	0 0 3	„
Miscellaneous	...	0 0 3	„
Education for children	...	0 1 0	„
Amusement	...	0 0 6	„
		0 6 3	
Total		1 6 4½	× 30 = Rs. 41-15-3 per month.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Tatanagar Foundry Workers' Union, Jamshedpur.

A.—A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INDUSTRY AND ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION.

This is a peculiar industry which is neither strictly seasonal nor perennial. The Company was started in 1926 to turn out casting and similar work. As at present, it depends mainly on Railway Board orders for slippers, although orders from the various local industries are not insignificant. Whatever be the volume and nature of work turned out by the factory, it is certain that the company has made very good progress since its commencement. The actual financial position of the concern is not known to us. But from the extension of the factory and the construction of residential buildings for the proprietors, one can make a near guess of the prosperity of the concern. It is said that the gross profit of the concern was in the neighbourhood of three lacs last year.

The labour force of the company has, however, existed and worked under deplorable conditions since the commencement of the operation. Wages scale is the lowest in the district, service benefits non-existent, tenure uncertain and welfare measures totally absent. When the workers could not further tolerate the existing conditions and mass unrest became manifest in all industrial centres of the province following the parliamentary elections, the workers of the Tatanagar Foundry Company re-organised their union on the 4th April 1938, and pressed for the concessions promised by the management about a year ago. The management took the line of least resistance and avoided meeting workers legitimate demands by pleading inability of the industry to bear any increased financial burden. Agitation followed, and protest *hartals* were held by the workmen to bring the employers to a reasonable frame of mind. At last there was a strike on the 9th of September which was called off after 5 days on the assurance of amicable settlement of all points at dispute. On the 17th September 1938 there was a settlement. The management agreed to grant a 10 per cent general increase and refer all other matters to the Government to be decided by a conciliation board. The Conciliation Board announced its award on the 14th of December 1938. The employers agreed to give effect to the general increment scheme with retrograde effect from the 19th September and to grant 10 days leave with pay every year and introduce a

scheme of provident fund and profit sharing bonus. Service was also secured and kept in continuity by grant of compulsory leave during the slack season.

None of these provisions has so far been respected. We demand, therefore, that the relation between the workers and the employers be examined in the light of the above facts and necessary safeguards be advised to protect the legitimate interests of the workers.

B.—SERVICE CONDITIONS.

1. *Recruitment*.—Recruitment of labour for the Tata-nagar Foundry is done by a *sardar* and sometimes by the Head Mistri. The Whitley Commission strongly criticised this method. We demand that recruitment should be carried on directly by the Managing Director on recommendation of the Workers' Union who will maintain a register of applications and send a list to the management according to the priority of enlistment and qualification.

2. *Security of service*.—There is practically no security of service in this industry. Before the Union re-organised in April 1938, labour had practically no strength and bargaining power and the employers used to appoint and dismiss men according to necessity and sweet will. It is not a seasonal industry. But during about 2 months in the year, out-put is held up owing to the Railway Board orders for slippers being exhausted and new orders not coming into hand. Between 60 per cent to 75 per cent of the men are reduced during the slack season without any guarantee of re-instatement. The helpless workers submit to their lot and employer's whims. In June last, through the intervention of the Union, an agreement was reached and the management undertook to grant compulsory leave for the slack period to all the superfluous hands and to provide them with jobs in order of seniority when work was resumed. The arrangement was again confirmed during September settlement and embodied in the terms arrived at by the Conciliation Board in December 1938. The terms of the Agreement have not been respected. Under the circumstances we suggest that:—

- (a) The employer should arrange with the Railway Board to spread the supply uniformly throughout the year so that no retrenchment may be necessary at any time of the year, or
- (b) the company should increase its permanent work by exploring new sources so that during the period that Railway orders are exhausted these orders

can be worked, and men engaged exclusively on the latter job, or

- (c) if temporary retrenchment becomes necessary the employer should pay 25 per cent of the wages for the idle period so that he may be tempted to avoid retrenchment as far as possible, and re-employ workers quickly; and men may maintain themselves somehow, and
- (d) each man temporarily retrenched, should be given a card showing his name, number, designation, rate, period of service, and possible date of resumption, so that on his return, he may not be put to any difficulty in any of the matters.

3. *Punishment*.—Suspension and dismissal should be strictly controlled and summary or abrupt punishment must be stopped. In case of reported offence, the Works Manager should make a preliminary enquiry, and either drop the case or issue a charge sheet to the party concerned for his explanation. The matter should then be placed before the Joint Committee of the Management and the Union for final settlement.

4. *Promotion and Demotion*.—In absence of a grade scale or any fixed system, promotion or increase is often governed by arbitrary methods. We demand that there should be a grade scale for every job with initial and maximum pay. A man starting on initial rate should, by periodical rise, reach the maximum and wait for vacancy the next higher position. A vacancy should be filled in by promoting juniors and only the bottom position should be filled in by new recruits.

A unique feature in the Tatanagar Foundry is frequent demotion. Men getting higher rates are often transferred, particularly after compulsory leave period, to jobs carrying lower wages. Cases are too numerous to require mentioning.

We demand that this practice must be stopped, as there can be no justification of permanently reducing a man's earning, particularly when his efficiency and skill increase.

5. *Wages*.—(a) *Increase of job rates*.—The job rates in the Tatanagar Foundry have been kept at a very low level. It is a contrast to rates in other industries. We, therefore, demand a substantial rise in the job rates for both skilled or unskilled workers, at least 20 per cent in each case.

(b) *Restoration of previous rates*.—The management have been reducing men's rates, particularly on return from compulsory leave, as stated before. This practice must be stopped

once for all. The plea that "there is no vacancy for the man and he may accept a lower rate job" should not be continued.

(c) *Minimum wages.*—The wages of unskilled labour are ridiculously low. This affects the standard of living of the workmen throughout Jamshedpur. We, therefore, demand that minimum wage scale introduced for Jamshedpur should equally apply to this industry. In no case the minimum should be less than annas 10 for unskilled and Re. 1 for skilled labour per day.

6. *Leave with pay.*—The management have been avoiding granting of annual leave with pay. It should be noted that most of the workers have served the company for years and the compulsory periodical break should not be made a plea to deprive them of the benefit. We demand that (i) one month's leave on full pay should be given to all workers, and (ii) sick leave on half pay for a maximum of 90 days in a year on the certificate of a medical officer should be granted, and (iii) 25 per cent of wages be given for compulsory leave period.

7. *Working hours.*—Shifts in Tatanagar Foundry are not systematically fixed excepting the general shift. There is quite a number of shifts commencing from different hours and overlapping each other. We recommend that these be substituted by straight shifts commencing from 6 A.M. and general shift.

Hours of work are also not uniform, and often extend to 11 hours with or without interval for food. It is said that the extra hours are not recorded in attendance register, but separate accounts are kept. This always gives rise to a lot of complaints of short payment. Besides, there is a peculiar system of "Double Duty" which although does not extend to 16 hours a day, involves a very great exertion on the part of the workmen, and means longer hours of work. The management insist on this system, in Ramming and Moulding Departments in particular, to get double production in one shift in order to avoid the supply of double the number of dice and consequent expenditure. We urge, therefore, that this system of double duty should be abolished.

8. *Provident Fund.*—As stated before, a scheme of Provident Fund was agreed to be introduced by the management within a month from the date of settlement by the Conciliation Board on the 14th December, 1938. More than 3 months since have elapsed but nothing has been done. The unduly low wage scale does not suffice for current expenses. Any saving for bad days is out of the question. Introduction of Provident

Fund is all the more necessary for the workers of this concern. We, therefore, urge for the introduction of the same with retrospective effect. A sum of half an anna in the rupee should be recovered by instalments against the total wages of the employees for the past year, and a similar amount contributed by the employer to create the starting fund. From 1939 one-twelfth of the wages should be subscribed by the workers, and an equal amount contributed by the company.

9. *Bonus*.—For greater incentive to higher production, a system of Bonus payment should be introduced as already agreed to by the management. There should also be both production and profit sharing bonus.

10. *Intensification of work*.—It is hardly possible to describe the degree of intensification in Tatanagar Foundry Works. Although there is hardly any developed mechanical device to extort intensified work, the deficiency is more than made up by extreme form of strict supervision for getting far larger volume of work from individual worker. Besides, hard and heavy jobs, generally performed by mechanical devices elsewhere, have to be done by sheer physical force. In almost all the departments, production per head has nearly doubled. In absence of mechanical development, the increase in production must be largely ascribed to intensification. We urge on the necessity of taking step to check this kind of intensification. Although we are not supporters of rationalisation that throws men out of employment, we certainly advocate introduction of certain improved method of mechanisation to relieve extraordinary physical exertion.

11. *Temporary Recruitment*.—The Management of Tatanagar Foundry have found it convenient to reduce any number of hands whenever they so desire under the plea of "reduction of temporary hands". Under this arrangement, any man, irrespective of the length of his service, can be shifted to the "temporary group". This dangerous procedure cuts at the very root of security of service, particularly of those who have incurred the displeasure of the management through union activity or otherwise.

12. *Housing accommodation*.—The management of the Tatanagar Foundry, it seems, are not prepared to accept the responsibility of providing housing accommodation to its workers during its thirteen years of existence. The Company has hardly built any quarters for the labour except two rows of about a dozen quarters meant for the office-establishment and a few huts for the supervisors and persons in charge of labour; and, more than 99 per cent of the men have been

left to their lot to find out a shelter to rest their head in, as best as they can. As the Whitley Commission observed, in a colonial place like Jamshedpur, the employer cannot deny the responsibility of providing accommodation to its employees. Particularly the industry which pays the lowest wages and provides with work for about 9 months in the year has certainly greater obligation to provide adequate number of houses. But the company has totally failed in this direction. We would, therefore, urge for a special measure to deal with the situation and compel the employer to start immediate building programme to house at least 66 per cent of its employees within three years from now.

13. *Medical Aid.*—Medical arrangement is non-existent, except for first-aid provided during working hours. Helpless patients have to pay for medical treatment out of their starving wages. And those who cannot even afford to do that, have to depend on their lot and suffer in silence.

It is needless to stress on the necessity of providing medical aid. We beg that the management may be compelled to arrange for efficient medical aid available to its employees and their families whenever necessary. A well equipped outdoor dispensary under qualified medical men should be started.

14. *Water-supply.*—Water-supply, both in the factory and around, is extremely inadequate and unsatisfactory. Even in hot weather proper supply of water is not kept up. No cold drinking water is available in the works and the supply kept up in a few earthen pots soon gets exhausted and men have to quench their thirst as best as they can. As supply is not obtained from the taps, a well has been sunk. Unfortunately for the workers, the well also dries up during the summer season and they have to take recourse to unfiltered water. The water consumption of the company employing over 2,500 men may be compared with that of the Tinplate Company, which employs about 3,000 men.

15. *Contract System.*—Quite a large proportion of the works inside the factory is entrusted to the contractors who in their turn bring in an additional volume of misery to the workers under them. The contractors employ about five hundred men on productive jobs. We demand immediate abolition of the system and absorption of the entire force by the company. There are instances of contractors who did not pay wages to the workers under them. Miseries of workers under such circumstances can be imagined

particularly in view of the fact that contractors normally make a good margin out of the very low wages that the company pays.

16. *Rest House, creches and tiffin room.*—There is no provision of Rest House, creches and tiffin room. We invite serious attention of the Committee to all these irregularities and beg that the employer may be compelled to make provision without delay.

17. *Light in the workshop.*—During the night, the workshop is inadequately and dimly lighted which accounts for larger number of accidents during night. We demand that during night, the plant should be lighted with high power lamps to prevent possible accidents as also inconvenience to workers.

18. *Indebtedness.*—By far the excessive indebtedness among the Tatanagar Foundry workers in comparison with that of other workers, is due exclusively to the very low rate of wages. As nobody can maintain himself with the earning, he has to incur debts, particularly during the compulsory leave period, when he can neither maintain himself here nor move to the country home, for want of passage money. During this period, he has to take credit from the grocers and borrow from the money-lenders, which multiplies with interest and becomes a burden as soon as he resumes duty after compulsory leave. Then he lives under perpetual debts.

We, therefore, strongly demand that the wages rate be increased to guarantee minimum maintenance. We also demand that during the leave period either 25 per cent of the wages be given as allowance or at least men be given passage money to proceed home with family.

19. *Accident.*—The Committee are requested to devote their special attention to study the causes of the very high rate of accidents. Minor accidents, such as burns, sprain, bruise, fracture, etc., are too numerous every day. The number of such minor injuries totals 6,000 a year. But hardly men get any compensation even in comparatively major accidents. The large number of injuries put physical strain and account for monetary loss to the men.

Antiquated methods of operation, antiquated machinery and lack of competent supervision are among the important causes of this huge number of accidents. Whatever it be, the causes of such extensive misery to the men need be ascertained and its remedy found out.

Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee

By

The Arthur Butler Labour Union, Muzaffarpur.

1. Total number in the Arthur Butler and Company,
Limited, Muzaffarpur, 300—500.

Officers	...	...	...	15
Clerks	...	...	...	60
Men	...	...	...	225

4. From the Sadr subdivision of the district of
Muzaffarpur.

5. The annual turn-over in this Factory is 600.

6. (a) 2 men left the establishment due to retirement
during 1936-37.

(d) 70 persons due to slackness or stoppage of work.

7. The workers are recruited both by (a) contractors
and (b) management. We prefer the latter system of recruit-
ment to that of the former because there is security of service
and other privileges which the former has not got.

13. Casual workers are employed for (a) smithy
(b) machinery (c) moulding (d) assisting others in this work.
The proportion of casual workers to the total number of
workers is in the ratio of 7:3 (seven to three). Yes, the pro-
portion is increasing.

14. Yes. Skilled labourers are also employed as casual.

23. The number of holidays is about 65 days in a year.

26. Heavy fines, suspension and dismissal.

27. No opportunity is given.

34. 7 to 12 A.M. and 1 to 5 P.M.

Yes, we are in favour of shorter hours because the workers
are so much exhausted and tired in Iron Factories that they
find very little time to look after their home affairs, the edu-
cation of children and above all their own health.

38. Yes, there is a system of working overtime. The overtime is calculated in some departments, as for instance, Black Smithy Department, on the basis of daily hours while in others, although there is a system of working overtime, no payment is made, as for instance in the Moulding Department.

44. Yes, we do think it necessary to extend the scope of the Factories Act.

45 and 46. The workers are compelled to work for more than even 8 hours a day.

70 and 71. No.

72. No medical facilities.

74. No, there is no such system.

MINES AND QUARRIES.

**Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee**

By

The Indian Miners' Association, Jharia.

NATURE AND RECRUITMENT OF LABOUR.

2. About 50 per cent of the labourers are permanently settled.

4. Workers in coal mines are mainly drawn from Chota Nagpur, North Bihar, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, Bengal and the Punjab.

5. The proportion of those who leave the mine within a year to the total number employed is undoubtedly considerable. Better housing, better wages, better working conditions and other amenities and ameliorative measures are the real remedies for reducing such turnover.

7. (a) In mines worked by raising contractors, the labourers are recruited by these raising contractors.

(b) In mines where work is done by the Company the labourers are recruited directly by the Company.

(c) There are also mines where labourers are supplied by jobbers or labour contractors on commission basis.

Mining being an old industry, recruiting is not so much necessary now-a-days as in the past. Indeed there are times in the year when labour supply exceeds the actual requirements. Shortage of labour is mainly due to the fact that owing to unsuitable housing and working conditions, a large number of miners go back to their villages as soon as there is an opportunity to do so, such as for cultivation, harvesting, etc., although many of them may not have any land of their own at all. Jobbers or other emissaries are, therefore, required to go to their villages to call them back to their work and there is thus a shortage of labour in the mines. Sometimes it so happens that unscrupulous jobbers or contractors recruit new labourers with false temptation of higher wages and facilities of work, etc., with the result that the poor labourers find themselves involved in great difficulties.

7. (b) Nature and extent of control exercised by the jobbers over the workers vary from colliery to colliery. But

generally they recruit and keep watch over them and see that they go to work regularly. They are practically intermediaries between the management and the labour. Whenever there is a grievance of the labourers and the management is unwilling to remove it, they try to suppress it with the help of the jobbers and therefore it is the interest of the management to keep the jobbers satisfied.

(c) Jobbers generally get commission at rates varying from 6 pies to 2 annas per tub of coal raised by the miners recruited by them.

8. None of the above systems of recruitment is desirable. Recruitment through the system of labour exchange is the best method. This system is better than any other system because it not only distributes employment equitably to all workers without any loss of income due to bribery, etc., which is generally prevalent in mines and factories but also furnishes the data upon which depends the working of such legislation as unemployment benefit and social insurance, etc.

11. See answers 7 and 8.

12. Labour exchange for the purpose of recruitment is both desirable and feasible. Primarily such exchanges should be under the control of the State but for facilities of work, Advisory Board consisting of representatives from the employers and worker's organisations may be put up in different industrial centres.

13. For earth-cutting, brick-making and building houses, etc., a number of casual workers are employed. The number of these workers varies from year to year according to the condition of the industry.

14. Skilled labourers are generally permanent.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

15. Generally there are no service rules in coal mines.

16. In some big collieries apprentices, mostly unpaid in the beginning, are taken for mining, electrical and mechanical training.

17. There is no system of graded promotion in colliery services.

18. There is no security of services in collieries. Services may be terminated at any time at the pleasure of the authority. Considering the rate of wages and salaries and difficulties of work, services should be made as secure as possible and

service rules on the lines of Government service rules should be enforced in collieries to secure stability of services.

In case, however, it becomes necessary to dispense with the services of any employee on grounds of abolition of any particular post or for retrenchment or for the closing down of any concern, there should be provision for adequate compensation to the discharged employee or employees to the extent of at least 6 months' wages or salaries.

19. There are no leave rules excepting in a few big collieries where only the salaried employees are granted 3 weeks' leave in a year on full pay. If any employee does not avail the leave in any year it lapses and is not allowed to be carried over to the following year.

It is highly necessary that all employees, labourers and workers of all descriptions, whether working on time basis or peace basis, should be given at least one month's leave and fifteen days casual leave with full pay and the leave should be allowed to be carried over if not availed of during the year.

20. There is no rule for granting leave during sickness. It is imperative that there should be provision for sick-leave to all employees and labourers.

21. There is no rule of giving maternity benefit to women workers and such benefit is seldom given.

There should be definite rules for giving maternity benefits from at least 2 months before to one month after delivery.

22. There are no provisions for gratuity, provident fund or old age pension for employees and labourers. Only in a very few big collieries, there are provisions for provident fund and pension for monthly paid employees. Even where this scheme is in force, pension is granted or refused at the discretion of the employers.

The provision for gratuity, provident fund or old age pension is highly necessary for all classes of employees and workers and should be introduced by legislation.

23. There are no holidays even on Sundays. The miners and some other weekly paid workers do not work one day in a week and they are not paid for that day.

There should be definite rules for holidays with pay on Sundays and gazetted holidays.

27. Ordinarily no opportunity is given to meet any charge before a worker is punished.

29. Fines from miners are levied for under-loading and bad loading of tubs, etc.

33. Fine funds in many collieries are credited to the capital account. In some big collieries some portion of the fund is utilised for *kali puja* and other purposes.

HOURS OF WORK.

34. According to Mining regulation 54 hours per week, with 9 hours daily limit, are the hours of work. But in practice, where regular shift system has not been introduced, miners and other workers are made to work longer hours.

Trade Union movement, both in India and in other countries, has decided that 40 hours of work per week without reduction of income ought to be adopted in all industries for the benefit of all concerned and specially for the solution of unemployment problem and to avoid over-work and fatigue and we adhere to that decision.

35. Under-ground work in mines is conducted on 2 or 3 shift system. Clerks and surface workers generally work in the morning and in the afternoon sometimes up to late hours in the evening without any overtime payment. Boilermen, pumpmen, enginemen, hookmen and onsetters, etc., in many cases are made to work for 12 hours without any extra payment. They have neither any rest day nor any half holiday. Those who do not work on Sunday are not paid for that day.

36. Mines, generally, are continuous working and the system of work is as stated above.

37. Hours of work should be reduced all round without reduction of income. The hours of work of surface workers should be so reduced that they may get more rest in the mid-day, during summer.

38. In collieries no extra payment is generally made for overtime work. There should be definite law in this respect.

39. Necessity arising, any worker is called upon to work overtime but generally the clerks, the mechanical and electrical workers, as also the surface workers, work overtime without extra payment.

40. No.

41. No allowance is given for enforced idleness although there is a recommendation to this effect by the Royal Commission on Labour.

CONDITIONS IN FACTORIES.

42—48. In view of the disastrous accidents that have been repeatedly occurring in the coal mines for the last several years causing deplorably heavy casualties and also in view of the heavy loss of coal due to fire, explosion, and premature subsidences, it is urgently necessary, for national interest, that legislative measures should be adopted to work the mine on the lines recommended by the Coal Mining Committee, 1937.

WAGES.

50. No.

52. No.

54. The Payment of Wages Act should be immediately enforced.

55. Since 1925-26 wages have been systematically reduced for every kind of work in coal mines. Miners who were paid on tub basis were getting annas 10 to annas 12 per tub of 14 cwt. during 1921 to 1924. In 1929 when the Royal Commission on Labour visited the coalfield and the miners were getting about annas 7 per tub of the above size. The rates were further reduced and they were getting annas 4 to annas 5 per tub for some years after 1929. Thereafter, when the miners opposed further reduction of wages, the size of the tubs was increased for indirect reduction in wages. Now the tubs contain about 1 ton of coal each in place of 14 cwt. in 1929 or before and the rate is near about the same as in 1929. In other words, the rate of wages today is below the rate in 1929, although the coal market, for the last two years, is much better than for many years previously. The weekly income of miners on an average is Rs. 2 to Rs. 3.

The wages of workers on time basis have not been increased to any extent in spite of improvement in the coal trade.

56. Besides fines, deduction from wages is made on such grounds as under-loading, small coal loading, etc. Small coal is paid at a very low rate.

While deduction is made for under-loading, no payment is made for surplus-loading. The Royal Commission on

labour for this reason made a recommendation that payment of miners should be made on weightment of tubs so that they may have the benefit of the surplus-loading. This recommendation should be implemented.

57. See answer 22.

58. Wage fixing machinery according to the minimum wage convention adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1928 should be created for fixing minimum living wages of all workers.

59—65. A properly constituted wage fixing machinery will be competent to decide these questions. We are of opinion that minimum wage in industrial centres should be fixed at Rs. 30 per month.

RATIONALISATION.

66—69. Labour is opposed to the idea of rationalising of the industry on the ground that it will cause serious unemployment amongst the workers and more strain and fatigue on those who will remain in service resulting in over-work, accident, physical deterioration and premature death of workers. The commercial side, however, may be rationalised to regulate market fluctuation by establishment of marketing board, etc.

WELFARE WORK.

I. Education.

70. There is no schools either for the employees' children or for the adults. In some big collieries, however, primary schools have been established for the children of the employees. But all of these schools are not free. Fees are collected in several places from the children of the miners and workers for which most of the poor workers cannot send their boys to schools.

71. There is no provision for libraries or reading rooms in any colliery for the labourers. The clerks in some places, however, have got their own clubs and libraries.

II. Health.

72. Medical facilities provided for workers in collieries are very poor and meagre. Smaller collieries, generally, maintain a part-time doctor who visits several collieries by turn and consequently labourers are very much neglected in cases of illness. In some big collieries whole-time doctors are

maintained and arrangements are a little better. Except a few maternity wards opened by the Jharia Mines Board of Health, there are no special arrangements for maternity cases in collieries. The arrangements on the whole are quite inadequate and unsatisfactory.

There should be doctors and well equipped hospitals with maternity wards in each colliery.

73. Treatment and medicines are provided free.

74. No.

75. The chief diseases in collieries are cholera, small-pox, malaria, dysentery and consumption.

Amongst the occupational disease may be mentioned hook-worm, and gout and rheumatism, etc.

Improvement of sanitation, adequate supply of water, checking of food adulteration, better medical facilities and special arrangements for treatment during epidemic, periodical examination of health and regular propaganda for teaching hygiene and above all better housing and better working conditions are the means to combat diseases.

77. Yes. Rickets and consumption can be largely found all over the mine area.

78. There are practically no latrines or urinals either in working places or in *dhaurahs*. There is no good arrangement for washing and bathing purpose. There is no privacy arrangement.

79. There is no arrangement for drinking water in work places even on the Railway-siding where wagons are loaded by the loading *coolies* in hot sun and other weather conditions. Near about the labourers' quarters or *dhaurah* water taps are provided in so inadequate a number and they are kept open for such a small time that the labourers find it extremely difficult to draw necessary quantity of water. Arrangements for sufficient quantity of water are essentially necessary.

80. There are no regular arrangements for providing sickness relief worth the name.

81. There should be Sickness Insurance and the premium should be paid by the employers.

82. The payment of Maternity Benefit should be made compulsory by legislation.

III.—Housing.

83. Housing in collieries is provided by the employers. The labourers' quarters known as *dhourahs* consist of rows of small cells made back to back and having no ventilation. The cubic measurement of each cell is said to be 1,000 c. ft. and may serve the purpose of a bed room for one or two persons. But in practice, owing to inadequate provision for housing, a number of persons, at times 8 to 10 or even more are made to live in one cell. The ugliness of this arrangement will be understood from the fact that men and women of different families are sometimes made to live in the same cell. There are no arrangements for cooking; bath, latrines or urinals. It is no wonder, therefore, that this old industry, in spite of enormous development, is still incurring heavy expenditure for recruitment of labour. It is absolutely necessary that this disgraceful arrangement should be improved by legislation. The recommendation made in this connection by the Royal Commission on Labour may also be referred to.

84. *See above.*

85. No house rent is collected from labourers.

86. None.

87. No.

IV. Rest and Recreation.

88. No facility is given to the labourers for any kind of sports, games or recreation.

89-90. No.

INDEBTEDNESS.

91. Workers in some places obtain credit from shopkeepers to the extent of one week's wages on such arrangement that the shopkeeper will get his payment from the employer direct. Credit price is always higher than cash price. Besides, in such cases the workers get short weight and are deceived in many ways.

92. The establishment of Co-operative Stores in the ordinary way will not benefit the miners until they are a little educated and form a sort of Industrial population.

93. Indebtedness is due to low wages. Unless their wages are increased, there is no way to alleviate their indebtedness.

95. No.

96. The labourers generally get loan from *Kabuli* money-lenders or from cashiers or *sirdars* of the mine where they work and these money-lenders know very well how to receive their money with full interest from these poor and ignorant people without any legal assistance. The workers, therefore, will remain where they are, inspite of the amended legislation referred to in this question.

98. Experiment may be made by the Government for supplying fresh victuals and other articles at the lowest possible price.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

99—102. See supplementary answer.

TRADE UNION.

103. (General) The Indian Miners' Association is a Trade Union, registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act and recognised by the Local Government as a genuine Trade Union. It is the only Trade Union in the Mining Industry which is affiliated to the National Trades Union Federation and the All India Trade Union Congress.

Up till 1930 there was only one Trade Union in the mining industry named Indian Colliery Employees' Association and the Secretary of the Indian Miners' Association, Mr. P. C. Bose was the Secretary of that body. Afterwards there was trouble and disruption in the movement and the Employees' Association was abolished. The Indian Miners' Association was then organised under the instruction of Messrs. Joshi and Giri and other Labour leaders, on pure trade union lines with aims and objects as laid down in its constitution. Its membership numbering nearly 4,000 has been drawn from a number of coal mines in the Jharia field as also from some mica mines in the Hazaribagh district.

104. Indian Miner's Association was registered in 1932.

105. Recognition:—The Association has not yet been officially recognised by any employer or employers' organisation. Of the employers' organisations, the Colliery Owners' Association, however, considers our representation and replies to our letters.

110. The policy and principle of Trade Union movement all over the world dictate that Trade Unions should be organised on industrial basis and that there should be only one Trade Union in one industry with branches in different places, if necessary.

111. See 103.

112. The executive of this Association is mostly composed of mine workers such as miners, *sardars*, fitters and clerks, etc. The only outsiders are the president, Mr. K. N. Bhattacharya M.A., B.L. who, for long, has been associated with the labour movement and the Secretary, Mr. P. C. Bose who is an ex-colliery employee and is in the labour movement since 1920 and who had represented the Indian workers at the International Labour Conference, Geneva and had seen the condition of labourers in many European countries. Both the president and the secretary are now on the General Council and the secretary is on the working committee of the All India Trade Union Congress.

Out of 18 members there are only 2 or 1 outsiders on the executive of the Association.

113. The Association has been constitutionally fighting for the removal of individual and general grievances and has also been regularly carrying on educative propaganda amongst the workers through lantern lectures and mass meetings.

The Association, sometimes ago, submitted a comprehensive scheme to the Colliery Owners' Association for welfare work amongst the workmen. But the owners ultimately did not agree to co-operate in giving effect to the scheme.

114. The attitude of owners is anything but satisfactory towards trade unions.

Freedom and recognition of genuine trade unions should be guaranteed by legislation.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE.

118—134. Although the officials had to conduct several strikes since 1928, the Indian Miners' Association got involved only in one strike in 1937. It took place without any sanction of the Association. It involved about 2,000 men and continued for 4 days. The strike was satisfactorily settled in favour of the workers by face to face talk between the secretary and the employers.

Generally, there are no arrangements in any colliery to look after the condition of labourers or to investigate into their grievances.

Conciliation officers may be helpful in settling ordinary disputes.

INDIAN MINERS' ASSOCIATION, JHARIA.

DEMANDS ON BEHALF OF THE WORKERS OF STANDARD COLLIERY.

(Still under negotiation.)

1. To arrange for better ventilation and better pumping in the mines so that Heat, Smoke and Water which hamper the progress of work and cause physical suffering to the workers, are removed from the working areas underground.

2. To arrange for more coal tubs so that miners are not to sit idle as at present for want of tubs.

3. Main roads under ground should have electric lights.

4. A general increment of 50 per cent of the present wages, should be given to all workers in all departments.

5. Miners working in specially difficult parts of mines should be given extra rates in addition to the above increment.

6. Miners and some other workers often do not get proper work and are compelled to sit idle. In all such cases a daily *hazree* should be paid to them.

7. Rules should be framed for leaves and holidays with pay, old age provision, sickness allowances and annual bonus for all workers.

8. The floors of almost all *dhaurahs* are oozing out water and the roofs are leaking. They should be properly repaired and the floors should be cemented.

9. Over-crowding in *dhaurahs* should be stopped and *dhaurahs* should be increased in number for proper accommodation of workers.

10. Coal and kerosene oil for daily use should be given to the workers.

11. To remove the extreme water difficulties, drinking water taps should be kept open for 12 hours daily and colliery pump water should be supplied to all *dhaurahs* for bathing and washing purposes.

12. Better medical facilities should be provided.

13. Taxation on domestic cattles as levied should be abolished.

14. Extra payment should be made for over-time and Sunday work.

15. New hands should not be recruited for any work while old hands are sitting unemployed on the colliery.

16. Those workmen who are paid on weekly basis, should be paid on monthly basis.

(Workers involved more than 2,000.)

TERMS FINALLY AGREED ON FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE TRADE DISPUTE AT BARAREE COKE PLANT, INVOLVING ABOUT 400 WORKMEN.

1. Increments will be given on the basis announced by the Manager (about 10 per cent).

2. Sick pay will be given at annas 4 per day up to one month on the Doctor's certificate.

3. 15 days leave with pay will be granted to all workers after a full year's service. The management reserves to itself the right to fix this leave to suit the convenience of the work.

4. All appointments, dismissals, re-appointments and punishments will have to be sanctioned by the Manager.

Signed on behalf of the workers

P. C. BOSE,
of the All India Trade Union Congress
and General Secretary, Indian Miners
Association,

Dated the 9th September 1938.

Signed on behalf of the Bararee Coke, Co., Ltd.

B. WILSON HAIGH,
Manager.

Answers to the Supplementary Questionnaire.

1. On the average, miners work for 4 days in the week. Miners are willing to work regularly for 5 days or even 6 days in the week. But in many places they are forced to remain idle for want of working facilities or for some sort of breakdown in the machineries. Thus their absence from work is more a matter of compulsion than one of option.

The Royal Commission on labour made a recommendation in this connection that if miners are to remain idle for no fault of their own, they should be paid remuneration on a daily rate.

2. But for the periodical absence of miners during cultivation and harvesting seasons, their attendance will greatly improve if they are not forced to remain idle as stated above.

3. A large number of miners and other labourers, who live in villages adjoining the coalfields, come on foot to the mines and go back on foot after their working shifts. The time spent in journey depends on the distance of the villages, which ranges from a mile to 10 miles or more.

4. Conveyance arrangement by motor buses was made last year specially on account of shortage of labour, improvement in the coal market and competition amongst owners to secure more labour. This transport system did not improve attendance on the contrary it was fraught with danger and difficulties.

5. There is no such arrangement in the Jharia Coalfields. Giridih Coalfield is perhaps the only place in Bihar where small holdings have been assigned to the miners near the colliery with the object of settling them on the mines. The results should be better—ascertained on the spot.

6-7. Raising contract system prevails very largely in the Coal industry. The evils of this system have been fully stressed upon by the Royal Commission on Labour. Their findings and remarks equally hold good even today.

8. Miners' *sirdars* or as they are called by the mines department Head men of miners, generally look after the welfare and regular attendance of the miners. In most cases intelligent and experienced miners ultimately become *sirdars*. The miners, therefore, are greatly benefited by their experience in many ways. The *sirdars* for these services get a commission from the owners say half-anna per tub, of coal by his miners.

Reports are sometimes received that the *sirdars* exploit the miners financially but so long as the miners are not educated enough to take care of their interests in the bustle and confusion of industrial establishments, these head men may be retained.

9. The idea of this question is perhaps the time spent by the miners in travelling from the pit mouth to the working place underground. This varies according to the size and condition of the mines. In some big mines the working faces are so far from the pit bottom that it takes about an hour to go to the place.

10. No special rate is paid for the distance of the working place.

11. The miners actually do not work more than 5 to 6 hours per relay.

12. Up to 1929 the size of the tub was 13 to 14 cwt. and the rate about that time was annas 7 per tub. The present size of the tub is about 18 cwt. to one ton and the rate per tub is annas 6 to annas 8 according to working conditions.

13. Miners suffer greatly for shortage of tubs.

14. No weighing machines have been set up in any colliery. Tubs are assigned to the miners separately.

15. No extra remuneration is paid for overloading. But deduction is made for and some times the whole tub is cancelled for underloading.

16. At the time when women were finally excluded from mines only $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the total number of women originally in employment, were working underground. Other women who were already engaged on the surface, are still working. The expelled women, therefore, have not been absorbed.

Sweeping, cleaning, loading, and carrying of coal (in open mines) and bricks, etc., are the works for which women are employed on the surface. Their average daily wage is annas 4 only.

17. Family income has naturally gone down. Many miners have sent their women and children home. Women having no male supporters are in great trouble.

18. The rate of wages of miners was slightly increased at the time of final exclusion of women as a result of unrest amongst the miners and great agitation by the trade unions.

19. Wages are generally paid in cash. Wages are mostly paid on rest days.

**Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee**

By

The Indian Colliery Labour Union, Bhaga, Jharia.

NATURE AND RECRUITMENT OF LABOUR.

2. About 50 per cent of labourers in the Jharia Coalfields are permanently settled and the remaining 50 per cent are migratory.

3. About 20 per cent live in their village homes and come to work in the coal mines daily, mostly in private motor buses supplied by the employers.

4. Workers in coal mines are mainly drawn from Chota Nagpur, the Central Provinces, north and south Bihar, the United Provinces, Bengal and the Punjab.

5. The proportion of the workers who leave the mine within a year to the total number is considerable. These miners mostly go to their houses during cultivation and harvest season. Better housing, better wages, better working conditions and other amenities and ameliorative measures are the real remedies for reducing such turnover.

7. (a) In mines worked by raising contractors, the labourers are recruited by these raising contractors, (b) In mines where work is done by the company the labourers are recruited directly by the company, (c) There are also mines where labourers are supplied by jobbers or labour contractors on commission basis.

Mining being an old industry recruiting is not so much necessary now-a-days as in the past. Indeed there are times in the year when labour supply exceeds the actual requirement. Shortage of labour is mainly due to the fact that owing to unsuitable housing and working conditions, a large number of miners go back to their villages as soon as there is an opportunity to do so such as cultivation, harvesting, etc., although many of them may not have any land of their own at all. Jobbers or other emissaries are, therefore, required to go to their village to come back to their work and there is shortage of labour in the mines. Sometimes it so happens that unscrupulous jobbers or contractors recruit new labourers with false temptation of higher wage and facilities of work, etc., with the

result that the poor labourers find themselves involved in great difficulties. These jobbers and contractors exploit labour and the practice of engaging them has been deprecated by the Whitley Commission.

(b) Nature and extent of control exercised by the jobbers over the workers vary from colliery to colliery. But generally they recruit and keep watch over them and see that they go to work regularly. They are practically intermediaries between the management and the labour. Whenever there is a grievance of the labourers and the management is unwilling to remove it, they try to suppress the workers with the help of the jobbers and therefore it is the interest of the management to keep the jobbers satisfied.

(c) Jobbers and recruiting contractors generally get commission at rates varying from 6 pies to 2 annas per tub or ton of coal raised by the miners recruited by them.

8. None of the above systems of recruitment is desirable. Recruitment through the system of Labour Exchange is the best method. This system is better than any other system because it not only distributes employment equitably to all workers without any loss of income due to bribery, etc., which are generally prevalent in mines and factories but also furnishes the data upon which depends the working of such legislation as unemployment benefit and social insurance, etc.

11. See answers 7 and 8.

12. Labour Exchange for the purpose of recruitment is both desirable and feasible. Primarily such exchanges should be under the control of the State and should consist of equal number of representatives from the employers and workers, organisations to be set up in different industrial centres.

13. For earth-cutting, brick-making and building houses, etc., a number of casual workers are employed. The number of these workers varies from year to year according to the condition of the industry.

14. Skilled labourers are also casually employed according to the requirements.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

15. Generally there are no service rules in coal mines.

16. In some big collieries apprentices mostly unpaid in the beginning are taken for mining, electrical and mechanical training.

17. There is no system of graded promotion in colliery services.

18. There is no security of service in collieries. Services may be terminated any time at the pleasure of the authority. Considering the low rate of wages and salaries and difficulties of work, services in the collieries should be made as secure as possible and service rules on the lines of the Government Service Rules should be enforced in collieries to secure stability of service. To ensure the security of service the system of piece work and *hazree* work should be abolished and in its place all workers should be monthly paid employees enjoying the benefits incidental to monthly servants. In case, however, it becomes necessary to dispense with the services of any employee on grounds of abolition of any particular post or for retrenchment or for the closing down of any concern, there should be provision for adequate compensation to the discharged employee or employees to the extent of up to 12 months wages and salaries, regard being had to the length of the service of the employee.

19. There are no leave rules excepting in a few big collieries where only the salaried employees are granted three weeks to one month leave in a year on full pay. If any employee does not avail of the leave in any year, it lapses and is not allowed to be carried over to the following year.

It is highly necessary that all employees, labourers and workers of all descriptions, whether working on time-basis or piece-basis, should be given at least one month's privilege leave and fifteen days' casual leave with full pay and the leave should be allowed to be carried over if not availed during the year or earnings in lieu of leave should be allowed.

20. There is no rule for granting leave during sickness but in exceptional cases some collieries grant such leave. It is imperative that there should be provision for sick-leave to all employees and labourers according to Government rules.

21. There is no rule of giving maternity benefit to women workers and such benefit is seldom given. There should be rules for giving maternity benefits for at least two months before and two months after delivery, on full pay or wages.

22. There are no provisions for gratuity, provident fund and old age pension for employees and labourers. Only in a very big few collieries there are provisions for provident fund and pension only for monthly-paid employees. Even where this scheme is in force, pension is granted or refused at the pleasure of the employers.

The provision for gratuity, provident fund and old age pension is highly necessary for all classes of employees and workers and should be introduced by legislation.

23. There are no holidays even on Sundays. The miners and some other weekly paid workers do not work one day in a week and they are not paid for that day.

There should be definite rules for holidays with full pay or wages on Sundays and gazetted holidays.

26. There is no definite procedure, except the rule of *anda*, i.e., the alleged offender is assaulted, filthily abused, fined and even discharged.

27. Ordinarily no opportunity is given to meet any charge before he is punished. He is summarily dealt with. Such cases should be finally dealt with by a tribunal consisting of a representative of the management, a representative of labour and a State official.

29. All these modes of punishment are prevalent in collieries.

33. In every colliery there is a fine fund which is utilised for *kali puja*, amusements and other purposes for the benefit of the clerical staff in which the labourers have no voice. This system should be discontinued and the fine fund, if any, should be exclusively utilised for the benefit of labour as almost the whole of it is realised from workmen.

HOURS OF WORK.

34. According to Mining regulation 54 hours per week with 9 hours of daily limit are the hours of work. But in practice, where regular shift system has not been introduced, miners and other workers are made to work longer hours. Trade union movement all over the world upholds 40 hours of work per week without reduction of income in all industries and this should particularly be adopted in the mining industry, as work in it is extremely hazardous and arduous.

35. Underground work in mines is conducted in 2 or 3 shifts. Each workman works in one shift only. Clerks and surface workers generally work in the morning from 6 to 12 and in the afternoon from 2 to 6 in summer and 2 to 5 in winter, sometimes up to late hours in the evening without any over-time payment. Workmen connected with underground operations, in many cases, are made to work for 12 hours without any extra payment. They have neither any rest day, nor

any half-holiday. Those who do not work on Sunday are not paid for that day. There is no difference in case of Saturdays.

36. Mines are generally worked in a continuous process and the system of work is as stated above.

37. For under-ground workers there should be three shifts of eight hours each. In this case season makes no difference. But in the case of surface workers the hours of work in summer should be 6 A.M. to 11 A.M. and from 3 P.M. to 6 P.M. and in winter from 7 A.M. to 12 A.M. and from 2 P.M. to 5 P.M.

38. In collieries there is no definite system of payment for over-time work although some collieries, as a matter of grace, pay something at their sweet will. There should be specific law in this respect.

39. In case of emergency, the mechanical and electrical workers are called upon to work over-time for which there is no system of regular payment. The clerical staff generally, has to work over-time for which they get no remuneration.

40. In some big collieries, such as the Tata's Jamadoba Colliery, this system is in vogue.

41. No allowance is given for enforced idleness.

CONDITIONS IN FACTORIES.

42. So far as factories are concerned, equipment for safety of workers is seldom supplied. But in case of coal mines, some safety measures are adopted which are quite inadequate to protect miners in consequence of which there have been repeated disasters in the coal mines. Safety equipments should be provided in larger numbers and rescue centres should be opened at once for protecting the lives of workers.

43. There are rules framed both under the Indian Mines Act and the Factories Act for preventing, classifying and reporting accidents. But they are inadequate and the management tries its best to evade them. Stricter and more frequent supervision is necessary. We are sorry to observe that in case of mines and factories owned by European supervision by Inspecting Officers is lax and in their case there is a tendency to whitewash their offences. We would propose as a check that labour unions should be furnished with copies of accident reports and should be allowed equal facility to hold enquiry into such accidents. Further, Labour Unions should have legislative powers to nominate their representative to sit as members on all committees constituted by the Government for enquiry into accidents.

44. Yes .

45. In case of mines the recommendations of the Coal Mining Committee should be given effect to.

46. We are opposed to exemptions being granted to any factory, as the workers of those factories are deprived of many privileges and safeguards which their co-workers enjoy elsewhere.

WAGES. .

51. In fixing the rate of wages employers are generally guided by the rule of demand and supply, e.g., when there is an influx of workmen more than the industry can absorb, the employers take advantage of the situation and reduce the wages and vice versa.

52. No.

53. It is feasible to convert all permanent daily and weekly-rated workers and even piece workers to monthly-rated ones. It will increase the efficiency and stability of labour force. It will also be easier to fix a minimum wage and to give labourers the advantages of leave allowance and bonus, etc.

54. Weekly and monthly payments are in vogue in collieries. Weekly-rated and piece-rated workers should be paid at the end of each week upto date and monthly-rated ones on the 1st day of the next month.

55. From 1929 to 1936 there has been a remarkable decrease in wage. In 1937 there was an increase of one anna or so per tub, but it has been counteracted by the increase of the capacity of the tub from 14 cwts. to 20 cwts. or even to 22 cwts. The wages of time basis workers have not been increased to any extent inspite of improvement in the coal trade.

56. Besides fines, deductions from wages are made on such grounds as underloading or bad loading mixed with stony coal. There are also various other modes of deduction on the occasion of *Durga Puja*, *Kali Puja* or other festivals and for lottery of old motor cars, harmoniums and other worthless articles, belonging to the officers and superior staff.

57. There is no system of bonus or profit sharing in vogue in the collieries except in the Tata's collieries where for the last two years bonus is being paid.

58. We consider such adjustment both desirable and feasible. Wages of all workers should be fixed in consideration

of their cost of decent living sufficient to maintain their dependants and the nature of work. We suggest that this should be done by the machinery of the State. The coming Labour Enquiry Committee can do it very well.

59. Yes, it should be fixed at the rate of Rs. 30 per month or Re. 1 a day for the lowest class of workers and the scale should be higher according to the nature of work. The question of fixing minimum wage should not be left to the pleasure of the employers. The standard of living of our workmen, at present, is unworthy of human beings. To raise the standard of living and give our workmen human conditions and ordinary comforts and amenities of civilised life, the minimum wage must be raised from its present level.

60. Minimum wage should be fixed according to the cost of decent living and the nature of work.

61. A standing committee or a board consisting of the representatives of labour, of the employers and of the Government in equal number should be formed for the purpose.

62. The rate of minimum wage should be uniform in respect of the same class of industry.

63. A system of grade rising from Rs. 30 to periodical increment should be introduced. This will prevent the minimum from becoming the maximum. Further it will be the look out of the proposed committee or board to see to it.

65. The answer is in the affirmative.

WELFARE WORK.

(a) Nil.

(b) There are a few schools for the children of the workmen; those are negligible and not properly conducted.

(c) Nil.

71. There are only a few which are exclusively for the clerical staff.

II.—*Health.*

72. (a) There is only one, viz., the charitable dispensary and hospital at Dhanbad which admits only serious cases of accident of colliery employees.

(b) Most inadequate.

(c) None.

There is most meagre arrangement for treatment of women and maternity cases. These are most inadequate and unsatisfactory. Every colliery should be compelled by legislation to maintain up to date well-equipped hospitals and dispensaries for indoor and outdoor patients. For the former, there should be an adequate number of beds according to the number of employees. There should be an adequate number of qualified medical men over a fixed percentage of workers.

74. No.

75. The chief diseases in the Jharia Coalfield are malaria, small-pox and occasionally cholera. The occupational disease among miners is a sort of eruption in hands and legs.

78. Not at all.

79. There is no arrangement for supply of drinking water in work places. The supply of water near worker's quarters is insufficient particularly in hot season.

81. There should be insurance against sickness without any contribution from workers.

82. Yes.

III.—*Housing.*

83. (a) The number of houses for workers are most inadequate.

(b) to (d) None.

The average room space of houses provided by employers is 10' × 10' × 10' as required by the rules of the Jharia Mines Board of Health. The number of persons living in each room ranges from 4 to 12 belonging to different families and there is no separate arrangement for women workers.

This is most reprehensible.

84. Not at all. The house accommodation is most inadequate.

85. No rent is charged.

86-87. No.

IV.—*Rest and Recreation.*

88—90. None whatsoever.

INDEBTEDNESS.

91. The shops from which workmen get the supply of their necessaries are generally either owned by raising contractors or patronised by a member of the superior staff. The difference between cash and credit prices varies from 25 to 50 per cent i.e. credit prices are 25 to 50 per cent more than cash prices and it is believed that in case of credit purchases shop-keepers generally enter in their shop accounts more than the actual price.

92. We would prefer establishment of Co-operative Stores by Government.

93. To an inappreciable extent. Increase in wages is the remedy to alleviate indebtedness.

94. Raising contractors and Indian concerns sometimes make advances to workers. European concerns and the Tata do not make such advances.

95. Recruiting advances should not be realised at all from workmen.

96. The recent amendment of law do not affect workmen.

97. We suggest that *Kabuli* money-lenders should not be allowed admission into the industrial areas and *chaprasis* and other employees of the collieries should not be allowed to carry on money lending business with workmen.

The Money Lenders Bill when passed into law will afford great relief to the workmen.

98. Yes, for purposes of money lending and uplift works.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

101 and 102. It is our sad experience that in many cases the employers belittle the accidents with a view to evade or minimise the payment of compensation and illiterate workmen are misled by employers. We suggest that registered trade unions operating in the area should be furnished with copies of notices of accidents as submitted to the Magistrate or the Chief Inspector of Mines, so that such trade unions can tender proper help to the labourers. The law should be amended accordingly.

TRADE UNION.

103. There are three registered trade unions operating in the Jharia Coalfield.

- (1) The Indian Colliery Labour Union (formerly known as the Indian Colliery Employees' Association).

(2) Tata's Collieries Labour Association, established in 1930.

(3) Indian Miners' Association, established in 1933.

104. The 1st was registered in 1932, the 2nd in 1931 and the 3rd in 1933.

105. Tata's Collieries Labour Association is recognised by the Tatas since 1931. The other two unions are not recognised by the owners or the management.

106. See above.

107. Does not arise.

110. We are in favour of one Central Trade Union for each particular industry such as coal, mica, steel, lac, etc.) in the province, with convenient branches, to maintain solidarity and co-ordination without a feeling of mutual rivalry among the smaller unions. It is desirable that a central organisation should be established.

111. The total number of members of the Indian Colliery Labour Union is about 9,000 (Nine thousand) and that of the Tata's Collieries Labour Association is a little more than three thousand.

112. In the Indian Colliery Labour Union the total number of members of the Executive Committee is 35 out of whom five are outsiders, and in the other the total number is 35 out of whom 10 are outsiders.

113. These Trade Unions direct the activities to ameliorate the condition of workmen, by propoganda about sanitation, maternity, education and other welfare works as well as to secure adequate wages for them, to help them during strike and in realisation of compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act and in various other ways.

114. No.

115. Except with the Tatas there is no such standing arrangement, but these Trade Unions represent the grievances of workmen to the management mostly without any appreciable result.

116. The attitude of employers towards trade union movement is most unsatisfactory, rather hostile. The trade unions movement is certainly helpful in dealing with labour and in improving the wage level which is the main plank in all labour organisations.

117. The employers are always opposed to trade union movement and all sorts of obstacles are put in the way of a worker joining a trade union, even to the extent of intimidation and victimisation.

For the existence and proper organisation of trade unions and for their legitimate activities, the employers should be compelled by legislation to allow trade unions officials a free access to the workers for propaganda and collection of subscriptions through the management.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE.

118 to 123. (a) In 1921 there was a general strike among the workers of Jharia Coalfield, under the auspices of the Indian Colliery Labour Union. It lasted for three days. Its object was increment in wages and resulted in increase from 5 annas to 10 annas per tub of coal.

(b) In 1923, there was a strike in Heilgers' Beniahir Colliery under the same auspices, and for the same object. The result was a small increment.

(c) In 1929 there was a strike among labourers in Ray Bahadur Karnani's collieries at Bhalgorah and Simlabahal under the same auspices and for the same object. The result was increase in wages. It lasted for about a week.

(d) In 1930 there was a strike in Mackinon and Mackenzie's colliery at Amlabad, under the same auspices and with the same object. The result was an increase of wages. It lasted for more than two weeks.

(e) In 1931 there was one in the Tata's Jamadoba colliery, under the auspices of the Indian Colliery Labour Union and Tata's Collieries' Labour Association. It lasted for six weeks. But there was no immediate benefit to the workers.

During all these strikes the strikers were fed by the Indian Colliery Labour Union with the help of public donations.

125. Nothing.

126. Very few collieries have Labour Officers to keep touch with workers. Those few who are there, look more to the interest of the management than that of workers.

No jobbers are used for that purpose.

127. There is no such machinery.

128. We are in favour of arbitration. The arbitrators should be one trade union officer, one employers' representative, one Government officer and two distinguished public men of reputation, one of whom is to be the Chairman. The award of the arbitrators should be final and it should be enforceable by statutory provision. Either party or the Government should be competent to refer a trade dispute to arbitration independently and without the consent of the other.

129. Not adequate. The Trade Disputes Act should be amended keeping in view the suggestions made in no. 128.

130. We are in favour of appointment of conciliation Officers chosen from among a pannel of independent and public spirited persons to be selected with the approval of trade unions.

131. Before a strike or a lock-out is declared, the striker or the employers should give ten days' notice and before the expiry of the period of notice, an Arbitration Board as suggested above should be appointed by the Government which should decide for good the dispute between the employers and the workmen.

135. The present machinery is inadequate and unsatisfactory. The defects will come out in the enquiry by the Labour Enquiry Committee. Legislation should be undertaken after the publication of their report.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

Mr. Mukut Dhari Singh, Representative of the workers of
Jharia Coalfield, Jharia.

The Jharia Coalfield occupies an area of roughly hundred and seventy-five square miles. This area is divided into a number of big and small collieries, all owned and managed by private and public companies. Nearly three-fourths of the area and nearly four-fifths of the first grade coal are owned by European companies. With the exception of the Tatas who own three or four big and first grade collieries, the remaining one-fourth of the area is divided into hundred and fifty small Indian-owned collieries, some of them so small as to have become almost uneconomic. Most of these collieries are managed by limited companies, formed under the Indian Companies Act of 1913, with their head offices at Calcutta. These companies are directed and controlled by business firms in Calcutta described in their Articles of Association as "Managing Agents". "They are usually remunerated either by a fixed percentage on the gross proceeds on all coal sold *plus* a percentage on their transaction, or by a commission on raisings *plus* a fixed monthly sum for office expenses, or by a fixed percentage on dividends or bonuses paid to share-holders *plus* a monthly sum for office expenses. All these methods place a premium on high output, big sales and large profits, and are generally calculated to focus effort on immediate rather than future gain, it being remembered as well that these Managing Agents also control Mills and other Industrial centres which benefit by cheap fuel..... Retrenchment in working expenses has necessarily directed policy in the coal trade, and industry has had to give effect to that policy by increasing output or cutting down cost without sufficient attention to the mining methods necessary to secure these ends. So far as we are aware, no firm of Managing Agents has a technical expert on its Calcutta staff, but it is from Calcutta that the policy of every coal company is directed in detail with primary regard to commercial considerations".* And the interference of some of these firms with the day-to-day management of the collieries has become so dangerous to the coal

*Coal Mining Committee's Report.

resources of the nation that the Indian Mine Managers' Association has to acknowledge before the Indian Coal Mining Committee that they "have not at present enough scope because they are controlled by people who have no sufficient knowledge of mining and are liable to be dismissed if they were to refuse to carry out the orders of an owner even though the carrying out of these orders would mean unsound and unsafe working". Some other managers are reported to have said before that committee in confidence "that they have on occasions been faced with the alternative of adopting unsound methods or losing their livelihood, and, though they are held legally responsible, they do not actually have control, management and direction of the mines", as is contemplated by section 15 of the Indian Mines Act.

This is but a short account of the anarchy that is prevailing in the coal industry to-day. And when this terrible anarchy continues and when the Coal Owner's only motive is to make as much profit as he can, not only the miners' lot becomes terrible but the coal resources of the nation also remain threatened. And this profit motive and carelessness in the exploitation of the coal has worked to such an extent that while nearly fifty per cent of the coal underground is being wasted, while workers' wages are going down and down every day, Managing Agents' remunerations and share-holders' dividends have gone on increasing every year in the past. And though the present period is considered a period of slump and the coal trade is certainly in a bad condition, still it cannot be denied that a vast majority of colliery proprietors are making huge profits even to-day and are bound to do so in future also, thanks to the forward contracts that some of these have made when market condition was favourable to them. Naturally, if they simply take it into their heads, they can do a lot to improve the lot of the poor workers engaged in the industry and hence they have no right to say that the industry cannot bear the additional expenses in the form of more wages to the workers that the Labour Enquiry Committee may recommend. But much of it hereafter.

Just at present we are concerned with the lot of the workers engaged in the industry. In the Jharia coalfield the average daily attendance of the workers, according to the Government of India figures, was seventy-three thousand two hundred and three throughout the year 1937. We may take it as the average daily attendance during the year 1938 also.

But we cannot say that the figures supplied to the Mines Department are always accurate. Generally, the colliery proprietors give an under-estimate of the number of miners working under them, partly because it is difficult for them to have an accurate idea of men working in various miscellaneous departments under small contractors, for instance building and construction departments; and partly because there is a tendency to minimise the number lest the Government may not press them to have more housing accommodation on their collieries. Though this may not be the general rule, still experience compels us to believe this story and we are definitely of opinion that the average number of workers working daily in the Jharia coalfield cannot be less than a lakh. If to this is added the number of those who, due to one reason or another, are unable to attend to their duties daily and enjoy leave, we come to the conclusion that the entire labour force in this coalfield is not less than 125,000.

And this entire labour force, which is primarily responsible for creating that huge amount of wealth which goes to add to the luxury of the colliery proprietors and their more fortunate subordinates, lives in a terrible state of starvation and poverty. As a celebrated British trade unionist, Mr. Joseph Jones, the President of the Mine Workers' Federation of Great Britain, has put it, "A miner always lives in the trenches". And as one goes about moving in the *dhaurahs* (dwelling houses) of these miners, one is simply shocked to see their terribly wretched condition. Early in the morning, between 7 and 8 o'clock, one comes across groups of miners coming out of the pits, pale, exhausted and besmeared with coal dust. With their sunken eyes, pale faces and hollowed cheeks, these human skeletons present most pitiable sight and automatically the words of the great poet come to our mind "what man has made of man". No doubt, these miners do not live like normal human beings and it would not be over exaggeration to say that they are no better than animals. Huddled together in small rooms measuring on an average 10' x 10' and often so damp and dark as to become unfit for human habitation, these miners generally live lives which are a disgrace to any society. In these small rooms which normally cannot accommodate more than two persons, we have seen huddled together generally five to seven persons; and not unoften two to three couples live in the same room. Can there be a greater inducement to corruption and a greater disgrace to society than this? It is a disgrace to those who provide these houses and a disgrace

to those who live in them, and a disgrace to society which must see that such things are not tolerated in future.

But the miners' miseries do not end there. The wages paid to them are also disgraceful. On the highest computation and according to the Government of India figures, a coal cutter got in December 1937 annas 0-9-3 daily and a loader annas 0-8-0 daily and the wages of other skilled and unskilled labourers underground, in the open workings and on the surface, also averaged between annas 0-4-6 to annas 0-10-0. But this is what was paid by the companies; it is very difficult to say whether even this small amount went into the pockets of the workers, thanks to the various illegal and underhand deductions that are made by the supervising staff. On further calculations we find that on the average coal-cutters and loaders do not work for more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 days in a week and their monthly income is not more than Rs. 9 to Rs. 11 per month. The monthly wages of other workers also come close to this and on this small income the poor miner is to support his whole family consisting generally of himself, his wife and one or two small children. And this is why after coming out of the mines—the living grave—where he spends from nine to eleven hours of his precious time daily, and not finding the wherewithal to support his family, he takes shelter behind the wine bottle and, leaving his wife and children to starve, goes to sleep generally on the naked floor and gets up like a lifeless machine when the hour to go underground draws near. To put it in a nutshell, from living grave to the wine shop, that is his life, and all thoughtful persons will agree that life on such a wage is hardly tolerable. It is but miserable comfortless existence, without job, without hope, a mockery of our existence, a blight upon our national life. And as Professor Neville Moss has rightly put it, "since the getting of coal demands a big expense of energy, it is clear that a miner needs plenty of good food to enable him to do his work. The question of wages thus arises. If wages fall too low one of two things must happen, either the miner has to do with less food and in consequence reduce his work-output or he has to maintain his work-output and dietary standard at the expense of his family. The importance, therefore, of wages in relation to adequate dietary standard must be fully grasped by the industry". We cannot improve upon the words of the learned Professor. Suffice it to say that the wages paid to the workers in the coal industry are much below the subsistence level and it is in the interest of the coal owners and the colliery

proprietors themselves that the wages are raised sufficiently high, lest there should be a total breakdown in the normal labour force. If higher wages are paid to the poor miners and if in consequence their capacity for work-output is increased, it is bound to decrease the proportionate overhead and supervising charges and ultimately is bound to increase the actual incomes.

Something about the actual working conditions also. No one can deny that those who work in the coal industry have to exert their utmost during the period of employment and know no rest while on duty. And there is reason for that. If a safety man working underground neglects his duty or goes to sleep, not only he endangers his own life or the property but he may endanger the lives of hundreds of his fellow workers working inside the mine. Naturally he has to be extra cautious and has to tax his energies to the utmost. And this involves a serious strain on his nervous system. Hence it is essential that he gets enough rest to recoup the previous exhaustion. Necessarily his hours of employment daily must be sufficiently small. But to our utter dismay we find that in spite of the statutory limitation of nine hours per day or fifty-four hours per week a workman has to spend generally over ten to eleven hours daily and often more, with the result that often on the first day of the week, workers, more specially miners, find themselves unable to go to their duties. But those who are the permanent employees have to attend daily, notwithstanding the exhaustion and hence at times they go to sleep while on duty with the result that accidents have become so common and so normal a feature in the coalfields. Not unoften we hear of boiler men and pump *khalasis* working in two shifts; that is, they work for twelve hours daily. No doubt in limited cases overtime allowances are paid to them. But this, in itself, is a dangerous thing because it is most unhealthy to give overtime allowances to some when thousands of people are unemployed. But even this is an exception rather than a rule and we have reason to say that in a large number of cases, when the workers, due to over work and exhaustion, are compelled to be negligent and careless at times, the colliery proprietors take advantage of their faults and dismiss them generally without notice and occasionally even without clearing their dues. Often, when these proprietors find people who, due to unemployment, agree to work on lower wages, some pretexts are found out and old employees are dismissed on mere flimsy grounds. And we are not ashamed to say that the Indian colliery proprietors are the worst sinners in this respect.

Naturally, the pit life of the miner, to-day, is in many respects, analogous to his ways and social conditions. It is a hard oppressive life; a life which has made thousands of human beings dumb driven cattle and unfit for decent society. These miners go down the mines with their picks and shovels, cut coal like lifeless machines and expose themselves to untold hardships and accidents. And when they come out, they find themselves thoroughly broken and exhausted, with the result that, in the very prime of their lives, they look like so many skeletons numbering the days of their lives.

And lastly, a word about the employment conditions. As one moves about in the collieries, one finds that, though the actual miners are generally not much in excess of the actual requirements, unemployment amongst those who work in the permanent departments of the collieries, both underground and the surface, is appalling. On the lowest computation as many of these men are unemployed as are employed and this works to the entire satisfaction and advantage of the colliery owners. Taking advantage of the presence of such a large number of unemployed men all over the coalfield, these employers go on reducing the scale of pay of the permanent lower supervising officers and other permanent employees, with the result that, to-day, the same class of people doing the same type of work are getting on an average much lower wages. If the pay rolls of the selected number of collieries are verified, our statement can be amply corroborated. At the same time, this unemployment induces the proprietors to replace the old hands without giving them due notice or at times even without clearing their dues. It is indeed shameful to see every day a number of people coming to us and saying that they have been dismissed without reason and the very fact that a number of them have been reinstated on our intervention goes to prove that something is seriously wrong with the employment system and it must be set right soon.

We thus come to the conclusion that the workers working in the coalfields are the worst sufferers in the country and not only their housing, sanitary and social conditions are horrible, they also get the lowest wages, not only in India, but in the whole world, with the exception of Japan. Even according to Whitley Commission Report a coal-cutter gets, on an average, Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month and on this meagre amount he finds it impossible to make his two ends meet. Hence, they live on starvation wages and wear rags. It is a pitiable sight to see in these cold winter nights groups of

miners sitting by the roadside clad in rags waiting for the private lorries to convey them back to their homes in distant villages. And the way in which these miners are put in the lorries is also terrible. One is shocked to see in a lorry, in which hardly 30 men can be accommodated, 50 to 60 men huddled together, each being crushed by the weight of the other. It is strange that even the Indian Motor Vehicles Act has no mercy for these poor people because these private lorry owners cannot be punished for excessive overloading. The poverty and helplessness of the workers has increased so much and to-day they are so much oppressed and exploited that they have become desperate. This is why labour troubles have become so common these days in this coalfield. It is wrong to suppose that strikes and other kinds of labour troubles are necessarily the creations of agitators. Though there is no dearth of irresponsible men and agitators out to fish in the troubled waters, the root cause of this lies in the terrible anarchy, exploitation, oppression, taunts, and pinpricks, of which workers are the perpetual victims. Hence, if the Government and the capitalists alike are anxious to set things right and to secure industrial peace, they will have to do away with all these. Unless the workers' standard of living is raised, unless they get minimum wages enough for the maintenance of their own selves as well as their families and unless they are well housed and well educated and well treated, they will ever remain exposed to outside agitation and form the weakest link in the body politic. And, naturally, we come to the conclusion that there should be radical reform in the coal industry and the relations between the capitalists and the workers should be so adjusted as the workers—the majority of whom are no better than slaves—should feel that they are the part and parcel of the industry itself and instead of being mere wage-earners they are the actual partners of it. And this naturally leads us to the question of nationalisation of the industry. But more about it hereafter.

This, in short, is the state of things as it obtains in the coalfields to-day. And from whatever we have been able to gather so far, we have come to the definite conclusion that workers' lot is terrible and Government can do a lot to improve their condition. It is fortunate that the Bihar Government has appointed a Committee to enquire into the labour conditions and to report to the Government on all problems affecting the well-being and the social and economic conditions of the workers. We, therefore, take the opportunity of placing

before the Labour Enquiry Committee certain important suggestions which if adopted and given effect to, can go a long way to ameliorate the lot of the toiling masses eking out their hard cheerless and joyless life in this coalfield. We take up the matter in detail item by item.

RECRUITMENT.

First and foremost is the question of recruitment and employment of the labour force. Though habits are changing to-day and a fairly large percentage of labour force, say 50 per cent, has become stationary, still unlike other perennial factories, labour force in the coalfields is floating. Hence arises the necessity of sending out recruiters to recruit labourers from distant villages in the various districts of this province as well as from outside. Generally, three systems are followed for recruitment. Firstly, the whole process from the cutting of coal underground to the loading into the railway wagons, is entrusted to raising contractors who recruit their own labour, meet recruiting charges and do all other things. Secondly, some miner *sardars* recruit labour for which they are paid a certain amount of money and when these labourers begin working they are responsible for them and draw a fixed commission on every tub of coal cut by the miners under their charge. And thirdly, the company send out their own recruiters and they recruit labourers much in the same way as before mentioned. No doubt in all these methods adopted for the recruitment of labour a certain amount of money is spent by the companies. And the recruiting charges go to add to the raising cost of coal. But whatever is known of the methods of recruitment and the ways in which poor workers are brought from distant villages to this coalfield, we are definitely of opinion that this system must end. It is said that the recruiters are always paid by the companies the railway or the lorry fares for the miners *plus* their fooding charges in the way. But not unoften these people taking advantage of the backwardness of the miners and their addiction to drink evil, cheat them on their way and bring them here on foot all the way from their homes in distant parts of Gaya, Monghyr, Hazaribagh and Manbhum, etc. And the worst part of it is that often these miners are not given sufficient food to sustain them on their journey. It is said that recruiters so arrange that whenever, during the course of the day, miners pass a toddy or a wine shop, they are paid an anna or two to meet their expenses there and that one anna worth of wine so much

intoxicates them that they travel over to the second wine shop and ultimately to the coalfields without having even one proper meal during the course of their journey. Undoubtedly, this is not the general rule but certainly this sort of exploitation goes on during the course of recruitment. This is a disgrace to civilised society and this must be stopped once for all.

But then the question arises as to how to supply labourers in the coalfields. No doubt, so long as this process of recruitment continues uncontrolled, some sort of exploitation of the workers will go on. And it will not serve our purpose if we simply condemn the process and sympathise with poor workers. Hence we have to think out some other ways whereby we may solve the problem of labourers here.

On a careful enquiry we find that out of the average daily working population of the Jharia coalfields nearly half have become stationary, that is, they do not go to their homes in distant villages; roughly 25 per cent are seasonal and 25 per cent come daily to the coalfield either on foot or on lorry, supplied by the various raising contractors and companies. If we take into consideration the number of those who are idle, we find that their number is also not insignificant. By a little bit of propaganda and by a little inducement in the form of good working conditions and good pay these people may very soon become permanent. Naturally, by almost no effort on the part of the Government and the colliery proprietors, nearly 75 per cent of their daily requirement may become stationary. Furthermore, on a closer study of the figures of total working population living in the coalfields, we find that the tendency to become permanent is daily increasing. And though even now nearly 50 per cent of the workers either go back to their villages every year or come and go back to their homes daily, it is not so much due to their love for the village life, as due to the terribly hard housing and working conditions obtaining in the coalfields, as well as the terribly low standard of the wages paid to them. Generally, the workers from distant places come to the coalfields because they are no longer required there, as their ancestral agricultural farms prove insufficient to meet their family requirements and they think it necessary to add some money from outside. They, therefore, come to the coalfields thinking that they will make some money which will go to defray some of the expenses of their families. But on coming here they are disillusioned; they find that after terribly hard work they cannot even make

two ends meet, not to speak of sending some money home. And in sheer disgust, partly in order to arrange for the debts and other dues at home and partly to mitigate the terrible monotony of life here, they run away to their village homes. This state of things must end and we are in complete agreement with the Whitley Commission Report that "a shortage of labour and the necessity of sending out emissaries to recruit indicate that all is not well with the industry and we would emphasize the importance of making conditions sufficiently attracting to secure labour without recourse to systematic recruitment". As a matter of fact, some of the mine managers are of opinion that the best advertisement for recruiting is not the emissary in the distant village, but the good conditions in the mine itself. And it cannot be denied that, though these days much more labourers are required in the coalfields, they are more easily available than they were before.

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR EXCHANGE.

We thus come to the conclusion that this vicious system of recruitment in the coalfields must end. If at any time a general census of the working population in the coalfields is taken, it will be found that the labour force stationary on the field is almost sufficient for the purpose. All that we propose is to have a correct idea of the exact number of workers living here. And this must be done as soon as possible. And for this Government must find out a machinery. We believe that the establishment of a Labour Exchange for this coalfield will do. It will serve a double purpose. It will serve the purpose of the recruitment of the labourers whenever necessity may arise. It will also put a stop to all sorts of illegal and unjust dismissals that are so common in the coalfields. This Labour Exchange must be established and run by Government. But to help it and to see that it has smooth working, it must be assisted by an advisory committee on which workers' and employers' representatives should be equally represented. In the office of the Labour Exchange all details about the workers should be kept and it should be so arranged that whenever any colliery is in need of more labourers, it may write to the Labour Exchange wherefrom the labourers may be supplied to that particular colliery. From our practical experience we know that the number of some classes of workers, say the loading *coolies*—workers who load coal in the railway wagons—is far in excess of the actual requirement. The result is that as they work in gangs and are paid collective wages, their weekly

wages are so low as to average between annas 0-12-0 to Rs. 1-8-0 per week. And yet we know that more and more people come from outside to do the same job and thereby bring down the average daily wages of the workers. Hence, if the Labour Exchange works properly and if the colliery proprietors co-operate, then by simple adjustments and by simply spreading the workers uniformly over the whole coalfield and also by inducing the workers in those collieries where they are far in excess of the actual requirements to go over to that colliery which is compelled to import labour from outside, we can set things right and can almost stop recruitment from afar as well as the problem of the terribly low wages. Even if after these adjustments it is found that recruitment from outside is necessary, men in charge of the Labour Exchange should be left in sole charge of it. They should be entrusted with chalking out a programme for the same.

But much depends on the way the work is done and the co-operation that is received both from the colliery proprietors as well as from the labour leaders. We are sure that it is not impossible of achievement and a properly organised Labour Exchange will ultimately succeed in solving the problems that prove so difficult of solution to-day. It must be arranged that on one particular day the number of all employed and unemployed men is recorded from colliery to colliery. From that day onwards the names of all the dismissed hands must be reported to the Exchange Office and the reasons of dismissal must be clearly stated. At the same time, if any individual colliery requires more labourers, instead of sending out its recruiters outside, it should write to the Exchange Office whose business it must be to supply labour to that colliery from amongst those who are on its unemployment list. Undoubtedly, it would not be easy to be successful soon and the number of the unemployed may be sufficiently high in the beginning, but ultimately the system is bound to work and we may, during the course of a few years, find that not only the list of the unemployed has dwindled down but the problem of unjust and illegal dismissals has also been solved. And automatically the problem of the security of services of the employees will also be solved. No doubt, employers will plead that by agreeing to this Labour Exchange they forfeit their right of employing and dismissing their labourers at their own sweet will. But they will have to realise that the time of dealing with labour as dumb driven cattle is over and it is not their concern alone to employ a man and dismiss him as and when they please.

They will have to realise that they deal with labour organised into Trade Unions and will have to hear workers' representatives before workers are dismissed. Through we are to-day not properly organised, still we can confidently hope for the day on which we workers may become so much organised and conscious as no individual employer will ever engage a worker who is not a member of any genuinely organised union, just as they are doing to-day in England and in other industrially advanced countries. We believe, if Government gave effect to our recommendations about the establishment of a Labour Exchange in the coalfield, it would go a long way to help both the workers and the capitalists in the realisation of their cherished dreams.

RAISING CONTRACTORS.

As the raising contractors have also to do a lot about recruitment and employment and as they also form a very important link in the exploitation of the coal resources of this coalfield, it would not be out of place here to say a few words about them also. I have no hesitation in saying that these middlemen, whose only business is to make as much money as possible, form a most vicious circle and this system must end once for all. This system has proved so unfortunate to the workers and so injurious to the coal resources of the nation that even the Royal Commission on Labour had to admit as follows. "The raising contractor receives a fixed payment per ton, in return for which he recruits the workers, mines the coal and loads it into wagons. We have found it to be generally true that workmen employed by salaried managers, who are personally responsible for their workers, receive more consideration than those employed by the contractors, and we do not think that the coal mining industry forms an exception to this rule. But there are reasons peculiar to the coalfields which, in our view render a system of employment through contractors, involving divided responsibility for labour, open to special objection. Both in law and in fact the manager is responsible for the safety of the workmen; he determines where coal shall be worked and his decision has the closest effect on the security of the miners. But even the safety men are not the managers' subordinates, being selected and paid by the contractors. The law also holds the manager responsible for compliance with its provisions in respect of hours of work, holidays, the employment of women, etc. As a rule he has also responsibility for housing and other matters (e.g., water-supply) affecting the welfare of the workers outside the mine. Yet he

has no responsibility for the selection of the workers, the distribution of their work, the payment of their wages or even the numbers employed. We believe that, whatever the merits of the system in primitive times, it is now desirable, if the management is to discharge completely the complex responsibilities laid upon it by the law and equity, that the manager should have full control over the selection, hours of work and payment of the workers ”.

As no stronger arguments are necessary against this system we suggest that this system should be abolished without delay. If this system is abolished and if the huge amount of money that goes to add to the luxury of the contractors, is distributed among the workers, the problem of wages can be solved to a very great extent without meaning any serious loss to the actual income of the colliery proprietors. But a still greater argument against this system is that it is terribly detrimental to the coal resources of the nation. The raising contractors' only motive being, to make as much money as they can, they never pay attention to the proper mining methods. And as it is impossible for the companies' supervising staff to make proper inspection due to the dual control, mines worked by the raising contractors are bound to be worked on unsound basis and hence is the necessity of abolishing this system all the more. The best interest of the nation demands it.

MINER-SARDARS.

A word about the miner-*sardars* also. In many of the collieries coal is cut and loaded in the tubs underground by miners who work in gangs under miner-*sardars*. These *sardars* get a fixed commission per tub of coal raised by the workers under their charge. But on a closer analysis we find that though this system is not an altogether unmixed good to the workers, still it is not analogous to the systems prevailing in textile and other industries, that is, the system of taking work from the workers by jobbers or *mukadams*. These jobbers are generally paid by the companies and their only business is to take as much work as possible from the workers. Unlike the jobbers the miner-*sardars* get commission on the tub of coal raised and the more the workers are happy under them, the more is their work-output and automatically the higher the remuneration to the *sardars*. Hence instead of badly treating these miners the *sardars* have to keep them happy and contented and at times are even compelled to flatter them, lest they should run away to some other collieries.

Hence, though it cannot be said that this system is faultless and cannot be improved upon, still we are of opinion that so long as any other better system of taking work from the miners is not evolved, it is better to give preference to this system than to any other system obtaining in the collieries at present.

HOUSING.

The problem of housing is one of the most important and difficult problems in the coalfields. In the entire Jharia coalfield, with the exception of Jharia, Kirkend and Katras, there are almost no villages. Hence the entire labour force lives in the houses provided by the colliery proprietors. But the total number of houses provided for the entire labour force is much below the actual requirements and if normal accommodation is provided for each worker, keeping in view the healthy sanitary conditions, the existing houses cannot accommodate more than one third of the total labouring population.

All the *dhaurahs* or dwelling houses of the miners are of a peculiar type, the arched *dhaurahs* being the most popular and common. The Jharia Mines Board of Health has laid down certain definite plans for the erection of these *dhaurahs* and they cannot be declared fit for human habitation unless they are passed and licensed by the said Board. But the bye-laws of the Board have become dead letters and most of the *dhaurahs* which should have been demolished long before, are still standing and though unfit for human habitation are being freely used.

The general type of *dhaurahs* is the big barrack types, some with back to back rooms, others with rooms on one side only. Each barrack contains, on an average, from 10 to 12 rooms; each room measuring roughly 10' x 10' x 7'. In these small rooms, which are often so damp and dark as they become unfit for human habitation and which normally cannot accommodate more than two persons, we find at times five to seven persons huddled together and not unoften two to three couples living in the same room. And this over-crowding becomes all the more obnoxious when during days of good market condition, colliery proprietors import more labourers for raising more coal. The life in these *dhaurahs* becomes all the more troublesome when, due to having ovens in front of the rooms, smoke rushes in to the rooms and makes the whole atmosphere within poisonous. Hence, the first thing necessary for any scheme for housing within coalfields is to provide separate kitchens. But we believe that, left to themselves, the colliery proprietors

will not arrange for enough houses for the workers. They care more for their pocket and if by accommodating more labourers in the same room they can carry on, they will be the last persons to do otherwise. The tendency to carry on with the existing number of houses may increase more and more in future, because with the change in the ideas of the people about their social and economic relations of the capitalists and the workers and also with the growing demand of the nationalisation of the industry, the capitalists may feel insecure and instead of investing more money on non-productive items, may prefer to wait and mark time. But on the other hand, the housing problem cannot be postponed even for a year and hence the Government will have to pay special attention to it. There is no dearth of colliery proprietors who take shelter behind the existing tenancy legislations and say that as they have no surface right; they cannot build more houses for their workers. It is, therefore, essential for the Government to take special measures and so arrange that adequate number of houses are built soon. The best course to follow, in our opinion, is to draw out a complete scheme of housing for the entire Jharia coalfield and for this purpose the services of expert engineers should be requisitioned. When the scheme is ready, the Government should give subsidy to the proprietors and compel them to complete the scheme by investing an equal amount from their own pocket. Government should raise special loan for the purpose and the same should be repaid in instalments every year from the money raised from the various employers in the form of house cess for a number of years. We believe that what the Cawnpore Labour Textile Enquiry Committee recommended for solving the problem of housing in Cawnpore will do with little modifications if necessary. But before any scheme is chalked out, all the old and rotten houses must be abolished and the new ones must be so constructed as each one of them may serve the purpose of a small family quarter with a kitchen at a suitable distance from the bed-room and with a shade or verandah in front of the room. And at least as many new houses should be built as may make it possible for two men at the most to live in each of them.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES.

The general health of the workers in the coalfield is very bad. It is due as much to the bad housing condition, as to under feeding and insanitary conditions both above and underground. Though the Jharia Mines Board of Health has been specially created to look after the health and sanitation in the

coal-field, it cannot be said that it has made any material alteration in the health of the workers. The bye-laws of the Board are honoured more in their breach than in their observance. And constituted as this Board is, to-day we cannot expect any better result. The Board is composed of members who are nominated and who represent the capitalists and naturally, the Chief Medical Officer or any other Health Officer cannot compel the colliery owners to observe even the elementary laws of the Mines Board of Health provided he touches the pocket of these proprietors. As a High Medical Officer very candidly put it, these officers care more for their jobs than for the lot of the poor miners.

The law lays it down that every colliery proprietor must have one doctor and must provide for at least first-aid materials in the collieries and must maintain a small dispensary. No doubt, this law is observed; but it would not be an over exaggeration to say that it is the most cruel joke played upon the miners. With the exception of the Tatas and a few European collieries which provide fairly tolerable medical facilities, maintain hospitals and keep whole time doctors, most of the collieries keep part time doctors who seldom go to the *dhaurahs* of the poor workers and hardly attend to their needs. Most of these even do not go to the collieries and fill up the records in the registers at their homes. Others go to the collieries but content themselves by attending to the dependants of the supervising staff only. And the very fact that some of these doctors serve as doctors for 8 to 10 collieries goes to prove that the whole system is bogus and fraudulent and the doctors work in name only. Had there been a sufficient number of good and public hospitals, both public and Government, workers' miseries could have been mitigated to a large extent. But the very fact that there are only two small non-colliery hospitals in the coal-field, one at Jharia and the other at Dhanbad, the workers die daily unattended, uncared for and unheard. The women's lot is all the more terrible as there is no proper provision, whatsoever, for attending to their female diseases and to help them in difficult maternity cases.

The health of the workers suffers to a great extent due to bad water-supply, specially for bathing and other purposes. So far as drinking purposes are concerned, Topchanchi water is sufficiently good. But when we find that it is the dirtiest tanks—the water of which is so dirty as we are unable to touch it—workers come and wash their bodies into, we are horrified. The bathing arrangement forms a most important item in the

coal-industry and there must be proper arrangement for shower baths. Some of the collieries are doing that and the others can do a lot only if they care to do so. Therefore, Government must pay special attention to it and compel the proprietors to do the same without delay.

But nothing is possible unless there is a radical change in the constitution of the Jharia Mines Board of Health which is primarily responsible for the health of the workers. So long as this Board remains a tool in the hands of the capitalists and so long as the Medical Officers attached to this Board do not feel themselves independent of the colliery proprietors, nothing material can be done towards the improvement of the sanitary and medical conditions. It is, indeed, shameful that, in this age of democracy, when all the institutions have become elected, this Board remains nominated with a High Government Official as its permanent Chairman. The Government must make this Board a board of health and welfare, with elected members on it, as recommended by the Royal Commission on Labour. And the Chief Medical Officer must be a man who should be immune from all indirect and direct influences. Unless something of this kind is done, no matter what bye-laws are made for the good of the poor workers, they will ever remain dead letters and things will go on as before.

HOURS OF WORKS.

The miners' health has a lot to do with his working conditions and the hours of work. It cannot be denied that the workers engaged in the coal industry are required to put up with the hardest working conditions and have to tax their energy to such an extent that they become exhausted and unfit for work comparatively sooner than the average workers engaged in other industries and factories. Hence arises the question of limiting the hours of work both underground and on the surface. But the existing regulations tell a different tale and while the whole world has almost driven towards the adoption of 8 hours shift per day and 40 to 48 hours per week at the maximum, a miner in this coalfield is compelled always to spend more than the statutory time limit, that is, he always spends more than nine hours underground. As a matter of fact, miners work in two shifts generally and hence, they generally remain underground for more than nine hours; not unoften even 10 to 11 hours. For other kinds of workers also, for instance, the boilerman and pump *khalasi*, the general rule is to work in two shifts only. Though for other class of

people there are three shifts, it cannot be said that it is a general rule and generally, workers are required to work for a longer period of time than what the law of the land permits.

If we take into consideration the working hours underground in a number of industrially advanced countries we come to the following conclusion :—

'A miner works for :—

7 hours a day and 40 hours a week in Spain,

7½ hours a day and 45 hours a week in Belgium and Holland,

7½ hours a day in Great Britain,

48 hours a week in Turkey,

7¼ hours a day and 40 hours a week in France (super-
vising staff),

38 hours and 40 minutes a week in France (miners),

7 Hours a day in U. S. S. R. (But the period is
reduced to 6 hours a day only for a large number
of miners),

8 hours a day in Austria and Canada,

10 hours a day in Japan,

9 hours a day and 54 hours a week in India.

From the figures quoted above we find that with the exception of Japan nowhere in the world the working hours of the miners exceed a weekly limit of 48 hours; generally the tendency is to reduce it to a 40 hours weekly limit. And generally this daily time limit does not mean only the actual time spent at the working places, but the time calculated from the moment the miners come to the pit-head to take lamps and the time when they again return to the pit-head. The working day of a miner includes a succession of widely different operations—preparing for the descent, the descent itself, the journey from the pit-bottom to the working place, the work there (interrupted by breaks or other stoppages), the return to the pit-bottom, the ascent to the pit-head, the handing in of the lamps, and baths, etc.

Even in India the statutory limit of a 9 hours day includes both the winding times, but unfortunately, the miners

are compelled to remain underground alone for more than 9 to 10 hours per day, what to speak of the winding times and the time taken up above in the course of preparation to go underground. On being asked as to why the miners remain underground for usually long hours, they tell a most pitiable story. The shortage and irregularity of tubs is primarily responsible for it. As a matter of fact, even if a miner has, during the course of six hours, cut sufficient coal to earn as much money as he earns daily, he cannot get a single pie for it unless the same is loaded in the tubs. But as, in the majority of cases, tubs are not adequately supplied, miners have to waste a number of hours underground in that poisonous and dirty atmosphere. The miners know that if they leave the coal unloaded, it will mean so many hours lost to them and hence instead of going out of the mines at the appointed hours, they wait inside for some time more and leave the working places only when they have got tubs and have filled them. If, therefore, proper arrangements are made for tubs and if only as many miners are allowed to work underground as can get adequate number of tubs, they can earn more than what they are earning to-day and that also in a much smaller number of hours. It is admitted on all hands that much of the time of the miner is usually wasted underground.

As the spending of more time does not only mean a danger to the health of the miners but as it means a danger to the industry and coal resources of the nation also, the working hours must be sufficiently reduced. Let us make it more clear. We know that those who work more than what they normally can do, are sure to be exhausted and are easily liable to be negligent in their duties. But as negligence in a mine means much more than what it does in a factory or in another industry, we must try to give as much rest to the miners as we can. Naturally, we consider eight hours a day, including winding times, to be the maximum daily limit for the miners and all other workers engaged in the coal industry. By reducing the time limit to an eight-hour-a-day not only can the rate of accidents be decreased, but the efficiency of the workers can also be raised. And if there is proper supply of tubs to the miners in comparatively shorter hours they can earn more than what they are normally doing. At the same time they reduce the overhead and establishment charges, which naturally means greater profit to the proprietors.

A few words about the overtime allowances. It is really a matter of great pity that, though unemployment amongst the

permanent and weekly and monthly-paid workers is appalling, still a vast majority of the employed men are required to work overtime. This type of overtime work should be discouraged as far as possible. But if it becomes unavoidable, it must be paid at a sufficiently higher rate than what the worker normally earns. In our opinion, for every type of overtime work a worker must be paid for each hour of the work done at the rate of the remuneration for two normal hours. But so far as this coalfield is concerned, overtime allowance is almost non-existent and workers do not at all get any remuneration for the extra hours. Not only that; people working on Sundays and holidays also do not get any overtime allowance. Asked as to why they work overtime, the workers say that if they refuse to work overtime they may incur the displeasure of their superior officials which may ultimately mean their dismissal on either one pretext or the other. Undoubtedly, the security of service in the coalfields is so small that a worker remains constantly in danger of losing his job and naturally, instead of disobeying his officers, though justly and rightly, he prefers killing himself inch by inch by doing hard overtime work for which he gets no remuneration. This practice must be stopped and it must be made clear to all that he who takes overtime work without paying proper remuneration commits crime for which he may be prosecuted before any law court.

WAGES.

The problem of the wages of the workers engaged in the coal industry is terribly embarrassing. After working for such long hours every day and after taxing his energy almost to the breaking point, a worker does not get even subsistence wages and generally he and his family live on starvation wages. As will be evident from the figures quoted below, the highest recorded figure for daily wages of the coal cutter per day was not more than annas 9 and pies 3 and that of a loader annas 8 per day during December 1937. We may take it to be the highest average recorded wages. The wages of other workers come close to this. But it is doubtful whether even this small sum of money goes into the pocket of the workers. On a closer enquiry we have found that bribery and corruptions are so rampant in the coalfields and there are so many illegal and unjust deductions that, on an average, at least one fourth of the wages paid by the employers do not find their way into the pockets of the poor workers. Partly due to these deductions and corruptions and partly due to the irregularity of the work and stoppages in the course of weekly employments, workers

do not get what they should normally receive. These corruptions and deductions have become so normal that even the highest colliery authorities have to admit it and only the other day, a very high colliery authority told me that he was very much doubtful about the workers actually getting what was generally entered into the books of the companies.

Thus, taking everything into consideration, we come to the conclusion that nearly seventy-five per cent of the workers engaged in this industry do not get more than Rs. 10 per month. And with the exception of the managers and a few fortunate class of supervising officers who get decent salaries, the number of such employees as get more than Rs. 35 to Rs. 40 per month may be almost nil. But at the same time the number of such workers as get, on an average, Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 per month is also very large. To some it may appear over exaggeration, but to those who know of loading *coolies* and depot *coolies* working in various coke plants, and getting an average of annas 12 to Re. 1 and annas 8 per week, it is no news. Naturally, it would not be wrong to say that the scale of pay obtaining in the coalfields is scandalous and cannot be tolerated even for a day, regard being had to the huge profits that most of the collieries are making even during these days of bad market condition.

But then the question arises; can the wages of the workers be raised; and should it be raised? We can at the very outset answer these questions in the affirmative and say that the wages must be raised sufficiently high. In considering the question of the increment of wages two things must be taken into consideration. Firstly, are the wages very low or are they above the subsistence level and sufficient to support the worker and his family? And secondly, if it is raised, can the industry bear the increased expenditure thus incurred? So far as the first question is concerned there can be no two opinions. Every one who has seen these workers and their terribly wretched condition, will agree that these people are living on starvation wages and are killing themselves and their families, inch by inch, due to under-feeding. Hence wages will have to be raised sufficiently high. It is indeed unbearable that working harder than workers in other industries and exposing themselves to far greater risks and accidents, workers in the coal industry should get the lowest wages paid to the workers in the country, nay, all over the world with the exception of Japan.

But it is on the second point that opinions differ. Taking advantage of the bad state of coal trade to-day capitalists argue that if wages are raised, the industry cannot bear the extra expenditure and naturally many of the collieries will have to be closed down, which may mean so many more workers thrown on the streets. But on a closer analysis of the whole situation we find that there is no truth whatsoever in these statements. And even during these days of hard market condition which itself is temporary and even to-day shows tendency of improvement in the near future, the colliery owners, specially those who own first grade coal, are making huge profits and by making necessary economies in overhead and supervising charges they can make still greater profits.

Let us come to facts. The figures of the output of coal per year show that of the total amount of coal raised per year, nearly seventy-five per cent is first grade coal and only twenty-five per cent is second grade coal. The price of first grade coal, so far as we know, has never gone down Rs. 4-8-0 per ton, but on the other hand it has gone as high as Rs. 20 to Rs. 22 per ton. No doubt, the price of second grade coal has come as low as to Re. 1-8-0 per ton, but this also is temporary and it is showing signs of improvement. From the Government of India figures for the year 1937 we find that 9,479,775 tons of coal was raised during that year. The output of the year 1938 is computed to be almost equal to the output of the previous year if not higher. At the same time, even taking the figures quoted by the mines department, which are surely higher than what is actually paid to the workers, as figures of wages paid to the various classes of workers engaged in the industry, we find that during the year 1937 for 9,479,775 tons of coal raised the raising cost, with the exception of the salaries of the high managerial officials; remuneration of the managing agents; remuneration of Directors; depreciation charges; interest charges; and various taxes paid by the collieries was Rs. 1,02,35,656. The chart given below will make it more clear :—

UNDERGROUND :—

Overmen and *Sirdars*—1,272—at Re. 1-2-3 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 4,52,673 per annum.

Coal-cutters—15,831—at Re. 0-9-3 each, month of 20 days, get Rs. 21,96,551 per annum.

Loaders—10,870—at Re. 0-8-0 each month of 20 days, get Rs. 13,04,400 per annum.

Other skilled labour—5,021—at Re. 0-10-3 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 10,03,572 per annum.

Other unskilled labour—8,064—at Re. 0-7-0 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 10,96,704-8-0 per annum.

OPEN WORKINGS :—

Overmen and *Sirdars*—127—at Re. 0-14-6 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 35,909 per annum.

Coal-cutters—1,665—at Re. 0-8-6 each, month of 20 days, get Rs. 2,12,287-8-0 per annum.

Loaders—504—at Re. 0-6-9 each, month of 20 days, get Rs. 51,030 per annum.

Other skilled labour—272—at Re. 0-8-3 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 43,770-8-0 per annum.

Other unskilled labour—1,317—at Re. 0-6-3 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 1,61,003-4-0 per annum.

SURFACE :—

Clerical and supervising staff—2,000—at Re. 1-3-0 each, month of 30 days, get Rs. 8,55,000 per annum.

Skilled labour—4,536—at Re. 0-10-0 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 8,84,520 per annum.

Unskilled labour—11,281—at Re. 0-6-6 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 14,22,252-12-0 per annum.

Females—6,883—at Re. 0-4-6 each, month of 26 days, get Rs. 6,03,983-4-0 per annum. Total Rs. 1,02,35,656-4-0.

Raising 9,479,775 tons wages paid Rs. 10,235,656-4-0 that is, on an average, one ton : wages paid Re. 1-1-4.

Further more, if we take into consideration other expenses which the industry has to bear, for instance, the salaries of general managers, managers and other highly-paid officials, income-tax, road-cess tax, water-tax, royalty tax, and other taxes depreciation charges, and such other charges as are paid by the companies we find that on an average they vary between annas 12 to Re. 1-8-0 per ton. We must carefully note here that in case of small collieries the charges under these heads as well as various other heads described above are much smaller and their total cost of production per ton cannot be more than Re. 1 to Re. 1-4-0 per ton.

But talking here of big collieries and first grade coal we find that on the highest computation the cost per ton in raising first class coal cannot be higher than Rs. 2-4-0 per ton on an average. But we may grant a further concession and believe it to be Rs. 2-8-0 per ton. From the very fact that many of the big and first grade European collieries raising first class coal are giving their raising contractors from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4-0 per ton, they cannot argue that their cost can be higher than what we have computed, if only they do not manipulate figures.

But first class coal is selling even in these bad market days at a rate not lower than Rs. 4-8-0 per ton; generally it is higher. Therefore, we find that even in these days of bad market conditions colliery proprietors raising first grade coal are making a profit at the rate of Rs. 2 per ton at the lowest. If out of this we set apart annas 8 per ton for the remuneration of the managing agents and the interest on the capital invested, we take it as almost certain that the industry, even in these bad market days is making a huge profit and at least Re. 1-8-0 per ton is the net profit of the first class colliery proprietors. Taking the total amount of the first grade coal to be roughly seventy-five lakhs tons for the year 1938 from this Jharia coalfield we find that the owners of the first grade coal have made at least a net profit of one crore fifty lacs for the year 1938. Now knowing as the proprietors do that workers' wages are below the subsistent level, if only they set apart the half of the amount, that is seventy-five lacs, to be distributed amongst the workers, it can raise their wages by seventy-five per cent. Are the workers wrong in demanding a general increase in their wages specially when the wages of almost all classes of workers have gone lower and lower during the last ten years?

Though the rate of net profit of the small collieries working good second class coal cannot be the same, still it is difficult to believe that they are running at a loss. No doubt they are unfavourably placed with the companies raising first grade coal and if they are to stand in the market, they must be granted certain relief.

We have come to the conclusion that the industry, even as it stands to-day, can afford to pay a much higher wage than what it is paying to-day. But with little economy and reorganisation it can, to a great extent, reduce its overhead and establishment charges and increase its prices, thereby making it possible to pay still higher wages. There is not the least

doubt that the terribly bad state of the coal industry is primarily due to the anarchy that is prevailing in the coal trade. There is such a bad cut-throat competition prevailing in the coal trade that every-day prices of coal are going down with the result that the wages of the workers are also going down every day. And so long as this cut-throat competition continues, it will give the capitalists a chance to shirk their responsibilities towards their employees under the pretext of the bad market conditions. It is, therefore, essential for the Government to control this cut-throat competition by creating some sort of a Coal syndicate—just on the lines of the Sugar Syndicate created by the Government.

The policy of the railways is also, to a great extent, responsible for creating trouble both for the capitalists and the workers. Railways being the chief consumers of coal dictate to a very great extent the market conditions. But in buying coal from the market the Railway Board has been following a very dangerous policy. In asking for the tenders for supply of coal it also goes in for uneconomic cheapness and accepts only such tenders as quote the cheapest rates. Naturally so long as the railway collieries, instead of conserving their coal resources for future contingencies, work them to their fullest capacities in place of buying coal from the market and also so long as the dangerous policy of accepting the lowest tenders by the Railway Board continues, the colliery proprietors and more specially the small colliery owners will have a perpetual cause for complaint. But if the Railway Board is compelled to change its policy, automatically the price of coal will go high which will leave a fair margin in the form of profit to be distributed amongst the workers in the form of higher wages. And if the Railway Board is further forced to change its policy towards the freight rate, a lot can be done both for the industry and for the poor workers. As a matter of fact, the freight charged for coal is abnormally high and has almost become excessive. If, therefore, the freight charges are lower, then even though the coal prices go high, the two together may not mean much change in the prices of coal in the various parts of the country and thereby may not mean any change at all for the consumers. We, therefore, are definitely of opinion that the Railway Board should be pressed to change its policy towards the coal industry and instead of paying less and less wages to the workers the capitalists should also try to give relief in this direction.

But even if this is found not easy of solution due to the stiff attitude of the Railway Board displayed so far and due

to the indifference of the Central Government, much can be done if the coal industry is re-organised and the small collieries, instead of following separate policies are grouped together and, if possible, a number of them are merged into bigger companies and thereby effect economy. And even if this proves ineffective, a lot can be done if some of the taxes borne by the industry are transferred to the consumers, which though meaning almost nothing for them, may mean a relief to the coal industry and a great relief to the workers. As most of the coal is being consumed by railways and other industries like iron, jute, cotton, etc., this increase in the prices of coal, if any, may not mean much to them as they themselves are making huge profits.

From what we have written above it is clear that there is not the least doubt that even in these bad market days industry can bear increased burden in the form of higher wages. And if the re-organisation of the industry proceeds, which is essential and about which we will write later, it can bear roughly even hundred per cent increase in the wages of certain classes of workers. Considering everything and also considering the absurdly low standard of the wages of the workers, we believe that the Government must fix a certain minimum wage. As most of the workers engaged in the industry are piece-workers, the Government should so arrange that wages of even the lowest paid workers do not fall below Rs. 15 per month for 26 working days. About the wages of coal cutters and loaders who form the main force in the exploitation of the resources of the nation, statutory minimum wage limit must be fixed. And we believe that it should be so arranged that no coal cutter and loader gets less than Re. 1 per day, i.e., their monthly income should not fall below Rs. 25 per month. In the course of the enquiry we have found that there is no dearth of coal cutters who can cut as much of coal as can bring them Re. 1 per day, but the poor men are victims of so many illegal cuts and exactions that by the time the money goes into their hands a fair proportion of the same finds its way into the pockets of their higher officers. No doubt, the colliery proprietors will argue that the minimum limit proposed by us is too high. But considering the total stoppage of female labour underground which has meant extra burden on the males and also considering the huge profits that the proprietors are making, we think this minimum essential for the workers' very existence. There may not be dearth of such employers who may argue that if this minimum is fixed, the workers will become more idle and will cut less and less coal. But human

nature as it is, we cannot believe this theory, and hope that with the changes in the ideas and outlook of the miners, with the change in the social relation of the people and with better working and housing conditions in the coalfields, miners' lot will become cheerful, thereby making them more efficient. Instead of wasting their time inside the mines, they will have to urge to cut more coal in shorter hours than what they are cutting to-day. And if there is the inducement that if they work to their utmost they can earn much more than Re. 1 per day, they can work still harder.

As for those who belong to the class of *hazari coolies*, for instance the pump *khalasis* and the boiler men, etc., there must be at the minimum fifty per cent increment in their average daily wages. In case it is found that in many of the collieries it is absurdly low, the increment must be higher. At any rate, unification of gradation in the rates and yearly increment is essential. No colliery proprietor should be allowed to take advantage of unemployment amongst the workers to reduce the wages at his own sweet will. As a matter of fact, this fifty per cent increment is not much, rather it is simply the restoration of the wage cuts which have taken place during the course of the last ten or fifteen years.

As for other higher servants, we are of opinion that there must be at least thirty per cent increment in their wages. This also will mean only the restoration of the wage cuts and we do not think any colliery proprietor should have any genuine cause for grievance.

But while making recommendations for the increment of the wages of the workers, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the workers' efficiency must also be raised and they should, by their work, produce such nice results as may leave a fair margin for those who control the industry. But for this the Government and the capitalists alike will have to exert. But more of this hereafter.

One thing important about the coal industry is this that there is no uniformity of the rates whatsoever all over the coalfield. The Government must put an end to this and must make wage rates thoroughly uniform. We suggest that for the adjustment of wages from time to time and to see that no employer gives less wages than what the laws lay down, a Wage Fixation Board should be created to function on the lines of the British Trade Board. This Board should be composed of the employers' and the workers' representatives with a

chairman who should be either one of them or an independent outside authority such as the Labour Commissioner.

All the daily and weekly-paid workers should be placed on the monthly list and the previous system should be as quickly abolished as possible. If monthly-paid workers are required to work overtime during night or on holidays, they must be paid double the wages earned on normal working days. The system of payment of wages on Sundays which is a public holiday must totally be stopped. Because that spoils for the poor workers the chance of enjoying even that hard-earned holiday. Therefore, all payments must be made on Friday and Saturdays. It is indeed shameful that some of the collieries pay weekly wages as late as Tuesdays and yet others do not clear the dues for all the six days. Therefore, the law must be explicit on this point, that is, the wages must be paid on Fridays or Saturdays only.

As for bonuses we are of opinion that the system of paying bonuses must not be encouraged. But that does not mean that workers should be deprived of a share in the excessive profits that the companies make. We consider it essential that all monthly bonuses should be consolidated with the wages and all annual bonuses should be converted into profit sharing schemes.

Something about skilled workers of the coalfields also. There are four coke plants and a number of power houses and engineering works which are employing at least 5,000 skilled workers. These people have to work the hardest. Many of them have worked from 15 to 20 years in the same plants; some even more. But their lot is terrible and on enquiry we find that after serving the companies faithfully for all these years, they find their wages reduced to much lower level than what they normally used to get. Special enquiry should be made into their condition and their wage level should be raised sufficiently high, at least 50 per cent above the wages paid to them today.

PENSIONS AND PROVIDENT FUNDS.

The question of pension and provident fund is interconnected with the question of wages. It is indeed cruel that after working for their whole life in these coalfields and after spoiling their health and energy, workers find it difficult to maintain their families and themselves in their old age. Society cannot tolerate people, working for the whole of their lives for the happiness and prosperity of a chosen

few, being thrown on the streets in their old age to expose themselves to the cruelty of nature. Therefore, there must be proper rules laid down for pension and provident fund. It should be laid down that whoever has worked for fifteen years regularly in a colliery or any other industry in this coalfield, should receive a decent pension, because fifteen years are sufficient to make one unless for work in this coalfield. As for miners, it should be provided that those who are present in the collieries every year for two hundred days and remain in the colliery for fifteen years should also be liable to get pension. For them one year's continued service should mean presence for 200 days only in the colliery.

LEAVE ALLOWANCES.

There should be adequate provision for privilege leave, sick leave and casual leave. Leaves and rest are imperative necessities in the coalfields and naturally adequate provisions should be made for the same. The question of leave with pay should not be postponed for the consideration of the Central Government as suggested by some employers.

MATERNITY BENEFIT.

As there is no provision whatsoever for maternity benefit, women are harassed to a very great extent. It is essential that the law lays it down that maternity benefit must be paid. In case of pregnant women two months' wages before the confinement and two months after it should be paid. Besides this, the Government should make adequate provisions for maternity and child welfare centres to help the women workers.

COMPENSATION.

Though, in order to safeguard poor workers against the onslaughts of the capitalists, the Government have passed various acts, for instance, Workmen's Compensation Act and Workmen's Wages Act, etc., it is doubtful whether workers make full use of them. From personal experience we are in a position to say that in a large number of cases adequate compensation for deaths and serious accidents is denied to the workers' dependants. The understanding power of the workers is so low and they are so backward and uneducated that whenever anyone dies, his dependants, instead of going to the law courts, are duped by the proprietors and having got Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 or sometimes a little more they leave their rights and do not get their dues. We know of employers who find out a number of pretexts and as it is not easy,

for the poor workers to contest their claims in law courts and to get their relief soon, they are generally cheated. It is essential that the Provincial Government make it clear that it is offence for the employers to refuse the adequate compensation by one pretext or the other. The genuine labour organisations should be taken into confidence and their officials whenever make complaints as regards the evasion of compensation laws, the case must at once be investigated. And if on enquiry it is found that the proprietors have been really trying to evade law, they must be punished. And it should also be laid down that whenever anyone dies, they should deposit the exact amount of compensation with the Commissioner of Compensation to be handed over to the dependents of the deceased, if there be any. It should be the duty of the Commissioner to enquire whether there are real dependants and the amount should be paid to them if he (Commissioner) thinks it right. But even if it is found that the deceased has left no dependants, the money should not be refunded back to the proprietor. It should be utilised for welfare work amongst the workers. Much can be done for the workers if, for the disposal of the compensation cases, a special authority is created just at the Bombay Government has done.

We, now, come to the question of the appointment of a Labour Commissioner. If a Labour Commissioner be appointed to look into the compensation as well as other cases arising out of the industrial relations, much can be done to ameliorate the lot of the workers. The Labour Commissioner should so arrange that at least once in every month he visits every important industrial centre and finishes all the cases on the spot be, they compensation or other cases. If this system is working perfectly alright in Bombay there is no reason why it should not work in Behar. But much depends on the personality of the Labour Commissioner who must be of such a strong character as may inspire confidence both in the capitalists and the workers.

STANDING RULES AND BYE-LAWS.

Much of the troubles of the workers and the difficulties in the working conditions is due to the behaviour of the supervising staff, and also due to the absence of any adequate rules and bye-laws in the collieries. Due to the total absence of all these, the officials act according to their whims and at times do things which even their higher officials do not approve. It is, therefore, essential that every colliery has a written code of bye-laws approved by the Commissioner of

Labour, which should be posted on the notice board in all the spoken languages of the place and should be explained to the workers. These laws should be strictly enforced and whoever tries to do otherwise should be taken to task however high he may be.

EDUCATION.

But much depends on the understanding of the workers. If they remain in the same state of ignorance and backwardness as they are to-day surely they can gain very little from what the Government does for them. Hence, it is of paramount importance that free primary education is introduced in the coalfields without delay. The capitalists and the workers alike agree that unless the workers are educated and their sense of understanding is raised, neither they can help themselves nor can the industry progress so efficiently as it ought to. We believe that the Committee will impress upon the Government the necessity of introducing free primary education without delay.

DRINKS AND DRUGS.

Akin to the problem of illiteracy is the problem of drinks and drugs. We have no hesitation in saying that liquor is the greatest blame upon our Government and as one moves about the streets on Sundays and Mondays one cannot but feel ashamed of a Government which tolerates such wilful destruction of a whole race. Even without making any increment in the wages of the workers the sale of liquor is stopped, workers' lot will be tolerably good and they will feel as if they are changed creatures. This disease is eating into the very vitals of our body politic. The workers have become so much a slave to these evils that they can tolerate their children starving but can never restrain themselves from drinking wine. We are definitely of opinion that if the sale of wine is not altogether stopped in the coalfields, no matter what increment in the wages of the workers is made, their condition will remain almost the same. The worst part of it is the outstill system which has made wine so cheap. It is essential that the sale of wine be totally stopped and pending that the outstill system be abolished without delay.

UNIONS.

If workers' lot is to be bettered, if they are to enjoy the ordinary civic and political amenities of life and if they are to get the minimum necessary wages enough for the maintenance of their own selves and their families they will have

to organise. In this age of terrible struggle between the capitalists and the labour, if the workers are to have their due, they will have to be organised for collective bargaining. After innumerable strikes and lockouts, not only in India but all over the world, in which lacs and lacs of workers were involved, the principle of trade unionism and collective bargaining has come to stay and has been accepted in theory at least, both by the capitalists and the Governments. But the real difficulty begins in practice and we find that though the capitalists accept trade unionism in principle, they try their best to crush the growing union spirit and always take recourse to victimisation. If we analyse a number of strikes, we find that the main reason of those strikes has been the victimisation and wilful dismissal of such workers as form the vanguard of the labour movements in their respective spheres. Hence, it can be said that though the capitalists accept trade unionism in principle, they fight every inch of the ground and accept a Union only when all their attempts to break the solidarity of the workers fail. Had this unnecessary obstinacy on the part of the capitalists not persisted so long, much of the trouble could have been avoided and industrial peace maintained. It is, therefore, essential that pressure is brought to bear upon the capitalists in this coalfield to accept and recognise that Union which is the best and most organised in the field and which commands the respect and the confidence of the largest number of workers. Once a properly organised Union is registered, it should be recognised by the capitalists. The Government must make such laws as make it essential for only one genuinely registered and recognised Union to flourish and function in one industrial area. We believe that something on the lines of the Bombay Trade Disputes Act will go a long way to help the proper and genuine growth of trade unions in the Province.

RE-ORGANISATION.

In these pages we have tried our best to suggest ways and means whereby the workers engaged in the coal industry can be relieved of their trouble to a great extent. But we cannot consider this to be a permanent remedy of the disease the whole coal industry is suffering from. We are definitely of opinion that unless radical steps are taken to recognise the whole coal industry and unless the profit motive is abolished once for all and the industry is nationalised, we cannot give any permanent relief to the workers engaged in the industry. Coal industry forms one of the chief key and basic

industries of the country and we cannot tolerate the terrible anarchy that is prevailing in it. At the highest computation with the present rate of production and with the present method of extraction the reserve of good quality coal, that is, selected and first grade coal, will last only for hundred and twenty-two years and the reserves of coking coal will last for sixty-two years only. It is to be noted that fifty per cent of the coal underground is being wasted and if this continues, the future, not only of the coal industry but of all industries is dark and dismal. It is, therefore, essential that this anarchy is stopped and gradually the industry is nationalised, royalty owners are got rid of and coal extracted on more sound lines.

INDEBTEDNESS.

The indebtedness amongst the workers is also appalling. We know of workers getting Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 per month paying more than half of their monthly wages as interest. A large number of money-lenders and *kabulis* are flourishing in this coalfield and if workers are somehow saved from the clutches of these, they can live a fairly decent life. If the Government finds a machinery whereby old debts are cleared off, it can do a lot to help the poor miners. A comprehensive scheme for the industrial area of the Province is essential and the Government should try to establish as soon as possible and as many as possible cheap credit societies to meet the daily needs of the workers. Workers' indebtedness is also due to the excessive rates of prices that they are to pay to the various shop-keepers for the food-stuffs they purchase. These shop-keepers make exorbitant profits and it is essential to save the workers from their clutches. If cheap co-operative credit stores are started in suitable places, a lot can be done. We hope the Government will do something in the matter and at least some experimental shops will be started soon.

Estimated expenditure per month of a working class family, consisting of four adults.

				Rs.	a.	p.
Rice—1 Md.	35 seers	...	...	7	8	0
Pulse—19 seers	...	...	...	3	8	0
Vegetable—20 seers	...	...	..	1	8	0
Meat or milk	...	...	...	2	0	0
Sugar or <i>gur</i> —5 seers	...	...	...	1	9	0

			Rs. a. p.
Spices	...	...	0 10 0
Oil or <i>ghee</i>	...	...	1 0 0
Salt—8 seers	...	...	0 10 0
<i>Biri</i>	...	...	1 8 0
Tobacco	...	...	0 8 0
Total			20 7 0
Clothing	...	...	3 4 0**
			23 11 0
Miscellaneous	...	...	1 5 0
Total			25 0 0

***Clothing per year per man.*

			Rs. a. p.
2 pairs of <i>dhoti</i>	...	...	2 0 0
2 <i>kurtas</i>	...	...	2 0 0
2 <i>ganjis</i>	...	...	0 12 0
1 <i>chadar</i>	...	...	1 0 0
2 blankets	...	...	4 0 0
Total			9 12 0

$$\frac{\text{Rs. } 9/12/0 \times 4}{/12/} = \text{Rs. } 3/4/0 \text{ per month.}$$

We are very definitely of opinion that the coal-workers of the Province are working under conditions which call for a higher resisting power against the continuous onslaught of the severe conditions obtaining in the industry. In order to maintain the required stamina to keep up health and normal standard of efficiency the necessity of comparatively higher wages than obtaining in other industries is unchallengeable. In this connection we would like to place before the Committee our considered opinion through long experience, that the average life of the lowest-paid workers is much below that of the higher-paid workers. This is a stark reality with which anybody connected with the working class is well acquainted. The obvious conclusion to be drawn from the fact mentioned

above is that the wages being far below the living wage, workers are not able to make necessary provision for food, wearing apparels, housing, recreation, etc., to resist the continuous wear and tear of the body in the course of employment. We would define a living wage as the quantum of currency necessary in the Province for a working class family to live a life progressively healthy, social, and efficient unit. In view of our definition, we would request the Committee to treat the coal worker as a normal citizen, the standard of whose life in the intellectual, moral, physical and social spheres is bound to affect the progress of the community as a whole in the Province. We have been obliged to place this view in light of the objective conditions prevailing in our Province.

The effect of the payment of a living wage to the coal-workers would certainly make them more healthy and efficient. In considering the question of a living wage standard for the workers one ought to keep in mind the psychological factors, viz., the contentment and satisfaction of a worker as far as his physical and social needs are concerned. In order that a worker becomes a useful member of the society and feels that he has a status in the present economic order, he requires to be liberated from the day-to-day worries which result from insufficient wages. Sense of injustice rankling in the minds of a large number of workers will express itself in a thousand ways to the detriment of efficiency; while a healthy and contented mind which has hopes of securing a decent existence in the society would very favourably affect the efficiency in a thousand ways visible and invisible. By its very nature, it would rather be difficult to assess concretely the psychological advantage of a living wage to the industry but those in touch with the working class either as social workers, trade union workers or as employers do know that adequate wages are more than compensated in the form of both qualitative and quantitative work. A living wage standard will raise the economic and social status of a worker resulting in higher sense of responsibility to the industry and ultimately to the society. A worker getting a living wage would not be forced to send his wife and immature children to work and thereby partially make up the deficiency in his earnings. Such a state of normal domestic life with a healthy and comfortable home, having cheerful and intelligent children receiving education, would develop a cultural life which in turn is bound to raise the morale of the worker.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Workers and Miners of the Noamundi Iron Mine,
Noamundi.

GROUPING OF LABOURERS.

The labourers of Noamundi may be divided into two groups—

- (a) Appointed and controlled directly by the Company.
- (b) Engaged through the contractors—mainly for Mining and Loading.

Consequently their grievances and sufferings, in many cases, are of different nature and we shall deal with them separately.

UNSKILLED LABOUR.

The unskilled labourers and the miners are mostly engaged from the people of the Kolhan area. The reason of this can be mentioned as follows :—

- (1) The Mine is situated in the Kolhan area.
- (2) The rate given is too low. Any man from outside cannot manage with such a low rate. The Company has taken advantage of the low standard of living of the Kolhan people.

SKILLED LABOUR.

The skilled labourers are mostly from the inhabitants of other parts of the country. Appointments are made by the Manager of the Mine. In cases of skilled labourers the appointments are either confirmed by the General Superintendent of Ore Mines and Quarries and Prospecting or made by himself.

As the appointments are left to one individual there is every possibility of favouritism. As a matter of fact, many examples will be found where the relations and friends of an influential man or a favourite of the Management are getting jobs ignoring the claims of the people working in the lower positions.

Such favourites of the Management are pushed up, while their seniors are left behind.

MINIMUM WAGES.

The minimum wages, i.e., the wages of the unskilled labourers in the Mines is annas 5 only. Formerly the minimum rate was annas 4 only. After a short strike in 1937, and also on repeated representations after the strike the rate was finally increased to annas 5 with an annual increment of six pies rising up to a maximum of annas 7 pies 6 for the males. The labourers were not satisfied with this and they sent a petition to the General Superintendent, Ore Mines and Quarries and Prospecting, that the final rate of annas 7 pies 6 should be made the initial one (Appendix 1). In that petition it was mentioned that in the declaration of the late Sir N. B. Saklatwala, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, it had been announced unreservedly that the minimum wages of the male workers of the Tisco would be annas 8 pies 9 (Appendix 2). Under these circumstances, we failed to understand why we should be deprived of that minimum wage.

In the reply of the General Superintendent, Ore Mines and Quarries and Prospecting (Appendix 1) it was mentioned that the cost of living at Jamshedpur was higher. We beg to contradict this statement. This will be understood from the fact that most of the commodities here are imported from Jamshedpur, Calcutta and some other places.

As for the facility of free quarters, etc., it may be said that the Company had no other alternative but to grant this temptation to draw skilled labour to these backward and unhealthy places where most of the mines are situated. As a matter of fact, this place is so bad with regard to health, that the railway pays a jungle allowance to their staffs at Noamundi besides the free quarters, etc. But the Company takes no consideration of this state of position. Most of the workers, whether skilled or unskilled, cannot draw their usual wages due to absence for sickness.

It may be mentioned here that the unskilled workers used to be appointed on annas 7 to annas 8 when the Mine started working. But as there were no definite controlling rules and regulations, this rate has gradually been reduced to annas 4 per day.

So we do not find any reason why the unskilled or skilled labourers should get wages less than those at Jamshedpur. We demand that the minimum wages at the Mines should be fixed at the same rate as in Jamshedpur.

We consider that the wages of all the skilled labourers should be graded starting with a rate and rising to a maximum with regular annual increment. And in view of the above fact, these grades should be fixed on the same lines as those at Jamshedpur.

LEAVE RULES.

In the service rules, daily-rated men are granted only 14 days leave, which is quite inadequate, particularly in a malarious place. Very few people will found who are not compelled to take leave without pay. This period of leave, in almost all cases, does not even cover the sick period. The same is the case with the monthly rated workers also, though they have the privilege of one month's leave besides other kinds of leave.

We claim that we should also be granted leave similar to that of the monthly rated men. We also beg to claim sick leave as this place is very unhealthy and people fall sick very often.

BONUS.

Excepting the Profit Sharing Bonus, no other kind of bonus is granted to us. We understand that the General Production Bonus is granted to all those who help production directly or indirectly. We help the production of Blast Furnaces directly by working on Iron Ores. So our demand is that General Production Bonus should also be extended to us.

In Jamshedpur Shipment Bonus is given on despatches of materials. We also despatch Iron Ore, sometimes working under immense strains. Consequently, we hope our claim for Despatch Bonus is legitimate.

ELECTRIC CHARGE.

In the Mines the Company charges for electricity in the residential quarters at the following rate:—

	As.
For Light and Plug Points	... 6 each per month.
	Re.
For Fans ,, ,,	... 1 ,, ,, ,,

This we consider as abnormal. We learn that the charge for current at Jamshedpur has been reduced to pies 6 per unit. We hope that our charge also will be reduced to nominal one.

EDUCATION.

There is only one Primary School and only Hindi is taught there. This school was long started by the Public with subsistence from the Company. During that time the medium of teaching was Hindi, Oriya and Bengali. But since the Company has taken up the school, they have abolished all other languages retaining Hindi only.

In Jamshedpur also the Company wanted to abolish Oriya and Telugu classes this year, but ultimately had to retain them. We hope that classes of other languages will be restarted immediately. Primary Education cannot be given in any language other than the mother tongue. As a result of this the employees are finding it very difficult to educate their children. They cannot be expected to send their children to other places at a heavy cost, when they are mostly very poorly paid.

In conclusion, we beg to mention that almost all these grievances (Appendix B) were placed through the President, Tata Workers' Unions, before Sir A. R. Dalal, the Managing Director of the Company, and we were given to understand that nothing could be done before the Enquiry Committee submitted their recommendations.

We were waiting so long for you and hope that all our real and pressing grievances will be removed now.

CONTRACTOR'S LABOURERS.

RECRUITMENT.

Contractor's labourers are mainly recruited through Jobbers. Practically the main contractors have very few labourers of their own. The Jobbers or the sub-contractors as they are called, recruit, control and pay the miners. These sub-contractors draw the payment from the main contractors.

WAGES.

Miners are all paid on piece work. Formerly, the rate was paid on *chattas* (about 130 to 150 c.ft.). The Miner's average earning used to be not more than 10 pies a day. Since the last two years Dr. F. G. Percival has introduced the box system, by which the miners earnings have increased a bit. But as soon as the contractors found that they were earning more money, they reduced the rate per box and also

compelled them to fill up the boxes 4 or 5 inches higher over the margins. It may be said that their average earning is not more than annas 3 per day.

It is said that the miners absent themselves frequently. The work is so hard and the nourishment is so insufficient that this tendency to absent cannot be reduced unless their earning is increased.

We are against contract system and also against Company's accepting lower rate beyond a certain limit. The whole position may be well depicted if we quote here from the writings of Mr. J. L. Keenan, the retired General Manager of the Company, published in the Modern Review of December, 1935. He said "A short time ago, I went on a trip to the Mines. We have saved a lot of money by letting out contracts on the tender system. In fact, the cost of mining Ore at one of our Mines has dropped from annas fourteen to annas seven, but I might tell you that I have found out, on enquiry, that the average wages of labour at one of our Mines had dropped to three quarters of an anna per day.

"I cannot say that the wages that our contractors are paying at the Mines is any credit to the Tata Iron and Steel, Company, Limited, and it is high time that we took some drastic action to ensure to the workmen a wage sufficient to keep them with their bodies and souls together.

"For the past three weeks, Mrs. Keenan has been impressing this fact on my mind, morning, noon and night. While we were at one of the Mines, a girl, who was about eighteen years of age carrying a baby in her arms, who could not be over two months, stopped my wife's trolley. The girl's breasts were not only unclean but they were sagging. Although my wife could not understand the Kohl language even an amateur could gather that the woman was trying to show that her child was starving, and pointing to her belly that she also was lacking in food and illustrated the child's condition by lifting one of her breasts. Instead of the child being appeased although it appeared to be receiving milk, it kept on crying which only emphasised the fact that there was no milk in that breast." Mrs. Keenan continued to remark, "We can cut down our costs in the works. Let us by all means not initiate Mr. Woolworth and have all our goods on display in Jamshedpur. But let us also think of the aborigines who live back on the hills, many of whom live on top of

the Ore properties, which we do not own and whose ancestors have lived there for centuries. Let us realise this fact and ensure that these workmen get a living wage. Even if the cost of mining Ores does go up, by a small amount, I think you can take it that our show window will reduce our costs by other methods but I certainly believe that we have no right to so curtail our cost of Ore at the expense of these poor people."

This is the condition of the Mine Workers. Though Mr. Keenan rightly realised the condition, he could do nothing towards the improvement of these poor people.

On the other hand, they are facing additional hardship.

(1) Formerly the Miners used to get the blasting holes drilled by extra engaged workers, but they have to do this work by themselves in most cases.

(2) The despatch of Ores being much increased the loaders, more than half of them being women, have to work in the night. This is highly objectionable from various points of view.

(3) The Mines, during the last few years, have extended to a large area, the length being more than 5 miles; there is practically no water-supply in the mining faces, excepting near about the localities.

(4) By the revision of the Mining Act, children are now prohibited to be taken to the Mining Faces. As mothers have to work generally, they keep 5 to 10 children in the jungles near the Mining Face under care of a girl of 7 or 8 years of age. This is rather more unsafe than bringing the children to the Mining Faces.

We claim that at intervals at the Mining Faces, rest-places, fitted with water taps along with creches should be erected.

HOUSING AND SANITATION.

The number of quarters provided by the contractors are very small. The huttings made for this purpose are normally over-crowded and in time of seasonal increase in the labour force, there being no addition in their number, the huttings become crowded by 400 to 500 per cent at times. The most obnoxious feature of the state is as sometimes has been found, that in one room a good number of men and one single woman have to live together. Apart from the moral standpoint, this tells upon their health abnormally. The high insanitary

condition of the *Basti* beggars description. The number of latrines, the amount of water-supply, etc., is abnormally insufficient. The cleaning of the *Basti* is scarcely done. The effect of this highly insanitary condition with over-crowding of the *Basti* is detected in the fact that most of the epidemic diseases originate from the *Basti* of the contractor's labour. Hence, we feel that it should be the responsibility of the Company to see that sufficient sanitary houses are provided to the labourers of the contractors.

CONTRACT SYSTEM.

We are against the contract system for various reasons, some of which have been placed before you by the Tata Workers Union. It has also been found that by direct employment of Miners, their earning increases, as well as the cost of raising is reduced. Hence we appeal that the contract system in the mines be totally abolished.

APPENDIX (1).

To

The G. S., Ore Mines and Quarries
and Prospecting,
Jamshedpur.

DEAR SIR,

In continuation to the talk of the last visit, we beg to mention the following cases of favouritism for those who took leadership during the last strike :—

(1) Mr. G. V. Upadhyya has been promoted to Manager, Baraduar, ignoring the claims of his seniors—Mr. R. R. Sinha and others.

(2) Mr. V. D. Misra got a promotion, superseding the claims of other senior men.

(3) Sreehari Pattanaik without having any knowledge in the Electric Department was given the job of an Electric Fitter Helper at the rate of annas 12 whereas those working in the Electric Department did not get it.

(4) Mr. Lingaraj Pattanaik got a jump from a mining *cooly* to a *Chowkidar* in spite of many other *Chowkidars* senior to him getting much lower pay.

(5) Sreehari and Lingaraj Pattanaik are said to have been given the charge of supervising the huttings. They make false complaints against us; Sreehari himself, leaving his work frequently visits the Manager's Office.

We beg to put before you the following grievances for your kind and favourable consideration :—

(a) Rate of pay is very low in the mines. Sir Saklatwala declared on the last Viswakarma Day (published in the Tisco Review) that the minimum wages of the Company's employees shall be annas 8 pies 9, whereas you have sanctioned annas 5 on appointment and half anna increment per year. We mentioned that we were not satisfied with this rate; you told us that this difference was due to the facilities we got here, viz., fuel and quarters free. Considering this, we would request you to sanction us the final rate of annas 7 pies 6 at the starting instead of annas 8 pies 9 given at Jamshedpur.

(b) *Water scarcity*.—

(i) In the working faces during this hot season, we suffer too much for want of water. We would request you to arrange spray system in the different places of the mines and other working places.

(ii) The huttings should be provided with more number of taps and latrines.

(c) *Housing.*—

(i) The Quarters should be improved. In the Babu Lines some of the houses are too bad for living. The verandahs in the huttings are not cemented and we request you to provide roofed houses.

(ii) We are not satisfied with present system of allotting quarters.

(d) *Lighting.*—

(i) There is no street light leading to the Power House and Workshop. We find it very difficult to attend our duties during the night. On many occasions, we have met with wild animals on the way.

(ii) The electric charge for our quarters is too high.

(iii) There is no light in the yard of the huttings. We would request you to provide with electric lights inside the quarters in the huttings, free of charge.

(e) In Jamshedpur they get General Production Bonus and Departmental Bonuses. We request you to give us despatch or some such kind of bonus.

Obediently yours,

LABOURERS OF NOAMUNDI IRON MINE.

No. MQ.

CAMP, NOAMUNDI,

The 13th/14th May, 1938.

To

Gurucharan and others,
Noamundi Iron Mine.

DEAR SIRs,

I have received your petitions, dated the 9th and 13th May, 1938, and confirm my verbal reply given to Charles and Dubraj, as follows:—

1. Mr. Sinha has himself represented his case to me and to the General Manager and has been given a full explanation.

2. Mr. Misra's transfer was ordered before the strike, and had nothing to do with his leadership of the strike.

3. Sreehari Pattanaik possesses service certificates showing that he worked as an Electric Fitter at Gurumahisoni and at Jamshedpur before he came here. His previous rate at Jamshedpur was Rupee 1 and annas 4. However, now that he wishes to be transferred and you have asked for him to be transferred, we have no objection and we are arranging for a transfer. Every one ought to be satisfied with this.

As to your other complaints.

(a) The rate of pay has been fixed by the Management giving due consideration to the provision of free quarters, etc., and to the cost of living as compared with Jamshedpur. The cost of living in Jamshedpur is the highest in the province of Bihar. If you compare your rates with others in the neighbourhood, I think you will find they are very favourable.

(b) *Water-supply.*—

(i) We have already got sanction to put a pipe system along the working faces up to Katamati, and water will shortly be available at all points as required. Sprays are also already being made.

(ii) Further taps and latrines have already been sanctioned and will be provided.

(c) *Housing.*—

(i) The quarters are being improved as fast as possible. The Mechanical Blocks mentioned will be taken in hand later on. Preference is being given to work on the *coolie* quarters, at present. The verandahs of the *coolie* huttings will be cemented later on, but sanction will have to be obtained for this later. Doors also will be provided later.

(ii) The system of allotting quarters has been devised to be as fair as we can make it. If improvements in the system are suggested, I shall give such suggestions careful consideration.

(d) *Lighting.*—

(i) Lights will be provided in the street leading to the Power House, as requested, and also in the *maidan* of the huttings.

(ii) The electric charges for lights in the quarters are low as compared with other places.

The rates have been approved by the Board and seem to me to be fair. I regret I cannot recommend that the Company should provide electric lights free in the quarters.

(e) There is no justification for a bonus on despatches, which depend on factors outside our control. I regret I cannot recommend this.

Yours truly,
Sd. F. G. PERCIVAL,
G. S., ORE MINES & QUARRIES
AND PROSPECTING.

APPENDIX 2.

VISWAKARMA MESSAGE TO THE EMPLOYEES OF THE TATA IRON AND STEEL, COMPANY, LIMITED.

I have been in Jamshedpur for a few days and have been pleased to see again with my own eyes the activities of this great works which is doing so much to strengthen our country, industrially.

It would have given me greater pleasure if I could personally have joined in the celebration of your annual festival, the Viswakarma Puja. My engagements in Bombay, unfortunately, make it impossible, but I send you all my wishes for a happy Puja.

During my stay here I have been able to announce to you that the remainder of the Profit-sharing Bonus will be paid to you in a lump sum during these few days. I again assure you of the pleasure which I feel in knowing that you are in that way sharing directly in the success of the Company.

It has been represented to me that the pay of the weekly-paid workers of the Company is lower than is desirable in present circumstances. I have looked carefully into this and am glad to find myself able to announce that from the first day of October 1937 the minimum wage for an adult male worker should be eight annas nine pies (0-8-9) and for a woman worker seven annas (7 annas) per day and that woman who has served the Company continuously for one year will be paid $7\frac{1}{2}$ annas per day.

I have also learnt that many of the temporary men employed by the Company have been working for a fairly long time, though with occasional breaks in service and in some cases with change of job. The management tell me that in

their opinion the time has come when we should improve the condition of these temporary employees by enabling them to share in the General Production Bonus and in departmental bonuses and by giving men of longstanding service certain privileges in connection with leave with pay. I am glad to be able to approve their suggestion and the General Manager is announcing the details of the scheme to-day.

I am sure you will all share our pleasure in these improvements in the conditions of the weekly-paid temporary workers. You will realise that in view of the large number of such employees these improvements will cost the Company large sums of money year by year. I am sure that every employee of the Company will do his best by his work to show appreciation of the Company's action in incurring this additional expenditure.

The current year already promises to give results which will enable us to pay you even larger profit-sharing bonus that is being paid this year but many of you will know that we cannot expect these good conditions to continue always and I hope that we shall all work together to keep this great Company on a sound footing even if difficult times return.

I again wish you all a successful Viswakarma Day.

Sd. N. B. SAKLATWALA,

Chairman,

The Tata Iron and Steel Company, Limited.

JAMSHEDPUR,

The 15th September, 1937.

APPENDIX 3.

LIST OF GRIEVANCES OF THE MINES.

1. *The minimum wages is too low.—*

The weekly paid workers start on annas 5 per day. They get increment of 6 pies after one year's completed service rising to the maximum of annas 7 pies 6.

Late Sir N. B. Saklatwala, in his message to the employees on the Viswakarma Puja day, 1937, declared that "from the first day of October, 1937, the minimum wage for an adult male worker shall be annas 8 pies 9 and for a woman worker annas 7 per day and that the women who have served the Company continuously for one year will be paid annas 7, pies 6 per day." In this declaration late Sir Saklatwala did not exclude the workers in the Mines.

The G. S., Ore Mines and Quarries and Prospecting said in reply to an application of the workers on 13th May, 1933, that one of the reasons of Jamshedpur rate being higher was due to the higher cost of living at Jamshedpur. But when compared with the prices of commodities in Jamshedpur and Noamundi, it will be found that they are higher in Noamundi in most cases.

It is also to be noted that the Railways pay a jungle allowance to the staff of Noamundi.

2. Grades.—

The grades for each post should be settled in the line and similar to the workers at Jamshedpur.

3. Sick leave.—

In the mines people suffer from diseases much more frequently. Consequently, the privilege leave (15 days only) is all used up for sickness. In most cases, people have to take leave for sickness without pay.

If special leave as sick leave is not granted to the workers in the Mines, the purpose of granting privilege leave is frustrated.

4. General Bonus.—

It is said that general bonus is granted to all people who help in production. In this respect the mines are the foremost factors for the production of Pig Iron.

5. Despatch Bonus.—

Shipping and other departments get bonus on shipment at Jamshedpur. On the same ground the Mines also have claims for despatch bonus.

6. Reduction of Electricity Charges.—

The electric charges monthly are fixed at annas 6 per point of light and plug and rupee 1 for fan. As the charge at Jamshedpur is reduced, it is hoped that the charges in the Mines also will be reduced.

7. Victimisation.—

The employees who work for the interest of the labourers are threatened to be discharged or transferred. This should be stopped.

8. Education.—

Only Hindi is provided in the Primary Schools of the Mines, thereby the employees of other provinces have to suffer in many ways. So provisions for other languages also should be made.

Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee

By

The Labour Union, Boulia (Shahabad).

(Limestone
Quarry.)

1. Clerks and Supervising Staff—40. Men ... 2,600.
Women—300 (not accurate figures) Children ... 50.

3. 65:35.

4. Bihar, the United Provinces, the Punjab, and Bengal.

7-8. Contractors recruit labourers themselves. Workers are taken in mainly through contract system. The company employs some labourers directly. It should be done through a Labour Bureau in consultation with the labour union.

10. No.

11. Yes, appointment of staff is generally marked with favouritism. All vacancies should be duly advertised by the Labour Bureau in the daily papers and affixed on the notice board and the selection should be approved by the labour union.

13. *Casual Labour*.—Ropeway Department—Though the workers have been serving for several years but their engagement entirely depends upon its run. For this special work a gang of 120 *khalasis* is maintained, out of which approximately, 80 *khalasis* get work daily and the remaining have to sit idle. In general the stoppage of the ropeway effects similar loss to other employees also. Sometimes 20 per cent of the total number of workers have to go back from the time office. Under the circumstances, labourers working for the last 12 years are being treated as new recruits and never get work daily. Hence, we do not understand whether they are to be treated as casual labour or permanent labour. It is neither increasing nor decreasing.

14. They too are treated as above.

15. No.

16. Yes. A few are taken on as apprentice in a few departments but they discharge full 8 hours duty. No training for apprentices.

17. No.

18. Cases of dismissals, suspensions, fines, etc. The Manager should take action with the consultation of the Labour Union.

19. Out of the total number of workers as shown above, only 40 employees are in the list of staff getting leave with pay, and the remaining all skilled and un-skilled labourers get leave without pay.

20. Only the staff with the option of the Manager. No hard and fast rules.

21. No.

22. Only provident fund to staff.

23. Instead of leave on Sunday, the workers are allowed one day rest in a week according to turn. Holidays to all communities are also allowed but no wages are given to any labourers for any sort of holidays except the staff mentioned above.

24. No.

25. Specially the Mining Acts notices are fixed on the notice board.

26. Suspension, dismissal and compulsory leave, permanent or temporary reduction in wages.

28. Punishments for either minor or major offences entirely depend upon the Manager's sweet will, for which there is no appeal.

29. Unsystematic everything.

32. Any employee if late in duty for even six minutes is deprived of his wages for half an hour. Punching card system is effected.

33. Fines are deducted from wages and utility of the amount is not known to us.

34. 8 hours.—The place being hilly and wild and the nature of work being of various types, almost all hard and hazardous, we are in favour of shorter hours of work. We are in favour of 40 hours in a week.

35. *Two shifts*.—Works of various natures—Limestone breaking, drilling, mechanical, repeway, clerical; recess or

interval hours are just the same except on the repeway jobs. They have no restriction of Sunday or any day. The workers take rest one day in a week in turn.

37. Yes.

38. Yes, daily hours.

39. Primary mechanical department does overtime work if at all. Ordinary rate even for the excess hours is being paid.

40. No.

41. No wages paid for enforced idleness which is frequently forced upon, say, 50 out of every 400 employees. The senior ones who get higher wages are forced to abstain from works. This is a cunning device to fill the company's coffer at the cost of the very livelihood of those, who have been devotedly working for its betterment for long.

42. There is no provision for protection from accidents:—

- (a) Stone breakers are constantly exposed to danger. Their eyes, face and particularly legs are permanent targets of flying flints. Face-masks, leg protectors or any special equipment for the purpose suggested.
- (b) People in groups of sometimes 50 are made to climb upon the unguarded top of hills to work. A section of them prepares the ground where the others have to work. This is a dangerous practice. All the people should not be sent there before the ground is prepared, guarded and finally made fit.
- (c) There is no provision to arrest the course of fast—tumbling heavy (and consequently dangerous) pieces of slabs from considerably great heights. People at the foot of such heights are in danger of being crushed to death.
- (d) Brakes of frail wood or bamboo stalks are attached to put a stop to the running trolleys on slopes and uneven surfaces. The brake so applied is not on all the four wheels of the carriage but only on one of them. Sometimes it so happens that the brake snaps at a twitch. The free trolley injures its driver. Sometimes it runs upon people working in front.

(e) Some such head-gear should be supplied to workers who carry heavy stone-loads which may protect their heads from the flying chips of stones, scorching rays of the sun, sharp pointed bottom of the basket containing the load or the stone-load itself.

(f) Hole drillers badly injure their palms by working without a hard glove to counteract the action of constant and rapid hard hits. Such gloves are recommended.

43. When accidents occur, classification and reporting of the accidents are not properly done and the workers are not satisfied with the present system. The number of First-Aiders should be increased and the report of all the accidents should be made to the Labour Union so that it might hasten help.

52. No.

53. *All the following are being paid on daily wage system.*—2,500 workers engaged in limestone quarries, 120 rope-way *khalasis*, 380 engaged in the mechanical department. All the above have been in the services of the company for a long period.

54. The company and contractor Darbari Lall make weekly payments and all the rest pay the workers their wages at the end of the month or a fortnight. Monthly payment is preferable if the wages are fixed on a monthly salary basis.

55. All wages are on time basis and since 1929 there has been persistent decrease of 40 to 50 per cent.

56. Loss of tools and plants is compensated by deduction from workmen's wages, arbitrarily determined by contractors who are also owners of such tools.

59. Yes, no bonus is conceded except to the staff.

61. Efficient living.

70. (a) No. (b) Yes, an ordinary lower primary school is maintained here. About 30 students. School fees are charged. (c) No.

71. Not for the labourers.

72. A small hospital is maintained here by the Company. Employees get medicine from the Company's hospital free.

Contractors have to pay the medical charges for their labourers who receive medicine from the Company's hospital. That is why, due to the payment of medical charges, contractors avoid sending their labourers to the Hospital even when they need medical help. Contractors control labourers and labourers do not get any medical aid until and unless they produce Contractor's slip to the Medical Officer of the Company for the same. The Quarry extend over a long distance of 5 miles and is worked up separately by 27 different Contractors and about 16 miscellaneous Contractors for the Company. Under the circumstances, the worker falling ill does not get any medical aid as he is far away from the little hospital built up for the purpose. No special arrangement for the treatment of women and maternity cases. One lady doctor with her staff is indispensably required. Indoor wards have no latrine; ventilation is wanting; rooms are not spacious and are tin-roofed. Rooms are in no way worth living for the patients. Ordinary *cooly*-sheds are used as in-door wards.

74. There is no system of periodical medical examination.

78. Not at all.

79. Water is not sufficiently supplied. No cold water is supplied in hot season when its need is seriously felt.

80. Nothing but medicine is given from the Hospital; cases are not treated regularly and with care. The present medical staff do not render appropriate service to the sufferers.

83. 65 per cent and over of workers go back to their village homes after work and the remaining percentage has been provided with houses. The term 'house' is a mockery in the real sense. Tin sheds there are, but they are very little in number and consequently accommodate a microscopic minority of the workers settled in the area. The rest have been provided with straw-thatched huts each occupied by six to seven people on the average. The rooms are low, dirty not at all ventilated and situated in low and unhealthy places. In short they are miniature hell quite unfit for human dwellings.

84. Even the so-called dwelling places provided to the workers are not sufficient and accommodate about 35 per cent of the working class population only.

88. Nothing for the labourers.

89. No, badly wanted.

90. No.

91. 25 per cent less the amount of the monthly wages is obtained on credit from the shop-keepers.

92. Yes.

95. No.

98. Yes, to deposit or to draw one's own money or to draw money on credit in case of need which is often felt.

101. Often delay is made in payment of money under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Some plan should be chalked out to avoid delay which causes great difficulty to workers.

103. Yes, there is a Trade Union. It was established in November, 1937.

104. No.

105. The employer recognises the Trade Union but treats it with indifference.

111. 490; 1/7th of the total number of workers.

112. 15 members comprise the committee; 1/5 are outsiders.

113. The Trade Union carries on with all its legal activities of organizing the labourers into a Trade Union, of trying to secure for them their legal rights and amenities from the employer, of conducting night schools and other cultured and welfare activities.

117. Many under-hand methods are applied to weaken the growing unity of the working class. The workers joining the Trade Union are subjected to victimization and are put to difficulties.

125. Office-bearers of the Trade Union try to elicit treatment of cases from the management through personal visits or correspondence, but as has been already mentioned, the management mostly disappoint them with inadvertence, intransigence or utter refusal.

Mostly the Company and the Contractors do not pay the workers their wages in cash. They issue slips to workers to enable them to have their necessities from shops. The shops are maintained directly by the Contractors or, some men of the Contractors or the management which sell commodities always dearer than at other places. Thus the workers have to incur another sort of heavy loss.

MICA.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Bihar and Orissa Mica Association, Giridih (Hazaribagh).

If the conditions of labour in any industry in Bihar and for the matter of that in the whole of India require very careful and exhaustive enquiry, it is, undoubtedly, the mica mining and manufacturing industry. As the controller, transmitter and sustainer of electrical current of high voltage as well as for its usefulness in the control and convenient handling of sub-marines aircraft, motor appliances and wireless apparatus the importance of mica cannot be gainsaid. India, with its production of 82.9 per cent of world's total produce of sheet mica, and Bihar, with its 87.1 per cent of the total Indian production, hold a sort of monopoly of the industry. Bihar mica is considered to be the best in the market, and there are certain varieties of manufactured mica for whose supply the world has to depend almost entirely on India. Such is the position and bright prospects of mica on the onward march of civilised mankind. It is very unlikely that even the commercial and technical success of synthetic mica will be able to alter this position.

But our industrialists do not seem to realise their duties towards this progressive industry. The huge profits that the industry brings to them now have blinded them and they pay little, if any, attention to developing this industry in a scientific manner by efficient management and exploitation of the resources of our province in this respect to the best advantage of our people. They have been oblivious of the fact that willing and intelligent co-operation of all the constituents is as necessary, if not more, for the success of an industry, especially of the type represented by mica, as the investment of capital. They forget that the large margin of profit that now accrues to this industry is obtained largely on account of the efficiency of our Labour who have been found to excel in their line the labourers of the consumer-countries of the West, and not because of any efficient organisation of the industry in which respect there exists a virtual chaos. Therefore, even in the interest of mica industry itself, apart from many other considerations including the special responsibilities of the Government towards the welfare of a backward people of a partially

excluded area like Chota Nagpur, it is essential that Mica-labour, a principal contributor to the prosperity of the industry, should be given its due share.

Wages.—As it is, the worker engaged in the mica industry is one of the lowest paid labourers. There are workers, adult males and women not excepted, who earn between one to two annas after working for a full day of about nine hours. In an industry over which, as has been said above, Bihar, and to be more precise Hazaribagh, has a virtual monopoly, the worker is usually paid at the rate at which agricultural labourers of the not very fertile lands of Chota Nagpur are paid their wages. A large majority is kept below the subsistence level. Increments are very rare and given only on exceptional cases. Sri Dukhia, a packer in the Indian Mica Supply Company, was admitted to the Factory fifteen years back on annas 4 a day, and after these fifteen years he has been fortunate enough to have earned an increment of Rs. 1-9-0. On a modest computation not less than eighty per cent of micamen come in Dukhia's category. There are deductions too for *dharmada* (compulsory charity) which are regular features in Marwari concerns. Even Muslim workers are not spared from subscribing to *Dussera* Funds. Security of service is literally non-existent. Occasions may be cited when within one month as many as five hundred workers have been turned out from factories whose total strength is about 700. In fine a Mica Factory furnishes all the disadvantages of an unorganised and irregular village industry whereas facilities of the latter are simply conspicuous by their absence.

Coming to particular branches of labour we find that Splitting absorbs about seventy per cent of factory labour. This is the process that requires the largest amount of skill and in which the Giridih worker is an adept because of his traditional association with it. It is exactly the process for which the exporter of manufactured mica secures the largest price without any corresponding gain to the splitter. Indeed, the rates for splitting, as also for other processes, have considerably gone down during the past several years. The wages for no. 6 book, for instance, were 12 annas to 14 annas per seer in 1926, while at present it is something between five to six annas per seer. If we compare the ratio of wages to the sale price of mica in different years we observe that it has no relation at all to one another. Take for example the price of no. 5 book. The price per maund of this quality of mica was

Rs. 80 in 1936. The present market rate of the same stuff, almost steady during the last six months at least, is Rs. 145 per maund, which means an increase in sale price by 81.25 per cent. Still no difference will practically be noticed between the wages obtaining in the industry then and now. This high price of the commodity and the consequent prosperity of the industry has not added a pie more to the income of the worker to bring it towards a subsistence level.

There is another very peculiar thing with the mica industry in regard to the system for payment of wages. The law that should govern the fixation of wages is that the bigger the margin of profit in a particular commodity the larger the worker's share in it. But here in mica it is just the reverse. What holds good here is that the more a particular quality bring in to the entrepreneur the lower are the worker's wages. No. 6 mica is inferior to no. 5 in quality. The latter is costlier and fetches better price. Its operation too requires better skill and more time and attention. But the Splitter's wages for no. 6 is Rs. 15 per maund, whereas those for no. 5 are Rs. 10 only.

The condition of workers in loose packing is still worse. Since this part of the business is carried on in the form of a cottage industry and is done through contractors squeezing is more systematic here. The contractor who does no work himself gets one and a half annas for each seer of mica split while the man who actually performs the task by the sweat of his brow is kept contented with an anna and a quarter per seer. There are other and more subtle ways too by which the unscrupulous contractor carries on his exploitation of the ignorant Home-splitter. One such method includes the payment of wages for one seer for one and a half seer of mica split. The only possible solution to prevent this corruption and this exploitation by the contractor is to ensure a minimum wage of five annas per seer to the Home-splitter and to eliminate the contractor altogether by getting his work done with the help of direct employees of the factories concerned.

This is about the workers employed on contract system. The problem of daily-rated workers is more complicated still. The average earning of an adult male worker at present is five to six annas a day whereas that of a female and a boy is four to five annas and two to four annas respectively. But to speak the truth there is absolutely no standard by which the wage of a worker is fixed. On the other hand, every individual

employer makes a constant endeavour to reduce the rate of prevailing wages as much as he can. The Indian Mica Supply Company, for instance, is the greatest sinner in this respect. Every worker who leaves this company earns an additional income of six pice to two annas at the least on his admission to any other factory of Giridih.

Of the factors that contribute to the surprisingly low level of wages in this industry employment of a very large number of child labour is the most important. The general notion that 'if started young they may become experts' is a camouflage to disguise the employer's real motive to bring down the general level of wages by offering as cheap competitors tender boys who could be made to work for much less than the average adult gets. Another factor is the availability of a large army of surplus agricultural labour. With the development of industry large numbers of rural folk are bound to be attracted to the town and other centres of industry. This is a welcome feature of our civilisation as it adds, among other things, to the wealth of the community. But if this influx of the villagers to industry is to be made a pretext for lowering the wages of workers, it will really be a very retrograde step which must be stopped at any cost. The responsibilities of the Government in this matter are very clear. They must see to it that the micaman is not left at the mercy of the employer who has seldom shown any interest for the welfare of the community in general. America is one of our biggest importers of mica, and if it is possible for the dealers in mica there to pay a minimum wage of eleven dollars a week (of 44 hours) to their workers (during the first year), it is worth considering what minimum wage should be fixed for the Indian worker. At any rate, the demand for fixing up a minimum wage is irresistible. After a proper and thorough investigation into the system for the payment of wages now prevalent it ought to be possible for the Government to take immediate steps for standardising the whole system and to fix up a rate below which the employer may not be allowed to pay. Therefore we make the following suggestions as regards wages for the consideration of the Labour Enquiry Committee:—

- (a) A basic minimum rate should be fixed at Rs. 15, and that for boys Rs. 12. Women should be paid at the rate of adults for the same type of work. An addition for efficiency to the basic rate should be made which may vary upto Rs. 10,

but which should on no account be less than Rs. 5 during the first year. Considering the fluctuating nature of the industry we do not claim a regular annual increment to each worker, but instead we should certainly demand the introduction of a system of Bonus. This would relieve the employer of any likely burden on him at a time of trade depression.

- (b) Till this is achieved the Committee will be well advised, in fact we urge upon the Committee to take this into their serious consideration, to publish an interim report recommending the restoration of wages of predepression days, say of 1924-26.

SECURITY OF EMPLOYMENT.

The industry affords no security to the worker. As has been mentioned elsewhere in this Memorandum there is such lamentable lack of elementary rules of service that it does not worry the employer the least to turn out sixty to seventy per cent workmen in one month. No notice of any kind is given to the workmen prior to his discharge. There should be some rule for the guidance of mutual relation between the employee and his employer. A worker should automatically become a permanent hand in the factory as soon as he completes one month of service in a particular concern. It will be essential for the employer to give proper notice of at least a fortnight, or wages in lieu thereof, if any such worker is sought to be removed. The Workers' Union must be consulted at the time of such discharges.

HOURS OF WORK.

As in other matters, so also in this respect there is absolutely no rule to guide the employer. Absence of the protection of the Factories Act leaves the worker completely in the hands of the management as regards the working hours. Excepting a few honourable exceptions of factories under European management, most of the mica factories never observe any rule in this respect, nor they have any. Although the worker is supposed to work from 8 A.M. to 5.30 or 6 P.M., in actual practice he is required to remain in the factory till eight to nine o'clock at night. On payment days he has got to remain for even a longer period. This must stop. No

more than forty-eight hours' duty should be taken from a worker in one week. No worker should be detained in the factory premises after the working hours.

INDEBTEDNESS.

Almost ninety per cent of the workers are ever in debt. The rate of interest on the borrowings from *kabuliwalas* and other money-lenders vary from 20 to 200 per cent, whereas in cases where money is advanced by the employer usually 12½ per cent to 25 per cent interest is charged. Owing to the accumulation of interest and rapid pauperisation of the worker, the total amount of debt is on the increase. Children of mica workers inherit the burden of their fathers' indebtedness. This makes the worker a perpetual debt-slave. A loan of Rs. 8 obtained by the father of a worker of Messrs. Rajgaria Bros. in 1922 remains unpaid even to this day although something towards it was paid every week by the original debtor and after his death his son. Employers should combine among themselves for the purpose of advancing loans to the workers at the time of their needs. Some sort of co-operative efforts may be made in this direction but care must be taken to keep the rate of interest as low as possible.

CORRUPTION.

The most prevalent form of corruption that has come to our notice is bribery and incorrect weighment. We know of no firms where the *sirdars* do not take from the workers some tip even as a matter of right. The Giridih factory of Messrs. F. F. Christien and Company, and Messrs. Rambilas Singh and Company, are notorious in this respect, in addition of course to the I. M. S. Co., where the *Sirdar* takes one anna from each worker every week. A little vigilance by the management will eliminate this evil. But as regards incorrect weighment we have a feeling that this is done under the advice of proprietors of small factories while in comparatively big factories some of the big officials have a hand in such mischief, perhaps not without the knowledge of their owners.

EDUCATION AND SANITATION.

Absolutely no attention is paid by the employers to these requirements of their workers. One or two firms have, however, begun to show some interest in the matter of education but nothing further can be said until this is tested in actual work.

FACTORY ACT.

The most elementary step that should be taken in the direction of removing from the mica factories its chaotic conditions is the early extension of the provisions of the Factories Act to all mica factories employing ten or more hands. We wish to urge upon the committee the necessity of this step with all the emphasis which we can command. We feel that it is not necessary to explain this point in any detail.

TRADE UNION AND ITS RECOGNITION.

It is now an admitted fact that a healthy growth of trade unionism among the workers is the best guarantee in favour of industrial peace and therefore for its systematic development. It also reminds the industrialist and others concerned that industry is a national asset whose working in the interest of the community requires corporate efforts of all. Proper trade unionism ensures this effort by the intelligent and willing co-operation of the largest single contributing factor to the progress of the industry. Trade unionism helps to alleviate the position of the workers which, in other words means that they become more efficient. It tries to obtain the workers' dues by keeping them conscious of their responsibilities to the industry. In fact a Union-worker is more conscious of his inevitability to the industry and his usefulness towards it than any other worker. He is vigorous. He is self-reliant. If such a man is assured the necessary incentive for improvement of his skill, he should certainly show better results. It is all to the good of the industry.

But to our dismay employers here do little for the growth and development of trade unions among their workers. On the other hand, they do all that lie in their power to diminish the influence of the Union on their workers. As of old, the local officers of the Congress Government, too, help the unscrupulous employer to break the workers' organisation. At least this has been our experience in Giridih where local civil authorities have taken active steps to demoralise the workers and all coercive methods have been applied to meet this end. Indian officers try to make friends with employers who are rich men, and they support the latter to crush vocal labour.

All these difficulties can, to a certain extent, be removed if employers are compelled to grant recognition to the union of their men and work for the welfare of labour in co-operation with the Union. Much of the complexities of the relation between a micaman and his employer can thus be removed.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

Mr. S. Nasiruddin, M.A., B.L., Giridih.

In the province of Bihar, labour and peasantry occupy nearly 50 per cent of the population and the amount of support from these people would decide any issue in the fight for liberation of the country. The mass contact programme of the Congress is now giving a distinctly prominent place to labour problem in the present Indian politics. In the last election manifesto the Congress organization made an open declaration that it is an obligation on the part of Government "to secure to the industrial workers a decent standard of living, hours of work and condition of labour in conformity with the International standard, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, economic protection against unemployment, old age and sickness and the right of workers to form unions for the protection of their interests". In pursuance of this election manifesto the worker threw themselves in the lot with the Congress in the election campaign. The Congress came out successful in majority at the poll in this province and has accepted office as well. With the beginning of the new regime, the workers are now looking forward for an immediate redress of their long standing grievances against the employers who are exploiting the resources of the labour.

It is gratifying to note that the Bihar Government have recently appointed an Enquiry Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the great leader of Bihar, to enquire into the present labour condition in this province. It would be the fitness of thing if at this moment labour condition of some important industries of the province, is brought to the notice of the Enquiry Committee as well as all those whom it may concern.

Bihar proper is mostly an agricultural area whereas the tract of Chota Nagpur is mostly mineral and partly agricultural and forestal. The portions containing mineral lie within the districts of Hazaribagh, Manbhum and Singhbhum and the chief minerals buried within these districts are iron, coal,

manganese, copper and mica. The predominant position occupied by these mineral industries can be imagined from the fact that no less than 200,000 (two lacs) of workers are employed in them and the recent establishment and the growth of the towns of Jamshedpur, Ghatsila, Dhanbad, Jharia, Giridih and Kodarma bear testimony to their great importance and value.

And from the coal, iron and manganese industries, the mica industry alone has no less than 400 miles and five hundred factories employing about forty thousand workers, both underground and on surface. The mica industry of Bihar is confined to the areas lying within the districts of Hazaribagh, Monghyr and Gaya and the chief centres are at Kodarma and Giridih. Many of these mines are buried in Jungles and are by no means easy of access. By the engagement of about half a lac of workers in mica industry within the small area of Giridih and Kodarma, labour problem from the modern labour point of view is of great importance and deserves especial mention.

The purpose of this article is to present a short survey of the mica industry with special bearing upon the existing labour conditions and the problem confronting them. Within the short scope of this survey it is impossible to analyse the whole field of modern problem on the subject of labour so far the mica industry is concerned. Far less it is possible to give an analytical account of the general economics of the existing labour. So far as has been possible with the available material, I deal intensively with the present labour condition of the Bihar mica industry.

Location of mica deposits.

The term Bengal mica as is known throughout the world is a misnomer. As a matter of fact, it is Bihar mica as the entire deposit of the minerals are located in the province of Bihar. It was known as Bengal mica because the mineral area was within the jurisdiction of Bengal before 1911. Except a small area at Nellore in Madras Presidency where some mica deposit is found, the entire Indian mica is found in Giridih, Kodarma, Monghyr and some parts of Gaya district.

Importance and utility of mica.

It is not possible to discuss the manifold uses of mica, but briefly speaking, mica from scientific point of view, plays an

important part in the operation and development of the industries of the world. At present all the major industries of the world are worked by electrical energy and it is this electrical industry which is the greatest consumer of high grade mica and Bihar mica alone is of the best and highest quality and is in great demand all over the world. India is still unaware of the scientific utility of mica and therefore it is exported to foreign countries in its raw form.

Market.

London and New York are the two important markets of mica in the world and direct export to these markets are made from Bihar mica centres of Giridih and Kodarma. During 1935 about seventy-six thousand cwts., of the value of rupees sixty-five lacs eighty-five thousand, was consigned from India to foreign countries while in 1936 ninety-nine thousand four hundred ninety-one cwt. (99,491 cwt.) of the value of Rs. 72 lacs 52 thousand was consigned.

Bihar mica splitting.

The reason why Bihar mica splitting is regarded as the finest and best of all foreign countries production is due to the fact that Indian girls are trained in better workmanship of fine splitting than the European girls and it has been found that consignment of mica has been received here from foreign country for splitting by Indian girls.

Class of mica industry.

The Royal Commission on Labour have divided the mica industry into two classes—one the mica mine and the other mica factory. The former is regulated under the Mines Act. There are about four hundred mica mines with twenty-five thousand labourers. These mines are directly under the control and supervision of the Chief Inspector of Mines, Dhanbad, who controls them from mining but not from labour point of view. Of the five hundred mica factories only three are using power and are controlled by the Factories Act; the rest are entirely uncontrolled and unorganised. In the opinion of the Labour Commission, mica mining, from labour point of view, hardly falls within the category of organised industry as the workers are not wholly or even primarily dependent on the industry. Even if this view of the Commission is correct, still mica mining industry stands on the same footing as other mining industry, such as coal, copper and iron. Mica mines like the other mines are generally worked by part-time

agricultural workers in spare time between two crops and are often closed during rains. In the coal mining industry the question of labour plays an important part and the employers are giving attention to the labour problem. In spite of the opinion that mica mining is not an organised industry, the Commission has found the labour condition in mica industry unsatisfactory and have made recommendations for remedial measures.

Of the five hundred factories where mica cutting and splitting is done most of them are located in the towns of Giridih and Kodarma and some are scattered in villages. This class of factory is not regulated by the Factory Act as machine power is not used there but the Labour Commission has placed this industry in the category of six other kinds of factories, such as wool, shellac, *biri*, carpet-weaving, etc., and have opined that labour problem in them deserves attention.

Sources of labour.

Workers to mica factories are mostly drawn from the surrounding rural areas. A certain percentage of workers belong to other districts but reside in the surrounding villages as circumstances permit. This does not suggest that these workers are essentially agriculturists who, after the cultivation is over, flock to factories forsaking their ploughs in order to increase their income by some temporary industrial work. It should be noted that these mica factories are not seasonal factories rather they are perennial in nature. The workers of these factories are composed largely of those classes whose interest in land and agriculture is very slight or who being extra members of their families migrate to factories to avoid pressure on land. For want of housing provision in factories, they are forced to settle down in village, away from factories.

Classes of workers.

Workers of mica splitting factories mostly belong to low castes, such as Dusadhs, Chamars, Mushars Toories, Santals and Jolahas. A very small percentage of higher caste is found in them. Of these workers nearly 50 per cent are minor children of both sex from 6 to 15 years of age and are employed either directly or with their parents. Nearly 20 per cent are young boys and girls from 15 to 20 years and the rest are adults.

Nature of factories.

These mica factories are of various grades and nature. Of the five hundred factories only a dozen are registered companies with limited liability and the rest are private concerns

owned by individuals. The unit and strength of workers range from ten persons to hundreds and in some factories to over a thousand.

Mode of recruitment of labour.

Recruitment of workers is made by employers through their managers or agents and *sirdars* who procure recruits from villages. These agents perform the function of a jobber to whom the unemployed approach. These jobbers supply labour to managers or owners of factories and in return get something from the employers as well as from the recruits who pay a few annas weekly to these jobbers. Sometimes the workers themselves call at the factories for employment. It is fairly a general practice by jobbers or *sirdars* to extract something in advance or by weekly instalments from recruits as the price of employment. Sometimes the recruits have to provide those jobbers with periodical drink. In short, the factory manager is the chief person to secure employment or dismissal of a worker. The Labour Commission have recommended the exclusion of such jobbers and agents and have stressed upon the necessity of appointing a Labour Officer independent of factory subordination who could supply labour to the requisition of factories.

Child workers.

As noted above 50 per cent of the workers in these factories consist of children of both sex from 6 to 15 years of age. The paramount question of child labour arises here. These children are employed either directly or with their parents or relations who by the child's labour add an extra income to their earning. There are a number of factories employing over thousand persons where the number of children is not small. These children are employed without medical examination as to their physical fitness and age. Their hour of work is according to those of the adults which is 9 to 10 hours—from 8 A.M. to 5 or 5-30 P.M. with a short interval for meal. In many factories no interval is allowed even to children which is a great hardship and is open to serious objection. Children are paid according to time or piece rates which amounts to $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 annas per day for nine hours work. The daily working hour for such children has been recommended by the Labour Commission to be four and a half or utmost five hours a day within special age limit of 12 years below which no child could be employed in a factory unless medically certified to be fit for a particular duty. The

question of age limit of children fit to be employed in Indian factories was discussed at length at the fourteenth International Labour Conference at Geneva and 12 was the minimum age fixed; but in mica factories there is no age restriction and children of such tender age as 6 or 7 years, are to be found in any number. The Labour Commission's report on the question of employment of children in mica factory is an important point to which no attention has yet been paid by the employers.

Another important point for consideration is the pledging of child labour in mica factories. Some petty factory owners are landlords of some villages. They advance some small amount to their tenants who in payment of the principal or interest pledge the labour of their children. This system of mortgaging child labour by parents or relations is a serious evil and in the opinion of the Labour Commission is "worse than the indentured labour for the indentured labourer is, when he enters on the contract, a free agent while the child is not". Payment of advances to secure the labour of children is in opinion of the Labour Commission a criminal offence and the State would be justified in adopting strong measures to root out the evil. Another great hardship for these minor workers is that they have to come to factories from villages several miles distant every morning without having sufficient fresh food. Throughout the day they do not get any tiffin except that at interval they contend themselves with a small quantity of parched grain. In the evening they run to their houses reaching late at night specially in cold and rainy seasons. Tedious nine hours factory work and the strain of a long journey is a great hardship for young children and is detrimental to the general health of these young workers. So great is the necessity of giving protection to these child workers that some restrictions in the light of the Labour Commission's recommendation must immediately be enforced.

Education.

It is a well-known fact that practically the whole mass of industrial labour in India is illiterate, a state of affair which is unknown in any other country of industrial importance; and the Bihar mica industrial area is no exception to this state of affairs. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the consequence of this lack of education among the children of factory workers. Not a single employer has attempted to develop the education of his workers' children by opening a primary or art school in the factory although some of the factories employ over two thousand workers a day. From figures available it

appears that only 2 per cent of children are at school within the entire area of mica industry. The neighbouring coalfields and other industrial areas have got schools for their workers' children but the apathy of the mica factory employers towards education of their workers' children is most deplorable. If children below 12 are not employed in these factories, they may, with advantage be given education in factory schools and when they come up to age, they may be found more serviceable than illiterate adult workers. Further, if the working hours for children is reduced from 9 to 5, they will have enough time for an hour or two to learn in factory schools. In the interest of the Indian industry and labour such backward industrial areas which produce from underground national wealth of great value have a special claim to sufficient facilities for the education of workers' children. If substantial employers locally combine to keep children at factory schools, they would be doing a great service besides the prospect of getting better type of workers in future.

Women workers.

In these mica factories women workers range from 6 years of age upward. They are employed at piece rate for mica splitting and dressing at the rate of two annas per seer and their daily wages hardly exceed 3 or 4 annas. Their lot is also quite miserable. Since their work is at piece rate, they try to increase their output by neglecting their domestic affairs at home and general health. They are deceived in payment of their wages by under weighment. The actual weight of their mica splitting is reduced on the scale by two to three *chattaks* in each seer. Besides, they are subjected to many other hardships.

Condition of factory.

The mica factories being perennial in nature the question of health, safety and welfare of the workers is of importance. Only a few organised mica companies have got permanent factory buildings made of corrugated tins or tiled sheds; the rest are accommodated in buildings quite unfit for factory purposes. They are all ill-ventilated and without proper sanitation. Workmen have to work in rooms which have no sufficient light and air. Some work in open verandahs and are subject to exposure in all seasons. No proper latrines and urinals are provided in the factory buildings for the use of the workers and the result is that the operatives have to use street drains or side lanes of the factory buildings. Within Giridih town there are several hundred factories the workers of which use street drains as urinals thereby making the whole

surrounding most insanitary. As regards drinking water, there is hardly satisfactory arrangement for supply to the workers who have to go to public wells near about or bring water with them. The manufacturing process of splitting mica disseminates large amount of mica dust and arrangement for its elimination and cleaning is most defective. The floors and walls of the factory are not clean and yards and surroundings covered with mica refuses and scraps.

Climatic condition.

The long period of work in these factories commencing from morning till evening, specially in hot season, renders physical toil most tiresome. Factory owners do not make any endeavour to mitigate the discomforts of their workers who work in congested and ill-ventilated rooms sitting side by side.

Welfare arrangements.

Hardly there is any welfare arrangement for the workers in these factories. There is absolutely no washing and bathing facility available in the factories. Since the factory work goes on from morning till evening, the workers have no time at home for taking bath or washing clothes. Poor labourers have to remain without a bath or a clean clothing throughout the week till Sunday. Another welfare arrangement which is wanting is the medical relief. Except one factory at Tisri where a Medical Officer and a dispensary is maintained, no factory provides any medical help to workers who are very poor in health. Hardly there is time or sufficient means within the reach of these workers to get medical advice or relief from outside. The employers do not examine the condition and state of health of their workers either at the time of employment or during the course of work. If a worker gets ill suddenly or is injured, no first aid is available in the factory. Refreshment rooms and rest rooms for workers are not provided in any factory. They take their meal or tiffin here and there in all uncomfortable and insanitary places. Articles of food sold by petty vendors at factory gate consist of oil-cooked cakes, parched gram and fried rice exposed to dirt and flies and prepared from adulterated stuff. No attention is paid by factory authorities to control the purity and freshness of the eatable for the workers.

Of the large number of women employed in these factories at least ten per cent are nursing mothers. While working they leave their babies lying near about them on a sack, in a box or a corner amidst dust-laden atmosphere, quite exposed to sun and wind. As the woman's work is at piece rate, she

generally cares more for her increased output than the nursing of the baby. There is no provision in the factory of a separate room or creches for such babies.

General health.

In actual fact the physique of these mica workmen is very poor, their general standard of health most unsatisfactory. In Giridih town alone there are several hundred factories and except one charitable dispensary, controlled by the municipality, no factory is equipped with medical facility to look after the health of the workers.

Indebtedness.

Want of medical facilities and the low wages make it impossible for the workers to get through more than a very short period of illness without borrowing. Sickness is an important contributory cause of indebtedness. By sickness the job is lost and at this time of greatest need the worker finds himself destitute of resources unable to take proper steps to restore his health and in difficulties regarding the means of subsistence. The employer does not care for him as he can get another worker in his place the result is that the poor worker is driven to a money-lender for loan. There are innumerable petty money-lenders who advance small amount on higher possible rate of interest. If a worker secure a loan of Rs. 5 the money-lender realises weekly payment of annas five as interest. Another cause of indebtedness is the drink evil. In matter of indebtedness the lot of a woman worker is most miserable specially when she is confined for a long time without getting any maternity benefit or allowance from her employer or welfare society. The situation calls for the exploration of all methods that may lead to the alleviation of the existing hardships.

Payment of wages.

The system of payment of wages is weekly in these factories and Saturday is generally the day of payment but in many factories payment is not made on Saturday and the workers have to attend factories on Sunday also to receive their wages. This practice of delay in payment causes hardship and their day of rest is wasted in mere attending factory without any wages for that day. The Payment of Wages Act, 1936, is not applicable to these factories for regulating the payment of wages.

Uncertainty of employment.

The rise and fall of the mica business is controlled by foreign countries. Dealers and suppliers are often compelled

to reduce the strength of their factory labour according to the demand of foreign country. The employer may at any time without notice close the factory or reduce the number of labour. It is at this period when many workers are unexpectedly driven to unemployment. The employers do not grant any subsistence allowance to them for the period they are unemployed nor there is any agency or society which could protect them from starvation and beggary.

Low wages.

In regards to wages the most important basic issue now-a-days is the minimum wage. In mica industry workers are paid very low wages. Children from six to fifteen years of age are generally paid at $1\frac{1}{4}$ anna to 3 annas a day of nine hours and the adult from 3 annas to 5 annas. As the labour is unorganised the workers cannot demand more wages. Better wages means better health and strength, better education and character. All of these are useful economic assets.

Labour unions.

There is no labour union in this industry. Workers being entirely disorganised cannot ventilate their grievances to the employers rather the employers themselves have formed Association to protect their rights and interest and to ventilate their grievances to the Government. The employers have not taken any steps to allow the workers to form unions. Nor is there any conciliation or arbitration board which could act as mediator in the dispute between workers and employers or between workers themselves. There have been a few strikes in some factories but the workers had to submit to the will and mercy of the employers. Every strike involved primary or secondary losses in some way and the necessity of its prevention hardly admits of dispute. It affects both the employers and workers. Apart from more or less measurable losses to any party industrial dispute and strikes create a psychological condition which directly affects the power of production and the development of the industry. An ill-paid worker is always driven to irritation, antagonism and ill-feeling engendered by maltreatment. Unwilling or grudging service is always a bad service. Industrial society is like an organism. The whole organisation functions well only when each part functions harmoniously with the whole and it is to this aspect that the International Labour Office and the Labour Commission have drawn attention. The mica industrial labour is badly lacking in organisation.

Labour administration and measures necessary.

In earlier years people used to talk mainly of factory legislation. The prevailing notion at one time was once the factory laws were passed workers would find their remedies by taking their cases to courts but the steps to court were found unsatisfactory and therefore factory officers were appointed to settle disputes. Time has now come that we now speak of labour legislation. The evolution of distinct labour department is a matter of recent history and in many foreign countries a Labour Ministry has been set up with special portfolio of labour and industry. In the Government of India a special Department of Labour and Industry has been recently created. It is a result of the stimulus received by the recent foundation of the International Labour Office at Geneva of the League of Nations which is a direct outcome of the Treaty of Versailles.

The mica industry, like many other industries of this province, is unregulated and disorganised but as it affects a considerable section of the community and the labour issues involved in it are broadly humanitarian, the services of Government, the chief organisation of all, may be usefully invoked in this direction.

Labour Union or Association may be formed to safeguard the interest of labour but such unions are rarely successful since their resources are limited and the employers generally do not recognise their *bona fide* existence. The most effective mediative machinery is therefore the Government agency but the chief drawback of Government's mediation, it is believed, that it is *Government*. As a rule it is found the Government command the confidence more of the employer and capitalist than of the employees and labour except where Government is controlled by Labour Party. Government have better facilities and resources than private agencies and unions and it is through State-managed agencies that the betterment of the lot of workers can be expected. As by factory legislation power using factories are controlled similarly by some measures the labour problem of the mica industry can be solved. There is one Act, the Mica Act of 1930 which is in operation to regulate the possession and transport of and trading in mica. It has nothing to do with labour problem nor does the Act give any protection to the workers. On the method of working of this Act there is no agreement among the mica traders themselves.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Bihar Mica Labour Union, Jhumri-Telaiya (Hazaribagh).

It is needless to say that mica industry is a very important industry not of India but properly speaking of Hazaribagh District only, with a little encroachment in the Gaya District adjoining Hazaribagh District. There was no Mica Union in Hazaribagh and this Mica Union, which we represent, was started a few months ago and it has not begun working properly. Therefore, we are in some difficulty because we have not studied the problem very exhaustively; but still what we have, we are giving below :—

We reserve our right to additional memorandum later on after studying the conditions of mica industry specially with reference to the labourers and we shall find out the real grievances of the labourers and then we shall give a separate memorandum which we expect will not take more than 20 days.

First, we begin with conditions of mines. We may say that mica mines, a good number of them, are very anti-quoted and they carry all the dangers and inconveniences of old mica mines. As a matter of fact, some of the companies, specially Chrestien & Co. and Hori Chatto, Ltd., are trying to work out mines on modern lines but still a good deal remains to be done.

The following are the dangers of old mines. Firstly, the mines are narrow and labourer has to crawl into the mines. The danger is that when dynamite is fixed into the mines to explode and struck mica out of stone, the labour has to go and light the dynamite and come out of the mine. It is very necessary that labourers should come out of the mine before explosion takes place. If a labourer is caught on the way, he loses his life; and if escapes, he loses the vital organ of his body. I may give a few recent instances of the miserable condition that labourers had to undergo because of the Piparahia mine having a very narrow passage. Three persons, namely, Megho Singh and Sukkar Gope of Chutiario and Akkul Singh of Markachu of police-station Kodarma became blind. They set fire to the dynamite which they fixed in the

mine and the dynamite exploded before they could hastily crawl out of the mine, with the result that they were struck with stone on various parts of their body including their eyes and they became blind. In the same way the Sugua and Thanhi mines, belonging to Messrs. Horil-Chatto, Ltd., have got narrow passage and are dangerous. In some of the mines the roofs are cracked and dangerous for the miners to work inside. In one of the mines, Daldalia of Messrs. Horil-Chatto, Ltd., casualties occurred in which three persons were involved. This happened about three months ago. Similar is the condition of the Sethua mines, belonging to Messrs. Sarkar and Messrs. Sâhana.

In several mines labourers break some part of their body by falling of stones from the roof as it is not checked before the labourers enter to work into the mine. Loose stones fall breaking their legs, hands or heads. In some cases the ladders are old and break down resulting in the fall of a labourer.

It is, therefore, necessary that a whole-time Mines Inspector, only for mica mines, be appointed to check the mines regularly. There are about two and half lacs of mica labourers. This huge number of labourers justifies the appointment of one whole-time Mica Mines Inspector. It would not be out of place to mention that up till now Mines Inspector seldom visits mica mines. The mica owners play trick and avoid the inspection of mines. When the Mines Inspector comes, they inform him that their mines are closed because there is no demand for mica and when the Mica Inspector goes away they write to the Inspector that the mine has opened because there is now demand for mica. We may also suggest that the Mica Mines Inspector should be accompanied by an officer of the Union who may put him in touch with the irregularities practised in mica mines. In some of the mica mines in the interior, which are not easily approachable, the mining law is openly broken and it does not come to the notice of the Mines Inspector. In several mines of Dhab, minors have to work in the mines at an average of 12 hours per day. In the same way there are several grievances, for example, want of proper ventilation as the requisite number of shafts are not sunk in the mines.

There is practically no hospital for labourers in the mines. The result is that several labourers die. Only very recently, 22 labourers died on their way to Jhumri-Telaiya hospital. There is a Government record of this with the Sadr Subdivisional Officer.

There is no provision for drinking water for the labourers. There is some arrangement of water for *Babus*. The result is that the labourers drink water at stagnant marshy places which abounds in malarial germs so they usually fall sick with malaria and influenza and either they die or their vitality is lowered.

Housing arrangement is abominable. The labourers have to live in a very small house, built of leaves, wood and straw. The floor area is hardly 32 square feet and it contains 7 or 8 labourers. Some time the whole of the houses is gutted with fire and their small property, consisting of clothes, etc., is destroyed. These huts are inside the jungles where fire is a thing of frequent occurrence.

In factory the roofs consist, in most places, of corrugated sheets which in summer get very hot. We may suggest that it may be covered with tiles also. And where there is electric supply, fans may be given.

There should be fixed standard of weight. In weighing in-correct weight it always indicates less supply of mica worked out by labourers than it is actually done.

The fixing of minimum basic wages, though difficult, must be introduced. We suggest ten annas for adult male and six annas for adult female per day. We understand that the price of mica has increased appreciably to-day than what it was ten years ago; but the wages are less than half of what they were then. We suggest that the balance sheets of the important mica firms be looked into and the wages be increased in proportion to the increase in profit.

Payments are made in kind, as for example, in cloth. Labourers have to purchase cloth compulsorily in lieu of their wages and at a higher cost than what is prevailing in the market. This should be at once abolished and labourer should be given a free hand in making purchases out of their wages. In several factories fortnightly and monthly payments are made. Weekly payment of wages should be introduced. Wages of some of the miners, as for example those who work with mechanical drills, should be increased. They are getting, at an average, 12 to 14 annas per day. It should be doubled. No deduction on account of *Dharam Khata* or *Dasturi* should be made. It may be made a cognizable offence. Harsh treatment of labourers by the employers or their agents should be stopped. They are assaulted and beaten. The offenders should be strongly dealt with. Officers of the registered Union should

be given free access in mines and factories after informing their employers and for this purpose it is necessary to legislate. Any obstruction on the part of the employer should be made a cognizable crime. Steps should be taken to put a stop to the bad behaviour meted out to the labourers and also to the non-payment of wages. In this connection the names of R. K. Sahana and S. K. Sahana and Rajgaria & Brothers are to be mentioned.

Provision for the education of child-workers in the factory should be made either on behalf of the employers or on behalf of the Government or both. They should be allowed to work for not more than three hours on the same wages which are given at present. The working of the boys for 8 or 9 hours is inimical to their moral, mental and physical development. Their very eyes will show that smartness has left them.

Separate provision should be made for urinals and latrines for male and female.

Women should not be detained longer in evening or night for the payment of their wages. This results in their moral degradation.

SUGAR.

Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee

By

Mr. Shyamnandan Sinha, M.L.A., President, South Bihar
Sugar Mill Mazdoor Union, Bihta.

1. Total number of workers—1,592:—
 - (a) Officers—25.
 - (b) Clerks—172.
 - (c) Workpeople—1,400.
2. Permanent hands—494.
Seasonal or migratory—1,100.
3. About 20 per cent including *purji*-distributors, peons and *Darbans*, etc., who constitute the larger proportion of these.
4. About 50 per cent from Bihar and the rest from the United Provinces mostly from Gorakhpur, Gonda, Cawnpore, Almorah and other districts of western United Provinces.
5. The proportion is 5.11. The remedy to reduce it is no pay retainings to all those who are seasonals, during the off-season so that they may all be treated as permanent hands of the factory who simply go on compulsory leave on reduced pay when the season is over. The amount of monthly or quarterly retaining pay may differ according to grades, the lower having higher proportion to their actual pays than the higher ones.
6. (a) retirement—Nil.
(b) dismissal—10 per cent of the total.
(c) about 6.
(d) 5 per cent.
7. By all (a), (b) and (c). The jobbers merely supervise the work and act as task-masters. They are mostly the favourites of the management and make profits at the cost of the workers whom they exploit by making them work under most inhuman and unhealthy conditions.
8. I would like the contract and jobbery system to be prohibited by law because they enact sweat labour in contravention to the provisions of the laws prescribed for governing the working hours, payment of wages, etc. Recruitment

should be made by the management as regulated by certain rules framed by Government so that the fittest and the deserving be employed for salaries justified by ability, efficiency, experience and nature of work they have to perform.

10. No.

11. Yes. As to the suggestions for checking them I have given same in my reply to (8). The most essential thing in this connection is to stop the jobbery and contract system. The second is to have set rules governing recruitment, grades, promotion, degradation, etc.

12. Yes. The state should establish employment bureaus which should maintain all information about the unemployed and keep in touch with the employers and recruitments should be made through them. Trade Unions should have effective voice in them.

13. For manufacturing, *coolie*-work, clerical cane-workers peon and *jamadars*. Except the officers, Engineers and a few retainers, all others are casual; their proportion to permanent hands being below 4 : 1; increasing.

14. Yes. 5 : 11.

15. No.

16. Yes. No conditions save the sweet will of the management.

17. No. The case is quite the reverse. Most of the workers have been degraded, their salaries being progressively reduced with the growth of skill, experience and efficiency.

18. As stated above all the employees should be treated as permanent hands, those required for seasonal works going on compulsory leave for which they should be paid at reduced rates according to the capacity of the concern employing them, so that all may know and feel sure of their job. As many should be retained on three-fourth or half pays or so as possible. Those not thus retained should get further reduced pay according to the capacity of the concern, besides Railway fares, etc., for their return home journey and the join-work one. Suitable accessory industries should be started to keep as many seasonal workers engaged as possible, viz., for the sugar factories, manufacturing of power alcohol from molasses, manures, etc., sugar cane plantation on scientific lines (the work of plantation begins with the ending of the season and ends with the beginning of the latter) and so on.

Rules regulating the services of the employees should be so framed that they may not be arbitrarily dealt with by the superior heads as they are now done and some government machinery should be provided to hear appeals of the dismissed or discharged hands or of those who may be punished otherwise as the case may be and in case of injustice they should get damage and compensation besides restoration or reinstatement. This will check to a considerable extent the vagaries and high-handedness of the management and create a sense of security and consciousness among the workers.

19. Yes. After the strike which took place on the new year's day and lasted for 48 hours ending in an agreement which provides for one month's privilege leave with pay in a year; seasonals to get according to the proportion in which they work for the year. Sick leave at the rate of 15 days for a year with half pay in the above proportion is also to be provided. But it is to be seen how it is administered.

20. According to the afore-mentioned agreement sick leave has been provided. I do not know of any definite rules on this point apart from the terms of the said agreement.

22. Previous to the strike provident fund for higher employees, but according to the terms of agreement all those who like to, may avail of it within the provisions of the laws. No old age pensions.

23. According to the terms of Agreement after the afore-said strike, *Holi*, *Basant Panchami* and *Dasahra* for Hindus and *Id*, *Bakarid* and *Moharram* for Muslims and Sundays during off-season.

24. No.

25. Does not arise.

26. Fines in rare cases and dismissal in others vary often for slightest offences advertent or inadvertent.

27. Nil.

28. The offence in most cases is the displeasure of the superiors and sometimes the annuity of the management to provide their favourites; and the punishment is invariably dismissal and final settlement of accounts due to the employee concerned.

29. Yes

30. One hundred and ten were dismissed and 10 resigned.

31. There has been practically no case of such absence.

32. For workers 10 minutes late is considered 2 hours absence and wages are calculated after making proportionate deductions for the same.

33. Fines are utilised for public charities.

34. Eight hours a day for shift-duty, 9 hours for Sunday rest and no fixed hours for daily and contract labour.

Yes, there should be shorter hours of work generally and still much shorter for night-shift and strenuous and hazardous jobs. The reason is obvious. Our workers are being overworked and less fed. In a hot country like ours continuous work for longer hours is enacted only at the cost of the health of the poor half-famished workers. As for the night-shifts and strenuous work no additional reason is required to be given.

Besides these there is one more reason. The reduction in working hours will mean the employment of more hands. Thus this will give relief to the overworked workers and employment and bread to many who have nothing to do and hence nothing to each practically.

35. Three shifts of 8 hours each for those working inside the factory with no interval during this 8 hours when they have to perform continuous duty, from 2 A.M. to 10 A.M., from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. and from 6 P.M. to 2 A.M., clerical staff also work for 8 hours a day; daily and contract labour have to do longer hours of work; Sundays off during off-season. The workers employed in the confectionary Department have to work 9 hours a day and Sunday is off for them.

37. Yes.

38. Yes. Overtime work is paid for at ordinary rate calculated on the basis of 8 hours a day.

39. Every department except the general establishment, the rates ordinary as mentioned in 38.

40. Yes.

42. No special and adequate equipment. Only knickers and half-shirts to those on shifting duty after the strike. No special measures to diminish risks to health or injury.

43. No proper and adequate measures adopted; only very serious and fatal cases are reported; even these are

reported only when they cannot be hushed up. These arrangements are not satisfactory. In addition to technical and mechanical improvements, awakening and consciousness among the workers in general as to their legal rights, strong and watchful organisation in form of Trade Unions and especial case and supervision on the part of the Government authorities are necessary.

44. *Yes.*

46. *Yes.* The factories wilfully violate the provisions of the Factories Act even when they apply to them and if they are granted further exemptions, this will make them only all the more too callous and oppressive.

47. So far as I know about the Bihta Factory the management do not seem to even know the elementary and fundamental principles of the Factories and Trade Union laws and rules framed thereunder and less so the poor workers. But the pity is that even the Factory Inspectors of the Government and other officials either do not care to know these laws and rules or do not care to see whether they are being violated or observed by the factories. Payments of wages, compensations and hours of work are not regulated according to the provisions of the laws and only when all concerned, including, Government management and labour become wide-awake to their duties, responsibilities and rights respectively, can the evils be remedied.

49. Wages are according to time rate but those of contract labour, i.e., *palledars* and the *coolies* who load and unload the cane-wagons, are on piece rate. The minimum is 7 to 8 rupees a month; maximum enjoyed chiefly by the favourites and relatives of the Managing Agents and high mill-officers are hundred and more, while the average is between Rs. 10 and 15; most of the workers being given low wages which go on decreasing from year to year and thus the average goes on falling. But as a result of the agreement arrived at after the strike the minimum has been agreed to be fixed at Rs. 11 per month and also general increment at the rate of 15 per cent from Rs. 11 and above up to Rs. 30 per month: of 10 per cent from Rs. 31 and above but up to Rs. 50 per month and of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent above Rs. 50 up to Rs. 100 per month has been agreed upon.

50. *No.*

51. There are no uniform and fair considerations. The general tendency is to keep the wages down, while in cases

of favourites as stated above every consideration is made for fixing high pays which goes up at random. The cases are so obvious and it is not desirable for me to give particular illustration of the latter cases, but these things are so widespread and general that they need no illustrations.

52. No.

53 & 54. Skilled and unskilled labourers are paid monthly. But the payment should be made on weekly basis. This would increase the efficiency and stability of the workers, while it will only require the management to give employment to a few more educated unemployed and I think the present arrangement of making monthly payment is only with a view to make this saving.

55. All round decreases and reductions effected during the last so many years that the Factory has been operating. But as a result of the last strike increases have been agreed upon as stated above.

56. Provident funds, compulsory contributions to community, club and revenue stamps upon receipts of pay amounting to over Rs. 20.

57. No regular scheme. During the first few years some amount was distributed as bonus but for the last few years even that has not continued. Bonus for the year 1936-37 has been agreed as a result of the settlement of the strike to be distributed but the amount is a paltry one and many misgivings are being raised in the minds of the workers in this connection.

58. Yes. But there should be a definite standard below which the wages should not go, while they should go on increasing with years and months of service, while extra and especial increments should be automatically provided through some Government machinery with increase in prices of commodities produced by the employing concern as well as with increase in the cost of living.

59. Yes. In absence of a minimum wage the employers sweat labour and they take advantage of the widespread unemployment among general body of workers, lack of organisation and strength in those employed and being driven by the greed of making more and more profit by spending less and less over production, they keep the workers starved and subservient to their whims and vagaries.

60. On the principle of a fair living wage for a human being having to support an average joint Indian family which should in no case be less than Rs. 15 in case of an infant and otherwise weak industry and Rs. 20 in that of a grown up and established one.

61. A joint Board consisting of equal representatives of labour and employer and some nominees of the Government elected through the legislations.

62. Yes. In big industrial centres, especially of big cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Jamshedpur the cost of living will be comparatively higher.

63. I have already stated above in reply to one of the questions that the Government should pass laws and rules governing recruitment, scales of pay, promotion, etc.

66. Yes. About half dozen or more engines or pumps are operated upon by 2 or 3 men at a time. So was the case in other departments also, but after the strike this has been remedied to a certain extent. But the former continues. We are afraid of further reduction in number of workers on ground that the management need less workers to run the concern than at present employed. By this they may get rid of the conscious workers who understand things and later on when they would feel comfortable they may again take in new hands. But of course, this is an apprehension entertained by the workers and it depends upon so many things.

67. Highly undesirable and crushing for the workers.

68. Before the beginning of the next season Government should make suitable laws or rules to prevent these things as soon as possible.

70. There is only one lower primary school at present, but according to the agreement after the strike it should be raised to upper primary standard with English teaching. No fee is charged.

71. None practically.

72. Medical facilities are not adequate. There is a charitable dispensary run by the Mill in which there are two doctors of L.M.S. qualification. They have to attend to cases from outside and also carry on their private practice. Very often they are required to attend to the cases in the family of the Managing Agents also. But according to the settlement of the strike the management have agreed to erect a new building for the Hospital providing 12 beds for indoor-patients.

73. Nil.

74. No.

75. General deficiency due to undernourishment; and diarrhoea, dysentery, etc., due to insanitary condition, congestion for want of adequate accommodation and lack of proper arrangements for healthy drinking water, latrines and urinals.

78. No.

79. Practically nil, a few water taps have been provided for but they serve only as an eye-wash.

80. Nothing particular beyond provision for sick leave with half pay for a restricted period according to the terms of the agreement as stated above.

81. Yes. But those getting below a certain level should not be required to contribute but the employers themselves should contribute for them also.

82. Yes.

83. By employers—40 family quarters, mostly for those getting comparatively high salaries, 80 small single-room quarters which are congested accommodating 5, 6 and sometimes 9 or 10 workers. There are two halls accommodating quite a large number of workers like rice-bags in a godown. Some of the workers live in rented rooms and houses outside the mill-area, which in turn are badly congested and highly unhealthy; family quarter rooms are 10' × 8' and single 8' × 12'. Quite a vast majority has to go without a shelter.

84. No.

85. No rent is charged.

86. None whatsoever.

87. No.

88. Nil practically for the workers, there are some scanty arrangements for the officers.

91. They make purchase of food-stuffs and other necessities from shop-keepers on credit.

93. Yes.

94. No.

95. Yes.

96. It has nothing to do with our factory-workers.

99. About 16.
100. Almost nil.
103. Yes. In the month of December 1938.
104. Not yet. But will be soon registered.
105. Yes, on condition of its being registered. Since just after the strike which it had to conduct in its early infancy.
106. No.
107. Does not arise.
108. Not yet.
109. Does not arise at present.
110. Yes.
111. Above one thousand and it is steadily increasing day by day.
112. One-fourth are outsider and remaining from amongst the workers themselves.
113. It is too young and has only emerged out strong and triumphant from the general strike which it had to face a few days after its birth. Nothing but the successful strike and organisational work of a month to its credit.
114. No.
115. Yes. But it is of recent origin, i.e., just after the aforesaid strike.
117. It is too early to say anything definitely in this connection now.
- 118 and 119. Only one in January 1939 lasting for only 48 hours and it ended in an agreement between the representatives of the Workers' Union and the Managing Agents.
120. The grievances were in connection with minimum wage, general increments, housing and leave, etc.
121. It was settled through a mutual agreement.
122. They will follow later on.
123. It did not last long and the local public and leaders expressed full active sympathy and rendered all help.
124. Nothing substantial.

125. A Committee consisting of Babu Chakreshwar Kumar Jain, Managing Agents and Shyamnandan Sinha, President, Labour Union has been set up for this purpose.

126. The relationship between some high officers and the workers are not happy because the former lord is too much over the latter and their moves make the workers apprehensive and suspicious.

127. Already stated in reply to 125. It is too young and hence no record.

131. The Government should intervene at the earliest stage, prevent the employer from employing black legs, maintain the *status quo* and try in the meanwhile for a just and equitable settlement.

134. No. The Government do not seem to be alert and sympathetic. The first and foremost thing for Government is to shake off their indifference and the matter will be alright. Up till now the Government have practically left the employees at the mercy and sweet will of the employers.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

Thakur Yugal Kishore Sinha, Secretary, Riga Labour Union, Riga.

As Secretary of the Riga Labour Union I take this opportunity of submitting this memorandum before you concerning the condition and problems of the workers of the Belsund Sugar Factory, Riga with recommendations and suitable suggestions for improving them.

Similar to the conditions of other factories, the labourers of this place too are subjected to various hardships and lots of their grievances are to be immediately redressed. There is a tendency, nay, usual practice to exact maximum work on minimum pay from the workers.

To the poor and specially unemployed people a service with any small amount of pay is always welcome as a boon and the mill authorities do not fail to take undue advantage of their helpless condition. Moreover, as plenty of hands are always available, the well known law of demand and supply is allowed to rule and thus the poor become an easy prey to their exploitations.

For some time past, since the last visit of Babu Jagat Narain Lal, the parliamentary secretary to this factory, the workers and the labourers have been growing conscious of their right and privileges for which they were entitled under the Factory Act. As a result of this awakening they have organised a Labour Union under the Presidentship of Dr. R. Thakur, M.L.A., and with myself as a secretary in September last. Just after the formation of the Union, the workers were asked by the Mill authorities to represent their grievances, if they had any. I am glad to note that on their representation being made out of 21 demands majority of them were connected to, but they were nominal and profitable to the Babu class only. Nothing has been done to improve the conditions of the menials so far.

The organisation of the Labour Union is looked upon by the authorities with suspicion since it came into existence. Some of the members of the Union were forced to resign and others were asked to announce their disassociation with it.

The relation of the Union with the authorities is far from satisfactory inasmuch as several letters addressed by the Secretary and the President of the Union regarding the daily wages of the *coolies* working under the shunting department have not been even favoured with any reply.

So far the matter of recruitment and dismissal, if a worker is concerned, is done arbitrarily and so his services always depend on the sweet will and whim of his immediate officer. Nobody feels secure and sure of his service. Without any notice they are turned out whenever there is any man available on a smaller pay or some relative and acquaintance of some members of the already working class come in. The practice of illegal gratification at the time of appointment is an open secret. In order to control such abuses it is desirable to stop jobbers and contract system and to set some rules governing recruitment, dismissal, grades, punishment, promotion and degradation of the workers. The maintenance of a service book containing the record of their work will be also very helpful in checking such corrupt practice.

The problem can be greatly solved if the State establishes Employment Bureau and trade unions have effective voice in it. There is no principle on which the increment or promotion of a worker is done. It is said that European staff and some members of the higher grade are enjoying the privilege of regular increment and promotion while the rest have to get without it. It is regrettable that the retrenched pay of the workers of the Power House has not been restored up till now. They have not been put on permanent cadre although they are serving for the last five years.

The plight of the *coolies* working for 12 hours on contract system in the shunting department is very miserable. They are not able to earn even at the average rate of three annas per day. Their rest-house is worth seeing. For want of warm clothes and proper housing these *coolies* working in winter nights contract cold and other diseases and thus meet premature death. These workers badly require warm coats and proper shelter to protect themselves from cold. The contract system of the factory for these *coolies* should be immediately abolished along with the mate system.

Fitters have to work for 8 hours, without any interval and are paid Rs. 8 monthly. On the same pay the daily *coolies* have to do shunting work for 12 hours continuously.

Weighment clerks have to work for 12 hours without any interval. It is said that the *coolies* working on Donga were dismissed on their refusal to work for 12 hours.

Hours of work vary from 8 to 12 hours without any interval. No leave with pay is granted to the workers even on medical grounds. No compensation is allowed to those who are injured or otherwise disabled in course of their duties for some months or for ever. Here is a petition of Muhammad Hashim which bears testimony to my statement.

In my opinion hours of work should be reduced and the minimum pay be increased. In no case, any worker should be asked to work more than 8 hours without one hour interval and the minimum pay should be at least Rs. 15 and the daily rate of the casual *coolie* should be fixed at the rate of annas 6 per head. The Running Peons are not supplied with cycle from the Company and are paid only Rs. 12 per month. Each of them should be supplied with a cycle and a monthly allowance of Rs. 2 at least be given for the repairs of cycle and other incidental expenses over and above the regular pay.

Nothing has been done from the Company towards the welfare of the workers. For the children of the employees and for the illiterate adults a school is an immediate necessity. There is a poorly equipped dispensary attached to this factory and the Doctor remains absent for months together.

The housing arrangement is also very unsatisfactory. One small room remains occupied by three to eighteen men who use it also as their kitchen, store room, etc.

No facilities have been provided for rest and recreation of the workers.

We are sorry, we have not been able to collect sufficient facts and figures within the short notice and so are not in a position to discuss everything in detail but hope to send another supplementary memorandum later on.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

Mr. Ramnandan Misra, Darbhanga.

There are 5 Sugar Mills in this district employing about 4,000 workers; two of Samastipur and one of Ryam are managed by Begg Southerland and Company, and two of Lohat and Sakri are managed by Octavius Steel, and the fifth at Hassanpur is managed by Birla. From every respect the condition of the labour at Hassanpur is worst.

In considering the labour condition of the Sugar Mills, the first thing which must be borne in mind is that the labour is employed only for 3 to 4 months in the year. So if the wages that they get are spread over the whole year it will come roughly to about Rs. 3 per month.

As regards the minimum wages following are the rates in different Mills:—

			Rs.	a.	p.	
Samastipur	...	...	13	0	0	Seven annas per day
Ryam	...	...	11	4	0	Six annas per day.
Sakri	...	...	11	4	0	
Lohat	...	...	11	4	0	
Hassanpur	...	...	6	8	0	

Considering the points which I have mentioned above, the minimum wages must be Rs. 15 per-month.

Now considering the skilled labour, except for the supervising staff, there is no system of gradation in any mill. Somewhere you will find a man working at the centrifugal getting Rs. 30 and somewhere getting Rs. 15 only. So I would suggest that the whole group be divided into different grades and minimum wage be fixed for them. There should also be some provision for their increment year after year.

As regards sick leave there is very little done for the seasonal workers. I found in several cases that even where there had been an accident, the man had not been allowed

rest. So some days must be fixed for sick leave which a worker can utilise at full pay and some days on half pay and after that he may be given leave, on medical certificate, without pay.

There is no system of granting privilege leave to seasonal workers of Sugar Mills of this district. I would suggest at least one month's privilege leave granted to all according to the duration of service and in lieu of the leave not availed he should be given wages.

As regards compensation, it is generally not utilised by the labour. The whole thing has become so technical that it is absolutely difficult for an illiterate worker to take full benefit of it. Secondly, this matter also concerns the doctor. If the doctor is good, he sometimes help the labourer in getting due compensation. But generally these doctors side with the management. So I would suggest.

No. 1. That rules concerning compensation be simplified.

No. 2. That doctors should be appointed by the Government and they should be instructed to do all so that the labourers may get due compensation.

Except at Ryam there is no school at any other place, for removing illiteracy. I would suggest that a school be maintained at every Factory and every worker should be made to come up to a certain educational standard at the pain of losing his job after a year or two.

It is most essential that there should be a reading room in every factory where workers can get newspapers and books to read during the rest period.

As regards the medical aid arrangements, Lohat, Sakri and Ryam pay something to the District Board Dispensary and Hassanpur and Samastipur maintain their own doctors. I am not satisfied with the arrangements any where. I suggest that every factory ought to maintain even a small indoor hospital at its own cost.

As regards the housing condition, the quarters are overcrowded every where. But the worst quarters are at Hassanpur where it is absolutely unfit for human habitation. I would suggest that every worker should have a room to himself and there should be a common kitchen for a group of 10 or 12 workers. It is rather a pity that these capitalists

spend lacs and lacs to protect the dead material, that is iron and sugar, whereas they do very little for the human element. I have nowhere found any arrangement for bathing purposes, which I think is very essential for a worker who works in the factory. Similar is the case with public latrines. Neither there is even a small garden nor a surrounding wall to give it a decent appearance any where. At Hassanpur the general complaint is that dogs enter the *tatti*-sheds quite often and please themselves with the stock of rice and other grains of the poor labourers.

As regards security of service, at present the whole thing depends upon the sweet will of the incharge of various departments. A man can be dismissed very easily. This must be stopped and there should be no dismissal without a reference to a permanent tribunal consisting of representatives of the Management, the Trade Union and the State.

Since these Mills work for only 4 months or so in a year, either all the workers should be allowed to draw one half or even $\frac{1}{4}$ th of their salaries during off season or they must get at least one month's pay as bonus at the end of the season to maintain them for sometime before they seek new employment.

**Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee**

By

**Messrs. Vindhyachal Prasad and Sarju Prasad, Mokhtars,
Gopalganj (Saran).**

NATURE AND RECRUITMENT OF LABOUR.

3. Majority of workers, temporarily employed in Sugar Factories, live in their village-home while they work in such factories.

4. Most of the temporarily employed workers in such factories are mainly drawn from the neighbouring villages.

5. Three-fourth of those working in Sugar factories on our side are asked to leave the factories after the cane season is over.

Preference in appointment should be given to those who have already worked in such factories in previous years. They should get half of their pay in off-season and such persons should be asked to enter into an agreement with factories to continue their service for the next year with some future prospects.

8. We do not think it advisable to have recruitments of workers through intermediaries. They should be employed directly by the head of the departments to which they are employed, with the consultation of the general manager.

10. No.

11. Yes.

A sub-committee of the general manager and the head of the department concerned and a responsible non-official should be constituted for the purpose.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

16. No provision for the training of apprentices in factories on our side.

18. As in Government services.

20. No sick leave is prevalent.

22. No such provisions.

27. No opportunity is given to workers to meet any charge levelled against them.

HOURS OF WORK.

34. No certainty in the hour of works; ordinarily not less than 8 hours but beyond that.

35. Yes.

37. Yes.

CONDITION IN FACTORIES.

42. No special equipment to workers while at work is made to diminish risk to health or to bodily injury.

44. No real service is done to those for whose benefit the Factories Act has been enacted as owners of the factories mostly influence the Inspecting Officers.

WAGES.

56. Mostly the temporarily employed workers are subjected to illegal gratifications to their superiors.

57. No.

59. Yes. Without such measure, the workers are put to serious losses by appointing them at the lowest rate of pay at the mercy of their employers.

60. The minimum wage should be fixed by looking into the nature of the work done and the risk to their health and also of the qualifications of the employees.

61. Rules framed by Government.

63. Government should frame such rules as to prevent the minimum wages from becoming the maximum.

65. Yes.

WELFARE WORK.

70. (a) to (c). No.

71. No.

72. Very rare.

74. No.

75. Phthisis and Malarial Fever.

76. Yes.

78. No.

80. No.

81—82. Yes.

83. Mostly, highly paid permanent officers of the factories are provided with houses by the factories.

84. No. 1/10.

86. No.

88. Absolutely nil.

89. No.

90. No.

INDEBTEDNESS.

91. Three-fourth, double the real price.

92. Yes. By the employer or by the Government.

93. Yes.

94. No.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

100. One-tenth of the accidents are reported to the commissioner.

TRADE UNION.

103. No.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE.

120. Questions of low payment, irregular payments and bad treatments are at the hands of the employers.

121. Suppressed by the employers.

122. Not beneficial to the interests of the employers.

125. No facilities.

126. No.

127. No.

128. Yes. Equal number of representatives of the factories and the employees besides one disinterested and respectable person as Chairman of the arbitration committee. Some enactment regarding the above is required.

130. Yes.

134. Not satisfactory.

CEMENT.

**Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee**

By

The Labour Union, Japla (Palamau).

3. The proportion of workers living in their village homes while they work in the factory is 70.30.

7. The system of recruiting workers at present is a great source of nepotism. The Foreman or some such head of the department recruits new workers. He usually recruits his relatives or those who enjoy his favour in some way or the other. We suggest that the recruitment to the services be made through a Central Labour Bureau in consultation with the Labour Union.

13 and 14. Casual workers including a fair number of skilled workers are seen to be employed when some new plant is to be installed. Between six to eight hundreds of such people are working as casual labourers at present. Majority of them have been working over a year hence; still they are temporary workers, eligible to be thrown on the streets unprotected and unemployed any moment.

15. The Company maintains no service rules within our knowledge. There is no provision for the training of apprentices which is a dangerous practice. It ought not to be allowed to continue.

17. There is no graded promotion excepting in the cases of those who are relatives, friends or recipients of favour from the heads of the departments.

19. There is no system of granting leave to workers, not to speak of leave with pay. A microscopic number of workers in the laboratory department do get leave. There is no rule, so far as known, on the subject.

21. Women employed in the factory, enjoy no maternity benefit. The sweeper women do enjoy maternity leave but they too get only a half of their usual allowance and the leave granted is not enough.

22. There is no scheme for paying gratuity, provident fund and old age pension.

23. Apart from Sundays, there are 8 days' leave as Hindu festival holidays and 8 days leave as Muslim festival holidays. Hindus are not allowed to enjoy Muslim festival holidays and *vice versa*.

25. There are no specific orders or rules proclaimed to guide the workers. Sometimes the management issues some notices which are pasted on the notice board.

26 and 27. In cases of indiscipline and slackness of work or any other offence arbitrary methods are applied. The defendant is not generally called to answer the charges and the judgment is delivered *ex-parte*.

28. Suspension, dismissal, compulsory leave, reduction in wages for a given period and permanent reduction are the forms of punishment awarded to offenders.

29. There is no system of awarding punishments, except that the management deals despotically in each and every affair concerning the working class.

31. Unauthorised absence is dealt with dismissal or is taken as compulsory leave.

32. Late attendance is dealt with as follows:—

(a) Half an hour for 5 to 15 minutes and one hour for over 15 minutes is deducted from the workers full hours of work, in shift cases.

(b) In general cases half an hour for 5 to 15 minutes and one hour for over 15 minutes.

Due wages are paid for remaining hours.

33. It is not known to us in what manner the fines are utilised. General wage-cuts are obviously forfeited. Only in cases of shift, wage-cuts are paid over to the over-working partner.

34. The present hours of work are 8. In view of a very exacting and hard nature of works of the cement industry, I am of opinion that 40 hours of work in a week, generally, would meet the ends of justice. But as the works in Grab-crane, Electric-welder, Kiln-burners, Boiler house, Ash-cooler, clinker, Cement packing, Oil greaser and Moulding-shop departments are strenuous as well as dangerous, no sensible person can recommend more than 4 hours of work. I am emphatically of opinion that in these departments the workmen should not be made to work for more than 4 hours a day on any account.

35. There are three more shifts worked apart from one general shift. The 3 particular shifts are worked in departments, such as Electric-welder, Kiln-burner, Grab-driver, Workshop, Cement-store, Laboratory, Wet-mill, Dry-mill, Electric-shift Power and Boiler house shifts, Ropeway, Time Office, Slurry-pump, Slurry-mixer, Coal-mill, gate-keepers and night guards. Shift workers too are made to work for continuously 8 hours. No rest is allowed to them excepting the workers in general shift, who are allowed an hour's rest in the middle. There is no interval allowed in shift duty. On Saturday also usual work of 8 hours is exacted.

37. During summer a considerable change in the hours of work in shifts should be brought about.

38. At present workmen working for 10 hours get ordinary overtime for 2 hours. Working for the 11th hour and more they get overtime wage at $1\frac{1}{2}$ of ordinary wage rate. But the ordinary procedure is that people get ordinary overtime.

It is a rare exception that people get the $1\frac{1}{2}$ overtime rate.

39. Workers of Repair Shop, Electric Shop, General Stores, Mason Departments (here on account specially of triplication), and fitter, turner, *Khalasi*, wireman, *serang*, *mistry* and *coolies* are, generally, regularly called upon to work overtime.

The law is that no man can be made to work for more than 6 hours of overtime work in the week. One hour per day at best. At the end of an hour's overtime work, his ticket is taken out. But there is an illegal practice which is very extensively followed. That practice is that the heads of the departments maintain separately a rough copy each where they make notes of 2, 3, 4 or more hours of overtime work per day and informally bring them to the notice of the Manager, who makes payment to each man according to the amount of work, that is, the hours of work he has done. This procedure is called "Contract System" although this is under the direct supervision of the management and so altogether different from the contract labour system.

This procedure is particularly detrimental to the interests of the working class. If per chance some untoward accident happens to the worker during this overtime work, the Company cannot be held responsible for this, under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Another harm which is done to the worker is that the wages so earned can be made to pass

under the name of grant of bonus to the worker. The Company when pressed for grant of bonus can easily free itself from the responsibility by resorting to this wile device.

40. There is no system of substituting overtime work by grant of leave instead of paying higher wages.

41. No exact number of working days in the year can be given. But for enforced idleness nothing is paid, idleness for which the worker was in no way responsible.

42. There is no special equipment given to the worker while at work or any special measures taken to diminish risks to health or bodily injury. To illustrate more clearly the point at issue I give below a few instance of open exposure to bodily injury or risks.

(a) Grab-Crane stands at a height of approximately 50 feet unprotected by any strong fencing. The tin attached therewith is too frail to support the heavy weight of a human body, suddenly cast by chance-slips. The unfortunate man will have no shelter except into the mouth of death, 50 feet below.

(b) A cloud of dust encircles the whole area where the Cement-stores are located. Fine particles of cement thickly mixed up in the air get into the system through nose, mouth, eye, ears, and myriads of sweat-pores giving rise to diverse venomous diseases such as Phthisis, Asthma, Headache, Heart troubles, etc., which are unfortunately too common here. Protective masks and other apparatus invented by science should be made available without reservation to relieve human beings of this too frequent occupational maladies. To remove cement from the Cement-store is never free from grave risks to workmen. The fresh Cement touching their limbs, produces full-blown boils. Some apparatus should be provided to them to protect their hands and feet.

(c) Coal-mill is another scene of a dense cloud. But the difference is that this cloud assumes another but ghastlier colour composed of particles of coal dust. I saw with my own eyes that the place was awfully dark on account of that, although it was broad day-light outside. Here too the dust generated by coal grinding gets free entrance into the body and begets lots of diseases; doctors alone can enumerate them more authoritatively. Due arrangement for protection should be made.

(d) Kiln-Burner is yet another instance of human helplessness. A man can hardly afford to endure the tremendous heat effusing out of the burner. Here the worker stands without cessation for complete 8 hours. To stand in the midst of an oven is an easier and more comfortable task. Something should be done to mitigate the effect of heat on his body. I suggest that two men should be posted at the place to work in rotation, each working for not more than 2 hours at a stretch and 4 hours in aggregate.

(e) Silo is the name of a part of the Cement-stores. Here, cement stored is as hot as when being heated and grounded. People working here should also be made to work in rotation.

(f) There is danger of a man falling from the Chimney of Art Mill and be killed.

(g) Labourers are made to enter into the dark and, in a way, burning-cave-like Kiln only 10 to 12 hours after it stops operation. As soon as the worker sets his feet into it, the first layer of his skin gets fried up. A fan of tremendous voltage is there, by which the hot cave could be cooled but it is deemed sacriligious to break the convention of roasting living human flesh. A worker is sent here to extricate the broken bricks and put in new ones in their places. Body masks and other gears should be supplied to him.

(h) Face masks are also indispensibly necessary to those who unload coals from the Railway Carriages.

No specific measures are adopted to prevent accidents except the measures observed by the workers themselves. The system of reporting accidents is defective and therefore, wholly unacceptable. Major accidents are self-evident and therefore require little effort to prove the existence of the injury received. But attempts are made to shelve minor accidents. Unless the injury caused by minor accidents is done before the eyes of the Foreman, no cognisance of it is taken by the management. The sufferer is thus deprived of the benefit which would accrue to him, under the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

52. No different rates of wages are paid for night work and work on holidays.

57. There is no scheme in operation in this Factory for payment of bonus or of profit sharing or any other additional allowance. Bonus is paid only to the staff which derive wages on monthly basis and not to the labourers.

59. I am in favour of the establishment of a minimum living wage. The minimum living wage should be established with a view to safeguard the interests of the working class—interests so meagre and ever open to the vicissitudes of the condition of trade. Any change for the better or for the worse in trade condition first affects the fortune of the wage earner. The boom period effects a tremendous influx of profit into the owner's coffers. The labourer shares little of it except the unemployed who finds a temporary and partial cessations of unemployment. Whereas the slump first falls on the throat of the labourer. Here the owners behave in such a reckless and remorseless manner that the poor workers are made the prime victim of the crisis. Fixation of living minimum wage would be the first step towards amelioration of the age-long sorry plight of the workers. It is the crying need of the hour.

60. The minimum wage should be based on the principles of an efficient living.

70. There is a middle English school for the children of the employees. Children have to pay school fees and purchase books and other materials at their own cost. To poor boys, to a very small number of them, grant of subsidy to partially meet the cost of books is sometimes conceded. There is also a night school for adults. But the paucity of attendance is strikingly remarkable. Out of a population of 1,400 employees and a still larger number of their male and female dependants, only twelve persons attend the school. So powerful is the stimulus offered on behalf of the managing board of the benevolent institution, with a nicely selected staff, well chosen teaching apparatus that a huge amount of propaganda is needed to attract the poor workers to it ever steeped in ignorance. Some of those attending, pay for their schooling and that in accordance with the grades or classes they read in.

71. There is a Library in the middle English school. The clerical staff has been provided with a club, a library, and a reading and common room but there is none whatsoever for the labourers.

72. (b) The Company maintains a Hospital with an indoor accommodation. There is no arrangement for treatment of female diseases or maternity cases. The provisions made are not adequate or satisfactory. Nothing is more necessary at present than the immediate appointment of a lady doctor, efficient nurses and extension of the Hospital premises.

74. Not to talk of the periodical medical examination of the workers, they are not favoured with it even once throughout the whole expanse of their life.

75. Eye, heart, and skin diseases are evidently the common diseases. Perhaps asthmatic and tubercular attacks which are not a little rampant in this industrial area are the further developments of the occupational diseases mentioned above.

76. A little bit of effort is witnessed on the part of the Company's medical staff to combat epidemics but nothing is done to protect or relieve the workers from or of the Industrial diseases prevalent in the area. Special measures are required to save people from this with a free supply of gas, face and body masks and protectors and antiseptic washes such as soap, lotion or acid water washes.

78. The arrangement for latrine, washing and bathing at workers' quarters is incredibly insufficient. There is no arrangement for urinal either at home or at work places. There is no privacy provided in bathing places. Latrine is provided for men at work places but for women there is neither latrine nor urinal there.

79. Drinking water during the summer and rainy seasons is a much prized asset. Only two water-pipes have been installed in the *Cooly* lines populated by over 800 employees with double or triple the number of their dependants: One of the two exists there, in a way, only in name. It drips and does not open its mouth to give any appreciable amount of water in even an hour of constant attendance at the place. There are other ten to twelve pipes but they are entirely useless during the rains as they give muddy water which is neither fit for drinking nor for washing or bathing purposes. During summer they give hot water which may boil potatoes or scorch the skin but not appease thirst or soothe the body. Cold water at work places, also, is not always and everywhere available.

80. No provision is made for sickness relief except medicine. And that too is not prompt. The heads of departments issue permits to the sick person in the workshop. Before that the sufferer is not eligible for any medical aid. Colossal difficulties have been experienced by the workers by this process. A suitable method to render ready help to the sufferer is required.

81. The answer to this question is in the affirmative but as the workers are very poorly paid they cannot possibly contribute to the insurance.

82. I do recommend legislation for compulsory maternity benefit. I cannot suggest any positive line for it. But I am sure, any legislation on this score would be a welcome thing in this welter of confusion and bourgeois despotism.

83. The quarters inhabited by the workers have been prepared and owned by the Company. The Company has built 250 rooms and 50 sheds. The rooms are of two varieties, viz., (a) family quarter rooms, each, 11' x 9' and (b) non-family quarter rooms, each 10' x 8'. The temporary sheds are each 8 ft. in area. The quarters and sheds accommodate over 800 employees, i.e., about 70 per cent of the total strength with a double or treble of their dependants. Each room, therefore, on a very rough calculation, is thus packed up with six to seven persons on an average. The rooms are not well ventilated. Cement which forms 90 per cent of the constituent parts of the building gets awfully heated up during the summer and radiates the absorbed heat rendering living in it a most unbearable affair. During rains the joints let in a literal down-pour of raining water. The sheds are, in a word, quite unfit for human habitation. There are a few houses built by a private landlord which have been rented to the workers. The sheds constructed by contractors for their labourers are another name for Hell.

84. There is no adequate housing accommodation for the total number of workers in this area. The proportion of workers favoured with housing is 70:30.

86. No financial aid or facilities are provided by the employer to a worker to build a house.

88. No facilities are available to the worker for (a) outdoor sports, (b) in-door games, (c) other amusements and (d) refreshments.

89. No separate shelters during rest interval have been provided for workers, men or women.

90. There are no creches for children. The practice is that mothers put their babies in baskets and place them in shade underneath the railway carriages.

103. There is a trade union here. It was established in November 1937.

104. It is not registered.

105. It is recognised by the employer, since its very inception.

112. The Executive Committee is composed of 18 members of which only the President is an outsider.

113. The Trade Union carries on with its legal activities of organising the workers into their Union, train them in tradition of trade unionism, of conducting night schools and other cultural and welfare schemes.

115. The office bearers of the Trade Union represent the grievances of the workers before the management and settle them. This has been the custom prevalent up till now.

117. Till recently no obvious restriction was imposed on any worker joining the Trade Union and carrying on its activities and no office bearers and active members of the Union. Though many instances of underhand dealings and unfair tactics to purposely victimize the workers for joining the Union are on record, no such thing was openly done. Recently, 2 workers who have joined the Union have been called upon to explain why they, belonging as they do to the monthly salaried staff, have joined the Union. It is in clear contravention with the rules of the Trades Union Act and even of the terms of settlement arrived at between the Management and the Union authorities.

118. There has been only one strike in which the workers employed by the Company took part.

119. The strike lasted for a day and it ended in a compromise between the Manager and the strikers led by the Congress leaders.

120. Grievances of the workers were the removal of a few of their fellow workers, curtailment of a few of the facilities awarded to them by the Company, etc.

121. The Company redressed their grievances, the strike thereby terminated.

**Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour
Enquiry Committee**

By

**The Palamau District Congress Committee, Daltonganj
(Palamau).**

8. The system of recruitment directly by the management is preferable. But, practically the management depends on 3 or 4 persons who, it is generally noticed never keep themselves impartial in that matter.

11. Partiality and other suspicious practices seem to be prevailing amongst the senior employees; with a view to check this, the recruitment should be made through a Committee consisting of some members of the Trade Union and some of the management.

16. In the Sone Valley Portland Cement Works, Limited there is no provision for the training of apprentices. Training is unavoidably necessary in a factory.

19. In the abovementioned factory there is no system of granting leave to the workers. Grant of leave with pay is required.

22. There is no scheme for paying gratuity, etc., in the Sone Valley Portland Cement, Company, Limited. All these including bonus are necessary.

27. No opportunity is given to a worker to meet any charge before he is punished. The arguments of employees like foreman and time-keeper become final.

34. There is no fixed hours of work of all the departments in the Sone Valley Portland Cement Company, Limited, Japla.

I am in favour of shorter hours of work specially for night shifts and for strenuous and hazardous jobs, viz., working in the cement packing, in the kiln, etc., because they affect health and destroy the eyesight very soon.

42. There is no provision for special equipment to the workers in time of work. Special measure should be adopted. Things like protective goggles, etc., should be supplied.

52. No different rates paid for night work and work on holidays. It is an injustice done to the workers of the Sone Valley Portland Cement, Company, Limited, Japla.

57. There is no such scheme as the payment of bonus, etc., in operation in the Sone Valley Portland Cement Company, Limited, Japla. This should be introduced.

68. In order to mitigate the effect of immediate unemployment caused by the scheme, the factory authority may adopt the following measures:—

(a) A certain amount out of the yearly profit may be sanctioned to a fund to be paid to the worker during budget estimate, every year.

(b) In addition to the above a certain portion of the wages of the workers who are expected to suffer for the inevitable unemployment, may be deducted and be kept for distribution during such unemployment period. Provident Fund system may be started.

(c) In addition to the above measures, retrenchment in the wages of highly paid employees alone may be made if and when absolutely necessary till a better chance presents itself.

70. The answer is in the negative. There should be regular schools for children and adults both.

71. There is no reading room and library for the workers. Both should be made at an early date.

72. The medical facilities given by the employers of the Sone Valley Portland Cement, Company, Limited are inadequate and unsatisfactory. There is no arrangement for treatment of women and maternity cases. Patients are often taken to Daltonganj hospital and to Calcutta where they are not sufficiently cared for. Highly qualified Medical Officers should be employed. The hospital premises should be enlarged and all the necessary instruments should be purchased.

74. There is no such system of periodical medical examination of workers.

78. Latrine, urinal, etc., at work places and at home are insufficient.

79. The arrangements for the supply of drinking water in work places specially at workers' quarters are very much inadequate. During the hot season water supplied to the workers is too hot to use for bathing purpose even.

81. Answer to this question is in the affirmative. But the workers are very poorly paid so they cannot contribute to the Insurance Fund.

84. The housing accommodation for workers is too inadequate in respect of number and area.

88. A very small number of the *Babu*-class people arrange some out-door games for themselves at their own cost; otherwise there is no other facility given by the factory authorities.

89. Separate shelter for the use of workers during rest intervals is not provided in the Sone Valley Portland Cement Company, Limited.

92. We suggest establishment of co-operative stores by the workers' union.

93. Reduction in the period of wage payments will alleviate indebtedness to certain communities, viz., sweeper class, etc.

95. We are in favour of making recruiting advance recoverable not from the first few wage-payment but according to the convenience of the employee, provided the employee wants it.

97. Where there is no co-operative credit society in a factory, the amendment of the existing law may be made in the following ways:—

(a) Money-lenders must be licence-holders.

(b) A minimum rate of interest should be fixed by the Government.

(c) The money-lender must be recognised by the Workers' Union as well as by the factory authorities.

98. Where there is a permanently settled industrial population we suggest establishment of co-operative societies for the purpose of lending money to the workers at a nominal rate of interest, so that they may be saved from the modern Shylocks, the *Kabulis*.

103. There is a workers' union in the Sone Valley Portland Cement, Company, Limited. It was established in November, 1937.

104. It is not yet registered.

105. It was recognised by the employer in the terms of settlement at the time of last strike in November 1937.

113. The present welfare activities of the union are as follows:—

(a) Preaching about the moral and physical culture of the workers.

(b) Settlement of disputes among the workers.

(c) Representation of grievances to the authorities for removal.

115. The answer is in the negative.

117. No direct restrictions are placed on workers joining the union, but indirect actions such as threats, suspension under false report, etc., are taken by the employers' higher post holders.

125. There is no such facility provided to the workers.

127. As there is no permanent joint machinery for the settlement of differences or disputes, practical difficulties were experienced in November 1937 and the workers had to strike work at last.

130. We are in favour of honorary conciliation officers who should be chosen out of the members of the Union, members of any recognised political body or the general public.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Tobacco Manufacturing Workers' Union, Monghyr.

NATURE AND RECRUITMENT OF LABOUR.

The Tobacco Manufacturers (India), Limited, is the greatest Industrial enterprise of its kind in India and has its factories at various centres in this country of which the Tobacco Factory at Basudeopur, Monghyr, is the biggest establishment employing about 2,000 labourers of which approximately 170 are women workers.

The majority of the labourers employed in the above-mentioned factory belong to this district and they come from both the neighbouring villages as well as from the other side of the Ganges. A considerable proportion of the labourers live in the town as they hail from distant parts of the district.

The recruitment of labourers by the Company is not governed by any sound principles of justice or equity inasmuch as they are not recruited with any reference to their respective positions in the waiting list. It is recognised on all hands that the sons and relatives of the employees should be given preference at the time of recruitment of labourers but the company refuses persistently to recognise any such claims of the sons or relatives for preference. It is desirable as such, that the sons and relatives of the employees of the company should be given preference and that recruitment of labourers should be made strictly according to the position in the waiting list. The service records, unfortunately, are not maintained in its proper form by the company even to this day.

CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT.

Though it is a well recognised principle that the employer should frame the rules of conduct for the guidance of its employees and to set up a standard to which they should conform, the company has failed so far to furnish any such Rules to the inconvenience of its workers who never know about any rules to which they are required to conform. They are thus left at the mercy and the whims of individual officers under whom they

are required to work. It is high time that the company should frame such rules of conduct for the benefit of both the employers and the employees.

Though there is provision for training of apprentices in the factory, there are no arrangements for their training. There are neither any rules regarding the period of such apprenticeship nor any stipulated rate of allowance for such apprentices. In short, the whole system is at once incredulous and an anachronism. It is high time that the whole system is overhauled for the better.

There is no system of graded promotion for the benefit of the workers as promotions are left at the discretion of the officers. Neither efficiency nor seniority determines the promotion of the workers and they depend mostly on the whims of the officers concerned, leaving a scope for both jobbery and favouritism. It is, therefore, desirable that promotions should be made after a consideration of both the questions of seniority and efficiency.

The rules regarding the question of granting leave to labourers are both defective and archaic. The labourers have hardly any holidays as they are mostly required to work even on gazetted holidays. They are granted casual leave with full pay for 15 days and a sick leave with half-pay for 15 days. In cases when the labourers choose to utilise the casual leave piecemeal, they are granted leave for only 12 days. The company refuses to recognise, as such, that the labourers are after all human beings in-as-much as the aforementioned provision leaves no scope to the labourers to recoup their disjointed nerves after the strenuous work for a year to which they are subjected. This is likely to cause serious nervous breakdowns and similar other diseases which are generally prevalent in industrial areas. It is everywhere sought to make the condition of service as humane as possible. Moreover, the provisions for granting leave to the workers are wholly unsatisfactory. It is urgently required for the benefit of the labourers in particular and humanity in general that the company should immediately provide that the labourers should be guided by at least the following rules regarding the question of their leave: 15 days casual leave and one month privilege leave with full pay and three months sickness leave with half-pay.

The arrangements regarding gratuities, provident funds and bonus are most unsatisfactory. No arrangement has yet

been made for provident fund for the benefit of the workers. Gratuities are calculated at the rate of 15 days pay per year and are as such inadequate. The rate should be increased to at least a month's salary per year. The system of bonus to the fixed salaried employees is as defective as it is unsatisfactory because there are no fixed rules for granting bonus to such workers. The daily-rated workers are not given bonus. In the case of monthly-paid employees it depends absolutely on the sweet will of the officers concerned. It is urgently necessary for the benefit of both the employers and the employees that a regular system for granting bonus to the workers should be brought into being. All the workers should be granted a bonus amounting at least a month's salary and earning that they receive. The interest of the labourers demand that a provident fund should be created for their benefit at the earliest possible opportunity. Thus the whole question of bonus, provident fund and gratuity should be considered sympathetically for the benefit of the workers.

HOURS OF WORK.

At a time when it has been recognised every where in the world that eight hours a day should be the maximum working hours for the labourers, the management of the factory has been guilty of having contravened the provision of the famous Washington Convention which fixed the hours of work at 'eight hours a day' .. The management should, therefore, bring down the working hours to eight hours a day. The company should, further, after due consideration of the inhospitable climate of this place during the summer should fix the working hours during the said season at seven hours a day.

It is really unfortunate that the company refuses to pay such labourers who receive monthly salaries any extra sums for working overtime which they are often required to do. This amounts to extorting work from one without any compensation for it. It should, hence, be immediately provided that these labourers should be paid for any overtime work that they may be required to do.

CONDITIONS OF THE FACTORIES.

The conditions in the factories leave much to be desired for the benefit of both the employer and the employed. No adequate provisions are made to ensure the health and safety of the workers. There are cases where though it is officially

said that workers should not touch the machines while they are working, the nature of their work is such which demands daily contact with the machines exposing them to serious risks. In such cases when there are accidents the company always comes forward with excuses, that the labourers have been forewarned not to touch the machines while they are in motion and thus seeks to deny the legitimate compensation to which such victims are entitled. Moreover, workers engaged on dangerous duties and required to work under unfavourable environments, such as working with chemicals, acids, vapour and gas, etc., are given no compensation for the risk in the shape of any special wages or allowances.

WAGES.

Whereas it is now a recognized principle that labour should have its legitimate share as the primary factor for the production of wealth and whereas much depends for a proper working of the modern industrial system on the efficiency of labour, they should at least be paid a minimum living wage for the interest of both the workers and the employers. The absolute minimum living wage that a labourer requires for his upkeep is Rs. 15 for unskilled and Rs. 30 for skilled labour.

These labourers, specially, in the Power House, who are required to work during the holidays are neither paid any extra wages for working during holidays nor do they get any compensating holidays for such periods. This grievance of workers requires immediate attention and should be removed at an early opportunity.

RATIONALIZATION.

Labour is against rationalization in-as-much as it causes unemployment in its ranks and as it does not get a proper share in the improvements. Labour is gradually reduced to the position of an automaton and a robot to carry on only mechanical duties. This entails serious nervous strain resulting in breakdown of both the health and intellect of the labourers. The most important reason, however, why we declare rationalization to be undesirable, is that rationalization is a later phase in the history of the development of industries. Only when the country has attained a very high standard of industrial expansion is there any scope for rationalization of industries. It was only during the last war that the question of rationalization was taken up. India is still in her first phase of industrial revolution. The transition has already brought

confusion as necessary corollary with it and a further rationalization at the present moment is sure to throw a considerable proportion of labour out of employment, thus disturbing the equilibrium of the present structure.

EDUCATION.

The management has not made any arrangement for the education of either the labourers or their children till now. The question demands a more sympathetic consideration on the part of the employers than they have hitherto shown in-as-much as it is not simply a question of the interest of the labourers alone. The larger interests of the country and humanity demand that they should be educated. Education will benefit the employers as much as the workers because it is a recognized principle that education contributes, to a great extent, towards the efficiency of the labourers. Thus it is desirable that the company should have schools both for the workers and their children. The company should have upper primary schools in the villages where there is a good number of its employees and middle English School in the town for the benefit of its labourers and their wards.

HEALTH.

The arrangement made by the company for medical help to its employees betrays the same lack of sympathy on its part as found in the question of education. There is absolutely no arrangement for any medical help to either the labourers or their dependants at their homes by the company. It is desirable that the company should forthwith provide free medical help to its employees and their dependants living within a radius of 4 miles from the Factory. The management should also provide for free attendance and help by a midwife or a lady doctor to its women workers in maternity cases.

The labourers are put to much inconvenience as it is required of them, in times of sickness, to get the certificate of even a registered practitioner countersigned by Mr. J. Chinhal, the Medical Officer of the Factory. This requires immediate modification. It should be provided that the certificate from a registered medical practitioner should by itself be sufficient for the purpose and that it should require no countersignature from the said Medical Officer of the company.

HOUSING.

Whereas a considerable proportion of the labourers working in the factory comes from distant places and whereas they

are forced to live in rented houses in which they are often forced to huddle themselves up in batches of six and eight in a single room, their housing problem remains till now one of the most serious questions which require immediate attention. Their paltry wages do not permit them to have any healthy place. This overcrowding in a single room is neither conducive to welfare nor decency and some way should immediately be explored to solve the question once for all. The situation demands that the management should provide houses for the accommodation of such labourers.

REST AND RECREATION.

Whereas there is no arrangement made by the company for the rest and recreation of the labourers and whereas there are no places inside the factory where the workers can either take their tiffin or have their refreshments, it is necessary, in the interest of the employees, that an institute for the workers be established, and a tiffin-room and restaurant be provided. There is no provision of any shelter where the labourers can take rest. Some provision should be made as regards that.

INDEBTEDNESS.

Whereas the labourers are heavily indebted at usurious rates of interest and whereas there is no way which they can avail to redeem themselves it is necessary that some means be discovered which help them to free themselves from this chronic indebtedness which has gradually grown to be a curse for our country.

TRADE UNION.

The Tobacco Manufacturing Workers Union is registered as a Trade Union under the provision of the Trade Unions Act, 1926 and has been recently recognized by the Company.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

Whereas in most cases the workers fail to secure proper compensation by the manipulations of the employers and whereas it is unnatural and against human instinct that he should be ready to injure himself in any way to secure compensation from the Company, it should be provided liberally so that the labourers may secure proper compensation in cases of injuries and accidents.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Whereas it is expedient in the interest of the employers as well as the employed that the workers should have a co-operative stores which should be guaranteed by the company so that

the labourers may have their necessaries of life at the cheapest rates, the management should take initiative to form such a co-operative society.

It is really deplorable that the company should engage unskilled labour to do the work of skilled labourers, e.g., *coolies* as firemen or *coolies* as fitters without paying them the wages of a skilled labourer. This is unfair in-as-much as those labourers are not paid for the work they do.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE.

Whereas we recognise that in case of difference between the management and its employees no stone should remain unturned for conciliation and whereas it is expedient that all the latest devices should be adopted to solve such difficulties, an Arbitration or Conciliation Board should be formed, to act under such circumstances to bring about an understanding between the two factors of production, consisting of the Manager of the Factory and the President of the Union together with a non-official person selected by these two gentlemen.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Patna Electric Supply Workers' Union, Patna.

LABOUR DISPUTES.

It is highly desirable in the interest of industrial peace that some effective machinery be evolved by resort to legislation whereby industrial disputes may be settled. As it is, the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act in regard to the settlement of disputes by arbitration are not very effective inasmuch as the award of the arbitrator has no statutory sanction behind it. So long as this position continues, there is no statutory obligation on the parties to abide by the award, and since labour is the weaker party, it has to suffer at the hands of unreasonable employers.

TRADE UNIONS.

It should be made obligatory on the employers to recognise properly constituted Labour Unions and to accept them as the agency for the ventilation of labour grievances and collective bargaining. Labour Unions must, as a rule, be consulted in all matters affecting the welfare of workers. In our opinion, the whole difficulty arises out of a preconceived hostility on the part of the employers towards the Unions, whose intentions are invariably misunderstood by the former. This makes the normal functioning of the Trade Unions extremely difficult, particularly at the early stage of their formation.

STRIKES.

While we are positively opposed to resort to strikes unless all avenues of settlement are explored and exhausted, we hold the view that strikes if called by a properly constituted Trade Union after complying with certain preliminary requirements should be legalised and the machinery of law and order should operate in aid of the workers. The employment of black-legs with a view to break up strikes or to demoralise the workers should be discouraged—at any rate, the state should not help the employer as against the strikers in defeating the purpose of the latter.

FACTORIES ACT.

There are certain loop-holes in the Factories Act, which render its beneficent effects nugatory. Clever devices are found out by certain employers to circumvent the provisions of the Act to the detriment of the workers. In many factories, a different set of books is maintained for production before Factory Inspectors. In our opinion, the Act is so clumsy and elaborate, being over-burdened with unnecessary details that its advantages are practically lost and the worker does not receive that protection which is sought to be vouchsafed to him under the Act. It will be more useful if the Act is simplified and its advantages made more pointed. Factory Inspectors should be compelled to cultivate contact with workers and should not be content with merely making their periodical appearance like *Bara Sahibs*, proclaiming the majesty of law and pointing to the long arms of the Factories Act. The Inspectors should also keep touch with the Unions and get the explanations of the management, as regards accidents, breach of the provisions of law and other cognate matters, corporated by the officers of the Trade Unions. Factory Inspectors should also address meetings of workers if occasions arise and explain to them the privileges to which they are entitled under the Act.

CORRUPTION AMONG APPOINTING AUTHORITIES.

It has come to light that the prevailing unemployment is responsible for encouraging corruption and bribery among employing authorities. In certain cases, heads of departments have been found to be susceptible to corrupt influences and take bribes for recommending candidates for employment or making the appointment itself. Some means should be found out whereby this exploitation of misfortune may be stopped. We would suggest the fixation of certain qualifications for posts that fall vacant, and the appointing authorities should announce the existence of those vacancies by means of a general notification and constitute a board consisting of 2 or 3 officers of the company and of a representative of the Union if there be one. The board will make the selection in order of merit. We see no reason why enlightened employers should not agree to this if their object is to stop corruption among their officers and to get hold of the best candidate.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR.

The department of labour should be strengthened and made more real and beneficial to the workers. The department must have a comprehensive plan of labour welfare, which

should be backed up by an intensive propaganda in industrial centres. It should be incumbent upon the officers of the labour department to inspect labour centres, visit workers' quarters and examine the condition of labour, with a view to the amelioration of their plight. It is necessary because much of this work is at present beyond the scope of the Factory Inspectors.

SAFETY FOR ELECTRIC WORKERS.

Workers engaged in electrical generation and distribution works are exposed to grave risks while working on the wires. Stringent measures should be adopted to ensure safety and statutory obligations should be imposed on the employers to provide adequate means of protection and to eliminate the chances of accidents.

LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

Employers should be compelled to provide facilities for medical relief, recreation, sports and other things affording relaxation to the worker and also to adopt other measures for their moral and intellectual advancement as a part of their general obligation towards their employees.

SHIFT WORKERS.

Some means should be devised whereby workers on Night Shifts or those engaged in strenuous and hazardous jobs such as Shift Engineers, Turbine attendants, Switch Board attendants, Tindals, Firemen and Coal and Ash Coolies should be required to work for shorter periods than 8 hours of continuous service. Arrangements should be made to allow them one complete day's rest each week and all loopholes in the present Factories Act which permit certain undesirable practices which operate to the detriment of the workers, while enabling technical compliance with the Factory Rules, should be carefully examined and remedied with a view to give relief to the workers. Shifts at the power house are so arranged that a worker gets only 8 hours of rest after 8 hours work on two days in a chain of two weeks' work, although this is highly inconvenient to the workers and injurious to their health.

There is no arrangement for a resting place for Shift Workers nor have they been provided with quarters by the Company. Workers have to come from long distances at usual hours in all seasons and have to leave the factory for their respective homes as soon as their duty is over. This is extremely inconvenient.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Government Press Employees' Association, Gulzarbagh,
Patna.

Preamble.—(A frank and open statement).—As preamble to this short memorandum the Association submit that the imperialistic foreign Government of the past, in their very usual way, made such differentiation and classification of the Press staff (necessarily they are a large number—approximating 400 strong) as to deprive about 75 per cent of them of the ordinary privileges and concessions prescribed in the general codes and the rules. The first and foremost of these differentiations and classifications is that the really one permanent establishment was purposely divided into two—permanent and temporary—with the inevitable result that men, who are really permanent hands to all intents and purposes, and have been serving Government for 10, 20 and even 25 years and without whom the Press cannot function, are classed as 'temporary' and thus deprived of all the prescribed humanitarian privileges and concessions and stripped of every thing that attracts men to Government services. More is possible orally to explain, indeed, if the Commission is really anxious to read the hearts of the labourers of this Government institution, both ordinary and skilled. To illustrate what is said above as to how the foreign bureaucratic Government treated and exploited the poor Indian labourers during their regime, when our present Government Members—"the popular" Hon'ble Ministers—and the other national leaders were courting jails, one out of many such instances is cited here to convince the Commission of what actually obtains even now under the "popular" Congress Government:—

A forme-carrier on Rs. 13 a month, in the so-called 'temporary' establishment, after about 22 years' service fell seriously ill; so much so that the Assistant Surgeon from whom he was asked to submit a medical certificate, recommended him 5 weeks' leave; and thereafter, on his pitious application for more leave as he was still unfit to resume duty, he was sent up to the Civil Surgeon with the request to certify whether he was fit for further Government service or not, and notwithstanding

the Civil Surgeon's certificate recommending him 4 months' more medical leave he was not paid a farthing for the period of his illness for those 4 months. And how was this done? Only by putting him under the category of 'temporary' so cleverly devised by the foreigners to exploit the poor Indians. Only one more instance to cite before the Commission out of many, is that on several occasions poor men, with 20 and more years' service, were quarantined (i.e., compulsorily not allowed to come to work) on account of small-pox in their family but, alas, were not paid a farthing for the period of their compulsory quarantine leave which is usually 3 weeks and sometimes more. Had they not been classified as explained above, they would have got their full pay as the permanent hands do. The poor men consequently sank in debt which will take them several years to liquidate. Posts created in 1912 along with the creation of the Province are up till now treated as temporary even after 26 years, though their incumbents are indispensable. The employer and the employed both know that they are indispensable, and yet they are treated as 'temporary' so that they may not earn pension or get the ordinary privileges which their brother-workers get under the category of 'permanent'. There are numerous such instances but to avoid long details the Association leave the question to this much; and they will be glad to elucidate orally if opportunity is given so to do. The lot of these unfortunates is indeed pitiable.

19. *Leave.*—The Press being a Government Institution (Factory), leave is generally regulated by the Bihar and Orissa Service Code Rules, but if those rules were applied to all regular employees without discrimination there would be but very little to grudge about. The Association hope that they will be heard orally for elucidation of the various points. There being no leave reserve in such a big establishment it is very difficult for any one to get leave when actually required.

23. *Holidays.*—These are very well laid down in the rules as well as in the Government Almanac but the employees of this factory have very little or practically nothing to dream of enjoying them. They are compelled to work on most of the gazetted holidays and even on Sundays with no remuneration but only with the unfulfilled hope of being allowed the same number of hours (not days) as compensation leave which in practice they seldom get when really necessary; so that work on gazetted holidays and Sundays is compulsory without payment but its return is optional and depends entirely on the

sweet will of those who make the men work on holidays without payment. This is one of the real cause of disaffection among the workers. If payment is enforced for working on holidays, compulsory booking during festivals and holidays will be automatically discouraged. We wish this point to explain orally.

32. *Late attendance.*—In this the piece-hands suffer double loss inasmuch as they are doubly punished unlike the fixed-pay hands. But this is mostly due to the office master's apathy towards redressing this grievance of theirs, knowing that they are semi-literate and cannot fight out their case. A little sympathetic outlook on the part of the Superintendent can remove this injustice (oral evidence is sure to convince the Commission).

34. *Hours of work.*—In this respect the interests of the fixed-pay and the piece-workers are opposed diametrically to each other, because the less the hours of work, the less is the earning of the piece-workers which is not the case with the fixed-pay hands. Oral elucidation will clarify the point.

42. *Risks to health.*—The first and foremost under this head are (i) the building, (ii) poisonous gas and (iii) want of fundamental necessities for health preservation which are absolutely unsuitable, unguarded and wanting respectively. Proper Latrine, Urinal, Tiffin room or device for avoiding occupational diseases or mischief to health are unknown to this factory. Many a written complaint and even oral request to the Superintendent and the Chief Inspector of Factories have till now proved of no avail. Unbearable heat in summer, exactly the opposite in winter and wet tables, chairs and stools in the monsoon are the characteristic of the present Press building. This can better be imagined than described from the fact that the authorities have allowed the Press to hold office during April to June for six hours only in the morning instead of eight hours in the day in normal condition. After the earthquake of 1934 this building was built as a temporary one but is now being treated as semi-permanent.

47. *Evasion or violation of the provisions of the Factories Act.*—Same remarks as under question 42 also want of proper medical facilities as required by the Act. A factory Doctor with the requisite paraphernalia is essential for the safety and security of the lives of the factory labourers and their families. The Sub-Assistant Surgeon of the Gulzarbagh

Charitable Dispensary is a public servant and cannot be had during his dispensary hours of duty (7 to 11 A.M. and 5 to 7 P.M.), even if necessary for really urgent cases.

50. *Time rate and piece rate.*—We definitely say that the very system of piece-work is ruinous to the piece-labourers from all points of view. It cuts deep into the root of a piece-worker's life. This can better be elucidated orally than explained in writing.

52. *Working on Holidays.*—(Vide note under question 23).—If payment for work on holidays and festival days be introduced, it will automatically discourage holiday booking and remove a bitter dissatisfaction among the employees. Of course, really urgent Government work should be timely executed and paid for. (The Association is serious about this and will explain where the responsibilities lie).

59 and 63. *Minimum Wage.*—Yes; we are in favour of a minimum living wage. To prevent the minimum becoming the maximum we would suggest the introduction of a graded system of pay which will be conducive to the good of both the employer and the employed. "Men live in hope" and the grade-system is sure to remove the present discontent (inherent to the policy followed at present) both among men of fixed-pay and the piece-hands. (Oral elucidation will be helpful to the Commission).

71. *Reading room and library.*—No provisions for those exist at present. If provision is made it will be much appreciated by the literate section of the employees.

72. *Medical facilities.*—Quite inadequate (vide remarks under Question 47).

74. *Periodical Medical Examination.*—No such system exists at present except for the few (about 20) Mono and Lino Operators.

75. *Chief diseases.*—Lead poisoning, heat stroke due to the condemned building of corrugated iron roofing and its effect on the general health of the employees culminating in various other constitutional diseases.

78. *Sanitary arrangement.*—Practically no arrangement exists at present (vide our remarks under Question 42). There is no incinerator in this Press though maunds of waste paper are daily burnt; the obnoxious smoke and smell of this are very injurious to health of the men.

79. *Water-supply*.—No arrangement exists for supplying drinking water at the workers' quarters. Ordinary drinking water is supplied in the factory, but *specially* cold water is not available in the hot season. The Press building is not connected with the Municipal water-supply pipes.

80. *Sickness relief*.—There is no provision whatsoever for sickness relief. (Our preamble elucidates).

83. *Housing*.—Quite inadequate. Only about 5 per cent of the workers is provided with quarters which in most cases are unsuitable and unhealthy.

88. *Rest and recreation*.—Practically nothing (except what the young men do voluntarily).

103—105. *Association*.—Yes, we have our Association which is called the "Government Press Employees' Association, Gulzarbagh", and is recognised by Government since 1927.

114. *Works Committee*.—We had a Works Committee which was functioning very satisfactorily for the good of both the employer and the employee but due to the apathy of the office master it was discontinued and allowed to die out; under the present "popular" Government this is essential in the interest of smooth working of the Factory and good feeling between the Superintendent and his subordinates.

GENERAL.

Extension of service.—The Association is very much against the grant of any extension of service after the completion of the prescribed period. There are some such cases of extended service in our establishment which are really prejudicing and hampering the prospects of those below in the cadre and at the same time causing unemployment among educated youths.

Piece-workers.—Pension of piece-workers is calculated on the average earning of the last six years of a man's service which means an inordinately low pension, as the earning of a piece-worker decreases with the advancement of his age; and in the last six years of service, being an old man, he cannot earn as much as he used to do six years before.

Therefore, pension of a piece-worker should be calculated according to his class-rate in the time-scale as exists in the Government of India Presses. Permanent piece-hands should

be entitled to pension just as in the case of permanent fixed-pay hands. Their lot is really very hard (vide remarks under Question 50). Introduction of the provisions of the new Hand-book of the Government of India Printing *in toto* will remove many of their grievances and will be much appreciated by the piece-hands.

The Distributors.—They are also technical piece-hands next to the compositors, who in the past were always promoted to be compositors. But since the last few years, i.e., since the advent of the new machineries, not only their prospects in service but their earnings have been reduced by 50 per cent and their hope of ever being promoted to be a compositor, buried. (We will explain this: we have a written statement from them of which copies are not available but this may be read out to the Commission).

Fixed-pay hands.—As regards this there are different and peculiar sorts of both skilled and unskilled labourers in the Press, of whom the lot of the following is very hard and deserves special sympathetic consideration at the hands of the peoples' Government:—

- (1) The Readers, Revisers and Copy-holders,
- (2) The Section-holders and Assistant Section-holders,
- (3) The Forme-carriers and Case-carriers,
- (4) The Forme-washers and Cleaners,
- (5) The Lino Machine Handymen,
- (6) The Mono type casters,
- (7) The so-called Fire Brigade *Coolies*, and
- (8) A Wheel-turner.

Almost all of these have several times applied to the Superintendent and even memorialized the past and present Governments with no result whatsoever up till now. Sunk in despair in the past but with full hope now that their long standing real grievances will be redressed by the present "popular" Government through the recommendations of this Labour Commission, the Association submit this memorandum for their sympathetic consideration.

The Reading Branch, which is proverbially the aristocratic and best educated branch the very life and soul of a Printing Press has been lamentably neglected in this Province though

they are the really responsible printers and but for them many a non-official and official author could be exposed to grave errors and consequent criticisms from the Press and the public outside.

This Association is, indeed, very jubilant over this Labour Commission and hopes much against hope from them — their countrymen—which it could never expect from the foreigners. Unlike the results of many previous Commissions alleged to have been appointed for the good of the country, with a majority of bureaucratic foreign elements (officials) in them every one of the poor labourers, skilled and unskilled, exactly like the tillers of the land for whom the present Congress Ministry have already done and is still doing all that they can to improve their lot, trusts and hopes that the labourers also will have the same sympathetic treatment from the “popular” Government who have pledged and are out to improve the lot of, and redress the imperialistic oppressions on, the poor Indian labourers.

MEMORANDUM.

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Muzaffarpur Press Workers' Union, Muzaffarpur.

There are altogether 14 presses at Muzaffarpur. The number of workers in most of the presses varies from time to time. Only three presses have permanent staff. The names of presses with the number of employees in them noted against their names are given below:—

(1) Bose Press	...	32
(2) Sulabh Press	...	15
(3) Sunder Press	...	26
(4) Shanker Press	...	12
(5) Vidyasagar Press	...	10
(6) Baishali Press	...	8
(7) Bihar Bandhu Press	...	6
(8) Kamali Press	...	9

Including casual workers.

The other presses for example Chatterji, Herculian, Fazi, etc., have not got more than three persons in each who too turn up only when there is work. Now I shall like to show you the condition of labourers in each press separately.

BOSE PRESS.

This is the biggest of all the presses of the locality with a full well-equipped staff. The minimum and maximum salaries of the compositors are Rs. 2 and Rs. 30 respectively.

This press is guided by the Factory Act and possesses a power printing machine. The rules of the Act are not generally adhered to and are broken very often. Workers are compelled to work for more than 10 hours a day. They are not paid duly for their overtime working. The treatment, moreover, meted out to them is brutal and inhuman.

Not only are they abused and assaulted but also severely penalised for petty things. Of course, these things are done with a selected few. The pressman are not less badly paid and treated. They are required to work on contract.

They are not even informed as to the nature of work they are required to do the next day. Sometimes it also happens that there is nothing to be printed in the press. Still they are required to remain inside the press. The only grievance of this section of the press is the practice of the system of contract and ill-pay. Their condition can be ameliorated by making them paid servants and allowing other facilities as in the Government Printing.

They all have been working for more than five years each without any increment in their salaries. Besides, the leave granted to them does not exceed 10 days in a year which should at least be extended to 45 days (30 + 15) sick and casual leave.

SUNDER PRESS.

This press is smaller and less equipped than the former and has a power machine. Although the number of workers exceed 20, still it is exempted from the provisions of the Factory Act. It has almost all the workers belonging to the ranks and file of the proprietor.

Their condition is more than worse when compared to that of Bose Press. The growing dissatisfaction among them is said to be such as to burst in a terrible strike unique of its type. The Government is solely responsible for the fate of the workers here.

SULABH PRESS.

The proprietor of this press is one of the renowned Congressman, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, and a prominent *Kisan Sabhait*. The treatment accorded to the workers here is, of course, a glowing example for the press-owners of the province. But as to the payment of wages and other facilities, this press too is not less telling upon the poor workers. Sick leave and other grievances still remain to be ameliorated. Holidays on certain festivals, including Sundays are granted.

VIDYASAGAR PRESS.

Last but not the least, is the Vidyasagar Press, the proprietor of which has not up-till-now, cleared off the arrears of the workers for months with the result that the workers have been compelled to go on strike since the 20th January last. The attention of Dr. Rajendra Prasad was also drawn towards it while the Labour Enquiry Committee was recording evidence

here. Sunday is not observed as a holiday. Arrangement of Provident Fund and regular payment is badly needed.

CONCLUSION.

The workers will ever remain dissatisfied unless and until the following demands are not conceded by the press-owners. In order to control the growing discontent and disturbances, it is high time for the Government to adopt such measures as to ameliorate their condition in near future, so that they may live a peaceful and happy life.

IMMEDIATE DEMANDS.

(1) Duty hours to be limited to six hours per day excluding overtime. (2) Wages for overtime work should be double of ordinary rate. (3) Sunday must be observed as a holiday with 15 days' casual leave with full pay, 30 days' sick leave with half pay. All other local holidays together with the gazetted holidays must be granted to them. (4) Provident Fund. (5) Guarantee of payment of wages in the first week of every month. (6) Arrangement for hand washing materials free of cost and supply of gloves to the compositors. (7) Minimum salaries to be fixed at the rate of Rs. 10 per mensem. (8) Free medical treatment. (9) Application of Factory Act in presses where more than 5 persons work. (10) Recognition of the Union by the press-owners. (11) 30 per cent increment in salaries and there must be grade thereof. (12) Tiled or roofed houses alone should be allowed to carry on press work.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Bihar Provincial Press Workers' Federation, Patna.

In the interest of the welfare of labour and the healthy functioning of the Trade Unions, it is desirable that no legislation should stand in the way of the (a) freedom of association, (b) collective bargaining and (c) the right to withhold labour as the primary right of the working class. The provision of the Trade Disputes Act must be so amended as to provide facilities to labour in their economic fight against their unreasonable employers.

The unreserved hostility of the employers towards the labour organisations and the foul means adopted to break the Unions (including forming of parallel Unions) is a common feature to-day. This must be discouraged as it makes the proper functioning of the Unions difficult. It must be made obligatory for the employers to recognise the duly constituted and properly functioning Unions. Not only this. The Trade Union must be deemed as the representative of the employees and as such it must be consulted in all matters affecting the workers.

The status of the trade unions must be so raised as to make it compulsory for the Factory Inspectors to get their reports regarding the conditions prevailing in the factory duly attested by the Union authorities. Factory Inspectors must have contact with the Unions to ascertain the genuine grievances of labour and their services must be within easy reach of the labour unions.

For us, strike is always the last weapon to defend the collective interest of labour when all other means fail. But workers must have the right to withhold labour collectively whenever they deem it expedient and necessary. There should be no action amounting to the discouragement of the strike on the part of the Government. Foul tactics on the part of the employers to break the strike (including the employment of the black-legs) must be discouraged.

The press workers are probably the most unfortunate as far as even the insufficient and conveniently vague provisions

of the Factory Act and even the Payment of Wages Act are concerned. The provisions in connection with ventilation, fan, water, latrine, soap, towel, etc., have always remained closed under the cover of law books and have seldom been of any advantage to the workers. Many of them have to work in dark and congested rooms and sometimes even amidst smoke (type-foundry of the Khadag Vilas Press) which tell upon their health and capacity to work.

It is a fact that different sets of false registers are maintained in the factory to be shown to the Factory Inspectors and the workers never receive their wages in time. It is a practice in most of the presses that one month's wage is always kept in the hands of the employers. In many presses it has been found that the workers have not been paid their salaries for the last six months (Khadag Vilas Press, Patna). At many places the workers are coerced not to speak the truth to the Factory Inspectors and at many a place they are not allowed to date their signatures at the time of getting their pay.

Not only this. The proprietors, at their sweet will, introduce such private rules and regulations which detrimentally affect the workers and are inexpressibly unjust, inhuman and improper so much so that they leave the workers, their livelihood and fate at the mercy of the proprietors. The workers are forced to sign objectionable contracts (Hindustani Press, Patna).

While the facilities of the casual and sick leave are unknown to most of the workers, the number of holidays granted are very few. Overtime conditions are severe. Hence the Factory Act must be so amended as to cover the pressing difficulties of the workers. The Factory Act must apply to all the presses irrespective of the number employed in them.

It also may be mentioned that the wage level of the workers are inordinately low. At many places they get not more than three to five or six rupees a month. The Government must make provisions towards fixation of a minimum wage standard as approved by the Bombay Municipal Corporation (1938) or evolve some such machinery as accepted by the International Labour Convention (1938).

The condition of the press workers deserves especial attention as it is the most important industry and the conditions of the workers are decidedly pitiable. Their demands, as adopted by the Bihar Provincial Press Workers' Conference deserve attention and a sound legislation.

Some of the main demands of the press workers that was adopted by the Bihar Provincial Press Workers' Conference (10th, 11th, December, 1939).

(1) Rate of the piece-hand workers of the private presses must be on the basis of the same rate as obtains in the Government Press.

(2) No worker shall be on probation for more than six weeks after which period he shall be automatically deemed permanent.

(3) No worker shall be kept on trial for more than two days during which period he shall be paid not less than Rs. 2.

(4) No permanent employee's services shall be dispensed with unless for a grave dereliction of duty involving serious damages to machinery or other valuable property or for continued irregular attendance without leave, for which there must be proper enquiry.

(5) A minimum wage of Rs. 20 per mensem shall be fixed for every worker with graduated increase in wages at regular intervals.

(6) A six-hour day and 36-hour week. An hour's interval should be given for rest or meals.

(7) Night shifts not exceed five hours.

(8) Wages for overtime work shall be double the payment of normal wages for works with refreshment arrangements. Overtime payment shall be cleared off positively at the end of each week.

(9) One month's leave with full pay each year; 15 days casual leave with full pay and 15 days sick leave with half pay every year.

(10) Factory Act with the exception of its clause regarding the working hours shall be applicable to all presses irrespective of the press being worked by steam, electricity or hand and irrespective of the number of the workers engaged therein.

(11) Provident fund benefits and a gratuity of one month's salary for every year (or a fraction thereof) of his service.

(12) Press-workers' Union all over the province shall be recognised by the employees.

(13) Periodical inspection of the printing presses by the Factory Inspectors and their reports should be attested by the local Union Officials.

(14) There must be adequate arrangement for ventilation, fan, water, latrine, soap and towel in order to assure healthy condition of work. The compositors be provided with gloves to protect themselves from lead-poisoning.

Replies to the Questionnaire issued by the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Bhagalpur Labour Union, Bhagalpur.

One Labour Union has been started only a short time ago and the workers of all the mills and factories of this town have had no opportunity to take active part in it and hence the condition of all the factories cannot be supplied and I confine myself in the present reply mainly to some facts relating to the workers of the weaving department and casually of other factories and mills.

* I may point out that the questions have been directed to the owners of mills and factories but taking the clue from the same, I am submitting below the grievances of the workers in the weaving and other factories of this town and annex replies to questions which affect them:—

I beg to state that there are no service rules, no system of graded promotion, no security of services, no leave rules or any provision for sickness. There is no scheme for paying gratuity nor there is any provision for provident fund or pension. There is no holiday save Sundays and at times this also is encroached upon or curtailed as punishment.

The worker gets no opportunity to meet any charges and is at the mercy of the employers. There are no fixed ways of punishment nor there is any system of fine or dismissal. Partial attendance is dealt with as the employees desire and mostly the wages of the whole day are cut. There is no arrangement for rest. A worker has to work for 4½ hours in the morning at a stretch and again after an hour's interval 4½ hours in the afternoon and in some mills continually for 8 hours or 9 hours without allowing time for rest. Some workers are paid by monthly salary and some by thrice. The wages are very low. The monthly salary is also very low. Sometimes a worker gets annas 2 to 4 annas only for his day's work and the salary is never paid in full. If a worker's pay is fixed at Rs. 10 a month, this is never given in full and about Rs. 4 is cut off in fines or as being marked as absent while actually he is working. No worker can support his family nor does any worker get his two meals of rice every day. This is a question which

requires to be settled by the authorities otherwise the employers will never like to give even living wages to the workers. The rates of wages have been fixed by the employers with only one consideration, namely, to bring larger profit to them without the least consideration as to whether this is sufficient for keeping the body and soul of the workers together.

There is no special fund or fees. The fines realised go to the coffers of the employers and are meant to enhance their unauthorised profit.

There is no system of graded wages or promotions after a certain fixed period. A worker having started on Rs. 10 a month or Rs. 12 goes on working on the same amount for a period of 8 or 10 years and no consideration is shown to the experience he gains and attempt is always made to curtail the wages whether it is monthly salary or daily wages or cloth for any fixed amount.

Deductions are sometimes made on false plea of defective work and the worker cannot raise his voice against it.

There is no scheme in any factory whether weaving, flour mills or oil mills, for payment of bonus or profit sharing or any other additional allowance.

Yes, it is imperative that there should be an automatic adjustment of wages to the cost of living, rules may be framed by Government on this head.

Yes, the establishment of a scheme of minimum wages is absolutely necessary. This should be according to the bare living needs of the worker so that he might get his two simple meals, otherwise, as unemployment exists, an employer will try to curtail wages as much as possible and the poor workers will accept anything to obtain at least half a meal or even a morsel.

The Government should fix the minimum wage in consideration of the living necessity of each place and other conditions generally prevailing in the area. The minimum wages would certainly differ from centre to centre on account of special circumstances of the place.

Welfare Work.—There is no facilities for any welfare work allowed to the workers. In some cases pure drinking water is nowhere to be found and the employer does not care for it.

No facilities for out-door games or amusement of any kind.

Many of the workers are indebted and this is due mainly to insufficiency of wages and the temptations offered by the *Sikh* and *Kabuli* money-lenders in lending out money on apparently easy terms whereas in reality the rates of interest are most exorbitant and high.

These classes of money-lenders do not care for any law nor the debtors take shelter under any law for obvious reasons.

There are no Works Committee in any factory nor any arrangement with any Trade Union.

CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT.

15. There are no service rules whatsoever.

16. None.

17. None.

18. There has been no such system but one is absolutely necessary. The labourers are entirely at the mercy of the employers and they can remove the labourers at their sweet will.

19. None. No allowance whatsoever is paid to the labourers for any absence, be it for any cause.

20. No, even if a labourer absents himself due to an attack of cholera or any other sickness, he is marked absent and is paid nothing.

21. None. There should be some such scheme to provide for the old age and other emergencies of the labourers.

22. Sundays are allowed as holidays to the permanent staff but those who work on *thika* wages are not allowed Sundays service. Then again, whoever is absent on account of illness or other causes for 2 or 4 days, loses the holiday on Sunday.

23. On festival days also no holiday is allowed. If on account of religious observance a worker absents himself from the work, he loses his pay.

24. No such rules in existence.

25. No such measures.

26. No procedure adopted.

27. No such opportunity is given to the labourers. They are at the mercy of the employers and the worker is not allowed any chance to refute any charge nor the charge is always made known to the workers.

28. No such list or ways.

29. No such system of fines, etc., suspension or dismissal exists. It is entirely at the sweet will of the employers who employ such methods of punishment as they like. Some specialised rules are absolutely necessary to be framed for the various sort of punishments. A worker whose pay is Rs. 10, gets Rs. 6 or Rs. 7 at the end of the month.

31. Unauthorised absence is dealt with forfeiture of pay and additional fine.

32. Arbitrary method is adopted against the late comers. Even for a few minutes absence the whole day's pay is cut. He is allowed to take up the work and do it all the day but if he is absent even for a very short time, the wages are wholly cut and no wages are given for the work done by the man.

33. When workers are fined, the same is deducted from the pay and sometimes the worker is marked absent in lieu of the fine.

34. There is no special fines fund and the fine realised goes to the coffers of the employers to enhance their undue profit.

HOURS OF WORK.

35. The hours of work are 7 A.M. to 11-30 A.M. and 12-30 P.M. to 5 P.M., i.e., 9 hours (4½ hours each).

During the 9 hours strict watch is kept and none is allowed even to take rest of 5 minutes. If any one does so he is marked absent for the whole day.

38. There is no fixed method for calculating the overtime work; this also depends on the choice of the employers.

WAGES.

49. Both systems of calculating wages are in vogue. Some are paid on fixed salary system while others are paid on *thika*, that is, so much per yard of cloth woven or so much for a pair of *saris* or for a piece of suiting or shirting.

51. No consideration save as to how most of the profit will go to the employer is taken into account in fixing the rate of wages for ordinary or overtime work.

52. There is no difference in rates for night work or for work on holidays.

56. Besides fines, wages are subject to cut on account of being marked absent for stoppages of work by the employers themselves for cases which the workers have no control on or connection with. This is done mostly without justification.

57. There is absolutely no scheme for payment of any bonus or profit sharing or of any other additional allowance. Justice requires that there should be some such system but the employers look to their own interest only and want to be mill owners in a very short time, instances of which can be found in large numbers.

To quote one, the owners of Ram Bansi Factory are said to have been 'Gumashtas' only a few years ago but are now owners of large funds and savings which have been achieved at the cost of the workers.

58. This is absolutely necessary; this should apply to all workers.

Adjustment of wages to the cost of living is very necessary because the wages which are allowed to the workers at present are far below the need and workers are practically starving. For weaving 12 yards of *sari* the wages are sometimes so long as the wages for weaving a *banian*. The *sari* will be woven with ease in 3 days and with much difficulty in 2 and 2½ days and thus, it may be deduced how the workers can support themselves and their family by getting annas 7 in three days or even in 2 days.

59. Yes, it is necessary to fix the minimum wages and this should be in relation with the expenses of living. If this is not done, the workers are at the mercy of the employers and on account of sheer necessity they will be forced to accept any wages offered without the least consideration whether it is sufficient to keep their soul and body together.

60. The principle for fixing the minimum wages should be one, i.e., the workers may get their living wages so that they may not starve.

61. This should be done by a Government officer in consultation with the employers and also the workers and after due consideration of the local conditions about price of food stuffs, etc., and the demand of labour.

62. I think it should.

63. When graded scale of wages is fixed the minimum cannot become the maximum.

64. I am not afraid that any adverse effect will fall on the total employment. Further, it will improve the condition of the workers.

In short, there is nothing in any shape which may safeguard the interest of the workers and they are entirely at the mercy of the employers whose only object is to look to their own interest and make as much profit as they can, without minding that the workers are being crushed thereby. An enquiry by a responsible officer in this respect will be more desirable.

MEMORANDUM

Submitted to the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Digha Labour Union, Patna.

Under the joint management of the Indian General Navigation Company and Rivers Steam Navigation Company there is a factory at Digha for the repairs of the boats and an agency centre to control the traffic. In both these Companies about seventeen hundred workers work. (Appendix A). Though they have to undertake very risky works, sometimes involving loss of limbs and even life, the Company has very inadequate arrangement of treatment for the patients. The dispensary which is maintained is only on papers; it is of no help to the sufferers. If the Company is asked to supply you a list of the persons injured during the last 12 months and the treatment given to them, I think you will be convinced of my contention.

The woes of the labourers do not end in inadequate supply of medicine. The leave rules for these sufferers are also very unsatisfactory and so also is the case with the payment of compensation to the labourers. There is no uniformity in the policy of the Company. In some cases the Company has been liberal in paying compensation and in granting leave to the sufferers but in most cases the Company has behaved inhumanly. Shiasaran Kumbhar of Paleza lost his life in the month of September while on duty but his heirs got only about eighty rupees as compensation for the life of the deceased. When an agitation was started, the Company took the plea that the deceased was the man of the contractor; but this does not sound well. Similarly in the case of Jhalku who lost his one eye and was not paid any compensation; and so was the case with Biteshwar who lost his left thumb. In this connection the demand of the labourers are as follows:—

- (1) The dispensary should be well equipped and well managed; and the factory should secure the services of a competent doctor;
- (2) Leave with pay should be granted to all the workers who meet accident while they are on duty till they join their work;

- (3) Compensation should be given uniformly according to the Compensation Act; and
- (4) The Company should grant sick leave with pay to the workers up to the maximum limit of a month in a year.

2. Another grievance of the labourers is about insecurity of service. There are workers here who have been working with the Company for the last thirteen or fourteen years and there are many who have been working for the last three years but the services of all these are very insecure. They are turned out even without any notice are left stranded overnight for no fault of theirs. This system must be given a good-bye and after a demonstration of good behaviour within a prescribed period of temporary service, the workers should be given some security of service. By this I mean that the Company should have certain service rules and they should confine to them in dealing with the workers. In this connection the demands on behalf of the workers are as follows:—

- (i) After a service of 6 months, the service of the workers be confirmed and payment should be made on monthly basis;
- (ii) No worker, after confirmation, be turned out without a notice of at least a month or payment of full pay for one month;
- (iii) Casual leave with full pay be allowed to every worker for 30 days in a year;
- (iv) Workers should not be punished without giving them a chance to explain their conduct and no worker should be abused for offence and bribery must stop;
- (v) All payments must be made directly by the Company and not through any intermediaries, as is done in cases of *laskars*, masters and drivers;
- (vi) On Sundays and other important festival days leave should be allowed with pay;
- (vii) No servant of the Company should be forced to work for more than eight hours a day. If work for more than 8 hours has got to be taken, overtime allowance must be given. This practice of taking work for more than eight hours a day,

is generally prevalent in the sub-agency department where sub-agents, peons and steam-clerks have to work even for 24 hours and that without any corresponding payment;

(viii) The system of engaging unpaid probationers for more than 6 months must go. Unpaid probationers, after satisfying the Company of their competence, must get due payment after a probationary period of six months;

(ix) Housing arrangement should be made for those who have to come from a long distance.

3. Wages and increment of wages are other points on which there is difference between the Company and the workers. It was in the year 1936, that a strike of workers took place in the factory and in that the workers were completely crushed. About 200 of them were thrown out of employment and fresh hands were recruited in their place. These fresh recruits have since been very much harassed. The wages paid to them are far less than the wages paid to their predecessors. In pre-strike days, the Company used to distribute some eight to ten thousand rupees between the workers as wages. The work of the factory after the strike has considerably increased but the wages paid to the labourers are far less than what was being paid before the strike. (These days the total amount paid to the workers never exceeds Rs. 4,000 a month. Thus the wages have been lessened by about 50 per cent. If the Companies are asked to supply the comparative figures for the last ten years of the boats received by Digha Centre and the income from Traffic during the period mentioned above, it will be demonstrated that work and income of the Company have increased in the last three years. If it is proved that the work has increased with the income, there is no justification in decreasing the wages. There is, therefore, a growing demand among the workers for increment of wages. The Company has no doubt read the signs of time but it has followed the policy of pick and choose and has given increment to a few workers. This has created a great discontent among the workers. Some method should, therefore, be adopted soon to set the matter right.

4. The question of recognition of the Union is another demand of the workers. I need not emphasise here much upon the importance of the recognition of the Union as every man who has the least interest in Labour matters knows well

how important it is and as such I think this demand of the labourers will receive sympathetic consideration.

5. Much of the grievances of the labourers will be redressed if some method is found out to make compulsory arbitration by the Government on any point of dispute between the employers and the employees.

APPENDIX 'A'

Workers under different departments of Joint Company.

Name of Department.	Approx. Number of workers.	
1. Workshop operatives	...	400
2. Coal and Carters	...	80
3. Coal and Cargo <i>coolies</i>	...	400
4. Crews of steamers and cargoes	...	600
5. Pilots	...	250

1,730

Points placed before the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Patna City Mazdoor Union, Patna City.

I, on behalf of the Patna City Mazdoor Union, have the honour to draw your kind and immediate attention to the grievances and troubles of the local labourers for your kind consideration and request your honour to kindly move the Government of Bihar to redress the same by proper legislation.

1. That a large number of labourers are employed on daily wages which does not insure their services and are often prey of victimisation by their employers.

2. The owners of small mills keep some labourers, say ten or fifteen, on monthly wages and the remaining on daily wages. Thus the total number of labourers reaches up to forty. This trick they play with a view to save themselves from the provisions of the Factory Act.

3. Hundreds of women work in the local industries on daily wages of annas four only and have no surety of service.

4. The clerical staff (*Munims* and *Gomastas*), experts, and supervisors do not get any holiday extensions of their religious festivals.

5. Labourers do not get any holidays except

6. The labourers under handling contractors carry load weighing $2\frac{1}{2}$ mds. to $2\frac{3}{4}$ mds. on their heads great difficulty and consequently their health suffers and their lives are shortened.

7. The employees are not granted any privilege, casual and sick leave.

8. No medical aids are given to the employees.

9. There is no system of provident fund or gratuity for the employees.

10. Employees, even working on monthly wages, have no surety of their services.

11. Employees are not provided with habitable quarters.

Points placed before the Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee

By

The Labour Union, Jaynagar (Darbhanga).

I have the honour to lay before you the following ~~w~~ances of the labourers working in the local Rice Mills confident hope that you would be kind enough to ~~the~~ir immediate redress.

services of the labourers are temporary.

~~The~~ wages are quite insignificant and poor. They ~~has~~ 2-6 to annas 3 per day as their daily wages.

(3) ~~They~~ are not allowed extra wages for the overtime work.

(4) They are getting the same wages for the nightwork also.

(5) In case of any death by accident or any such similar occurrence, they or their family members do not get any compensation for the same.

(6) ~~The~~ workers of the Mill have no uniform save a few ~~sh~~ine-workers.

~~The~~ working hours are 11-12 hours at present.

~~The~~ facilities of water-supply, sanitation, latrines, leave, Sunday leave, sick leave, privilege leave, ~~maternity~~ leave to women, and the public holiday leave are not at all given to them.

(9) They are treated very harshly by the mill-owners.