

Indian Labour Commission: Evidence.

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ON

LABOUR IN INDIA

EVIDENCE

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NOTE TO PART 1.

In this part is reproduced the bulk of the evidence submitted to the Commission in the form of written memoranda in reply to the list of subjects circulated in August 1929. In preparing this volume the Commission have sought to retain all matter likely to be of permanent interest to students of the subject, and not available elsewhere. Material supplied to the Commission which has already been printed and published elsewhere has in general not been reproduced. Where memoranda have been abridged all considerable omissions have been indicated in the text.

TERMS OF REFERENCE.

“ To inquire into and report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India, on the health, efficiency and standard of living of the workers, and on the relations between employers and employed, and to make recommendations.”

NOTE.—“ Industrial undertaking ” for the purpose of the Commission is interpreted as in Article I of the Washington Hours Convention, which is as follows :—

“ For the purpose of this Convention, the term ‘ industrial undertaking ’ includes particularly :—

- “ (a) Mines, quarries, and other works for the extraction of minerals from the earth.
- “ (b) Industries in which articles are manufactured, altered, cleaned, repaired, ornamented, finished, adapted for sale, broken up or demolished, or in which materials are transformed ; including shipbuilding and the generation, transformation and transmission of electricity or motive power of any kind.
- “ (c) Construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, alteration, or demolition of any building, railway, tramway, harbour, dock, pier, canal, inland waterway, road, tunnel, bridge, viaduct, sewer, drain, well, telegraphic or telephonic installation, electrical undertaking, gaswork, waterwork or other work of construction, as well as the preparation for or laying the foundations of any such work or structure.
- “ (d) Transport of passengers or goods by road, rail, sea, or inland waterway, including the handling of goods at docks, quays, wharves or warehouses, but excluding transport by hand.”

* * * * *

The competent authority in each country shall define the line of division which separates industry from commerce and agriculture,

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LIST OF SUBJECTS.

I. Recruitment.

- (1) *Origin of Labour.*
 - (i) Extent of migration.
 - (ii) Causes of particular streams of migration.
 - (iii) Changes in recent years.
- (2) *Contact with villages.*
 - (i) Extent and frequency of return.
 - (ii) Extent of permanent labour force.
- (3) *Methods of recruitment.*
 - (i) Existing methods.
 - (ii) Possible improvement.
 - (iii) Public employment agencies.
 - (a) Desirability of establishing.
 - (b) Possibility of practical schemes.
- (4) *Extent and effects of disturbance of family life.*
- (5) *Recruitment of seamen.*
 - (i) Existing practice.
 - (ii) Effect of changes introduced in Calcutta.
 - (iii) Suggestions for improvement.
- (6) *Recruitment for Assam.*
 - (i) Need of retention of control.
 - (ii) Administration of present system.
 - (iii) Composition and working of Assam Labour Board.
 - (iv) Defects of existing Act and system.
 - (v) Possible substitutes.
- (7) *Unemployment.*
 - (i) Extent and character.
 - (ii) Extent to which caused by—
 - (a) Retrenchment or dismissals.
 - (b) Voluntary retirement.
 - (c) Other causes.
 - (iii) Possible methods of alleviating and remedying distress.
 - (iv) Unemployment Insurance.
 - (v) Application of International Conventions relating to unemployment.
- (8) *Labour "turnover."**
 - (i) Average duration of employment.
 - (ii) Extent of casual employment.
 - (iii) Absenteeism.
 - (a) Extent, character and causes.
 - (b) Seasonal or otherwise.
 - (c) Time and wages lost.
- (9) *Apprentices Act, 1850.*
Value of.

* This word should be read as indicating generally the changes in composition of the labour staff of an undertaking.

II. Staff Organisation.

- (10) *Details of organisation, administrative and departmental.*
- (11) *Selection of managing staff.*
- (12) *Recruitment and training of supervising staff, superior and subordinate.*
 - (i) Methods in force.
 - (ii) Facilities for training and promotion of workmen.
- (13) *Relations between staff and rank and file.*
 - (i) Relations generally.
 - (ii) Value and defects of system of employing jobbers.
 - (iii) Works Committees : their constitution, extent and achievements.
 - (iv) Works Councils and Industrial Councils.
- (14) *Timekeeping, piecework, contract and attendance registers.*
 - (i) How and by whom kept and checked.
 - (ii) How and by whom wages actually paid to workers.
- (15) *Contractors as intermediaries.*
 - (i) Extent and character of work given on contract.
 - (ii) Extent of sub-contracting.
 - (iii) Control exercised over working conditions.
 - (iv) Effects.

III. Housing.

- (16) *Extent to which housing is provided.*
 - (i) By employers.
 - (ii) By Government or other public agency.
 - (iii) By private landlords.
 - (iv) By workers themselves.
- (17) *Facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses.*
- (18) *Nature of accommodation provided in each class.*
 - (i) In relation to workers' demands.
 - (ii) In relation to best type from health point of view.
 - (iii) Provision made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.
- (19) *Utilisation by workers of accommodation available.*
- (20) *Rent-rates in various classes.*
- (21) *Special problems arising in connection with various classes of housing.*
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 - Occupation of employers' houses by tenants in other employ ;
 - Eviction.
- (22) *Moral effect on worker of industrial housing conditions. Improvements tried and suggested.*

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- (23) *General health conditions of workers.*
 - (i) Figures of mortality.
 - (ii) Birth rate and infant mortality.
 - Methods of registration.

- (iii) Working conditions—
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 - (iv) Dietary.
 - (v) Physique.
 - (vi) Effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities.
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- (24) *Extent of medical facilities provided.*
- (i) By employers.
 - (ii) By Government.
 - (iii) By other agencies.
 - (iv) Provision for women doctors, trained midwives or dais.
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- (i) Generally.
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- (26) *Sanitary arrangements, (a) at work places, (b) at home.*
- (i) Latrines.
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 - (iii) Bathing and washing.
- (27) *Extent and nature of official supervision.*
- (i) Work of Boards of Health in special areas.
 - (ii) Inspection of plantations.
 - (iii) In mill and other industrial areas.
- (28) *Suitability of existing Factories and Mines Acts and Rules*
- (i) Control of temperature in factories.
 - (ii) Control of humidification in cotton mills.
 - (a) Nature of action taken by Local Governments.
 - (b) Results.
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- (30) *Sickness insurance.*
- (i) Suitability of International Labour Convention.
 - (ii) Possibility of introducing other systems.
 - (iii) How to meet difficulties arising from non-acceptability of Western medicine, paucity of medical men, migration of labour, finance.
- (31) *Maternity benefits.*
- (i) Extent and working of existing schemes (including allowances given before and after childbirth).
 - (ii) History of central and provincial Bills.
 - (iii) Possibility of legislation.

V. Welfare (other than Health and Housing, but including Education).

- (32) *Extent of welfare work.*
 - (i) By employers.
 - (ii) By other agencies.
- (33) *Employment of Welfare Officers and workers.*
- (34) *Nature of other Welfare activities, (a) by employers (b) by other agencies.*
 - (i) Provision for refreshments, shelters and crèches.
 - (ii) Provision for physical culture, recreation and amusements.
 - (iii) Other activities.
- (35) *Results achieved.*
- (36) *Provision of educational facilities by employers—*
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 - (ii) For half-time workers.
 - (iii) For workers' children.
 - (iv) Extent to which used.
- (37) *Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.*
- (38) *Co-operation.*
- (39) *Possibility and desirability of a Statutory Miners' Welfare Fund.*

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 - (ii) Of children employed in factories.
 - (iii) Of adults.
- (41) *Facilities for industrial and vocational training.*
- (42) *Effect of education on standard of living and industrial efficiency of workers.*

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- (43) *Existing regulations in factories, mines, railways and docks.*
- (44) *Incidence of accidents in factories, mines, railways and docks.*
- (45) *Causes.*
- (46) *Accident prevention (including " Safety First " propaganda).*
- (47) *Accidents in non-regulated establishments.*
- (48) *First-aid and medical relief.*
- (49) *Stringency of inspection and enforcement of regulations.*
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 - (ii) In seasonal industries.
- (50) *Effect upon safety of hours, health, light and working conditions generally.*

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 - (i) Extent of use.
 - (ii) Comparison with extent of possible claims.

- (iii) Effects on industry.
- (iv) Availability and use of insurance facilities and value from workers' point of view.
- (v) Desirability of compulsory insurance by employers.
- (52) *Desirability of extending Act to other occupations.*
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 - (ii) Conditions governing grant of compensation.
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 - (iv) Machinery of administration.
 - (v) Other matters.
- (54) *Desirability of legislation on lines of Employers' Liability Act, 1880.*

IX. Hours.

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- (55) *Hours worked per week and per day.*
 - (i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
 - (ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
 - (iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.
- (56) *Days worked per week.*
- (57) *Effect of 60 hours restriction—*
 - (i) On workers.
 - (ii) On industry.
- (58) *Effect of daily limit.*
- (59) *Possibility of reduction in maxima.*
- (60) *Intervals.*
 - (i) Existing practice—
 - (a) In relation to fatigue.
 - (b) In relation to workers' meal times.
 - (ii) Suitability of the law.
 - (iii) Suitability of hours during which factory is working.
 - (iv) Number of holidays given.
- (61) *Day of rest.*
 - (i) Existing practice.
 - (ii) Suitability of the law.
- (62) *Exempting provisions and the use made of them.*

B. Mines.

- (63) *Hours worked per day and per week.*
 - (i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
 - (ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
 - (iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.

- (64) *Days worked per week.*
- (65) *Effect of restriction of hours.*
 - (i) On workers.
 - (ii) On industry.
- (66) *Possibility of reducing maxima.*
- (67) *Suitability of the law relating to shifts.*
- (68) *Possibility of introducing an effective daily limitation.*
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 - (i) In relation to fatigue.
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 - (iii) Number of holidays given.
- (70) *Day of rest.*
- (71) *Adequacy of existing provisions.*
- (72) *Exempting provisions and use made of them.*

C. Railways.

- (73) *Hours worked per week and per day.*
 - (i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
 - (ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
 - (iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.
- (74) *Days worked per week.*
- (75) *Extent of application of International Labour Conventions relating to—*
 - (i) Hours.
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- (76) *Intervals.*
 - (i) In relation to fatigue.
 - (ii) In relation to workers' meal times.
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- (77) *Possibility of regulation.*

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- (a) Plantations.
- (b) Docks.
- (c) Other industrial establishments.
- (78) *Hours worked per week and per day.*
 - (i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
 - (ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
 - (iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.
- (79) *Days worked per week.*
- (80) *Desirability of regulation.*

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- (81) *Effect of 1922 Act on employment.*
- (82) *Admission of infants to factories.*
- (83) *Suitability of regulations for women's work.*
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- (85) *Double employment of children (i.e. in more than one establishment in same day).*
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- (87) *Extent of "blind alley" employment (i.e. extent to which children are dismissed on reaching full age).*
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 - (ii) Probable effect on industry.
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2	Mr. C. J. Spencer ..	General Manager, The Metropolitan Tramways, Limited, 55, Broadway, London, S. W. 1.	10—14	173—183, L-150.	
3	Captain L. H. Green, M.A.	Secretary, Flour-Milling Employers' Federation, 28, King's Road, Chelsea, S. W. 3.	15—16	183—187, L-231.	
4	Mr. R. R. Bannatyne, C.B.	Assistant Secretary, Home Office, Whitehall, London.	17—30	187—197, L-277.	
5	Sir Gerald Bellhouse, C.B.E.	Chief Inspector of Factories, Home Office, Whitehall, London.	17—30	198—215, L-370.	
6	Sir Walter Kinnear, K.B.E.	Controller of Health Insurance, Ministry of Health, Whitehall, London, S. W. 1.	31—41	215—236, L-550.	
7	Mr. J. F. G. Price, C.B.	Principal Assistant Secretary, Unemployment Insurance Department, Ministry of Labour.	42—88	237—259, L-732.	
8	Mr. F. W. Legget ..	Principal Assistant Secretary, General Department. } Ministry of Labour, Whitehall, London.	42—88	260—285, L-947.	
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9	Mr. H. L. French, C.B., O.B.E.	Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 7, Whitehall Place, London, S. W. 1.	89—96	285—304, L-1142.
10	The International Labour Office.	Geneva	97—146	..
11	British Social Hygiene Council.	Carteret House, Carteret Street, London, S. W. 1.	147—152	..