

EAST INDIA (ASSAM COOLIES)

—RETURN to an Address of the Honourable the House of Commons,
dated 22 July 1889;—for;

- “COPIES of GOVERNMENT OF INDIA DESPATCH, dated the 22nd day of June 1889, with its ENCLOSURES, including REPORTS by Mr. *Tucker* :
“ And, of MEMORIAL of the INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF CALCUTTA, dated the 12th day of April 1888 (in continuation of House of Lords’ Return, (No. 14), 5th March 1889).”

India Office,
25 July 1889. }

J. A. GODLEY,
Under Secretary of State for India.

(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

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COPIES of GOVERNMENT OF INDIA DESPATCH, dated the 22nd day of June 1889, with its INCLOSURES, including REPORTS by Mr. *Tucker*:—And, of MEMORIAL of the INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF CALCUTTA, dated the 12th day of April 1888 (in continuation of House of Lords' Return, (No. 14), 5th March 1889).

No. 11, of 1889.

Government of India.—Revenue and Agricultural Department.—Emigration.

To the Right Honourable Viscount *Cross*, G.C.B., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

My Lord,

Simla, 22 June 1889.

IN our Despatch No. 1 (Emigration), dated 22nd January 1889, we gave an account of the proceedings which had taken place up to that date in connection with inland emigration from Bengal to Assam, and explained that until we had conferred with the Chief Commissioner of Assam, who was then expected in Calcutta, and with the Bengal Government, we were unable to decide how far further inquiry might be requisite as to the working of Act I. of 1882, or what would be the earliest date by which it would be possible for us to determine whether new legislation upon this subject was called for, or not. We are now in a position to place before your Lordship our more mature views on this subject.

2. We will first explain what action has been taken since the date of our last communication. It was stated in the 6th paragraph of the Despatch above quoted that we were disposed to agree with the Bengal Government that a case had been made out for introducing reforms in the system of recruitment, and for establishing more effectual sanitary control over tree emigrants on their way to Assam. After conferring with the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the Chief Commissioner of Assam, we decided that one step at all events might be taken at once, which would have the effect, without interfering with the working of the Inland Emigration Act, of enabling the Bengal Government to deal more effectually with sanitary difficulties, and in some measure to strengthen its hands in repressing abuses connected with recruitment. This was the enactment of a short Sanitary Act in the Provincial Council. * A Bill was accordingly prepared, and passed into law on the 7th ultimo.* As your Lordship will observe, this Act establishes ample control by the Provincial Government over sanitary arrangements on the emigrant routes to Assam; and, by providing that all emigrants shall proceed by prescribed routes and halt at fixed depôts, and that all persons who engage or assist others to emigrate may be required to furnish way-bills and otherwise to carry out the instructions of the Act, places the local authorities in a very much better position to watch over the interests of assisted emigrants and to counteract the abuses which attend the recruiting system.

3. The question was at the same time carefully considered whether any early legislation was expedient or necessary for the general or partial amendment of Act I. of 1882. It was decided at the conference to which allusion has already been made that before any safe conclusions could be formed upon this point the Chief Commissioner of Assam should be required to provide us with more definite and fuller information on the following points:

- (a) the relations between coolies and planters;
- (b) the sanitary condition of tea plantations;

(c) the

* *Vide* Papers forwarded with the Viceroy's letter (Legislative) No. 18, dated 13th May 1889.

RETURN RELATING TO

- (c) the sanitary arrangements *en route* within Assam to tea plantations ;
- (d) the working of the system of local contracts under Sections 111 and 112 of the Act ;
- (e) the expediency of reducing the minimum term of contract from three years to one ;
- (f) the effect in Assam which would result from modifying the present system of recruitment by introducing a stricter system of registration, either of persons willing to emigrate, or of contracts, or by any other measure ;
- (g) the effect of excluding Dhubri from the list of labour districts.

4. The Chief Commissioner was addressed accordingly in our letter No. 30E., dated 13th February 1889, which forms one of the enclosures of this Despatch. He was also asked to state what measures would be taken to secure the opinion of the planters.

Mr. Fitzpatrick replied on the 26th March after his return to his province. His letter recommended adherence to the plan which he intimated that he had already formed, viz. :

- (1) to complete during his cold weather tour his examination of the working of the present system ;
- (2) to issue, at the close of his tour, circulars to the officers of the administration detailing the points on which further investigation and report might be required ;
- (3) to collate their reports before going into camp in November next, and then during his winter tour to clear up points still remaining doubtful, in personal discussion with officials and others interested in the matter, and to submit his final report in March of next year.

He represented that he could not, unless this programme could be sanctioned, give a really satisfactory report on the points enumerated in the preceding paragraph.

5. In the same letter, however, Mr. Fitzpatrick offered to submit, if required to do so, the best report he could in the approaching autumn. He did not recommend this course ; and we have agreed with him in considering it much less satisfactory than that for which he had expressed his preference. It has moreover now become out of the question that the Chief Commissioner should submit a report in the autumn, in view of Mr. Fitzpatrick's early departure from Assam, and the impossibility of his successor mastering so intricate a subject before having had the opportunity of making a tour through the Province. We should certainly deprecate any general revision of the Act that was not based upon a careful and complete investigation of the conditions and circumstances of the province in which emigrants are employed, as well as of those of the province in which they are recruited. A copy of the detailed instructions recently issued by the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the district officers of the Province, in connection with the proposed inquiries, forms another of the enclosures to this Despatch, and will, we think, convince your Lordship of the impossibility of obtaining the full information which we require within an earlier period than that named by Mr. Fitzpatrick.

6. There remains the question whether the abuses attending recruitment are so prevalent, or of such a character as to require any special and partial amendment of the Act in anticipation of a general review of the law affecting inland emigration. We do not think that they are, and we believe that no case has been made out for any urgent legislation beyond that which has recently taken place in the Bengal Council. This will, we believe, secure to the local authorities not only a sufficient control over sanitary arrangements, but also greater facilities for inspecting the batches of assisted emigrants *en route* to Assam. We anticipate that the active measures which are now being taken by the Bengal Government to use the authority given by the criminal law for the investigation and repression of abuses connected with recruitment, will go far to reduce criminal or illegal action within very narrow limits, and we have recently supported the efforts of the Local Government in this direction by extending for another year the employment of a special police officer on the duty

of dealing with cases in which recruiters overstep the law. We have moreover sufficient reasons for suspecting that the allegations hitherto made regarding the existence of malpractices have been, in many instances, either exaggerated or unfounded. The result of the inquiries which have been instituted has been to show that the cases in which such malpractices have actually occurred form a very small percentage, and that such cases would as a rule be cognisable by the police under the ordinary criminal law. In the Report on Labour Immigration for 1887, the Chief Commissioner of Assam points out that against a number of 25,500 emigrants there were only 26 cases of alleged malpractice, and that in many of these there was clearly great exaggeration; and he proves this to be so by an examination in detail of each one of them. Mr. Tucker, the special police officer to whom reference has just been made, reports 31 cases, all apparently of 1888, of which eight proved to be false, and eight more had to be abandoned, and were probably false. Of others still under inquiry many were of a very doubtful character; while in every case in which there had been, or was likely to be, a conviction, open violence had occurred with which the police had, under the criminal law, full power to deal. We attach as Appendix A. to this Despatch a memorandum in which the cases reported by Mr. Tucker are made the subject of a more detailed analysis.

7. We desire to guard ourselves against being supposed to deny that abuses exist. They are inevitable under any system of emigration on a large scale. Misrepresentations will be made both to men and to women of the advantages of the life for which they are invited to abandon their own country. But we contend that before we can consider ourselves justified in contemplating a step so retrograde as the abolition of free emigration, a very much stronger case must be made out to prove not only that malpractices are common, but that the police are unable under the ordinary law to suppress them.

The whole of our emigration policy has in recent years been directed to the removal rather than the imposition of restrictions; and it has been found that as facilities of communication have been improved, abuses have gradually disappeared. The extensive flow of labour from Madras to Ceylon and the Straits, from Madras and Chittagong to Burma, and from Bengal itself to the Duars, is unfettered by any restrictions, and is now practically free from any of the evils which are represented to attend the recruitment of labourers for Assam. We would remind your Lordship that, although it is true that the labourers in Burma and the Duars are not placed under penal contracts, except so far as Act XIII. of 1859 may be applied to their case, yet both in Ceylon and the Straits there are labour ordinances, and the planters pay a moderate fee for the coolies brought to them. The easy system of transport has much to do with these favourable results. We are convinced that in the same way the opening up of railway communication with Assam would do more to reduce to a minimum the percentage of cases, small as it now is, in which malpractices can be proved, than any system of general registration which, however effectual it might be in the discovery and punishment of abuses, would carry with it the still greater evils of checking the flow of emigration and of interfering both with the liberty of the people and with the natural relations between the demand for, and the supply of labour. Assured as we are of the advantage which Assam emigration offers to the overcrowded districts of Bengal, and of the general superiority of the condition of the tea coolies in Assam over that of their fellows whom they leave behind in their native villages, we are unable to permit ourselves to take any step in the direction of restrictive legislation without the fullest deliberation and the most complete conviction of the necessity of such action. We have therefore decided to await the further reports called for from the Chief Commissioner of Assam, before dealing in any respect with the Amendment of Act L. of 1882.

We have, &c.

(signed)

Lansdowne.

F. S. Roberts.

G. Chesney.

A. R. Scoble.

C. A. Elliott.

P. P. Hutchins.

D. Barbour.

(ENCLOSURES)

APPENDIX A.

MEMORANDUM on Complaints of Recruiting Abuses.

It will be convenient to refer first to the Chief Commissioner's remarks in paragraph 3 of the Immigration Report, quoted as an Appendix to his letter of 26th March 1889. He points out that in 1887 out of 25,500 emigrants there were only 26 cases of alleged malpractice; that in many of these there was clearly great exaggeration; that it is absurd to talk of large bodies of men being marched off from Bengal or Behar to Dhubri as prisoners and against their own will; that when such a body is diverted from one destination to another, it must certainly be with the connivance of the Sardár or recruiter, who of course has to tell his employer some sort of a story to excuse himself; that the cases of single women are especially exaggerated, although there is little doubt that they all start of their own free will and (supposing registration at starting to be requisite) would then be prepared to say anything which their temporary protectors tell them.* In the same place Mr. Fitzpatrick examines in detail the 26 complaints which had been brought to his notice.

* The reports of 1885-86 by the Government of Sir B. Thompson and the then Chief Commissioner, Sir C. Elliott, contain similar observations.

2. The number of emigrants in 1888 has not been reported, but was certainly in excess of 25,000. In this year Mr. Tucker was specially deputed to investigate complaints which had been or might be brought forward in connection with the action of *arkatis* or recruiters. In his report dated 29th September 1888 he mentions 31 cases, all apparently relating to 1888.

3. In Nos. 13, 15 to 18, and 21 to 30, the alleged victims were females, and these cases strongly confirm what Mr. Fitzpatrick had previously remarked on this class of complaint. In No. 13 the women admitted at the trial that their previous statements were false and the accused were acquitted. In 22 the magistrate found that the woman had gone away of her own free will. Twenty-three was also found to be false, and Nos. 17 and 24 to 28 had to be abandoned. No. 15 is a curious case, but has but little connection with emigration though the complainant and the accused happened to be *arkatis*. The former sold his wife to the latter and then charged him with having kidnapped her; the woman was a consenting party and had actually married the defendant. No. 18 also turned out to have no connection with emigration; the three girls had been ill-treated at home and took refuge in a mission-house. No. 21 is still under inquiry, but the woman's statements seem absurd and incredible on their face. In No. 16 it has been ascertained that there was no misrepresentation or other malpractice on the part of the recruiters with whom the girls went, and the case is chiefly remarkable as showing how easy it is for an emigrant to complain and get sent back to her family. In 29 also the girls (assuming their story to be in all respects true and free from exaggeration) found no difficulty in effecting their escape and returning home. In case No. 30 the women complained with effect to a native doctor; this case is shown in the first Report as under inquiry; from the Report dated 23rd April 1889, it appears to have ended in a conviction of rioting and cheating, or attempting to cheat, but the girls' complaint does not seem to have alleged either of these offences.

4. In cases 14 and 19 the alleged victims were boys of 13 and 12, respectively. In 19 the boy of 12 turned out to be a young man of 18, and had emigrated voluntarily. Fourteen is still under inquiry; the boy was sent home by the forwarding agent as soon as he protested.

5. In case 31 an unlicensed subordinate is said to have persuaded coolies passed by his master to transfer themselves to other employers. He may have been guilty of fraud on his principal, but there was no fraud on the cooly. The conviction obtained before the magistrate has been set aside on appeal.

6. Case No. 11 is a very good illustration of Mr. Fitzpatrick's remarks. It was a false complaint made by the recruiting agent of a Dooar planter by way of excuse to his employer for his failure to bring any coolies. No. 12 was a case between rival recruiters, but is still under inquiry. In Nos. 4 to 10 a very large number of men are alleged to have been forcibly seized and carried off to the tea-gardens. In some cases they have never been found. No. 9 seems to have been a true case; there was an immediate complaint and the police acted promptly. In Nos. 4, 5 and 6 also there have been convictions, and the allegations must have had some substantial basis of fact. They are, however, open to this remark, that the forcible seizure and confinement of large bodies of men would be impossible if the police were even moderately efficient, while the involuntary removal even of a single individual to Dhubri, by the route and through the depôts prescribed under the new Act, would be wholly impracticable. Nos. 7, 8 and 10 are still unproved, and in each case the complainant was himself a recruiter and unlikely to be deceived. In No. 8 he had himself signed a labour contract and worked for some time under

under it. In No. 7 he was certainly examined at Dhubri, for he and his wife had been rejected as unfit or unwilling; the presumption therefore is that his coolies were also examined and found both fit and willing. Ten seems a very similar case to 11, which has been noticed above; the complainant at once made his escape, but went on to his garden instead of complaining.

7. The remaining cases, 1, 2, 3 and 20, were all the work of one gang which has been broken up by Mr. Tucker's energetic proceedings, and he reports that the Dooar route is now open and "no longer infested by arkatis." In No. 1 the coolies resisted successfully.

8. In addition to these four there were convictions in six other cases; eight proved false, seven were abandoned, and six remain under inquiry and doubtful.

9. Mr. Tucker's second report bears date February 1889, and mentions only three new cases. The second is precisely similar to No. 19 mentioned above; a boy alleged to be 12 years of age turned out to be 18, and had emigrated voluntarily. The third is a characteristic instance of the female victim; the girl went of her own accord, but changed her mind and had no difficulty in escaping, though she said she had been locked up; during the inquiry she again changed her mind and returned to the same depôt, quite willing and anxious to go to Cachar.

10. The first case is a serious one, but it does not appear that it had any connection with emigration, and the Bengal Government has withdrawn it from Mr. Tucker as being outside the scope of his special employment. Five men dressed as constables are said to have taken away five young women as witnesses after dark, and they have not since been heard of. Bearing in mind native customs, it is most extraordinary that no male relative accompanied them, and the whole story seems suspicious.

11. The third report is dated 23rd April 1889, and gives details of seven other complaints. In No. 1 three men have been convicted of wrongfully confining a miner and his wife and child. There is the usual pretence that some intoxicating drug was administered, but they seem to have gone willingly, though they afterwards changed their minds. In this case, as in the others in which convictions have been obtained, the ordinary law has been found sufficient, but it of course requires to be put into operation. No. 2 is under trial; the alleged victims were stopped at Dhubri and sent back; they intended to emigrate to Sylhet, but not to the Assam Valley. No. 3 is also under inquiry, and may be similar to No. 11 mentioned above. In No. 4 the only fact ascertained is that a boy has disappeared. Nos. 5 and 6 are really one case and still under inquiry; it remains to be seen whether the girls were really deceived or had merely changed their minds; one thing is quite clear that when they refused to go on they were sent back; when they chose they could raise an alarm, and obtain the assistance of the police. In the last case a servant girl became the willing mistress of an arkati; she says he was taking her to be sold as a cooly, but the case has yet to be proved.

APPENDIX B.

CORRESPONDENCE with the Government of Bengal and the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

(No. 30—5—9, dated *Calcutta*, the 13th February 1889.

From *W. R. Lawrence, Esq.*, Under Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department, to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

IN continuation of my letter No. 79E. of the 25th May last, and previous correspondence, on the subject of the working of the Inland Emigration Act, I. of 1882, I am directed to forward, for your information, a copy of a note, embodying the conclusions arrived at at the consultation recently held on the subject, and to request that you will favour the Government of India, at as early a date as possible, with the report required under the second clause of the note accompanying.

2. It is requested that in furnishing the report you will also supply more definite and fuller information on the following points:—

- (a) The relations between coolies and planters;
- (b) The sanitary condition of tea plantations;
- (c) The sanitary arrangements *en route*, within Assam, to tea plantations;
- (d) The working of the system of local contracts under sections 111 and 112 of the Act;
- (e) The expediency of reducing the minimum term of contract from three years to one;
- (f) The effect in Assam which would result from modifying the present system of recruitment by introducing a stricter system of registration, either of willingness to emigrate or of contracts or otherwise;
- (g) The effect of excluding Dhubri from the list of labour districts.

3. I am also to request that in submitting the report required under Clause 2 you will state what measures will be taken to secure the opinion of planters on the working of the present Act, or on any changes which may be suggested for the improvement of the present system.

WORKING of the INLAND EMIGRATION ACT, I. of 1882.

(No. 899.)

From the Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department.

(Judicial Department.)

Sir,

Dated Shillong, 26 March 1889.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Lawrence's letter No. 30E., dated the 12th ultimo, on the subject of the working of the Inland Emigration Act, No. I. of 1882, and to submit the following remarks:—

2. In the letter under acknowledgment the Chief Commissioner is requested to state the character of the inquiry he proposes to institute, with a view to furnishing the report required by paragraph 4 of Lord Cross's Despatch No. 102, dated 4th November 1886, and in particular what measures will be taken to secure the opinions of planters, and further to say whether the inquiry can be completed so as to admit of the report being submitted at an earlier date than that already ordered, namely, the end of 1889.

3. The Chief Commissioner, I am to say, in laying out his plans for the preparation of the important report in question, has been guided by Mr. Lawrence's endorsement No. 8, dated 13th January 1887, which, in forwarding Lord Cross's Despatch, directed that the report should cover the working of the Act for the year 1889, and should be submitted "as soon after the 1st January 1890 as possible." His plan accordingly has been—

(1.) To see for himself as much of the working of the system as he could during his present cold-weather tour, which extends over both the Surma and Assam Valleys;

(2.) To prepare and issue on his return to headquarters in April, a very full circular addressed to Deputy Commissioners, discussing in a suggestive manner all the points (including among others those mentioned in paragraph 2 of Mr. Lawrence's letter under reply) which have from time to time been raised by official correspondence, or by critics, or which should occur to the Chief Commissioner in the course of his tour, and requiring Deputy Commissioners to investigate them thoroughly in communication with planters among others, and report in detail on them by the end of August or early part of September;

(3.) To collate these reports, and as far as possible prepare his report for Her Majesty's Secretary of State before going on tour in November, then during that tour to have meetings in the principal localities concerned, and discuss the subject with all interested in it, clearing up doubtful points, reconciling discrepancies, and giving a final shape to his suggestions for the amendment of the law.

If this plan were carried out the Chief Commissioner's report would be submitted to you from camp in March 1890, but could not be submitted earlier.

I am to add that it was Mr. Fitzpatrick's impression that if the report were submitted in March it would reach the Government of India at the most convenient season. It would be in vain to hope that proposals involving a large mass of details, such as he will probably have to submit, could be at once accepted and thrown into legislative form. Correspondence which will occupy several months, involving possibly a reference to the Secretary of State, must take place before a Bill can be introduced, and as it would probably be thought desirable to introduce such a Bill in Calcutta, no time would be gained by submitting the report in the autumn.

4. If, however, the Government of India think it necessary to have the report in the autumn, say before the Chief Commissioner starts on his cold-weather tour in November, the Chief Commissioner will, of course, submit it then; but I am to say that in that event he can do little more than frame his report and his proposals for the amendment of the law on the materials furnished by the Deputy Commissioners and such general knowledge as he himself possesses. In such an event he would endeavour to get together at Shillong a few of the most experienced district officers and a few representatives or delegates of the planting community; but he fears that, though a meeting of that sort might

might suffice to prevent its being said that the planters had not been heard, it would not help much towards the framing of amendments of the law which could be relied upon to work smoothly.

5. The fact is that the state of things to be dealt with, as disclosed to the Chief Commissioner in the course of his present tour, is somewhat peculiar. The great varieties that present themselves in the conditions of different plantations in the classes of labourers employed and in the systems prevailing make the subject a very complicated one to deal with. Then, again, the comparative isolation in which planters, even living near each other, work, the want of organization among them, and the impossibility of getting busy men like them to think out a large number of questions the full bearing of which may not be immediately apparent, or discuss them adequately among themselves, make any attempt to obtain their views through the medium of a very small number of representatives somewhat difficult. It is for those reasons that Mr. Fitzpatrick is anxious, if possible, to visit at least the head-quarters of the districts, and perhaps of some of the principal sub-divisions concerned, after he has received the reports of the Deputy Commissioners.

If, however, he should find on receiving the Deputy Commissioners' reports that there is less in them calling for reconciliation and that explanation than he apprehends that there will be, and that they disclose a greater unanimity among the different classes concerned than he anticipates, he will at once frame his own report, and submit it to the Government of India before proceeding on tour. What he would ask is that the question as to whether the report should be submitted in the autumn or in March should be left open until the reports of the Deputy Commissioners have been received and collated.

6. I am to add that, though there are numerous points of detail on which the Chief Commissioner desires to reserve his judgment, pending fuller inquiry, he has no hesitation in saying that there is absolutely nothing in the existing state of things which calls with any such degree of urgency for a revision of the Act of 1882 as would make it of importance whether his report was submitted in the autumn or in the spring. As regards the relations generally between the employer and the labourer, I am to annex to this letter an extract from the last Labour Immigration Report, which sets forth the opinion Mr. Fitzpatrick formed from last year's experience of Assam, and I am to say that what he has since seen goes to confirm that opinion. It may further be stated that steps are now being taken by the planters themselves to establish committees to watch over the treatment of coolies by their employers, a measure from which great assistance to the authorities employed with the administration of the Act may be expected.

7. There are, I am to say, only two important points in which the working and results of the system are to any serious extent unsatisfactory, namely, first, that of the detailed arrangements for the importation of labour; and, secondly, that of the health of the imported labour on the garden.

Both of these points, I am to observe, have been so thoroughly inquired into that there is really little further room left for investigation, and on neither of them, as it seems to the Chief Commissioner, is any amendment of the Act of 1882 urgently required.

8. As regards the former point, the evils of the present system are a want of proper sanitary arrangements along the route and a danger of persons being entrapped or enticed into emigrating by false representations. The subject is discussed at length in paragraph 3 of the last Immigration Report, an extract from which is annexed to this letter. The whole subject has been exhaustively inquired into both in Assam and in Bengal. In Assam the powers given by the existing Act are amply sufficient, and all that was needed was the issue of certain executive orders, which are now in operation, and which, though they cannot be expected entirely to get rid of evils which must exist to a certain extent under any system of emigration on a large scale in any part of the world, will, it is hoped, reduce those evils to the minimum.

In Bengal, on the other hand, where additional powers are needed, the Chief Commissioner believes that all that is required could be effected, without touching Act I. of 1882, by a Sanitary Act, which, while its main object would be that of enforcing a proper system of sanitation, would indirectly check the malpractices of recruiters and *arkatis* by requiring all emigrants to appear before an official, and by providing for the registration of them and of those under whose charge or on whose responsibility they travel.

9. To turn now to the second of the two points above referred to, viz., the health of the imported labourer on the garden, it must, the Chief Commissioner fears, be admitted that the high mortality among freshly-imported labourers forms a heavy set off against the many advantages of the emigration system. This high mortality, however, the Chief Commissioner thinks, is except in some rare cases, in no way due, as has been suggested, to the labourers being overworked. The daily task is light, as may be seen by the very large amount of extra work done by the stronger and more energetic coolies, which often amounts to as much again, and in some instances it is said to twice as much again. Moreover, the extent to which labourers desiring to take a day's rest or to engage in other work apply for and obtain leave of absence from the garden work strikes any one who visits the gardens as extraordinary. The only cases in which the severity of the work

may be suspected to have some effect upon the health of the labourers are those of certain undermanned gardens, where leave of absence is refused, and the labourer is perhaps pressed to do (for extra payment of course) something beyond the ordinary task. These cases will form the subject of special inquiry, but, so far as the Chief Commissioner is aware, they are rare. Nor does the Chief Commissioner believe that the mortality is due, as has likewise been suggested, to insufficient food. The ordinary garden coolie, he believes, is much better fed than others of his class, and many of them add considerably to the wages they earn on the garden by keeping cows and bullocks, and cultivating patches of land for themselves or working for neighbouring landholders.

10. The main causes of the mortality are, he believes, two. The first of these is cholera, which is usually more or less prevalent in Assam, and which, when it attacks a garden, is, owing to the habitations of the coolies being closer together, apt to commit far greater ravages than in an ordinary Assam village, where each house is at a considerable distance from the next.

The second and more important cause of the excessive mortality is the climate of Assam, which, at least in those parts where many of the tea-gardens lie, is by no means a salubrious one for those born and bred in it, and which is peculiarly fatal to new arrivals.

The operation of this cause has hitherto been to a considerable extent aggravated by the contractors, in whose hands a large amount of the emigration business lies, sending up weakly coolies, but the managers of gardens have now had this fact so forcibly brought home to them that, the Chief Commissioner believes, the evil is likely to be less in future. If, however, the efforts of managers to check this evil are not successful, it seems to the Chief Commissioner that it may be a question whether we should not insist on a medical declaration of fitness as distinguished from one of mere freedom from disease, such as, he believes, was required under some of the former Acts.

11. There is, however, the Chief Commissioner fears, no disguising from ourselves that, do what we will, the mortality among new arrivals in some gardens, and especially in gardens established on fresh clearances, will continue to be high. That no pains are spared to cope with this evil will be seen from the chapter of the annual report on unhealthy gardens. It should be added that, subject to what has just been said as to the possibility of its becoming desirable to insist on a medical certificate of fitness, we already possess ample powers to deal with this matter, and further, that the managers of gardens are always most ready to second our efforts in this direction. Among the numerous reports and references which are constantly coming before the Chief Commissioner in connection with sanitation on gardens, he only recollects one instance in which the manager did not readily and at once adopt an improvement proposed by the medical authorities.

12. This being the position, the Chief Commissioner ventures to think that it would be best if he were allowed to take, in respect to the preparation of his report, the course he marked out for himself when the original orders of the Government of India were put before him; but if the Government of India express a wish to have the report in the autumn, leaving it to him to submit it then or in the spring, as he may think best on receiving the Deputy Commissioners' reports, he will do his best to meet their wishes, and if they order him to submit it in the autumn it need hardly be said that he will so submit it, doing what he can under the circumstances.

I have, &c.

(signed) *F. C. Dankes,*

Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

EXTRACT Paragraphs 3 and 5 from the Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam for the year 1887.

Working of the Act. Paragraph 3.—THIS seems the most convenient place to speak of the working of the system of so-called "free immigration."

It must be admitted that that system has worked in a manner very different from what was contemplated by its authors. It is easy for those who are wise after the event to say that this ought to have been anticipated; but it may well be doubted whether any such persons, if they had assisted at the passing of the Act of 1882, would have anticipated what as a matter of fact has happened.

It was thought that the time had arrived when emigrants might be expected to come to Assam in large numbers without much assistance, or at all events without the stimulus and aid of the elaborate organisation then provided by the professional supplier of labour, and that the system of contractors, *arkattis*, and so forth, would in time die a natural death; but, instead of this, the great and ever increasing mass of the labour supply business has remained in the hands of the professionals, with this difference, that, whereas formerly these persons worked under strict regulation and control, they now under the "free emigration" system work free from all control. As a result, certain evils, more or less incident to any system of emigration, have been considerably aggravated.

In

In the first place, we have had in the severe outbreak of cholera which occurred in the early part of the present year,* causing a lamentable sacrifice of human life and most serious pecuniary loss to planters or suppliers of labour, an illustration of the danger of allowing immense masses of emigrants to be transported to Assam without any means of enforcing the most ordinary sanitary precautions; but on this point the Chief Commissioner will not dwell here, as it does not appertain to the year under report. In the second place, the free recruiting system has undoubtedly given rise to a not inconsiderable number of cases of forcible kidnapping and fraudulent enticement of labourers by the understrappers of the professional dealer. As to the nature and extent of this mischief, Mr. Fitzpatrick, having so recently taken charge of the administration, is unable as yet to express any very definite opinion. Moreover, the matter has only recently attracted the attention it deserves, either here or in Bengal, and most of the cases that have been taken up being still under inquiry in Bengal, there is but little information in the Assam offices regarding them. The following, however, are the conclusions to which the Chief Commissioner is disposed to come provisionally, and pending further inquiries which he is making. As regards forcible kidnapping, the charges have commonly proceeded from employers of labour in Bengal or their recruiters, who have alleged that coolies proceeding to an estate in Bengal have been forcibly seized by the servants of a professional contractor, confined in a depôt for Assam emigrants, and, perhaps, ultimately carried off to Assam. That considerable numbers have been so seized and confined in Bengal seems beyond a doubt from some reports of Bengal officers which the Chief Commissioner has seen; but so far as Mr. Fitzpatrick is aware, though charges of carrying the coolies forcibly to Assam, and settling them on plantations there have been made, no such charge has as yet been substantiated, and he must say that it seems to him that the story told in some of these cases is extremely improbable. In what is called the Tiphuk case, *e.g.*, the papers of which the Chief Commissioner has before him at this moment, it is alleged that fifty coolies were by force seized in Bengal, carried to Dhubri, made to execute contracts there, then carried up to the Tiphuk estate in Sibságar, and settled there, and that though they were within easy reach of the district head-quarters, and the Deputy Commissioner visited the plantation, they never breathed a word of their grievance to anybody until months later, when, a complaint having been made by the Bengal employer who had been deprived of their services, a regular inquiry was instituted.

Now it is, the Chief Commissioner admits, conceivable that these men may, in the first instance, have been forcibly seized, but that all the rest could have been effected by force, or even by intimidation, passes belief. It seems to him, so far as he can venture to conjecture, that the probability is that these coolies and their sardárs were paid for abandoning the service for which they had been engaged, and that when the matter came to be inquired into, they thought it best (the coolies acting under instructions from the sardárs) to make out that they had acted under compulsion throughout. An alternative suggestion, and not an improbable one, is that they were deceived by false representations as to the advantages they would enjoy in Assam, but that, however simple and timid they may be, they were under compulsion, whether physical or moral, throughout, it would be most difficult to believe. However this may be, the Chief Commissioner is inclined to think that now that attention has been fully directed to the matter, we have not much to fear in the future from anything in the way of kidnapping, properly so called.

He is inclined to regard the danger from enticement by fraudulent means as on the whole a more serious one; but this, too, he is disposed to think, is apt to be much exaggerated. The entire number of cases in which there was even a suggestion that coolies had been enticed to the Assam Valley during the year 1887, and of which the Chief Commissioner has been able to hear anything, was about 26, against an immigration of upwards of 25,500. Of these, seven were simply cases in which a woman having been abducted somewhere up country, and a reference having been made to the Deputy Commissioner, Dhubri, on the mere chance of something having been heard of her there, it was reported that nothing had been heard. Two were cases in which it appeared that, whatever ground the husband or other members of the family might have had to complain, the immigrants had come of their own free will, and not under the influence of any deception. In eight other cases no trace whatever has been found of the person or persons alleged to have been enticed to Assam, and all that can be said is that they may or may not be cases in which persons were induced to come here by the fraudulent representations of a recruiter. Of the remaining cases, about ten in number, four have been disposed of by the courts in Bengal, one resulting in conviction and three having been dropped. The other six are still under inquiry, chiefly in Bengal, and, owing to the absence of any regular system in dealing with such cases here (a matter which has now been corrected), the Chief Commissioner is unable to say anything regarding them beyond this, that some of them are likely to be true.

There is one sort of enticement case of which the Chief Commissioner himself has learned something since his arrival here, and to which, as it seems to be to a certain extent typical, and to have given a peculiar tinge to the discussion of this subject in the hands of writers for the native press, it may be desirable more particularly to refer. It is that of the female waif or stray, the woman who has been deserted by her husband, the woman who has left her home after a quarrel, the first wife who has been superseded

* Judicial Department Resolution, No. 2,575, dated the 7th September 1888, published in the "Assam Gazette" of 8th September 1888.

superseded by a second, the wife of a Coolin Brahmin, and such like. Such women are often ready almost to go anywhere with anybody, and to do anything, and they seem not unfrequently to fall victims to the professional *arkatti* or recruiter. It may safely be said, however, that at least such of them as are of superior caste would not willingly go to labour on a tea-garden. They have accordingly to be deceived by some false representation, and they are probably told that a home will be provided for them, either as domestic servants or in a less honourable capacity, or perhaps the person who enlists one of them tells her that he will himself marry her, or keep her as his mistress. All then goes well till they reach Dhubri, and it is conceivable that, notwithstanding the care taken there in the attestation of contracts, a woman may sometimes be got through by being told that the attestation means nothing, and by thus being persuaded to give the required answers. It is only when she is put on board the steamer, and her deceiver leaves her, that she is brought to understand what is before her, and the deception comes to light. Unfortunately, one of these women, when her case comes to be inquired into, is apt, probably under the tutoring of others, to tell a story altogether false in its details. She is a person of unimpeachable respectability, she was led to believe that she was being taken to her husband, or some other member of her family, she was forcibly carried away or concealed on the route, she never appeared before any medical or other officer, either in Calcutta or Dhubri, and so on. The result is that, on the one hand, there is a risk of her story altogether being disbelieved, and, on the other, there is a risk of its being invested with a sensationalism which fixes the attention of the public, and thus leads to this matter of enticement of coolies being regarded as a much commoner incident of the emigration system than it really is. The matter is nevertheless one calling for serious attention, and the Chief Commissioner has issued instructions to the Deputy Commissioner of Dhubri, and also to officers attesting contracts under Section 111 of the Act for the special and separate examination of female recruits unaccompanied by a husband, which, he trusts, will have the effect of checking the evil to some extent.

As regards other classes of the immigrant population, it is manifest that the immense mass of them, coming, as they do, from localities from and to which there is a constant stream of labourers going and returning, could scarcely be imposed upon by any misrepresentation as to the nature of the life before them; but there must be always a certain proportion of persons from localities tapped for the first time, or of recruits picked up by chance, whom it would be very easy to deceive, and who, so long as the present absolutely uncontrolled system continues, are, it is to be feared, often deceived, not perhaps in the precise manner stated by themselves or by writers in the press, but in a manner still harder to bring home to the guilty parties, viz., by simple misrepresentations as to the nature and advantages of the life which lies before them.

For this reason, and, quite as much, if not more, from a regard to the necessity of some system of sanitation and protection for large masses of emigrants en route, the Chief Commissioner is glad to learn that the matter of the so-called "free emigration" is being taken in hand by the Government of Bengal, which controls the recruiting areas.

Paragraph 5. As regards the relations between the employers and the labourers generally, Mr. Fitzpatrick is yet unable to say much; but he has made it a point during the short time he has been here to inquire carefully into every case, whether brought to notice in the press or otherwise, in which there has been the slightest suggestion of a cause of complaint on either side, and he feels bound to say that, so far as he has gone, he sees no reason to dissent from the opinions expressed by his predecessors on this point. With about 900 gardens employing upwards of 323,000 hands, there must, of course, be a certain proportion of bad men, perhaps even of thoroughly depraved men, both among the employers and the coolies. There must be a certain amount of harshness and oppression, at times possibly even of downright cruelty, on the one side, and of turbulence, conspiracies, and maliciously concocted charges on the other; this, unfortunately, is human nature as displayed among all classes of men, and happily we have criminal courts strong enough to deal with it; but, speaking generally, the relations between the employers and the labourers seem to be fairly good. The Chief Commissioner much regrets to observe the attitude taken up by a certain class of writers in the vernacular press on this point, as, indeed, regarding the position of coolies in Assam generally. It is, of course, proper that these writers should bring abuses to notice, and the Chief Commissioner must acknowledge that his attention has been sometimes directed by them to matters which might otherwise have escaped him; but the exaggerations and misrepresentations in which they at times indulge, the bitter hostility some of them exhibit towards the planters, and the indiscriminating opposition most of them display towards emigration, ignoring all the good it has done, and can do, both for the people of this province and the people of the recruiting districts, are calculated to work a lamentable amount of mischief, not only by embittering the relations between the employers and the labourers, but also by deterring people who are in distress in their own country from emigrating to Assam. This latter danger was recently dwelt on in a sensible article in the "Paridarshak," a vernacular newspaper published in Sylhet, and that it is by no means an imaginary one will be seen from the following extract from a letter addressed to a Calcutta newspaper by the Rev. Mr. Heberlet, a Baptist missionary, who recently, from motives of the purest benevolence, brought up to this province a number of distressed Christian labourers from Orissa. After speaking of the advantages gained by these people

people by emigrating to Assam, and of the position of tea-garden labourers, and their relations with the planters, he notices the descriptions to be found in the vernacular papers of the hardships endured by the coolies, and of the atrocities said to be practised upon them by the planters, and then proceeds as follows:—

“These exaggerated reports, I believe, do a great deal of harm by deterring many necessitous people who might better their hard lot by emigrating to the tea districts, and they have operated injuriously, I know, in frightening many of the neediest of the people under my charge to such an extent that they prefer their present miserable condition to the awful lot of garden coolies as depicted in these reports. I had enlisted several of our poor families who were to proceed with me to Assam, and arrangements were being made for our departure, when one of them happened to hear an article read out of a local vernacular paper which dealt with the coolie question, and pictured the horrors of the coolie's lot. He reported what he had heard to his companions, and the result was that more than half of the volunteers drew back at the last moment, and would not be persuaded to go. A time of partial drought in these parts followed, and while the people who went with me to Assam had an abundance of food, those who tarried behind, and had previously been in straitened circumstances, were reduced almost to starvation point. Let me then appeal to those who circulate such reports to consider that they may, in many cases, as in the case of these people, do much harm, and cause much suffering to those whom they desire to save from evils that are largely imaginary.”

(No. 94—5-33, dated Simla, the 19th June 1889.)

From Sir *E. C. Buck*, Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

WITH reference to my letter No. 77—E.—5-20, dated 14th May 1889, and previous correspondence, I am directed to say that the Government of India, after a careful consideration of the correspondence and of the views of the Governments of Bengal and Assam, has decided that investigation of the issues concerned with inland emigration will most conveniently follow the programme suggested in the second paragraph of the letter No. 899, dated the 26th March last, from the Chief Commissioner of Assam, a copy of which is enclosed for information.

2. In arriving at this decision, His Excellency in Council has been partly influenced by the consideration that a new officer is about to take charge of the Assam Administration, and he cannot be expected to form at once any well-matured conclusions on the various issues with which he will have to deal. No amendment of Act I. of 1882 of a general character can, therefore, come under consideration until the final report is received from Assam in March 1890.

3. I am to add that the question has been separately and carefully considered whether any special amendment of the Act of 1882 is desirable at an earlier date for the purpose of dealing with the abuses connected with recruitment. In consideration of the small percentage of alleged malpractices compared with the whole number of emigrants; the still smaller percentage of cases in which the allegation is proved to be true; the fact that the statutory terms of the contracts under which labourers are placed in Assam are already fairly well known in the districts of recruitment, and that such knowledge must be daily becoming more and more widely extended; the greatly improved facilities afforded by the recent Sanitary Act for the inspection of coolies *en route*, and the success of the active measures now being taken by the authorities in Bengal to deal with such cases under the existing law, His Excellency in Council has determined that it is not expedient or necessary to undertake any urgent legislation in anticipation of the fuller information which will be provided by the Assam report. In conclusion, I am to request that a further report on the whole subject may be submitted by the Government of Bengal simultaneously with that expected from Assam about March 1890.

No. 95—5-38.

COPY forwarded to the Chief Commissioner, Assam, with reference to his letter No. 899, dated the 26th March last.

CIRCULAR calling for Information on the Working of Act I. of 1882.

(Circular, No. 43.)

From the Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, to all Deputy Commissioners and Sub-divisional Officers of Labour Districts.

(Judicial Department.)

Sir,

Dated Shillong, 30 May 1889.

IN compliance with instructions from the Government of India, I am now directed by the Chief Commissioner to address you on the subject of a thorough inquiry into the working of Act I. of 1882, the Inland Emigration Act, and Act XIII. of 1859, in connection with the tea industry in Assam.

2. Her Majesty's Secretary of State, in reluctantly giving his consent to Act I. of 1882, pointed out objections to some of its provisions, in particular to the extension of the maximum term of contract to five years, and, having regard to the high mortality on tea estates, and the general unhealthiness of some parts of the Province, directed the submission of a special report at the end of three years, with a view to consider the possibility of abandoning exceptional legislation respecting labour contracts in tea gardens. That report was submitted in due course, and subsequently, under the further orders of the Secretary of State, a second triennial report, which is due at the close of the current year, was called for, for the period ending with the year 1889. The Government of India are now pressing for the submission of this report at an earlier date, but Mr. Fitzpatrick has asked that it be permitted to stand over till March 1890, so as to enable him to carry out his original programme of inquiry, which was as follows :—

(1.) After personally examining the working of the system during his cold-weather tour of 1888-89, which has just closed, to issue a circular of this sort, suggesting points on which information should be given, and requiring Deputy Commissioners and sub-divisional officers thoroughly to investigate them in communication with planters and others interested in the subject, and to report on them in detail before the end of the rains.

(2.) To collate these reports, and, so far as possible, prepare his draft report for Her Majesty's Secretary of State before proceeding on his cold-weather tour of 1889-90; during that tour to hold meetings in the principal localities concerned and discuss the subject with all interested in it, and then to give a final shape to his suggestions, and submit his report to the Government of India in March 1890.

Whether it will be possible to carry out this programme fully or not depends in a great measure on the degree of urgency which the Government of India attach to the early receipt of the report; but in any case it is most important that Deputy Commissioners and sub-divisional officers should do their best to make as searching an inquiry as possible into the results of the working of the system and furnish as complete information as can be procured.

3. The Chief Commissioner accordingly desires that you will reply to the various points raised in this Circular, utilising all information in your office, all that you know from your own experience, and all that you can learn by consulting those interested as widely as possible, and after inspecting and thoroughly studying a certain number of gardens, not being less than 15 per cent. of the total number in the district or sub-division in your charge, which you may, on a consideration of all circumstances, select as being typical ones, fairly representing the rest. Among the gardens so selected should be one or two unhealthy gardens according to the size and importance of the district or sub-division; but, as these unhealthy gardens will bear an abnormally large proportion to the healthy gardens selected, the figures for them should in no case be compiled with the figures for the healthy gardens, but should be kept entirely separate. To ensure uniformity in the treatment of the figures by different officers in different districts, the Chief Commissioner desires that the special inspection should in all cases cover the period of one year previous to date of inspection, irrespective of the date on which the garden was last inspected.

4. I am to explain that, in the case of this report, the injunction laid down in General Department Circular, No. 20, dated the 27th March 1889, against making reports the vehicles for suggestions and proposals, is removed, the Chief Commissioner's object in addressing you now being to obtain not only full statements of facts and inferences, but also proposals for the improvement of the Act and rules, and for the administration of the system generally. In treating the subject in your report, you will follow the order in which the various heads and sub-heads are shown in this Circular; but you will not feel yourself bound to confine your report to the points expressly raised, if you have any observations

observations and suggestions to make on other points. It will no doubt occur to you that several matters of importance are not brought forward, or are insufficiently brought forward, in this Circular; but there are, I am to explain, many important matters with which, as full inquiry has already been made into them, and there is complete information on record in the Secretariat, it is unnecessary to trouble district officers. Should you, however, have any remarks to make on any points other than those referred to you, the Chief Commissioner will be glad to receive them.

5. As regards the form in which your report is to be prepared, I am to communicate the following instructions, which the Chief Commissioner desires should be very carefully followed:—

(1.) Under each head and sub-head, in the order in which they are treated in this Circular, you should give in detail the facts and figures obtained at your inspection of the specimen gardens selected for the inspection directed in paragraph 3, adding such comments and observations as may be necessary to explain them, and taking care to show separately the total results,—

(a) For ordinary gardens,

(b) For unhealthy gardens.

(2.) Having given these particulars, you should then, with reference to the head or sub-head under which they are given, proceed to consider how far they may be taken as applicable to the generality of gardens in your district or sub-division, and you should make such general observations on the subject, and give such general facts, explanations, and proposals as may suggest themselves to you from your own experience, from the results of your inquiries, and from the opinion of planters and others interested in the subject who have been consulted by you.

Under some of the heads into which the subject has been divided it will be unnecessary for you to enter into figures, and under others it may perhaps be impracticable to obtain them. The Chief Commissioner is obliged to leave a good deal to your discretion in this respect; but he expects that in all cases in which it is practicable you will endeavour to obtain and report detailed figures for the selected gardens. For the heads under which uniformity in the details of the figures to be reported has been considered essential, tabular statements have been prescribed, which you should carefully fill in.

6. I am especially to request that you will take due care to complete your inquiries in time to admit of your report being prepared and despatched so as to reach the Chief Commissioner's office before the 15th September at the latest. I am to point out that any delay in its submission will cause serious inconvenience to this office, and will interfere with the punctual execution of the Chief Commissioner's programme described in paragraph 2. The reports of sub-divisional officers should be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner, who will submit a general report for the whole district, distinguishing the total figures for each sub-division, and forwarding the sub-divisional officers' reports and statements with his own remarks thereon, together with his own report. In the Assam Valley districts the reports will be submitted through the Commissioner, who will add his own comments and suggestions.

7. Having given these general indications of the lines of inquiry, I am now to invite attention to the particular heads to which the Chief Commissioner desires your inquiries to be directed. The subject naturally falls into three parts:—

I. Labour supply—Recruitment and transit.

II. The legal status of the labourer—His contract and the incidents and consequences thereof.

III. The material condition of the labourer—Wages, health, vital statistics.

LABOUR SUPPLY—IMPORTATION.

1. As you are doubtless aware, one of the objects with which Act I. of 1882 was passed was to bring about the following results:—

First.—To promote recruitment by garden-sardárs, as opposed to recruitment through contractors.

Secondly.—To encourage and in every way facilitate "free immigration," in the proper sense, and at the same time to secure that recruitment by garden-sardárs and contractors should be conducted under careful supervision.

These results, however, have not been attained. Contractors have avoided the restrictions intended by the Act, and, by omitting to register the coolies recruited by them in the district of recruitment, have brought them up as so-called free immigrants to Dhubri, or in the Surma Valley to the garden itself, and placed them under local contract there. This practice has led to many abuses, and complaints of abuses (to be noticed at greater length hereafter) in connection with the subject of recruitment, and to sanitary evils of a grave nature which have manifested themselves from time to time. A full consideration

RETURN RELATING TO

of the entire system of recruitment is therefore a matter of the greatest importance, and, though there is necessarily much in it which falls beyond the experience of officers in Assam, the Chief Commissioner hopes that, by careful attention to the points referred for inquiry, and by fully consulting employers of labour, you will be able to obtain much valuable information.

9. *Recruitment and Importation of Labour.*—As regards the details of your inquiry under this head, you will first consider the general course of fluctuations from year to year in the importation into your district or sub-division of each class of immigrants, sardári, contractors, and non-Act, so far as can be ascertained from the Provincial and other reports in your office, and you will then state, as fully as you can learn them, the causes which have led to increases or diminutions in immigration generally and in immigration of each description from time to time.

10. Next, you will describe the various modes in which immigration is brought about in the case of your district or sub-division. On this point, I am to ask that you will obtain accurate statistics for the last three years for the selected gardens in your district or sub-division of—

- (1) Coolies brought up under an Act I. contract executed previous to arrival on the garden, (a) through certificated garden-sardárs, (b) through contractors.
- (2) Coolies sent up by contractors, but not under such a contract.
- (3) Coolies brought up not under Act I. contract by uncertificated garden-sardárs.
- (4) Coolies brought up without a contract by certificated garden-sardárs contrary to law. Probably you will find some cases of this description.

The results of your inquiries will be shown in Tabular Statement Form I. (statistics of recruitment) annexed to this Circular. The figures for all the gardens dealt with should be compiled together in one statement.

11. Further, you may find on inquiry that the sardári system is conducted in two modes, which it is important to distinguish. You may have, on the one hand, the pure sardári method of recruiting, under which the sardár himself collects from his own village or its neighbourhood all the coolies he brings down, receiving no aid from any one except from an agent in the recruiting district, who supplies him with funds, and possibly arranges for forwarding the coolies he collects, or you may have, on the other, a mongrel system under which the sardárs are sent up to the recruiting districts consigned to the care of a contractor, who engages that if they fail to complete their complement of coolies, he will make good the deficiency by *arkati* coolies. You will carefully ascertain to what extent the sardári systems with which you have to deal fall under the one or the other of these descriptions, and the Chief Commissioner will be glad to have your opinion as to the advantages and disadvantages of the latter form of sardári recruiting. *Prima-facie* it would seem objectionable, as tending to initiate the sardárs into all the abuses of the contractors' system, and as confounding two processes which it may be difficult to deal with unless they are kept distinct. It is, moreover, hard to believe that there is any real necessity for having recourse to it, as if the sardárs fail in completing their complement of coolies, the manager can always, even at the last moment, have contractors' coolies sent up.

12. You should next describe in very minute detail the *modus operandi* in the case of each of the systems of recruitment referred to in paragraph 10, and state, as far as you may have been able to ascertain them, the causes which have led to the adoption of one or the other of those systems.

There is one point in this connection on which the Chief Commissioner would desire to be informed. He has heard it said that what are commonly called *arkati* or contractors' coolies are not recruited for any particular garden, or even for any particular part of the Province, and that they are perfectly indifferent as to where they are sent. He would be glad to know whether such is the case, or, if not, to what extent such coolies exercise a choice in the matter, and at what stage they make their election.

13. The next point that will require your attention is the result of each of these modes of recruitment with reference to the stamp of coolies recruited, their nationality, adaptability to the change of climate, willingness and capacity for work, &c. In the event of your finding that there is a tendency, either generally or in respect of any particular mode of recruitment, towards increase in the importation of classes of coolies who are considered bad or ill-adapted to the climate of the Assam or Surma Valley, you will endeavour, so far as you are able at this distance from the areas of recruitment, to arrive at the causes of such increase. It may be that the labour supply is falling short in those recruiting districts from which the most desirable classes of coolies are got, or it may be that the pressure of competition for labourers in these districts during the recruiting season, which is confined to a few months in the year, makes it cheaper and more expeditious during those months to recruit from districts which are less sought after, and where the demand for labour is less, or perhaps the bad results may be the natural consequence of some defect in one or other of the different modes of recruitment adopted. In this connection you will further inquire and report what nationalities and castes of immigrants are considered good coolies, and what nationalities and castes are generally supposed to be unfit for the Assam climate

climate and garden work. In paragraph 15 of the Report of the Commission on the Labour District Emigration Act, dated the 20th January 1880, it is stated that "it is to Behar and the North-West* that the tea-planters must in future mainly look for their supply of labour: it is to Behar and the North-West that the Government must look for the working population to reclaim the wastes of its north-east frontier." If this be correct, and if it also is true, as it is now commonly believed to be, that natives of Behar and the North-Western Provinces are less adapted to the Assam climate than other classes of immigrants, it becomes a question whether special measures should not be devised for ensuring greater care in the selection of coolies of those classes, and possibly for their complete exclusion in localities shown to be peculiarly fatal to them. The statistics of immigration show that the number of immigrants who annually come from Behar and the North-Western Provinces has risen from 4,165 in 1881 to 7,496 in 1887; but from the fact that the proportion of women to men imported has in each year been considerably less among them than in the case of Chota Nagpur and Bengal coolies, the inference suggests itself that their recruitment has not up to the present been conducted on a proper or popular system, a smaller number of whole families being recruited, and a larger number of stray men, possibly of a bad stamp, who have been unable from physical incapacity or indolence to obtain a livelihood in their own country, and who on arrival at the gardens are thrown entirely on their own resources, and have no friends or relations to whom to look for assistance.

The Chief Commissioner understands that the North-Western Provinces or Behar coolies recruited for some gardens of the Chargoia Valley in Sylhet form a striking exception in these respects, and he would be glad to know how this is to be accounted for.

14. The result of each of the above-mentioned modes of recruitment as regards the cost of importation should then be examined and compared, and the variations as far as possible explained. The Chief Commissioner expects to receive from all district officers complete statements (with details of items) showing the cost per adult labourer of importation under each mode and for each class of coolies,—“Junglies,” North-Western Provinces coolies, and so on. You should also go fully into the cost of labour in previous years with a view to ascertain whether the cost has been increasing or decreasing of late; and if you find that the cost is increasing either generally or under any particular mode of recruitment, you are requested to say how far you attribute the increase to natural causes, such as scarcity of labour, increased competition, &c., and how far it is due to any peculiarity in the system of recruitment itself; and, having regard to the importance of a cheap immigrant rate both for the tea industry and the opening out of the province generally, you are requested to suggest any means of cheapening the cost that may occur to you.

15. The Chief Commissioner would also be obliged if you would supply him with information regarding the part played by the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association in the case of your district or sub-division, the proportion of gardens in the district or sub-division which belong to it, and the proportion of work done by it. In this connection I am to quote the following extract from a speech delivered by the President at the recent annual meeting of the Indian Tea Association at Calcutta, copy of which has been forwarded to the Chief Commissioner:

“The Government of India are now considering whether some alteration in Act I. should not be made with the object of checking the abuses connected with the recruitment of coolies. What we want is, first, the prevention of abuses; second, more labour; third, cheaper recruiting. It is in that order that we ought to consider it, as I feel confident that no one here will put the second before the first. It may be said that Government ought to see to the first, but Government can only do it at the expense of both the second and the third; in fact, by almost stopping recruiting entirely. There is one way, however, which I think will overcome the difficulties far more effectually than any Acts or Gazettes full of rules, and that is, if all interested in recruiting of coolies formed themselves into an association, with a regularly organised staff, which would control the recruiting and forwarding agents, and outside the pale of which no coolies, whether under contract or as free recruited emigrants, would go up to the tea districts.”

Assuming the practicability of forming such a body, and making the entire conduct of the recruiting over to it, under certain Governmental control, I am to ask how the idea would be received by the planting community in your district or sub-division, and what your own opinion is on the proposal, as also a modification of it which might be suggested under which only *arkati* or contractors recruiting should be placed in the hands of the Association, genuine *sardari* recruiting being left free.

16. *Forcible and Fraudulent Recruitment.*—In paragraph 3 of the Provincial Immigration Report for 1887 the extent to which the use of force or fraud to induce coolies to proceed to their destination is found to exist was referred to, and I am now to ask for further information on the point, first, from your own experience and the result of your inquiries as regards the use of force or fraud within Assam; and, secondly, as regards the use of force and fraud outside the Province from such facts as have come before you in your official capacity. You should prepare statements in the usual form of all the cases of forcible kidnapping and recruitment by fraudulent misrepresentation that have come before

* You should explain in all cases in which you speak of “Behar” or “North-West coolies” what exactly you mean by those phrases, as coolies from certain Behari districts are commonly classed as North-West coolies.

before you since your special attention was directed to the matter by Circular No. 38, dated the 17th August 1888, showing the nature of the complaint made in each case, and the results of the inquiry, so far as they are known to you. You should also state in this connection the extent to which women or young people resort to emigration to free themselves from their family ties. It is necessary to notice this, because it has at times been urged as an objection to the emigration system, and it will be well to refer to it in connection with kidnapping and recruitment by fraudulent misrepresentation, if only for the purpose of clearly distinguishing two matters which, though altogether different, are very apt to be confounded. The Chief Commissioner invites the fullest expressions of opinion and proposals of remedies that suggest themselves to you in respect of abuses of this description, but he would suggest that, so far as the abuses which are alleged to have taken place in Bengal or elsewhere beyond the control of this Administration are concerned, you should base your remarks exclusively on matters that have come within your official cognisance.

17. *Medical Examination of Immigrants.*—The subject of the medical examination of intending immigrants is, at the present moment, assuming greater importance in view of the increasing number of “bad batches” that have recently been sent up, and go far to swell the mortality of the garden population in this province. In paragraph 9 of the Provincial Report for 1887 it is remarked that, even in cases where the law provides for the previous medical examination of the labourer as to his fitness to labour, this provision of the law is, possibly from motives of false economy, not taken advantage of in the majority of cases by managers. But, as in a large proportion of importations there is no legal provision at all on this point, the question arises whether the Act should not be amended in the direction either of insisting on a medical certificate of fitness to labour, as distinguished from fitness to travel, before the labourer is placed under contract, or of giving such employers as choose to avail themselves of them, facilities for securing the examination of intending immigrants by the civil surgeon or other competent medical officer previous to execution of contract. The existing provisions of the law on the subject are contained in Sections 30, 40, 47, 67, and 70 of the Act, and of Rule 4 of the Chief Commissioner’s Rules, from which you will observe—

- (1.) That in the case of labourers recruited by certificated sardárs, the employer may require, before a labourer is registered under Section 66, a medical certificate of his fitness to undertake the journey to, and to labour in the labour district to which he is to proceed.
- (2.) That in all other cases (*i.e.*, those of contractors’ and free immigrants) the registering officer is merely required to satisfy himself that the labourer is in a fit state of health to proceed to his destination.

The subject is fully discussed in paragraph 62 of the Provincial Report for 1882. Sir Charles Elliott at that time directed that the Civil Surgeon of Dhubri should give a liberal interpretation to Rule 4, and should, for the protection of the planter, conduct the medical examination with some regard for the immigrant’s fitness to labour in Assam. This is now done; but the examination is necessarily of a very superficial character, and only the worst cases are rejected. Mr. Fitzpatrick has recently given permission to a thorough examination of immigrants being made by the Civil Surgeon of Dhubri in his private capacity in cases where the employers or agents desire it to be made; but, as this as well as the more superficial examination just referred to are arrangements entirely outside the Act, and based on no legislative authority, the importance of considering an amendment of the law on the subject is apparent.

18. The Chief Commissioner has, during his recent tour, heard complaints of persons rejected at Dhubri by the Civil Surgeon as unfit to labour being sent up as dependents, and even of their being tacked on, as dependents, to persons with whom they were in no way connected. These complaints have formed the subject of a separate inquiry, the reports of which have been received, and all that is necessary now is that you should keep the point before you at your inspection of the selected gardens, and state in your report how many cases of this description you actually meet with, distinguishing, of course, the cases where these medically-rejected persons were *bonâ fide* dependents accompanying relatives, with whom it was necessary to send them, from cases in which there were no such grounds of necessity. You should also state whether any of these “dependents” are, on arrival at the garden, put under Act I. or Act III. contracts.

19. *Proposal to make Registration in District of Recruitment Compulsory.*—As remarked in paragraph 8, the system of so-called free immigration, indirectly brought about by the Act, has led to certain mischievous consequences. In the first place, immense numbers of immigrants are massed together in Bengal and along the route to Assam without any sort of control over the arrangements made for their health and comfort. The very serious outbreak of cholera last year, involving, as it did, a lamentable sacrifice of human life, and a heavy pecuniary loss to suppliers and employers of labour, is sufficient to show the evil of this. Secondly, malpractices in recruitment have arisen, and numerous complaints, whether true or false, have been made of the forcible kidnapping of labourers and enticement by fraudulent misrepresentation, especially of single females. With a

view

view to remove these evils, and to insure that proper sanitary arrangements are made along the route (which is impossible as long as the great mass of labourers travel as free immigrants), as well as that the labourer's willingness to contract is ascertained before he leaves his district of recruitment, the following proposals have been made :—

- (1.) To insist upon the registration in the recruiting district under Section 32 of all emigrants other than those recruited by regularly-certificated garden-sardars, for whom a special procedure is provided by the Act ;
- (2.) After such registration, in the case of Assam Valley emigrants, to allow them to be forwarded to Dhubri to execute their contracts there ; and,
- (3.) In the case of Surma Valley emigrants, either to have the contracts executed at some place in Bengal, such as Goalundo, or else to allow the emigrants to proceed to the gardens as at present, and execute their contracts there.

As regards the means by which the proposed compulsory registration under Section 32 is to be enforced, the following methods have been suggested :—

(1.) A direct method, by imposing a penalty on any person forwarding an immigrant otherwise than as permitted.

(2.) An indirect method, by enacting that any person who goes to Assam otherwise than under the procedure prescribed, shall be incompetent to bind himself by a contract under Sections 111, 112 of the Act for a certain period—one year or two years—after his arrival in the Province.

20. I am to ask you to consider the above proposals in consultation with planters ; and, in the case of the Surma Valley in particular, I am to request that their opinion should be as widely as possible ascertained as to whether the execution of the contract should be insisted on in Bengal, or the emigrant should be allowed after registration to proceed to the tea-estate, and be put under contract under Section 111 of the Act there, as at present.

21. *Proposal to exclude Dhubri from the operation of Section 111.*—Another proposal, and one in some sense the opposite of the foregoing, on which the Chief Commissioner would invite your opinion and the opinion of persons interested, has been made to the Government of India, viz., to exclude the Goalpara district from the operation of Section 111 of the Act, or so to amend that section that the labour contract would not be made until the arrival of the immigrant within the district to which it relates ; in other words to introduce into the Assam Valley the state of things which at present prevails largely in the Surma Valley. The arguments which might be advanced in favour of deferring execution of the contract till the immigrant reaches the gardens are these :—first, that after arriving at the garden he would have a clearer idea of what was before him, and would be less likely to be imposed upon ; and, secondly, that the cost of taking him up to the garden, being considerably in excess of the cost of taking him to Dhubri, would act as a deterrent to fraudulent recruitment. On the other hand, in considering this proposal, you will bear in mind the fact that the further an emigrant goes from his home the more helpless he becomes, and that if he should decline to contract after arrival on the garden, the further question would arise as to what was to become of him, and who was to pay his repatriation expenses. The experience of officers in the Surma Valley, where, as just stated, this system largely prevails, ought to be valuable here.

22. In connection with all the above proposals, so far as they apply to recruiting through contractors, you will doubtless remember that one important element to be considered is to what extent the employer has the whip-hand of the contractor, or *vice versa*. The position seems to vary very much from one garden to another in this respect. A manager for one of the largest employers of labour in the Province informed the Chief Commissioner that their mode of checking the fraud and malpractices of the contractors was to postpone their final acceptance of a coolie till he had been a week on the garden, and then if they found he was physically unfit, or that there was any other objection to his being retained, to throw him back on the contractor's hands. Other managers, on the contrary, have said that they were not in a position to do this, that they must take what the contractors send them or the Calcutta agents procure for them, and that the garden must bear the loss on the bad bargains or else remain short of labour at a busy season.

The position in this respect will have such an important bearing on any amendment of the law that it should in all cases be carefully ascertained.

TRANSIT OF IMMIGRANTS IN ASSAM.

23. The arrangements in connection with the transit of immigrants in the Assam Valley having already been thoroughly inquired into, and being kept under his close and constant supervision in every detail, the Chief Commissioner does not think it necessary to ask you for further information on this point. A proposal has, however, been brought to his notice, on which, as it would affect the Labour Transport Fund, it might be convenient now to ascertain the opinion of planters, viz., that in localities where the gardens of destination are far from the debarkation depôt or authorised landing-place, a system

rest-houses should be established under some sort of recognised control, which might, if so desired, be placed under the charge of managers interested in them, as halting-places for the coolies *en route*.

You are requested to report whether this is considered practicable or desirable, and whether there would be any objection to the charges being met from the Transport Fund.

24. As regards the transit arrangements in the Surma Valley, the question arises whether the steamer traffic should not, so far as immigrants are concerned, be placed under Government supervision, similar to that exercised on the Brahmaputra. Formerly, when the coolies travelled in small batches, chiefly in country boats, the necessity for such supervision did not exist; but, now that the accelerated steamer service is largely employed for this purpose, and the evil effects of overcrowding and want of proper arrangements have begun to show themselves, the necessity for the sanitary regulation of the immigrant traffic becomes obvious. The chief difficulty lies in the fact that the great mass of immigrants here are not, as on the Brahmaputra, labourers under contract, but free immigrants. The Deputy Commissioners of Sylhet and Cachar should submit such proposals as may occur to them for overcoming the difficulty and introducing rules similar to those applied to steamers on the Brahmaputra.

LOCAL LABOUR SUPPLY.

25. Under this head the Chief Commissioner desires full information regarding the classes of coolies, other than immigrants, who are employed on the gardens in your district or sub-division, the extent to which they are available for employment, the manner in which they are employed, the work done by them, and the rate of wages paid to them for each kind of work, as compared with the wages of the immigrant coolie. In giving this information you will deal with the different classes of coolies in three groups, according to the character of their engagement with the garden, thus:—

(1.) Coolies temporarily employed as daily labourers; such as Assamese villagers employed for occasional jobs, Nágas (in Siságar and Lakhimpur), &c.

(2.) Coolies employed for a season; such as bodies of Kacháris who migrate for work in the cold weather, returning home for the rains.

(3.) Coolies permanently employed; such as Kacháris, Gáros (in Nowgong), perhaps some Assamese villagers, Bengali settlers in the Assam Valley districts, and others who are taken on the permanent strength of the labour force of the garden.

TIME-EXPIRED IMMIGRANTS.

26. In Revenue Department Circular No. 56, dated the 24th November 1888, you were addressed on the subject of the settlement of time-expired labourers, and your report in reply to that Circular will probably contain most of the information now required. You are, however, requested, with reference to this inquiry into the working of Act I. of 1882, briefly to give some idea as regards your district or sub-division on the following points:—

(1.) As to the proportion of immigrants who, on the expiry of their original term of contract, renew their contract on the same garden.

(2.) As to the proportion of time-expired immigrants who, having returned home after completion of their period of service, have of their own accord come back to the garden, and brought up their friends and relatives with them. Should you meet with any cases of this description in your inspection of the selected gardens you will give such details as you can obtain.

CONTRACTS.

27. Under this head I am to request that you will describe fully all the circumstances which determine managers to dispense with contracts and to make contracts under Act I. and Act XIII. respectively, the periods for which such contracts are made, and the amount of the bonus paid in the case of each of the classes of labourers described in paragraphs 10 and 25, viz.:—

I.—Imported labourers—

- (a.) Imported already under an Act I. contract.
- (b.) Imported not under contract.

II.—Locally engaged labourers.

As regards labourers imported under contract, it will be sufficient for you to give particulars of the periods of their contracts, distinguishing the coolies recruited by sardárs from contractors' coolies, and explaining, so far as you are able, any marked difference between

between the periods of the contracts of the two classes. As regards labourers who are placed under contract on the garden, you should, with reference to each class of labourers, state the usual practice in your district or sub-division as to whether they are placed under Act I. or Act XIII. contracts, as to the considerations which lead managers to adopt the one or the other course, and as to the amount of bonus which each class receives under Act I. and Act XIII. Taking the permanent labour force of the garden, and excluding such labourers as are employed only for occasional work or for short periods, are there any labourers who may be called "free labourers" in the proper sense, i.e., under civil contract not penally enforceable, in your district or sub-division? If so, you should state the approximate proportion.

28. With reference to time-expired Act I. immigrants who renew their contracts, you should give the same information, and in their case in particular the Chief Commissioner would wish to have an explanation of the various considerations which managers have in view in making use of Act I. or Act XIII. for the renewal of their contracts. Mr. Fitzpatrick has observed that in many gardens in which importation under Act I. is the regular practice, time-expired contracts are systematically renewed under Act XIII., while in other gardens, situated in so far as appears precisely the same circumstances, and in many instances in the immediate neighbourhood, they are systematically renewed under Act I. He would be glad to receive an explanation of this difference in procedure.

29. *Terms of the Contract under Act I.*—On this subject the first point to be considered is the period of the contract. As you are probably aware, the maximum period of contract under Act VII.(B.C) of 1873 was three years. This limit was raised to five years by Act I. of 1882, in accordance with the general demand of persons interested in the tea industry, with a view to recoup employers for the cost and risk of importing the labourer, and maintaining him during the period of his acclimatization in Assam; but, at the same time, to compensate the labourer for the bonus he would, ordinarily, have been able to obtain on his re-engagement, if the term were limited to three years, the rate of wages for the fourth and fifth year was raised. The Government of India, in their triennial report to Her Majesty's Secretary of State, justified the extension of the period, and pointed out that, so far as risk to life was concerned, the liability to disease and death was chiefly confined to the first two or three years of an immigrant's residence in the Province. These considerations, however, have not been sufficient to prevent objections being raised in many quarters against the labourer being permitted to bind himself by a penal contract for five years; and the question now arises as to whether this limit should be reduced.

30. In this connection the large preponderance of five years' contracts executed at Dhubri, as compared with the proportion of such contracts executed elsewhere, has, in particular, been unfavourably commented on. The suggestion has been made that labourers who are taken to Dhubri are helpless on arrival there, and being unable to pay their way back to their homes, are practically forced to contract for the maximum term; but, on the other hand, an explanation, at first sight at least plausible, has been offered, namely, that the employers who engage labourers through Dhubri insist on five years contracts, and that consequently none but labourers willing to contract for five years are forwarded to that place; but on closer examination it will be seen that that explanation does not take us to the bottom of the matter. In paragraph 21 of the Provincial Immigration Report for 1887 it is observed, "it is worthy of remark that in the case of contracts entered into in the recruiting districts for the Assam Valley, 56.3 per cent. were for three years, and 43.7 per cent. for five years, in the case of contracts entered into at Dhubri, 3.5 per cent. only were for three years, and no less than 96.5 per cent. were for five years;" and assuming the explanation in question to be the true one, the further question at once arises: Why should employers in the Assam Valley almost invariably insist on a five years' term when the contract is executed at Dhubri, while in the majority of cases when the contract is executed in the labour district they are satisfied with a shorter term?—The Chief Commissioner would be glad if any explanation of these results could be given; he would further be glad to have the figures for contracts executed by immigrants on first arrival in the Surma Valley, and if, as he believes to be the case, they are usually for periods short of five years, he would wish to show the cause of the difference between the two valleys in this respect.

31. The general question of the limit to the period of contract you should consider with reference to the extent to which free labour may be relied upon to supply the wants of gardens, the extent to which five years' contracts actually prevail, and generally with reference to all the circumstances of your district or sub-division. If the conclusion arrived at is that the higher maximum (of five years) is open to objection, it would then be necessary to consider to what extent its reduction would affect the working of gardens; and a most important element in considering this is the extent to which time-expired coolies renew their engagements. When, as is the case on many gardens, the coolies almost invariably renew, it would not apparently matter much to the manager whether the original contract was for five years with a wage of Rs. 12 per annum more for the last two, or whether it was for three years only, with a bonus of Rs 12 to be paid for each year's renewal.

32. The provisions of the contract with reference to the supply of food-grains should next be examined. In the first place, as regards the price at which rice should be supplied, it has been reported from some districts that the fixed price of Rs. 3, which is the present contract rate, has been a fruitful source of dispute between the manager and the labourer. Managers, no doubt, lose when they are forced to purchase at over Rs. 3 and sell at Rs. 3; but again, at times when rice is procurable in the market at less than Rs. 3, they recoup their losses by supplying the coolies at the contract rate. Of course, it may be said that the coolies are not obliged to purchase from the manager; but on the other hand, it has been pointed out that the improvident habits of the coolies frequently leave them without means to purchase in the market, and they are forced to fall back on the manager for their supply of food; and, moreover, that in many gardens in the province the markets at which food-grains are procurable are not sufficiently close to the garden to enable coolies to purchase whenever they need a fresh supply without neglecting at least a part of their day's work and losing a part of their daily wage. A proposal has been made to amend this part of the contract by imposing on the employer the obligation to supply rice whenever required, at a fixed sum per maund in excess of the market price, provided that the highest price at which rice is to be supplied to the labourer should never exceed Rs. 3. The question is practically one as to whether on any considerable number of gardens the employer under the present law profits to an extent greater than is reasonably sufficient to cover his risks. Another question under this head is whether provision should not be made for other food-grains besides rice, such as *otta*. In the draft Bill which ultimately became Act I. of 1882 it was proposed, in view of the large majority of immigrants coming from Behar and the North-West Provinces, where rice is not the staple food-grain, to omit all reference to rice in the contract, and to give the Local Government power to make rules for the supply of such food-grains as were ordinarily used by different classes of immigrants. This proposal is embodied in Sections 124, 125 of the Act, but the supply of rice was considered of such special importance that it was thought necessary to provide for it also in the contract (*see* Section 9 of the Act and the form of contract annexed to the Act). Since the passing of the Act the number of immigrants from the provinces where rice is not the ordinary article of food has steadily increased (*see* paragraph 12 and Immigration Reports), and it is still a question whether the mortality among them, which is greater than among other nationalities of immigrants, may not have been affected by changes of diet, and whether accordingly it would not be well to provide facilities for immigrants from provinces in Upper India to adhere to their national diet. The Chief Commissioner would be glad to have your opinion as to the alterations which you think should be made on these points, either in the Act itself or in the form of contract, or in the Chief Commissioner's Rules under the Act (*see* Rule 137).

33. *Local Contracts under Section 111.*—In paragraph 22 of the Provincial Immigration Report for 1887, it was observed that Section 111 of the Act is still on its trial, and a question has been raised as to whether all contracts now executed under Section 111 might not be executed under Section 112, or at least whether some pressure might not be brought to bear to lead to more of these contracts being executed under Section 112 by allowing contracts under Section 111 only for one year. It has been suggested that inspectors might attend at certain central points in the neighbourhood of gardens, say once in two months, to admit of contracts being executed under Section 112. The Chief Commissioner would be glad of your opinion as to the practicability of this, and also on the alternative suggested by Sir Charles Elliott in 1885, *viz.*, that the procedure under Section 112 should be the only procedure on gardens within 10 miles from a court.

34. The Chief Commissioner would further wish to be informed to what extent it is true, as the accused in the well-known "Gibbons' case" is stated in a recent memorial to the Government of India to have alleged in the course of his defence, that it is "the custom" and a "thing always done" to send on contracts under Section 111 to be registered, which, as a matter of fact, have never been executed by the coolies.

35. A minor point which suggests itself in connection with this section is whether the wording of the latter portion of it should not be modified so as to expressly authorise the verification or cancellation by the inspector in special cases on occasions other than that of his next visit to the estate. Such special cases would arise, *e.g.*, if a labourer showed sufficient cause at any other time for the cancellation of his contract, or if a manager before sending coolies out of the Province for recruiting work produced them before the inspector to have their contracts verified.

36. *Cancelment of Contracts.*—Under this head the following points have been raised:—

(1.) *Section 142, Redemption of Contracts.*—Whether the value of the unexpired term of the contract is not put too high, especially for the latter years of the period, and generally whether any modifications in the section are required. You will consider this in connection with the question of the period of contract, and bearing in mind the fact that the very large majority of three and five years' contracts are confined to cases of imported labourers.

(2.) Whether express provision should not be made for the cancelment of contracts in cases of established force or fraud in recruitment, *e.g.*, in instances where a conviction

viction is obtained against the sardár or contractor's recruiters, and, if so, to what officers this power should be given, and with what restrictions.

(3.) Whether cancelment by mutual consent should not be expressly provided for. There is nothing in the present Act to require such cancelment to be effected in the presence of the inspector or magistrate, and it is possible that in some cases contracts which ought to be dissolved under Section 122 are mutually dissolved without reference to the magistrate or inspector, and without the payment of the three months' wages prescribed under that section for repatriation expenses.

37. *Endorsements of Additional Periods on Contracts.*—(1.) *Sections 121-170.*—You should report how the provisions of these sections work in practice, whether monthly lists under Section 170 are frequently sent, and whether endorsement under either section are frequently made in your district or sub-division. You should further report, with regard to Section 170, whether absences for fractions of days are included in the monthly lists, how such fractions are worked out by the manager (*i.e.*, according to the fraction of the working time the labourer was actually absent, or the fraction of daily task unperformed), and whether such fractions are admitted by the inspector into the calculation of the total absentee period. With reference to the proposal to which allusion is made in paragraph 33 that the inspector should periodically attend at certain central points to attest the execution of contracts under Section 112, how would it work to have these endorsement matters decided by him then, or to appoint fixed dates at district or sub-divisional head-quarters for their decision, instead of deferring them to the uncertain date of the next inspection, which may not be till months after, and before which many of the contracts may have expired by efflux of time?

(2.) *Section 182.*—The Chief Commissioner has heard complaints from managers that no provision has been made in this section to compensate employers for the loss of labour caused by the imprisonment of labourers for offences other than offences punishable under Act I. of 1882. An expression of your opinion is invited as to whether you would recommend the endorsement, and, if so, subject to what limitation of time, on labour contracts of periods during which the labourer was absent from work owing to imprisonment for offences punishable under the Penal Code or other Acts. The matter of limitation has an important bearing on the point in issue, for it may be that the labourer is sentenced to imprisonment for a longer period, perhaps months or years longer, than the unexpired period of his contract. How would you propose dealing with such cases?

ACT XIII. OF 1859.

38. The proposal to repeal Act of XIII. of 1859, so far as labour districts are concerned, formed the subject of a separate inquiry in the cold weather of 1886-67, but was, under the orders of the Government of India, postponed for consideration in the course of this inquiry into the working of Act I. of 1882. It will not be necessary for you now to repeat the detailed inquiry which was then made, but you should in your inspection of the selected gardens, as far as possible, obtain the same information regarding Act XIII. coolies as in the case of Act I. coolies, so as to ascertain the exact position of the Act XIII. question at the present moment. There was no provision in the former Labour Act, VII. (B.C.) of 1873, for the execution of local labour contracts under the Act in labour districts, and such contracts had to be made under the ordinary law of the country. Act XIII. was consequently made use of for such contracts, though it is observed in the Statement of Objects and Reasons for the Bill, which subsequently became Act I. of 1882, that "its provisions were obviously never intended to meet such cases." But, as the present Act provides for the execution in the labour district of contracts under Sections 111, 112, by any native of India, whether immigrant or resident, the question has been raised whether Act XIII. should not be repealed.

39. The chief grounds on which the repeal of the Act is urged are briefly these:—

(1.) That it is one-sided in principle; that contracts under it need not be made in writing, nor registered, nor verified; that there is no fixed form of contract; and that, as a matter of fact, the contracts, when in a written form, are ordinarily so drawn up as to impose more onerous obligations on the labourer than would be permitted under Act I., while they impose no corresponding obligation on the employer beyond that of paying the daily wage for work done.

(2.) That it entitles the labourer to no protection or collateral advantages, such as result from the obligations imposed on the employer under Act I., as to house accommodation, sanitation, diet, medical comforts. Thus, if a garden is declared unfit for the residence of labourers under Section 129 or Section 132 of Act I., a labourer under Act XIII. contract would not be entitled to be released from his contract, though, no doubt, the courts would consider on the merits of each case how far the established unhealthiness of the garden was a reasonable excuse within the meaning of Section 2 of Act XIII. for the labourer's refusal to remain on it.

(3.) That it does not provide for the exercise by the manager of such discipline and

RETURN RELATING TO

and control as is necessary on a garden. On this subject a manager of long experience in Upper Assam writes as follows :—

“ Sections 123 to 133 do not apply to Act XIII. or free labourers, nor can they be punished under Section 178 for disregarding any sanitary rule. Yet their disregard may cause an epidemic. I think, generally speaking, all the purely sanitary sections of the Act should be made applicable to an estate, excluding (if necessary) natives of the labour district ; otherwise the manager is legally powerless.”

40. On the other hand, the following arguments, among others, were urged in favour of retaining the Act during the inquiry held in 1886-87 :—

(1.) That it has been in force and recognised for upwards of 20 years, and that the exclusion of tea-estates from its operation would result in a serious disturbance of the existing order of things.

(2.) That it is preferred to Act I. by many employers, and still more by many classes of coolies, who, owing to the common practice of placing only those coolies who are likely to prove troublesome under Act I., have come to regard that Act as of a more penal nature ; and that in the case of certain classes of labourers living independently in villages outside tea-estates, an Act I. contract could not, under the circumstances in which they live, be entered into consistently with the terms of the contract, both as to the labourer's obligation to remain on the estate and the manager's obligation to comply with the rules regarding house accommodation, medical comforts, &c.

(3.) That, as a matter of fact, Act XIII. has not operated harshly ; that prosecutions under the Act are few ; that in most cases the labourer is simply ordered to return to the garden ; and that sentences of imprisonment are extremely rare, considering the total number of labourers under this Act.

41. As regards certain proposals which have been made for amending Act XIII., so as to remove the objections to which, as applied to tea-gardens, it is at present open, the Chief Commissioner thinks it would be hardly worth while to spend any time on considering them. It is possible that having regard to the facts that the Act has come so widely into use and that it works, on the whole, fairly well, the Government would consent to let it stand on its present footing so long as the High Court does not hold it inapplicable ; but looking to the whole history of this question, the Chief Commissioner is convinced that no proposal for amending the Act and setting it up on a firm basis as a second law of penal contract parallel to Act I. would, for a moment, be entertained.

REPATRIATION OF LABOURERS.

42. Instructions as to the payment of expenses incurred in repatriating invalided labourers to their homes are contained in Circular No. 37, dated the 9th August 1884, and No. 53, dated the 21st November 1888, from which you will see that, as regards labourers under contract discharged under Section 122, the cost in excess of the three months' wages awarded under that section is met from the Deputy Commissioner's permanent advance, and that the entire cost of repatriating labourers who are not under contract and have no claim on any employer is met from the same source, and recovered by a Bill submitted to the Comptroller. Having regard to the number of invalided labourers who wander about as beggars, or find their way into the dispensaries of the Province, the necessity of returning them to their homes is obvious, but the propriety of paying the expenses of sending them to their homes from provincial funds is quite a different matter. You will see from Circular No. 53, dated the 9th August 1884, that the Government of India expressed themselves unable to sanction the Chief Commissioner's proposal to pay these charges from the Labour Transport Fund, on the ground that the application of the fund to such a purpose was not authorised by Section 192 of the Act, but that they concurred generally in the desirability of the proposal, and reserved the point for consideration when the Act came under revision. You are now requested to give your opinion—(1) whether the maximum limit of three months' wages in section 122 should not be raised so as to cover the full expenses of repatriation in all cases falling under that section ; (2) whether the Labour Transport Fund should not be made available for the repatriation expenses of immigrants who are incapacitated for work, but whose case does not fall under Section 122.

43. As to the general working of this section (122) you should report whether the three months' wages are generally awarded, and whether they are paid in a lump sum to the labourer, or utilised in defraying his expenses home, and, in cases where the award of wages is not made, on the manager undertaking to allow the labourer whose contract has been cancelled to reside on the estate with his friends or relatives, whether any steps are taken by the inspector to see that the undertaking is carried out.

44. The circulars referred to above apply only to the repatriation of physically incapacitated labourers ; but the further question arises whether arrangements should not
be

be made in the Act for repatriating other classes of labourers in certain cases, as, for instance, where the use of force or fraud or some material irregularity in recruitment is established. You will consider this further in connection with the proposal explained in paragraph 21 of this letter, which, if adopted, might result in bringing into the Province many labourers, who, after arrival at the gardens to which they are sent, would be unwilling to enter into contracts, and for whom some arrangements would have to be made.

DESERTIONS.

45. Under this head the causes of desertion, and the classes of labourers most given to desert, should be very fully discussed. Among the chief causes of desertion, as commonly assigned, are low wages, ill-health, the unhealthiness of the garden, the occurrence of epidemics, bad management, changes in the mode of management unfavourable to the labourer, private quarrels and intrigues, indolence, indebtedness, enticement, and the desire to get a bonus on another garden. To these the Chief Commissioner would be inclined to add, first, the mere wish for change, so common among natives taking service away from their homes, accompanied, perhaps, as in the case of the coolies who desert from the Surma Valley to the jute mills at Narainganj, by an idea that they can better themselves elsewhere; and, secondly, among new arrivals who commonly are the most ready to desert, a feeling of not finding themselves at home in the garden, or, discovering that their position is in some respects different from what, even in the absence of any tangible misrepresentation, they had come to imagine that it would be. Should you have any reason in your inspection of any of the selected gardens to suppose that the desertions are due to bad management, you should not be content with a mere statement of the cause in general terms, but should endeavour to get as full an account of the previous history of the deserters as you can obtain from an examination of the registers or other means. It should also be noticed in your report how far the complaints made by employers of the increase in late years in systematic enticement of labour are well-founded, and the classes of persons by whom you have reason to suppose that such enticement is carried on should be stated. As to the classes of labourers most given to desert, you will probably be able to obtain accurate particulars, which will further help you in arriving at the causes of desertion. You should classify them (1) according to their province of recruitment, North-West Provinces, Chota-Nagpore, Bengal, &c.; (2) according to their length of service on the estate; (3) according to their mode of recruitment, contractors' or sardari; (4) according to their condition on the garden, whether isolated men and women, or men and women with families and relatives on the garden, and generally according to such other modes of classification as may, under the special circumstances of each garden, suggest themselves to you. It is hopeless to expect that complete statistics of the causes of desertion can be obtained, but the results of your inquiry should be shown in the desertion statement (Form No. II.) annexed to this Circular.

46. In connection generally with the subject of desertion, you will naturally allude to the provisions of Section 172 of the Act, both from the employers' and the labourers' point of view, with special reference to the five-mile limit. Is the law as to arrest without warrant generally observed in your district or sub-division? Do you think it affords sufficient protection to the employer?

47. As regards the manner in which the period of absence from the garden owing to desertion should be dealt with, you should state your opinion as to whether the absentee period (that is, the period intervening between the labourer's desertion and his apprehension or return to the garden) should be endorseable under Section 182 as an addition to the original term of his contract, and, if so, whether the endorsement should be made subject to any limitation of time. In particular, should such endorsements be made in cases where the labourer is arrested after the original term of his contract has expired? I am further to ask you to state how a case like the following should be provided for: A labourer under an Act I. contract for one year at a garden, A, deserts after completing six months' service. He lives by independent means for one year after his desertion, and then enters into a two-years' Act I. contract at garden B; immediately after this he is arrested and prosecuted by the manager of A, who applies for the endorsement of the unserved period of six months.

WAGES.

48. Under this heading you should first give information regarding the selected gardens in a tabular form similar to the first table in paragraph 7 of the Provincial Immigration Report for 1887, showing the average wages for your whole district or sub-division (healthy and unhealthy gardens being in this, as in all other cases, separately shown), based on the figures of the selected gardens for two months, one in the rains and the other

in the cold weather, but showing the wages of Act XIII. labourers separately from those of other non-Act coolies, thus:—

			Monthly Wages.	
			Average.	Highest.
Non-Act	Act I.	Men - - -	—	—
		Women - - -	—	—
	Act XIII.	Men - - -	—	—
		Women - - -	—	—
	Others	Men - - -	—	—
		Women - - -	—	—
Children - - -		—	—	

49. In addition to this table of district or sub-divisional averages, you should give separate figures for each of the selected gardens, showing the following particulars:—

- (a) The number of coolies of each class employed in each of the months taken.
- (b) The average monthly wages for a month in the rains, including *ticca*, bonuses, hospital allowances, &c. (*see* paragraphs 2-4 of this office Circular No. 36, dated the 13th May 1889).
- (c) The same for a month in the cold weather.
- (d) The total aggregate of payments or credits taken into account in (b) and (c).
- (e) The portion of that aggregate due to *ticca*.
- (f) The highest amount of *ticca* earned by any coolie in a month.

You should then carefully examine the daily attendance register, and show for each of the two months (*see* the Circular just referred to),—

- (g) The total number of *háziris* earnable if all coolies on the daily attendance register had been present, and done a full task every working day.
- (h) The number of *háziris* altogether disallowed in consequence of—
 - (1.) Absence with leave.
 - (2.) Absence owing to desertion.
 - (3.) Absence otherwise without leave.
 - (4.) Absence owing to sickness.
- (i) The number of fractions of *háziris* entered.

A form of statement (Wages Statement, Form No. III.) is annexed.

50. Having completed this statement, which you should be careful to make out for each garden before leaving it, as otherwise half the questions that ought to be asked will not occur to you till you are miles away; you should next proceed to obtain explanations of such of the figures as call for explanation under the directions conveyed in the Circular above referred to, making at least rough notes on the spot.

51. Having set down in your report all the information thus obtained regarding wages in the selected gardens, you will proceed to give such general information on the subject as you may possess or be able to obtain from previous reports, or otherwise, regarding the gardens of the district or sub-division generally, stating how far the selected gardens may be regarded as typical, and explaining any differences you may have observed in other gardens, with such further remarks as may help to illustrate the position of the wages question in the district or sub-division generally. It should be particularly observed throughout these inquiries, whether the wages of the non-Act or Act labourers are higher, and the causes of the difference should be ascertained and stated.

52. The matter of the collateral means of livelihood of the coolies should also be inquired into in this connection, both as showing the general condition of the garden coolie, and as bearing incidentally on the wages question, in so far as the other occupations of the coolies may lead them to absent themselves for days together from their work, or their profits from those occupations may make them less eager about earning wages. Under this heading it will be desirable to state, in as much detail as possible, the extent to which the coolies engage in cultivation on or off the garden, the extent to which they work for cultivators in the neighbourhood, the number of cattle and other live stock they keep, and whether they earn money thereby as, *e.g.*, by hiring out bullocks, as the Chief Commissioner found to be the case to a large extent in some gardens in Cachar.

53. It is spoken of in the Annual Provincial Report for 1884, paragraph 7, as "a statement frequently made" that "the large importation of labour in late years has tended

tended to overstock gardens with a labour force for which employment cannot always be found." Having regard to the very great difference in the demand for labour in the cold season and in the rains, the possibility that a coolie might not be able to get work from his employer in the cold weather was one of the first things that occurred to Mr. Fitzpatrick on his arrival in the Province; but he has not as yet been able to learn of any instance where this is found to be the case. As, however, it would be a manifest breach of the labour contract if any labourer desiring work were refused it at any season of the year, it is most important that this matter should be fully inquired into and reported on.

54. As you are aware, the question of the payment of wages for the weekly holiday, prescribed by Section 116 of the Act, has given rise to some discussion, and it is clear that, owing to the difficulty of making out exactly what the Act means, it will be necessary to amend the wording of this section. You need not trouble yourself about the proper construction of the law as it stands, but should state what precisely is the present practice in your district or sub-division, and what you consider, after consulting managers, would be the best way of framing the provision so as to avoid the difficulties and ambiguities that have arisen.

TASKS.

55. Under this heading you should not only treat the subject generally, but also go into it in detail for each of the selected gardens. You should state the amount of each sort of task, noticing variations from garden to garden, and from season to season, or according to circumstances, such as a fuller or weaker flush of leaf, or the fineness of the plucking. You should examine the task schedule-book prescribed by Section 115 of the Act, and see whether all variations in the task, according to season or otherwise, are duly recorded therein, as it is important that they should be. You should ascertain, moreover, how soon it is considered that a new arrival will have learnt his work sufficiently to perform a full task, and what (if any) arrangements are made to relax the task rules in favour of new arrivals. You should also notice if, owing to the opening out of new stretches of land or otherwise, there is an abnormally large proportion of severe work, jungle-cutting, hoeing, drain-making, and such like, to be done. You will, lastly, be particular to note (see this office Circular No. 40, dated the 21st May 1889) whether the garden is adequately manned.

The Chief Commissioner has seen it stated in a memorial presented last year to Government of India that "the work (meaning the severity of the task) has been considerably increased since the depression of the tea industry," and he desires special inquiry as to whether, and to what extent, that is the case.

56. If the inquiries you make under the head of wages lead you to suppose that any of the tasks are too heavy, or that there is something to the disadvantage of the coolie in the subordinate agency employed to measure the work, or in the mode of procedure generally, you should go very fully into the matter. (See this office Circular No. 36, dated the 13th May 1889.)

57. Assuming the tea-coolie's daily task to be fair and moderate, as it is believed in the generality of cases to be, you should state whether you consider, taking the whole year round, and having regard to the comparative constancy and regularity of the work, that the tea-coolie is a harder-worked man, or a man more exposed to the weather, than the ordinary cultivator in the neighbourhood, and, if so, should state to what extent you consider this to be the case. The Chief Commissioner anticipates the objection, that in this comparison the coolie is, certainly, so far as the Assam Valley is concerned, being contrasted with the peasantry which, perhaps, of all others in India earns a livelihood with the greatest ease; but, in the absence of a less-favoured class in the province, no other comparison can be made. Should your experience, however, extend to Central Bengal, Chota Nagpur, or Behar, the localities from which recruitments are ordinarily made, you will, no doubt, also compare the condition of the garden coolie with that of the small cultivator and landless labourer of those localities.

58. It has been brought to the Chief Commissioner's notice that in some labour districts it is the practice for the coolies in the cold weather to go out to work at 8 or 9 a.m., after their morning meal, and to continue at work till 4 or 5 p.m. This is contrary to Section 116 of the Act, which places a limit of six hours upon continuous work; but it is said that a break in the day would be against the interests of both the employer and the labourer, as some coolies would not be able to finish their task, and others might be tempted to absent themselves after the break. You are requested to report if this practice prevails in your district or sub-division, and if so, whether you would recommend an alteration of the law.

FOOD.

59. You should here state the descriptions and quantities of food a coolie is ordinarily able to obtain, and compare them with those which an ordinary cultivator in your district or sub-division enjoys, giving not only the main articles, such as rice and dal,

but also usual or occasional additions, such as fish, meat, milk, ghee. You will be able to learn something of these latter among other methods, by observing the articles, such as fish, poultry, pigs, &c., brought in for sale to the hâts and the demand for them among the coolies. Mr. Fitzpatrick has heard it said by several managers that the unhealthiness of North-Western Provinces coolies is in part due to their penurious habits, which lead them at times to deny themselves a sufficiency of wholesome food. He would be glad to know to what extent this is true of North-Western Provinces or any other class of coolies.

60. You should also report as to the extent to which the "mess" or "hotel" system has been introduced on the gardens in your district or sub-division, and how far it is found to answer in practice. What food is provided at the mess, and what can an adult man, an adult woman, and a child respectively, get fed for per diem there? By whom is the "hotel" managed? Does it actually pay its way, and who bears the loss and takes the profit of it? Are any coolies compelled by the rules of the garden to eat at the mess, or do you think that any class of coolies, *e.g.*, debilitated or convalescent coolies, should be so compelled?

SICKNESS AND MORTALITY.

61. Having regard to the indifference coolies display about their health, the dislike they have to go to hospital, and the very large amount of liberty allowed them to absent themselves from work, it seems hopeless to attempt to procure any figures regarding sickness as distinguished from mortality which would be worth having. Any opinion, however, which the civil surgeon could form from a close examination of the coolies on the selected gardens, supplemented by his own previous knowledge, as to the health of the different classes of the coolies; new arrivals, old hands, North-Western Provinces coolies, Chota Nagpur coolies, and Bengalis, children and adults, should be furnished, and there is one class of disease in regard to which the Chief Commissioner will expect actual figures from the civil surgeon for the selected gardens, *viz.*, that of the coolies anæmia, on which you were addressed in this office Circular No. 29, dated the 30th April 1889. The civil surgeon should state for each of these gardens the number of coolies whom he found suffering from this disease, the stage to which it had advanced at the time of his inspection, and the medical treatment, if any, to which the coolie had been subjected.

62. As regards mortality, whenever (as you would in the case of the selected gardens) you give figures, you should, in order to separate the effects of cholera, which is to a certain extent fitful in its variations (*see* end of paragraph 40 of the Provincial Report for 1887), give the totals and percentages, both including and excluding cholera. You should further not content yourself with going separately into the figures for Act and non-Act coolies, but should also endeavour to ascertain in further detail what classes of persons go to swell the mortality returns, and the causes of this in each case, distinguishing children from adults, immigrants of one or two years' standing from older immigrants, coolies whether imported free or under contract by contractors from coolies imported by garden-sardars, whether certified or uncertified, and North-Western Provinces coolies from Chota Nagpur coolies and Bengal coolies. A form of statement (Deaths Statement Form No. IV.) is annexed, in which you should show separate figures for each of the selected gardens in the district or sub-division.

63. The civil surgeon, who should, if possible, accompany you to the selected gardens, and certainly to the unhealthy gardens, should endeavour, so far as it may be possible to do so, by questioning the native doctor, to form some rough estimate of the corrections which would have to be made in the causes of deaths shown by the latter in the mortality statements, owing to errors of diagnosis. Thus, *e.g.*, he might find, on questioning the native doctor, that there was reason to believe that a considerable number of the deaths which he had shown under the head indicated by mere symptoms were really deaths from anæmia, in which case he would note this in his report.

64. Both you and the civil surgeon, in inspecting the selected gardens, will, of course, be more than ordinarily particular in your inquiries as to the causes of any large amount of sickness and mortality, and report fully upon them. There are two points in this connection which the Chief Commissioner desires to have specially inquired into. First, excessive sickness or mortality on a garden has in many cases been ascribed to its having large expanses of newly-cleared jungle. It would be desirable to ascertain whether this theory is borne out by finding that such sickness or mortality diminishes after the land has been for some time opened up, and, if so, of what descriptions of jungle it holds good, whether only of tree jungle or also of ordinary grass jungle. The second point on which the Chief Commissioner desires special information is as to what classes of imported labourers have to submit to changes, not only of climate, but also of diet, and what are the changes in their diet they have had to submit to, in particular whether they have been previously accustomed to live on rice.

65. With reference to the statements that are sometimes made as the manner in which mothers neglect their very young children on tea-gardens, death statistics should, in the case of the selected gardens, be collected for children of each year up to three, and the causes of death should be carefully noted. In this connection you should also inquire fully

fully and carefully how children of these ages are looked after while their mothers are at work, and how children under a year old are nourished. The Chief Commissioner would wish you to consider the following picture of child life on a tea-garden, and to say, after a full inquiry into the facts, to what extent, as regards its various particulars, it represents the state of things prevailing on the tea-gardens in your district or sub-division:—

“The conditions of child life on a tea-garden are altogether so unfavourable that the wonder is how so many children succeed in passing childhood’s stage. A coolie woman gets a variable amount of leave for her confinement. After that, if the infant is not strangled at birth, she must either take it out with her to her work, or leave it behind, with no one to look after it. In the former case, tied to its mother’s back or left in the nearest drain, it is exposed to extremes of heat and cold, to wind and to rain; in the latter, the child gets half starved, and so paves its way to a death from some bowel-disorder, or succeeds in cutting short its career by a fall or a roll into the open fire. So alive are coolie women to these facts that, to avoid the trouble of bringing up their children under these circumstances, abortion is frequently resorted to, and dais who produce it often make their business a very profitable one. These women live as a rule in the nearest bazar or basti, to be beyond the reach of the garden manager.”

You should further state in this connection the extent (if any) to which the suggestion made in paragraph 12, page 41, of the Immigration Report for 1883 as to regular inspections of children has been acted on.

66. The cases of the unhealthy gardens included in your selected list would, of course, be reported on in greater detail by yourself and the civil surgeon, a full history of them from a sanitary point of view being given.

67. It was observed at the end of paragraph 34 of the last Annual Provincial Report that, though it is reasonable to expect cholera to be indiscriminating in its attacks, a larger proportion of Act than of non-Act coolies seem to die of it. This, when it is the case, should, if possible, be explained.

68. The sanitary condition of the tea gardens, the position of the lines, house accommodation, drainage, water-supply, hospital and medical arrangements, &c., you will naturally describe in dealing with the question of sickness and mortality; and, in the case of selected gardens, it will be the most convenient course to arrange the information under these heads in the order of Questions 1 to 12, and 36 to 40 of the ordinary form of inspection report.

VITAL STATISTICS.

69. Under this head, in addition to the deaths statement required by paragraph 62, you are requested to furnish a return, showing in one statement the total population and death-rate of all the selected gardens in the form annexed (Population and Death-Rate of selected Gardens, Form No. V.), separate statements being, of course, submitted for healthy and unhealthy gardens.

70. The low birth-rate on tea-gardens has frequently been remarked on, and the statistics available in the Immigration Reports would seem to show that the birth-rate has been diminishing, whether the rate on women only or on the whole population, male and female, of tea-gardens is taken. How far the decrease may be due to one or other of the following causes (among others) remains to be yet ascertained; first, to many of the women being at first, at the starting of immigration on a larger scale, of a child-bearing age and gradually getting beyond it; secondly, to a gradual increase in the number of the immigrants who live outside the lines, either on the grant or having settled down in villages outside the tea estate, in the case of whom the managers might inadvertently omit to record births, though, as they form part of the labour force, their deaths would naturally be noticed and recorded; thirdly, to general negligence in the preparation of the returns. You should carefully investigate the causes of this decrease in the birth-rate, and should obtain actual figures in the case of each class of coolies, showing the percentage of births (1) to total population, (2) to the total number of adult females on the selected gardens in your district or sub-division. Having obtained these percentages, you should compare them, in particular as regards the percentage of births on adult females, with the percentages prevailing in this Province generally (*i.e.*, outside tea estates), or in other provinces, so far as you can ascertain them from the Census and Sanitary Reports. That the percentage of births, taking the total population of a tea-garden, should be low as compared with the general percentages of districts and villages is only natural, considering the large preponderance of male over female (*see* Immigration Reports) coolies on tea-gardens; but it is possible that the results of further and careful inquiry will show that the proportion of births to adult female coolies is not absolutely low on tea estates. The total figures for each sub-division, as obtained in your inquiry on this point, should be shown in the form of statement annexed (Population and Birth-rate Statement, Form VI.).

RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND LABOURERS.

71. Observations on the relations generally between employers and labourers have been recorded from year to year in the Immigration Reports; but the Chief Commissioner would be glad if you would now review the whole position, speaking not only as to the existing state of things, but also as to any changes for the better or the worse that may have taken place from time to time. In particular he would wish to know to

RETURN RELATING TO

what extent it is true that, as stated in a memorial recently presented to the Government of India, "the cane, it is to be feared, is too frequently employed in many of the tea-gardens of Assam," and that coolies on many tea-gardens are placed in illegal confinement by the managers.

MISCELLANEOUS.

72. Under this heading you will notice all difficulties that have arisen in the working of the Act, all points on which you would propose amendments, and generally all matters which do not fall under one or other of the heads previously given on which you may have any observations or suggestions to make. Among others, the following points may suggest themselves to you as calling for remark:—

(1.) *Inspections.*—As to the difficulties, experienced by inspectors in inspecting tea-estates, and whether the Act sufficiently provides for inspectors' powers for overcoming them.

(2.) *Registers and Returns.*—Are any modifications needed either in the form in which the returns and registers are kept, or in the rules under which they are kept? Are the optional registers, as a general rule, kept up? In cases where they are not kept up, is the information required to be shown in them sufficiently shown in the other registers?

(3.) *Sections 134–137.* As to the general working of these sections.

(4.) *Section 151.* With reference to the bringing up by certified garden-sardárs of unregistered immigrants (*vide* paragraph 17 of Provincial Immigration Report for 1887).

(5.) *Section 152.* The Committee of the Indian Tea Association have pointed out the following objections to this section, (a) that there is no provision against the sardár making over the labourers engaged by him to other persons than those expressly mentioned; (b) that under the terms of Section 65 a labourer is not held to be engaged till he is registered, and that the disposal of an unregistered recruit to a third person would be no offence; (c) that in any case the penalty of Rs. 10 fine is too slight.

(6.) Some managers have complained to the Chief Commissioner that the Act does not empower the employer to compel the labourer to reside in the lines, and that it is accordingly difficult at times to get labourers to come punctually to work, with the further result that the danger of infection in time of cholera is increased.

73. In addition to the particular points to which your attention is above directed, you will, of course, have to consider the larger question raised by the Secretary of State, whether in some parts, if not throughout the Province, legislation of this sort could not be altogether dispensed with. There is at this moment before the Chief Commissioner a proposal from Mr. Campbell, Officiating Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, for its repeal in the Kámrup district. There, however, the question is a comparatively small one. The really important suggestion put forward in this direction has been for the repeal of the Act in Sylhet. The idea of repealing it there was taken up by the higher authorities in the year 1887 on a remark incidentally made by Mr. Ward, the Officiating Chief Commissioner; but though there are undoubtedly gardens in that district which could dispense with it, the further inquiries made by Mr. Ward, and the inquiries made by Mr. Fitzpatrick in the course of the two tours he has made in Sylhet, tend to show that on a considerable proportion of the gardens it is still required as well from the planter's point of view as from the point of view of the administration.

Officers inquiring into this point should be careful not to accept too readily the bare statement of a manager, that he would be glad to see the Act repealed. Many managers consider that the irksomeness of certain provisions of the Act more than counterbalances the hold it gives them over their labourers, and they accordingly declare themselves in favour of its repeal: but it will commonly be found on questioning them further, that they do not mean that they could do without a penal labour Act altogether, but that they prefer to rely on Act XIII., which many of them hope they might succeed in getting strengthened in certain respects, and this, of course, altogether alters the position.

Another caution the Chief Commissioner desires to give in this connection is one against too hastily assuming that all the labourers one finds permanently working on a garden without contracts stand towards their employer in a footing entirely independent of the Act. Some managers, whom the Chief Commissioner has met, have informed him that they often deem it enough to put one member of a family under contract, that being sufficient to deter the others from lightly throwing up their employment.

74. In conclusion, I am to say that if it should occur to you on perusing this circular that any points have been omitted on which it would be desirable to have inquiry made in other districts as well as your own, the Chief Commissioner will feel obliged by your letting him know, so that he may consider whether other Deputy Commissioners should not be addressed on the matter.

I have, &c.

(signed) *F. C. Daukes,*
Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

SPECIAL INSPECTION OF SELECTED GARDENS.

STATISTICS OF RECRUITMENT.—FORM I.

		District						Sub-division.							
Name of Sub-division.	Name of Garden.	Labour Population of Gardens on 1st January 1889.						Total Number of Immigrants, including Children, Imported in 1886, 1887, 1888.	Number of Adult Immigrants Imported in 1886, 1887, 1888.						
		Act.		Non-Act.		Children.	TOTAL.		Under Act-I. Contract.		Not under Contract.			TOTAL.	
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.				Through Contractors.	By Certificated Garden-Sardárs.	Through Contractors.	By Uncertificated Garden-Sardárs.	By Certificated Garden-Sardárs.		
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	
	TOTALS - - -														

SPECIAL INSPECTION OF SELECTED GARDENS.

DESERTION STATEMENT.—FORM II.

		District																												Sub-Division.						
Name of Sub-division.	Name of Garden.	Number of Persons who Deserted during the Period of Twelve Months previous to Date of Special Inspection Classified.																																		
		According to their Contract.						According to their Nationality.										According to their Mode of Recruitment.						According to their length of Residence in the Province.						Chief Cause of Desertion.						
		Act I.		Act XIII.		TOTAL.	Bengal.		Chota Nagpur.		Behar, North-Western Provinces, and Oudh.		Others.		TOTAL.	Immigrants.		Non-Immigrants, and others.	TOTAL.	Immigrants of less than One Year's standing.		Immigrants of One Year, but less than Two Years' standing.		Immigrants of more than Two Years' standing, and others.		TOTAL.										
		M.	F.	M.	F.		M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		M.	F.			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		M.	F.	M.		F.					
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.							
	TOTALS - - -																																			

N.B.—The totals of columns 7, 16, 23, and 30 should correspond.

"Immigrant" includes also "free" immigrant.

RETURN RELATING TO

SPECIAL INSPECTION OF SELECTED GARDENS.

WAGES STATEMENT.—FORM III.

CLASS OF COOLIE.	Number of Persons Employed		Total Wages Payments, including <i>Ticca</i> , Proportion of Bonuses, &c.			Portion of Total (Column 6) Payable for <i>Ticca</i> .	Highest Monthly <i>Ticca</i>		Total Number of <i>Hazaris</i> Earnable		Number of <i>Hazaris</i> altogether Disallowed on Account of								Number of Fractions of <i>Hazaris</i> Entered	
	In (Rains).	In (Cold Weather).	In (Rains).	In (Cold Weather).	Total of both Months.		In (Rains).	In (Cold Weather).	In (Rains).	In (Cold Weather).	In (Rains).				In (Cold Weather).				In (Rains).	In (Cold Weather).
											Absence with Leave.	Desertion.	Absence without Leave.	Sickness.	Absence with Leave.	Desertion.	Absence without Leave.	Sickness.		
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.
Act I. - - - { Men - Women -																				
Non-Act { Act XIII. { Men - Women -																				
	Others - { Men - Women - Children																			
		TOTALS - - -																		
	TOTAL - - -																			

SPECIAL INSPECTION OF SELECTED GARDENS.

DEATHS STATEMENT.—FORM IV.

Name of Sub-Division.	NAMES OF GARDENS.	Average Population of Garden.	Number of Deaths during the Twelve Months previous to Date of Special Inspection, Classified according to																																						Percentage of Deaths (excluding Cholera) to Average Population of Garden.	Percentage of Deaths (excluding Cholera) to Average Population.													
			Nationality.				Mode of Recruitment.				Length of Residence in the Province.						Age.												Causes of Death.																										
			Bengal.		North Western Provinces and Behar.		Chota Nagpur.		Others.		TOTAL.		Immigrants Recruited by Garden-Sardars.		Con-tractors.		Non-Immigrants and Others.		TOTAL.		Immigrants of Less than One Year's Standing.		Immigrants of One Year's but Less than Two Years' Standing.		Others.		TOTAL.		Children.				Adults.				Cholera.		TOTAL.				Other Diseases, &c.				TOTAL (including Cholera).								
			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.			
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.	31.	32.	33.	34.	35.	36.	37.	38.	39.	40.	41.	42.	43.	44.	45.	46.	47.	48.	49.	50.	51.	52.	53.	54.	55.	56.
	TOTALS - - -																																																						

N.B.—The Totals of Columns 12, 19, 26, 37, and 55 should correspond. Immigrants include also free immigrants. The average population in Column 3 should be obtained in the manner indicated in foot note to Form I.

SPECIAL INSPECTION OF SELECTED GARDENS.

POPULATION AND DEATH RATE STATEMENT.—FORM V.

281.

District.

Sub-division.

DESCRIPTION OF COOLIES.		Number on Date of Inspection.	Number on Date Twelve Months previous to Date of Inspection.	Average Strength.	Number of Deaths during the Twelve Months previous to Date of Inspection.	Per-centage of Deaths to Average Strength.	REMARKS.
Act I.	Men - - - - -						
	Women - - - - -						
TOTAL - - - - -							
G	Under Act XIII. Contract	Men - - - - -					
		Women - - - - -					
TOTAL - - - - -							
Non-Act	Free Labourers and Dependents (Adults)	Men - - - - -					
		Women - - - - -					
TOTAL - - - - -							
Children - - - - -	Children over two years of age and under 16 -						
		Children under two years of age - - - - -					
TOTAL - - - - -							
GRAND TOTAL - - - - -							

INSTRUCTIONS.

In filling up Column 3, if the number employed on the date precisely twelve months before the inspection cannot be ascertained, the figures shown in the nearest half-yearly returns should be taken, Act XIII. coolies being separated from other non-Act coolies, and children under two from children over two by the inspecting officer by examining the registers and questioning the manager and garden staff. Under the head "Free labourers and dependents" will be shown all adults except those under Act I. contract or Act XIII. contract.

EAST INDIA (ASSAM COOLIES).

SPECIAL INSPECTION OF SELECTED GARDENS.

POPULATION AND BIRTH-RATE STATEMENT.—FORM VI.

		<i>District.</i>			<i>Sub-division.</i>				
NATIONALITY OF COOLIES.		Number on Date of Inspection.	Number on Date Twelve Months previous to Date of Inspection.	Average Strength.	Average Strength of Adult Women.	Number of Births during the Twelve Months previous to Date of Inspection.	Per-centage of Births to Average Strength of Total Population (Column 4).	Per-centage of Births to Average Strength of Adult Women (Column 5). =	REMARKS.
1.		2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
Bengal	Men								
	Women								
	Children								
	TOTAL								
Choto Nagpur (including Sonhalia)	Men								
	Women								
	Children								
	TOTAL								
Behar, North-Western Provinces, and Oudh	Men								
	Women								
	Children								
	TOTAL								
Others, i.e., Assam, Nepal, Madras, Bombay, &c.	Men								
	Women								
	Children								
	TOTAL								
GRAND TOTAL									

N.B.—Coolies under 16 will be taken as children, and 16 and over 16 as adults. Column 4 will be filled in according to the instructions given under Form I.

RETURN RELATING TO

No. 246 J.D., dated Darjeeling, the 18th October 1888.

From *J. W. Edgar*, Esq., c.s.i., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal,
Judicial Department, to the Secretary of the Government of India.

I AM directed to state that several complaints having been made to this Government by the tea planters in the Dooars regarding the difficulties experienced by them in recruiting free labour for their gardens from Chota Nagpore, owing to the malpractices of professional recruiters from Assam and Cachar, and their agents and employés, the Commissioner of Chota Nagpore was directed to inquire and report into the matter towards the close of last year. The reports submitted by the Commissioner showed that these complaints were founded on fact, and the Lieutenant Governor accordingly decided on deputing a police officer for the purpose of specially inquiring into charges of fraud and kidnapping connected with the recruiting of coolies for the tea districts. Mr. F. H. Tucker, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, was selected for the duty, and was placed on deputation for a period of six months on an allowance equal to one-fifth of his salary.

2. I am to forward, for the information of the Government of India, copies of two reports,* submitted by Mr. Tucker, on the subject, together with a copy of a memorandum† from the Commissioner of Rajshahye, and of its enclosure from the superintendent of the Dooars Tea Company, Limited, asking that steps may be taken by Government to protect coolies proceeding to the gardens in the Dooars, *en route* from Chota Nagpore.

* Memorandum from the Inspector General of Police, No. 7971, dated the 2nd July 1888, and accompaniment.
Letter from the Commissioner of Chota, Nagpore, No. 606 J., dated the 27th September 1888, and enclosure.
† No. 271 Ret., dated the 22nd September 1888.

3. The Lieutenant Governor has now under consideration proposals which it is hoped will remove the source of the evils, the existence of which has been so clearly brought to light in the course of Mr. Tucker's inquiry; but these proposals will, if adopted, require the sanction of legislation, and some considerable time must elapse before effect can be given to them. Meanwhile, it is absolutely necessary to check the malpractices of the recruiting agents during next season, and Sir Steuart Bayley therefore proposes to retain Mr. Tucker on special duty till after the end of April 1889. The term of his deputation under the orders of this Government expired at the beginning of September last, and the Lieutenant Governor would now solicit the sanction of His Excellency the Governor General in Council to his retention for a further period of eight months on the substantive and acting pay to which he may be entitled in his grade, and to the grant to him in addition of a special allowance of 100 rupees per mensem.

4. The favour of a very early reply is requested.

Enclosures of No. 246 J.D., of 18th October 1888.

REPORT on the Subject of Abuses connected with the Emigration of COOLIES
to the Dooars.

No. 7971, dated Fort William, the 2nd July 1888.

Memo. by J. C. Veasey, Esq., Inspector-General of Police, L. P.

FORWARDED to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal for information.

No. 6—3—S, dated Ranchi, the 25th June 1888.

From J. H. Tucker, Esq., Assistant District Superintendent of Police, on special duty,
to the Personal Assistant to the Inspector-General of Police.

(Through Commissioner.)

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your demi-official, dated 20th June, forwarding copy of a telegram from the Government of Bengal to the Inspector-General of Police, Lower Provinces, asking for a preliminary report of the nature, extent, and causes of the abuses connected with the free emigration of coolies to the Dooars, and, in reply, to submit the following report:—

I find that for years large bodies of men, women, and children, chiefly relatives and intimate friends, residents of North Lohardugga, Palamow, and Hazaribagh, have left their homes in the early part of every year, each body under the leadership of a garden sardar well known to them, and who has been deputed by a manager of some garden to collect coolies to work in the Dooars or Darjeeling Terai. When at the gardens these coolies work directly under their sardars, who get a daily or monthly allowance from the garden for every head they produce for labour, and, at the same time, are allowed to draw the pay of their gang, and distribute it according to the muster rolls they prepare, and which are duly checked by the manager of the garden, or his assistant daily in parade. The coolies are under no agreement, and are therefore at liberty to leave the gardens whenever they please, and return home. As a rule, they leave at the close of the working season, at least a good many of them, which is about September or October, and come home for a few months to see their old people and lands, and emigrate again at the commencement of the working season.

The service is a pleasing one, and consequently draws any number of labourers. For the past two years or so, these gangs of coolies have been intercepted *en route* through Gya, Hazaribagh, and Ranchi by "arkatis" or (recruiters) for free labour for Assam, who have managed, by false representations, personations, inducements and force, to abduct these gangs, or as many of the individuals as they could get hold of, and handed them over to purchasers in the case of "arkatis" working independently, or to agents employing them. In some cases the "arkatis" have taken the coolies, *vid* Naihati and Goalundo, direct to the gardens in Cachar, and disposed of them there. The Dooar and Terai planters have represented that losing their old recognised coolies in this manner is a great loss to them, and affects greatly the working of their gardens; and at the same time say that the abuse has caused such a scare that their other sardars, who were told to go and get coolies to recoup their losses, refuse to move, as they fear they will be treated as their comrades were, and at the same time have no protection now, for the permits granted them by managers, duly endorsed by District Officers, are so much waste paper.

However, from my personal experience on visiting some of these gardens in April last, I must say that I cannot help thinking that the planters rather exaggerate their hardships and grievances; and it was pretty evident that there was no lack of labour for these Dooar and Terai gardens. The whole of the sympathy should go towards the poor unfortunate coolies who have been abducted.

Even supposing that they had succumbed to the false inducements held out by the Assam "arkatis" when once landed in Assam, and finding themselves clapped under five years' agreements, the deceit played upon them then comes home to them. Being tied down as they are is what they were never accustomed to, or bargained for; and they feel it very much, for it means to them being cut off from their homes and old people, and in many instances wives and families for years.

As far as my experience goes, I know that 99 per cent. of these unfortunate coolies, who have been found up in Assam and Cachar, and who have been examined by the District Officer up there, at my request, strongly protest against the treatment, stating at the same time that they were brought up by deceit and force, and beg to be sent back home or to their old gardens. It is harder of course on such men and women who were taken forcibly with their friends. From the five cases of abduction that have recently been

been investigated and decided in Hazaribagh, and four others of Gya and one of Ranigunj, that are now under strict inquiry, the following appears to be the *modus operandi* of the "arkatis":—

In Hazaribagh, a Mr. Lawton, an Eurasian of very doubtful character, engaged a body of some eight or ten up-countrymen as peons, and took up his position in the route generally taken by Dooar and Terai coolies through that district, and built himself a depôt at Bugodah, which was like a small jail with an eight-foot wall all round, and small rooms inside with doors and padlocks. He, as a rule, had scouts out, who brought him news of the approach of a gang of coolies. This gang was at once marked down, and during the night Lawton and his men came down on the camps of the coolies, which generally are made under some trees off the road-side, and by false representations, personations, and threats forced the coolies to go to his place. When once there he had them confined, with their personal belongings, and replacing them from his own stores. He then had false agreements made out inside the depôt in favour of each coolie, and then carted the coolies stealthily during the night across country, halting during the day in out-of-the-way places, until he got them to a railway station. The coolies were then clapped into trucks and rushed down to Calcutta, where they were handed over to a contractor, who, as soon as he could, sold them, and they were as hastily sent off to Dhubri, and eventually drafted off to various gardens under false names, &c., to Assam and Cachar.

In one instance a gang of 30 men, women, and children were rushed down to Goalundo direct *via* Naihati, and then put into steamers and country boats in the custody of his peons, and landed in Cachar, and made over to a garden, thus keeping clear of Dhubri, where registration goes on, and leaving no trace. Fortunately this case has been detected after a great deal of trouble, and is now pending before the Sessions Court. The coolies have all been repatriated by the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar.

Three other cases of a somewhat similar nature have also been detected against this same individual, for which he was sentenced to an aggregate term of 11 months' rigorous imprisonment, and fined besides.

This accused managed to make away with two batches of Dooar coolies, one of which I have found; the other I have not, but hope to. In Gya I find that a Baboo, who is a sort of sub-agent of another well-to-do Baboo in Calcutta, who is a coolie contractor, had a body of some 30 or 40 "arkatis," up-country men (so far the statements of the coolies are to be believed). These "arkatis" were planted on the route taken by coolies through that district, and a depôt planted conveniently. In January last they managed to intercept no less than four batches of Terai and Dooar coolies, and made off with them; rushed them down to Calcutta, where they were sold to various agents and managers of gardens on the look out for coolies, and sent to Dhubri, and from there drafted off to various gardens under false names, agreements, &c., the result being that I have had the greatest difficulty in tracing these coolies. I have, however, by means of some of those who escaped, found a large number of them in the Sibsagar district in various gardens, and had them all examined. They one and all corroborate the complaints, but unfortunately are not in a position to identify the accused. However, when brought face to face with them I daresay they will, and for this purpose I have asked for a certain number to be sent down to me to Calcutta, where I will begin my inquiries, and work up to Gya. It was only about a week ago that I got to know where some of these coolies were.

The "arkatis" in Gya seem to be a very formidable body, and I am in hopes of bringing them to justice.

In most of these Gya cases the "arkatis" actually accompanied the coolies to Dhubri, for the purpose, so I am told, to keep them in check, and prevent them from informing.

One would naturally suppose that such highhandedness could never prevail, and be unknown to the district officials, without some collusion on the part of the sardars and coolies. However, the sardars and coolies that have been up before me as complainants most emphatically deny any connivance. All state that nothing but severe threats, assaults, and the gross manner in which their women were treated, and threatened to be still more severely treated, should the men turn at all hostile, made them succumb to the "arkatis," and at the same time prevented them from bringing the abuse at once before officers of the district. This, however, from my inquiries, I cannot entirely believe, and feel that there has been collusion on the part of sardars who no doubt received some consideration from the "arkatis," who could well afford to pay a good deal, considering that they get on an average Rs. 25 per head. I must say that the "Kols," a poor and semi-civilized race, are easily duped.

In the Ranigunj case I find that opposition bands of "arkatis" exist, and therefore there has been less oppression, and the three or four gangs who were intercepted got off. The case I have in hand is one in which the gang was separated, and no less than four recruiters got hold of them, if the complainant's story is true. I am at present trying to find the coolies.

The complaints made to me show that this year (*i.e.*, in January, February, and March) from Gya 204 Terai coolies were abducted and 113 Dooar coolies, all sent to Assam. From Hazaribagh there were 59 Dooar coolies only, and from Ranigunj 16 likewise sent to Assam and Cachar.

These three districts are the only ones in which this wholesale abduction has taken place. Last year, however, I am told Ranchi was in it too. I have been told of one attempt at abduction, in the Monghyr district last February; the sardar, however, got off

with his men, and had very little trouble. He told me he was not able to bring the matter home to any one, and so I did not take up the case.

Three routes have, as a rule, been adopted by Dooar and Terai coolies, viz., through *Gya*, which North Lohardugga and Palamow then take, then as to Sahibgunj on the Ganges across to Purneah to Julpigoree; Assam through *Hazaribagh* to Giridi, which the Hazaribagh men and sometimes Ranchi men take and go to Sahibgunj, and Purneah on to Julpigoore.

The third through Ranchi down to Ranigunj and then across. Why these different routes are taken by men who really, one may say, come from the same parts of the Chota Nagpore is only accounted for by the coolies, who tell me that they generally go by the route they have always been accustomed to take, and which they know well, their ultimate destination being Julpigoree. I do not see why *one* route should not be adopted by *all*. It should be a safeguard from future malpractices, and could be looked after, and I see no reason why the middle route, viz., through Hazaribagh, should not be adopted and looked after by the interested parties. This I know could easily be adopted. I attach a statement showing in detail the cases in connection with the Dooar and Terai coolies that have come before me for inquiry.

As to the cause of these abuses, I cannot but attribute it to the large and ever-increasing demand for free labour in Assam and Cachar, the enormously high prices paid for coolies varying from Rs. 80 to Rs. 120 a head, and run according to scale; for instance, an "arkati" can get Rs. 25 a head for every able adult, male or female, and the man who purchases from him can get as much as Rs. 60 from the contractors, who, on their account, get Rs. 80 to Rs. 120, and the scope that Section 7 of the Act gives.

The whole business of free emigration has become a most lucrative trade, and any one can enter and share the large profits; consequently the country is overrun with "arkatis," who can roam about the whole place without fear of molestation on the part even of the district officials; and the large batches of free emigrants to the Dooars and Terai, travelling, one may say, on their own account, naturally were an easy prey to them, and they went for them.

A number of "arkatis" now work on their own account, while others are employed by agents, who arm them with, to say the least, extraordinary permits. I herewith forward a sample. I have reason to believe that those said "arkatis" are anything but good men. For instance, the man on whom I found this sample of permit is a notorious bad character borne on the books of the police, who suddenly disappeared, and was not heard of or seen till he was caught in a kidnapping case at Giridi. I do not think such men should be employed or even tolerated as "arkatis." I dare say there are many of this stamp roaming about the country who make a very good living too.

I must say some of the firms in Calcutta, who are agents for gardens in the Dooars and Cachar, and purchase coolies in Calcutta for the latter gardens, can hardly be ignorant of the fact that some of these very coolies belong to the Dooars, and of the abuses that exist in connection with them. Such firms could render much assistance in preventing the abuses if they would but refuse to buy coolies from persons suspected of malpractices.

LIST of Cases of Abduction of Dooar and Terai Coolies as reported having occurred this Year, 1888.

Number.	Name of District and Garden.	Names of Sardars who recruited Coolies.	Number of Coolies recruited.	Number of Coolies said to have been Abducted.	Where Abducted.	Where taken to after Abduction for disposal by "Arkatis."	Where eventually found.	Number of Coolies that have been found repatriated.	Number of Coolies who escaped <i>en route</i> after Abduction.	Number of Coolies who escaped from Gardens in Assam and Cachar.	REMARKS.	
	JULY-NOVEMBER:											
1	Rangamatti - - - -	Mungloo - - - -	52	53, including sardar.	Gya - - - -	Calcutta - - - -	Typhoon, Assam - - - -	- - - -	- - - -	1, Mungloo Sardar - - - -	Case under inquiry.	
-	Bamandanga - - - -	Chattoo - - - -	81	81	ditto - - - -	Not found yet - - - -	Not found yet - - - -	- - - -	1, Chatto - - - -	- - - -	ditto.	
-	Ditto - - - -	Charwa - - - -	80	81	ditto - - - -	Calcutta - - - -	Typhoon, Assam - - - -	- - - -	Charwa - - - -	1, Sanaji - - - -	ditto.	
-	Dangwajhar - - - -	Kungloo - - - -	30	30	Hazaribagh - - - -	Cachar - - - -	Kaspara, Cachar - - - -	21 - - - -	1, Kungloo - - - -	9 (not found yet) - - - -	Case pending before Sessions Court, sections 241, 242, 265, 270.	
-	Garden not known - - - -	Khalla - - - -	16	16	Haniganj - - - -	Calcutta - - - -	Not found yet - - - -	- - - -	1, Khalla - - - -	- - - -	Under inquiry.	
	DARJELING DISTRICT:											
-	Central Terai Garden - - - -	Kajeel - - - -	132	133, including sardar.	Gya - - - -	Calcutta - - - -	Jorehat, Assam - - - -	None - - - -	11 found at home - - - -	- - - -	ditto.	
-	Ditto - ditto - - - -	Dunkar Kisen - - - -	71	70	ditto - - - -	Not found - - - -	Not found - - - -	ditto - - - -	2, Dunkar and his wife, rejected at Dhubri.	- - - -	ditto.	

N.B.—Besides these cases, there were three others in Hazaribagh, in which Dooar and Terai were restrained, but got off, with the exception of 20. These were inquired into and detected, and accused, Lawton, convicted. One case of Monghyr (not inquired into), and one at Haniganj, not inquired into, as no proof could be obtained; and one at Ranchi, inquired into and convicted, an attempt case.

Ranchi, 25 June 1888.

J. H. Tucker,
Assistant District Superintendent of Police, on special duty.

No.

LICENSE to Recruit Free Emigrants.

UNDER the provisions of the India Government Resolution, paragraph 3 of the 27th January 1882, published in the Supplement to the "India Gazette," dated the 28th idem, and republished in the Supplement to the "Calcutta Gazette" of the 15th March 1882, I hereby authorise

_____ to engage and forward all labourers who may wish to proceed to any of the Tea Gardens in Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet, independently of the Emigration Act.

DESCRIPTION of Recruiter.

NAME.	Father's Name.	Caste.	Age.	Sex.	Zillah.	Pergunnah.	Village.	Descriptive Marks.

This license will remain in force for one year from date.

The Raneegungo, 188 .

A. P. Banerji, Manager,
for Alexander Cass, Contractor and Agent.

No. 606J, dated Chota Nagpore, the 27th September 1888.

From *J. A. Hopkins*, Esq., c.s., Officiating Commissioner of the Chota Nagpore Division, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

IN forwarding Mr. Tucker's report on the abuses connected with the inland emigration, for inquiry into which he was specially deputed, I venture to make the following remarks with some diffidence, for my experience in this division is small, and the subject is, as far as free emigration is concerned, quite new to me.

2. It would appear, from a perusal of the cases reported by Mr. Tucker, that the licensed systems of recruiting have almost disappeared; a so-called system of free emigration has taken their place. Under this system the chief abuses are noticeable:—

- (1) In the collection of emigrants;
- (2) In their transit to the labour districts;
- (3) In the manner in which they are guarded and lodged in transit;
- (4) In the system, traffic, or trade, which has arisen.

3. The deceit and fraud practised on the inhabitants to induce them to emigrate, I think, may be left to remedy itself. There is already a tendency, which is noticed by Mr. Tucker, on the part of the villagers to protect themselves. Any interference in this respect would strike at the root of free emigration, and would probably do more mischief than good.

4. But I think in their transit to the labour districts, a great deal might be done to protect emigrants, such as the selection of compulsory routes and the control of lodging-houses or depôts as they are called. Gangs of coolies proceeding in charge of garden sirdars or local agents' peons should be directed to follow specified routes, and their halting places and lodging-houses should be open to inspection. Minors and single women should be liable to be questioned, and coolies under the influence of intoxicating drugs and liquor, should be liable to detention.

5. The

5. The manner in which free emigrants are guarded in transit, and confined when they bivouac for the night, deprives the system of all the benefits intended by the Legislature; but I think the evils would be considerably palliated by a system of selected routes and halting places.

The system which has arisen of trafficking and trading in free emigrants, by which both employers of labour and the coolies themselves are considerable losers, is far more difficult to deal with. There can be no doubt that the chances of such trade arising were unforeseen. No such trade takes place with reference to the Darjeeling and Dooars tea labour; or if it does, it is small and unimportant. In the case of labour for Assam, &c., from three to five middlemen seem to derive profit from free labour. This in itself is an abuse of the system; but the worst of it is that it leads to every kind of fraud and crime by which this unlawful, or rather unrecognised traffic, may be kept up. It is clear the authorities cannot interfere with a trade which is carried on with the consent of both the parties most interested. No system of registration would be effectual in preventing abuses. As far as the proprietors and employers of labour are concerned, they ought to be able to protect themselves. With reference to the coolies, it is another matter; they are ignorant and incapable of protecting themselves after they have got into the hands of the coolie agents, and I think that, without interfering with free emigration, Government might interfere to protect all emigrants proceeding to Assam, &c., under advances for expenses, and under challans by local agents.

No. 105E, dated Ranchi, the 29th September 1888.

From *F. Harrington Tucker*, Esq., Officiating District Superintendent of Police, on special duty, to the Commissioner of the Chota Nagpore Division.

UNDER instructions from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, and with reference to Government letter, No. 1221J, dated 24th March 1888, to your address, I have the honour to submit the following report on the inquiries into cases of fraud, abduction, and enticement of Dooars, Terai, and other free emigrants of Cachar, made by me since March last.

Below I give a tabular statement showing in detail the nature and results of all the cases I have had to deal with. I have arranged these cases under two headings:—

- 1st.—Those concerning only Dooars and Terai coolies.
- 2nd.—Those appertaining to other coolies.

STATEMENT of Cases of Abduction, Kidnapping, and Enticement of Coolies (Free Emigrants) from Chota Nagpore and adjoining Districts to Assam Districts.

District in which Offence took place.	No.	Name and Particulars of Complainant.	Name and Particulars of Accused.	Class and Substance of Complaints.	Result of Inquiry.	Final Result.
HAZARIBAGH—DOOARS AND TERAI CASES.	1	Tenion Oraon - - - - -	Mr. Lawton, unlicensed agent, and Edoo and Saligram, <i>arkatis</i> of Bogodar, in Hazaribagh.	Complainant, with 40 men, women, and children, were proceeding to a garden in the Terai to work. One night, <i>en route</i> , when they were encamped near Bogodar, in Hazaribagh, some of Mr. Lawton's men, Saligram, and another, came to them and inquired where they were bound for. When told, the accused went away. Later on that night Mr. Lawton, accompanied by his men, came to the coolies and tried to force them to go to Bogodar, under the pretence to have their names registered. The coolies refused; whereupon Mr. Lawton directed four of his men to look after the coolies, and to bring them to him in the morning. He then returned to Bogodar. The <i>arkatis</i> the next morning tried to force the coolies to Bogodar, and ill-used some of them. The coolies whereupon fled into the jungles, leaving their pots and pans and food, and made off to Hazaribagh, where Tenion complained to the Deputy Commissioner.	The case was fully established against Mr. Lawton and his <i>arkatis</i> , Edoo Khan, Saligram, and others; and Mr. Lawton, the only accused who could be arrested, was sent up for trial under Sections 147 and 323 (rioting and assault). The <i>arkatis</i> had absconded.	Mr. Lawton was convicted under Sections 147 and 323, Indian Penal Code, and sentenced to two months' rigorous imprisonment and fine Rs. 25.
	2	Kungloo Oraon, sirdar of Dang-najhar Tea Estate, Dooars.	Mr. Lawton and his <i>arkatis</i>	The complainant was proceeding to his garden in the Dooars last January with 30 men, women, and children to work as free emigrants. When encamped near Bogodar, <i>en route</i> through Hazaribagh, Saligram, an <i>arkati</i> and <i>munshi</i> of Mr. Lawton's, came up and demanded the license under which they were travelling. The complainant showed his permit, granted by his manager. Saligram then went away. Some time after, about dusk, in the evening, Mr. Lawton and some six or seven of his men came down on them and, representing himself to be a police officer, forced them to go to Bogodar to have a list made out. On arrival at Bogodar, Kungloo and another were taken into the depot, and soon after the remainder of the coolies were regularly driven in. When once in they were locked up in the enclosure. Mr. Lawton forced them to give up their money, food, &c. He then had a list prepared and agreements, to which he forced some to attach their marks; at least, to touch his pen, after which he put marks on. These agreements were attested by three of his men. The coolies were kept confined in this depot for 11 days, and fed by Mr. Lawton. On the 11th night the coolies, with the exception of Kungloo sirdar, were put into four bullock carts, and, under escort of five or six <i>arkatis</i> (peons) of Mr. Lawton, were sent across country to Burrakur. Kungloo was still kept confined in the depot. He, however, managed to escape the following night, and went off to Burrakur, where he saw his coolies again. He then went to Calcutta, paying his fare from the proceeds of a blanket he sold. In Calcutta he had a couple of friends, to whom he narrated his story, and from whom he borrowed his fare to Julpigoree. On arrival at his garden, he reported matters to his manager, who brought it to the notice of Government, and the matter was taken up.	After some time, the abducted coolies were found in the Kaspore garden in Cachar, where they had been taken by Saligram and other <i>arkatis</i> of Mr. Lawton, and sold to the manager. The coolies were taken from Burrakur by train to Goalundo, from whence they were sent off in boats to Kaspore direct. Mr. Lawton and his <i>arkatis</i> were found guilty under Sections 384 (extortion), 379 (theft), and 344 (wrongful confinement for 10 or more days), and 170 (personating a public servant), and sent up for trial. Mr. Lawton was arrested in Calcutta, but his <i>arkatis</i> had absconded.	The Deputy Commissioner of Hazaribagh tried the case, and committed Mr. Lawton, under Sections 384, 379, and 344 to the Court of Sessions, which court, as Mr. Lawton claimed to be tried as a British-born European subject, committed the case to the High Court of Calcutta for trial, where the case is now pending.
	3	Genoa Oraon, sirdar of Naingtauce Tea Garden, Dooars.	Mr. Lawton and his <i>arkatis</i>	This sirdar was proceeding last January to his garden, with 24 men, women, and children. When near Bogodar, in Hazaribagh district, the accused intercepted them, and by force and threats made them enter his depot, where they were locked up. On the third day the complainant managed to escape, and went and reported the case to the deputy commissioner, who ordered an inquiry at once. The accused, on learning that Genoa had escaped, immediately released the other coolies.	The case was clearly proved against Mr. Lawton and his gang, and in March they were challaned under Sections 343 (wrongful confinement for three days), 341 (wrongful confinement), and 170 (personation). Mr. Lawton was the only accused who could be arrested, the <i>arkatis</i> having hidden themselves,	Mr. Lawton was found guilty by the deputy magistrate of Hazaribagh, and on the 26th April sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment, under Sections 342 and 343.

GIRDIDH SUB-DIVISION OF HAZARI-BAGH.

4 Ledwa Oraon, sirdar of Bamundanga Garden, Dooars.

Chit Bahal, unlicensed local agent, and his *arkatis* Nanko, Baudho, Mayet, Budhan, and Chit Lal.

Complainant and 62 men, women, and children, were on their way to the Dooars last February. When near Girdidh, they were intercepted by a gang of *arkatis*, and forcibly confined in a depot belonging to Chit Bahal, a local agent, working for a Mr. Bennett, contractor, of Ranigungeo. During the night complainant and another sirdar managed to escape by going through a drain and gave information, but too late to recover the rest of his coolies. The coolies were supposed to have gone to Bailhpara garden in Assam, but were not found there. Mr. Bennett is said to have sent them to Dhubri, but no trace could be got of them there even.

The case was fully established against the accused, and they were sent up to the sub-divisional officer of Girdidh for trial under Sections 365 (abduction) and 368, Indian Penal Code (wrongfully concealing a kidnapped person), and he committed them to the Court of Sessions.

Chit Bahal Sing was acquitted for want of evidence; Nanko Budhan and Mayet, *arkatis*, were found guilty and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment each, under Sections 378 (theft), 342 (wrongful confinement), and 170 (personation). Baudho and Chit Lal sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment each, under Sections 342 and 170, by the Court of Sessions last April.

GYA

5 Mungloo and Charwa Oraons, sirdars of Rungamatti and Bamundanga Tea Gardens in Dooars.

Baboo Kristo Nath Mitter, an unlicensed local agent, and his *arkatis* Golab Sing and Dowlut Sing, &c.

These two sirdars were proceeding through Gya last December, with 82 men, women, and children, to work on their gardens. When near Gya, the accused intercepted them, and by force and ill-treatment compelled them to enter the depot, in which they were kept confined for two days; after which they were taken down to Calcutta, where they were made over to a Mr. Trose, son of Mr. M. Mackertich, a licensed contractor, who sold them to Messrs. Begg, Dunlop, & Co., and had them sent to Dhubri, where they were, under compulsion, made to sign agreements to work in Assam. The coolies were then sent off to the Tejjhook Garden. Charwa Oraon, one complainant, managed to jump out of the train near Lakiseral when *en route* to Calcutta; also a coolie, and these went at once to the garden and reported matters to their manager, and where I recorded their complaints. Mungloo, the other complainant, after some time managed to escape from the garden, and was thus able to complain to me.

After some time the abducted coolies were found in the Tejjhook Garden, and some 10 of them were examined in June last. Their statements corroborated those made previously by the complainants. I had them sent down to me, but owing to want of funds, &c., which I afterwards obtained from Government, these witnesses did not arrive until the 4th September. I then proceeded to Gya with them and the complainants, and made full inquiries, which resulted in the arrest of two *arkatis* and warrant for Kristo Baboo hiding in Calcutta. Wrongful confinement was clearly proved against the accused.

This case is now pending submission of final Form A. by the District Superintendent of Police, Gya, to whom it was made over by me to punish judicially the other day. I have to remark that there was great difficulty in getting the witnesses down from Assam. They did not arrive till the 4th September.

N.B.—Since heard that the case has been sent up for trial under Section 342 (wrongful confinement).

6 Jeta Oraon, sirdar of Central Terai Tea Garden, Darjeeling.

Baboo Kristo Nath Mitter, unlicensed sub-agent, and his *arkatis*, Golab Dowlut Sing and others.

This sirdar along with three other sirdars of the Central Terai Tea Garden were proceeding through Gya in December last, with 132 men, women, and children to work as free emigrants near Gya; they were met by the accused, who, after persuasions to go with them to be sent as coolies to Assam, failed, used them badly, and forced them into the depot, where they were confined for two days, and then sent off to Calcutta, with the exception of 11, who managed to escape. In Calcutta, they were given over to Mr. Trose, who sold them there and then to a Mr. Hert, manager of Oinnamara Garden in Assam, and were sent to Dhubri, under escort of the accused under whose influence and those of the Dhubri depot they were registered, and signed agreements. The complainant, after a stay of a month or so in this garden, managed to escape and preferred his complaint before me at Sukna Terai, in April.

The inquiries in this case were similar to those in case No. 5, Mungloo's and Charwa's. The abducted coolies' statements were first taken in Sibsaigor; they were then sent down to me, but did not arrive until the 4th September. I then took all up to Gya, where the case was well established, and two *arkatis* arrested.

This case likewise was recently made over to the District Superintendent of Police of Gya to arrest Kristo Baboo, who was in Calcutta, and submit final Form A. to magistrate for trial.

N.B.—Since heard that this case has been sent up for trial under Section 342 Indian Penal Code (wrongful confinement).

Remarks.—In this case, as well as No. 5, unfortunately the coolies could not name the accused. It was only by parading some of the *arkatis* that could be got at that the present accused were discovered, the coolies having identified them.

7 Dunkerkesan, sirdar of the Central Terai, Tea Estate.

Chutan Mia, sub-agent (unlicensed), Baboo Lal, and *arkatis* names, unknown.

This sirdar was proceeding through Gya with 71 men, women, and children to work in his garden in December last. He and his men were intercepted by the accused and forcibly kept under restraint for some days, and were moved about from place to place, until they arrived at a railway station supposed to be Gya. They were then put into the train, and under escort of five or six *arkatis* were taken to Calcutta and kept locked up in Baboo Hira Lal Mookerjee's depot, this Baboo being a contractor of coolies, and were eventually sent to Dhubri, where, under pressure of the *arkatis* and Baboo Hira Lal's peons in charge of the depot at Dhubri, they were registered, and signed agreements to serve in Assam. At Dhubri, they, complainant and his wife, were rejected, and so they got off and went to their gardens, where I recorded their complaints.

On inquiry and after some time, I found the coolies had been drafted to Melhi and Teta Damara Gardens, former in Nowgong and latter in Lakhimpore, Assam. Thirty-five of the coolies are now in Teta Damara and 17 in Melhi. I had some of these coolies examined, and on finding they corroborated the complaint, have asked the various Deputy Commissioners to send them down to me as soon as they arrive. They are to go to Gya to the District Superintendent of Police who will finish the case.

Still under inquiry; the chief witnesses from Assam are awaited.

STATEMENT of Cases of Abduction, Kidnapping, and Enticement of Coolies (Free Emigrants) from Chota Nagpore and adjoining Districts to Assam Districts—continued.

District in which Offence took place.	No.	Name and Particulars of Complainant.	Name and Particulars of Accused.	Class and Substance of Complaints.	Result of Inquiry.	Final Result.
GYA—continued	8	Bhowla and Jamna, sirdars of Balla-baria Tea Gardens in Julpigoree.	Baboo Nital Sankar, sirdar, and others, names unknown, of Hashah, village sub-division Nawadah of Gya.	These sirdars were proceeding through Gya, in November last, with 46 men, women, and children, when near Hashah in Nowadah, sub-division of Gya, the accused and various <i>arkatis</i> intercepted them, and by threats, assaults, &c., compelled them to go with them to some railway station, where they were put into the train and sent off to Calcutta, where they were kept in a place belonging to Nital Baboo, and from whence they were taken to Dhubri, passed through the registration office, and entered into agreements; all under pressure, without an alternative, and sent up to Singloo Tea Garden in Sibesger. The complainants served in this garden for a time and then induced the manager to allow them leave to go to Chota Nagpore to bring some more coolies. They were allowed to go, but instead of going to Chota Nagpore, at once went off to their old gardens, and reported facts to their manager, who sent them to Ranchi to complain; this they did in December.	The Joint-Magistrate of Ranchi first recorded the complaints, and wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of Sibesger for particulars. In July the Deputy Commissioner of Sibesger replied that 10 of the abducted coolies were at last found in Singloo Garden. The papers were then made over to me. The Deputy Commissioner of Sibesger was at once written to by me to examine some of these coolies and to try and get at the others. These coolies were not passed through Dhubri, but taken up direct to the garden by the accused, or men belonging to them, which makes it all the more difficult to fathom and bring the case to an issue.	Case is pending now with me, and will now be made over to the District Superintendent of Police, Gya, to finish.
	9	Bhaga Oraon	Ulfat Hosein, Sankar Kabar, Palat Kabar, <i>arkatis</i> of Gya.	The complainant and a number of men, women, and children were proceeding through Nowadah, in Gya, en route to Darjeeling Terai, to work in a tea garden, where they were intercepted by the accused, who, with the assistance of some village chowkidars, forced the coolies into a depot and kept them confined there for three or four days. The attack on the coolies was noticed by a road overseer, who brought it to the notice of the sub-deputy collector, who, with the police, came upon the <i>arkatis</i> and discovered the coolies confined in a depot. The coolies all protested against the treatment, and a case was at once instituted against the accused.	The accused were found guilty of wrongful confinement under Section 342, Indian Penal Code, and were sent up for trial before the Joint Magistrate of Nowadah.	The three accused were found guilty under Section 342, Indian Penal Code (wrongful confinement), and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment each, and fined Rs. 200, by the Joint Magistrate of Nowadah. <i>Remarks.</i> —A very clear case indeed of the manner in which such Dooars and Terai coolies are abducted by <i>arkatis</i> and sub-agents.
	10	Chuttoo Oraon, sirdar of Bamundauga.	Unknown	This sirdar was proceeding through Gya with 31 men, women, and children last January, and somewhere near Gya he and his men were intercepted by some <i>arkatis</i> whose names he does not know, and were taken to a place in which they were confined. He, however, managed to escape, and went to his garden, but has never heard of his coolies, and does not know where they are; he is trying to find them.	I at once wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of Dhubri to ascertain if he could give me any clue, but he could not, and since then my endeavours to find the coolies in various gardens have failed; however, the inquiries will continue.	This case will be made over to the District Superintendent of Police, Gya, along with the complainant, who perhaps will be able to identify some of the <i>arkatis</i> who have been got at by the District Superintendent of Police, lately in connection with other cases made over to him recently.
PURULIA	11	Koku Oraon sirdar of Ghatia Gardens, Dooars.	Unknown; supposed to be two constables.	This sirdar was proceeding through Purulia with 16 coolies last August; he and his men were stopped by a couple of men on the highway and told to return as the route was closed. They returned and soon after went away home. Their not turning up at the garden caused some uneasiness, and I got a telegram stating they had been abducted. The complainant, however, finally confessed that his intimation to the agent was false. His coolies, when stoppted in Purulia, got alarmed, and bolted back to their homes, and he was afraid to go back to his garden without them, and so spread a false report.	From inquiries made in Purulia by me, I found that at the time cholera was raging there, and all traffic on the highways closed. These coolies were stopped by the police, and sent back under orders of the magistrate.	Case abandoned; was a false one.

RANIGUNGE	13	Khaliq Agar, sirdar of	Lalit Misir and others, <i>arkatis</i> of Ranigunge.	The complainant is one of the 10 coolies recruited by Ratti sirdar of Mr. Wallick's tea garden in the Doars, Jalpigore, proceeding down in February last. They arrived at Ranigunge en route, and were soon after intercepted by the accused, and some four other <i>arkatis</i> , and forced into a depot where a Sahib came to them and used them roughly, and compelled them to go to Assam. From Ranigunge they were taken to Dhubri by one Rampratab peon, made to enter into agreements, and were sent to Akkell Tea Garden, from which place he escaped, and came to his old garden.	From inquiries made, and the depositions of the coolies found in Assam, it has been proved that the <i>arkatis</i> took the coolies to a Mr. Bennets, local agent at Ranigunge, who sent them to Dhubri on behalf of Baboo N. B. Roy, a coolie contractor at Ranigunge. Owing to Mr. Bennets being away, the case is pending inquiry. The papers, however, have now been made over to the Ranigunge police.	Case pending inquiry at Ranigunge.
LOHARDUGGA—OTHER CASES	13	Jugtoe Kumar of Chandagneel Ranchi.	Nisir Khan, Ahmed Baksh, Gasaffar Hosen, Gunga, Gour, all <i>arkatis</i> of Lohardugga.	The complainant charged the accused with having forcibly kidnapped and abducted his daughter Biban, his sister-in-law, Bandhani, and her daughter Akhji. The three were at the Dorunda Bazaar on the 31st December, selling things, when the accused, one of whom was armed with a surreptitious warrant for arrest for debt against the three women, and dressed as a peon, forced the women to leave the market. The women raised a hue and cry which attracted the attention of some sepoy in the bazaar and a havildar. These men interfered, but were told that the women were arrested for debt, and one of the <i>arkatis</i> had the audacity to show the false warrant, whereupon the sepoy ceased to interfere. The accused then took the women away and put them into a two-wheeled gharry, pulled by coolies and took them to Giridih. There handed them over to a Mr. Suther, local agent for Messrs Elliot & Co., Calcutta, who sent them to Assam.	The women were found some three months afterwards in a garden in Assam, and were brought down, and from their evidence, and that of the sepoy, the case was proved, and the Joint-Magistrate of Ranchi committed the accused to the Court of Sessions to be tried under Sections 342 (wrongful confinement) and 365 (kidnapping and abduction).	Before the Sessions the women retracted from their former statements to some extent, and the accused were acquitted. The witnesses were undoubtedly got at by the people of the accused and ruined the case.
PALAMOW SUB-DIVISION, LOHARDUGGA.	14	Gohri Kahar of Rajnara, Palamow	Haripal Kahar, Akhaj and Sumaroo, all <i>arkatis</i> .	The complainant's minor son, Sow Taha, a boy aged 18, was enticed away from his home by the accused under a promise to give him service for Rs. 5 a month and rice, &c. The accused brought the boy to Ranchi to their employer, a sub-agent and recruiter, named Golam Hyder. Finding Golam Hyder away, the accused then took the lad to Mr. Binning, a local agent, who accepted the lad, and entered him as Balgobind, a name given by the <i>arkatis</i> , wrong caste, and age 17. The <i>arkatis</i> then returned with the boy to Golam Hyder, and the next day the lad was sent off with some other coolies under a chaprasi to Ranigunge, the chaprasi taking the challan granted by Mr. Binning. At Ranigunge, Mr. Thompson, forwarding agent for Mr. Binning, took over the coolies, and examined them; it was then that the lad discovered he was being sent off to Assam as a coolie, and protested, whereupon Mr. Thompson returned him to Ranchi, and the same chaprasi brought the lad back to Golam Hyder. The boy then managed to have information sent to his father, who came over, and took the boy away, and preferred a complaint against the accused.	The case was well brought home to the accused, and all the parties were sent down to the Sub-divisional Officer with my proceedings to take up the case judicially, where it is at present pending. The three accused are to be tried under Section 365 for kidnapping and Section 342 for wrongfully confining the lad.	Case pending judicial inquiry at Palamow.
	15	Kamiruddeen, <i>arkati</i>	Baxi Ahmed, sub-agent and local recruiter.	Kamiruddeen charged the accused with having abducted his wife, Gunjari, and sent her off to Assam as a free emigrant. granted the accused the usual challan, and she was taken to Ranigunge by one of the accused's chaprasis, and there handed over to an agent, who sent her to the collieries in Assam. The woman says that the complainant kept her for about a month or so under promise to marry her, but left her for some business; while he was away, Azimuddeen and Wazir, two <i>arkatis</i> , enticed her away to Ranchi to meet Kamiruddeen, where she was to be married to him. When she came to Ranchi she put up in the accused's house and was taken after a week to Mr. Driver and there registered and then sent off to Ranigunge and from thence to the collieries. The accused has proved, that the complainant sold him the woman, and that Azimuddeen and Wazir aided him, for which the three received Rs. 20, and granted a receipt. Case proved false and malicious because of this, and also because Kamiruddeen's master Tahir, and this sub-agent and the accused were at enmity, and the latter (Tahir) made the complainant prefer the charge. Complainant also put in a petition afterwards to withdraw his complaint.	On inquiry it was found that the accused had brought the woman before Mr. Driver, a local agent at Ranchi, who accepted her and sent her to Ranigunge by one of the accused's chaprasis, and there handed over to an agent, who sent her to the collieries in Assam. The woman says that the complainant kept her for about a month or so under promise to marry her, but left her for some business; while he was away, Azimuddeen and Wazir, two <i>arkatis</i> , enticed her away to Ranchi to meet Kamiruddeen, where she was to be married to him. When she came to Ranchi she put up in the accused's house and was taken after a week to Mr. Driver and there registered and then sent off to Ranigunge and from thence to the collieries. The accused has proved, that the complainant sold him the woman, and that Azimuddeen and Wazir aided him, for which the three received Rs. 20, and granted a receipt. Case proved false and malicious because of this, and also because Kamiruddeen's master Tahir, and this sub-agent and the accused were at enmity, and the latter (Tahir) made the complainant prefer the charge. Complainant also put in a petition afterwards to withdraw his complaint.	I drew up proceedings in the whole case, and charged Kamiruddeen, under Section 311, Indian Penal Code, for giving a false complaint, and Kamiruddeen, Azimuddeen and Wazir under Sections 342 and 365, Indian Penal Code (wrongful confinement and abduction with secret intent to wrongfully confine a person) and sent papers to the District Superintendent Police, Ranchi, to finish. Remarks.—This is a very good case, exposing the villainy of the <i>arkatis</i> .

STATEMENT of Cases of Abduction, Kidnapping, and Enticement of Coolies (Free Emigrants) from Chota Nagpore and adjoining Districts to Assam Districts—continued.

District in which Offence took place.	No.	Name and Particulars of Complainant.	Name and Particulars of Accused.	Class and Substance of Complaints.	Result of Inquiry.	Final Result.
PALAMOW SUB-DIVISION, LOHARDUGGA—continued.	16	Mussamut Sohada Paikin and Kuar Sobran.	Magahae Upadya, unlicensed sub-agent, and his <i>arkatis</i> , Rudna and Purna Lohars, of Ranchi.	The two complainants were enticed away from their homes by the accused <i>arkatis</i> . Mussamut Kuar Loharin was enticed away by Rudna under promise of marriage, and Mussamut Sohoda was enticed away by Purna, under a promise that one Mukund Bai, a well-to-do man of Chatakpore would keep her. The <i>arkatis</i> brought them to Magahae Upadya, who sold them to Mr. Driver, sub-agent, and they were sent on to Giridih <i>en route</i> . They discovered that they were being taken as coolies for Assam, and so complained at Bogoda, in Hazaribagh, to the police, who sent them back to Ranchi.	Inquiries were made at Ranchi, regarding the recruiting of these women, and it was discovered that they were abducted by deceitful means; and so the case was not instituted against the accused. At the same time, the inquiries disclosed the fact that head-constable Kishen Dyal of the Court and Chuni Lall, process peon, attempted to sell these girls again on their return from Hazaribagh, and the matter was taken up departmentally and the two men have been punished.	Case false. <i>Remarks.</i> —In this case it was found that process peons adopt the trade of <i>arkatis</i> .
CHYEBASSA	17	Sankar Teli, of Chyebassa	Boloram Harlah, Tanti, and Neeranjun, Tanti, <i>arkatis</i> .	In this case the complainant accused the three defendants with enticing away his wife, Parbati, and sending her to Assam as a coolie. He missed his wife early in January, and after a long time found out she had been abducted.	The complainant's story was found to be true, and the woman traced out, but unfortunately she died on board the steamer <i>en route</i> , and so the case had to be abandoned.	Case abandoned owing to the death of the chief witness, the woman abducted.
LOHARDUGGA	18	David Christian, and Mungri Orain, of Ranchoe.	Philip Christian	The former complainant brought to my notice that his daughter, Doymani, aged 12, and his niece, Peary, aged 13 years, were missing, and that he suspected that the accused, who is an <i>arkati</i> , had enticed the girls away. The second complainant story was the same. The three girls had disappeared together. Mungri had lost her daughter only.	The three girls were found after some time in the mission at Chyebassa, and when sent up before me said that the accused had not enticed them away. They said that their people had ill-treated them, and so they ran away.	Case abandoned as the supposed abducted girls denied everything.
CHYEBASSA	19	Gansoo Bhoonij	Nathoni and Gunput Sao, <i>arkatis</i>	The accused were charged before me of having enticed away a lad, Gadey, aged 12, son of complainant. Complainant had missed his boy one day, and, on searching for him, could not find him, but learnt that he was last seen with Gunput, accused.	The two I found were <i>arkatis</i> employed by Mr. Driver. They had produced the boy before Mr. Driver, who accepted him, and eventually sent him to Pertabgar Tea Garden, where the boy was found, and admitted he had come of his own free will. A medical certificate was also produced showing his age to be 19 years.	Case abandoned, as the abducted boy admitted going of his own free will.
HAZARIBAGH	20	Jehan Sing, Government patrol	Lawton and his <i>arkatis</i> , Bilon, Salligram, &c.	Mungra, a sirdar, was proceeding last February through Hazaribagh with 24 coolies, men, women, and children, to make over to an agent in Ranigunge. When nearing Bogodar, on the Grand Trunk Road, in Hazaribagh, he was stopped one night by the accused, who snatched away the coolies, and assaulted the sirdar. A hue and cry was raised at the time by the sirdar, which attracted the attention of the complainant, whose patrol house was close at hand. Complainant went up and tried to prevent the accused, but only got assaulted himself, whereupon he went and complained. The case of assault was taken notice of, and inquired into. In the meantime the accused made off with their coolies, and nothing has been heard of them since, nor a proper complaint made by the owners.	The case of assault on the complainant was clearly proved on the evidence of the cartmen and others, and Mr. Lawton, who was arrested in Calcutta, was sent up for trial, under Sections 170, 332, 323, viz., for personating a public servant, assaulting a public servant, and assault. The <i>arkatis</i> had disappeared.	Mr. Lawton was found guilty by the Deputy Magistrate and sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment for causing hurt. <i>Remarks.</i> —This case was well contested. The defendant had Mr. Gasper, Barrister, and Mr. Cranenburg to defend him.

31	Musamat Golap	Unknown	<p>This complainant, when landing at Gowhati, in Assam, en route to (Shelladana Tea Estate, in Darung, complained to Dr. J. Mullane, Civil Surgeon of Gowhati, that one morning, when she was alone in her home, at Synthia, a stranger man came to her and induced her to carry his bundle as far as Ranigunge, 12 kos away, for a good remuneration. She went to Ranigunge, and there taken before a Sahib, and was put up and given rice to eat, and told that she would soon be sent to her home; she, however, remained some days at Ranigunge under such promises. One day the same man asked her to carry his bundle to the Railway Station, which she did. When at the station she was forcibly put into a carriage, and eventually sent with others to Dhubri in charge of a chaprasi, Ram Pershad, under whose influence she was made to agree to go to Assam. When she was put into the train she was so frightened that she could not cry out.</p>	<p>These papers I received on the 4th September, and commenced my inquiries in Buriwan, but will now hand them over to the District Officer for disposal. The papers were sent to me by the Commissioner of Assam.</p>
32	Bakta Mochi, of Moorhabad	<p>Baboo Rajoni Kanta Mozumdar, sub-agent of Mr. Maskertick, a contractor in Calcutta, and Dinoo his poon.</p>	<p>Complainant and his wife Siboo arrived at Ranigunge from Pooree, where they had gone on a pilgrimage. They were encamped under a tree, when Dinoo came to them and made overtures to them to go to Assam, where they would find good wages. They consented, and were taken to the Baboo, who took them down to Calcutta to Mr. Maskertick, who accepted the woman, but rejected the man (husband). He, however, objected to his wife going without him, and so the pair were brought back to Ranigunge, and made to put up in Dinoo's house. The next day the complainant missed his wife, and was told she had been sent home, and that he could go to; so he went, but found his wife had not returned home, whereupon he came back to Ranigunge, and accused Dinoo and the Baboo of having enticed away his wife. The Sub-divisional Officer sent me the complaint to inquire into.</p>	<p>I proved the story of the complainant to be quite true, and found the woman Siboo up in Assam, and had her examined. She stated that under the pretence of sending her home, Dinoo and the Baboo put her into the train and sent her to Dhubri, with others, with a chaprasi. At Dhubri she was forced into an agreement to go to Assam. I took the case to Ranigunge, and then handed it over to be tried under Sections 365 and 342, abducting and wrongful confinement.</p>
23 24 25	<p>Musamat Mungli Tanti Musamat Darmi of Belara, Doomka Rangmahal, of Nuni, Doomka</p>	<p>Sobak Sing, Dollon Sing, <i>arkats</i> of Ranigunge.</p>	<p>These three women were on board the "Miri," bound for the Messai Tea Garden in Dobruhur, when they complained to Mr. Campbell, Deputy Commissioner, who was on board. Mungli said that she had been induced to leave Chyebassa by Sobak, who promised to find her "good service at Ranigunge with his brother Dollon." Dollon, however, brought her to Dhubri, and put her on board the steamer as a cooly, and left her. The Assam authorities sent her back home.</p> <p>Darmi's story was that her sister Rangpai made her over to Dollon, who promised to find her service, but he took her to Dhubri, and then put her on board and sent her off as a cooly; she too was allowed to return home.</p> <p>Rangmahal said her husband had left her to find work while he was away. Dollon induced her to leave with him, as he said her husband had found work in the Messai Tea Estate. At Dhubri she was with the other women put on board as a cooly; she too was allowed to return home.</p>	<p>These cases were sent to me by the Commissioner of Chota Nagpore to inquire into; he had received them under Government Letter, No. 1410, dated 5th April. They are Assam papers.</p> <p>Mungli I found in Chyebassa, but she simply denied everything she had said before, and on her oath stated before the Deputy Commissioner of Chyebassa and myself that she went willingly. She was found to be a very immoral woman, and no doubt was anxious for a change of scenes. Her case was abandoned.</p> <p>Darmi, I could not find; no one of that name had ever lived in the village; case abandoned.</p> <p>Rangmahal, I could not find her either. Her brother Gunga I found, and he said that his sister was very immoral; she had married four times; and on the death of her last husband had suddenly disappeared, and had never been heard of since; case abandoned.</p>

The case was tried and accused acquitted by the Sub-divisional Officer, of Ranigunge, under Section 209, Indian Penal Code. He did not believe the story, and was of opinion the woman went of her own free will to find a more congenial companion than her old husband. All I can say is it was a good case thrown away.

Case of Musamat Mungli Tanti proved false. Cases of Musamats Darmi and Rangmahal abandoned, as they could not be found.

STATEMENT of Cases of Abduction, Kidnapping, and Enticement of Coolies (Free Emigrants) from Chota Nagpore and adjoining Districts to Assam Districts—continued.

District in which Offence took place.	No.	Name and Particulars of Complainant.	Name and Particulars of Accused.	Class and Substance of Complaints.	Result of Inquiry.	Final Result.
RANIGUNGE	(26) (27) (28)	Mussumat Jamuna of Assensole - Mussumats Chandra and Mandakini of Gungajalhatl, Bankoora.	Mohendra Chakravarti of Ranigunge.	These three women were also on board the "Miri," bound for the Medla Tea Estate, in Lakhimpore, along with the other three mentioned above, in cases 23, 24, and 25, and complained to Mr. Campbell. They all stated they were enticed away from their homes by the accused, an <i>arkati</i> , under promises of good services, but were taken to Dhubri, and there put on board the steamer, and sent off as coolies. Brindaban; he was found to have died, but his son said he never had a sister of that name, but one named Sonpara, who was immoral, and left her home some years ago, and had never been heard of since. It may be that Chandra is the same woman who has thought it better not to come home again.	Jazanna's case I made over to the Ranigunge police to inquire into and try and find the parties, but they have been unable to get at any one. Chandra could not be found in the village, nor has such a person ever lived there. In the statement given by her in Assam, she mentioned her father's name as	Cases abandoned; parties could not be found.
GIRIDI—HAZARIBAGH	29	Hoolale Kamarin of Giridih	Setna, Mussumat Janki, and two others of Giridih. them with promises of finding them good husbands with lucrative employment to go to their house. The four accused lived together and worked as <i>arkatis</i> . They (accused) kept the girls confined in the house for three days or so, and took from them what ornaments they had on, with promises to give them much better ones. One night the three girls were put into a bullock cart, and were being taken to Ranigunge in charge of Setna's uncle (an accused). After travelling some distance the uncle dismissed the cart, and told the girls they would have to walk the remainder of the journey. This rather disappointed the girls, and they began to suspect that all was not right, and strongly objected to proceed any further, and they all returned home. The girls then told the complainant of all that had happened to them, and she brought the matter to notice and inquiries were at once made.	Three girls, Parbati, aged 15 years, daughter of complainant; Gungri, aged 10 years, complainant's daughter-in-law, and Sukiah, aged 10, were out one day picking mangoes when Mussumat Sukri and her sister went up to them and induced Mussumat Sukri and her sister to go to their house with them. They (accused) kept the girls confined in the house for three days or so, and took from them what ornaments they had on, with promises to give them much better ones. One night the three girls were put into a bullock cart, and were being taken to Ranigunge in charge of Setna's uncle (an accused). After travelling some distance the uncle dismissed the cart, and told the girls they would have to walk the remainder of the journey. This rather disappointed the girls, and they began to suspect that all was not right, and strongly objected to proceed any further, and they all returned home. The girls then told the complainant of all that had happened to them, and she brought the matter to notice and inquiries were at once made.	From inquiries made, the story of the girls was well founded. They were undoubtedly being taken to Ranigunge to be sold as coolies for Assam, to some local agent. The four accused were sent up for trial under Section 363, kidnapping; 379, theft; and 342, wrongful confinement.	The accused were convicted by the sub-divisional officer of Giridih and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment under Section 363, kidnapping, and Mussumat Sukri and her sister to six months more under Section 379, theft. <i>Remarks.</i> —This case shows that both men and women adopted the occupation of <i>arkatis</i> .
PURULIA	30	Kirpa and Chandra, girls of Govindpore, Purulia.	Kangni Podar of Gobindpore He first took them to Ranigunge, where they were examined by some Sahab, and he then took them to Dhubri, and put them on board the steamer, and then went ashore himself under the pretence of getting some food, but never returned. They then found out they were being carried off as coolies, and objected very strongly. The women repeated their story to Dr. Mullane, at Gowhati. The Chief Commissioner of Assam sent me the papers to inquire into.	These girls were on board the steamer "Miri," bound for Sibsagar in Assam, to work as coolies on Klamtia tea garden, when they complained to the native doctor on board. The accused had enticed them away from home one day to see the <i>Sarcasti meli</i> .	I had commenced my inquiries, but have now to hand over the papers to the district officer of Purulia for disposal.	—
RANCHI	31	Mr. W. Driver, Local Agent	Daxi Ahmed and others, sub-agents, and <i>arkatis</i> of Ranchi.	The accused is a sub-agent (unlicensed) employed by Mr. Driver, a local agent (unlicensed) to supply him with free emigrants for advances made. The accused on this occasion brought up some coolies to Mr. Driver, who accepted 11 of them and rejected others. Complainant in the usual manner gave the accused a challan, in which were entered the names and description of the 11 coolies picked by him, and the agent to whom they were to be made over at Ranigunge. Mr. Driver had reason to suspect the accused of malpractices, so the third day after he had picked the coolies, and gave orders that they were to be sent to Ranigunge by the sub-agent, he rode out and overtook the cart containing the supposed challaned coolies, and found that, with the exception of one man, all the others were coolies he had never picked; in fact they were old and useless people, and two of them he had some time ago rejected. The cart-load was brought back to me, and he charged the sub-agent with cheating.	I at once examined the coolies, and ten of them stated to me that they had never been before Mr. Driver. That they had been with the accused, a recruiter, and he had sent them off that morning to Ranigunge, and enticed them to adopt the names, &c. of men entered in the challan, and to say they were picked men. Fortunately, too, Mr. Driver had photographed two of the men he had picked out, and entered in the challan; none of those that were found in the cart in any way resembled these photos. I sent the accused parties up to the Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi, to be tried under Sections 418, 417, cheating by personation, &c.	Case is pending judicial inquiry. <i>Remarks.</i> —This is a case that exposes another of the malpractices adopted by recruiters, by keeping a certain number of fine-looking men and women to substitute for bad and rejected and refractory coolies. This is quite a common practice, but hard to detect.

The abstract of results are :—

Convictions - - - - -	6
Acquittals - - - - -	2
Persons convicted - - - - -	15
Ditto acquitted - - - - -	6
Cases pending trial - - - - -	5
Ditto - submission of final form - - - - -	0
Cases under inquiry with me - - - - -	3
Ditto - ditto - police of other districts - - - - -	4
Ditto abandoned for various reasons, such as death of complainant, &c., &c. - - - - -	9
False cases - - - - -	2
	31
TOTAL Cases - - -	31

1. The cases shown as "under inquiry with me" are those in which the abducted coolies have not yet been found. Endeavours have been made, and are still being made, to find them. However, they will now be made over to the district superintendents of the districts in which the offences were committed, to bring to an issue, if possible, working in accordance with my notes and instructions.

2. I find that three systems of recruiting coolies for Assam, Cachar, Sylhet, Dooars, and Terai gardens are in force in Chota Nagpore and the adjoining districts that supply labourers—

I. *That by garden sirdars of Assam and Cachar through local agents, under Chapter IV. of Act I. of 1882.*—This is worked strictly in accordance with the Act and calls for no comment. Recruiting under this system goes on all the year round.

II. *Recruiting of free emigrants for the Dooars and Terai by garden sirdars, and irrespective of any local and other agent or recruiter.*—This system in itself works well enough, but is greatly interfered with by system No. 3. Recruiting under this system goes on only from October to March. These coolies work under no agreements, and can leave their gardens and sirdars whenever they please, and return home, and rejoin whenever they like.

III. *Supplying of supposed free emigrants for Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet by unlicensed local agents, through unlicensed local recruiters, i.e., sub-agents and arhatis or village recruiters.*—This system is based upon Section 7 of Act I. of 1882, and paragraph 3 of the Government of India's Resolution of the 27th January 1882, published in the "Calcutta Gazette" of the 15th March 1882.

3. It is under this system that all the above cases have occurred, and the numerous malpractices and abuses exist. Recruiting under this system goes on all the year through.

4. I will now endeavour to explain this system.

The demand for labour for Assam having become so great, with every tendency to increase, and the very high prices that are paid for coolies to work in tea gardens in the province, led to very many Europeans and natives establishing themselves at the sudder stations of Chota Nagpore and adjoining districts that likewise supply labourers as suppliers of free emigrants, calling themselves local agents but unlicensed. These local agents employ local recruiters, chiefly natives, and unlicensed, who keep regular depôts to house coolies, the same as authorised contractors and recruiters under the Inland Emigration Act. These local recruiters, or, properly designated, local sub-agents, receive advances from local agents, for which they enter into stamped agreements to supply free coolies at fixed rates, which I found ranged from Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 a head for male and female adults, and a proportionate rate for children.

6. These sub-agents employ villagers and others called *arhatis* (recruiters) in very large numbers, under the same conditions as they have entered into with the local agents to supply them with free coolies from the district, at certain fixed rates, which I found range from Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 a head for male and female adults, and proportionate rates for children. Sub-agents are granted permits, in the form attached, by their local agents as likewise *arhatis* :—

Ranchi, 188 .

Under provisions of the India Government Resolution, para. 3, of the 27th January 1882, published in the Supplement to the "India Gazette," dated the 28th idem, and republished in the Supplement to the "Calcutta Gazette" of the 15th March 1882, I hereby authorise

_____ to engage and forward all labourers who may wish to proceed to any tea gardens independently of the Emigration Act.

7. I have also discovered that some contractors of coolies grant similar permits to arkatis to supply them with free emigrants. The other contractors, as well as agents, in Calcutta and elsewhere, for tea estates, generally get their supplies from local agents. In some instances, too, I have found local agents working direct with arkatis.

8. The Act I find is almost, if not quite, a dead-letter in Chota Nagpore and other districts.

9. The *modus operandi* of this No. 3 system is as follows:—

Arkatis who, working only for the Assam and Cachar requirements, scour the country round for free emigrants. The coolies they manage to get hold of are then taken to the sub-agent, who, if he approves of them, either takes them up to his local agent himself, or sends them up with the arkatis who brought them. The local agent on approving of them grants the parties who produce them a challan in the name of the sub-agent, bearing on it the name of the individual at Giridi, Raneegunge, or Dhubri authorised to take them over finally. (This same individual being an agent or contractor, or some responsible person told off by the contractor or agent to take charge of coolies and send them to their ultimate destination, a garden or other concern, who require them.)

10. The coolies, when passed by the local agent, are then taken back to the sub-agent's depôt, and from there sent off in charge of the sub-agent's peon, wearing the badge of the local agent, to Giridi, Raneegunge, &c. The peon then returns with the challan duly receipted to his sub-agent, who then gets paid for every coolie on the challan accepted by his local agent, and afterwards settles his accounts with the arkatis; in some instances the arkatis accompany the coolies to Giridi, Raneegunge, &c.

11. The local agent eventually recovers his price of the coolies from the person who signs the challan at Giridi, Raneegunge, &c.

12. The whole thing is a regular debit and credit transaction, and regular trade by which no less than three parties are greatly benefited.

13. By this method it will be observed the local agent does not take upon himself any responsibility. It is supposed, however, when the coolies are brought to him, that he passes them as *bonâ fide* free emigrants for Assam and Cachar. Whether this is actually done is difficult to know, and I am in doubts about it. The sub-agents have a certain amount of responsibility, but the arkatis are undoubtedly the ones upon whom the whole responsibilities are thrown; for if during transit any coolie turns out to have been abducted, or becomes refractory, or runs away, the arkatis are the ones first pounced upon. However, to prevent all this, the arkatis have friends and relatives everywhere, even among the peons at depôts, to act on their behalf.

14. Now for the various working members of this system, I will first deal with the arkatis. These individuals are, as a rule, the scum of the country, and unscrupulous to a degree. Amongst them have been found ex-convicts, burglars, thieves, dacoits, and notorious budmashas, all of the deepest dye, and who resort to every vile practice to obtain their ends, i.e. a poor unfortunate coolie. A large percentage of these men are armed with extraordinary and most formidable documents called permits, similar to the one I attached to my first report, dated July 1848. From my experience these permits, amongst the ignorant classes in the interior, are looked upon as instruments of dread, and are a means of bringing them under subjection to any caprice of the arkati.

15. These arkatis are at liberty to roam about the country without any fear of being interfered with by the local authorities. However, so well are these individuals known now, that I am informed that they do not find it safe to travel in remote villages; should their disguise be discovered, the people turn out and treat them as they deserve.

Under these circumstances, and with men of such a type, can it be wondered at that malpractices and abuses are practised on the unfortunate inhabitants. These are the men who lie in wait for the Dooars and Terai coolies, quietly wending their way to their gardens to work as *bonâ fide* free emigrants, and by force abduct them to Assam; as the cases of Lawton of Hazaribagh notoriety and Kristo Baboo of Gya with their myrmidons will show.

16. As far as I could learn, this system of recruiting for the Dooars and Terai was adopted by the Assam gardens, but fell through simply because the arkatis were too much for the sirdars, and so the system was dropped, and that of unlicensed local agents, sub-agents, and arkatis reigns supreme.

17. The audacity of the arkatis and their employers is, I think, fully portrayed in the Lawton and Kristo Baboo's cases. In the former, the position of the accused was that of highwaymen. They planted themselves on the side of the highway, and built themselves a depôt, which is a small jail, in which their captures were confined, and finally disposed of; they carried on their depredations until they became too daring, and then were caught. The same may be said of the Gya accused. The arkatis in these gangs were not regular village arkatis. They were more like latials, and went in chiefly against the Dooars Terai coolies whom they found easier prey than scouring the country for free emigrants, as is done in the Chota Nagpore plateau. The former faction too, as a general rule, took their captures direct to Assam and disposed of them there. The latter, however,

however, adopted a sort of precautionary move by forcing their captures through Dhubri, where registration exists and agreements are taken.

18. My inquiries, I regret to state, lead me to think that great slackness exists at Dhubri in carrying out the strict provisions of the Act concerning registration. The only reason I can assign for this laxity is want of time to examine each individual coolie when so many come up at a time for parade. The general custom is to read out the conditions of the Act, to which a few men answer, and as for the rest silence is most probably taken for consent, and all the individuals are then handed over to some Baboo to enter in the register. From the very many dispositions taken of witnesses in Assam, this "Baboo" is the one the coolies complain to, but who can do nothing, and is no doubt in the pay of the depôt men to hold his tongue. The coolies, however, are not long in bringing their grievances to the notice of some one, by letters, or escaping, &c.

19. The depôts at Dhubri, kept by contractors, into which every abducted coolie is placed before registration, are well manned by peons, arkatis, &c., who keep the inmates in order by threats, &c., and bring them out, thoroughly cowed, to be registered.

20. The Assam authorities, especially the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, represent that in these cases of abduction of Dooar and Terai coolies there is collusion on the part of the sirdars, who get well paid to divest themselves of their coolies, but that afterwards they become dissatisfied with the new life, and complain of having been abducted. From the cases I have had to deal with, I have not yet been able to detect this. An instance against such an idea as that held by the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar is the case of Mungloo and Chanva, No. 5 in the statement. The sirdar, in this instance, escapes *en route* to Calcutta by jumping out of the train; also a coolie. Their story was taken in February, and in April was corroborated by the coolies found in Assam months afterwards. The sirdar himself was ignorant of where his coolies were until I found them.

21. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar again holds a different opinion, for when applied to, to assist in finding some abducted coolies in Kungloo's case, No. 2 of the statement, he found the coolies, and on examining them believed they had been abducted, and so cancelled their contracts and repatriated them.

22. As for sub-agents, the majority of them I found were bad and simply aiders and abettors of their arkatis. Some of them were once arkatis, and after amassing wealth became sub-agents, and took life easy, earning their Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 per coolie, after paying all expenses, without any trouble. Naturally, with such pecuniary advantages before them, they are not above resorting to vile practices themselves to obtain coolies.

23. Amongst the European local agents, I found but few who were doubtful characters. By most of them I was allowed access to their books, and every help given to trace out abducted coolies. Not so with Natives; they closed everything against me, and too often told me they kept no books, and were recruiters of free emigrants.

24. I must say undue advantage has been taken of the term free emigration, and that it was never contemplated that Section 7 of the Act would be worked in the manner it is.

The majority of the cases in the statement under heading "Other Cases" are petty ones, but show clearly the many malpractices adopted by the recruiters and arkatis, such as—

(a) Enticing men away under promises of getting them service where they will be well paid, not mentioning Assam and Cachar.

(b) Enticing away girls under the promise that they would be provided with well-to-do husbands, jewellery, &c.

(c) Enticing away girls and women under promise of marriage, and deserting them after putting them on board the steamers at Dhubri.

(d) Assuming various disguises by which they induce men and women to join them in pretended enterprises, and somehow getting them under pecuniary obligations and taking them to recruiting depôts, and there making their victims over to contractors who ship them off to Assam, &c.

25. I also discovered that at almost every depôt a certain number of well-made men and women are kept, who are brought forward before local and other agents as substitutes for bad and refractory coolies. These same substitutes are passed by local agents as *bonâ fide* coolies, whereas they go back to the depôt, and the bad and refractory coolies are challaned by sub-agents and arkatis, the substitutes being kept for nothing but deception.

26. During my inquiries in Lohardugga, Hazaribagh, Gya, and Raneegunge, my attention was drawn to regular depôts in which coolies are kept by supposed free recruiters. The depôts are built like ordinary authorised depôts. Free emigration requires no depôts. They are simply used as places of confinement of free emigrants.

27. All I can say in conclusion is that, as long as this No. 3 system of recruiting of free emigrants exists, and no control is exercised over the various members working it, especially over the arkatis and sub-agents, abductions, malpractices, &c., will continue. The whole thing is now a trade and a very paying one too. District officers are powerless

in the matter. They see the scum of their districts wandering about as recruiters of free emigrants and cannot do anything. The cry is against the enormous body of unscrupulous arkatis and their employers, who are established all over the country.

The permissive provisions of the law have let loose an army of unscrupulous crimps and blackguards on an ignorant population which cannot defend itself from the evils and deceit practised. The question is whether these are to continue to be practised with the tacit sanction of the Government; if not, local officers must be vested with some powers of interference and control.

In the Chota Nagpore Division I think that some good has been done by the few prosecutions and convictions, and fear has been instilled into the less bold workers: but it is hard to tell how long this good will last. The same may be said at Gya. I have my doubts, however, about other districts that are worked directly by the strong factions of recruiters in Raneegunge, who are chiefly Europeans. Success has not attended our exertions there.

Local officers, however, quite understand their responsibilities in checking abuses as much as possible, and will no doubt exercise every power to do so. The task is no easy one.

P. S.—I append a description of the routes taken by coolies. Three routes, as a rule, are adopted by the Dooar and Terai free emigrants:—

1st.—Through Gya district, which men living in the north and west of Lohardugga district, including Palamow, and west of Hazaribagh take. Then on to Sahebgunge on the Ganges, across through Purneah district to Julpigoree.

2nd.—Through Hazaribagh to Giridi or Burrakar across to Raneegunge and Sahebgunge through Purneah and on to Julpigoree. This route the men of Hazaribagh, West Lohardugga, and South Palamow adopt.

3rd.—Through Ranchi on to Purulia and then across as in the above cases. Men of Lohardugga and the Tributary States generally adopt this route.

In the second and third routes the emigrants generally travel by the main roads, but not so in the first. In this route jungle roads and short cuts are taken along the bases of hills, &c.

Why these different routes are taken by men who really, one may say, come from the same parts of Chota Nagpore is all accounted for by the coolies, who tell me that they generally go by the route they have always been accustomed to take, and which they know well.

Their ultimate destination being Julpigoree, I do not see why one route should not be adopted by all. It will be a safeguard from future malpractices, and could be well looked after.

The route through Ranchi and Purulia is the one I would advocate. The road is good, and plenty of water to be had all the year round. This route could be looked after by the interested parties with the assistance of the local officers. All the Tea Association would have to do would be to appoint some responsible European of their own, with a staff of persons in a way subordinate to the district officer, and through whom all coolies should go, and who could adopt some means of protecting them not only from arkatis, but other measures.

Coolies for Assam are generally sent from the districts in which they are recruited, direct to Giridi or Raneegunge, where they are taken over by agents and drafted off to Dhubri and Calcutta, and some to the gardens in Assam and Cachar direct.

(signed) *F. H. Tucker.*

No. 271, Ret.

Revenue Department.—Petitions, &c.

Commissioner's Office, Rajshaye Division;
dated Darjeeling, 22 September 1888.

THIS petition of Mr. F. T. Verner, Superintendent, the Dooars Tea Company, Limited, is forwarded in original to Government, Revenue Department for consideration. The petition was accompanied by a verbal request that the Government might be moved to take such steps as might seem fitting to protect the coolies coming to the Dooars during the next few months. The petitioners acknowledge the great good that has been done by the appointment of Mr. Tucker; they are, however, apprehensive that his services on this special duty will soon be dispensed with, and they fear that the withdrawal of active supervision may give rise to a recurrence complained of. The petitioners hope that the services of Mr. Tucker may be retained for the present.

(signed) *E. E. Lewis,*
Commissioner.

Tondoo Ramsahai Hat, P.O., Jolpaiguri,
17 September 1888.

Sir,

I have the honour to ask for your interest and assistance in the matter of the protection of free labourers *en route* from Chota Nagpore to the tea gardens in the Dooars.

I enclose for information copies of two memorials submitted to his Honor the Lieutenant Governor last year; in these memorials the difficulties and dangers incurred by coolies proceeding to the Dooars are pointed out. His Honor the Lieutenant Governor not only ordered general inquiries to be made into our grievances, but also appointed Mr. F. Harrington Tucker, Superintendent of Police, on special duty, to investigate the cases of kidnapping and abduction, of which the Dooars' Planters Association, this company and various individual planters complain. These inquiries have fully confirmed our representations as to the dangers to which the coolies proceeding to the Dooars are subject to, and fully prove that not only are the Dooars coolies kidnapped and abducted in large numbers to Assam and Cachar, but also that many gangs of coolies, on their way to the Dooars, attacked by arkatias and others, are broken up; the coolies that escape from the hands of the arkatias returning to their homes frightened and discouraged. The result is that the tea industry of this district greatly suffers from the want of sufficient labour.

I feel sure that the authorities fully recognise the deplorable state of affairs. The inquiries that have been instituted and the proceedings that have been taken against some of the offenders will, no doubt, have a sanitary effect, but it appears to me, as at present advised, that the action of the authorities has chiefly been confined to inquiries into our complaints of the past. I am not aware that any adequate steps have been taken to secure the safety of the coolies proceeding to the Dooars in the present and future.

The yearly emigration of coolies to the Dooars commences in the month of October. Immediate action is therefore necessary to protect the coolies *en route*, and I therefore pray you to represent the urgency and importance of this matter to his Honor the Lieutenant Governor. If the authorities will show us how we can best co-operate to secure the safety of the coolies, the planters of the Dooars will not be found wanting; they fully recognise the difficulties. Each adult coolie kidnapped and abducted to Assam and Cachar represents some Rs. 40 into the pockets of the subordinate agents (the arkatias and others) engaged in the kidnapping trade. Strong protective and repressive measures are required to counteract such an inducement to violence and fraud.

To the Commissioner,
Rajshahye Division, Darjeeling.

I have, &c.
(signed) *F. T. Verner*,
Superintendent,
The Dooars Tea Company, Limited.

Judicial Department.—No. 8 J.D.

From *J. Ware Edgar*, Esq., c.s.i., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department; dated Darjeeling, the 22nd May 1889.

Sir,

WITH reference to your No. 207 E.—69-2, of the 6th November last, I am

Letter No. 168 S., dated February 1889, from Mr. F. H. Tucker.

Resolution dated the 22nd April 1889 on above letter.

Letter No. 88 I., dated the 25th April 1889, from the Commissioner of the Chota Nagpur Division, and Mr. Tucker's Report of 23rd April 1889.

directed to submit, for the information of the Government of India, the papers noted in the margin on the subject of the inquiry made by Mr. F. H. Tucker, into the charges of fraud and kidnapping connected with the recruiting of coolies for the tea districts.

2. It will be seen that when the Lieutenant Governor recorded the Resolution of the 22nd April, he considered that it would not be necessary to retain Mr. Tucker on special duty after the completion of the period fixed in your letter above referred to, although the necessity of re-employing him at the commencement of the recruiting season was contemplated, but since then the further report of the 25th April has been received from the Commissioner of Chota Nagpur giving cover to Mr. Tucker's letter of 23rd April. From the latter it appears that several fresh cases have come to light, some of which appeared to be of a very serious character, and the conduct of which called for special attention.

3. In consequence of this, the Lieutenant Governor considered it desirable not to remove Mr. Tucker from the work while these cases remain undecided, particularly as there are indications that the malpractices of the recruiting agents have been turned into directions hitherto unknown. This is probably a consequence of the check given to the old forms of the evil by the action taken during the last eighteen months, and it seems to indicate that any relaxation of our efforts now might be followed by a revival of the old evils and a further development of those now coming to light.

4. The Lieutenant Governor has therefore in anticipation of the approval of the Government of India retained Mr. Tucker on special duty, and would ask to have the sanction conveyed in your letter above referred to extended for a further period of 12 months from the date on which it terminated. It might be found convenient to let Mr. Tucker take up the regular work of a district superintendent of police, after the conclusion of the cases mentioned in his report of the 23rd April, in which case his employment on special duty would be suspended; but it is now quite clear that he will have again to take up the special inquiries at the end of the rains, and it appears most convenient to obtain the requisite sanction at once and so save further reference.

I have, &c.
(signed) *J. Ware Edgar*,
Chief Secretary
to the Government of Bengal.

No. 1688; dated Hazaribagh, the February 1889.

From *F. Harrington Tucker*, Esq., Officiating District Superintendent of Police, on Special Duty, to the Commissioner of the Chota Nagpore Division.

WITH reference to a telegram I received at Gya on the 22nd instant from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal (copy of which I herewith attach), I have the honour to submit the following report, in continuation of my No. 105 E, dated 29th September 1888.

1. On receiving intimation in the early part of November last that my special appointment was to be extended, I at once took up the question of fixing a definite route for the Dooars and Terai free emigrants to take this cold season, and, after consulting with you, and under your verbal instructions, I started to project the following route, which had been previously recommended by me, and approved of by you and the Dooars and Terai planters.

2. I made a tour commencing from Balomat in Lohardugga district as a starting point, right through Hazaribagh, then through Deoghur, a subdivision of the Sonthal Pergunnahs, then through Bhagulpore district *vid* Bousie, Colgong to Caragola, then through Purneah district along the old "pucca" road to Darjeeling, and found that the route was a good one. Supplies were plentiful, water good, road for the most part very good, and the police protection ample with the exception of the bit from Jaipore to Colgong in the Bhagulpore district, which undoubtedly required more protective measures.

3. I saw the various district officers along the route, and told them what Government wished, and brought especially to the notice of the Commissioner and Magistrate of Bhagulpore the extra police protection that was necessary in their district, and they promised to look into the question. This portion of country too, as far as I could ascertain, was still overrun with arkatis, as a nasty case occurred about that time in the Banka subdivision, which I shall give in detail further on.

4. On the 22nd November last I received a letter from Mr. P. Nola, Secretary to Government in the General Branch, forwarding me Dr. Gregg's report, and asking me for particulars of this route, which I sent him on the 24th November accompanied by a sketch map showing the line of route and a tabular statement (copy of which I now attach) of the protective measures and certain suggestions. A similar report was sent to the Inspector-General of Police, Lower Provinces.

5. On my return to Ranchi in the early part of December from this tour I found a large number of sardars from the Dooars and Terai, who had arrived during my absence, had collected coolies, and were waiting for instructions from me as to how they were to proceed. I then gave them full instructions and lithographed copies of the route, and told them under all circumstances to go by this route, and at the same time sent intimation to the various district officers that the route was being used, and that the local police may be told to be on the alert, and, if possible, prevent any interference on the part of arkatis.

6. Since then I may say thousands of coolies have gone along this route (my own calculations show 5,505 men, 3,659 women, and 1,683 children; besides this I know many others have gone with their masters) in batches as far as I could regulate of 200 men, women, and children.

7. I have up to date received absolutely no complaints of any interference by arkatis with these coolies; in fact, the managers, who have received their coolies at the gardens, have written to me saying that this year their sardars have returned quite pleased, and that my efforts were, as far as they have heard, "crowned with success."

8. I was told, moreover, by one planter that some of his coolies were detained in the Lohardugga dehat by villagers, who he thought were pretty zemindars, and who were most anxious that their ryots should not emigrate, but the coolies got off and baffled the zemindars. I also had a complaint from Mr. Driver of Ranchi, who recruits for Assam, that some peons, as he thought of the Maharajah's, were interfering with some of his recruiters and trying to prevent coolies from emigrating. In such cases I thought that most probably there were faults on both sides, and that the recruiters were well able to look after themselves, and unless I got an actual criminal complaint would not interfere.

A Baboo, K. N. Ghose, agent for Mr. Verner of the Dooars, complained that the Lohardugga police about Balomat and Chainpore were interfering with his sardar's recruiting, but failed to substantiate his complaint. He also complained of zemindars trying to get coolies from emigrating.

9. The only serious hitch that took place along this route was at the Caragola Ghât. The Government ferryman had not enough boats plying, and consequently coolies were gathering in large numbers at the riverside. However, with the assistance of a European, who was sent down to the ghât on behalf of the coolies, hired boats were procured for a time, and the coolies were taken across. I have to suggest that for the future the Purneah authorities who farm out the ferry should be prepared for this rush of coolies, and should have more boats put on at the ferry during the period from the 1st December to end of February, for it is during this period that the greatest number of coolies are *en route*.

10. This is also very essential in a sanitary point of view, as coolies allowed to accumulate means running a great risk of an epidemic breaking out amongst them. I also learn that the method of putting coolies on board the boats is objectionable. A bamboo ramp is badly needed, and would prevent the coolies from having to wade at times some distance waist deep in water to get to the boats.

11. It was also brought to my notice that the ghatwallahs tried at first to extort extra toll from the coolies, as much as three annas a head for crossing. However, I got the authorised tariff from Purneah, and told the sardars of it, and this put a stop to extortion to a large extent. This is a point that should be brought to the notice of the Purneah authorities, who have the farming out of the ferry.

12. This cold season I found that representatives from the following firms in Calcutta had come up to these parts to look after their sardars. The firms are agents for tea-gardens in the Dooars :—

Mr. Thompson	-	-	-	} From Messrs. Steel & Co.
„ Henry	-	-	-	
„ C. Muir	-	-	-	- From Messrs. Finlay, Muir & Co.
„ W. T. Cresswell	-	-	-	- From Cresswell & Co.
Baboo K. N. Ghose	-	-	-	- From the Dooars Tea Association (Mr. F. T. Verner's).

There were also two gentlemen, Mr. Halkett and Mr. Hingelburg, from the Terai Association.

13. All these representatives remained up in these parts till about the middle of February and took up their positions for most of the time at Hazaribagh, spending some little time at Ranchi and in the interior. When they had got, or saw their sardars had got as many coolies as they required and started them for the various gardens, they then left. They found Hazaribagh more central and convenient to meet their sardars and give them advances to help their coolies *en route*.

I too took up my quarters at Hazaribagh to be more handy in every way to do my portion of the work.

14. When in Calcutta during the second week of February, I went and called on Messrs. Finlay, Muir and Company and Steel and Company, and asked them if they had any complaints to make or put forward any suggestions now that the recruiting season was closing. They said they had none; and, as far as they knew, things had gone well with their Dooar and Terai coolies. Messrs. Finlay, Muir and Company, however, told me of a case at Purulia of Mr. Soubolle, a contractor for Assam, attempting to seize some 18 coolies their Baboo had collected for a garden in Assam. This case has been put by them before the Deputy Commissioner of Manbhoom.

15. After settling this question of the route, I then took in hand the pending cases of abduction of Dooar and Terai coolies that I had transferred to various district officers last September when closing my operations after six months under the orders of Government. The cases were Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the abstract contained in my report No. 105 E, dated 29th September.

The first two, Nos. 5 and 6, ended last January in conviction at Gya, and two out of the three accused, viz., Dowlut Singh and Gotab Singh, "arkatis," were sentenced under Section 342, Indian Penal Code, to one year's rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200, or three months' in default; the cases are now on appeal before the Sessions Judge. The third accused in these cases, one Kristo Baboo, a sort of contractor who had absconded, has since been arrested and now awaits his trial.

With reference to cases Nos. 7 and 8, I have had great difficulty in finding the abducted coolies. I now await funds to enable me to get these witnesses from Assam. As soon as they arrive, I will institute prosecutions at Gya.

Cases Nos. 12 and 21, and 30 are still pending trial with the magistrate of Ranigunge. Case No. 15 fell through for want of sufficient evidence. Case No. 31 ended in conviction, but was acquitted on appeal by the Judicial Commissioner on a point of law.

Case No. 2 (Lawton's) was up before the High Court for trial when my report of September went in; it has recently been returned to the Judicial Commissioner.

missioner of Chota Nagpore to try. The results of cases in Gya have had a very material effect I am told.

16. Of new cases I have had very few; in fact only three, and these are in connection with recruiting for Assam. I narrate them here:—

No. 1. Bhagulpore Case.—One Hular Kol of Khajori village in Banka subdivision of Bhagulpore district reported that late one night (last November) five men, Munshi Damok, Palakhdhari Sing, Ladhoo Sing, Delar Kahar, and Miroo Sing, dressed as policemen, came to his house, and represented that the sub-inspector of police of Kharagpore police-station, who was then at Mangra village inquiring into a case of cattle-killing, in which, on a previous occasion, some of Hular Kol's people had been challaned, required the attendance of certain female relatives of his to examine. The five accused took away five young women. Hular Kol early next morning went to Mangra and found the whole thing a myth. The police arrested three of the accused and examined various depôts at Howrah, Calcutta, and elsewhere, but could get no trace of the missing females. The case was then made over to me, and I am endeavouring to find the girls, as they are the principal witnesses. This is indeed a bad case, and shows the audacity of the arkatis.

One great difficulty I have to contend with in such cases is to find out the employers of these arkati. They now ignore everything. These girls have undoubtedly been smuggled away to Assam or Cachar.

No. 2.—A lad of about 12, son of Chamroo Dhobi of Gola, in Hazaribagh, was enticed away by an arkati, Kurma, assisted by the village chowkidar, taken to Ranigunge, from thence sent to Dholagram tea-garden in Cachar. I have written for the boy to be sent back to me, and will then work up the case.

No. 3.—Mr. Keefel, German Missionary near Hazaribagh, brought up a Sonthali girl aged about 14, who, he said, escaped from a depôt at Domra for Cachar coolies, and claimed protection. The girl's story was that she was induced by a woman of her village to accompany her to the jungles to collect firewood. In the jungle they met a coolie sardarni. This sardarni then took her up, and induced her to accompany her to the depôt, promising to give her good wages, clothes, &c. The girl went to the depôt, and was locked up; after a while she relented and managed to escape. I went into the case and found that the girl went willingly to the depôt. Moreover, in the course of inquiry, she suddenly disappeared and was next found in the same depôt quite reconciled and willing to go to Cachar. She has but an old uncle, is unmarried, and no doubt has been induced to think she will do better elsewhere.

17. Cases of this nature still prevail, but not to the extent they did, owing no doubt to the fact that there is some one now looking after them. Young, unprotected, and, I may say, protected, girls are ever a prey for arkatis. They are in great demand up in Assam and Cachar, where they fetch very high prices, and contractors and their arkatis will, and do, use every device to get them.

18. As long as this uncontrolled arkatis system exists, I do not see how possibly malpractices of the above nature and others can be averted.

19. There is no doubt that a certain amount of fear has been instilled into the minds of contractors and arkatis, so called recruiters of supposed free emigrants for the Assam and Cachar gardens, by my being on the alert and wandering about working up cases; but will this exist when the present restrictions have been removed? I fear not; especially with the present calibre of the army of contractors and their arkatis who openly declare that in all matters of recruiting "one's conscience has to be put into one's pocket," and these same are working amidst, one may say, still an ignorant race, like the Oraons, Mundas, &c., of Chota Nagpore, unmolested by law.

The trade is too lucrative to them to give up without every struggle.

20. As regards sanitary arrangements that may have come under my observation lately, I regret to say that I have seen none. The few depôts that exist along this route lie here and there, between Hazaribagh and Deoghur, and

they are in their original state. The Dooar and Terai free emigrants do not go near depôts of any description. From the moment they start from their homes bound for the gardens, they encamp along the roadside on open isolated tracts, where they can get good water, and, if possible, under topes congenial to their natural status and feelings, and I must say it is a good thing.

21. The depôts are a perfect horror to such people. From my experience I must say I find that the free and open system adopted by the Dooar and Terai free emigrants *en route* is a very safe one, and certainly not conducive to any prevalent disease. They incur no risks, simply because they are always on the move, travel as they like, and lead a free open life.

22. All the supposed free emigrants recruited in Hazaribagh district by contractors are sent down in carts along the route to Giridi, from whence they are sent off in trucks by rail to Ranigunge and Calcutta. Some few also come this way from Ranchi.

I recently received a letter from Mr. Driver, a recruiter for Assam and Cachar, residing at Ranchi, inquiring whether Government intended adopting any sanitary arrangements for coolies *en route*, and when: from this I gathered that none had up to date been attempted.

23. All the depôts I have come across are maintained simply for housing registered and supposed free coolies for Assam and Cachar. Some are used exclusively for sardari, *i.e.*, registered coolies, and these are accessible to officers of the district, and can be thoroughly supervised for sanitary purposes; while others are used for both descriptions of coolies, and are inaccessible legally, and it is in these that all the malpractices exist and disease germinate through massing of all descriptions of people. These depôts I know are kept in a shockingly bad state.

I must say that all depôts should be subject to the closest scrutiny of district officers and be accessible at all times.

Proper sanitary arrangements along the routes that contractors and arkatis, who recruit for Assam and Cachar, dispatch their batches, are absolutely essential. The system they adopt of collecting, housing, and dispatching coolies requires it; not so that for the Dooars and Terai coolies.

There is no prescribed route for the Assam and Cachar coolies; there should be one. At present they adopt numerous routes, but this has already been put before Government by Dr. Gregg.

COPY of Telegram from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to
Mr. F. H. Tucker, dated 19th February 1889.

"THE Lieutenant-Governor is anxious for a further report showing any new facts about interference with recruiting for the Dooars, and any matters connected with the sanitary arrangements of recruiters which may have come to your knowledge. The report should be addressed to the Commissioner as usual but please send one copy to me direct."

(True copy.)

F. Harrington Tucker.

EMIGRATION, 1888-89.

PROPOSED Route for Free Emigrants from Chota Nagpore to the Dooars and Terai Tea Estates.

Divisions.	Districts.	Names of Principal Places along the Route.	Distances Apart.	Police and other Protection.			REMARKS.
				Thannas.	Outposts.	Road Patrols.	
Chota Nagpore	Lohardugga	Balomat	—	Police station, ditto	—	4 road patrol posts.	
		Simaria	15 miles	—	—		
	Hazaribagh	Sela Chuk	16 "	—	—	8 road patrol posts.	
		Hazaribagh	14 "	Police station.	—		
		Fatigharia	16 "	—	—	5 road patrol posts.	
		Bugoda*	16 "	Police station, ditto	—		
		Dumri	13 "	—	—	2 road patrol posts	
		Pertand	12 "	—	Police outposts.		
		Girdij	15 "	Police station.	—	4 road patrol posts.	
		Mohestmunda	10 "	—	—		
	Sonthal Pergunnahs.	Booshal	11 "	—	—	Zemindari-road patrols.	
		Rowal	10 "	—	—		
		Deeghur	3 miles.	Police station.	—		
	Bhagulpore	Jaipore	15 "	—	—	Along this bit there is only one outpost (police); no other protection, not even road patrols. Country is bad and should be properly manned. Arkatis abound about this part of the district. Cases of abduction still take place. This crossing is six miles north-west of Pipraini outpost.	
Bousie		22 "	—	—			
Dhorya		9 "	—	Police outposts.			
Usrihat		7 "	—	—			
Colgong		16 "	Police station.	—			
Bhagulpore	Purneah	Caragola Ghât	12 "	—	—	Here cross over the Ganges by Government ferry ghât; is manned by Caragola police.	
		Caragola	—	—	Police outposts.		
		Gondwara	13 miles	Police station.	—		
		Hurdah	10 "	—	Police outposts.		
		Purneah	7 "	Police station.	—		
		Belgachia	10 "	—	Police outposts, ditto		
		Dengra	9 "	—	ditto		
		Anuragurh	8 "	—	—		
		Kisbenganj	11 "	Police station.	—		
		Galsal	—	—	Police outposts, ditto		
		Alwatai	—	—	—		
		Chopra	—	Police station.	—		
		Darjeeling	Julpigoree	Julpigoree	(about) 25 miles.		Police station.	—	This road is well protected, but not required. No recruiting goes on in the Purneah district; no emigration.
—	—			—	—		

F. Harrington Tucker,
Officiating District Superintendent of Police,
on Special Duty.

RESOLUTION.—JUDICIAL.

READ.—

LETTER No. 168 S, dated February 1889, from Mr. *F. H. Tucker*, on Special Duty, reporting the Results of his Work in superintending Emigration in Chota Nagpore during the Recruiting Season of 1888-89.

Calcutta, 22 April 1889.

THE period of Mr. Tucker's deputation on special duty is now nearly at an end, and the Lieutenant-Governor has much gratification in recording that a very large measure of success has followed the efforts made to suppress the evils that attended the system of unlicensed recruiting for tea districts in Chota Nagpore. In a previous report submitted in September last, Mr. Tucker gave a full and detailed account of the various cases that had arisen, and which he

RETURN RELATING TO

was engaged in prosecuting in the local courts, or had already brought to a conclusion, and at the same time described the system pursued by the arkatis and others whose malpractices he had been deputed to watch, and, if possible, prevent.

2. In the commencement of the past recruiting season, Mr. Tucker was mainly occupied in the selection and supervision of a route for coolies travelling from Chota Nagpore to the Terai and the Dooars through Deoghur, Colgong, and Purneah to Silliguri. This route was finally approved of by the Lieutenant-Governor in February last, after he had consulted the Commissioners of the divisions along the line, and the Inspector-General of Police on the subject, and the orders of Government concerning it were published in a Resolution which issued on 20th February 1889. Mr. Tucker had, however, been previously authorised to make use of this route, and the coolies for the Terai and the Dooars having been using this line throughout the past recruiting season without any serious hindrance from unlicensed arkatis and without any outbreak of disease. Some difficulties were experienced at one time at the Caragola ferry, but they were soon overcome, and orders will be issued to the Commissioner of Bhagulpore on the subject to prevent their recurrence in the future.

3. After seeing that this route was being regularly used, and that the passengers on it were free from all danger of molestation, Mr. Tucker turned his attention to the cases that were still pending on the date of his previous report, and went on to inquire into such new cases as had arisen during the current season. All these cases appear to have been very thoroughly gone into; and although, from causes beyond Mr. Tucker's control, several of them fell through, yet a sufficient number were carried to a successful conclusion to serve as a very effective deterrent to those arkatis who had previously indulged in wholesale kidnapping. During the past six months there has been only one case of any real importance, and that occurred in the district of Bhagulpore in peculiar circumstances. The five women in this case who were carried off at night by some men who personated policemen, may or may not have been smuggled to Assam or Cachar; and although the case was a very serious one, it would not appear to be one of the series of systematic crimes that it has been Mr. Tucker's special duty to deal with.

4. Mr. Tucker has been able this year to pay some attention to the unlicensed recruiting for Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet, and his remarks on the route taken by these coolies, and on the complete absence of sanitary precautions against epidemics on the journey, confirm the very full information that the Lieutenant-Governor has received from other quarters on the subject. The proposals made are, however, dealt with in the sanitary legislation recently before the Bengal Council, and in the rules to be issued subsidiary to that legislation.

5. Mr. Tucker's work has for the present come to an end; and although it may become necessary to re-appoint him at the commencement of the next recruiting season, it does not seem advisable to extend his period of deputation through the hot weather and the rains. The Lieutenant-Governor takes this opportunity of recording his approbation of the manner in which Mr. Tucker has carried out the special duties entrusted to him.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of the Resolution be forwarded to the Inspector-General of Police for information.

Ordered also that copies of the Resolution be forwarded to the Commissioners of Chota Nagpore and Bhagulpore, and to Mr. F. H. Tucker for information.

By Order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

J. Ware Edgar,
Chief Secretary to the
Government of Bengal.

No. 1941 J.

COPY forwarded to the Inspector-General of Police for information.

Nos. 1942-43 J.

COPY forwarded to the Commissioners of Chota Nagpore and Bhagulpore for information.

No. 1944 J.

COPY forwarded to Mr. F. H. Tucker for information.

By Order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal,

R. W. Carlyle,
Under Secretary to the
Government of Bengal.

Calcutta : Judicial, 21 April 1889.

No. 88 J, dated Chota Nagpore, the 25th April 1889.

From *C. C. Stevens*, Esq., Commissioner of the Chota Nagpore Division,
to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

I HAVE the honour to forward a copy of a report showing the work which has been recently done by Mr. Tucker, or is now pending in his hands.

2. I consider that Mr. Tucker has done good work, and that the sound practical sense, tact, and activity which he has shown have entirely justified his selection. At the same time this report clearly indicates in my opinion that much yet remains to be done, and that, if the restraint caused by Mr. Tucker's appointment were removed, there would be great danger of a reaction. I would therefore recommend that Mr. Tucker's appointment should be again extended. Besides the direct advantage which I have mentioned, when the work of revising the Inland Emigration Act is undertaken, the experience and detailed knowledge acquired through Mr. Tucker's investigations would be of very great service.

No. 204 S, dated Hazaribagh, the 23rd April 1889.

From *F. H. Tucker*, Esq., Officiating District Superintendent of Police, on Special Duty, to the Commissioner of the Chota Nagpore Division.

As my deputation ceases after the close of this month, *vide* letter No. 207-69-2, dated 6th November last, from the Government of India to the Government of Bengal, copy of which I received under cover of letter No. 358 J, dated 11th November, from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, I have the honour to submit a further report of how matters now stand with me, in continuation of my report No. 168, dated 28th February last.

I have nothing to add to my former reports beyond the following points:—

1st. That recruiting for the Dooars and Terai tea gardens ceased about the end of March. The last batch of coolies was sent off by me along the authorised route on the 28th March, without any complaint against arkatis and contractors.

The enterprise has proved a success, which is chiefly due to the stringent protective measures adopted along the defined route, in which I received the hearty co-operation of the district officers concerned.

2nd. With reference to paragraph 15 of my report No. 168, dated 28th February, the cases that were under appeal at Gya, *viz.*, Nos. 5 and 6, "Charwa" and "Jetus," have all been upheld, which has been a great success, and resulted in putting a stop to malpractices in that district.

These cases dealt with some intricate and important points in connection with registration at Dhubri, and the repatriation of the abducted coolies previously reported to Government in my Nos. 176, 184, and 191, dated 14th and 18th March and 7th April.

Funds have recently been received and sent to Assam, and I now await the arrival of witnesses to conduct the case against Kristo Baboo, a coolie contractor of Gya, in connection with "Jetus" case, and cases Nos. 7 and 8, viz., "Dunkerkesens" and "Blowla," sidars of the Dooars and Terai. Case No. 12 is still pending at Ranigunge owing to some important witnesses summoned from Sibsagar not turning up. Case No. 21 is also pending owing to some fresh evidence required from Assam.

Case No. 30 ended in conviction at Purulia, under sections 147, 109, and 417, Indian Penal Code, and one accused was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment and two others to six months each. I regret to have to mention that in the new case, that of Hulas Kol, who lost five young women, I have been up to date unsuccessful in finding the girls. I hunted all over Calcutta for them, made inquiries at Dhubri and Goalundo, but got no clue. I have now sent the descriptive rolls to the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar and Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, and asked them to have searches made in every garden for them.

In the case of Chumroo Dhobi, No. 2 (new case), I found the lad Pahla, but he turns out to be 18 years old, and is under an agreement for three years. The whole family are regular emigrants to Cachar. It was found that there was no chance of a criminal case, and so it was abandoned.

Under this paragraph I have now to add seven more cases since February of rather a serious nature. I narrate them below.

These cases undoubtedly show that where large numbers of contractors, agents, &c., for Assam and Cachar exist with their arkatis, a bold front is still shown against all measures to prevent malpractices, fraud, &c. Three of these cases have occurred at Giridih and Ranigunge and at Arrah. At all these places I may say contractors and agents swarm.

The case of "Karu Mungli" of Giridih has ended in conviction under section 343, Indian Penal Code, and the accused sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment each. Mongra Sirdar's case has been committed to the Sessions, and comes on for trial on the 8th May 1889.

Parbatia and Gendwa's cases of Arrah are up for trial before the joint-magistrate of Arrah.

Rakhal Sirdar's case is now under inquiry with me; also Kunjwa's, *i.e.*, Balki Ghatwar's.

The following are brief narratives of the new cases:—

No. 1. Karu Mungli. His wife and child, who work in a coal-pit at Giridih, were returning from a visit to a relative, when Bulaki Arkati met them and entered into conversation. Finding out who they were, he at once induced them to following him to take up some very lucrative and pleasant work. Bulaki then took Karu into a wayside place, and then offered him a smoke. After the smoke Karu became very giddy and drowsy, and while in this state Bulaki took him, his wife and child away and put them into his depôt. A day or so after Karu's mother made inquiries and saw Karu and his wife and child close prisoners in the depôt, and at once reported the matter to the European manager, who was instrumental in getting the people released and reported the case. Three accused were arrested and tried and convicted under section 342, to six months' rigorous imprisonment. This depôt belongs to a Mr. Sarkies, agent for Calcutta firms, and who had a vile set of arkatis. He himself was convicted last year over the abduction of a girl. In this case he was absent at the time.

No. 2. Mangar Sirdar had, when in the dehat recruiting coolies for his garden in Sylhet, engaged his brother, brother's wife, and their two children to go to Sylhet with him, and sent them to Pachamba to meet him there while he got together some other coolies. The brother and his wife and children came to Pachamba, but were ignorant of where Mangar's depôt was, and so went about asking to be put on to the right path. When they were wandering about, an arkati made for them, and representing that he was of the same depôt, viz., Mangar's, took them and shut them up and kept them confined for three days. In the meantime Mangar returned to Pachamba, and not finding his brother made inquiries at every depôt, and was admitted into them to search, except "Rakhal Baboo's," but failed to find his brother. Suspecting that his brother was in Rakhal's depôt, he laid in wait to get some clue and succeeded in seeing his brother through a window, but failed to get his release. Rakhal one night smuggled the family away, and sent them to Dhubri. Mangar got scent of this, and with a peon went off to Dhubri and caught his brother and the family there. In the meantime he had sent a telegram to Finlay, Muir and Company, who telegraphed particulars to Dhubri. The Dhubri people gave him up Karu and his family, and he took them down to Calcutta, and eventually went off to his garden in Sylhet. The case was reported to me by Messrs. Finlay, Muir and Company, and I took up the inquiries and sent the contractor Rakhal and his two arkatis up for trial.

No. 3. Rakhal Sirdar. This sirdar was recruiting coolies for his gardens in North Sylhet, and went to Ranigunge with some coolies in quest of his agent. A Baboo representing himself to be his agent, took them in. Rakhal made over some coolies to him,
and

and returned to the *debat* to get more. On his return with fresh coolies he learnt from this supposed agent that the first coolies had been sent to a wrong garden, and induced Rakhhal to go off to this garden to recover them. Rakhhal went, but on arrival found himself under an agreement to serve in this garden and was refused his release. He managed to bring his case to the notice of his master at new Chinatolla, who reported the case to the Commissioner of Burdwan, who sent it on to me. I have sent for Rakhhal to make a full inquiry.

No. 4. Balki Ghatwar reported that his son, who was on a visit to an uncle, had disappeared, and he suspected that some *arkatis* had got hold of him. From some inquiries made, I found that a recruiter had been about, but had about that time disappeared and gone to Cachar. It is just probable he took the boy with him. I am having inquiries made in Cachar. The lad is said to be under 12 years of age.

Nos. 5 and 6. Two youngish females, Parbatia and Gandia, were enticed away from the banks of the Ganges river, where they had gone on a pilgrimage, by a couple of *arkatis* belonging to Ram Sewak, a contractor of coolies at Benares, who sent them to Calcutta to his employers to be sent to Assam as coolies. When the girls got to Calcutta, they complained that they would not go as coolies to Assam, whereupon they were sent back to Mogulserai, where they wished to go. The Calcutta firm then, it appears, wrote to Ram Sewak and censured him for sending such girls down, and debited him with the cost of the return journey. On alighting at Mogulserai, the two girls were met by two other *arkatis* of Ram Sewak's, who forcibly took them back to the *depôt*, kept them confined for two days, and then, under instructions from Ram Sewak, took them to Arrah to sell to a Huroo Baboo, an agent there. *En route* from the Arrah station to Huroo's place, the women made a row, and a constable came to their rescue and took the whole gang to the *thanna*, where the case came out. I inquired into the case at Arrah, and challaned the two *arkatis*, also Ram Sewak. I also requested that the latter individual should be tried for fabricating false evidence, insomuch as producing a false and forged permit for recruitment of free labourers granted to Sohadeo Arkati, one of the accused.

No. 7. A young unprotected girl, Shugia, who was earning her living as a menial, was met by Sohadeo Ojha, an *arkati*, who induced her to become his keep, but eventually put her into a *depôt*, and was taking her to Arrah to sell, when he was caught. This case was also inquired into by me and parties challaned.

All these cases show very distinctly that recruiters of free emigrants and their employes, such as contractors and agents, in the principal stations are still given to most disgraceful and outrageous practices, and require very severe handling. The cases of Parbatia, Gandia, and Shugia are disgraceful illustrations.

There is one feature, however, that has arisen in this coolie trade within the past few months which is rather to our advantage, and that is that some unscrupulous agents and contractors, failing to get at Dooars and Terai coolies, took to abducting coolies belonging to their brother contractors and agents, and thus carried the war into their own homes one may say. It has caused a general commotion amongst themselves and also amongst managers of gardens who employ them. Karu, Mangar, and Rakhhal Sirlar's cases are illustrations of this. The conviction of a few influential contractors and agents here and there will have a very great effect in bringing others to their proper senses and methods of working. Ere long no doubt some at Ranigunge, the great centre of European and native agents and contractors, who form a very formidable obstacle to all attempts at preventing frauds and malpractices, will fall into the clutches of the law. It is only a matter of time. In the meantime, however, and until some legal measures have been adopted to curtail the ravages committed by *arkatis* and their employers, who have now enormous scope, the strictest watch and measures are very necessary to protect the poorer classes.

P. S.—I beg now to solicit early orders as to my future destination.

GENERAL DEPARTMENT.

Inland Emigration.—No. 176.

From P. Nolan, Esq., Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Superintendent of Emigration, Calcutta.

Sir,

Calcutta, 11 June 1889.

I AM directed to forward, for your information and guidance, and for communication to persons interested in emigration to Assam, 100 copies of Act I. (B.C.) of 1889, recently passed by the Bengal Legislative Council, and of the rules under the Act published in the "Calcutta Gazette" of the 5th instant. You are requested to take steps at an early date to have corrected the defects

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in the sanitary arrangements of depôts disclosed by the inspections which you have recently made, particularly in those situated at Ranigunge and Calcutta, which are the most important. It is believed that the agents in charge of depôts are ready to take all necessary measures which you may indicate to them, and that the requisite improvements will be effected without resort to compulsory measures, but if it should unfortunately prove otherwise in any case, your proper course will be to communicate on the subject with the district magistrates concerned.

2. The arrangements for the comfort and health of emigrants on the railway journey are second in importance only to those made in the depôts, if indeed any distinction can be made as to their comparative value; for if cholera is generated in depôts it is undoubtedly spread during the passage by train. This is a subject to which the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor has been for some time directed, and it appears from your letter No. 832, dated 27th April 1889, and the connected correspondence, that considerable improvements have been effected, while the agents are being consulted as to the expediency of conducting the journey on an entirely new system, with long halts for the preparation of cooked food and for repose. The conditions are to some extent modified by the issue of the present rules, and I am to request that you will now, in consultation with Major Boughy, R.E., manager of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, and with the Sanitary Commissioner, submit a complete scheme for the control of the journey by rail. The authorities of the East Indian Railway will doubtless afford all suitable assistance with regard to their line, which, however, is not, in regard to emigration, of so much importance as the State Railways under the control of this Government. The arrangements already made provide for preventing overcrowding by limiting the number to be transmitted daily, for the provision of suitable carriages, transmission by the most convenient trains, for hospital accommodation, medical treatment, and the cremation of the dead. It is now necessary to see that suitable food is provided on the route, and to reconsider the periods allowed for halts. Moreover, it would appear from the correspondence forwarded with the letter of the Commissioner of Rajshahye, No. 38 J, dated 6th April 1889, taken with the comments which you have made upon that communication, that when cholera breaks out the arrangements for cleaning carriages, conveying the sick and segregating them, are not adequate. Your report upon this subject should indicate what portion of the necessary expense should be borne by the railway authorities, and what should fall on the Labour Transport Fund.

3. I am also to forward, for your consideration in this connection, a copy of a letter from the magistrate of Dinagepore, No. 634, dated 16th May 1889, on the subject of the rules under Bengal Act I. of 1889.

I have, &c.
(signed) *P. Nolan*,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal

No. 183.

COPY, with copy of the Inland Emigrants Health Act [I. (B.C.) of 1889], and of the rules framed under it, submitted to the Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department, for information.

By Order of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal,

W. Maude,
Officiating Under Secretary to the
Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, Inland Emigration,
11 June 1889.

NOTIFICATION.

The 28th May 1889.—In exercise of the powers conferred by the Inland Emigrants' Health Act I. (B.C.) of 1889, the Lieutenant Governor is pleased to make the following rules, which will take effect from the date of their publication in the "Calcutta Gazette."

P. Nolan,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

RULES.

1. Every agent shall provide sufficient and proper accommodation in a suitable place for such emigrants as may be collected by him pending their removal to a labour district.

2. The magistrate of a district or of a division of a district, or a magistrate subordinate to him, or an officer of police above the rank of sub-inspector authorised by him in this behalf, shall visit and inspect such accommodation, and all agents and other persons in charge of such places shall afford to such magistrate or officer of police every facility for making such visits and inspections.

3. It shall be the duty of the district magistrate to see that every place used for the accommodation of emigrants is regularly and thoroughly inspected by an officer authorised in that behalf.

4. The sanitary arrangements in such places shall be regulated generally by the rules prescribed under Act I. of 1882 for depôts, subject to such modification as the magistrate of the district may consider necessary where the accommodation provided is for a small number of occupants, or is for temporary use only.

5. The agent shall be bound to carry out any order given by the district magistrate for the purpose of securing compliance with the rules for depôts referred to in the foregoing article.

6. An agent shall either himself accompany the emigrants engaged or assisted by him throughout their journey to the labour districts, or shall send with them some competent person.

7. When the number of emigrants (exclusive of dependents) proceeding on their journey to a labour district is more than 20, for every 20 emigrants so in excess, or for any number of emigrants less than 20 in excess, one additional agent, or person appointed by him, shall accompany the emigrants so proceeding.

8. Every agent, or person appointed by him as aforesaid, who accompanies emigrants to the labour districts shall provide such emigrants and their dependents (if any) with proper and sufficient food and lodging throughout the journey.

9. The agent, or person appointed as aforesaid, must take every care of the emigrants during the journey. He must give them a cooked meal before they start; and if the journey is likely to occupy more than six hours, he must distribute biscuits and sugar in the proportion of two biscuits and one ounce of sugar to each emigrant of, and above, 10 years of age, and one biscuit and half an ounce of sugar to each emigrant under the age of ten years; and if more than eight hours, dry provision must be supplied, such as choora, sutto, and the like, in such quantity as may be determined by the Superintendent of Emigration or other authorised officer. It must be seen that the clothing provided is worn by the emigrants whenever the weather renders such a precaution necessary. At the close of every day's march, or of a train journey, the emigrants must be properly housed, and provided with a cooked meal and wholesome supply of water for drinking and ablution purposes.

10. Any magistrate or any embarkation agent may, if himself a medical man, examine, and if not himself a medical man, send for examination by a medical man, any emigrant or dependent who, while on the journey to the labour district to which he intends to proceed, appears to such magistrate or embarkation agent not to be in a fit state of health to proceed thereto.

11. If such emigrant or dependent is on such examination declared not to be in a fit state of health to undertake the journey to the labour district to which he intends to proceed, the magistrate or embarkation agent may order him to be detained at such place as he thinks fit until the emigrant or dependent is in a fit state of health to undertake such journey, when he shall either be forwarded to such district or sent back to the place from which he came according as the agent or person appointed by him accompanying such labourer or dependent may direct.

While any emigrant or dependent is so detained, he shall be entitled to be fed, lodged, clothed and (if necessary) medically treated at the cost of the agent.

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12. When an order under Rule 11 has been made with reference to any emigrant, any person dependent upon, and any labourer being the wife or husband of such emigrant, shall be entitled—

(a.) Until such emigrant is in a fit state of health to undertake such journey, to be fed, lodged, clothed and (if necessary) medically treated at the place where such emigrant is detained and at the cost of the agent.

(b.) If such emigrant is sent back to the place from which he came, to be sent back to such place at the cost of the agent.

When any such order has been made with reference to any dependent, the emigrant to whom he is attached shall thereupon, until such dependent is in a fit state of health to undertake the journey to the labour district, be entitled, if the emigrant so wishes, and if he or she be the husband, wife, son, or daughter of such dependent, to be fed, lodged, clothed, and (if necessary) medically treated at the place where such dependent is detained and at the cost of the agent; and if such dependent is sent back to the place from which he came, such emigrant shall, if he or she so wishes, and if he or she be the husband, wife, son, or daughter of such dependent, be sent back to such place.

If such emigrant is entitled and claims to be so fed, lodged, clothed, and (if necessary) medically treated, or to be so sent back, his or her dependents, and any other emigrant being the wife or husband of such emigrant, shall be entitled as the case may be.

(a.) To be fed, lodged, clothed, and (if necessary) medically treated at the place where such dependent is detained and at the cost of such agent until such dependent is in a fit state of health to undertake the journey to the labour district, or

(b.) To be sent back to the place from which he or she came at the cost of the agent.

13. If the agent or person appointed by him accompanying any emigrant or dependent fails to provide such emigrant or dependent with food, lodging, clothing, and medical treatment, or to send him back as required by Rule 11 or Rule 12, the magistrate or embarkation agent may order such agent or person to pay such sum as is necessary to provide such food, lodging, clothing, and medical treatment, or to defray the cost of the return journey of such emigrant or dependent, as the case may be, to the place from which he came, and, on failure for 24 hours of such agent or person to comply with such order, he may pay the sum specified in the order to or on behalf of such emigrant or dependent.

14. In the event of an emigrant or dependent dying on the journey to the labour district, the agent shall arrange promptly for the disposal of the dead body in a suitable manner. If he fails to do so, the district magistrate, or anyone appointed by the district magistrate in that behalf, may dispose of the dead body, and the cost shall be recoverable from the agent.

15. If an emigrant or dependent is attacked by cholera, small-pox, or other dangerous communicable disease, he shall, on recovery, be supplied with clothing by the agent on the scale provided in the case of contractors' labourers by the rules made under Act I. of 1882. If he fails to do so, the magistrate of the district, or anyone appointed by him in that behalf, may supply such clothing, and the cost shall be recoverable from the agent.

16. Whoever commits a breach of any of the above rules shall be punishable with fine which may extend to 500 rupees.

17. Any money recoverable from an agent under Clauses 13, 14, or 15 of these rules shall be realizable as arrears of revenue.

Act No. I. of 1889.

Passed by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in Council.

(Received the Assent of the Lieutenant Governor on the 22nd April 1889, and of the Governor General on the 7th May 1889.)

An Act to provide for the Sanitation of Emigrants during their Passage through Bengal to the Labour Districts in Assam.

WHEREAS it is provided in Section seven of the Inland Emigration Act, 1882, that, subject to the provisions of Section five of that Act, nothing in the Act is to be deemed to prohibit any native of India from emigrating to any of the labour districts otherwise than under the provisions of the Act;

And whereas natives of India emigrate in large numbers to the labour districts otherwise than under those provisions;

And whereas in the territories administered by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal great sickness and mortality have occurred among such emigrants on their way to the labour districts:

It

It is hereby enacted as follows:—

1. This Act may be called the "Inland Emigrants' Health Act, 1889." Short title, extent,
and commencement of
Act.
- (2.) It extends to the whole of the territories administered by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, and Definitions
- (3.) It shall come into force on the day on which it is published in the "Calcutta Gazette," with the assent of the Governor General.
2. In this Act, unless there is something repugnant in the subject or context:—
- "Agent" means a person who engages or assists a native of India to emigrate otherwise than under the provisions of the Inland Emigration Act, 1882. "Agent."
- "Dependent" means any woman (not being herself an emigrant), child, or aged or incapacitated relative or friend, accompanying an emigrant with the consent of the agent. "Dependent."
- "Emigrant" means a native of India engaged or assisted by an agent so to emigrate. "Emigrant."
- "Emigrate" denotes the departure of any native of India of the age of 16 years or upwards (other than a native of any of the labour districts) from any part of India for the purpose of labouring for hire in any of the labour districts otherwise than as a domestic servant. "Emigrate."
- "Labour districts" means the districts of Lakhimpur, Sibságar, Nowgong, Darrang, Kámrúp, Goálpára, Khási Hills, Cachar and Sylhet in the Chief Commissionership of Assam. "Labour-districts."
3. The Local Government may from time to time make rules with respect to any of the following matters, namely:— Power to make rules
for protection in
Bengal of the health
of emigrants on their
way to Assam.
- (a.) The routes by which emigrants and their dependents are to travel on their way to any of the labour districts;
- (b.) The depôts and rest-houses to be provided by, and at the cost of, agents for the accommodation of emigrants and their dependents on or off such routes, and the sanitation and superintendence of such depôts and rest-houses;
- (c.) The mode, and the numerical strength of the parties in which emigrants and their dependents are to travel, the arrangements to be made by, and at the cost of, agents for facilitating their journey, the length of their daily marches by road, and the provision to be made by, and at the cost of, agents for the carriage of women and dependents, and of emigrants suffering from sickness;
- (d.) The food to be supplied to emigrants and their dependents by, and at the cost of, agents, and the provision to be made by, and at the cost of, agents for the proper cooking of such food;
- (e.) The water-supply to be maintained by, or at the cost of, agents for the use of emigrants and their dependents;
- (f.) The clothing to be supplied to emigrants and their dependents by, and at the cost of, agents;
- (g.) The hospital accommodation, medical treatment and maintenance to be provided by, or at the cost of, agents for emigrants or their dependents suffering from sickness on their way to any of the labour districts, and the arrangements to be so made, and maintenance so provided, for any emigrant and his dependents where either he or any of them is so suffering;
- (h.) The disposal of dead bodies of emigrants and their dependents at the cost of agents;
- (i.) The powers of entry and inspection which may be exercised for the purposes of any rule under this Section, and the authorities by whom those powers may be exercised;
- (j.) The mode of compelling agents to discharge their liabilities under any rule under this section, and
- (k.) Generally the giving effect to the purposes of this Act.
- (2.) In making any rule under this section, the Local Government may direct that a breach of it shall be punishable with fine which may extend to 500 rupees, and when the breach is a continuing breach, with a further fine which may extend to 50 rupees for every day after the first during which the breach continues.
- (3.) If a rule under this Section authorises an officer of the Government to expend any public money in the event of default on the part of an agent to comply with any rule under that Section, the money, together with simple interest thereon at the rate of 6 per cent.

cent. yearly, shall be recoverable from the agent under the provisions of the Public Demands Recovery Act, 1880.

(4.) Nothing in the last preceding clause shall be construed to bar a prosecution for any breach of a rule where the breach thereof has been made punishable in pursuance of the power conferred by clause (2) of this Section.

MEMORIAL OF THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION, CALCUTTA.

From the Secretary to the Indian Association to the Secretary to the Government of India; dated Calcutta, 12th April 1888.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Committee of the Indian Association to submit the following remarks, for the consideration of his Excellency the Viceroy in Council, in connection with the condition of the coolies employed in the tea-gardens in Assam, and the system by which they are recruited:—

The position of coolie labourers in the Assam tea-gardens, and the system by which they were to be recruited, were definitely fixed by the Inland Emigration Act of 1882, which, however, left unrepealed the previous enactment of 1859. The Act of 1882 was passed in the face of strong opposition on the part of the native community led by the late Kristo Das Pal, who was then member of the Viceregal Council. Six years have elapsed since the enactment of this law, and the time has now come when its operation may be reviewed by the light of accomplished facts, and when a sufficiently trustworthy opinion may be formed as to whether it is not desirable, in the interests of the coolies, and perhaps also of their employers, to allow the emigration of coolies into Assam to be regulated by the law of supply and demand without the aid of legislation. The complaints with regard to the system of recruiting, and the treatment which the coolies received in the tea-gardens of Assam had been numerous; and the Association in 1886 deputed its Assistant Secretary to make personal inquiries with the result, as the Committee hope to be able to demonstrate, that the gloomiest anticipations of those who opposed the Act of 1882 have been more than fully realised. It will be convenient to discuss separately each of the subjects to which the Committee desire to call attention. In the first place, they would respectfully invite the attention of the Government to the system of recruiting, which is a fruitful sort of oppression. In the representation which the Committee of this Association made to the Government of Lord Ripon when the Bill, which subsequently became Act I. of 1882, was under consideration, they pointed out that the system of recruiting was liable to grave abuses arising from the ignorance of the labourers, and their utter helplessness and inability to protect their interests against the arts of unprincipled recruiters who deceived them by false hopes and delusive promises to enter into contracts, the real nature of which they did not often sufficiently understand. The facts which have subsequently been brought to light, and which have from time to time been published in the newspapers, confirm the gravest apprehensions that ever were entertained with regard to the working of this part of the law. The Committee will quote two cases from the many that have appeared in the newspapers in this connection. In the first place, the Committee would refer to the judgment of the deputy magistrate of Berhampur in a case where three recruiters were punished with imprisonment for having kidnapped a young girl for service in Assam:—

Srisundori Bagdi, complainant,

v.
 (1.) Gopee Mohun Mitter, }
 (2.) Kaminy Peshker, } accused.
 (3.) Saurobhy Dossy, }

Decision.

The case for prosecution is that the accused kidnapped Nishoda, a girl of 14 years, from the lawful guardianship of her mother, the complainant. It appears that Kaminy (accused No. 2), took Nishoda to the house of accused No. 1. Accused No. 1 sent Nishoda with accused No. 3 to Calcutta for being transported to Assam to work in a tea-garden. Nishoda states that she was told that she will be employed in Calcutta, whereas accused Nos. 1 and 3 allege that she agreed to go to Assam; accused No. 2 states that the other two accused proposed to take Nishoda to Calcutta, and she agreed to go, notwithstanding she (accused No. 2) prevented her. Though Nishoda's consent is of no consequence, as she

she is a minor, yet it appears that deception was practised on her. No attempt has been made on behalf of the defence to prove complainant's consent, or even that of her daughter. The Civil Surgeon in his deposition says that Nishoda is only 14; there is in fact no doubt that she is under 16. The taking is also proved and admitted; so there remains to be seen whether or not Nishoda was taken from the lawful guardianship of her mother, and without her consent. Though Nishoda led an immoral life, yet it is proved that she was under the guardianship of her mother; it is not inconsistent with any law for a prostitute, who is a minor, to have a guardian. Kaminy (accused No. 2), being a neighbour of Nishoda, must have known that her mother was alive, and in all probability she (Kaminy) communicated this to the other accused. Moreover, from the statement of accused No. 3 (Saurobhy) it appears that she knew Nishoda before, and accused No. 1 is paramour of accused No. 3. Again, it has been held by the Bombay High Court, in the case of Umshodaleoksh, that a person who takes a minor without inquiring whether she has a guardian is punishable, if, as a matter of fact, she had a guardian, though the accused did not know that she had. It is not even urged by the defence that Nishoda was taken with the consent of her mother, and no evidence is adduced on this point by the defence. Accused Nos. 1 and 3 are recruiters independently of the Emigration Act, and accused No. 2 acted as their agent in enticing the girl; all of them are therefore equally guilty. Of the three witnesses examined on behalf of the defence, Amulya Raton Dhur is quite unworthy of belief, and he contradicts himself on a point which shows that he is a perjurer; the other two witnesses do not help the defence in any way. The Court find all the accused guilty under section 363, I. P. Code, and directs that each of them be rigorously imprisoned for three months. The Court further directs that Gopi Mohun Mitter is to pay a fine of Rs. 50, and Saurobhy Rs. 25, and Kaminy Rs. 10. In default of payment of the fine each is to suffer an additional imprisonment for a month.

The sentence was appealed against. The Sessions Judge confirmed the conviction, and though he held that the offence was technical, he remarked that "the mother's guardianship could not have been more grossly violated." Here is another case where a man, in comparatively better circumstances, was duped by the arts of the recruiter. The facts are these:—

Kessur Sing Nepali, was a peon attached to the Mungpoo Post Office, in the district of Darjeeling, and used to get a salary of Rs. 10 per month. But the work of post-peon being of an arduous nature, Kessur Sing, in an evil moment, thought of resigning his post, if he could secure a better one. Thus, with a view to improve his condition, he took leave for a few days and came down to Silliguri. There he met with the brother of one Lutchman Sing, jemadar. Lutchman was described by this man as a person of considerable influence in Assam, who could easily secure for Kessur Sing a suitable appointment on a salary of Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 per month if he would but go there. The offer was too tempting for Kessur Sing, and he had no reason to suspect that he was being decoyed by this recruiter; so he forthwith went back to Mungpoo, resigned his appointment there, and having secured from the postmaster a certificate of good character and efficiency, he returned to Silliguri with his wife. From Silliguri the party came down to Julpiguri, where they met Lutchman Sing, who took from them Rs. 5 as their railway fare, and brought them to Dhubri, where they were lodged in the coolie depôt. Kessur Sing, on solemn affirmation, stated before the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, that, soon after they were lodged in the depôt, "a Babu took down our names and gave us a blanket, two *coortas* (shirts), and two *dhoties*, and a tin mug. I did not wish to accept these things, but the jemadar, Lutchman Sing, said they are given us as a present by the Sirkar, and returned me the Rs. 5 I had given as my railway fare. We got no other money, and this was my own. I never saw any agreement, and I never signed any agreement. I can sign my own name. No *sahib* asked me any question. A *sahib* came on horseback to the depôt once, but left without saying anything. It was not till I got on board the steamer, when the doctor said you must drink here and not there, that I found out I was an emigrant." There was an exciting scene on board the steamer, where Kessur Sing refused to drink water drawn from the river by the Mahomedan crew. It was difficult to persuade Kessur Sing to give up his caste, and the incident of his refusal created no small commotion. A gentleman, who was a passenger on board the steamer, having been drawn to the scene of the tumult, and having acquainted himself with all the particulars of the case, felt interested in it. When the steamer reached Tezpur, Kessur and his wife were landed on shore. The gentleman followed them to the coolie depôt, where they were lodged for the night. Having thus ascertained the place, he went to a kind-hearted pleader of the town and gave him all the particulars of the case. The pleader was good enough to take up the cause of poor Kessur Sing and his wife. He went to the Deputy Commissioner's house and instituted a suit for their release. The Deputy Commissioner made a reference to the Deputy Commissioner of Dhubri on the subject, and, on the receipt of his reply, passed, on the 11th of August 1886, the following order on the petition of Kessur Sing and his wife:—

No. 1005.

Order of the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang. Passed on the petition of Kessur Sing, Nepali, and Mussamud, Rupkanotee. Read letter 266 E., dated 7th August, from the Deputy Commissioner, Dhubri. From the statements contained in this letter it is quite

clear Kessur Sing and his wife entered into agreements, and his petition to the effect that he was deceived, cannot be entertained. He must therefore proceed to the garden for which he was recruited.

Dated 11th August 1886.

A. E. Campbell,
Deputy Commissioner, Darrang.

Even if it be admitted that Kessur Sing and his wife had entered into any agreement, it is quite clear that they did so under misrepresentation, and were, according to law, justly entitled to have their contracts cancelled. No man in his senses would have ever resigned a comparatively lucrative and respectable post for the purpose of being employed as a coolie in a tea garden far away from his home on half his original pay, unless some kind of fraud had been practised upon him. Yet their application was dismissed.

The next case to which the Committee would refer is still more painful. The facts are these, as related by a correspondent:—

A batch of emigrants arrived here (Dibrugarh) a few days ago. Like those coolies whose circumstances require them to be taken, on their arrival, before the district magistrate for orders, this particular batch was likewise, on landing at Dibrugarh, taken to the cutcherry before the Deputy Commissioner. The batch was composed of three helpless women of the gentleman class; their names are, Ahlady, Shoshi, and Deologni. It was only from the first two that we could gather information as to how they became victims of the slavery act of the most highly-civilized British Government; whereas the last woman, Deologni, having become insane during the voyage, could tell us nothing about her, and the little that could be gathered concerning this woman was only from her two associates. Ahlady, *alias* Khanto, the daughter of a Brahmin, and Shoshi, a Boistab woman of the Hooghli district, were bathing in the Ganges at the Juggurnath Ghaut in Calcutta. In course of conversation, Ahlady told Shoshi that she had a relative somewhere at Burra Bazaar whom she would like to see if she knew the place where he lived. Hearing this, some one near them volunteered to show them the place, and another woman corroborated what this man said. Thereupon the volunteer brought a hackney, took Ahlady and Shoshi therein, and drove them off. This was at about 10 a.m.; after driving from place to place, at last, at about 5 p.m., they were brought into a house where they were confined for some five or six hours, and afterwards again put into a coach and brought to the Sealdah Station, where, to their utter astonishment, they were locked up in the train, which then left for Goalundo and Dhubri. Breaking their journey now by train and then by steamer, they at last arrived, as they said, at a place (Dhubri) and taken to some houses where they were thrust into the company of innumerable ragged, half-clad, dirty men, women, and children. The next day they were conducted to the river ghaut and filed before a Sahib, and then put on board a steamer which, after five days, arrived at this place (Dibrugarh). It was on board the steamer that Ahlady and Shoshi got acquainted with Deologni, who told them that she was a Rajpoot, and had two children at her home; one day, quarrelling with some one at home, she, in the heat of anger, came out to the road, where she was accosted by a man who, pretending to console her, put her into the train and conveyed to where God knows. Deologni was in her senses, but always crying for her children, till the second day after they were shipped, when suddenly she became mute and showed signs of insanity. For eleven days they did not eat anything: on board the steamer the doctor used to give them sweetmeats, which, however, they did not take; when disembarking at Dibrugarh, Deologni suddenly became a tigress, and belaboured the steamer-doctor with kicks and blows. The other day merciful death put an end to all her miseries, when it had been arranged to send her down to the Tezporé Lunatic Asylum. The tears of these poor women would move the heart of anybody; they would cling round the legs of anyone who would kindly ask them their circumstances. Our kind-hearted Deputy Commissioner detained them for some two days till the receipt of their contracts, but when these showed nothing to authorise his interference, they were taken to their destination, the Khobong Garden, in this district.

The case has been reported in several newspapers. And although the facts were set forth with every circumstance of detail which might lead to the correction of any error, if in any respect such correction were possible, the statement of facts has not been contradicted, and the Indian public have read with horror that, by reason of the system of recruiting which offers ample facilities for the practice of fraud, three women were decoyed into Assam for service in the tea-gardens, all losing their caste, and one dying the miserable death of a maniac. That it should be so is not at all remarkable, considering that little or no care is bestowed by the registering officer to explain to the coolies the nature of the contract into which they may enter. The law provides that an emigrant should "understand the contract as regards the locality, period, and nature of the service and the rate of wages and the price at which rice is to be supplied to him, that the terms thereof are in accordance with the law, that he has not been induced to agree to enter thereunto by any coercion, undue influence, fraud, misrepresentation,

tation, and that he is willing to fulfil the same." Before a labourer is registered it is therefore necessary that the registering officer should satisfy himself that he understands the drift of his contract as regards the points referred to above. But the manner in which this part of the registering officer's duty is performed precludes the possibility of the terms of the contract being clearly explained to the coolie or being understood by him. Like regiments of soldiers, the coolies are made to stand in groups before the registering officer. When they thus stand in regular lines, one after another, the registering officer begins his examination, and they are examined *en masse*. The questions that are usually put and the answers that are usually given are appended below :—

Questions of the Registering Officer.

Answers given by the Coolies.

(Men and women in one voice.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Where do you go ? | 1. We go to Assam. |
| 2. For how many years do you go ? | 2. For five years. |
| 3. What work will you do ? | 3. Men,—we will hoe. Women,—we will pick up tea-leaves. |
| 4. What will be the rate of your wages ? | 4. Men,—five rupees for the first three years, and six rupees for the last two years.
Women,—four rupees for the first three years, and five rupees for the last two years. |
| 5. At what price will rice be supplied to you ? | 5. At three rupees a maund. |
| 6. If the price of rice be more than three rupees who will pay the difference ? | 6. The sirkar (meaning the employer) will pay. |

The inquiry then comes to a close. It is obvious, the Committee submit, that an inquiry conducted in such a fashion and under such conditions must defeat the purpose which the law has in view, viz., to provide the necessary safeguards for the protection of the coolie. The stereotyped answers given to stereotyped questions by a crowd of ignorant people do not imply that they have really all taken part in the replies that are given, or that even those who have taken part in them have understood their drift. It would be absurd to hold that, unless the necessary explanations were forthcoming, they would even understand where Assam was—whether it was a Province or a town, or how far distant it was from their homes, or the sort of work which they would have to undergo in the tea-gardens. If the account which they have received regarding the manner in which the contract is explained to the coolies is correct, the Committee have little hesitation in affirming that it is an empty form which is gone through, that while the letter of the law is preserved, its spirit is completely broken, and that the coolies are not much wiser after their being brought before the registering officer than they had been before that event. Indeed, the Committee of the Indian Association have been informed that in many cases the coolies, before they are brought before the registering officer, are regularly taught by the officers attached to the depôts to return the stereotyped answers to the stereotyped questions which have been quoted above, and that those who in any way prove refractory are either kept back in the depôts and there shut up as prisoners till they consent to sign the agreement, or if they are brought before the registering officer they are pushed back towards the rear, so that from behind other people they may not have an opportunity of speaking to him. The Committee are aware that these are grave allegations to make; and they have ventured to put them forward upon the evidence which they have been able to collect by inquiries made in Assam and by their agents, and they hope that the Commission of Inquiry which they will have prayed for in this letter will sift this and other matters connected with coolie emigration into Assam and suggest the remedy.

Such then are the circumstances connected with the system of recruiting which is now followed. But once arrived in the garden the lot of the coolie in too many cases is such as to deserve the earnest attention of the Government. The rate of mortality is a sufficiently good measure of the conditions of life in any given situation. When mortality is high in a given situation it is obvious that there is more than ordinary neglect of the laws of health, that it proceeds from overwork or from insufficient or bad food or from exposure to all kinds

of weather, or from all these causes combined. Be the causes what they may the fact cannot be gainsaid that in most of the gardens where coolies are employed and under contracts supervised by Government officers, the rate of mortality is very high. The Committee would quote, in support of their views, no less an authority than Dr. Eteson, Deputy Surgeon-General and Sanitary Commissioner of Assam, who in his report of 1884 observed :—

The condition of the emigrant labourer alters greatly for the worse immediately he is landed from the river-steamers and discharged from Government sanitary protection. In many important respects he is thenceforward left to his own resources; in others he receives only modified and often injudicious care; in all the conditions of life he is less favourably placed than before. His food is no longer dietetic and carefully cooked; his clothing and bedding (beyond a blanket) is left to himself to provide; his lodging is often inadequate against the variations of climate; his work exposes him to all weathers, and often to dangerous disease-causes; he is unprotected against drinking to excess; nay, he is, in many instances, almost tempted to it; even if he falls ill, the hospital is a name only; he may receive medicine either by daily attendance at a dispensary or given to him in his hut, but the care of suitable food and adequate restoratives and nursing are, generally speaking, unknown. It is no wonder therefore that the rate of sickness and mortality among the tea-garden labourers as a class has been always very great; that in many gardens it is above what is counted a frightful epidemic in civilised countries; and the subject has been an unceasing anxiety to the Government of the province.

The Committee venture to point out that these are the observations of the highest medical authority in Assam, and they refer to permanent conditions in the life of the coolie in the Assam tea-gardens, irrespective of any particular year or of any particular locality. Indeed, since the passing of the new Emigration Act in 1882, the mortality in the tea gardens has largely and steadily increased. The death-rate, which followed a downward course from 1878 to 1881, began to rise in 1882 when it was 37·8 per thousand. In 1883 there was a further rise to 41·3; and in 1884 it rose to 43·2, notwithstanding the assurance given to the Government of India in 1883 by Mr. Elliott, then Chief Commissioner of Assam, "that no exertions will be wanted on the part of the Civil and Medical Staff of the Assam Commission to wipe out the blot on the administration of which this terrible mortality is the cause." As regards sickness and mortality among labourers in tea-gardens in 1885, the Sanitary Commissioner observes that "nothing has occurred during the year to modify the conclusion published in the closing paragraphs of Appendix A. of the Sanitary Report for 1884." While adult life is thus exposed to unusual risks, and a heavy rate of mortality prevails among adult labourers, it may readily be assumed that child-life which, under ordinary circumstances, requires tender care and nursing would be exposed to even greater risks. That such is the case will appear from the frightful tale of infant mortality which the records of sanitary officers disclose. We thus find that in 1884 the death-rate among children in tea-gardens had risen from 39·7 to 44 per thousand. While the death-rate increased the birth-rate gradually fell; in 1882, it was 39·7 per thousand; in 1883 it was 34·3, and in 1884 it further decreased to 32·7 per thousand. The Chief Commissioner of Assam thus explains this excessive mortality :—

Neglect on the part of the women who are unable to do their daily task and at the same time look after the children, and who cannot afford to do no work and stay at home, accounts in a great measure for the high mortality among children.

It will thus be seen that the conditions of coolie life in the Assam tea-gardens are such, their lot is so hard, that both husband and wife are obliged to go on with their daily task-work, and the wife at a time when the duties of maternity render it imperatively necessary that she should attend rather to the nursing of her new-born offspring than to her work. The Committee can hardly conceive of any condition of labouring life where the labourer is so badly provided for, that even the duties of the mother have to be neglected to meet the demands of her employers. The remarks of the Chief Commissioner which the Committee have quoted afford unexpected but painful commentary upon the condition of coolie life in the Assam tea-gardens. In this connection the Committee would quote the observations of the Civil Surgeon of Dibrugurh which strikingly bear out the view suggested by the remarks of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The Civil Surgeon of Dibrugurh says :—

"The conditions of child-life in a tea-garden are altogether so unfavourable that the wonder is how so many children succeed in passing childhood's stage. A coolie woman gets a variable amount of leave for her confinement. After that, if the infant is not strangled at birth, she must either take it out to her work, or leave it behind, with no one to look after it. In the former case tied to its mother's back or left in the nearest drain, it is exposed to the extreme of heat and cold, to wind and rain; in the latter the child gets

gets half-starved and so paves its way to a death from some bowel-disorder, or succeeds in cutting short its career by a fall or a roll into the open fire. So alive are coolie women to these facts that, to avoid the trouble of bringing up their children under such circumstances, abortion is frequently resorted to, and daees, who produce it, often find their business a very profitable one."

In noticing the excessive mortality among children he again observes in his report of 1886:—

"Turning to an actual analysis of the figures, two facts are noticeable, and one more than another. This is the large number of deaths among the children. Of fifteen reported deaths among the non-Act coolies, fourteen are of children. This is directly traceable to the first of the causes of sickness I have mentioned. Women are most needed during the plucking season, which is at the same time most sickly. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that they are not allowed the time they need to look after their children, or that the latter are neglected."

The Committee would beg to call the pointed attention of the Government to the remarks of the Civil Surgeon where he says that "so alive are coolie women to these facts that to avoid the trouble of bringing up their children under such circumstances abortion is frequently resorted to, and daees (mid-wives) who procure it often make their business a profitable one." A more revolting and at the same time a more painful admission it is difficult to conceive. So hard is the lot of infantile life in the tea-gardens, and so difficult it is to bring up children in these gardens that coolie mothers, rather than face the difficulty of rearing up children, sacrifice the tenderest of human feelings, those of the mother. No state of recognized slavery could be worse; and the Committee of the Indian Association would earnestly pray for the appointment of a Commission with a view to the reconsideration of the law which makes such things possible.

It is not indeed a matter of wonder that there should be this high rate of mortality both among children and adults, considering the hard work imposed upon the coolies in the tea-gardens. Under section 115 of the Emigration Act the schedule of work is framed by the planters themselves, and though subject to revision by the inspector, the visits of that officer are few and far between, and he can scarcely be expected to exercise any effectual check over the work which the planters in their interests may think fit to allot. The Committee understand that the work has been considerably increased since the depression of tea-industry.

Cases of hard treatment of coolies by planters, to call them by no severer name, have been frequently reported in the newspapers, and facts have come to light which warrant the assumption that these unfortunate people do not meet with the measure of protection to which they may be said to be entitled. In cases between planters and coolies, the Committee regret to have to observe that too often the interests of justice and the interests of the weaker party are not sufficiently cared for. From the Emigration Report of 1884 the Committee find that in the sudder sub-division of Cachar, "the only serious offence committed by coolies was a riotous attack on the manager of the Bowalia tea-garden. The assault was a very serious one, the manager being kept a prisoner for some hours in his house; but he had to a certain extent brought the attack on himself by defiantly caning a boy in the presence of the assembled coolies. About a dozen men were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment from three days to one year, and the manager was fined Rs. 200. The judge upheld the sentences on the coolies, but reduced the fine on the manager to Rs. 50." The same report mentions another case in which the assistant manager of Chinkuri tea-garden was besieged in his bungalow. No assault, however, was committed, and the trying magistrate said that "he was unable to find any reason for the disturbance, save a dispute with the Babu of the out-garden. A number of women, as well as men, were brought up before him, but he thought in this case a warning to the women and a month's imprisonment for some of the men was quite sufficient." The Committee venture to make a few remarks upon these cases. A tea-planter who had defiantly flogged a boy in the presence of the assembled coolies was let off with a fine of two hundred rupees, which was again considered to be a little too heavy by the court of appeal and was reduced to Rs. 50; while, on the other hand, though the coolies made an attack upon the manager under very strong provocation, they were punished with imprisonment, and the sentence in some cases was the maximum punishment provided by the law. In the second case, though no assault was committed, a number

of coolies were sentenced to a month's imprisonment for besieging the assistant manager in his bungalow. When this is often the character of the administration of justice in Assam in cases between planters and coolies, it is natural that a coolie would not venture to institute a suit against his master and undergo the expenses incidental to it, even though he might manage to escape from the garden. There is another case to which the Committee would refer with a view to illustrate how justice is sometimes administered in these cases. On the 10th of October 1885 one Sheikh Sukari petitioned the magistrate of Sibsagar for a discharge certificate under Section 141 of Act I. for the release of his son, Sheikh Khodadin, from the garden of one Mr. Hosack of Diron tea estate. The Assistant Commissioner, Lieutenant H. R. Browne, who was the trying magistrate, wrote a letter to Mr. Hosack giving him the substance of the application, and calling upon him to make his defence. But Mr. Hosack, without sending him a reply, wrote to the Deputy Commissioner as follows:—

“ I beg to enclose a letter received from the Extra Assistant Commissioner, Sibsagar. I am not aware that he is acting within his powers, and therefore put the matter before you ; at the same time I beg to bring to your notice that a coolie named in his letter is not an Act I. coolie, but a domestic servant. The man denies having put in the application for release ; he was in the factory on the date the application is supposed to have been made. Should feel obliged by your looking into the case, as it seems to me that it has been done simply to give me annoyance.”

The letter affords an illustration of the relations which too often exist between planters and the administrators of the law in Assam, and which, it need hardly be said, is inconsistent with that firm and impartial administration of justice which alone can afford the necessary protection to the helpless coolies. On receipt of this letter, the application of the father was summarily dismissed on the 28th October without even calling for evidence. The worst part of the affair has yet to be told. It appears that, after the dismissal of the case, the father somehow communicated to the son the purport of Mr. Hosack's letter, and the latter having managed to escape from the garden applied on the 2nd November to Lieutenant Browne to grant him a discharge certificate. The same day the following order was passed:—

“ Mr. Hosack has already written to say that complainant has no contract ; complainant is told that he can leave the employ if he wishes to.

“ *H. R. Browne,*
“ Assistant Commissioner.”

But on the next day, the 3rd of November, one Pator Gogoi, on behalf of Mr. Hosack, made an application under Section 175 to Lieutenant Browne for the arrest of Sheikh Khodadin on a charge of desertion. A warrant was immediately issued, and the man having been arrested was put on his trial the same day, and was summarily convicted to undergo a sentence of seven days' rigorous imprisonment. It appears from the judgment that if Mr. Hosack had not asked for the accused “ to be lightly treated,” he would have been more severely punished. What could be stranger or more humiliating than this solemn farce enacted in the name of justice. The judge forgot that this sentence passed on the accused completely upset his order of the previous day. It was he who had told the accused “ that he can leave the employ if he wishes to,” and the next day he upsets the order on the strength of a document whose existence Mr. Hosack himself was not aware of!

In another case a coolie, Bholu Kachari by name, was convicted by Mr. Arbuthnot, the Assistant Commissioner of Jorhat, although the contract was not drawn up in conformity with the requirements of Section 9, Clause C. of Act I. of 1882, and its schedule, and of Section 111, as to registration. The High Court, in setting aside the conviction, observed:—

“ It appears to the judges that, owing to Mr. Arbuthnot's mistake, the accused in this case has undergone several months' imprisonment for which there were no legal grounds.”

The learned judges, Justices Cunningham and Chandra Madhub Ghose, called for an explanation from Mr. Arbuthnot.

It is unnecessary to multiply these cases ; but the cane, it is to be feared, is too frequently employed in many of the tea gardens in Assam. A high officer of the Assam Government, while on an incognito visit to a garden, saw that the manager, having tied the hands of a coolie to a tree, was caning him
most

most unmercifully. In 1884 Mr. Francis, manager of the Dygoroon tea garden, was tried on a charge of grievous hurt, for having struck a coolie woman with a cane which caused her death. Dr. Conceicao, the civil surgeon of Golaghat, who made a post-mortem examination, said that "death was the result of congestion of the kidneys, which he was of opinion had been set up by violence applied to that part of the body where the kidneys are situated." But Mr. Francis called a witness to show that he "did not strike the woman, but only lifted his cane and threatened to strike her." Mr. Francis was eventually acquitted.

The next mode of punishment, which is sometimes resorted to, is the lock-up. The Committee have been given to understand that it is the fermenting house which is generally used for the purpose. In 1884 two officers of the Dum-Duma tea-estate, in the district of Dibrugarh, named Babus Kedar Nath Ghosh and Sasadhar Barua, were charged with the offence of keeping a man under illegal restraint, and in this case the existence of a dungeon in many tea gardens was proved by the witnesses for the defence. The Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Greenshield, who tried the case, expressed, in his judgment, great surprise and strong disapproval of such conduct on the part of the planters.

In December 1886 the following telegram appeared in the newspapers, which goes to support the view which the Committee have here put forward:—

"Having been systematically maltreated, some 110 coolies, men and women, came in a body on the 9th instant from the Rajabarie tea garden, and made complaint before the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. McLeod, who immediately sent out Lieutenant Gurdon to the garden, and asked him to report about the coolies' complaints. Lieutenant Gurdon has found some of the serious charges to be correct, namely, the existence of a dungeon, where absconders and other recalcitrant coolies are confined and tied down with ropes. The manager, Mr. Eyre, admitted having the dungeon, and having cut a coolie with a cane."

Helpless as the coolies are, miserable as is their lot, the Committee regret to

111. Notwithstanding anything hereinbefore contained, any employer may enter into a labour-contract with any native of India within a labour district. When any employer has executed any such contract with any such native within a labour district, he shall within one month from the date of the execution of such contract, forward it in duplicate to the Inspector within the local limits of whose jurisdiction such employer resides. On receipt of the contract so forwarded, the Inspector shall enter an abstract thereof in a register to be kept by him for the purpose, and shall then give one copy of the contract to the labourer and the other copy to his employer.

When for the first time after the registration of any such contract with a labourer, the Inspector visits the estate on which such labourer is employed, the employer shall cause such labourer to appear before the Inspector, and such labourer may thereupon apply to the Inspector to cancel the contract; and, if he shows cause sufficient in the opinion of the Inspector to justify the cancellation, the Inspector may cancel the contract, and shall thereupon endorse on the labourer's copy of the contract, or, if such copy be not forthcoming, shall give the labourer a certificate of such cancellation.

call attention to a letter issued by the Commissioner of the Assam Valley District, No. G., dated the 29th August 1884, to the address of the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, by which the Deputy Commissioner is allowed discretion to permit the registration of contracts, though they should be presented after the time specified by the law. Here is the letter:—

"On Section 111 of Act I., 1882, the penalty is that if not registered the contract is not a contract under the Act, it is a mere civil contract, and you are legally justified in refusing registration when a month has passed; but it is a general rule applying to all such limitations that the court or officer who has the legal power to refuse the application may admit it for good cause shown. So, though you are legally justified in refusing registration, you are not legally bound to adopt this course. You must use your discretion. If a year has elapsed, I should certainly refuse. If under two months has elapsed, and any reasonable explanation was offered, I should register."

It will thus be seen that a provision of the law, which by ensuring prompt registration of contracts, affords some sort of protection to the coolie, is rendered nugatory by the manner of its application, which again is contrary to law.

Then with regard to that part of Section 111 which requires that contracts should be verified, the Chief Commissioner observes in the Emigration Report for 1883, that "the number verified is extremely disproportionate to the number registered, and it seems that only in Cachar and Sibsagar have any strenuous efforts been made to perform this important duty." The duty of verification is not only not regularly but also not properly performed. The Chief Commissioner, in the report for the year 1883, admits that "it is in itself a much more satisfactory thing that the terms of the engagement should be explained to the coolie before he signs it by an officer of Government. But this is not always possible."

Out of 25,457 local contracts executed in 1884, only 9,492 were verified during the year, and out of the number, 117 contracts were cancelled "as a punishment on managers for transgressing the rules." That the provisions of Section 111 of the Act operate to the injury of the coolie is a fact which is admitted by high official authority. Thus in 1883, Mr. Porteus, the sub-divisional officer of Karimgunge, wrote:—

"There is not the smallest security that the coolie, when he is brought up to go through the form of touching the pen, in company with some dozens of others at the garden, understands in the least what he is signing to. There is no provision that his agreement should be first explained to him, nor is it very likely that any objection he might make would be listened to. He is expected to sign with the rest. As shown above, it is not uncommon for coolies to try to repudiate their agreements afterwards, and it is very difficult to decide whether their objections afford sufficient ground for cancellation."

Mr. Stevens, the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, endorsed these remarks. He said:—

"In the above remarks of the sub-divisional officer of Karimgunge, on the liability to abuse of the Section 111 procedure, I fully concur. In this matter the law appears entirely one-sided. Everything is in favour of the employer. A labour contract, purporting to have been signed by the coolie, but either not executed by him, or if executed, executed under a misapprehension, is sent in for registration under Section 111 and is registered. It may not be verified for a year afterwards; and suppose it is then cancelled, what compensation does the unfortunate coolie receive? He has been, one may say, in wrongful confinement for a year, forced to labour for a year, forced to labour for a master who had no claim to his services, and liable, if he tried to escape from his state of quasi-slavery, to be pursued, arrested, and sent up for trial like a common criminal, or worse, as these even cannot in all cases be arrested without a warrant."

Thus a high officer of Government, in the position of a Deputy Commissioner in charge of the administration of a district, describes the position of the coolie as one of "quasi-slavery." The Chief Commissioner, however, does not take this view. He says:—

"These remarks are couched in stronger terms than the Chief Commissioner can endorse. It may be admitted that if the Executive were weak and the tea planters given to oppression, Section 111 would afford a dangerous facility for high-handed conduct, but neither of these conditions exist. A garden is always liable to inspection and opportunities for escape constantly offer themselves."

But the case of Gibbons throws a flood of light upon the practical working of Section 111, and how agreements which are alleged to be executed by the coolies and are produced as such before the registering officer, are sometimes not executed at all. This was what Gibbons himself said in the course of the inquiry into his case:—

"Several coolies' agreements were written out on the 1st December last They were written by Gopal Chundra. They were signed by me. They were not signed by the coolies on the 1st December. I did not bring up the coolies to my bungalow on the 1st December They never executed the agreements now placed before me I, however, sent them in to be registered."

In reply to an exclamation of surprise on the part of Mr. Lyon, the inspecting officer, at this statement, Gibbons said that there was nothing extraordinary in this—that it was the custom and was always done. The High Court in reviewing this case observed:—

"It is difficult to conceive a grosser case. The helplessness and ignorance of the labourers and the superior intelligence and position of the accused aggravates the offence, which, but for the intervention of the inspector, would have entailed grievous injustice on the labourers."

But

But imperfectly worked as are the provisions of Act I. of 1882, Act XIII. of 1859, which has not been repealed, is still largely used by planters in executing local contracts. Referring to this Act, the Chief Commissioner in his report considers it to be open to the gravest objection. "A contract," says the Chief Commissioner, "may be enforced under this Act, though it is not in writing, though it is not stamped, though it is not registered, though it has not been presented for verification before any official, though there is no proof (other than what evidence is produced on the trial) that the labourer understood the terms of the engagement, though the terms may be manifestly unfair. A labourer cannot free himself by redemption, nor can he plead any misconduct of his employer as an excuse for non-performance. In short, not one of the safeguards which the Legislature in Act I. of 1882 thought necessary for the protection of the tea-coolie are provided by Act XIII. of 1859." The Deputy Commissioner of Dibrugar says :—

"So long as Act XIII. of 1859 remains in force in the district, I apprehend that the number of contracts under Section 111 will not increase."

Mr. Porteus, the sub-divisional officer of Kainiungunge, says that any attempt to repeal "this obnoxious Act" would "meet with very strong opposition." The Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, in his report for 1884, observes that several managers, when verification of local contracts was insisted on, "declared that they would resort to the 'simple plan' of putting their coolies under 'the good old rule' of Act XIII. * * * Act XIII. is, I venture to think, not an enactment which should rule contracts between tea-planters and their labourers. Where it applied to cases of job work, and the employer is allowed the option of deciding whether he shall have his job completed or his more or less equivalent advance returned him, the procedure of the Act is fair enough; but here the coolie is never allowed to refund the so-called advance, the whole pound of flesh is rigorously exacted, and the coolie has to go back to the garden, even if he offers, as I have known him offer, to pay a larger sum than the advance claimed, and the job claimed is an apprenticeship of a year's duration in an unhealthy climate for which the so-called advance is a very imperfect consideration."

The Committee of the Indian Association have now submitted their representation; and they venture to hope that they have made it clear that the system by which coolies are recruited, their treatment in the tea-gardens, the imperfect nature of the protection afforded them by the Act, are such as should engage the earnest attention of the Government. "The coolies themselves are voiceless; they have no organization to represent them. All the more, therefore, the Committee submit, is the duty incumbent upon the Government to look to their grievances and to redress them. The Committee would earnestly appeal to the Government for the appointment of an independent Commission to inquire into the facts which have been here urged, and generally into the condition of the coolies in the Assam tea gardens. A thorough and exhaustive inquiry is all that the Committee seek for as the basis for any future action which the Government may think fit to take, and the Committee earnestly hope that the Government will have no difficulty in complying with this request. The Committee have learnt with satisfaction that his Honor the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal has appointed a special officer to inquire into certain complaints of kidnaping and other criminal offences made by persons engaged in free recruiting outside the provisions of Act I. of 1882. No inquiry, however, into the working of Act I. of 1882 and Act XIII. of 1859 has yet been ordered, and the necessity for it clearly exists in view of the evidence which has been set forth in this letter, and, indeed, of the action of the Government of Bengal itself.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Surendranath Banerji*,
Honorary Secretary.

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(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

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ON

IMMIGRANT LABOUR

IN THE

ASSAM DISTRICTS OF EASTERN BENGAL
AND ASSAM

FOR THE

Year ending the 30th June 1910.



SHILLONG:

PRINTED AT THE EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.

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Coolie Routes for the Brahmaputra and Surma Valley.

- (1) By the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Dhubri, and thence by steamer.
- (2) By the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Dhubri, thence by steamer to Gauhati and thence by rail.
- (3) By rail from Chandpur.
- (4) By steamer or country boat from Goalundo.

PORTS OF INSPECTION.

1. Dhubri.
2. Gauhati.
3. Tezpur.
4. Dibrugarh.
5. Karimganj.

RIVER DEBARKATION DEPÔTS.

1. Tezpur.
2. Silghat.
3. Negriting.
4. Kokilamukh.
5. Desangmukh.
6. Dhansirimukh.
7. Dibrugarh.

RAILWAY DEBARKATION DEPÔT.

1. Gauhati.

LANDING-PLACES NOT BEING DEPÔTS.

1. Silchar.
2. Katigora.
3. Karimganj.
4. Fenchuganj.
5. Manumukh.
6. Maulvi Bazar.
7. Madna.
8. Palasbari.
9. Rangamati Ghat.
10. Singri.
11. Biswanath.
12. Behalimukh.
13. Gomirighat.
14. Kamalabari.
15. Dikumukh.
16. Dehingmukh.



REFERENCES.

- Province or State Boundary.....
- District.....do.....
- Undemarcated.....do.....
- Railway Line.....(open).....
- Do.....(under construction).....
- Road.....
- Area under Tea.....

THE PROVINCE OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM



NOTE.—The Longitudes are referred to the Greenwich Meridian taking that of Madras Observatory as 80° 14' 54" East.

Resolution on Immigrant Labour in the Assam Districts of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1909-1910.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam in the Municipal Department, No. 8920M., dated the 28th November 1910.

Read—

The Immigrant Labour Reports of the Deputy Commissioners of Labour Districts.

RESOLUTION.

THE labour force dealt with in this Resolution is that imported for employment on tea gardens in Assam, in the oil refinery at Digboi, in coal-mines and in certain saw-mills. The labour employed on railways is excluded, and no account is taken of those labourers who are temporarily employed during the cold weather and return to their homes in April and May.

The history of the past year, though less eventful than that of either of the two previous years, is nevertheless a record of steady progress in many directions. Good harvests in the recruiting districts resulted in decreased immigration, but there are indications that employers are disposed to place greater reliance upon sardars and less upon contractors to enable them to keep the labour force up to strength, and the gradual extinction of labour indentured under Act VI is proceeding. The transit of immigrants to Assam was attended with remarkably little mortality, the recorded birth-rate of the labour force increased while the death-rate fell, wages of all classes slightly improved, the area of Government land settled direct with time-expired coolies increased and good relations were generally maintained between employers and employed.

A joint representation from the Assam and Surma Valley Branches of the Indian Tea Association asking this Government to move the Government of Bengal to close the Presidency Division and the district of Howrah in the Burdwan Division to recruitment by contractors afforded a striking proof of the change of opinion which is taking place on this important question among employers. The Government of Bengal was unable to accept the proposal in its entirety, but issued a notification closing the districts of Howrah and Sambalpur with effect from the 1st August 1910. Further concessions to garden sardars working under certain approved Associations were granted during the year by the Government of Madras and the Administration of the Central Provinces.

The desertion of coolies to Hill Tippera has been in the past the cause of some friction between the State authorities and the managers of gardens adjoining the frontier. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts that the appointment at Agartala of a Political Agent, who will be in a position to give special attention to this question, will improve the situation.

2. At the close of the year the total strength of the labour force (Statement I) was 758,319, an increase of 2,481 over the figures of the previous year. The number of adults is returned at 457,639 and of these only 26,778 were indentured under Act VI of 1901. Perhaps the most significant feature of the labour statistics of the past seven years has been the continuous decline in the number of Act coolies and so striking are these figures that it is desirable to reproduce them. They are as follows:—

	Total adult labour force.	Number indentured under Act VI of 1901.	Percent ge.
1903-04	404,350	84,306	20.8
1904-05	410,165	79,983	19.5
1905-06	417,262	76,782	18.4
1906-07	419,445	69,841	16.6
1907-08	452,464	61,480	13.5
1908-09	457,826	40,680	8.9
1909-10	457,639	26,778	5.9

It will be interesting to quote similar figures for the districts of Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, where employers can still import labourers under contract.

	Total adult labour force.	Number indentured under Act VI of 1901.	Percentage.
1903-04	247,152	80,942	32.7
1904-05	251,991	76,885	30.5
1905-06	257,600	74,179	28.8
1906-07	259,362	68,065	26.2
1907-08	286,128	52,735	20.9
1908-09	290,401	39,191	13.5
1909-10	290,329	25,678	8.8

The withdrawal of the right to enter into local contracts and the voluntary abstention on the part of many employers from having recourse to Act VI are the causes responsible for the steady replacement of Act by non-Act labour.

Of the total force 63.32 per cent. were employed in the Assam Valley and 36.68 per cent. in the Surma Valley.

3. There was very little change in the distribution of the labour population according to nationality and sex. Nearly three quarters of the adult labour force adults belonged to Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas and the plains districts of the United Provinces and Bengal. The proportion of women was 46.13 per cent. of the Act labourers and 49.82 of the non-Act labourers, while the percentage of children was 39.6 of the total strength. Details are given in Statement II.

4. The area under tea cultivation increased from 344,916 to 345,658 acres, the increase being mainly accounted for by the addition of 1,281 acres in Sibsagar. The number of adult labourers employed per 100 acres remained the same as in the two preceding years, *viz.*, 132, the district average varying from 62 in Kamrup to 159 in Lakhimpur. No account is taken in this calculation of the outside local labour which is employed on many gardens.

CHAPTER II.

IMMIGRATION.

5. Statistics of immigration into the province during the past five years are given

Provincial figures of immigration in the following statement:—

Class of labourers.	1905-1906.	1906-1907.	1907-1908.	1908-1909.	1909-1910.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Act { Sardari adults ...	5,482	3,060	4,890	1,123	515
Act { Contractors' adults ...	3,961	2,919	8,422	6,172	4,914
Non-Act adults ...	15,252	14,034	45,622	35,229	23,233
Total of Act and non-Act adults ...	24,695	20,043	58,934	42,524	29,397
Children ...	7,135	5,574	25,890	18,249	9,935
Grand Total ...	31,830	25,617	84,824	60,773	39,332

Good harvests in the recruiting districts account for the decrease in the number of immigrants compared with the figures of the two previous years, but it is significant that even under normal conditions the figures of the year exceed those of any of the six years previous to 1907-1908. It is not unreasonable to infer from this fact that the increased extent to which immigrants are brought to Assam without being placed under contract and the gradual removal of prejudices against emigration in the recruiting districts are causes tending to an improvement in the volume of immigration. The plains districts of the United Provinces and Bengal superseded Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas at the head of the list of recruiting centres, but Madras was the only important centre which showed improved figures as compared with those of the previous year. The proportion of children to the total number of immigrants declined, while the proportion of men to women (4 to 3) remained approximately the same.

6. The great improvement in the health of coolies during transit consequent on the arrangements introduced towards the close of 1908 was maintained. Only 45 deaths occurred, of which 38 were due to cholera. The Lieutenant-Governor desires to record his appreciation of the efforts made by the Sanitary Commissioner and his staff in supervising transit arrangements by rail and steamer.

7. The usual routes to Assam by steamer and railway were followed and no change occurred in the number or situation of debarkation depôts.

8. Complaints of fraudulent recruitment were made in 44 cases, of which 22 were made in the Lakhimpur district. Fraud or irregularity was proved in 6 cases only.

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

9. The number of contracts executed in the recruiting districts during the year was 5,268 against 7,295 in 1908-1909.

10. Contracts cancelled by efflux of time were regularly reported in all districts except Darrang. The Lieutenant-Governor regrets to observe that the improvement effected in this respect during the previous year in Darrang was not maintained. Out of 4,777 cases only 1,371 were reported. A circular letter issued by the Deputy Commissioner calling for the punctual submission of the monthly returns of time-expired coolies was responsible for the improvement in 1908-1909, but in the absence of another special reminder during the year under report the managers again became careless. The Lieutenant-Governor desires the Divisional Commissioner to take the necessary action to ensure that reports are promptly submitted in future.

11. The option of repatriation was given to 39 coolies, of whom 33 were sent to their homes, 3 preferred to remain on the garden, and 1 absconded and 1 died.

12. Act XIII was freely used and its popularity was well maintained. In some districts the agreements are usually oral, while in others they are written. Complaints that the Act does not give employers sufficient power to compel the due performance of the contract are still made, but much has been done by concerted action among the managers to prevent the enticement of coolies from one garden to another.

13. The average monthly wages of Aot labourers are detailed in the following statement. They are calculated on the wages earned in the months of March and September.

Subdivision.	Average calculated on the figures for September 1909 and March 1910 of monthly cash wage, including fees, diet rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.				
	Of total number on the books.		Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	
	1	2	3	4	
		Rs. as. p.	Rs. as. p.	Rs. as. p.	Rs. as. p.
Cachar Sadr		5 8 9	4 8 8	6 8 2	5 10 9
Hailakandi		5 8 9	3 10 0	6 12 4	5 13 2
North Sylhet		7 4 6	6 5 8	10 3 1	8 1 6
Karimganj		4 7 4	3 10 9	5 15 3	5 1 10
South Sylhet		5 9 5	3 13 1	6 8 1	4 14 6
Habiganj		5 6 10	4 0 11	5 13 6	6 5 7
Kamrup Sadr		4 10 7	3 11 3	5 9 8	4 15 10
Darrang Sadr		5 13 2	6 1 11	6 12 6	6 12 6
Mangaldai		6 1 1	3 2 9	7 5 3	6 3 1
Nowgong		5 5 4	5 1 4	6 11 4	6 9 1
Sibsagar Sadr		5 15 8	5 6 2	7 2 3	6 2 9
Jorhat		5 1 3	4 3 4	6 6 2	5 4 2
Golaghat		5 2 10	4 7 4	5 9 7	5 9 9
Lakhimpur Sadr		6 0 10	5 2 11	7 9 4	6 14 9
North Lakhimpur		5 6 6	4 2 2	7 0 7	5 15 10
Average for 1909-1910*		5 12 2	5 0 6	7 1 0	6 6 6
Average for 1908-1909		5 7 8	4 13 6	7 0 6	6 5 7

* The provincial averages are not the means of the district averages, but are calculated independently by dividing the total earnings of the two typical months by the total number of coolies on the books (column 2 of Form No. 27) and by the total average daily working strength (column 4 of Form No. 27) as the case may be, in the same months.

Hailakandi, Karimganj, South Sylhet and Mangaldai are the only subdivisions in which there was an actual fall in the rates. In many subdivisions there was an appreciable rise, and it is satisfactory to note that the combined average shows a slight increase.

Wages of non-Act coolies.

14. The average earnings of non-Act coolies were as follows :—

Subdivision.	Average calculated on the figures for September 1909 and March 1910, of monthly cash wage, including <i>ticca</i> , diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.					
	Of total number on the book.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar Sadr	5 3 1	4 2 1	2 2 10	6 13 1	5 13 8	3 5 10
Hailakandi	4 14 2	3 13 7	2 2 2	6 9 0	5 15 1	3 8 4
North Sylhet	4 14 6	3 4 9	2 7 4	6 0 11	4 14 11	3 6 8
Karimganj	4 14 5	3 11 11	2 7 0	6 7 11	5 1 8	3 9 2
South Sylhet	5 0 9	3 10 0	2 1 8	6 6 10	4 14 11	3 5 5
Habiganj	5 4 11	3 12 11	2 4 2	6 14 0	5 15 4	3 10 10
Kamrup sadr	4 0 7	3 1 7	1 14 11	7 5 0	5 13 1	3 8 9
Darrang Sadr	5 0 5	4 6 9	2 12 8	6 3 11	5 12 8	3 12 1
Mangaldai	5 11 10	3 15 11	2 6 0	7 3 6	5 5 6	3 3 6
Nowgong	5 11 7	4 11 1	2 12 10	7 7 1	6 12 9	4 1 9
Sibsagar Sadr	5 14 6	4 12 3	2 9 11	7 6 4	6 7 11	3 6 11
Jorhat	5 4 2	3 11 2	2 6 6	6 9 2	5 1 2	3 6 0
Golaghat	5 8 4	3 10 7	2 10 3	6 5 11	4 10 10	3 9 9
Lakhimpur Sadr	6 13 6	5 2 6	3 1 10	8 14 4	7 1 3	4 1 4
North Lakhimpur	5 14 11	4 7 1	2 6 11	7 10 1	6 2 4	3 10 3
Average for 1908-1910*	5 10 8	4 4 5	2 9 3	7 3 8	5 14 2	3 10 3
Average for 1908-1909	5 5 2	4 1 6	2 8 2	7 1 6	5 14 7	3 9 4

* The provincial averages are not the means of the district averages, but are calculated independently by dividing the total earnings of the two typical months by the total number of coolies on the books (column 2 of form No. 27) and by the total of average daily working strength (column 4 of form No. 27) as the case may be in the same months.

These figures also show a small increase, compared with those for 1908-1909.

CHAPTER IV.

VITAL STATISTICS.

15. The recorded birth-rate per mille calculated on the total strength of the coolie

Birth-rate.

District.	Number of births.	Birth-rate per mille on—	
		Total coolie population.	Adult female population.
1	2	3	4
Cachar	3,435	27.6	88.8
Sylhet	3,933	25.6	84.1
Kamrup	75	26.0	83.4
Darrang	2,062	22.7	76.3
Nowgong	450	29.9	70.4
Sibsagar	4,612	25.9	89.6
Lakhimpur	5,004	26.6	89.2
Total for 1909-1910 ...	19,571	25.8	86.1
Total for 1908-1909 ...	17,001	22.7	75.1

population was 25.8 and calculated on the adult female population was 86.1, compared with 22.7 and 75.1, respectively, in 1908-1909. Although the figures show a general improvement, they still compare very unfavourably with the provincial rates of 40.46 and 189.91.

16. The registered death-rate for the total labour force fell from 34.3 to 28.4, the number of deaths being 21,476 as compared with 25,630 in the previous year. The rate of mortality among adults only was 32.4. The highest rate was recorded in Darrang and the lowest in Cachar. In every district except Nowgong mortality was greater among the Act coolies than among the non-Act coolies. The year was generally a healthy one.

Death-rate (Statement VIII).

17. The following table shows the mortality according to nationality, the Madras and the Central Provinces coolies, as in previous years, having the worst record :—

Nationality.	Sex.	Mean annual strength of adults of the Act and non-Act classes.	Deaths among adults of the Act and non-Act classes.	Rate per mille of deaths to strength.
1	2	3	4	5
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.	Men	165,487	2,681	32.91
	Women	...	2,766	
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	Men	178,441	2,689	31.33
	Women	...	2,902	
Central Provinces	Men	71,048	1,299	35.71
	Women	...	1,238	
Madras.	Men	25,719	478	36.98
	Women	...	473	
Assam	Men	16,448	108	17.69
	Women	...	183	
Others	Men	592	10	25.34
	Women	...	5	
Total	Men	230,518	7,265	31.52
	Women	...	7,567	
Grand total	.....	457,730	14,832	32.40

The mean strength of the total Act labour force and the number of deaths from

	1908-1909.	1909-1910.
1	2	3
Mean strength	51,053	33,728
Deaths from—		
Cholera	228	113
Diarrhoea	217	130
Dysentery	999	509
Malarial fever	128	69
Anæmia	472	348
Respiratory diseases	403	217
Other causes	668	365
Total	3,115	1,751

the chief diseases during the last two years are shown in the marginal statement. Dysentery in Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Darrang again accounted for the highest number, while anæmia also proved fatal in a large number of cases in the last two districts.

18. The number of time-expired coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries fell from 633 in the previous year to 330. Sick and destitute coolies.

CHAPTER V.

UNHEALTHY GARDENS.

19. Gardens are classed as unhealthy when the mortality either of the total garden population or of the Act or non-Act coolies taken separately exceeds 7 per cent. and the number of deaths is not less than 10. During the year under review the number of gardens on the unhealthy list fell from 63 to 31. Most of these were in the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts. There was no unhealthy garden in Cachar and Nowgong and only one in Sylhet and Kamrup. Fourteen gardens were placed on the list for the second year in succession, while four have been on the list for the last three years. Details are given in the following table :—

District	Unhealthy in respect of.	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Ratio per mille.	Cause of deaths.						
						Cholera.	Diarrhoea.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anemia of cooiles or anchylosis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sylhet	Non-Act population.	1. Isabheel	1,069	76	71.1	24	9	16	9	3	4	17
Kamrup	Ditto	2. Noonmaty	236	17	72.0	...	1	2	6	6	...	2
	Ditto	3. Sessa	891	70	78.5	5	11	18	...	5	8	23
	Ditto	4. Kolony	856	81	94.6	1	4	49	...	7	7	13
	Act population	Kolony	141	40	283.6	2	...	30	...	3	2	3
Darrang	Act and non-act population.	Kolony	997	121	121.3	3	4	79	...	10	9	6
	Act population	5. Addabari	176	20	113.6	...	...	2	...	4	6	11
	Ditto	6. New Addabari	191	25	130.8	...	...	6	...	4	1	14
	Ditto	7. Singlijar	163	14	85.8	...	3	7	...	4	...	...
	Non-Act population.	8. Khongla and Korahat.	754	56	74.2	46	1	2	3	...	2	2
	Act population	9. Mathrupur	179	17	94.9	...	6	4	...	4	1	2
	Ditto	10. Towkok	197	22	111.6	2	...	10	1	3	...	6
	Ditto	11. Tingalibam	106	13	122.6	...	...	6	...	...	3	4
	Ditto	12. Kathalguri	139	15	107.9	4	...	2	...	2	...	7
Sibsagar	Ditto	13. Moriani and Hunwall.	119	13	109.1	...	1	7	...	...	...	5
	Ditto	14. Halikha, Karsoli and Dhopatbari.	216	54	250.5	4	...	38	...	6	...	6
	Ditto	15. Duklengia, Hat-tigar Koliapani.	163	13	79.7	...	2	2	2	2	...	5
	Non-Act population.	16. Khonikor and Diha.	525	46	87.6	25	...	7	4	3	...	4
	Act population	17. Hatikhuli	126	12	95.2	...	...	10	...	1	...	1
	Non-Act population.	18. Deering	160	13	81.25	1	...	3	3	...	...	...
	Act population	19. Deyhatarang	181	15	82.8	...	...	3	3	2	5	2
	Ditto	20. Kharjan	382	49	147.5	1	...	25	...	7	5	11
	Ditto	21. Borbam Joonk-toli.	145	13	89.6	1	1	1	...	4	1	5
	Ditto	22. Sessa and Kacharbari.	78	10	128.2	...	...	2	...	6	2	...
	Ditto	23. Keyhang	146	11	75.3	1	...	4	...	1	4	1
	Ditto	24. Chabua	275	35	127.2	2	2	12	1	11	2	5
Lakhimpur	Ditto	25. Bahmaria Balijan.	318	33	103.7	6	...	12	1	2	8	9
	Ditto	26. Naharkatia	99	10	101.0	2	3	2	...	...	1	2
	Ditto	27. Zesjali	139	21	151.0	...	3	6	1	6	5	...
	Ditto	28. Joyhing	440	48	109.0	3	...	13	1	15	6	10
	Ditto	29. Silonibari	581	48	72.7	3	5	10	2	12	...	11
	Non-Act population.	30. Dinjan Hopewell	1,504	111	73.8	8	2	14	8	...	26	33
	Ditto	31. Tarajan	959	77	80.2	2	...	36	5	4	9	21

CHAPTER VI.

OFFENCES AND PROSECUTIONS.

Complaints by planters and by coolies. Statement IX. 20. Only one complaint of ill-treatment was made by a coolie against his employer during the year and in that case as well as in the one pending from the previous year the complaint was dismissed.

Applications for discharge certificates were filed in 447 cases and were successful in 267 cases.

Managers instituted 820 cases under Act XIII during the year; of these 352 were decided in favour of the complainants, the coolies being sent to prison in 49 cases while 461 cases were dismissed.

Good relations were maintained between employers and employed and cases of collision were not numerous. There were in all 10 cases of unlawful assembly or rioting, but most of them were unimportant, the most serious case being a riot by some Uriya coolies on a Newgong garden. An Assistant Manager of a garden in Sylhet was charged with causing a boy's death. He was said to have caught the boy stealing wood and to have struck him with a piece of bamboo. There was, however, no evidence and the accused was discharged.

Desertions. Statement X. 21. There were 2,067 desertions of Act VI labourers compared with 3,023 in the previous year. Warrants were issued in 319 cases, arrests were effected in 150 cases and 141 coolies were convicted of desertion, 74 being punished with imprisonment.

CHAPTER VII.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Inspections. Statement XI. 22. There were 734 gardens on the register at the close of the year, a net increase of one. Two new gardens were opened in Lakhimpur and one in Sylhet, while one garden was closed in Sylhet and one was amalgamated with another in Sibsagar. The number of gardens liable to inspection rose from 347 to 394 and 389 were actually inspected.

Capitation fees. Statement XII. 23. Capitation fees fell from Rs. 25,360 in 1908-1909 to Rs. 17,631 in the year under review.

Relations between planters and neighbouring villagers. 24. Relations between the planters and the neighbouring villagers are reported to have been generally excellent.

Colonisation of ex-tea-garden coolies. 25. At the close of the year 164,121 acres of Government land were settled direct with time-expired coolies, an increase of 11,124 acres, which occurred mainly in Darrang, Lakhimpur and Nowgong. In addition to the land held direct from Government, large areas are held by ex-coolies as sub-tenants.

Inland Labour Transport operations. 26. Receipts amounted to Rs. 34,127 during the year and disbursements to Rs. 49,285.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor,

L. J. KERSHAW,

Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

STATEMENTS.

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STATEMENT I.—PART A.—Statistics of the Adult Coolies employed under Act VI of 1901 on the Tea Estates in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1909-1910.

District.	Number remaining at the end of the previous year.	Additions made during the year 1909-1910.					Total of columns 2 and 7.	Deductions made during the year 1909-1910.												Number remaining at the end of the year 1909-1910.	Annual strength.	Death-rate per mille.
		Imported		Otherwise than by importations.				Transferred to other estates.	Deaths.	Desertions.	Cancellation under section 10.	Cancellation under sections 11, 152 (1), 153(1), 154 and 200.	Cancellation for permanent unfitness under section 131.	Cancellation under section 140(c).	Suspended under section 129.	Efflux of time, section 155.	Redemption, section 156.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.			
		By contractors.	By garden sardars.	Received by transfer from other estates.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Total added.																
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Cachar	875	112	...	1	...	113	988	11	25	44	...	...	...	...	...	131	...	4	215	773	824	30.3
Sylhet	532	49	...	4	3	86	638	...	17	62	...	...	...	...	...	237	...	43	359	279	415	40.9
Total, Surma Valley	1,427	191	...	5	3	199	1,626	11	42	106	...	...	...	...	...	368	...	47	574	1,052	1,239	33.9
Kamrup	62	...	...	...	...	...	62	...	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	7	...	...	14	48	55	54.5
Darrang	11,846	1,131	342	101	40	1,614	13,460	101	516	505	...	...	7	...	...	4,777	3	173	6,082	7,378	9,612	53.7
Nowgong	3,861	249	...	10	2	261	3,122	12	69	154	...	...	7	...	...	798	...	...	1,040	2,082	2,471	27.9
Sibsagar	8,825	1,612	15	45	21	1,693	10,518	45	439	368	2	...	6	...	...	3,112	...	139	4,311	6,207	7,516	58.4
Lakhimpur	15,659	1,761	158	187	67	2,173	17,832	261	682	730	2	...	18	...	...	6,100	1	27	7,821	10,011	12,835	53.1
Total Brahmaputra Valley	39,253	4,753	515	343	130	5,741	44,994	419	1,709	1,961	4	...	38	...	...	14,794	4	339	19,268	25,726	32,489	52.6
Total for 1909-1910	40,680	4,944	515	348	133	5,940	46,620	430	1,751	2,067	4*	...	38	...	...	15,162	4	386	19,842	26,778	33,728	51.9
" " 1908-1909	61,430	6,172	1,123	498	164	7,957	69,387	493	3,115	3,023	14	3	58	...	...	21,283	12	706	28,707	40,680	51,053	61.0

* This does not include two coolies of the district of Darrang whose contracts were cancelled under section 10.

STATEMENT I.—PART B.—Statistics of the adult coolies (working and not working) living in garden lines and garden bastis, but not employed under Act VI of 1901, and coolie children.

District.	Number remaining at the end of the previous year.	Additions made during the year 1909-1910.			Total of columns 2 and 5.	Deductions made during the year 1909-1910.			Number remaining at the end of the year 1909-1910.	Annual strength.	Death-rate per mille.
		Number imported during the year.	Number added locally during the year.	Total added.		Number lost by death during the year.	Number lost by transfer, discharge, or desertion during the year.	Total deducted.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar ... { Adults ...	75,563	1,960	3,774	5,734	81,297	1,640	3,635	5,275	76,022	75,792	21.6
... { Children ...	47,560	703	3,970	4,673	52,233	1,008	3,526	4,534	47,699	47,629	21.1
Sylhet ... { Adults ...	88,596	4,347	5,096	9,443	98,039	2,627	7,042	9,669	88,370	88,483	29.6
... { Children ...	64,736	1,258	4,860	6,118	70,854	1,273	4,595	5,868	64,986	64,861	19.6
Surma Valley { Adults ...	164,159	6,307	8,870	15,177	179,336	4,267	10,677	14,944	164,392	164,275	25.9
... { Children ...	112,296	1,961	8,830	10,791	123,087	2,281	8,121	10,402	112,685	112,490	20.3
Kamrup ... { Adults ...	1,777	98	373	471	2,248	51	379	430	1,818	1,797	28.3
... { Children ...	1,025	39	111	150	1,175	41	83	124	1,051	1,038	39.4
Darrang ... { Adults ...	45,212	3,421	8,650	12,071	57,283	1,732	5,740	7,472	49,811	47,511	36.4
... { Children ...	33,915	1,309	2,246	3,755	37,670	749	3,273	4,022	33,648	33,282	22.2
Nowgong ... { Adults ...	10,266	440	1,779	2,219	12,485	320	1,515	1,835	10,650	10,458	30.5
... { Children ...	6,772	187	550	727	7,509	119	757	876	6,633	6,702	17.7
Sibsagar ... { Adults ...	95,016	6,212	8,798	15,010	110,026	3,080	8,691	11,771	98,255	96,636	31.8
... { Children ...	73,237	2,864	5,485	8,349	81,586	1,547	6,330	7,877	73,709	73,473	21.1
Lakhimpur... { Adults ...	100,716	7,460	10,543	18,003	118,719	3,631	9,153	12,784	105,935	103,325	35.1
... { Children ...	70,767	3,375	5,629	9,004	79,771	1,907	4,970	6,877	72,954	71,861	26.5
Brahmaputra { Adults ...	252,987	17,631	30,143	47,774	300,761	8,814	25,478	34,292	266,469	259,727	33.9
Valley. { Children ...	185,716	7,974	14,021	21,995	207,711	4,363	15,153	19,716	187,995	186,856	23.3
Total ... { Adults ...	417,146	23,938	39,013	62,951	480,097	13,081	36,155	49,236	430,861	424,002	30.8
... { Children ...	298,012	9,935	22,851	32,786	330,798	6,644	23,474	30,118	300,680	299,346	22.3
Grand Total for 1909-1910 ...	715,158	33,873	61,864	95,737	810,895	19,725	59,629	79,354	731,541	723,348	27.3
Total for 1908-1909 ...	678,365	53,478	64,481	117,959	796,324	22,515	58,651	81,166	715,158	696,759	32.3

STATEMENT II.—Nationality and Sex of the Adult Labour Force.

Nationality.	Act.			Non-Act.			Total.			Percentage of column 9 to column 10.	Percentage of column 10 to total labour force.
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.	4,360	3,816	8,176	77,087	80,178	157,265	81,447	83,994	165,441	50.77	36.15
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	6,406	5,334	11,740	81,573	83,163	164,736	87,979	88,497	176,476	50.14	38.56
Central Provinces ...	2,838	2,507	5,345	32,417	32,887	65,304	35,255	25,394	70,649	50.09	15.44
Madras ...	712	503	1,215	13,765	12,063	25,828	14,477	12,626	27,103	40.59	5.92
Eastern Bengal and Assam ...	105	132	237	10,875	6,830	17,705	10,980	6,362	17,342	36.68	3.79
Others* ...	3	2	5	483	140	623	486	142	628	22.61	1.4
Total of 1909-1910 ...	14,424	12,354	26,778	216,200	214,661	430,861	230,624	227,015	457,639	49.61	100.00
„ „ 1908-1909 ...	22,290	18,390	40,680	208,125	209,021	417,146	230,415	227,411	457,826	49.67	100.00

* This includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

STATEMENT III.—Nationality and Sex of Adult Immigrants and Agency by which recruited.

Nationality.	Imported by garden sardars.			Imported by contractors.			Total Act.			Total non-Act.			Total Act and non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.	7	9	16	1,068	791	1,859	1,075	800	1,875	4,394	3,418	7,812	5,469	4,218	9,687
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	286	213	499	1,191	921	2,112	1,477	1,134	2,611	3,620	2,946	6,566	5,097	4,080	9,177
Central Provinces ...	...	...	...	508	335	843	508	335	843	2,494	1,915	4,409	3,002	2,250	5,252
Madras ...	...	...	...	73	54	127	73	54	127	2,467	2,033	4,500	2,540	2,087	4,627
Eastern Bengal and Assam.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	483	2	485	483	2	485
Others* ...	...	...	...	2	1	3	2	1	3	144	22	166	146	23	169
Total of 1909-1910 ...	293	222	515	2,842	2,102	4,944	2,135	2,324	5,459	13,602	10,336	23,938	16,737	12,660	29,397
„ „ 1908-1909 ...	593	530	1,123	3,465	2,707	6,172	4,058	3,237	7,295	20,030	15,199	35,229	24,088	18,436	42,524

* This includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

STATEMENT IV.—Recruitment of Act Labourers.

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars.	Number of certificates providing for the medical examination of labourers.	Number of sardari coolies recruited.	Average number of recruits per sardar.	Number of contractors' coolies imported.	Total number of coolies imported under the Act.	Number who contracted in recruiting districts.		
							Under Chapter III.	Under Chapter IV.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cachar	390	101	...	...	112	112	...	...	...
Sylhet	908	570	...	...	79	79	...	...	...
Total, Surma Valley	1,298	671	...	...	191	191	...	...	...
Kamrup	32	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	2,188	1,295	342	15	1,131	1,473	1,131	342	1,473
Nowgong	365	308	...	...	249	249	249	...	249
Sibsagar	4,346	2,349	15	003	1,612	1,627	1,612	15	1,627
Lakhimpur	4,645	3,306	158	003	1,761	1,919	1,761	158	1,919
Total, Assam Valley	11,576	7,258	515	004	4,753	5,268	4,753	515	5,268
Total of 1909-1910	12,874	7,929	515	004	4,944	5,459	4,753	515	5,268
" " 1908-1909	11,032	7,812	1,123	009	6,172	7,295	6,172	1,123	7,295

STATEMENT V.—Debarcation Depôts.

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants.	Number who passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts.				Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure.		
				Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For night only.		Buildings.	Establishments, etc.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Kamrup	1	137	1,412	...	6	...	796	...	406 0 0	193 0 0	599 0 0
Darrang	1	6,403	5,471	2,424	38	31	709	...	207 13 10	1,769 11 4	1,977 9 2
Nowgong	1	876	1,397	214	12	8	335	...	373 3 0	704 8 6	1,077 11 6
Sibsagar	4	10,703	6,397	2,016	38	133	3,045	...	1,569 0 0	2,715 3 3	4,284 3 3
Lakhimpur	1	12,754	5,561	740	88	21	4,712	...	237 7 0	1,011 13 0	1,249 4 0
Total of 1909-1910	8	30,873	20,238	5,394	182	193	9,597	...	2,793 7 10	6,394 4 1	9,187 11 11
" " 1908-1909	8	48,588	35,758	7,117	236	548	17,228	...	3,325 1 8	6,094 8 2	9,419 9 10

* Including sardars, coolies imported for gardens in Golaghat Subdivision bordering Nowgong district.

STATEMENT VI.—*Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.*

District.	Number of cases pending from the previous year.	Number of complaints received during the year.	Number found true.	Number found false.	Number not proved.	Pending at the close of the year.	Total number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons concerned.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar ... ..	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	2
Sylhet ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kamrup ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	1	9	...	...	5	5	5	18
Nowgong ... ..	...	2	...	...	1	1	1	5
Sibsagar	3	10	2	1	4	6	7	19
Lakhimpur	4	22	3	2	15	6	20	30
Total of 1909-1910	8	44	6	3	25	18	34	74
" " 1908-1909	12	46	8	14	28	8	50	80

STATEMENT VII.—*Repatriation of Labourers.*

District.	Total number of labourers available for repatriation.	Number repatriated					Total.
		Under section 12 (section 10 or 11).	Under section 158 (section 139).	Under section 159.	Under section 161.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Cachar	2	...	...	...	2	2
Sylhet ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kamrup ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	9	2	5	...	...	7
Nowgong ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sibsagar	7	...	3	...	...	3
Lakhimpur	21	2	17	2	...	21	
Total of 1909-1910	39	4	25	2	2	33	
" " 1908-1909	77	3	51	6	7	67	

District.	Number whose contracts were cancelled, but who were not repatriated.						Cost of repatriation charged to the Inland Labour Transport Operations.		
	Awaiting an escort.	Preferring to remain in the garden or in the district.	Died.	Absconded.	Sent to lunatic asylum.	Total.	Under section 159.	Under section 161.	Total.
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Cachar	Rs. a. p.	...	...
Sylhet
Kamrup
Darrang	1	1	...	2	...	...	...
Nowgong
Sibsagar	3	...	1	...	4	...	...	...
Lakhimpur	72 13 6	...	72 13 6
Total of 1909-1910	3	1	2	...	6	72 13 6	...	72 13 6
" " 1908-1909	8	2	...	...	10	57 7 0	...	57 7 0

STATEMENT VIII.—Deaths among all Classes of Labourers.

District.	Class.	Mean annual strength.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Ratio per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhoea.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anemia of coolies or ankylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	Act ...	824	5	2	3	2	6	1	6	25	30.3
	Non-Act adults ...	75,792	126	63	261	281	135	378	396	1,640	21.6
	Children...	47,629	75	20	90	208	87	255	273	1,008	21.1
	Total adults	76,616	131	65	264	283	141	379	402	1,665	21.7
Sylhet	Act ...	415	1	4	2	3	4	...	3	17	40.9
	Non-Act adults ...	88,483	416	304	422	412	295	303	475	2,627	29.6
	Children...	64,861	101	144	217	387	72	67	285	1,273	19.6
	Total adults	88,898	417	308	424	415	299	303	478	2,644	29.7
Kamrup	Act ...	55	...	...	2	...	1	...	...	3	54.5
	Non-Act adults ...	1,797	3	5	8	15	10	...	10	51	28.3
	Children...	1,038	3	3	4	20	7	...	4	41	39.4
	Total adults	1,852	3	5	10	15	11	...	10	54	29.1
Darrang	Act ...	9,612	32	26	145	5	139	79	90	516	53.7
	Non-Act adults ...	47,511	82	76	445	21	376	334	398	1,732	36.4
	Children...	33,782	31	50	193	14	83	86	292	749	22.2
	Total adults	57,123	114	102	590	26	515	413	488	2,248	39.3
Nowgong	Act ...	2,471	3	7	14	10	5	...	30	69	27.9
	Non-Act adults ...	10,458	5	19	61	44	24	...	167	320	30.5
	Children...	6,702	5	8	20	43	6	...	37	119	17.7
	Total adults	12,929	8	26	75	54	29	...	197	389	30.0
Sibsagar	Act ...	7,516	39	31	172	19	46	38	94	439	58.4
	Non-Act adults ...	96,636	383	182	874	172	255	433	781	3,080	31.8
	Children...	73,473	79	77	473	289	48	121	460	1,547	21.1
	Total adults	104,152	422	213	1,046	191	301	471	875	3,519	33.7
Lakhimpur	Act ...	12,835	33	60	171	80	147	99	142	682	53.1
	Non-Act adults ...	103,325	169	391	760	226	535	731	817	3,631	35.1
	Children...	71,861	47	142	457	288	143	356	474	1,907	26.3
	Total adults	116,160	202	451	931	258	682	830	959	4,313	37.1
Grand Total ...	Act ...	33,728	113	130	509	69	348	217	365	1,751	51.9
	Non-Act adults ...	424,002	1,184	1,040	2,831	1,178	1,630	2,179	3,044	13,091	30.8
	Children...	299,346	341	444	1,454	1,249	446	885	1,825	6,644	22.2
	Total adults	457,730	1,497	1,170	3,340	1,242	1,978	2,396	3,409	14,832	32.4
Total Labour force ...	757,076	1,638	1,614	4,794	2,491	2,424	3,281	3,234	21,476	28.4	

STATEMENT IX.—Offences committed by Tea-garden Coolies and by Tea Planters.

	By coolies against Managers.				By Managers against coolies.					
	Violence, intimidation, or oppressive treatment without reference to re-engagement.	Violence, intimidation, or oppressive treatment in order to compel re-engagement.	Applications for discharge certificates.	Others.	Non-fulfilment of contract (by absence, desertion, etc.).	For failure of garden wardens to return to duty.	For enticing coolies.	Unlawful assembly or rioting.	Assault or intimidation.	Others.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Number of complaints or petitions received during the year.	1	...	421	81	1,153	13	16	10	8	5
Number of complaints or petitions pending from the previous year.	2	...	26*	3	104	...	1	1	...	...
Total	3	...	447	84	1,257	13	17	11	8	5
<i>Number dealt with criminally and decided—</i>										
For complainant ... ..	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	10	8	4
Against complainant	1	...	1	4	8	...	...	...	...	1
Number of persons fined ... ..	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	5	1	...
„ „ imprisoned ... ..	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	67	10	1
<i>Number dealt with under Act VI of 1901 and decided—</i>										
For complainant ... ..	...	...	63	4	142	1	8	1	...	...
Against complainant ... ..	...	...	38	17	197	11	8	...	...	...
Number of persons fined ... ..	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
„ „ imprisoned ... ..	...	...	...	...	74	...	6	...	...	...
<i>Number dealt with under Act XIII of 185 and decided—</i>										
For complainant ... ..	...	...	44	3	352	...	...	...	...	...
Against complainant ... ..	...	...	33	7	461	...	...	...	...	...
Number of persons imprisoned ... ..	...	...	...	...	49	...	...	...	...	...
<i>Number dealt with executively and decided—</i>										
For complainant ... ..	...	...	160	21	...	...	...	...	...	...
Against complainant	1	...	50	24	...	...	...	...	...	...

* Revised figure.

STATEMENT X.—Statement of Desertions among Adult Labourers under Act VI of 1901.

Subdivisions.	Number of desertions.	Percentage of desertions on mean strength.	Number of warrants issued for the arrest of deserters.	Number arrested.	Number convicted.	Number punished with imprisonment.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar ... { Sadr	25	4'03	...	...	...	...
... { Hailakandi	19	9'3	...	...	...	...
... { North Sylhet ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet ... { Karimganj	16	9'66	1	...	...	...
... { South Sylhet	46	20'86	...	...	...	...
Kamrup ... { Habiganj ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...
... { Sadr	4	7'27	...	...	...	...
Darrang ... { Sadr	441	4'99	133	61	59	38
Nowgong ... { Mangaldai	64	8'20	9	6	6	4
... { Sadr	154	6'23	21	15	13	13
... { Sadr	188	5'64	31	12	12	12
Sibsagar ... { Jorhat	264	11'73	8	2	2	2
... { Golaghat	116	9'53	15	1	1	1
Lakhimpur ... { Sadr	572	5'16	91	44	44	1
... { North Lakhimpur	158	8'03	10	9	4	3
Total of 1909-19'0	2,057	6'13	319	150	141	74
„ „ 1908-1909	3,023	5'92	567	254	206	148

STATEMENT XI.—Inspection.

District.	Number of gardens employing Act labour.	Number of non-Act gardens employing more than 50 labourers.	Number of gardens liable to inspection during the year.			Number of gardens inspected during the year.			Number inspected once.	Number inspected twice.	Number of inspections made by Deputy Commissioners.	Number of inspections made by Assistant Commissioners.	Number of inspections made by Civil Surgeons.	Number of inspections made by other agencies.	Total number of inspections made.	Number of gardens which submitted returns.
			Number not inspected in the previous year.	Specially selected for annual inspection.	Total.	Of those entered in column 4.	Of those entered in column 5.	Total.								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Cachar ...	20	145	52	9	61	52	9	61	61	...	34	17	...	10	61	113
Sylhet ...	34	92	57	18	75	56	18	74	73	1 ^a	9	64	3	...	76	129
Kamrup ...	2	11	...	5	5	...	5	5	5	...	4	...	1	...	5	14
Darrang ...	68	15	33	25	58	30	24	54	42	12	32	7	27	...	66	74
Nowgong ...	29 ^b	4	16	3	19	16	3	19	17	2	6	...	15	...	21	34
Sibsagar ...	105	35	60	39	99	60	39	99	94	5	16	58	29	1	104	138
Lakhimpur ...	123	11	55	22	77	55	22	77	77	...	43	4	20	10	77	134
Total of 1909-1910 ...	381	313	273	121	394	269	120	389	359	20	144	150 ^c	95	21	410	635

* Inspected thrice.

STATEMENT XII.—Demand and Collection of Capitation Fees under Section 17 of Act VI of 1901.

District.	Demand for the year.		Arrears from previous year outstanding.	Gross demand.	Total realised.	Balance outstanding.
	Number of labourers for whom fee is payable.*	Total demand.				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Kamrup ...	96	24 0 0	15 0 0	39 0 0	27 8 3	11 8 0
Darrang ...	18,003	4,500 12 0	...	4,500 12 0	4,464 4 0	36 8 0
Nowgong ...	5,558	1,389 8 0	...	1,389 8 0	1,389 8 0	...
Sibsagar ...	13,561	3,390 4 0	106 0 0	3,496 4 0	3,436 12 0 ^(a)	74 4 0
Lakhimpur ...	24,573	6,143 4 0	4,782 0 0 ^(b)	10,925 4 0	8,313 8 0 ^(c)	2,611 12 0 ^(d)
Total ...	61,791	15,447 12 0	4,903 0 0	20,350 12 0	17,631 8 0	2,714 0 0

* The figures in this column represent the number of coolies on which the fee for the half year was payable.

(a) Includes excess payment of Rs. 14-12-0.

(b) Revised figure.

(c) Exclusive of excess collection of Rs. 64.

(d) Rupees 2,443-8-0 realised since the close of the year.

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RESOLUTION

ON

IMMIGRANT LABOUR

IN THE

ASSAM DISTRICTS OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1910-1911.



SHILLONG :

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1912.

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Coolie Routes for the Brahmaputra and Surma Valley.

- (1) By the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Dhubri, and thence by steamer.
- (2) By the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Dhubri, thence by steamer to Gauhati and thence by rail.
- (3) By rail from Chandpur.
- (4) By steamer or country boat from Goalundo.

PORTS OF INSPECTION

1. Dhubri.
2. Gauhati.
3. Tezpur.
4. Dibrugarh.
5. Karimganj.

RIVER DEBARKATION DEPOTS.

1. Tezpur.
2. Silghat.
3. Negriting.
4. Kokilamukh.
5. Desangmukh.
6. Dhansirimukh.
7. Dibrugarh.

RAILWAY DEBARKATION DEPOT.

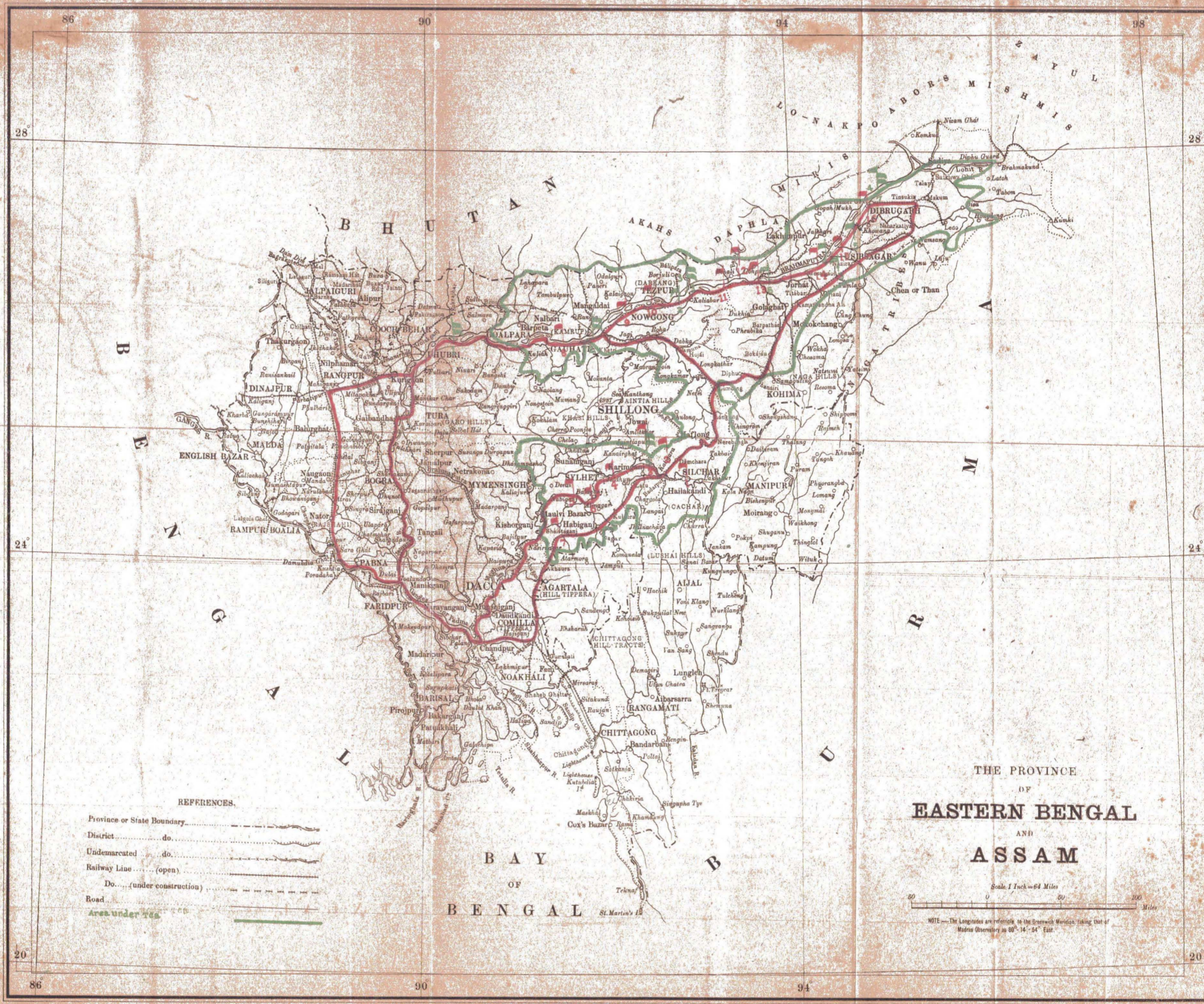
1. Gauhati.

LANDING-PLACES NOT BEING DEPOTS.

1. Silchar.
2. Katigora.
3. Karimganj.
4. Fenchuganj.
5. Manumukh.
6. Maulvi Bazar.
7. Madna.
8. Palasbari.
9. Rangamati Ghat.
10. Singri.
11. Biswanath.
12. Behalimukh.
13. Gomirighat.
14. Kamalabari.
15. Dikhumukh.
16. Dehingmukh.

REFERENCES.

- Province or State Boundary.....
- District..... do.....
- Undemarcated..... do.....
- Railway Line..... (open)
- Do..... (under construction)
- Road.....
- Area under Res.....



THE PROVINCE OF EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM

Scale 1 Inch = 64 Miles

NOTE.—The Longitudes are referred to the Greenwich Meridian, taking that of Madras Observatory as 80° 14' 54" East.

Resolution on Immigrant Labour in the Assam Districts of Eastern Bengal and Assam for the year 1910-1911.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam in the Municipal Department, No. 214M., dated the 16th January 1912.

READ

The Immigrant Labour Reports of the Deputy Commissioners of Labour Districts.

RESOLUTION.

THIS Resolution deals with the labour force imported for employment on tea gardens in Assam, in the oil refinery at Digboi, in coal mines, and in certain saw-mills. The labour employed on railways is excluded, and no account is taken of those labourers who are temporarily employed during the cold weather and return to their homes in April and May.

2. The year was prosperous for the tea industry. Increasing demands for labour were met to some extent by a considerable increase in the number of immigrants despite the fact that good harvests prevailed in the recruiting districts. The mortality during transit decreased and the health of the labouring population on tea gardens was good, the recorded birth-rate improving while the death-rate fell.

3. No new enactment tending towards the adoption of a system of completely free labour was passed, but shortly before the close of the year the Government of India suggested to the Local Government and the Indian Tea Association that the labour districts provisions of Act VI of 1901 should be withdrawn from the districts of the Brahmaputra Valley with effect from the 1st July 1913. An expression of opinion was also invited on the question whether the system of recruitment by contractors might then be abolished, and it was pointed out that with the abolition of the contractor, but not otherwise, most of the safeguards against fraudulent recruitment, which, though necessary in present circumstances, undoubtedly hamper the operations of garden sardars, might be relaxed. Speaking generally, the withdrawal of the labour districts provisions of Act VI has been accepted by the Tea Industry as inevitable and Government is considering the possibility of introducing a measure which shall afford some protection against the enticement of imported labour. It is for the planting community to decide whether they can do without the contractor, and, while not desiring to anticipate their decision, the Lieutenant-Governor cannot but hope that it will be in favour of the abolition of this method of recruitment. It is only when this step has been taken that garden sardars can be given a comparatively free hand, and so long as the contractor exists there is no likelihood that several areas now closed to recruitment will be thrown open.

Progress in the gradual substitution of free for indentured labour was very marked, and in one district at least Managers strove to render employment on their gardens popular by leasing large areas from Government on special terms with the object of giving their coolies rice fields of their own to cultivate. It is to an extension of this system even more than to any general increase in wages that the Lieutenant-Governor looks for the gradual settlement in Assam of a contented labour force strong enough to meet the demands of employers. While the existence of waste lands adjacent to gardens is an unquestionable advantage in this respect it is by no means essential as coolies can quite well be settled at a distance of a few miles from the gardens on which they are employed.

4. In the Resolution published last year hopes were expressed that the appointment of a Political Agent at Agartala would improve the situation on the Hill Tippera border where the absconding of garden coolies into the State had led to considerable friction between Managers and the State authorities. His Honour is glad to learn that the situation has already improved considerably. The Darbar requires every coolie who settles in the State to be registered and particulars regarding him to be furnished to the State police, and a genuine attempt is being made to enforce the execution of warrants issued by British Courts.

5. At the close of the year the total strength of the labour force was 7,63,239, an increase of 4,920 over the figures of 1909-1910. In the Resolution for the preceding year statistics were given showing the steady and continuous decline in the number

Strength and distribution of the labour force.

of coolies indentured under Act VI. In 1903-1904 the number was 84,806, representing 20·8 per cent. of the adult labourers, while in 1909-1910 it was only 26,778 or 5·9 per cent. The substitution of free for indentured labour continued during the year under review, and the number of Act coolies fell to 20,868 or 4·5 per cent. Of the total force 64·10 per cent. was employed in the Assam Valley and 35·90 per cent. in the Surma Valley.

6. There was again very little change in the distribution of the labour population according to nationality and sex. Of the adults 74 per cent. were natives of Chota Nagpur, the Santhal Parganas, and the plains districts of the United Provinces and Bengal. The number from Madras and Eastern Bengal and Assam, though comparatively small, showed a considerable increase during the year. The proportion of women was 46·22 per cent. of Act labourers and 49·25 of non-Act labourers, while the percentage of children was 39·2 of the total strength.

7. The area under tea cultivation rose from 346,658 to 349,537 acres. To the increase of 2,879 acres the district of Lakhimpur alone contributed 1,199. A slight increase took place in the number of adults employed per acre, the district average varying from ·73 in Kamrup to 1·63 in Lakhimpur. These figures take no account of local labour available from outside the gardens.

CHAPTER II.

IMMIGRATION.

Provincial figures of immigration.

8. Statistics of immigration into the province during the past five years are given in the following table :—

Class of labourers.	1906-1907.	1907-1908.	1908-1909.	1909-1910.	1910-1911.
I	2	3	4	5	6
Act ... { Sardari adults ...	3,060	4,890	1,123	515	616
Contractors' adults ...	2,349	8,422	6,172	4,944	5,194
Non-Act adults ...	14,034	45,622	35,229	23,938	28,482
Total of Act and non-Act adults ...	20,043	58,934	42,524	29,397	34,292
Children ...	5,574	25,890	18,249	9,935	9,865
Grand total ...	25,617	84,824	60,773	39,332	43,657

The high figures of 1907-1908 and 1908-1909 were due to the prevalence of famine or scarcity in the recruiting districts. The year under review was free from exceptional circumstances, and the increase in the number of recruits as compared with normal years must be ascribed to other causes. (It is difficult to avoid the gratifying conclusion that the gradual substitution of free for indentured labour is tending to remove the prejudice against Assam and to increase the supply of labour.) The plains districts of the United Provinces and Bengal were responsible for the largest increase (2,792), which established them securely at the head of the list of recruiting centres. Madras with an increase of 1,162 continued the progress made in 1909-1910 and took the third place. The proportion of men to women increased to nearly 5 to 3, while the proportion of children showed a further decrease.

9. The improvement in the health of coolies during transit which took place in the year 1909-1910 was most satisfactory and the Lieutenant-Governor observes with great pleasure that the year under review shows even better results in this respect, the number of deaths having fallen from 45 to 23 in spite of the increase in the number of immigrants. This remarkable record affords convincing testimony to the valuable work done by the Sanitary Commissioner and his staff in providing immigrants with medical aid and improving the sanitary conditions under which they travel.

10. The growth in the volume of immigration was accompanied by some increase in the number of complaints of fraudulent or irregular recruitment. In all 99 such complaints were made of which 42 cases were found to be true. A considerable increase took place in the number of Act labourers recruited by contractors.

CHAPTER III.

CONTRACTS AND WAGES.

11. The number of contracts executed in the recruiting districts rose from 5,268 to 5,809. The increase is small compared with the growth in the total number of immigrants.

12. Contracts cancelled by efflux of time were for the most part regularly reported. The improvement in this respect was very marked in Darrang, where the remissness of Managers in previous years had led to a special warning being given.

During the year under review the expiry of 2,288 out of 2,523 contracts was duly reported, the corresponding figures for 1909-1910 being 1,371 and 4,777. The total number of time-expired contracts was 7,788. Four hundred and eighty-two contracts were dissolved by mutual consent, while 24 were cancelled under section 131 for permanent unfitness and 44 under section 10 for irregular recruitment.

13. The option of repatriation was given to 76 coolies of whom 74 availed themselves of it, while two elected to remain on their garden.

14. Act XIII continued to be largely used and is reported to have worked well on the whole. It is popular with employers who can no longer place their labourers locally under agreement under Act VI, and it is equally popular with coolies, as an agreement under it entails the giving of an advance which is usually written off as a bonus. The successful working of the Act requires a certain amount of give and take on the part of both employers and labourers, and its extensive employment, coupled with the fact that so few complaints were made against its working, affords a striking and gratifying testimony to the good sense and good feelings which mark the relations between employers and employed in the tea districts. On most gardens equal privileges are given to Act VI labourers and to coolies who have executed agreements under Act XIII.

15. The following statement gives the average monthly wages of Act labourers calculated on the earnings of March and September :—

Subdivision.	Average calculated on the figures for September 1910 and March 1911 of monthly cash wage, including ticca, distractions, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.			
	Of total number on the books.		Of average daily working strength.	
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar Sadr	5 9 8	4 5 9	6 9 9	5 11 9
Hailakandi	5 4 1	3 15 11	6 13 7	6 4 7
North Sylhet ... ..	...	...	...	...
Karimganj	3 6 5	3 12 4	6 4 5	4 13 11
South Sylhet	4 14 5	4 5 11	6 10 1	6 2 5
Habiganj	4 15 11	4 11 4	6 10 6	5 3 9
Kamrup Sadr	5 3 9	4 4 3	6 3 5	5 1 11
Darrang Sadr	5 1 10	5 4 6	6 4 8	6 5 0
Mangaldai	6 10 7	5 13 7	7 14 6	6 15 6
Nowgong	5 8 0	5 6 4	7 8 4	6 2 3
Sibsagar Sadr	5 3 11	4 4 11	5 6 4	4 14 6
Jorhat	5 3 1	4 7 3	6 6 0	5 9 4
Golaghat	5 6 5	4 7 3	6 8 4	5 10 6
Lakhimpur Sadr	6 5 4	5 7 6	8 3 9	7 1 0
North Lakhimpur	5 10 3	4 6 7	6 14 1	6 7 3
Average for 1910-1911*	5 11 0	5 1 6	7 0 11	6 5 2
Average for 1909-1910 ...	5 12 2	5 0 6	7 1 0	6 6 6

* The provincial averages are not the means of the district averages, but are calculated independently by dividing the total earnings of two typical months by the total number of coolies on the books (column 2 of Form No. 27) and by the total average daily working strength (column 4 of Form No. 27) during the same months.

These figures are higher than those for 1908-1909 and with the exceptions of the Headquarter subdivisions of Darrang and Sibsagar where the fall was marked, very slightly lower than those for 1909-1910. Too much importance, however, must not be attached to them as they depend in many cases on the extent to which leave is given, in other words on the counter-attraction of home cultivation.

16. The average earnings of non-Act coolies are shown below :—

Subdivision.				Average calculated on the figures for September 1910 and March 1911, of monthly cash wage, including tips, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.					
				Of total number on the book.			Of average daily working strength.		
				Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Cachar Sadr	4 15 0	3 10 10	2 2 4	6 12 3	6 6 9	3 6 10
Hailakandi	5 0 9	3 13 11	2 3 8	6 14 10	5 15 6	3 9 10
North Sylhet	5 4 2	3 10 8	2 9 2	6 1 8	5 6 0	3 6 1
Karimganj	4 11 5	3 12 4	2 8 2	6 7 7	5 6 6	3 11 3
South Sylhet	5 6 6	4 2 6	2 6 6	7 0 3	5 7 11	3 11 3
Habiganj	5 5 10	3 15 11	2 8 3	6 10 8	5 12 0	3 11 10
Kamrup Sadr	3 14 8	3 12 7	2 2 3	7 0 9	6 9 7	3 11 4
Darrang Sadr	5 6 0	4 12 3	2 9 11	6 14 0	6 6 6	3 4 10
Mangaldai	6 3 5	4 9 11	2 3 10	7 9 5	6 1 2	3 4 3
Nowgong	5 12 8	4 12 3	2 13 3	7 12 4	6 13 0	3 11 11
Sibsagar Sadr	5 12 8	4 9 2	2 12 7	7 1 0	4 5 5	2 12 4
Jorhat	5 4 1	3 14 2	2 10 1	6 11 9	5 4 6	3 10 8
Golaghat	5 9 6	4 5 4	3 2 4	7 9 2	5 14 5	4 6 3
Lakhimpur Sadr	6 14 6	5 5 2	3 7 9	10 0 8	7 4 8	4 8 2
North Lakhimpur	5 7 4	4 9 6	2 6 5	7 5 0	6 6 9	3 9 1
Average for 1910-1911*	5 11 6	4 6 7	2 11 11	7 10 5	6 0 11	3 12 4
Average for 1909-1910	5 10 8	4 4 5	2 9 3	7 3 8	5 14 2	3 10 3

* The provincial averages are not the means of the district averages, but are calculated independently by dividing the total earnings of two typical months by the total number of coolies on the books (column 2 of Form No. 27) and by the total of average daily working strength (column 4 of Form No. 27) during these months.

CHAPTER IV.

VITAL STATISTICS.

17. The recorded birth-rate per mille was 27·8 calculated on the total strength of

Birth-rate.

District.	Number of births.	Birth-rate per mille on	
		Total coolie population.	Adult female population.
1	2	3	4
Cachar	3,817	30·5	98·7
Sylhet	4,226	27·9	92·8
Kamrup	67	21·8	72·3
Darrang	2,221	24·4	81·5
Nowgong	496	25·8	81·1
Sibsagar	4,867	26·8	92·4
Lakhimpur	5,502	28·7	97·2
Total for 1910-1911	21,196	27·8	92·9
Total for 1909-1910	19,571	25·8	86·1

the coolie population and 92·9 calculated on the adult female population, the figures for the preceding year being 25·8 and 86·1, respectively. The rates were highest in the Cachar district (30·5 and 98·7) and lowest in Kamrup (21·8 and 72·3). The difference between the recorded rates for the province and for the tea gardens was still very marked, the birth-rate for the whole province being 37·96 per mille of the total population and 178·18 of the adult female population.

18. The registered death-rate of the labour force as a whole decreased from 28.4 in 1909-10 to 27.8, the number of deaths being 21,132 against 21,476. Among adults the rate was 32.2, which was slightly lower than the 32.4 of 1909-1910. As in the preceding year the highest rate was recorded in Darrang (40.1) and the lowest in Cachar (27.2). In every district the mortality was greater among Act labourers than among non-Act coolies.

19. The following statement compares the death-rate among coolies from the several recruiting areas. As usual Madras and the Central Provinces show the highest figures :—

Nationality.	Sex.	Mean annual strength of adults of the Act and non-Act classes.	Deaths among adults of the Act and non-Act classes.	Rate per mille of deaths to strength.
1	2	3	4	5
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal ...	Men ...	165,923	2,687	33.96
	Women ...		2,948	
Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas ...	Men ...	176,802	2,435	30.24
	Women ...		2,913	
Central Provinces ...	Men ...	70,125	1,231	34.25
	Women ...		1,171	
Madras ...	Men ...	28,732	512	37.34
	Women ...		561	
Eastern Bengal and Assam ...	Men ...	18,336	124	19.85
	Women ...		240	
Others ...	Men ...	767	9	15.64
	Women ...		3	
Total ...	Men ...	233,298	6,998	30.00
	Women ...		227,387		7,836	34.46
Grand total ...	...	460,685	14,834	32.20

	1909-1910.	1910-19 11
1	2	3
Mean strength ...	33,728	23,821
Deaths from—		
Cholera ...	113	54
Diarrhoea ...	130	80
Dysentery ...	509	436
Malarial fever ...	69	56
Anæmia ...	348	233
Respiratory diseases ...	217	166
Other causes ...	365	265
Total ...	1,751	1,290

The mean strength of the total Act labour force and the number of deaths from the chief diseases are shown in the marginal statement. Dysentery was again responsible for the highest number of deaths, Darrang and Sibsagar being the districts that suffered most.

Sick and destitute coolies.

20. The number of time-expired coolies treated as in-patients in Government dispensaries rose from 330 to 357.

CHAPTER V.

UNHEALTHY GARDENS.

21. Gardens are classed as unhealthy when the mortality either of the total garden population, or of Act or non-Act coolies taken separately, exceeds 7 per cent. and the whole number of deaths is not less than 10. During the year the number of gardens

on the unhealthy list fell from 31 to 25. Two of these gardens are in Sylhet, and the rest in the Darrang, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur districts. Three of them have been on the list for three years in succession and three more for two successive years.

District.	Unhealthy in respect of	Name of garden.	Mean strength.	Number of deaths.	Rate per mille.	Cause of deaths							
						Cholera.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anemia of coolies or anachylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Sylhet	Non-Act population.	1. Chargola	1,875	233	124.3	152	13	17	18	14	7	12	
		2. Anipar	867	60	70.5	54	4	3	2	...	1	8	
		3. Dulapadong	207	21	70.7	...	5	7	...	5	3	3	
	Act population	4. Namghon	199	15	75.3	...	...	5	...	5	4	2
		5. Kaoharigan	178	23	129.3	3	...	3	...	3	7	2	
		6. Hathibari	115	12	104.3	...	1	2	...	7	...	2	
		7. Kolony	91	19	208.7	...	3	5	...	6	2	4	
Darrang	Non-Act population	Kolony	628	78	127.8	6	3	21	...	22	2	12	
	Act and non-Act population.	Kolony	979	97	99.0	6	10	26	...	26	5	22	
	Act population	8. New-Addabari	104	10	61	...	1	3	...	...	...	6
9. Phulbari		475	27	77.8	...	3	18	...	6	7	1		
Sibsagar	Act population	10. Bhatlachang	296	29	121.7	...	...	25	1	4	2	7
		11. Sapakati, Baruaill and Kaunbari.	56	13	232.1	...	...	7	1	...	1	4
		12. Mathurapur	228	24	106.1	2	3	8	...	5	2	4	
		13. Jabokai	264	26	136.3	1	2	20	...	2	2	6	
		14. Towkok	163	19	104.3	...	...	11	...	3	2	2
		15. Bihkha Karail and Dhopatbari.	161	26	164.6	1	...	12	1	1	...	10	
		16. Murauria	417	39	71.9	1	5	4	1	...	...	19
Lakhimpur	Act population	17. Hatikhuli	145	27	186.3	...	1	16	...	7	3	...	
		18. Naharjan	105	15	142.8	1	1	6	3	4	...	...
		19. Namdang	69	12	174.8	...	...	2	...	...	2	7
		20. Longsoal	140	11	78.5	...	...	4	...	2	4	1
		21. Sepon	202	21	105.2	...	1	6	1	7	2	4	
		22. Baljan	225	20	70.1	2	...	11	1	1	3	1	
Lakhimpur	Non-Act population	23. Hazalbank	123	11	79.7	...	1	6	...	2	1	1	
		24. Khowang	1,239	97	70.2	53	1	7	2	3	1	14	
		25. Nokhroy	660	53	78.7	6	...	16	1	4	14	11	
		Hazalbank	552	45	80.6	...	3	12	2	1	2	21	

CHAPTER VI.

OFFENCES AND PROSECUTIONS.

22. Five complaints of ill-treatment were made by coolies against their employers during the year. In two instances the complaints were found to be true, while three cases were dismissed. Applications for discharge certificates were filed in 468 cases and were successful in 264 cases. Managers instituted 902 cases under Act XIII during the year. Of these, 402 were decided in favour of the complainant, while 421 were dismissed. In 49 cases the coolies were sent to prison. Thirteen cases of riot or unlawful assembly and seven charges of assault were instituted by Managers. The most serious cases were:—

- (1) An attack on the Manager of the Kurma Tea Estate in Sylhet, followed by a formidable show of resistance to the Subdivisional Officer and the police which necessitated the despatch of armed police to the garden.
- (2) An attack on the Manager of the Dewan garden in Cachar.
- (3) A serious assault in the same district on the Manager of the Tarapur garden and another European in which severe injuries were inflicted with some sharp weapon by a coolie who had been ejected from a house for creating a disturbance after a nautch.

Good relations between employers and employed were distinctly the rule, and although the number of criminal cases was higher than in the preceding year there was no indication of any general ill-feeling or distrust.

23. The number of desertions of Act VI labourers reported was 2,137. Warrants were issued in 271 cases, arrests being effected in 129. Of 116 coolies who were convicted 53 were punished with imprisonment.

Desertions.

CHAPTER VII.

MISCELLANEOUS.

24. There were 733 gardens on the register at the close of the year. Two gardens, one in Sylhet and one in Cachar, were closed and one new garden was started in Sylhet. The number of gardens liable to inspection during the year was 381, and of these 368 were inspected.

Inspections.

Capitation fees.

25: Capitation fees fell from Rs. 17,631 in 1909-1910 to Rs. 11,349 in the year under review.

Relations between planters and neighbouring villagers.

26. The relations between planters and the neighbouring villagers are reported to have been generally good.

27. At the close of the year 173,683 acres of Government land were settled direct with time-expired coolies. Of the increase of 9,562 acres Darrang accounted for 6,700 and Sibsagar for 1,175 acres. The increase in Lakhimpur was only 97 acres, but in that district 4,378 acres were settled with Managers on special terms to enable them to allow their coolies to cultivate. In addition to the lands held direct from Government *ex-coolies* also occupy large tracts as sub-tenants.

Colonisation of *ex-tea* garden coolies.

Inland Labour Transport operations.

28. Receipts amounted to Rs. 22,933 during the year and disbursements to Rs. 50,256.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor,

W. J. REID,

Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

STATEMENTS.

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STATEMENT I.—PART A.—Statistics of the Adult Coolies employed under Act VI of 1901 on the Tea Estates in the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam during the year 1910-1911.

District.	Number remaining at the end of the previous year.	Additions made during the year 1910-1911.					Total of columns 3 and 7.	Deductions made during the year 1910-1911.												Number remaining at the end of the year 1910-1911.	Annual strength.	Death-rate per mille.
		Imported		Otherwise than by importations.				Transferred to other estates.	Deaths.	Desertions.	Cancellation under section 10.	Cancellation under sections 11, 152 (1), 153(1), 154 and 200.	Cancellation for permanent unfitness under section 131.	Cancellation under section 140(c).	Suspended under section 129.	Efflux of time, section 155.	Redemption, section 156.	Number dissolved by mutual consent.	Total deducted.			
		By contractors.	By garden sardars.	Received by transfer from other estates.	Recovered after having been struck off as deserters.	Total added.																
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Cachar	773	..	1	7	1	9	782	6	27	33	..	..	..	..	..	130	..	2	198	584	678	39.8
Sylhet	279	..	..	2	..	2	281	2	9	26	..	..	6	..	..	84	..	..	127	154	216	41.7
Total Surma Valley	1,052	..	1	9	1	11	1,063	8	36	59	..	..	6	..	..	214	..	2	325	738	894	40.3
Kamrup	48	..	..	2	..	2	50	2	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	44	46	65.2
Darrang	7,378	1,251	481	40	28	1,800	9,178	40	410	550	28	..	1	..	..	2,528	1	199	3,757	5,421	6,399	64.0
Nowgong	2,082	222	..	12	11	245	2,327	60	62	150	..	..	2	..	..	791	..	22	1,087	1,240	1,661	37.3
Sibsagar	6,207	1,748	35	62	26	1,871	8,078	62	385	623	11	..	3	..	..	1,339	2	216	2,641	5,437	5,822	66.1
Lakhimpur	10,011	1,973	99	91	41	2,207	12,218	106	394	754	5	..	12	..	..	2,916	..	43	4,230	7,988	8,999	43.7
Total Brahmaputra Valley	23,726	5,194	615	207	109	6,123	31,851	270	1,254	2,078	44	..	18	..	..	7,574	3	480	11,721	20,130	22,927	54.7
Total of 1910-1911	26,778	5,194	616	216	110	6,136	32,914	278	1,290	2,137	44	..	24	..	..	7,788	3	482	12,046	20,868	23,821	54.1
" of 1909-1910	40,680	4,914	515	348	133	5,940	46,620	430	1,751	2,067	4	..	38	..	..	15,168	4	386	19,842	26,778	33,728	51.9

STATEMENT I.—PART B.—Statistics of the adult coolies (working and not working) living in garden lines and garden bastis, but not employed under Act VI of 1901, and coolie children.

District.	Number remaining at the end of the previous year.	Additions made during the year 1910-1911.			Total of columns 2 and 5.	Deductions made during the year 1910-1911.			Number remaining at the end of the year 1910-1911.	Annual strength.	Death-rate per mille.
		Number imported during the year.	Number added locally during the year.	Total added.		Number lost by death during the year.	Number lost by transfer, discharge, or desertion during the year.	Total deducted.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar ... { Adults	76,022	2,756	4,547	7,303	83,325	2,074	4,601	6,675	76,650	76,336	27.2
... { Children	47,699	531	4,623	5,154	52,853	1,075	3,309	4,384	48,469	48,084	22.3
Sylhet ... { Adults	88,370	4,737	4,860	9,597	97,967	2,659	9,828	12,487	85,480	86,925	30.5
... { Children	64,986	1,165	5,010	6,175	71,161	1,287	7,184	8,471	62,690	63,838	20.1
Surma Valley { Adults	164,392	7,493	9,407	16,900	181,292	4,733	14,429	19,162	162,130	163,261	29.0
... { Children	112,635	1,696	9,633	11,329	124,014	2,362	10,493	12,855	111,159	111,922	21.1
Kamrup ... { Adults	1,818	89	619	708	2,526	55	336	391	2,135	1,976	27.8
... { Children	1,051	32	132	164	1,215	22	143	165	1,050	1,051	20.9
Darrang ... { Adults	49,811	4,280	7,012	11,292	61,103	1,915	6,022	7,937	53,166	51,488	37.1
... { Children	33,648	1,478	2,352	3,830	37,478	647	4,438	5,085	32,393	33,020	19.5
Nowgong ... { Adults	10,650	780	1,233	2,013	12,663	367	1,386	1,753	10,910	10,780	34.0
... { Children	6,633	177	687	864	7,497	150	498	648	6,849	6,741	22.2
Sibsagar ... { Adults	98,255	7,577	8,512	16,089	114,344	3,066	6,942	10,008	104,336	101,295	30.2
... { Children	73,709	2,819	5,656	8,475	82,184	1,203	6,261	7,464	74,720	74,215	16.2
Lakhimpur... { Adults	105,935	8,263	8,359	16,622	122,557	3,408	8,957	12,365	110,192	108,064	31.5
... { Children	72,954	3,163	6,198	9,361	82,315	1,914	7,070	8,984	73,331	73,142	26.1
Brahmaputra Valley { Adults	266,469	20,939	25,735	46,724	313,193	8,811	23,643	32,454	280,739	273,603	32.2
... { Children	187,995	7,669	15,025	22,694	210,689	3,936	18,410	22,346	188,343	188,169	20.9
Total ... { Adults	430,861	28,482	35,142	63,624	494,485	13,544	38,072	51,616	442,869	436,864	31.0
... { Children	300,680	9,365	24,658	34,023	334,703	6,293	28,903	35,201	299,502	300,091	21.0
Grand Total of 1910-1911	731,541	37,847	59,800	97,647	829,188	19,842	66,975	86,817	742,371	736,955	26.9
Total for 1909-1910	715,158	33,873	61,864	95,737	810,895	19,725	59,629	79,354	731,541	723,348	27.3

STATEMENT II.—Nationality and Sex of the Adult Labour Force.

Nationality.	Act.			Non-Act.			Total.			Percentage of column 9 to column 10.	Percentage of column 10 to total labour force.
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.	4,022	3,427	7,449	79,134	79,820	158,954	83,156	83,247	166,403	50.03	35.88
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	4,510	4,001	8,511	83,647	84,969	168,616	88,157	88,970	177,127	50.30	38.20
Central Provinces ...	2,186	1,809	3,995	32,862	32,746	65,608	35,048	34,555	69,603	49.65	15.01
Madras ...	457	367	824	16,042	13,353	29,395	16,499	13,920	30,419	45.76	6.56
Eastern Bengal and Assam	46	41	87	12,385	6,853	19,240	12,431	6,896	19,327	35.68	4.17
Others*	1	1	2	682	174	856	683	175	858	20.40	1.18
Total of 1910-1911	11,222	9,646	20,868	224,752	218,117	442,869	235,974	227,763	463,737	49.11	100.00
.. , 1909-1910	14,424	12,354	26,778	216,200	214,661	430,861	230,624	227,015	457,639	49.61	100.00

* This includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

STATEMENT III.—Nationality and Sex of Adult Immigrants and Agency by which recruited.

Nationality.	Imported by garden sardars.			Imported by contractors.			Total Act.			Total non-Act.			Total Act and non-Act.		
	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Plains, United Provinces and Bengal.	7	6	13	1,721	939	2,660	1,728	945	2,673	5,987	3,819	9,806	7,715	4,764	12,479
Chota Nagpur and Sonthal Parganas.	333	253	586	926	584	1,510	1,259	837	2,096	4,146	3,110	7,256	5,405	3,947	9,352
Central Provinces ...	...	1	1	672	244	916	673	245	917	2,739	1,879	4,618	3,411	2,124	5,535
Madras ...	9	7	16	70	30	100	79	37	116	3,341	2,332	5,673	3,420	2,369	5,789
Eastern Bengal and Assam.	...	...	...	7	1	8	7	1	8	754	41	795	761	42	803
Others*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	279	55	334	279	55	334
Total of 1910-1911	349	267	616	3,396	1,798	5,194	3,745	2,065	5,810	17,246	11,256	28,482	20,991	13,301	34,292
.. , 1909-1910	293	222	515	2,842	2,102	4,944	3,135	2,324	5,459	13,602	10,336	23,938	16,737	12,660	29,397

* This includes figures for Bombay and Nepal.

STATEMENT IV.—Recruitment of Act Labourers.

District.	Number of certificates granted to garden sardars.	Number of certificates providing for the medical examination of labourers.	Number of sardary coolies recruited.	Average number of recruits per sardar.	Number of contractors' coolies imported.	Total number of coolies imported under the Act.	Number who contracted in recruiting districts.		
							Under Chapter III.	Under Chapter IV.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cachar	655	155	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Sylhet	1,595	846	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total Surma Valley	2,250	1,001	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Kamrup	13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Darrang	2,682	1,488	481	'17	1,251	1,732	1,251	481	1,732
Nowgong	482	450	...	...	222	222	222	...	222
Sibsagar	5,419	3,080	35	'01	1,748	1,783	1,748	35	1,783
Lakhimpur	5,276	3,561	99	'01	1,973	2,072	1,973	99	2,072
Total Brahmaputra Valley	13,872	8,539	615	'04	5,194	5,809	5,194	615	5,809
Total for 1910-1911	16,122	9,540	616	'04	5,194	5,810	5,194	615	5,809
" " 1909-1910	12,874	7,929	515	'04	4,944	5,459	4,753	515	5,268

STATEMENT V.—Debarcation Depôts.

District.	Number of depôts.	Total number of immigrants.	Number who passed through depôts.	Number detained at depôts.				Contracts cancelled at depôts.	Expenditure.		
				Through want of a guide.	In hospital.	For segregation.	For night only.		Buildings.	Establishments, etc.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Kamrup	1	121	1,283	4	1	...	106	...	253 8 0	204 0 0	457 8 0
Darrang	1	7,490	6,307	2,183	21	5	1,029	...	153 8 6	1,527 1 4	1,680 9 10
Nowgong	1	7,179	1,409	121	50	17	1,195	...	266 12 0	458 2 2	724 13 2
Sibsagar	4	12,179	7,221	2,264	21	...	2,571	...	1,368 0 0	2,533 13 0	3,901 13 0
Lakhimpur	1	12,498	5,085	600	28	9	3,845	...	307 0 0	1,284 1 10	1,591 1 10
Total of 1910-1911	8	34,467	21,305	5,172	721	31	8,746	...	2,348 11 6	6,007 2 4	8,355 13 10
" " 1909-1910	8	30,973	20,238	15,394	182	193	9,597	...	2,793 7 10	6,394 4 1	9,187 11 11

STATEMENT VI.—*Fraudulent and irregular recruitment.*

District.	Number of cases pending from the previous year.	Number of complaints received during the year.	Number found true.	Number found false.	Number not proved.	Pending at the close of the year.	Total number of cases disposed of.	Number of persons concerned.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cachar ... ..	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	2
Sylhet ... ..	...	6	6	...	...	...	6	7
Kamrup ... ..	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	2
Darrang	5	16	9	...	7	5	16	40
Nowgong	1	5	2	...	...	4	2	10
Sibsagar	6	30	10	6	12	8	28	54
Lakhimpur	6	40	13	7	17	9	37	51
Total of 1910-1911	18	99	42	13	36	26	91	166
" " 1909-1910	8	44	6	3	25	18	34	74

STATEMENT VII.—*Repatriation of Labourers.*

District.	Total number of labourers available for repatriation.	Number repatriated.					Total.
		Under section 12 (section 10 or 11).	Under section 158 (section 139).	Under section 159.	Under section 161.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Cachar	2	...	...	...	2	2
Sylhet	11	...	6	...	5	11	
Kamrup	2	...	...	...	2	2
Darrang	30	25	1	...	3	29	
Nowgong	2	...	...	...	2	2
Sibsagar	12	9	3	...	...	12
Lakhimpur	17	5	11	...	...	16
Total of 1910-1911	76	39	21	...	14	74	
" " 1909-1910	39	4	25	2	2	33	

District.	Number whose contracts were cancelled, but who were not repatriated.						Cost of repatriation charged to the Inland Labour Transport Operations.			
	Awaiting an escort.	Preferring to remain in the garden or in the district.	Died.	Absconded.	Sent to lunatic asylum.	Total.	Under section 159.	Under section 161.	Total.	
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
Cachar	Rs. a. p.	...	...
Sylhet	
Kamrup	
Darrang	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Nowgong	
Sibsagar	
Lakhimpur	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Total of 1910-1911	2	...	...	...	2	—	...	...
" " 1909-1910	3	1	2	...	6	72 13 6	...	72 13 6	

STATEMENT VIII.—Deaths among all Classes of Labourers.

District.	Class.	Mean annual strength.	Deaths from							Total deaths.	Ratio per mille.
			Cholera.	Diarrhoea.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anæmia of coolies or anchylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Other causes.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cachar	Act ...	678	2	3	4	3	4	6	5	27	39.8
	Non-Act adults ...	75,336	326	153	370	180	245	331	469	2,074	27.2
	Children ...	48,084	123	108	230	245	38	76	255	1,075	22.3
	Total adults ...	77,014	328	156	374	183	249	337	474	2,101	27.2
Sylhet	Act ...	216	...	1	2	1	1	...	4	9	41.7
	Non-Act adults ...	86,925	239	282	460	415	275	220	768	2,659	30.5
	Children ...	63,838	46	137	263	425	61	48	307	1,287	20.1
	Total adults ...	87,141	239	283	462	416	276	220	772	2,668	30.6
Kamrup	Act ...	46	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	3	65.2
	Non-Act adults ...	1,976	3	8	17	12	4	6	5	55	27.8
	Children ...	1,051	...	1	12	6	1	...	2	22	20.9
	Total adults ...	2,022	3	8	18	13	5	6	5	58	28.6
Darrang	Act ...	6,399	12	23	149	1	93	49	83	410	64.0
	Non-Act adults ...	51,488	83	117	481	13	446	331	444	1,915	37.1
	Children ...	33,020	10	54	153	3	78	53	294	647	19.5
	Total adults ...	57,887	95	140	630	14	539	380	527	2,325	40.1
Nowgong	Act ...	1,661	1	4	19	11	7	...	20	62	37.3
	Non-Act adults ...	10,780	33	30	63	73	34	6	128	367	34.0
	Children ...	6,741	3	11	32	40	7	...	57	150	22.2
	Total adults ...	12,441	34	34	82	84	41	6	148	429	34.4
Sibsagar	Act ...	5,822	17	25	164	22	48	28	81	385	66.1
	Non-Act adults ...	101,295	315	268	755	197	319	314	898	3,066	30.2
	Children ...	74,215	53	109	373	193	90	67	318	1,203	16.2
	Total adults ...	107,117	332	293	919	219	367	342	979	3,451	32.2
Lakhimpur	Act ...	8,099	22	24	97	17	79	83	72	394	43.7
	Non-Act adults ...	108,064	194	340	570	225	547	721	811	3,408	31.5
	Children ...	73,142	72	147	365	280	118	347	585	1,914	26.1
	Total adults ...	117,063	216	264	667	242	626	804	883	3,802	32.4
Grand Total	Act ...	23,821	54	80	436	56	833	166	265	1,290	54.1
	Non-Act adults ...	436,864	1,193	1,198	2,716	1,113	1,870	1,929	3,523	13,844	31.0
	Children ...	300,091	307	567	1,428	1,194	393	591	1,818	6,298	21.0
	Total adults ...	460,685	1,247	1,278	3,152	1,171	2,103	2,095	3,788	14,834	32.2
	Total Labour force ...	760,776	1,554	1,845	4,580	2,363	2,496	2,686	5,606	21,132	27.8

STATEMENT IX.—Offences committed by Tea-garden Coolies and by Tea Planters.

	By coolies against Managers.				By Managers against coolies.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Violence, intimidation, or oppressive treatment without reference to re-engagement.	Violence, intimidation, or oppressive treatment in order to compel re-engagement.	Applications for discharge re-trafficants.	Others.	Non-fulfilment of contract (by absence, desertions, etc.).	For failure of garden owners to return to duty.	For enticing coolies.	Unlawful assembly or rioting.	Assault or intimidation.	Others.	
Number of complaints or petitions received during the year.	3	2	450	43	1,073	19	6	13	7	...	...
Number of complaints or petitions pending from the previous year.	...	...	18	4	96	3	2	...	...	...	...
Total	3	2	468	46	1,168	20	8	13	7	...	...
<i>Number dealt with criminally and decided—</i>											
For complainant	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	7	0	...	...
Against complainant	...	...	1	2	1	...	3	6	1	...	...
Number of persons fined	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...
" " Imprisoned	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	80	8	...	...
<i>Number dealt with under Act VI of 1901 and decided—</i>											
For complainant	...	...	31	1	214	3	3	...	...	...	...
Against complainant	...	1	30	3	207	10	4	...	...	...	...
Number of persons fined	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
" " Imprisoned	...	...	...	...	53	3	3	...	...	...	...
<i>Number dealt with under Act XIII of 1899 and decided—</i>											
For complainant	...	...	50	3	403	...	...	...	...	...	...
Against complainant	...	3	35	12	401	3	...	...	...	...	...
Number of persons imprisoned	...	...	...	...	49	...	...	...	...	...	...
<i>Number dealt with summarily and decided—</i>											
For complainant	...	...	183	0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Against complainant	1	...	121	16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

STATEMENT X.—Statement of Desertions among Adult Labourers under Act VI of 1901.

Subdivisions.	Number of desertions.	Percentage of desertions on mean strength.	Number of warrants issued for the arrest of deserters.	Number arrested.	Number convicted.	Number punished with imprisonment.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cachar						
{ Sadr	12	2'4	1	1	1	1
{ Hailakandi	21	11'1	...	...	...	...
{ North Sylhet	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sylhet						
{ Karimganj	12	11'42	...	...	...	...
{ South Sylhet	14	13'53	...	...	...	...
Kamrup						
{ Habiganj	...	...	...	...	...	...
{ Sadr	1	2'17	...	...	...	...
Darrang	461	8'05	89	57	57	23
Nowgong						
{ Mangaldai	89	13'16	14	12	12	...
{ Sadr	150	9'03	53	7	7	7
{ Sadr	267	9'91	15	9	7	7
Sibsagar						
{ Jorhat	237	11'62	10	7	5	5
Lakhimpur						
{ Colaghat	119	10'01	17	3	3	3
{ Sadr	644	8'75	69	31	23	7
{ North Lakhimpur	110	10'00	3	2	1	...
Total of 1910-1911	2,137	8'97	271	129	116	53
" " 1909-1910	2,067	6'13	319	150	141	74

STATEMENT XI.—Inspection.

District.	Number of gardens employing Act labour.	Number of non-Act gardens employing more than 50 labourers.	Number of gardens liable to inspection during the year.			Number of gardens inspected during the year.			Number inspected once.	Number inspected twice.	Number of inspections made by Deputy Commissioners.	Number of inspections made by Assistant Commissioners.	Number of inspections made by Civil Surgeons.	Number of inspections made by other agencies.	Total number of inspections made.	Number of gardens which submitted returns.
			Number not inspected in the previous year.	Specially selected for annual inspection.	Total.	Of those entered in column 4.	Of those entered in column 5.	Total.								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Cachar	20	144	51	11	62	49	11	60	59	1	29	17	...	15	61	115
Sylhet	20	106	54	30	84	54	30	84	84	...	12 ^a	72	...	...	84	128
Kamrup	3	11	...	4	4	...	3	3	3	...	2	...	1	...	3	14
Darrang	63	20	29	17	46	27	14	41	37	4	20	9	16	...	45	74
Nowgong	22	11	15	3	18	15	3	18	18	...	8	...	10	...	18	34
Sibsagar	101	39	43	3 ^a	81	43	38	81	71	10	22	48	21	...	91	140
Lakhimpur	118	17	70	16	86	65	16	81	78	3	30	8	15	31	84	135
Total of 1910-1911	346	348	262	119	381	253	115	368	350	18	123	154	63	46	386	640

^a By Additional District Magistrate.

STATEMENT XII.—Demand and Collection of Capitation Fees under Section 117 of Act VI of 1901.

District.	Demand for the year.		Arrears from previous year outstanding.	Gross demand.	Total realised.	Balance outstanding.
	Number of labourers for whom fee is payable.*	Total demand.				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Darrang	11,773	2,945 4 0	36 8 0	2,979 12 0	2,989 10 0 ^(a)	0 3 0
Nowgong	3,021	755 4 0	...	755 4 0	736 12 0	18 8 0
Sibsagar	10,902	2,725 8 0	74 4 0	2,799 12 0	2,744 0 0	55 12 0
Lakhimpur	17,703	4,425 12 0	2,611 12 0	7,037 8 0	4,878 12 0	2,158 12 0
Total	43,399	10,849 12 0	2,722 8 0	13,572 4 0	11,349 2 0	2,233 2 0

* The figures in this column represent the number of coolies on which the fee for the half-year was payable.

(a) Includes excess payment of Rs. 10.

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Resolution on the Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee, 1922.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Governor of Assam in Council in the Finance Department, No. 6405F., dated Shillong, the 9th October 1922.

READ—

The Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee.

RESOLUTION.

THE Resolution which is printed at the beginning of the Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee gives the reasons which led to the appointment of the Committee, and also the terms of reference. The latter were purposely drawn on wide lines. Answers were invited to two specific questions; and in addition the members were asked to make any recommendations which seemed desirable for improving the conditions of labour on the tea gardens. Paragraph 4 of the Report names seven of the nine members who actually served on the Committee. The other two were the President, the Hon'ble Mr. J. C. Arbuthnott, C.I.E., who in the course of a long and distinguished service had had experience of labour conditions in every tea district in the province, and the Secretary, Mr. J. A. Dawson, who had held charge of tea districts in both the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley.

2. Seven of the nine members of the Committee have signed the Report, their number including three of the five members who are directly interested in tea. Messrs. McMorran and Fox have, however, written what they have preferred to describe as a minority Report which is appended to the main document. They answer the two questions put to the Committee in the same way as do the majority, except that their finding on the first is unqualified. They take exception, however, to the manner in which the enquiries were conducted, and in particular to the lack of opportunities afforded to the Committee as a whole of discussing the evidence recorded, the information obtained by the groups of members who visited individual tea gardens, and the draft Report itself. In deciding the weight to be attached to such criticisms the Government are bound to remember the magnitude of the task set the Committee, and the extent to which ill-health or the pressing claims of their ordinary avocations in a time of stress prevented some of the members, Mr. Fox being unfortunately one, from attending all the meetings both in the tea districts and in Shillong. Nor is it clear to Government how, in the time available and with communications so defective as they are, information could have been collected, and what the majority call "the evidence of the eye" obtained, by any expedient other than the deputation of parties of the Committee to visit particular gardens. Such a procedure is not unusual when enquiries are necessary over a wide area, and if Mr. McMorran and Mr. Fox, who both took part in these visits, found little or nothing amiss, while other observers were occasionally moved to adverse comment, the Government do not think that that circumstance affords sufficient ground for discarding everything but the results of joint investigation and discussion. The Governor in Council regrets that veiled criticisms upon the Secretary's work should appear in the last paragraph of the minority Report, being assured that any suggestion that that officer withheld information from the Committee is without reasonable foundation. For the rest, the minority members have usefully drawn attention to certain clerical mistakes in the majority Report which have now been corrected. Their substantive criticisms will be discussed in due course, as will the one important question on which the majority and the minority differ essentially. But the Governor in Council does not understand that the two dissenting members desire that their Report should be regarded as a complete answer to the reference made to the Committee. His Excellency in Council understands that their rejection of their colleagues' Report is qualified rather than absolute, and trusts that he does them no injustice in assuming that they agree generally with the majority except where their disagreement is expressed. On this assumption His Excellency in Council is glad to find how few the points of essential difference are.

3. It will be convenient in reviewing the Report to follow its general sequence. The introductory chapter gives a clear account of the matters into which the Committee enquired, and of the manner in which their enquiries were conducted. It sets out the special difficulties experienced owing to the political situation; and the Governor in Council congratulates the members of the Committee on having performed their task as thoroughly as they did without giving any foundation for the apprehension expressed by one Sub-Committee that their investigations would accentuate labour troubles. The reasons given for discarding any idea of recording the formal evidence of coolie witnesses are frankly stated, and the Government of Assam accept them as sufficient. They also accept the claim that the enquiry was conducted from the standpoint of the coolie's well-being. At the same time the judicial character of the Report is shown by the fact that it never fails to make full allowance for the difficulties which handicapped the employers during a period of depression. The Governor in Council notes with pleasure the acknowledgment of the assistance rendered by garden managers to the Committee, and indeed was confident that such assistance would be forthcoming.

4. The second chapter which deals with strikes and disturbances on tea gardens is so complete as to render review superfluous. The causes of the disturbances have been analysed with exceeding fairness. The Committee are satisfied that, when owing to the financial crisis economies in working had perforce to be effected, every effort was made to prevent the labourers from suffering in consequence; and the Governor in Council unreservedly accepts their conclusions that the unrest was due to a combination of economic and political conditions, and that the existence of economic grievances rendered coolies more ready to listen to the exhortations and incitements of non-co-operators and other agitators of whose mischievous activities sufficient proof has reached them. This is not challenged by the authors of the minority Report, and it is the view which the Government of Assam have all along held. The question whether the economic grievances of the coolies might not have been lessened by more liberal treatment during the preceding years of prosperity will be discussed later. It is noteworthy that after the Chergola exodus the rates of wages in the gardens most affected were materially raised. But it may be said in passing that the number of labourers who, owing to sickness or incapacity, earned the remarkably low wages noted in paragraph 29 of the Report was very small.

5. The third chapter is concerned with what are styled 'concessions' in the terms of reference to the Committee. These might perhaps have been more accurately described as benefits or privileges enjoyed by the labourer over and above the wage paid to him for his labour. As is pointed out in paragraph 55, until the labour-districts provisions of Act VI of 1901 were withdrawn, most of these benefits were secured by law to labourers contracting under the Act, the supply of rice at the statutory rate of three rupees a maund being a condition entered in the contract. The Governor in Council cannot agree with the suggestion made in the minority Report that this chapter minimises the benefits or belittles the expenditure which they involve. On the contrary His Excellency in Council considers that the question of the extent to which these benefits represent an actual addition to the wages paid has been handled in a thoroughly judicial manner, and readily accepts the important conclusions of the majority set forth in paragraphs 70-72 of the Report. The Committee, majority and minority alike, are agreed that it would be both impracticable and undesirable from the point of view of the labourer as well as of the garden to convert into a money equivalent the various benefits direct and indirect which the labourer now receives; and though such conversion would certainly not be without advantages, political and administrative, the Governor in Council feels that he must accept the answer to the first part of the second question put to the Committee. The minority members demur to the statement made in paragraph 57 of the Report, that the coolie does not, any more than would the policeman or the sepoy, regard money spent on hospitals, medicine and doctors as part of his pay. Such a view might fairly be regarded as unreasonable in the case of educated people, but with the classes of public servant mentioned, as with the garden coolie, custom is more dominant than reason. But the conclusion that the coolie does in fact take for granted the provision of medical comforts implies no want of recognition either of the efforts made by the Industry, with little regard to cost, to improve the health of the labour force; or of the positive and demonstrable advantages to the labourer. The criticism by the same two members of paragraph 70 seems to overlook what is said in the suggestive paragraph 129 of the Report.

6. In Chapter IV the Committee have treated exhaustively and with the most anxious care the vital question of wages. They lay stress on the fact that it is not the rate of wage that matters so much as the joint earnings of a family of coolies, and in paragraph 83 they point out that there may be adequate compensations for low earnings. They then discuss tasks and systems of payment, but for the most part wisely content themselves with pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of the different systems.

7. The writers of the minority Report in answering the first question put to the Committee are of opinion that at the present time the remuneration in money payments, together with the various concessions received, is sufficient to maintain the coolies in health and reasonable comfort. The majority, while agreeing that this is generally the case, do so with reservations, and their views are stated in paragraph 128 in terms which bear witness to the scrupulous care with which they considered the problem. The Government of Assam agree that the question admits of no short and easy answer. The various factors mentioned by the Committee must be given due weight. But they welcome the valuable detailed analysis of the wages paid in each subdivision of the planting districts which precedes the general findings. They agree that the method adopted by the Committee was the only possible way of arriving at an accurate appreciation of the situation, and they accept without hesitation the findings as to the adequacy or inadequacy of the wages given in each subdivision. On points of detail the dissenting members seem to dispute the accuracy of certain figures in paragraphs 117 and 118. All that need be said is that the rates of pay in the Langla Company are astonishingly low on paper whatever may be the real explanation; while the Governor in Council understands that the fact that the coolies of the Patrakhola Estate were on strike for several days in March 1922 was not brought to the notice of the Committee. It is clear that in particular areas wages should be higher than they are; and the Government of Assam commend the cases instanced by the Committee to the earnest attention of the Tea Industry.

8. The Government cannot differ from the broad conclusions to which the majority of the Committee have come, that the rise in prices has exceeded the rise in wages, or their inference in paragraph 128 that the coolie's standard of living must in consequence have been lowered of recent years. That the upward movement of prices usually outpaces wages is well known. But in this instance the Government of Assam feel that the employer would have done wisely to take advantage of the fat years, and to have raised wages before the coolie began to feel the pinch of the lean years. They have not overlooked what has been urged in paragraph 8 of the minority Report about the pressure of taxation on the Industry. But they believe that to some extent the troubles of last year would have been averted had a more enlightened policy been adopted while conditions still permitted. The Governor in Council shares the hope expressed that the Tea Industry will before long be in a position to enable the coolie to regain if not to raise the standard which he had attained when the cost of living was less. He is glad to learn from paragraph 98 of the Report that many estates have already found it possible to raise wages, and agrees that justice to the employers required the inclusion in the wage statistics of the figures for March last.

9. Paragraph 129 formulates the practical suggestions of the Committee. They advise that the district Sub-Committees should recommend what they consider to be a decent monthly or daily rate of wage, which is not to be a mere subsistence allowance, but a wage that will suffice to keep the labourer in health and reasonable comfort with the possibility of saving a little. Few would quarrel with the interpretation placed on these terms in paragraph 96 of the Report. They consider moreover that this should be a wage which the average coolie can earn in a reasonable time, and that in fixing it no regard should be paid to *ticca* earnings by which it may be supplemented. The Government accept these recommendations. They of course recognise that economic factors must have full play. It is not possible to insist on all gardens in the same area having identical standards of task or wage. But what the Government desire is that the Sub-Committees should be authorised to propose a standard rate for their districts, and to bring to the notice of Agents and Directors and the Association any refusal on the part of individual concerns to fall in with their suggestions. His Excellency in Council believes with the Committee that managers are a reasonable and fair-minded body of men, and is convinced that the Sub-Committees are in the best position to say what is a fair task for a decent living wage.

10. The same paragraph contains the answer to the objection taken in the minority Report that the expression 'working overtime' has not been defined. To sum up the Governor in Council is definitely of opinion that the standard wage for the standard task, on the performance of which, as the Committee observe elsewhere, employers might reasonably insist, should apart from *tacca* earnings be sufficient to provide the labourer of average capacity and industry with wholesome food, sufficient clothes and a little money over. It may be difficult to devise a task which an old and experienced coolie could not perform in less than the six hours which may be taken as a reasonable working day; on the other hand the average coolie will take longer than the three or four hours suggested in the minority Report to earn the standard wage. With the recommendation that the rate of wages should be fixed on the assumption that a coolie has no cultivation or other subsidiary means of livelihood the Governor in Council also agrees. It remains to notice the contention advanced by many managers that increased wages will only mean less work for the same or more pay. This may be true in the case of lazy coolies who would in no circumstances attempt to do more than earn a bare subsistence. In this connection the remarks in paragraph 184 are relevant. But the Industry could not have flourished as it has done if its labour force was universally lethargic. There is evidence that many coolies desire to attain a certain standard of comfort, and the object should be to stimulate their output by encouraging that desire. If, as the Government believe, the coolie has had to abandon the standard of living to which he was recently becoming accustomed, it may be hoped that the desire to regain it will make him work. The suggestion that coolies should receive a bonus proportionate to the prosperity of the garden was rejected by the Committee as impracticable and unprofitable; and the Governor in Council agrees that the proposal presumes a measure of intelligence and thrift at present lacking in the labour force generally.

11. The present Committee have prepared some interesting budgets of personal expenditure, which will doubtless attract the attention of students of economic questions; and they arrive diffidently at the conclusion that the cost of living for the adult coolie has risen by about 40 per cent. since 1914. The Government incline to the opinion that this if anything probably understates the rise in the cost of living of recent years. The remark of the minority members that the coolie is not singular in feeling the stress of adverse economic conditions is obviously true; but the Government agree with the majority in holding that some line of distinction must in fairness be drawn between those who had a large margin of saving and the tea-garden labourer whose margin for saving or for petty luxuries was insignificant and in many cases non-existent.

12. The scope of the Committee's enquiries was confined to Assam, but in paragraphs 1, 31 and 127 they touch upon the question of the relative prosperity of the labourer upon the gardens and in his own home. The Governor in Council will not here review in detail the reasons which led to the provisional conclusion in November 1921 that "the earnings of the tea-garden labourer and his family are sufficient to support them in a standard of comfort superior to that prevailing in their home districts". The Committee of 1906, after visiting both recruiting and labour districts and examining numerous witnesses from both, formed the impression that the ordinary labourer in Assam is certainly better off than he would be in the "back tracts of the down-country districts which he has left behind", and this Government are in possession of numerous and weighty opinions since that date to the same effect. But the broad fact is that with the development of communications and the spread of intelligence recruitment from distant provinces for the tea gardens of Assam could not possibly have been maintained simply on a basis of misrepresentation. The returning coolies' accounts of the prospects offered by foreign service must have been satisfactory for fresh recruits from the same neighbourhood to be forthcoming.

13. This question of the adequacy of the wage paid is no new one. The Government have never ceased to acknowledge and to discharge definite responsibilities in connection with the earnings of coolies. Indeed previous to 1908 the law itself fixed minimum wages for labourer under contract under Act VI of 1901. The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906, to whose Report frequent references are made in the present Report, devoted much attention to the rate of wages. They observed:—"In the recruiting districts people only consider the actual Act wage.

Practically nothing is known about the coolies being able to earn extra money for overtime, and the fact that wages in Assam have stagnated while down-country they have almost everywhere risen is held to be a strong argument for raising the pay of the coolie. The planter on the other hand sees that the coolie is comfortably off, his work is not heavy and he earns extra pay at certain seasons of the year." The Committee of 1906 went on to say that the evidence which they had recorded in the recruiting districts showed that in many parts from which Assam used to draw its labour the wage then offered was no attraction to the labourer. They stated plainly that it was of no use saying that the planter provides the coolie with extras which should count in lieu of wages, because such amenities were not considered and would not be considered by the person who was being asked to emigrate. They added that unless the Industry was prepared to offer an increased wage it would find that many of its recruiting grounds would become drier year by year. They did not argue that the coolie did not do fairly well for himself on what he got, but they held definitely that unless the money inducements held out to him were improved he would be less and less ready to leave his country, and they added that this fact must be recognised by the Industry if it hoped to attract labour to Assam. These weighty observations were made sixteen years ago. They were not buried in the pages of a blue book, for the more important recommendations of the Committee were extracted and sent to every tea garden manager then in the province. In view of the findings of the present Committee, which are based on recorded earnings over a series of years, the Governor in Council is forced to conclude that sufficient attention was not paid to the recommendations of the earlier Committee.

14. Chapter V deals with the working of Act XIII of 1859. The question of the retention of the Act or its abrogation so far as garden labour is concerned is the one important point on which the majority and the minority Reports differ essentially. The minority members question the correctness of the Committee's action in enquiring into a matter which was not specifically referred to them. But, quite apart from the formal reference which was made while the Committee were sitting, it cannot seriously be denied that, as stated in paragraph 138 of the Report, the matter of Act XIII contracts has an intimate concern with wages. It clearly has an intimate concern also with the conditions of labour on tea gardens, and thus falls within the third of the terms of reference to the Committee. The questionnaire, to the form of which the minority writers take exception, was framed, it is true, before the Committee actually assembled. This was done to save time. But the questionnaire was in the hands of each member from the beginning: it comprises definite questions about the working of Act XIII, and if any members thought those questions irrelevant, that was the time to take formal exception to their inclusion.

15. The chapter begins by describing the changes made in Act XIII of 1859 by the amending Act of 1920, and reviews the recommendations of the Committee of 1906. Next comes a criticism of the working of the Act in the various districts of the province, based on an examination, covering several pages of the Report, of the records of cases which came before the courts. The two minority members consider that this examination should have been conducted by the Committee as a whole, which, had time allowed, would undoubtedly have been the obvious course. They point out quite rightly that the number of complaints of non-fulfilment of contracts is only a minute proportion of the total number executed, and that the percentage of persons under contract sentenced to imprisonment is infinitesimal. The Government of Assam accept their inference that on the whole the Act has been worked considerably and has not borne heavily on the labourer. The comprehensive review given in the Report needs to be read with close attention if its real significance is to be appreciated. By no means all the cases mentioned are open to criticism. At the same time the records examined show clearly that there are instances of harshness and that abuses do occur. It has been found that at least in some districts contracts continue to be executed for a longer period than the amended Act permits, and it is startling to learn that one influential company pays a commission on contracts executed. The advance given, which is an essential element of a contract under Act XIII, is sometimes inadequate, and some magistrates have failed to realise that such contracts should not be enforced as a matter of course. Cases of minors being placed under contract have also come to light. Lastly there can be no doubt that the practice of unlawful arrest has not disappeared. For some of these abuses of the Act the Governor in Council holds that magistrates must share the blame with employers.

16. The Committee's reference to discharge certificates may not be generally understood without some amplification. A coolie whose contract under Act VI of 1901 had determined was legally entitled to have his contract endorsed to that effect, or to receive a discharge certificate from his employer, or in the employer's default from the Inspector of Labourers. On the other hand while the contract endured the employer had the right of private arrest; but the conditions which safeguarded the coolie were in practice not always observed. In actual fact a tea garden labourer twenty years ago, whether under contract or not, found it almost impossible, unless he was in possession of a certificate or *chit* from his late employer, to cross a ferry or to obtain a ticket for a journey by rail or steamer. In 1903 and again in 1907 the Government issued orders that when a coolie applied for the grant of a discharge certificate or for permission to leave the garden where he had been employed, the proceedings should ordinarily take the form of an enquiry to ascertain whether he was entitled to a discharge certificate or whether the garden had any claim to his services. Further, if no report was received by the date fixed or if it appeared that the coolie was not under contract under Act VI of 1901, a discharge certificate was to be given. In other cases an order was to be passed to the effect that there was nothing to show that the coolie was not free to leave the garden, and a copy of this order was to be given to him. With the withdrawal of sections 195 and 196 in January 1908 private arrest became illegal, but the provisions of the law requiring the grant of discharge certificates, and therefore the instructions for dealing with applications for them continued in force. The Governor in Council regrets to find that in some cases magistrates have misapprehended these instructions, and have wrongly held that the fact that a labourer is pecuniarily indebted to a garden is sufficient cause for refusing him a certificate. Conditions have materially altered in recent years, but it is plain that private arrest, which is illegal, is still not unknown. Whatever be the facts of the particular case which is questioned in paragraph 15 of the minority Report, the evidence of the witness quoted in paragraph 161 of the majority Report is an admission of the survival of the practice. It is probable that the taking back to the garden of a coolie who has accepted an advance and broken his contract to labour is not regarded by him as an injustice; and indeed that persuasion is often sufficient. But breaches of the law do occur and these must cease.

17. The practice of placing newly imported labourers under contract immediately on their arrival on the garden is rightly condemned by the Committee. The increased recruiting facilities described in paragraphs 167 and 168 were given on the understanding that only free labourers would be recruited. There has been a literal fulfilment of this condition in so far that Act VI of 1901 has not been used, but the Committee of 1906, who are quoted in paragraph 179 of the present Report, strongly deprecated the demanding of contracts even under Act XIII from intending emigrants in the recruiting districts. The Government of Assam cannot but hold that the placing of new immigrants under such contracts immediately on their arrival on the garden is a breach of the spirit if not of the letter of the understanding made with the Governments in whose territories recruiting is conducted, and this opinion will be brought prominently to the notice of district officers. The fact that leading companies in the Lakhimpur district do not find it necessary to put new coolies under contract disposes of the plea that managers cannot keep labourers imported at great expense without the hold given them by Act XIII.

18. The records examined by the Committee have been again examined on behalf of this Government. Detailed comment would be out of place here, but two observations must be made. It must, in fairness to all parties, be stated that the action of the Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong in cancelling the unexpired portion of the sentences of certain coolies sentenced to imprisonment and sending them back to complete their contracts was not taken as the result of any suggestion made by the garden authorities. The Deputy Commissioner complied with requests made to him by the coolies themselves, though his action was unwarranted by law. It hardly affords ground for the suggestion in paragraph 180 of the Report that the Act does not even secure finality. Secondly, with respect to the observations in paragraph 155 about the increase in 1920-21 in the number of cases instituted, it must not be forgotten that there had been in the two preceding years a very large importation of new coolies.

19. The arguments for and against the retention of the Act are set forth carefully in paragraphs 172-180 of the Report. The Assam Administration has on various occasions expressed the view that the Act has on the whole worked satisfactorily and is not unfair, and has stated that no instances of the abuse or misuse of its provisions

have come to notice. The Governor in Council on the information then before him accepted this view as recently as February last. The Act is not unpopular with the labourer, and the advances given are greatly valued. And, grave as are the instances of abuse which the special enquiry has now disclosed, these must still be viewed in their right numerical proportion, which the anxious consideration given to them by the Committee may to some extent have had the effect of disturbing. The Governor in Council does not believe that these abuses are universal or even widespread. But that they do occur is undoubted, and there can be no certainty that they will not recur. Nor is this all. The bad effects on recruitment of the existence of a penal contract of any kind have long been recognised; and though the concluding lines of paragraph 168 seem to the Government of Assam to take a more gloomy view of the future of recruitment than the premises warrant, they nevertheless convey a warning which is not to be disregarded. The Report brings out clearly the absence in the case of Act XIII contracts of the safeguards provided for contracts under Act VI. The arguments in paragraph 166 regarding the effect of penal contracts on wages have great force; and, whatever other factors enter into the comparison, the figures given in paragraphs 170 and 171 regarding the relative frequency of riot cases in Assam and in free labour areas are remarkable. In view of all these considerations the Governor in Council accepts the recommendation of the majority of the Committee that the time has come when in the interests of the Industry and of the labourers alike the Act should cease to apply to tea gardens in Assam. The majority of the witnesses examined are opposed to the withdrawal of the Act, but the evidence recorded by the Committee shows no general apprehension on the part of managers about it. When opinions were last invited on the question at the end of 1921 the Surma Valley Branch, Indian Tea Association, while holding that the Act had worked satisfactorily, and that the benefits which it entailed were much appreciated by coolies, were of opinion that if it had to be repealed the present restrictions on recruitment imposed by Act VI of 1901 should simultaneously be withdrawn and a system of free recruitment introduced. With this suggestion the Governor in Council is in complete sympathy, and any proposals which may be put forward to make recruiting easier and cheaper without reviving the evils of the old system of so-called free recruiting will be sympathetically examined.

20. In Chapter VI of the Report the Committee have made some most valuable suggestions for promoting the general welfare and contentment of the labourer. These the Governor in Council confidently commends to the attention of the Tea Industry. Whether or not a system of indenture unfavourably affects the death-rate, the placing of new immigrants under contract immediately on arrival on the garden has already been condemned for other reasons. Regarding the comments in paragraph 181 on the death-rate and the birth-rate in the Darrang and Nowgong districts, the Government of Assam are not satisfied that the administration of Act XIII is responsible for the statistics of births and deaths to which the Committee have called attention. The Government have read with satisfaction the Committee's interesting account of the measures taken to combat disease upon the tea gardens and desire to pay a tribute to the work of the medical officers. They are confident that the remarks about conservancy systems will receive the attention which they merit. A strong recommendation on this subject has recently been addressed to the Indian Tea Association by the Assam Branch of the British Medical Association, the great majority of whose members are tea-garden medical officers. It is satisfactory to note that leave and allowances to pregnant women are being more liberally granted. This is a matter to which the special attention of the Branch Associations was recently invited. The paragraphs on the treatment of new coolies and the advantages of leisure and recreation will be read with interest. The comparative failure of garden schools must in fairness be ascribed to the indifference of the labourers themselves.

21. After a review of labour legislation from 1906 onwards, Chapter VII discusses recruitment with particular reference to the abnormal importations of 1918-19. The Governor in Council endorses the Committee's condemnation of the disservice rendered to the Industry by the ill-considered action of recruiting agents. It is satisfactory to find that the medical examination of intending emigrants is now universal. The Government have already issued special instructions for the guidance of inspecting officers much on the lines of the remarks in paragraph 207 of the Report, and vital statistics are now compiled for the twelve months from July 1st to June 30th. The form of wage returns was recently revised, but will be again examined in the light of the suggestions made in paragraph 208.

22. The Report ends by drawing attention to some matters of supreme importance to the Industry. The Government of Assam believe that it does no more than justice in attributing the comparative steadiness of the garden labour force in recent

disturbed times largely to the sympathetic attitude of managers. Again and again in the Report are reasons shown for holding that on the personality of the manager depends in a great measure the attractiveness of a garden, or the reverse. The Committee point out how important it is that the manager or his assistant should personally fix tasks and supervise weighments of leaf and issues of rice. They have also shown how disturbances have resulted from managers having acted inconsiderately, or having failed or having from ignorance of the vernacular been unable to listen personally to grievances, real or fancied, against the subordinate staff. The prominence given to such cases in the Report shows how unusual they are: and the Government have no hesitation in recording their own belief that most managers are genuinely anxious for the welfare of their coolies, and well fitted to play that part which the Committee assign to them of the coolie's "best advocate or adviser". The Committee are anxious that suggestions, whether of individual managers or of Sub-Committees, for ameliorating the lot of the labourer should be regarded by the Managing Agents and Directors as having been made with knowledge and authority; and they and the Government both welcome the indications of a growing tendency in this direction. Lastly, the Committee refer to the competition which confronts the Industry. They recognise that there are economic limits to the wage-bill which it can pay, but they wisely remind employers that the garden coolie has begun to be moved, if yet but vaguely, by the same awakening and aspirations as the rest of the world of labour. The Governor in Council, as must every well-wisher of the great Industry to which the province owes so much, trusts that these words will go home; and that up to the full limits of the economic capacity of the Industry effort will be made to meet the changing conditions of the present day.

23. Finally, the Governor in Council desires to express his acknowledgments to the President and Members of the Committee for the admirable manner in which at no slight sacrifice of comfort or convenience they have discharged their onerous duty. His Excellency in Council believes that the Report which is now published will command respect by reason of its thoroughness and the moderation of its language: and be received with a large measure of assent. It is certain to remain for many years to come an authoritative pronouncement on the difficult questions with which it deals.

By order of the Government of Assam,

A. J. LAINÉ,

Second Secretary to the Government of Assam.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM.

Orders by the Governor in Council.

Appointment of a Committee to enquire into the conditions of tea garden labour in Assam.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Governor of Assam in Council in the Finance Department, No. 8555F, dated the 26th November 1921.

RESOLUTION.

In pursuance of the undertakings given the Government of Assam have decided to appoint a representative committee to enquire whether, in view of the great rise in prices which has occurred during recent years, the remuneration paid to the labour force on the tea gardens of the province is sufficient to maintain the labourers in health and a reasonable degree of comfort.

A committee composed of the undermentioned gentlemen is accordingly appointed to enquire into the conditions of coolie labour on tea gardens in Assam, and in particular (1) to enquire whether the remuneration in money payments together with the concessions received by the coolies in the way of free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice and clothing, garden-land and the like is sufficient to maintain the coolies in health and reasonable comfort; (2) to enquire whether it is possible and desirable that the indirect remuneration represented by the above-mentioned concessions should be converted into an increase of money wages; or, if not, whether it is possible for the value of such indirect remuneration to be so expressed in terms of money wages that the actual total remuneration received by the coolies can be readily exhibited; and (3) to make any recommendation which seems desirable for improving the conditions of labour on the tea gardens.

The Hon'ble Mr. J. C. Arbuthnot, C.I.E., *President.*

Rai Bahadur Giris Chandra Nag, M.L.A.,

Major H. B. Fox, M.L.C.,

Babu Ramani Mohan Das, M.L.C.,

Mr. D. S. Withers, M.L.C.,

Srijut Siva Prasad Barua, M.L.C.,

Mr. T. MacMorran,

Rev. Dr. O. O. Williams,

Khan Sahib Wali Muhamad, Extra Assistant Commissioner,
Central Provinces,

} *Members.*

Mr. J. A. Dawson, I.C.S., *Member and Secretary.*

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of the foregoing Resolution be forwarded to the Commissioners of Divisions in Assam, and that it be published in the *Assam Gazette* for general information.

By order of the Government of Assam,

A. W. BOTHAM,

Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

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REPORT

CHAP. I.
PARA. I.

OF THE

ASSAM LABOUR ENQUIRY COMMITTEE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

It may be useful to give a brief review of the events leading up to the appointment of the present Committee as announced in the Resolution printed at the beginning of this Report. It will be seen that the Committee was appointed to enquire generally into the conditions of tea-garden labour in Assam and with particular reference to the question whether in view of the great rise in prices which has occurred during recent years, the remuneration paid to the labour force is sufficient to maintain the labourers in health and a reasonable degree of comfort. In taking into consideration the wages or cash earnings the Committee have been asked to estimate as far as possible the pecuniary effect of concessions in the way of free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice and clothing, and estate land given out for rice cultivation, and to enquire whether it is possible or desirable that the indirect remuneration represented by these and any other concessions should be converted into an increase of money wages; or if not, whether it is possible for the value of such indirect remuneration to be so expressed in terms of money wages, that the actual total remuneration received by the labourers can be readily exhibited. The Committee was finally invited to make any recommendations which seem desirable for improving the conditions of labour on tea-gardens.

Appointment of a Committee to enquire into the conditions of tea-garden labour in Assam.

In the Resolution on Immigrant Labour in Assam for the year 1920-21, Finance Department No. 8476F., dated the 23rd of November 1921, which covers the year ending on the 30th of June 1921, it is stated that the period was "unfortunately marked by much unrest, culminating in rioting and violence in certain areas, and in the Surma Valley in what is known as the Karimganj exodus."

In giving an account of the other disturbances in the Assam Valley the Resolution refers to the series of riots in the Doom-Dooma group of gardens in the Lakhimpur district in September and October 1920, and two serious cases of rioting in the Darrang district, at Monabari tea estate in October 1920 and at Halem tea-estate in March 1921. There is a further reference to the occurrence of several riots "of varying degrees of seriousness" on Tezpur gardens in the Darrang district in October 1921 which finally led to the appointment of the present Committee of Enquiry at the end of November.

In the Resolution dated the 26th of November 1921 which appointed the Committee and defined the terms of reference, there is no allusion to any of these unfortunate incidents, but as it is stated in paragraph 7 of the Resolution on Immigrant Labour, that the causes of these outbreaks will almost certainly come under the review of the Committee of Enquiry, the question has received careful attention and Members of the Committee have visited most, if not all, of the estates on which serious disturbances or riots have occurred within the last 18 months. The scope of the Enquiry has therefore necessarily been widened beyond the original terms of reference. In any case, the consideration of recommendations for improving the conditions of labour on tea-gardens opens out a wide field for investigation.

Incidentally, the Assam Labour Committee of 1906 dealt with the question of wages and recommended a rise in the initial wage under Act VI of 1901 from Rs. 4 and Rs. 5 to Rs. 5 and Rs. 6 in order to encourage recruitment by making conditions in Assam more attractive. They observed that the evidence recorded in the recruiting districts showed that "the wage which is offered on the tea-gardens is no longer an attraction in many of the parts from which Assam recruits its labour." Since then there has been no enquiry by any Committee into the question of tea-garden wages in Assam. But the subject has steadily engaged the attention of Government and has been invariably dealt with in the Annual Immigration Reports.

CHAP. I. In the last of these reports the provisional conclusions are that "there has been an increase of wages which was much more marked in the Assam Valley than in the Surma Valley, and that while wages have not risen to a degree commensurate with the general rise in the cost of living, the earnings of the tea-garden labourer and his family are sufficient to support them in a standard of comfort superior to that prevailing in their home districts." Considering the wide and scattered areas in different provinces from which labour for the Assam tea-gardens is recruited, the Committee are not in a position to express an opinion, still less to criticise this statement, nor are they aware of the nature of the evidence on which it is based.

2. Towards the end of 1920, Deputy Commissioners of tea districts were asked to make enquiries into the adequacy of wages earned on tea-gardens. The Government of Assam has in fact from time to time during and since the war, made careful enquiries as to whether wages in tea-gardens have risen in proportion to the cost of living and members of the Government have discussed the subject with representatives of the tea industry on more than one occasion.

In the first week of May 1921 thousands of coolies left the Chargola Valley in the Karimganj subdivision of Sylhet district in the Surma Valley. Details will be found in Chapter II. This exodus and the subsequent events at Chandpur concentrated public attention on tea-gardens and a certain section of the Indian Press contained allegations of the bad treatment accorded to tea-garden coolies in Assam. In a *Communiqué* on the subject of the Chargola exodus issued by the Government of Assam in the beginning of June 1921 the following statement occurs:—

"... The Government and the tea industry have for some time past recognised that in view of the rise in prices some readjustment of wages is called for throughout the province, and special enquiries which are nearly complete have already been made. The only reason why a commission had not been appointed to go into the matter is the depressed state of the industry which makes it impossible for most gardens to contemplate any increase in expenditure. But the Government repudiate altogether the allegation that the wages given in the case of the striking coolies were starvation wages; and they are fully prepared to examine further the whole question of wages when the present excitement has subsided and they consider the time to be opportune.."

It will be seen from this that the Government of Assam recognised that an enquiry into tea-garden wages was desirable, but that owing to the depression in the tea industry the time was inopportune. Had a Committee of Enquiry been appointed at that time when political agitation was at its height in connection with the exodus, it was apprehended that an impression might get abroad that the Committee had received a mandate to increase tea-garden wages which it might be impossible to carry out owing to the financial position of the industry. It was thought that the enquiry should await a time when the industry was more prosperous and when the atmosphere was freer from political prejudice. At one time it was proposed that the enquiry should be confined to the Surma Valley, if not to the area from which the Chargola exodus took place. The Indian Tea Association were averse to restricting the enquiry to the gardens in the Karimganj subdivision which had been affected by the exodus, in case the finding might convey a wrong impression as regards the tea industry generally in the Province of Assam. It was pointed out that estates in the Assam Valley, owing to the more favourable prices obtained for their tea, had, in many cases, been able to grant an increase of wages, whereas estates in Sylhet and Cachar were incurring heavy losses. It was undesirable that public opinion should be incorrectly informed as to general conditions as the result of an enquiry limited to one locality. Finally, the view was accepted that any enquiry to be undertaken should deal with conditions on tea estates in the whole province.

In October 1921 when a series of riots occurred in a group of gardens in the Darrang district in the Assam Valley, the Government of Assam considered that the promised enquiry should no longer be deferred. By this time the financial position of the tea industry had considerably improved, but the political outlook showed distinct signs of deterioration.

3. It should not be imagined, however, that the question of labour and wages had not meantime been engaging the attention of the tea industry. In the latter half of 1920, and the early months of 1921, when tea estates, specially in the Surma Valley, were working at a heavy loss, and when the future was uncertain, it was realised that expenditure should be curtailed as far as possible, but Managers were instructed by their Agents to see that the labourer did not suffer. As a rule, the budget provision for payment of labour was not reduced. In some cases gardens were unable to provide the usual amount of overtime work, but coolies were encouraged to take up land for cultivation, and leave was freely

given to those who asked for it. In some instances Managers were able to employ a portion of the labour force on outside work such as the repair of Local Board roads. Gardens sold rice to their coolies at a price below the market rate and, in some cases, cloth was given *gratis* or supplied at a reduced price. About the middle of 1921, when the outlook for the tea industry seemed brighter, agency houses drew the attention of Managers to the question of the adequacy of wages, and called for reports. The question of wages had also received the close attention of the Indian Tea Association for some time past.

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4. A Committee of ten members was constituted. Rai Bahadur Girish Chandra Nag, M.L.A., who had originally agreed to serve sent in his resignation in the end of November on the ground that his health was unequal to a prolonged tour and that he would be unable to discharge his duties as a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Of the remaining nine members, Messrs. Fox and Withers, Srijut Siva Prosad Barua and Bahu Ramani Mohan Das are tea planters. Mr. McMorrin of Messrs. Duncan Brothers and Co., one of the chief tea Agency houses in Calcutta, was appointed as representative of the Indian Tea Association. Dr. Williams of Karimganj is a medical missionary of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission. Khan Sahib Wali Mohammad, Deputy Commissioner in the Central Provinces, represented the recruiting districts in that area. Mr. Withers was appointed in virtue of his position as nominated Labour Member on the Assam Legislative Council.

5. Before the Committee assembled on the 9th December at Gauhati, the *questionnaire* had been drawn up and sent out by the Secretary to Managers of all tea estates. A copy of these questions with the forwarding letter will be found in the Appendix. It was recognised that it would be impossible for the Committee to visit more than a small proportion of the gardens and to examine more than a limited number of witnesses and the object in framing the questions which were made as comprehensive as possible, was to obtain the maximum of information as regards present conditions on tea-gardens. Notices were sent to the local Indian newspapers and were also circulated in Bar Libraries in the province inviting members of the general public who could give useful information on the subject of the enquiry to communicate with the Secretary. The various sub-committees in the tea districts were also asked to send replies to certain questions (Nos. 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 25, 33, 34, 36, 39, 40, 73, 75, 76, 83 and 85). Three hundred and eighty-three sets of answers have been received. In some cases, joint replies have been sent in for a group of gardens. After meeting at Gauhati the Committee toured in the Darrang district, dispersing at Mangaldai on 21st December for the Christmas holidays. They met again at Sylhet on the 5th January, toured in Sylhet and Cachar in that month and visited Lakhimpur and Sibsagar in February and Nowgong in March. The few gardens in Kamrup are neither typical nor important. Tea cultivation is subsidiary to zemindari on more than one estate. No replies were received from Managers and the Committee did not consider it necessary to visit any gardens in this district. The total adult labour population is only 2,829.

6. One hundred and thirty-nine witnesses were examined at convenient centres mainly planters (European and Indian), but the evidence of garden medical officers, district officials, the Commissioner of the Surma Valley and a few non-official Europeans and Indians was also recorded. The Committee were invested with no powers to compel the attendance of witnesses. In the course of the enquiry, 99 tea-gardens were visited, attention being mainly devoted to inspection of the lines, hospitals, sanitary arrangements and to examination of the pay registers and other garden records. In order to cover as much ground as possible and at the same time to avoid any chance of disturbing the labour force, the Committee usually divided into parties of two or three members. In this way, it was generally possible to visit two or three gardens in one day. Members recorded notes on any points which called for particular attention in the course of their inspection. The gardens selected were of three classes: (a) typical representative gardens; (b) gardens where conditions were perhaps open to criticism; and (c) gardens where there had been strikes or disturbances in the previous 18 months.

7. It can hardly be said that conditions in the cold weather of 1921-22 were ideal for the purpose of conducting an enquiry of the kind. When the Committee started touring in the Darrang district in December, the strength of the non-cooperation movement was conspicuous in its outward and visible aspects. As regards the tea-gardens, the most noticeable phase of the movement at this time was interference with garden bazaars. This usually took the form of attempts, often successful, to prevent supplies from reaching these bazaars, and to establish

Political conditions in the tea districts at the time of the Enquiry.

CHAP. I, rival markets with the obvious intention of creating discontent and unrest among
 PARAS, 7-9. the labour force. In Sylhet the non-co-operation movement was not so visibly prominent, being overshadowed by the Khilafat agitation. In January the sight of thousands of Khilafat volunteers in procession through Silchar town which is practically the centre of the numerous tea-gardens in that district, showed the strength of the revolutionary movement in Cachar. There was ample proof of attempts on the part of the non-co-operators to interfere with garden bazaars, and latterly of a dangerous movement to enlist tea-garden coolies as volunteers with a distinctive display of caps, sashes and badges. In Dibrugarh probably owing to the fact that there are comparatively few Assamese villages in the main tea district area, which forms a more or less solid block, the activities of the extremists were not much in evidence.

8. In Sibsagar, on the other hand, for more than a month previous to the arrival of the Committee the non-co-operation campaign had been vigorously conducted. Throughout the district attempts had been made by the apostles of the new regime to interfere with garden bazaars and to induce vendors of paddy and villagers to refuse to sell it to tea-garden coolies except at exorbitant rates notwithstanding the excellent harvest. At the same time coolies were incited to demand exorbitant wages to enable them to buy rice or paddy at prohibitive prices in order to create an impossible position for the employer. The situation was met by the importation of large quantities of rice at considerable expense although ample local supplies were available had they not been held up as the result of the campaign of race hatred and boycott. The movement, however, collapsed as soon as effective measures were taken by the Government to realise the land revenue. The Committee found that previous to their arrival, and also to some extent during their stay in the district, strikes had occurred on many gardens usually with a demand for extravagant wages. The majority of these strikes were peaceful and after two or three days' absence the coolies returned to work on the same conditions. While the Committee were at Sonari, the centre of the Singlo Company's gardens, a strike occurred at Suffry tea estate. The Committee had arranged to visit this garden, but as the district officials with armed police were actually on the garden engaged in dealing with the disturbance, it was obviously inexpedient to attempt an inspection. In the Sibsagar district it was suggested for the first time that the Committee, by its presence, had encouraged labour unrest and strikes. At a meeting of the Jorhat Sub-Committee of the Assam Valley Branch of the Indian Tea Association held on February 15th, the programme of the Committee in the Jorhat subdivision was discussed, and the following resolution was passed :—

“ Regarding the proposed visits to individual gardens the Committee was strongly of opinion that these be confined to the examination of books, lixes, etc., and that no personal enquiries be made from coolies, or the labour in any way interfered with. It was considered that any such enquiries would be misunderstood and would create an opposite impression to that intended and would certainly be used by agitators to further their own ends.

“ The garden staffs contain many such agitators and these would distort the meaning and object of the whole Commission.”

On the other hand, there was little outward or visible sign of the non-co-operation movement during the stay of the Committee in the Jorhat subdivision. At this time a force of 500 Assam Rifles had been deputed to march through the district. The object of this demonstration was to show that the Government possessed the means to deal strictly with disorder should occasion arise. There was now little, if any, attempt to interfere with garden bazaars. Villagers, who had withheld payment of land revenue, influenced or intimidated by agitators showed the utmost alacrity in paying up the Government demand. The quartering of additional police in some parts of the district at the cost of the villagers had produced a good effect. The non-co-operation movement was far less conspicuous than it was in Darrang in December when there were no strikes during the Committee's visit to that district. In Nowgong in March there was no sign of the non-co-operation movement on the surface though towards the end of 1921 great activity had been displayed. These facts indicate the circumstances in which the Enquiry was conducted, also the special difficulties encountered in the Sibsagar district.

Examination
of labour
witnesses.

9. On more than one occasion the Committee considered the possibility and practical utility of examining coolie witnesses. Apart from the fact that the ordinary labourer is not sufficiently educated to give a fair and intelligent expression of his views before a Committee of strangers the time selected for the Enquiry was singularly inopportune and the difficulties attendant on this method of procedure consequently enhanced. Political agitators and volunteers were making every effort to disturb labour on tea estates. It is doubtful if reasonable and fair

conclusions would have been arrived at in any case by adopting this mode of enquiry and the risk of playing into the hands of unscrupulous agitators had to be taken into account.

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The Committee can trace no previous attempt to record the formal evidence of coolie witnesses. In paragraph 153 of the Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906, it is remarked that the Committee in the course of their tour conversed with labourers. The Duars Committee of 1910 state in their Report :—

“The Committee thought that no useful object would be served by recording formally the statements of coolies. Any coolies brought up to give evidence before a number of strange Europeans would inevitably become frightened and confused and no information of value was likely to be obtained in that way. Many opportunities were, however, taken by members of the Committee, when visiting coolie lines, to converse with the coolies and gather information bearing on their general condition.”

After careful consideration it was decided to follow this procedure when visiting estates and not to conduct a formal examination of witnesses in Committee. The evidence of the eye as regards the condition of the labourer on the estate, his possession of cattle, carts, livestock and poultry and land under cultivation, or the absence of such property, is a more reliable indication of his material prosperity or the reverse than the recorded testimony of illiterate witnesses selected at random or by the employer.

The Committee have endeavoured to conduct the Enquiry from the standpoint of the coolie's well-being. It has been recognised that to adopt any other attitude would have been to discount the whole aim and object of the present Enquiry. It is therefore hoped that a study of the Report will show that the Committee have consistently examined the question from the labourer's point of view.

10. The Committee desire to express their indebtedness to the garden Managers who devoted so much time and trouble to preparing and sending answers to the *questionnaire*, and to record their appreciation of the assistance rendered on the occasion of visits to tea-gardens when there was a general readiness to place all materials at the disposal of Members of the Committee.

CHAPTER II.

STRIKES AND DISTURBANCES ON TEA-GARDENS.

Preliminary.

11. The present Chapter endeavours to deal with the principal disturbances and riots which occurred during the eighteen months previous to the appointment of the Committee and to analyse the causes. The opinions of Managers and officials as to the reasons for the recent unrest in tea-gardens are summarised. Allusion has already been made to the circumstances in which the Enquiry was conducted. This is supplemented by a short review of the political situation in both Valleys, with special reference to tea-gardens. Finally the conclusions arrived at have been briefly formulated.

The Doom-
Dooma riots
in Lakhimpur
district.

12. The first sign of trouble occurred at Hansara, a garden of the Doom-Dooma Company, on the 6th of September 1920 when different sections of the labour force refused to turn out to work. The complaint made was that the rice issued at Rs. 3 a maund was insufficient and of bad quality. The complaint about bad rice was found to be substantiated. On the 15th of September at Raidang, a neighbouring garden of the same Company, the coolies struck work, a garden jemadar was beaten and two European Assistants attacked. More serious trouble occurred on the 21st of September at Pabhojan Tea Estate where the jemadar was severely beaten and the Manager's bungalow damaged by the mob. Next day a similar outbreak took place at Dhodaam, an adjoining garden of the Pabhojan Tea Company. The Superintendent of Police was severely injured, a constable badly beaten, a European tea Assistant seriously assaulted and bungalow property destroyed. At Dhodaam the main demands were that the allowance of rice which was sold at Rs. 3 a maund should be raised from 6 to 8 seers a week and pay increased from Rs. 6 to Rs. 8. On the 25th of September there was a disturbance at Samdang, a garden of the Doom-Dooma Company adjoining Raidang. In this case three *kayas'* shops were looted. On the 27th of September the coolies of Hukanguri, a garden adjoining Pabhojan but belonging to the Assam Frontier Company, raided the weekly *hat* at Bara Hapjan. A quantity of cloth and rice was carried off and in an affray some traders and also some coolies were injured. About the same time there was a disturbance of minor importance on Daisijan tea estate. On the 12th of October there was some trouble on the Deamuli tea estate in connection with the enforcement of garden discipline, but it had apparently no connection with previous disturbances.

13. The conclusion of the Commissioner of the Assam Valley, based largely on the reports of the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Colquhoun, was that the failure of wages to respond to the enormous rise in prices and the ease with which the employees of the Dibru-Sadiya Railway had, by a strike, secured an increase of pay were quite sufficient to cause unrest among tea-garden coolies. There can be no doubt that the rice supplied by Marwaris to the Doom-Dooma Tea Company was of inferior quality. Paragraph 14 of letter No. 471F., dated the 30th October 1920, from the Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, may be quoted:—

"14. *Causes of the riots at Doom-Dooma.*—On this subject the Deputy Commissioner writes as follows:—

'It is probable that there has been some incitement from outside, and Mr. Furze (Superintendent of Police), I understand, thinks that the Bengali staff on the gardens were concerned in the matter. It is I believe the fact that the clerks and mohurrirs who were assaulted and threatened were usually Assamese and not Bengalis. My own opinion is that the late Railway strike was the chief incitement to combined action. I can throw no further light on the organization of the strike. It is my opinion, and I have not yet met any planter who would venture to contradict it, that the coolie like a good many other people is less prosperous and has to content himself with a lower standard of living than before the war. On many of the older gardens where the coolies have their own land and cattle and work more or less as they please, these conditions are not felt so severely, but in the Doom-Dooma area where there is generally little rice land available and where discipline is fairly strict, there is undoubtedly a good deal of dissatisfaction.

The proposal to raise wages in 1918 must have been known to the clerical staff of the gardens, and it is not likely that they would have kept it to themselves.'

That there should be some unrest amongst the coolies is I consider no matter for surprise. According to the published returns the average wage earned by men calculated on the average working strength in the Dibrugarh subdivision was Rs. 10-10-2 in 1911-12 and Rs. 10-8-1 in 1918-19. I admit that wages in 1911-12 were unusually high but it is not to be expected that coolies will now be content with wages approximating those paid to them before the war. In 1918 the question of raising wages in the Doom-Dooma district was discussed and though the proposals put forward were negatived the fact that they had been made doubtless filtered down through the garden clerks to the

labourers themselves. Many of the employees of the Dibru-Sadiya Railway started life on tea-gardens. The Railway runs through or near many of the estates and the fact that the railway workmen had recently obtained a substantial rise in their wages through a strike must have been well known to the garden force. It is possible that there was deliberate incitement from outside, though of this there is little evidence, but the failure of wages to respond to the enormous increase in prices which had occurred and the ease with which the railway employees secured an increase in their pay were quite enough to cause unrest among the garden coolies. High prices are to some extent mitigated in the Doom-Dooma district by the practice of supplying rice below cost price, but it is probable that this rice was of a poorer quality than in previous years as it is understood that several of the Marwaris who had made forward contracts had lost heavily on them and it is not unnatural that they tried to reduce their losses by supplying grain of an inferior quality.

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16.

Dhoedaam and Pabhojan, the two gardens on which most damage was done, treat their labour well, but though they pay their coolies wages fully up to the standard of the district the average wage given in September 1920 was substantially lower than the average wage paid in September 1919 and a downward tendency in wages which had already failed to respond to the abnormal increase in prices was bound to produce dissatisfaction amongst the coolies.

Garden Managers generally, I believe, recognise that an increase of wages would be desirable, but unfortunately at the present moment tea is being produced on most gardens at a heavy loss; few, if any, estates are working at a profit and proprietors and managers are bound to work as economically as they can. It is generally recognised that the maintenance of the labour force is the first charge upon an estate, but concerns which are losing money every day cannot treat their coolies with the liberality which firms making large profits are able to do...."

These remarks are quite irrelevant as regards the Doom-Dooma and Pabhojan Tea Companies. The Pabhojan Tea Company paid a dividend of 35 per cent. in 1918 and 1919 and 25 per cent. in the disastrous year, 1920.

The Doom Dooma Company paid a dividend of 15 per cent. in 1918 and 1919 and 10 per cent. in 1920.

14. Hansara and Dhoedaam were visited in February 1922. The lapse of time between the strikes and riots and the visit of the Committee rendered it difficult if not impossible to arrive at independent conclusions. As regards Dhoedaam, the Commissioner has stated that the average wages in September 1920 were substantially lower than for the same month in 1919. One explanation of this is that the coolies received no pay for four days while they were out on strike in September 1920. There seems to have been no complaint as to the quality of the rice supplied at Dhoedaam and Pabhojan, though the rice supplied at Hansara was admittedly of inferior quality. The wage returns show that the earnings of these gardens for March and September 1921 considerably exceeded the earnings in the same months of 1920. The majority of the Committee accept the conclusion that the disturbances were primarily due to the failure of wages to respond to the great increase in the cost of living. A contributory cause may have been the success of a strike on the Dibru-Sadiya Railway in July. The line runs through the Doom-Dooma gardens. Managers were convinced that the disturbances were due to incitement from outside agitators. But there is no direct evidence in support of this view.

15. On the 16th of October 1920 the coolies at Monabari and the out-garden Kato-nibari, struck work, looted some shops, and assaulted Indian members of the garden staff. Three members of the Committee visited this garden. Letter No. 5003, dated the 23rd November 1920, from the Deputy Commissioner to the Commissioner, dealing with the causes which led to the riot was shown to the Manager who agreed with the findings. The Committee, in the circumstances, have no hesitation in accepting the conclusions arrived at by the Deputy Commissioner. These may be summarised as follows.

M nabari
not in
Darrang
district.

16. The causes of the outbreak were entirely economic. The Manager had long before the riot realised that his coolies were not receiving an economic wage and had some months before drawn the attention of the Managing Agents, Messrs. Macleod and Company, to the fact but without result. The Deputy Commissioner states that the rate of wages in force had remained unchanged for a quarter of a century, in fact since the garden was opened. This, if anything, understates the case. In October 1920 the rates were Rs. 5 a month for men, Rs. 4 for women and Rs. 3, Rs. 2-8 and Rs. 2 for working children, according to age: Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 was the initial wage for newly imported coolies under Act VI, and rice was provided at Rs. 3 per maund so that on this estate the coolies were worse off than they would have been 20 years ago under that Act. The question of bonus has not been overlooked. Records of cases show that new coolies were put under 939-day agreements for petty advances of Rs. 9. And up to 1918 agreement advances to old coolies were

CHAP. II, deducted at the rate of Re. 1 per month from their pay. The Deputy Commissioner writes :—

"...In view of the enormous increase in the cost of all foodstuffs and of all articles of wearing apparel, I think no further comment is necessary. Even when full allowance is made for 'ticca' earnings, and for the fact that paddy rations are supplied at a rate considerably below cost price, the total pay earned by the labour force on this garden (as well on some other gardens in this district) is not sufficient to enable the coolies (with their families and dependents) to live in decent comfort..."

Owing to the curtailment of expenditure, due to the depression in the tea industry, the first items of work to be reduced were those which in normal times enable the coolies to earn "ticca" (overtime earnings). This may be illustrated by a comparison of the average earnings of September 1919 and 1920 :—

						September 1919.	September 1920.
1						2	3
						Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Men...	...	...	...	...	...	9 11 0	7 11 6
Women	...	...	...	...	...	11 4 10	7 0 9
Children	...	...	...	...	...	6 8 1	4 8 4

17. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the coolie had, *pari passu* with his decreased earnings, to pay more to the garden for so-called concession paddy. Previous to 1920, the rate was fixed at Rs. 2-4 a maund; in the course of 1920 the rate was gradually raised to Rs. 5-6 from July onwards. The paddy was not paid for in cash, but debited against the coolie's individual account and carried on from month to month, recoveries being effected as far as possible on each pay day. An increase in the rate of recovery of these advances, on the ground that there had been some extra *ticca* earnings on account of plucking in September, brought matters to a head. At the time of the riot a sum of Rs. 29,300 was outstanding against the coolies for paddy advances on a working labour force of 2,857. In addition to this, the garden had incurred in the first nine months of 1920 a loss on paddy transactions of Rs. 36,647, this sum representing the difference between the cost price of the paddy to the garden and the price at which it was retailed to the coolies and debited to their account. The Deputy Commissioner observes :—

"...These so-called losses are, in my opinion, 'deferred pay' to which the coolie has for some time been economically entitled. Had the Directors and Managing Agents, when it became obvious that the cost of living had permanently risen and was still rising, boldly faced the situation, and increased the rate of coolies' pay to make it a real living wage, it would probably have cost them no more than the present circuitous system which will sooner or later involve the writing off as irrecoverable of huge outstanding balances and would have been far less embarrassing to the immediate management and infinitely more satisfactory for the coolies..."

and again :

"The system of paddy advances now in vogue is in my opinion vicious in principle and the sooner it is done away with and replaced by a proportionately adequate increase in actual pay, the better it will be for all concerned."

18. The working force had about 2,000 persons dependent on them. These had to be maintained from the wages earned by the workers *plus* any income which might be derived from cultivation or other sources. The Monabari Tea Estate owns a considerable area of rice cultivation, but not every coolie by any means had a share in it. With the exception of rice used in hospital and to feed indigent and weakly labourers on the hotel system, rations were only issued to workers. The ration for a man, it is admitted, was more than sufficient; for a woman not quite enough, and for a growing boy or girl inadequate. It was clear that the entire coolie population, including dependents, could not live on the rations supplied but had to supplement them from other sources. Shortly before the riot, the Manager discovered that the boxes used for measuring the rations contained less than the supposed quantity. By actual test, the Deputy Commissioner found that "a family consisting of, say, father and mother and 3 children, was thus being robbed of 8 pounds of *dhan* every week—a very serious item in times of stress." It is only fair to add that these old boxes were in use long before the Manager joined the garden and had been recently discarded for others which gave a generous measure.

19. Another grievance was the high price of clothing. The coolie with his diminished earnings was unable to buy new clothes when required. The garden had provided some standard cloth, but the supply was very limited. Evidence was obtained that the doctor babu in the out-garden had been exacting bribes from coolies for granting sick leave. CHAP. II, PARAS. 19-22.

20. The Deputy Commissioner remarks in his report :—

“What is now needed, it appears to me, is a closer study of present-day economic conditions in the tea districts by the Directors and Managing Agents of the Companies concerned, coupled with the grant of greater freedom of action to the Manager on the spot.”

In a subsequent letter he pointed out that though there was “abundant evidence to show that prior to the riot the Agents were not sufficiently well-acquainted with the detailed working of the system of management for which they were initially responsible and did not therefore adequately appreciate the economic significance of the recent rise in the cost of living, they had since made ample amends.” The coolies’ pay was raised by Re. 1 immediately after the riot to Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 and again in January 1921 to Rs. 6-12 for men, and in the beginning of March to 5 annas and 4 annas a day for men and women; considerable outstanding advances were written off to the amount of Rs. 19,880 and a system of weekly payments was instituted. If the coolies before the riot had received an adequate wage, there was no necessity to introduce these substantial increments of pay. A special order was given on the 19th of January 1921 that *ticca* was not to be cut down. It has been noted that for about two years prior to the riot the agreement advance which used to be deducted monthly had been treated as a real bonus; that from the 1st of August 1920 allowances of half pay for 4 months and full paddy rations had been given, in the case of pregnant women, also compassionate allowances on a small scale in special cases of hardship from the 1st of October 1921.

21. On the 21st of March 1921 there was a serious riot at Halem tea garden. A very large number of the coolies assembled near the estate office in the afternoon and announced their intention of handing in their tools and ceasing work. They then beat the garden jemadar and mohurrir mercilessly. Later on, the Manager of Halem and the Manager of a neighbouring garden, on arrival at the scene, were attacked and severely beaten. A Halem riot in Darrang district.

22. The finding of the Deputy Commissioner was that the riot was deliberately planned beforehand. It was accompanied by acts of great violence, and largely inspired by social and political propaganda. Examination of the registers showed that the coolies had been receiving an adequate wage with liberal sundry concessions. The portion of the Deputy Commissioner’s report of 25th April 1921, dealing with the cause of the disturbance, may be quoted :—

“The labour force on Halem consists of a very large element of native Christians—there are three churches on the garden built and maintained by the garden for the Church of England, the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran communities. These coolies are mainly Mundas from Ranchi and neighbourhood. The Lutheran denomination was before the war supervised by a German pastor and it is not impossible that their present attitude is partly the outcome of his teachings. Many of these native Christians are literate and their religious interests are looked after by pastors and pundits of their own caste. Sometime before the riot the chief resident pandit by name Christoson obtained leave to go to his country from which he returned shortly before the riot. Since his return the Manager had noticed a gradual growth of a feeling of sullenness and discontent among the coolies for which no apparent cause could be assigned. No grievances were formulated but a spirit of ‘ca’ canny’ began to pervade all forms of garden work. The Manager was at first inclined to blame his Jemadar and work Mohurrirs for this attitude, but the riot showed that the Manager’s suspicion was unfounded as these men were the first to be attacked by the rioters. This feeling of discontent came to a head some two days before the occurrence when the coolies who had been sent out to do a specific work deliberately scamped the work. I visited the work in question and satisfied myself by experiment that the task assigned was very reasonable and that the coolies had no cause for complaint on this score. I also personally tested the unit prescribed by the garden management for plucking and hoeing and found that the tasks assigned were exceedingly light. The men’s hoeing task for which they receive a daily wage of five annas was completed in some cases under two hours and in no case exceeded three and a half hours. The soil of this garden is very friable and easy to work. Similarly with the plucking unit. In numerous cases the minimum unit prescribed was more than doubled by some of the plucking women before noon and in no case could the task assigned be considered to be hard. This garden is worked on the modified unit system. If a coolie turns out to work he has to perform the minimum unit which is well within his power, and if he so desires he (or she) can go on and earn very much more by extra work for which the coolies receive liberal *ticca* pay. It is I believe beyond a doubt that these Munda Christians have been largely influenced by the social and semi-political propaganda which appears to be now pervading the Munda country. The Manager had noticed that for sometime before the riot correspondence between the coolies and their own country had enormously increased, and it was also reported that a number of subscriptions had been sent by Christian coolies towards the expenses of this social and political propaganda in their own country. The visit of the pundit to his own country appears to have increased his sympathy with the movement, and on his return there is no doubt that he and his friends have attempted to spread it on the garden and on other gardens in the east of the district where Christian Mundas are to be found.

CHAP. II, "4. Simultaneously with the spread of this movement local non-co-operators have been holding meetings at *hats* and other populous centres in the east of the district and it is significant that the day before the riot Chandra Nath Sarma presided over a non-co-operation meeting at Gahigaon *hat* which is not far from Halem and which is attended by numerous Halem coolies. No evidence is forthcoming to prove that Chandra Nath Sarma or any other non-co-operator directly incited the coolies but from the language used by the coolies in the course of the riot it is evident that their general attitude has been affected by the prevalent social and political propaganda

23. This garden was visited by three members of the Committee who found that the coolies were well paid and contented. The Committee have no hesitation in accepting the conclusions arrived at by the Deputy Commissioner.

Chargola
exodus in
Sylhet dis-
trict.

24. On the 1st and 2nd of May 1921 non-co-operation meetings were held at Ratabari in the Chargola Valley. These meetings, particularly on the second day, were attended by many garden coolies especially from Anipur Tea Estate which is about a mile from the place. The Manager of Anipur informed the Sub-Inspector of Police who had warned him some days beforehand about the impending meeting that he would not prevent his coolies from attending lest their suspicions might be aroused. According to the police reports, the main themes of the speeches were the Khilafat wrongs and non-co-operation, but in the first meeting one Radha Krishna Pande of Silchar who spoke in Hindi impressed on the coolies the fact that their present daily wage was inadequate and that it should be raised to 12 annas for men, 8 annas for women and 3 annas 6 pies for boys. He quoted the example of some gardens near Lakhipur (in Cachar) where the coolies struck for an increase of pay. He amiably compared tea-garden Managers to Satan. He further stated that the English nation had seized India by foul means and that now *Swaraj* could be attained through non-co-operation. At the second meeting the same speaker urged the coolies to demand wages of 8 annas a day for men, 6 annas for women and 3 annas 6 pies for children, and if their grievances were not redressed to cease work like the coolies of Khoreal Tea Estate in Cachar. Next day about 750 labourers and dependents left Anipur on their way to Karimganj. This was followed by a general exodus of coolies from other gardens in the Valley. The solitary exception was Bidyanagar Tea Estate, which did not lose a single coolie. On the 15th of May about 335 coolies left Kalinagar, a garden in the Valley near Bidyanagar managed and owned by Indians. At the time of the exodus a few hundred coolies also left Longai, Adamtita, Lalkhira, Baitakhal and Eraligul gardens in the Longai Valley which is separated from the Chargola Valley by a low range of hills.

25. The following statement shows the number of labourers and dependents who were employed on the 1st of May 1921 and the numbers who left during the exodus :—

Statement showing for the gardens in the Chargola and Longai Valleys the number of labourers and dependents who were employed on the 1st May of 1921 and the number that left during the exodus.

Tea gardens.	Total number of coolies in the garden on the 1st May 1921.				Total of columns 3-4.	Number of coolies who left during the exodus.			Total of columns 6 to 8.	Remarks.
	Workers.			Workers.						
	Under agreement.	Not under agreement.	Dependents.	Under agreement.		Not under agreement.	Dependents.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Dullabcherra ...	931	374	755	2,060	371	139	258	768		
Singlacherra...	715	415	626	1,756	215	209	137	561		
Maguracherra ...	276	455	249	980	211	310	129	650		
Kekragool ...	833	222	674	1,729	377	182	372	881		
Goombhiracherra ...	482	193	273	948	440	140	319	899		
Oliviacherra ...	621	173	629	1,423	469	100	540	1,109		
Chargola ...	835	256	548	1,639	329	185	286	800		

CHAP. II, The *Communique* issued by Government on 5th June 1921 regarding the exodus
 PARAS 25— will be found in the Appendix.
 28.

23. The view which finds general acceptance with employers in the Chargola Valley who lost their labour is that the exodus was entirely due to political agitation. On the 6th of May while the exodus was in progress a meeting of officials and local planters was held at the Dullabcherra Planters' Club to discuss what steps could be taken to check the exodus. The Appendix contains a copy of the minutes of the meeting drawn up by Mr. Webster, the Commissioner of the Surma Valley Division. Item No. (6) states :—

" There is a consensus of opinion that present wages are too low and that the wage of a man for a fair task should be six annas and of a woman four annas and that unless these rates are conceded a large proportion of the coolies will strike work or desert."

Some of the Managers have deposed that the minutes, and in particular, the passage quoted, are not a correct statement of the conclusions arrived at. Others have suggested that they were overawed by the presence of officials when they expressed the opinion that the rates in force were too low and that the wage of a man for a fair task should be 6 annas and of a woman 4 annas. The Committee regret that they are unable to accept this view. Mr. Hunter of Bidyanagar Tea Estate, a senior planter, who took part in the meeting has stated that the proposed increase in wages was not due to official pressure. The Commissioner of the Surma Valley is quite definite on the point that the local planters themselves admitted that the wages were insufficient and must be raised. He adds that there was some difference of opinion as to the extent of the rise which should be given. It is unfortunate that two Managers, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Bather, who took an active part in the discussion had proceeded to England before the Committee visited the Valley.

27. A noticeable feature of the so-called exodus is that a large proportion of the deserters were coolies of comparatively recent importation. Over 42 per cent. had been less than 4 years on the gardens. In the Valley, recruiting in 1918-19 had been unusually heavy and the class of coolie imported in that year under famine conditions is a matter of notoriety. The new coolies were mostly Chamars. It is admitted that many arrived in such a condition as rendered them easy victims to the influenza epidemic then raging in the gardens. Many of the survivors were so reduced in health and strength as to be incapacitated from doing a fair day's work or earning a living wage.

28. Shortly after the exodus, detailed enquiries were instituted on several of the Chargola gardens which had lost a large proportion of their labour force. The finding was that in some gardens many coolies prior to the exodus were not earning a living wage, that there were cases of oppression of low caste coolies by sardars of superior caste, that others were employed by the Indian staff on private work and that there was some lack of sympathy on the part of the European staff. The Ratabari meetings were found to be largely responsible for the sudden exodus. The general conclusion was that the recruiting of an inferior type of coolie had paved the way for the agitator and facilitated his methods of propaganda. The following extract from the Deputy Commissioner's report may be quoted :—

" 6. I think the cause of the exodus was that the appeal of non-co-operators at the Ratabari meetings found a ready response in the hearts of the coolies of low caste who had been recruited in the last few years, many of whom were never physically fit to do a hard day's work and others who were constitutionally lazy or unwilling to exert themselves. I am convinced that if the Agents of the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association had been more careful in their selection of coolies and if the ~~Ca~~ Agents had not been so keen in getting hundreds of new coolies into the gardens in war time when tea was prosperous and money plentiful without troubling much about the quality of the recruits, the exodus, if it had taken place at all, would have been of much smaller extent. In brief, bad recruiting made the non-co-operation propaganda easy. It would have been better perhaps to spend more money on the old coolies, e.g., by raising the rates. One result of getting so many new coolies is that with a more or less fixed budget allotment for coolies' wages the individual coolie cannot earn so much. The money has to be distributed among more people. What happens is that where a garden has a lot of useless, feeble or lazy coolies, they must be kept alive, and the hard-working coolies suffer. It would pay many gardens to weed out the riff-raff, but as these useless coolies have often got relations among the older and better coolies this is very difficult to do. From this point of view, it is quite likely that some gardens have really benefited by the exodus in getting rid of much bad material though there can be no doubt that the gardens that lost so much labour are meantime much undermanned and fresh recruiting will be necessary. In so far as the inferior coolies were getting a bare living wage in some of the gardens, in some cases their misfortune because they were physically unfit, in other cases their own fault because they were lazy, we may say that to some extent economic causes had something to do with the exodus, but this was only secondary. At the same time I do not mean to convey the idea that those coolies who did not leave were getting a fair reasonable wage. A garden coolie, like everybody else, is entitled to more than a bare living wage, and, as a general rule, owing

largely to the rise in price of necessities, he was not getting this at the time of the exodus, as was admitted by the Managers. The new rates of 6 annas for men and 4 annas for women may or may not be excessive; for good hard-working coolies I do not believe they are. But there are so many factors to be taken into consideration, the class of the coolie, his disposition to do an honest day's work, the length of time he has been on the garden, the amount of cultivation he has inside or outside the garden, other ways of supplementing his earnings, and other considerations. It has also to be borne in mind that the coolie as a rule is helped by other earning members of his family. Then, in some tea districts, the price of necessities may be dearer than in others....." CHAP. II. PARAS. 28-30.

29. The following table shows the earnings, calculated on the average daily working strength, on six typical gardens in the Chargola Valley in March and September 1920 and in March 1921 :—

	March 1920.	September 1920.	March 1921.
1	2	3	4
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Maguracherra—			
Men ...	7 6 3	6 11 0	8 4 4
Women ...	5 7 1	5 10 2	4 7 9
Children ...	4 2 8	4 2 11	2 11 7
Bidyanagar—			
Men ...	7 11 9	9 0 4	9 6 2
Women ...	4 12 3	5 2 1	5 11 7
Children ...	3 6 1	3 9 2	4 14 1
Kalinagar—			
Men ...	6 12 5	7 13 1	6 4 11
Women ...	5 10 3	6 14 7	4 15 0
Children ...	4 3 10	4 13 6	2 15 9
Goombhira—			
Men ...	5 15 3	6 1 6	5 10 1
Women ...	5 6 4	6 0 7	5 5 7
Children ...	3 9 6	3 7 3	4 7 1
Mukamcherra—			
Men ...	5 5 10	6 3 3	5 5 1
Women ...	4 4 2	5 1 0	3 11 7
Children ...	3 6 11	4 8 6	3 2 0
Anipur—			
Men ...	6 4 5	7 15 7	6 1 1
Women ...	4 14 10	5 14 7	4 5 9
Children ...	3 12 4	4 10 4	3 4 5

The earnings on Bidyanagar Tea Estate, especially for March 1921, are worthy of note. This garden had few new coolies. It was fortunate in the possession of an old settled labour force with a quantity of rice land for cultivation inside and outside the grant. Liberal leave was given, and the Manager was allowed a freer hand by his Agents. This garden lost no coolies. An examination of the registers for August 1920 at Oliviacherra garden (Goombhira division) disclosed the fact that in the height of the plucking season, two gangs comprising inferior workers and new coolies were only earning on an average Rs. 3-8 a month as against Rs. 7-8 and over, earned by the best workers. In these two gangs, there were a large number of women earning 2 annas 3 pies a day, and many earning only one anna 6 pies. The low earnings in Mukamcherra are remarkable. The pay registers showed an excessive number of quarter *haziras*. At the time of the exodus a full task or *hazira* in this garden was 4 annas 3 pies for men and 3 annas for women.

30. Rai Bahadur Panchu Gopal Mukerjee, Subdivisional Officer of Karimganj, is of opinion that the sudden exodus was mainly the result of the efforts of political agitators. He believes that propaganda had been carried on in the neighbourhood of the tea-gardens for some time previous and that matters culminated in the Ratabari

CHAP. II. meetings, Documents placed at the disposal of the Committee show that towards the end of April 1921 certain upcountry men, admittedly non-co-operators, visited gardens in the Longai and Chargola Valleys, and presumably tampered with the coolies. That the exodus had a political aspect cannot be denied. The fact that the coolies, as they passed along the road, shouted "Gandhi *Maharaj ki jai*"—and that in their desire to return to their country as soon as possible they sold their cattle and other property on the road for ridiculous prices, corroborates this view. The Subdivisional Officer in his evidence referred to the large number of coolies of indifferent physique recruited in 1918-19 and stated that influenza in 1919-20 had reduced a large number of coolies on the gardens to such a condition that many of them were physically unable to earn a decent living-wage. He adds that during the exodus he found numbers of coolies in rags, many of whom appeared to be ill-nourished though the majority of those who left the gardens were in a good state of health and fairly well-clad. Dr. Dunlop, the Medical Officer of the gardens, states :—

"The coolies who left in the exodus were mainly new coolies and many were physically unfit. The gardens used to do their best to feed them up,"

and again,

"I should say that 80 per cent. of those who left were physically fit to do a day's full task."

The Deputy Commissioner, in the course of his enquiries, found that the wretched condition of some of the coolies on Goombhira estate had been brought to the notice of the visiting Agent who gave instructions that efforts should be made to assist them in every way. The Deputy Commissioner's note indicates what was done for the coolies on the gardens belonging to the Chargola Tea Association :—

"3. I may note on some benefits which the coolies get here. For some time it has been the custom to keep a *bhathkhana* in connection with the hospital. Coolies who were unable to work or who had been unable to earn enough to keep themselves could get two full meals a day, free of charge. The cost to the garden in the years ending March 1920 and March 1921 was Rs. 4,284 and Rs. 4,425, respectively. The Manager says the *bhathkhana* system was overdone. The loss on rice in the same two years was Rs. 10,585. In 1919 during the influenza epidemic it was necessary to give considerable help to the coolies in the way of advances. The Manager wrote to the Directors at home that such advances should be written off as irrecoverable as the coolies were not responsible. This was accordingly done to the extent of Rs. 5,352. Another item was a small loss sustained by the garden in keeping a shop where some articles were supplied to them at the lowest rate possible to keep down the prices of the *mahajan*. New coolies coming up get full *haziras* for the first month, irrespective of the work done; after that many of them are put on easy jobs where they can earn their pay till they are fit to hoe. Unless in the case of a single man or woman, absolutely helpless, no sick *haziras* are given. They could get meals at the *bhathkhana*. Up to 1919 the agreements used to be for three years with total advances (not annual) of Rs. 9 and Rs. 6 for men and women, respectively. Since then advances of the same amounts are given annually."

31. In the course of the examination of witnesses, allusion has been made to the Surma Valley Conference which met at Sylhet on the 26th September 1920. The fourth resolution reads as follows :—

"In view of the fact that the European merchants and planters of the Surma Valley have systematically opposed the national aspirations and legitimate claims of the people,

"And in view of the fact that the said merchants and planters of this Valley have frequently oppressed and tyrannised the Indian employes under them and have more than once trifled with their lives,

"And in view of the fact that the Local Administration have, in spite of the repeated protests of the people of this Valley against such oppressions and outrages, failed to adopt effective measures to put a stop to such misdeeds,

"And in view of the fact that the Assam Administration has identified itself with the said European merchants and planters,

"This Conference is of opinion that complete non-violent non-co-operation with the said European merchants and planters is the only effective measure to guard against the continuance of such actions."

"And as a first step this conference urges the people of this Valley to adopt the following programme :—

- (1) To refuse to take service under European planters and merchants ;
- (2) Gradual withdrawal of those who are already in such service ;
- (3) Non-acceptance of briefs by lawyers from such planters and merchants ;
- (4) Refusal on the part of the people of this Valley to grant fresh leases or to renew, whenever possible, the old ones after the existing term ;
- (5) Immediate withdrawal from all such association with such non-official Europeans ;
- (6) To abstain from attending any party or gathering in which such non-official Europeans are invited."

It seems not unreasonable to hold that the Chargola exodus was partly the result of the policy of advocating a gradual withdrawal of Indian employes in the service

of European planters and merchants. The police accounts of the speeches delivered at the Ratabari meetings are meagre, but they may be supplemented by the evidence of Mr. Gunnery, the Manager of Anipur, and others. It is of interest to note that documents seized by the police show that in June 1921 when many Chargola coolies were stranded at Karimganj, more than one Indian zemindar and the Manager of an Indian tea-garden approached the Secretary of the Congress Committee, Karimganj, with offers to find employment for the labourers on their estates.

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The Chairman of the Assam Labour Board who made enquiries in the Central Provinces with reference to reports that many of the Chargola coolies wished to return to the gardens found that there was nothing in them and he was unable to trace any particular batches. Mr. Milligan has also stated in his evidence that some of the Chargola coolies who had returned to their homes complained to him that they only received 2 annas 6 pies a day on the gardens. There is evidence too that the coolies who returned to their homes in the Gorakhpur district of the United Provinces, were able to earn much better wages than on the Chargola tea-gardens and evinced no desire whatever to return. The Report on the Revenue Administration of the United Provinces for the year ending 30th September 1921 states:—"The demand for labour was again in excess of the supply, and wages rose in consequence proportionately to the increase in the cost of living, so that labourers did not suffer. The Commissioner of Gorakhpur mentions that four to five thousand labourers returned to Gorakhpur and Basti in or about the month of June in consequence of the agitation in the Assam tea-gardens, and were absorbed without difficulty." The general conclusion arrived at by the Committee is that the exodus was partly due to the bad economic conditions existing among certain sections of the labour force on the Chargola tea-gardens, particularly in the case of coolies imported in recent years, notably 1918-19, but that the Ratabari meetings, and probably secret propaganda among the coolies, in pursuance of the anti-British programme deliberately adopted by the Sylhet Conference in September 1920, were to a great extent responsible. They cannot believe that the exodus would have taken the form it did, that the coolies would have deserted the estates *en masse*, had it not been for the speeches delivered at the political meetings in the vicinity, which gave the final impetus to discontent engendered by conditions prevailing on the plantations.

32. During September and early in October 1921 several minor strikes occurred on gardens in the Thakurbari area of the Darrang district. The common feature of these strikes was a demand for higher pay—a minimum daily wage of 8 annas for men and 6 annas for women. The garden authorities in all cases were able to induce the coolies to return to work. The strikes spread to the gardens lying to the north and assumed a more serious aspect. During the Durga Poojals at Sonajuli on the 9th of October the coolies, under the influence of liquor, beat the Superintendent of the Company and the Manager. The Deputy Commissioner at once proceeded to the spot in order to make enquiries. The coolies complained of low rates of pay, excessive work and inadequate leave owing to the reduction of the labour force, the high price of food and clothing and, in some instances, it was alleged that pay was withheld on the charge or suspicion that absconders had been assisted to leave the garden. Next day, on the 10th of October, a serious riot occurred at Kacharigaon where the Manager and some of the Indian staff were seriously assaulted. The complaints made to the Deputy Commissioner were that the tasks were excessive, that insufficient leave was given on market days and for paddy cultivation, that during the previous month work had to be done on three Sundays out of the four, that a reduced labour force was required to do the work previously done by a larger force, that young children and persons in ill-health were made to do heavy work and that coolies were often called up to the office for disciplinary reasons. The most serious outbreak took place at Dhendai on the 14th of October where the Superintendent of Police was severely beaten and some members of the Indian garden staff injured.

Riots at
Sonajuli,
Kacharigaon,
Dhendai.

33. The Deputy Commissioner in his letter of 23rd December 1921 to the Commissioner has reported on the causes of these disturbances. At Rupajuli, the garden where the first of the minor strikes occurred, the Assistant in charge had temporarily raised the rates of pay pending the return of the Manager. This had an immediate effect on neighbouring gardens where the labourers believed that the strikers had secured a permanent rise.

34. In the great majority of the gardens on which strikes occurred the Manager was a junior Assistant, sometimes with an insufficient knowledge of the vernacular, and often too prone to refer the complaints of the coolies to the garden clerks instead of making personal enquiries. On the gardens on which the most serious disturbances

CHAP. II. took place, complaints against the garden babus were very bitter and insistent, and there was evidence that money had been extorted by them from the coolies under various pretexts. The Deputy Commissioner has remarked that "an Assistant who is more or less on his trial as Manager is severely handicapped in his relations with his Directors or Managing Agents. He is apt to be driven at times to increase his output or to extend his cultivation or to reduce expenditure, and in his zeal to prove himself worthy of his charge, he is apt to overlook the coolies' standpoint and to exact from them an increasing amount of labour."

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35. As regards Kacharigaon Tea Estate, it was admitted that on three out of the four Sundays preceding the riot pressure had been applied to turn the coolies out to work. In this garden the coolies had good reason for complaint "that they had not sufficient leisure to attend to their own cultivation, to do their weekly marketing and to look after their family affairs generally."

36. The Deputy Commissioner was also satisfied that the complaints about short weight and the poor quality of foodstuffs obtained at the shop of the garden *kaya* were well-founded. At Sonajuli complaints were made that the tasks were not reduced for fine plucking. The Manager admitted that though this was nominally the case, due allowance was made at the time of weighment. The Deputy Commissioner considers that "this is obviously open to grave objection."

37. It was also found that in two of the gardens where the outbreaks took place, the coolies' pay was held back for disciplinary reasons, in some cases for several weeks. The Deputy Commissioner held that the excessive authority allowed on some gardens to sardars and chowkidars was open to criticism.

38. The Deputy Commissioner had no doubt that the unrest was in some measure due to economic causes. Wages had been slightly raised from time to time, but had not kept pace with the increase in the cost of living, and the pinch was felt mostly in the matter of clothing. Labourers had "almost unconsciously but none the less certainly become impregnated with the world-wide dissatisfaction with existing conditions," and "this dissatisfaction had of course been accentuated by the very crude social and political teachings with which coolies have inevitably been brought into contact during the political ferment of the last few months." He adds:—

"Though there is no evidence that the major outbreaks were instigated by political agitators, there is evidence that one or two subsequent incidents connected with tea-gardens have received encouragement from the local Congress party. An *ex-coolie* who was found inciting the Dibru-Darrang garden labour force, nominally to eschew opium and liquor but in reality to strike work, was openly recognised as a Congress volunteer at the time of his trial and after his conviction, and a number of Belsiri coolies who came into Tezpur to complain openly visited and were entertained at the local Congress camp, and there is no doubt that the activities of volunteers in the villages created an atmosphere which was favourable to the occurrence of strikes and outbreaks among ignorant coolies."

The Deputy Commissioner has worked out the average daily cash earnings of an average adult coolie in the three gardens on which the October riots occurred:—

	March 1919.	September 1919	March 1920.	September 1920.	March 1921.	September 1921.
I	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sonajuli	3.2	4.5	1.8*	5.2	4.8	4.8 annas
Kacharigaon	4.4	4.1	3.5	5.4	3.8	5.8 "
Dhendai	3.3	4.9	3.1	4.6	4.1	5 "

* The Deputy Commissioner doubts the accuracy of this figure.

39. Members of the Committee visited Dhendai and Sonajuli. It was found at Dhendai that some tasks were excessive and that there was a tendency to over-drive the coolies. Kacharigaon except for a visit to the hospital, was not inspected, owing to the absence of the Manager. The Committee accept the report of the Deputy Commissioner who had the advantage of making enquiries immediately after the riots.

Suntok riot
in Sibnagar
district.

40. On the 22nd of June 1921 a large body of coolies of Suntok, a garden of the Assam Company, looted *kayas'* shops, beat the garden sardars and damaged buildings in the mohurrirs' lines. The average earnings for the previous month, May, were for men Rs. 6-0-10, and for women Rs. 4-8-10; for June the

wages were slightly higher. The garden is worked on the unit system. The General Manager stated that coolies could, without difficulty, have earned more. In the opinion of the Deputy Commissioner, the real cause of the outbreak was that the coolies' earnings had been regularly subjected to illegal deductions by the garden clerks who were singled out for attack in the riot. Coolies with grievances were not allowed to approach the Manager. This garden was visited by two Members of the Committee who found that a complete change in the Indian staff had been made after the riot. The earnings of the coolies in recent months were found to be satisfactory. The Committee believe that the conclusions arrived at by the Deputy Commissioner are correct.

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40-43.

41. In April 1921 a strike took place at Nahortoli in the Dibrugarh subdivision. The Deputy Commissioner has stated in evidence that at the same time strikes for higher pay occurred on several other gardens and that at a meeting of the local planters held in April, it was resolved to give a rise of one rupee per month. The cause of the trouble at Nahortoli was undoubtedly economic. The Agents, Messrs. James Finlay and Company, objected to give the rise of one rupee apparently on the ground that the concession would be regarded as a surrender to the strikers. On three separate occasions the Deputy Commissioner sent police to the garden on the demand of the Manager who was ultimately informed that a police force could not be kept indefinitely on the garden simply because his Agents refused to accept the general decision. Finally the rise was granted.

Nahortoli
strike in
Lakhimpur
district.

42. Two Members of the Committee visited this garden and found that in the cold weather of 1920-21 opportunities for *ticca* work had been restricted, that the earnings of March 1921 were very low, and cases of half *haziras* not infrequent. There were coolies who, after deductions had been made for cloth and rice advanced, not only received no wages whatever in cash at the end of the month, but were weighted with further debt to the garden. In September 1921 the wages of men and women were appreciably higher with comparatively few half *haziras*. It should be noted that before September 1921 the pay had been raised by one rupee. The wage returns for 1920 and 1921 are given below :—

	March 1920.	September 1920.	March 1921.	September 1921.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Men	7 3 5	9 4 11	6 1 4	10 7 11
Women	5 0 11	7 14 7	4 14 7	9 8 1
Children	4 4 6	3 14 4	3 10 7	4 5 11

In March 1921 "new women," that is to say, women who had been about two years or less on the garden, were paid at the rate of only Rs. 4 a month, and it is not a matter for surprise that they found it impossible to live on this wage. Women coolies of longer service who were paid at the rate of Rs. 5 a month in March 1921 had more in hand at the end of the month. The Manager seems to have done his best to urge the Agents to raise the pay, but they refused to move in the matter so long as police were available as strike breakers. The majority of the Committee agree that the Agents were entirely responsible.

The Committee have been constrained to pass some strictures in cases where, owing to the system of rice advances, the labourer has been reduced to what is practically a condition of servitude, in that although he is fed by the estate, he is unable to pay for his food and receives no cash wages at all at the end of the month, with sometimes an increasing load of debt accumulating round his neck. But fortunately such cases are quite exceptional.

43. Managers and District Sub-Committees were invited to send replies to the following questions :—

Opinions of
Managers
and others
on the cause
of unrest on
tea gardens.

" 15. Is it a fact that there has been a widespread feeling of unrest among tea-garden labour during the past few years? If so, to what do you attribute it? State your own experience. Were you aware of a feeling of unrest apart from any caused by the efforts of political agitators and do you think that without these efforts the unrest would have manifested itself?"

" 16. To what extent do you attribute disturbances among tea-garden labour to the incitement of agitators? If possible, give your own experience.

" 17. Have coolies had any real grievances—economic or personal—of which agitators could make capital? If not how do you account for the sporadic nature of the troubles that have occurred?"

The general reply given to question 15 is that there has been no widespread feeling of unrest among tea-garden labour apart from that due to political agitation. As regards question 16 recent disturbances among tea-garden labour are attributed entirely to the action of agitators. The reply to question 17 is that though in some cases labourers may have felt the increased cost of living, gardens have done their best to alleviate conditions. There are, however, instances of more qualified replies. For example the Tezpur Sub-Committee state that they do not believe there was any widespread feeling of unrest prior to 1921, and they do not think that where coolies were well paid and looked after, any trouble would have manifested itself, but for political agitation. They attribute much of the recent trouble to the work of agitators but allow that it is impossible to ignore the economic factor altogether. Unfortunately the high cost of living synchronised with a time of great depression and monetary stringency and undoubtedly the coolie, like the whole community, has suffered. The General Manager, Amgoorie Tea Estates, Sibsagar, submitted the following reply :—

Question No. 15.—“ There undoubtedly has been unrest during 1920 and the early part of 1921. I think it may be attributed chiefly to economic reasons. Yes, I believe, it would have done so, because the industry generally refused to recognise the urgent necessity of increasing the coolies' pay with the increasing cost of living. ”

“ These remarks do not apply to the end of the present year, 1921, when the rates of pay have been increased and coolies enabled to earn easy *ticks* throughout the year, I believe, on the generality of gardens, and the cost of living has also fallen considerably as compared with 1920. ”

“ Trouble now threatens from agitators who are endeavouring with considerable success in many districts to stop garden supplies and artificially to raise prices and inciting coolies to make unreasonable demands. ”

Question No. 16.—“ I believe that economic reasons tended to make living harder, and coolies impoverished and discontented, and much more likely to be influenced by agitators than would otherwise have been the case : it has made it more urgently necessary for managers to be in close personal touch with their labour in order to remedy legitimate causes of discontent. ”

Question No. 17.—“ Yes, I believe both economic and personal grievances. Personal grievances will always be present among large numbers of ignorant labourers, and it is necessary to ascertain, enquire into and remedy these promptly and fairly and see labour is not worried needlessly. ”

44. Managers in their evidence have generally stated that the unrest on tea-gardens is due to political agitation. Some Indian witnesses attribute the unrest to economic rather than to political causes.

Babu Nagendra Nath Dutta of Sylhet states :—

“ My impression is that this labour unrest is partly due to the all-India labour unrest and partly to political propaganda ”,
and again:

“ The unrest among the masses would appear to be due more to economic causes than to political causes, but the economic unrest is now assuming a political form. ”

Mr. Gupta, Manager of Vernerpur Tea Estate, Cachar, says :—

“ There has been a widespread feeling of unrest among tea-garden labourers recently owing, in my opinion, to the dearth in the cost of living, and not to any political causes. ”
and he adds that political agitation has very slightly affected the coolies.

Official witnesses agree that considerable weight must be attached to economic causes. The evidence of the Commissioner of the Surma Valley Division, with regard to the economic conditions in the Chargola Valley prior to the exodus, has been recorded. With reference to other parts of the Division, his opinion is that a rise in wages was certainly necessary on some gardens and that on others it would be desirable. In reply to a question as to whether it was reasonable to infer that the troubles on tea-gardens were due to political agitation, Mr. Walker, Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, said :—

“ I do not think, I can answer that ‘ Yes ’ or ‘ No. ’ From a purely superficial view people might be inclined to that inference, but I would not support it at all. ”

The opinion of Rai Bahadur Panchu Gopal Mukerjee, Subdivisional Officer, Karimganj, is that the non-co-operators had a large field for propaganda among the discontented portion of tea-garden labour in the Chargola Valley. Again he states :—

“ Before going on leave in 1920, I visited most of the gardens. It is very difficult to say whether the wages that were being earned then were sufficient to feed and clothe the labourers as that must naturally depend on the working capacity of each individual. Those who were able to earn well looked quite healthy and well off, but others who did not appear to be in good condition would probably have been unable to earn enough by reason of their poor health or through laziness so that the difference is obvious. Of course, I would not say that the wages that were being paid in 1913 were enough for 1920. ”

Mr. Lainé, Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, has stated that economic reasons were the sole cause of the Monabari riot and played a considerable part in the riots of October 1921. He is also of opinion that there are still a number of gardens where

wages should be raised. Mr. Cosgrave, Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur, in discussing strikes in that district, states :—

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"It will be seen from these details that in the year 1921, there were numerous garden strikes in the Dibrugarh subdivision but that there was no rioting or violence used to the garden staff, European or Indian, and that there is little or no evidence to show that the strikes were due to the influence of Congress agitators. In my opinion the strikes were mainly due to economic causes, i.e., the high cost of living."

Mr. Phillipson, Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, in reply to the question how far economic reasons were responsible for strikes in his district, says :—

"It is an extremely difficult question to answer, but I should say that had all the coolies been quite contented, agitators would have had far less influence. On the other hand, had there been no agitation the coolies might have been a little slower to disclose their grievances or make a great noise about them. I think, both causes must be taken together; one reacts on the other."

Mr. Higgins, Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong, in answer to a question as to whether the wages of coolies had risen in proportion to the cost of living, replied that this was not the case but that he thought a coolie could earn more than a living wage and that the coolie did not differ from the general community in having cause to make any complaint on this score.

45. The fourth resolution passed by the Surma Valley Conference at Sylhet on the 26th of September 1920 has already been referred to. There was no visible result of the policy then enunciated until February 1921 when three up-country emissaries arrived at Srimangal and addressed coolies belonging to some of the Balisora gardens, pointing out that they were oppressed and should no longer remain in the service of their employers. Similar advice was tendered at two meetings held in the Lungla Valley in the end of March and beginning of April, the result of which was a prolonged strike on Lungla garden. The culminating point was reached a month later in the Chargola exodus in Karimganj. Simultaneous strikes occurred on gardens in the Dholai Valley in South Sylhet in the first week of May. At the meetings held at Ratabari on the 1st and 2nd of May and at Adampur in the Dholai Valley on the 1st of May, not only were Managers libelled, but the coolies were urged to demand higher wages—usually a daily wage of 8 annas for men and 6 annas for women. The issue of orders under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, prohibiting meetings within seven miles of tea gardens in Sylhet, put an end to the haranguing of tea-garden coolies at public meetings. In the Cachar district strikes began in April 1921, and continued at intervals, throughout the year. Some gardens lost coolies, but not to any large extent. The effectiveness of the speeches made at meetings in Sylhet and Cachar was enhanced by the fact that they were frequently delivered in Hindi which specially appealed to the coolies. It is of interest to note that two of the leading up-country speakers were arrested and convicted.

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46. It is probable that secret propaganda had been carried on for some time in the gardens in the Chargola Valley. Otherwise, it is difficult to account for the extent and suddenness of the exodus. There is also no doubt that after the prohibition of meetings an insidious campaign was being conducted surreptitiously on some gardens. A Muhammadan was convicted of spreading stories among the coolies in the Dholai Valley, that the garden wells had been poisoned; a *sadhu* was also imprisoned for tampering with coolies on one of the Habiganj gardens.

47. In both Sylhet and Cachar agitators did their best to unsettle labour by interfering with garden bazaars. These attempts were met by the issue of orders prohibiting the establishment of rival bazaars and, in Cachar, by quartering additional police in, at least, one disaffected area.

48. In the middle of 1921, some anxiety as regards supplies and the attitude of garden labour was caused by the strike on the Assam-Bengal Railway which serves both districts. Managers were, however, able to obtain supplies by river. In January 1922, there was a short-lived movement in Cachar to enlist tea-garden coolies as Congress volunteers. In the Surma Valley generally, and especially in Sylhet, from the middle of 1921, the Khilafat side of the revolutionary movement was the more prominent.

49. In the Assam Valley no well-defined line of action was laid down corresponding to the Sylhet resolutions of September 1920; at least no programme was openly drawn up. There were, however, in the winter of 1920-21 clear indications that attempts would be made by agitators to unsettle garden labour. These, however, did not attract special attention till the hot weather of 1921 when there was a marked interference with garden bazaars, especially in the Darrang and Sibsagar districts. From that time onwards, the non-co-operation movement gathered strength and grew more intense. The Dibrugarh subdivision of the Lakhimpur district was affected less than the rest of the Valley, probably because it contains

Political situation in the Assam Valley.

fewer Assamese villages, and a greater mixture of races, and a large tea-garden population concentrated in a compact area. Political agitation was, however, by no means absent, and several individuals were convicted or prohibited from addressing meetings. According to the Deputy Commissioner, there is little or no evidence that the Doom-Dooma riots or the strikes of April and May 1921 in the Dibrugarh and Panitola tea districts were due to the influence of Congress agitators. Nowgong is not an important tea district, and although the non-co-operation movement was conspicuous in the past cold weather, its effect on gardens was negligible. Attempts to interfere with bazaars, though for a time successful, were in the main defeated by the action of Managers who opened private bazaars on the estates.

50. In the Darrang and Sibsagar districts, non-co-operators directed their main activities towards interference with garden bazaars. In Sibsagar, when orders prohibiting the establishment of rival bazaars were issued, the agitators endeavoured to intimidate or persuade villagers not to sell rice to coolies except at exorbitant rates. Documents seized disclosed the existence of a plan to induce coolies to abandon the garden bazaars in order that they might be more easily influenced by professional agitators and volunteers who dare not venture inside the lines or garden grants. The papers included lists of tea-gardens, post offices and garden bazaars. From April 1921 onwards, numerous strikes occurred on tea-gardens in both districts, especially in Sibsagar. The coolies demanded enhanced wages, but generally resumed work after a peaceable strike of two or three days' duration. Exceptions were the riots at Suntok and Suffry in Sibsagar, and the riots of October 1921 in Darrang.

51. There was more than one case of assault by Assamese villagers on Europeans. The arrest of many prominent agitators in the Sibsagar and Darrang districts after the Criminal Amendment Act, XIV of 1908, had been brought into operation, led to a cessation of more open activities. In January 1922 refusal to pay land revenue and the boycott of the law courts were conspicuous features of the revolutionary programme. The march of 500 Assam Rifles through the Sibsagar district, and the quartering of additional police in disaffected areas in both districts succeeded in restoring peace and order. In March the situation had become more or less normal.

Conclusions.

52. In the latter half of 1920, and the beginning of 1921, owing to the unfavourable rate of exchange and the crisis in tea, many gardens found that their resources were crippled, at a time when the coolies required special assistance to enable them to meet the high cost of living. In view of the depression in the tea industry, and the uncertainty as to the future, an increase of wages was considered impracticable. Gardens found it difficult to induce Banks and Agents to advance money to carry on, and the case of some concerns owned by Indians was particularly critical. An increased wage bill might well have meant in some instances the temporary or permanent closure of gardens, and the dispersion of the labour force. Help was given to the coolie in the shape of concession rice, and, to some extent, of clothing. Opportunities for overtime earnings had to be restricted. It is not surprising that there was unrest among tea-garden labour. The Committee are satisfied that though economies had to be effected, Managers did their best to see that the labourer did not suffer. Their inability to provide full employment on the estates was met by granting coolies liberal leave, by encouraging them to take up land for rice cultivation, and in some instances by arranging for outside work on the construction and repair of Local Board roads.

53. In these circumstances, the fact that non-co-operators found a congenial field for their activities was only to be expected. The short historical retrospect indicates that full advantage was taken of the opportunities. The Committee are convinced that the agitators who interfered with garden bazaars and who addressed coolies in meetings on the subject of low wages and mal-treatment were mainly actuated by the desire to unsettle and disturb labour and not by any benevolent intentions of improving the material condition of the labourer. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with racial feeling. The aim of the non-co-operators in the tea districts of Assam, as elsewhere, was avowedly revolutionary, and this is the only interpretation which can reasonably be placed on the policy of civil disobedience which was so insistently advocated last cold weather.

54. The Committee are of opinion that, though their main task is to enquire into present conditions on tea-gardens, a brief review of the political situation was essential to obtain a correct perspective. At the same time an analysis of the causes of the more serious disturbances and riots indicates that the economic factor cannot be ignored. The Committee desire to dissociate themselves from the view that political agitation was the sole and only cause of the recent unrest in tea-gardens. They hold that the unrest was due to a combination of economic and political conditions, and that undoubtedly the existence of economic grievances rendered coolies more ready to listen to the exhortations and incitements of non-co-operators and other agitators.

CONCESSIONS.

55. Under Act VI of 1901 (sections 132-136) the provision of house accommodation, water-supply, sanitary arrangements, hospital accommodation and medical attendance was compulsory, also the supply of food-grains at a price to be fixed by the Local Government which in the case of rice was Rs. 3 per maund. The omission to provide house accommodation, water-supply, sanitary arrangements and rations in accordance with the Act and rules framed by the Local Government was punishable with severe penalties. And the failure to provide hospital accommodation or to make provision for the medical care and treatment of labourers as required by the rules made under the Act was also punishable by fine up to Rs. 200 for each week during which the default continued (sections 189, 190). The idea that these requirements are to be regarded as concessions, is, therefore, of comparatively recent origin. When the Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906 recommended an increase in wages in order to attract labour from the recruiting districts, they observed "It is no use saying that the planter provides the coolie with extras which should count in lieu of wages. This is not considered, and will not be considered by the person who is being asked to emigrate," and it may be concluded at once that this represents the attitude of the average labourer on a tea garden as regards most of these so-called concessions. The Committee do not of course wish in any way to minimise the enormous expenditure incurred by large Companies in Upper Assam or elsewhere in the province on the provision of permanent lines, an elaborate water-supply, excellent hospital accommodation and up-to-date medical and sanitary arrangements, but only to present the point of view of the labourer. Preliminary.

In the first term of reference concessions are defined as consisting of "free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice, clothing, garden land, and the like." There is some doubt among the Members of the Committee as to how far it is correct to apply the term "concessions" to all these items. The Committee agree that the provision of rice and clothing at rates cheaper than those prevailing in the open market can be termed concessions. With the abolition of Act VI, the obligation to supply rice at three rupees a maund when the market rate exceeded that figure ceased. There is no longer any legal obligation as regards housing and medical attendance, but if these were not provided by the estate the labourer would presumably either have to pay house rent or build his own house. To this extent, free housing may be called a concession. On the other hand, it is usually essential from the point of view of the employer that the labourers should live in certain definite areas as a matter of administrative convenience. If the garden failed to provide doctors, hospitals and medicine, the coolie might have to make his own arrangements, and incur a certain expenditure, unless he resorted to a Local Board dispensary, or, as is more likely, the State intervened and compelled estates to contribute to a medical fund towards the upkeep of central hospitals and dispensaries as is done in Ceylon. To this extent, free medical attendance may be called a concession. It is clearly to the interest of the employer to keep his coolies fit for work, and it would be short-sighted policy, instead of providing medical attendance, to leave them to their own resources. In fact, it is a matter of enlightened self-interest for the employer to provide free housing and medical attendance, though the legal obligations no longer exist. As regards "garden land," many coolies add appreciably to their income by cultivation. In so far as the employer loses the services of the coolie while he is engaged on his own cultivation, particularly in the busy tea season, the disadvantage is more than counterbalanced by the fact of labour being more settled on the garden, and it is now generally recognised that estates which are in a position to allot land to their labourers are in a particularly fortunate position. The various concessions may now be examined in detail.

56. There is considerable diversity in the system of housing on tea estates. In some gardens coolies live in separate houses with a vegetable garden attached to each, and in others in more or less congested barracks. In fact, broadly speaking, there are two systems, the system of barrack lines and that of the bustee or small village. The former prevails on gardens where the location of a large labour force in a small area is more or less obligatory, and the latter, where more space is available for groups of houses constituting a scattered hamlet or village. The Committee endorse the opinion expressed by the Assam Labour Committee of 1906 in discussing the necessity for greater freedom of labour: "Most of the aboriginal or semi-aboriginal races object to close contact with men of other castes; in their own country they lived in separate villages or *talas*. It is repugnant for them to live in a common Housing.

CHAP. III. barrack. Every facility will have to be given to separate castes to form their own little hamlets and assimilate as far as possible their life on the tea garden to their life in their own country." Unfortunately on some large estates owing to want of foresight there is no room for hamlets, any more than for rice cultivation, grazing, and fuel reserves, as the main area of the grant is under tea cultivation. Barrack lines, especially in the Assam Valley, are usually substantial structures, often with iron roofs and brick walls. It is probable that where the coolie is compelled to live in congested barrack lines under more or less artificial conditions there is a tendency towards more rigid disciplinary methods, as perhaps is inevitable in the interests of sanitation alone. Speaking generally, every effort is made to provide the coolie with good houses, and the initial and repair cost of lines must often be considerable. In some estates in Sibsagar the system of building barrack lines abutting on the public road does not seem to be conducive either to health or comfort, but in such cases there is probably a limited choice of sites owing to the extent of the area taken up by tea. There are gardens where coolies are allowed to build their own houses, thatching grass and other building materials being available free from the grant. The Tara Tea Company on the eastern verge of the Doom-Dooma district affords an interesting example of both systems. The estate consists of 3,600 acres, of which 1,200 acres are under tea. There is one set of barrack lines with iron roofs inhabited by East Coast Uriya coolies. A staff of sweepers is maintained and iron latrines are provided which are said to be used by 80 per cent. of these coolies. There are three sets of widely scattered *bustee* lines which are really coolie villages with *baris* and cultivation on high and low land adjacent. In these hamlets the coolies build their own houses and receive an advance of Rs. 5 in the first instance to enable them to do so; a large proportion of the labour force live in these hamlets and all have an option and no one is compelled to live in the barracks. The Cuttack Uriyas, however, are said to prefer the barrack lines while coolies from the Kalahandi State and aboriginal or semi-aboriginal labourers prefer the village system. About 300 acres of rice land are available for which 4 annas a *bigha* is charged and no rent is charged for high land attached to the hamlets on which crops of vegetables and mustard were being grown. This estate enjoys exceptional advantages. Managers differ as to whether a coolie prefers to live in houses provided by the garden or built by himself and opinions are probably coloured by individual experience of particular districts and classes of labour. It is possible that coolies of some castes are gregarious and prefer to live in barrack lines; most coolies, however, particularly those belonging to aboriginal races, prefer detached houses built by themselves, and like to live with people of their own race or community.

The cost of houses varies considerably, depending on whether they are of the ordinary *kutchā* type or more substantial buildings. In Sylhet the Manager of Amoo Tea Estate estimates the initial cost of a coolie's house, including labour and materials, at Rs. 60 and allows Rs. 15 for annual repairs. In the same district the Manager of Satgaon states that the average annual cost varies from Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 for a house of two rooms accommodating two families. "The average cost per adult is Rs. 3 per annum which represents the actual concession for the house." These estimates are for houses of a *kutchā* type. On the other hand, houses of a more permanent character in Upper Assam built to contain two families, may cost Rs. 300 but they do not require so much expenditure on annual repairs and are possibly cheaper in the long run.

If a money value has to be placed on housing, the Committee think that it would be unfair to put it higher than the rent which would be derived from a house of the type which the coolie himself would build.

Medical attendance.

57. Most gardens are equipped with an ample supply of medicines and surgical appliances, and on large estates the expenditure on hospitals, and medical stores is a very considerable item. Generally speaking, the Indian medical staff on tea gardens is qualified, but there are naturally variations in efficiency. Much depends on the personality of the doctor and on the interest he takes in the coolies and their various ailments. Most companies and large estates retain the services of a European medical officer who pays periodical visits to the various gardens. The central hospital at Labac in Cachar which serves 14 estates belonging to different companies is probably unique of its kind and is in every way an admirable institution. Bacteriological work is carried on, lectures are given, and Indian Assistants receive training to fit them for garden medical work. The Committee have been told that in the Surma Valley coolies object, as a rule to remain in hospital as in-door patients, and it is probably correct to say that only serious cases are to be found in these hospitals. At the same time, the Committee think that the in-door accommodation is often of an inferior character and that if hospitals were

made more attractive, coolies would be more inclined to use them. The Committee are not unmindful of the fact that some gardens cannot afford elaborate hospitals and that too great an insistence on attendance at hospital is resented by the coolie. Many hospitals in the Assam Valley fulfil all modern requirements and leave nothing to be desired. In particular, mention may be made of the hospitals of the Pabhojan Tea Company where no expense is spared to provide every requisite for the treatment and cure of patients. On the other hand, at Monabari Tea Estate, the in-door accommodation consisted of temporary grass huts attached to a dispensary. Hospitals in the Dibrugarh subdivision, where colder climatic conditions prevail, than in most other districts, are often provided with hot water pipes. From the coolie's point of view the Committee do not think that a money value can fairly be placed on medical arrangements which include expensive hospital accommodation and European medical supervision. It would be as reasonable to expect the policeman or the sepoy to regard money spent on hospitals, medicines and doctors as part of his pay. Sick *haziras* and hospital diet have, however, a distinct pecuniary value and expenditure on this account is included in the half-yearly wage returns.

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58. In the Resolution on Immigrant Labour for 1920-21, a statement is given showing the acreage of land held by labourers whose names are still borne on the garden books. The statement gives the area held and revenue or rent paid by tea-garden coolies as settlement-holders under Government, as tenants of garden lands, and as tenants of other landholders:—

STATEMENT X.—Statistics showing the amount of land held by labourers still on the garden books.

Subdivision.	As settlement-holders under Government.		As tenants of the garden.		As tenants of other landholders.		Total.	
	Area.	Revenue.	Area.	Revenue.	Area.	Revenue.	Area.	Revenue or rent.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Acres.	Rs.	Acres.	Rs.	Acres.	Rs.	Acres.	Rs.
Cachar Sadr ...	2,063	2,479	14,750	44,314	1,217	7,697	18,030	54,490
Hailakandi ...	2,203	1,819	5,325	13,435	289	1,643	7,817	16,897
North Sylhet ...	161	194	905	1,664	730	4,446	1,796	6,304
Habiganj ...	18	33	3,225	2,785	117	356	3,360	3,174
South Sylhet ...	238	279	6,141	6,537	1,042	5,304	7,421	12,120
Karimganj ...	547	750	4,903	5,438	664	3,235	6,114	9,423
Kamrup Sadr ...	55	129	381	1,444	55	244	491	1,817
Darrang Sadr ...	1,223	3,042	8,003	11,648	636	5,675	10,062	20,365
Mangaldai ...	284	517	1,100	1,209	103	459	1,487	2,185
Nowgong ...	500	1,273	2,525	3,500	220	617	3,245	5,350
Jorhat ...	635	1,628	5,663	16,602	1,573	9,968	7,871	28,198
Sibsagar ...	2,170	6,261	9,129	14,422	2,186	16,196	13,485	36,879
Golaghat ...	765	2,893	3,220	15,112	428	1,296	4,513	19,301
Lakhimpur Sadr ...	4,471	6,934	34,545	19,460	916	3,992	39,932	30,386
North Lakhimpur ...	514	1,162	813	1,336	...	...	1,327	2,458
Total ...	15,847	29,393	100,728	1,58,906	10,376	61,128	126,951	2,49,427
Average rent or revenue per acre.	...	Rs. a. p. 1 13 8	...	Rs. a. p. 1 9 3	...	Rs. a. p. 5 14 3	...	Rs. a. p. 1 15 5

The total area is 126,951 acres. The same report shows that there were 571,526 adult labourers living in tea-garden lines and on estate land. With an even distribution, this would mean over one-fifth of an acre per adult or perhaps two-fifths of an acre per family. Fifteen to 20 maunds of paddy per acre may be

taken as a fair estimate of the crop in a normal year. A maund of paddy is equivalent to 26 or 27 seers of rice of which the average price may be taken at Rs. 5 a maund. It is obvious that coolies who are fortunate enough to hold land enjoy a substantial addition to their income. If part of the area is under sugarcane, the coolie would at present make a considerable profit by selling the *gur*. Another fact which emerges from the statement is that the coolie generally pays a much lower rent to the garden than is exacted by an outside landlord. In the year ending 30th June 1921, *ex-tea-garden* coolies held 232,022 acres directly from Government. In paragraph 263 of the Assam Labour Enquiry Report of 1906, it is stated that the area settled by Government with time-expired coolies was 112,000 acres, so that the expansion since that year is marked.

59. It may be of interest to cite a few instances of gardens favourably situated in respect of land for cultivation :—

Silcuri (Cachar)—1,200 acres in the grant are held by 1,223 adult coolies; the adult garden population is stated to be 650 men and 626 women; rent for paddy land varies from one to two rupees a *kedar* or *bigha* (one-third of an acre) and for sugarcane land five rupees a *kedar*.

Samabagh (Sylhet)—400 acres, rent free; practically every adult has land; labour force 552 men and 573 women.

Amluckie (Nowgong)—2,160 *bighas* held by 740 coolies; labour force 869 men and 823 women. If a coolie or a member of his family works 200 days in a year, two *bighas* are given rent free and 12 annas a *bigha* is charged for the rest.

Brahmaputra Tea Company (Sibsagar)—4,600 *bighas* rented at 8 annas a *bigha*; labour force 3,167 men and 3,302 women; practically every coolie has land.

Majuli Tea Company, Behali Division (Darrang)—1,335 *bighas* rented at 8 annas a *bigha* held by 482 adult coolies; labour force 614 men and 568 women.

Jokai Tea Company, Panitola Division (Lakhimpur)—3,062 *bighas* rented at 8 annas a *bigha*; labour force 1,234 men and 1,511 women.

60. Generally speaking, a nominal rent is charged. But economic rents up to Rs. 6 an acre are not unknown. When crops have failed or where the coolie has felt the economic pressure severely as in 1919-20, rents are frequently remitted. As a rule, there is an understanding that when a coolie holds land some members of his family must work for the garden, and the obligation is usually fulfilled. Coolies are rarely ejected from the land except as a disciplinary measure. In some gardens the distribution of land is uneven and there is always a risk that if a manager tries to remedy this, his action will be resented as an attempt to interfere with vested interests. It is natural that those who hold more than what appears to be a fair share should object to a redistribution, especially if they have had the trouble of originally clearing the land, or if it has been sold or mortgaged to them. In some gardens the land in possession of coolies is regularly surveyed and mapped and leases are issued. Land is of little use to the coolie unless he gets sufficient leave to cultivate it and to reap the crops. Of late years the tendency in most estates has been to grant more liberal leave for this purpose. On gardens where it was necessary owing to the depression in the industry to restrict opportunities for overtime earnings, coolies were encouraged to open out land for rice and sugarcane cultivation. As is inevitable, new coolies have no land for cultivation. It takes a coolie three or four years at least to save sufficient money to set up a holding with the necessary livestock. The available land is often already in possession of the older residents, and some time may elapse before a holding falls vacant. While it may be readily conceded that the profits derived are an addition to the coolies' income, the uneven distribution of land among a labour force fluctuating from year to year makes it extremely difficult to arrive at any money equivalent which would be of practical assistance in determining the value of cultivation to the average labourer on an estate. It would not be impossible to extract the cases of individuals who hold land and to calculate the value as far as they are concerned, but it would be obviously incorrect to say that the money value of the total crops divided by the number of coolies on the books represents an addition to the wages of the average coolie many of whom, especially new immigrants, have no land at all. Another point is that the coolie receives no pay when he is engaged on his own cultivation situated within or without the estate grant, so that the wages foregone would have to be deducted from the gain on produce sold or retained for home consumption.

As to how far the allotment of garden land for cultivation can be termed a concession, there is a divergence of opinion. One view is that the measure of the concession is the difference between the rent (if any) charged by the garden and the rent which the coolie would have to pay for similar land outside the garden. Another view is that the concession is the market value of the crops, less the rental pail and the economic value of the labour spent in cultivating the land. The soundness of this view is open to question. The Government of Assam, in a desire to encourage land settlement in certain areas, has frequently held out inducements to ryots in the form of concession rates, sometimes with an initial rent-free term. It would hardly be maintainable that the concession consisted in anything more than the difference between the rent (if any) charged and a fair economic rent. The value of the crops would form no part of the concession. Government has also settled with Managers at concession rates considerable areas of waste land in the neighbourhood of tea estates for allotment among their coolies. In such cases the concession consists in the low assessment of land revenue. It is in the interest of the employer that the coolie should be kept contented on the estate by having land to cultivate and the Committee do not consider it a practical proposition to attempt to fix any money value for the concession of land for cultivation.

61. On almost all gardens cowherds usually paid by the estate are employed to look after the cattle belonging to the coolies. The importance of reserving grazing land has not always been realised by garden Managers or by Settlement Officers. Where grazing land is available on an estate no charge is made. Usually there is a garden pound in which cattle straying in the tea are detained. There is no reason to think that the system of impounding cattle or imposing fines is abused. Fines imposed for cattle impounded are often refunded and sometimes utilised for the benefit of the coolies on the occasion of the Durga Poojahs or other festivals. Provided the cattle are sent to the nearest Government pound within 24 hours, the system of garden pounds does not appear to be illegal.

62. On most estates there are ample facilities for obtaining firewood from the garden grant or the adjoining jungle. Some gardens, however, for instance in the Doom-Dooma district, are less fortunately situated owing to the omission to retain reserves for fuel when tea cultivation was being extended. It is now realised that it would have been wiser policy to have left blocks of forest or jungle for this purpose. In other cases where gardens have been opened on grass land, firewood must always have been a difficulty and permits have to be taken out from the nearest forest reserves, as for example on some estates in Mangaldai and Bishnath. On the Upper Assam Company's gardens near Dibrugarh coolies receive an additional cash payment in lieu of firewood. In the cold weather tea prunings are utilised and some estates have been actually obliged to plant quick-growing trees on account of the scarcity of firewood.

63. It is not an uncommon practice to give loans free of interest for buying cattle, for marriage expenses and similar purposes. This is apart from the advances or bonuses given with Act XIII agreements. Such loans are naturally given only to reliable working coolies, who can give personal or other security, and the concession tends to keep the coolie out of debt to money-lenders and shopkeepers.

64. Under Act VI of 1901 and the previous Labour Law Act I of 1882, the supply of rice at a price not exceeding Rs. 3 a maund was compulsory and regarded as part of the labourer's wage. When Act VI fell into disuse in the Surma Valley some twenty years ago, rice was cheap in that area—seldom dearer than Rs. 3 and often cheaper,—and it was not anticipated that the average price would rise to Rs. 5 and in years of scarcity to Rs. 7 and Rs. 8 a maund. As has been stated the main provisions of the Act were repealed in the Surma Valley in 1908 and as regards the important tea districts of Upper Assam in 1915. Nowadays the term 'concession rice' usually means rice sold to the labourer by the employer at rates below the current market price when it exceeds Rs. 5 a maund. In recent years, particularly in 1919 and 1920, when rice was exceptionally dear, and to a less extent in 1921, many gardens sold rice at rates below those ruling in the local market. For the year 1920-1921 Managers were asked by Government to show the loss sustained on the sale of rice to coolies in a separate column in the half-yearly wage returns. It would not, however, be correct to assume that the loss sustained by the garden represents the monetary advantage gained by the labourer; it might be less or more and would depend on the fluctuations of the market, which might rise or fall after the estate had purchased the rice. The point of view of the labourer and of the employer is not necessarily identical. For instance, if the estate bought rice at Rs. 6 a maund, and the price afterwards fell to Rs. 5, though the loss to the estate on rice supplied at

CHAP. III, Rs. 3 a maund would be Rs. 3 on every maund sold, the gain to the labourer would
 PARAS. 64-67. be Rs. 2 and not Rs. 3 if he could buy it in the market at Rs. 5.

There are two distinct classes or rates of rice concession. On many gardens in the Doom-Dooma district rice has always been available to the coolie at Rs. 3 a maund. These estates are not situated in a rice-growing area. Most of the rice for the very large coolie population has to be imported at great expense. The general cost of living is higher than in other tea districts. Some inducement is also necessary to retain labour on gardens forming a solid block of tea cultivation which provide few amenities and side interests for the coolies. The practice of selling rice at Rs. 3 a maund has in any case been continued since the repeal of Act VI. Again in the Golaghat subdivision of Sibsagar, the Brahmaputra Tea Company have always supplied their coolies with paddy at Rs. 2 per maund. These gardens are not situated in an expensive district and the coolies possess a large area of land for rice cultivation. Elsewhere the general practice is to stock and sell rice to coolies in years of scarcity when the market price is unduly high or exceeds Rs. 5 a maund. This concession is more common in Assam than in the Surma Valley. Previous to 1919, it was comparatively rare for gardens in Sylhet and Cachar to stock rice, but in many gardens in the Lakhimpur district, where prices run higher on the average than in Lower Assam, the practice is of long continuance.

65. Some gardens keep rice in stock for the benefit of new coolies who may at first find difficulty in getting full value for their money owing to ignorance of the local vernacular or insufficient acquaintance with market rates and local conditions. The average coolie looks forward to the weekly market day as a welcome variety in his monotonous existence and prefers to go to the bazaar, or to the village to bargain for his rice or paddy and other supplies rather than have recourse to the garden store. When rice is supplied by the shopkeeper or contractor, the bags are carefully examined by the Manager or his Assistants. The acceptance of bad rice has led to serious trouble among the labour force in more than one case. There is no doubt that there are shopkeepers who deliberately mix bad rice with good and endeavour to palm it off if precautions are not taken and the rice carefully examined by reliable agency. The temptation has been very great in order to avoid heavy losses on contracts, due to fluctuations in the market price. Cases are not unknown when the coolie has been defrauded by the subordinate garden staff using false measures or boxes containing less than the amount for which the coolie pays in cash or by deduction from his pay at the end of the month. There is necessarily a limit on the quantity of "concession rice" which a coolie is allowed to buy and the Committee have no reason to believe that the ration is not sufficient in most cases. But when a coolie depends solely on his garden earnings for the support of his family, care should be taken to see that the amount of rice allotted is sufficient for the needs of the children. Some gardens meet the difficulty by giving free midday meals to the children on the estate.

66. It is impossible to put an exact money value on the rice concession from the coolie's point of view. This could only be done if statistics as regards particular estates were carefully worked out. Details would be required as regards the number of coolies who buy rice from the garden, the quantities purchased, the current market rate and the garden selling price. Where rice or paddy is always sold to the coolie at a fixed rate as in many gardens in the Doom-Dooma district and in the Brahmaputra Company, the task is easier if the current bazaar prices are known. As regards gardens which do not sell at fixed rates or which normally only stock rice or paddy in years when it is exceptionally dear, the sliding scale which is preferred to an increase in the cash wage renders accurate calculation an impossibility, without the collection of intricate statistical information. For part of 1919, in 1920 and for some months in 1921, many tea gardens had, owing to the difficult financial position, to restrict their expenditure in this respect as in other directions.

67. In the Resolution on Immigrant Labour for 1920-21 the following statement is given of the amount of grain (paddy and rice) supplied by tea gardens to labourers

and the price charged for it during the year ending 30th June 1921 :—

CHAP. III,
PART. 67.

District.	Amount of grain supplied to labourers.	Price charged to labourers.	Market price as returned.
1	2	3	4
	Mds.	Rs.	Rs.
Cachar ...	Paddy ... 190	549	569
	Rice ... 149,841	8,59,835	10,88,386
Sylhet ...	Paddy ... ..	...	...
	Rice ... 218,090	11,40,543	13,98,218
Kamrup ...	Paddy ... 2,084	4,674	6,891
	Rice ... ..	...	...
Darrang ...	Paddy ... 37,954	1,31,741	1,30,594
	Rice ... 16,695	1,01,170	1,44,993
Nowgong ...	Paddy ... 10,164	34,194	43,302
	Rice ... 36,729	1,96,598	2,71,364
Sibsagar ...	Paddy ... 93,340	3,28,781	3,95,420
	Rice ... 60,102	3,02,182	4,67,528
Lakhimpur ...	Paddy ... 104,726	3,90,413	4,31,002
	Rice ... 387,760	17,28,768	30,48,667
Total ...	1,117,675	52,19,243 — 22,60,686	74,79,934

By far the heaviest loss was incurred by estates in the Lakhimpur district—Dibrugarh subdivision. It may be of interest also to show from the same Resolution the amount of land held by labourers on the garden books and the number of adult labourers living in the lines and on estate land :—

District.	Acreage of land held by labourers.	Adult labourers on 30th June 1921.	Price charged to labourers for grain supplied in year ending 30th June 1921.
1	2	3	4
			Rs.
Cachar ...	25,847	80,838	8,60,184
Sylhet ...	18,691	96,896	11,40,543
Kamrup ...	491	2,829	4,674
Darrang ...	11,549	82,101	2,32,931
Nowgong ...	3,245	15,330	2,30,792
Sibsagar ...	25,869	141,211	6,30,953
Lakhimpur ...	41,269	152,321	21,19,181

CHAP. II; PARAS. 67-69. In paragraph 8 of the Resolution, it is pointed out that the instructions issued for the collection of statistics showing the losses on rice were somewhat complicated and occasionally misunderstood so that the complete accuracy of the figures cannot be guaranteed. This must be borne in mind in drawing any conclusions. The heavy losses in Lakhimpur were mainly incurred by the large companies which supplied rice at Rs. 3 a maund. In 1920 the Assam Frontier Company lost Rs. 2,42,909; the Doom-Dooma Company about the same amount, and the Budla Beta Company Rs. 93,685. In that year the Brahmaputra Company in Sibsagar lost Rs. 1,39,220 by supplying paddy at Rs. 2 a maund. In gardens which did not sell at these low rates, Rs. 5 a maund was the common concession rate, both in Assam and the Surma Valley. In both valleys the rate was in some cases Rs. 4. On the other hand, in some gardens (for instance in the Longai Valley, Sylhet, except Bhurighat tea estate) 7 seers for a rupee or about Rs. 5-11-0 a maund was the rate. Others again gave an extra seer for the rupee over the market rate. There are instances where the labourer paid over Rs. 6 a maund for garden rice. Considering the adult population and the area of rice land held by coolies, the amount of rice sold in the Darrang district seems insignificant in comparison with Sylhet and Cachar. From the answers submitted by Managers in Darrang, it appears that a good many gardens did not supply rice while in other cases the losses were trivial. It may be that concession rice was not so necessary as in other districts where earnings were lower. An increase in wages was given in many gardens in Darrang in 1920 and 1921.

Clothing and Blankets.

68. Before the war many gardens used to give blankets free of cost or at reduced rates to new coolies, or sick and weakly individuals. When prices rose during and after the war the concession was extended. Previous to the war the extent to which clothing, mainly in the form of *dhotis*, *saris* or cold weather coats, was given free or at reduced rates was negligible; but from 1917 when cloth rose in price, many gardens sold them below the market rates. Others indented for standard cloth as long as it was available. Some gardens, especially in the Lakhimpur district, sell blankets and warm coats at less than the local bazaar rate to those who wish to take them.

Judging from the answers to question No. 68, the Committee are of opinion that, generally speaking, free or cheap clothing is not given to any large extent. Now that the price of clothing is falling, this form of concession will tend to disappear. Witnesses have been asked whether the coolie is as well off for clothing as he was before the war. The replies vary, but the Committee have no doubt that in the majority of cases he is not so well off. The tea-garden coolie is not singular in this respect. At the last meeting of the Legislative Assembly at Delhi, Mr. Rhodes, M.L.A., President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, stated that whereas before the war there were about 18 yards of cloth per head of population in India, the average has now fallen to 10 yards. It has been argued that the amount spent by the coolie on clothing is an insignificant part of his total expenditure on the necessaries of life. At the same time outside the narrow radius of Assam where the tea-garden population represents much less than one *per cent.* of the total population of India, competent observers have expressed the opinion that in the political unrest of the past two years, the universal dearness of clothing has played a more important part than is generally recognised.

Possibility and desirability of converting concessions into money wages.

69. The Committee have been asked to consider whether it is possible and desirable to convert the various concessions into an equivalent in money wages. The general reply given by the planting community is that it is neither possible nor desirable. Some witnesses, however, state that it is possible and desirable to convert the rice concession into a money equivalent. The replies given by District Sub-Committees to question 73 on the subject may be quoted:—

North Sylhet:—

"Consider it both impossible and undesirable from both garden and coolie points of view. The time for building and repairing houses is when men are especially required for garden works. Many are incapable of building good houses. Free houses would develop into clusters of houses and be insanitary, etc. A coolie would never pay for medical attendance. Coolies invariably prefer buying rice in the town bazaars even if they have to pay slightly more and receive short measure. It is only when rice is scarce or exceptionally dear that a coolie takes it from the garden. As regards clothing the agreement bonus meets with this requirement. Garden land, as with free houses and medical attendance, would involve complicated accounts for the garden and would never be understood by the coolie."

Chargola Valley:—

"We do not consider it would be in the interest of the coolies or the employers."

Longai Valley:—

"It is impossible to carry out the suggestion, and in view of the fluctuating prices of rice and clothing no stable value would be placed on these concessions. Such a proposition would not benefit the garden and would not be understood by the coolie."

Lungla Valley :—

"Not desirable from either point of view."

North Cachar :—

"It was considered that it might be possible, but certainly not desirable, either from the garden or coolies' point of view, that concessions now given should be converted into an increase of wages. Concessions are given with due regard to the comfort, health and welfare of the coolie. If concessions were converted into cash we would be compelled to confine ourselves to hard business."

Happy Valley (Cachar) :—

"We consider the indirect remuneration brings the Manager more into touch with his coolies and is desirable also from the point of view of the coolie in that he is always able to get free assistance to help him over a bad time."

Tezpur :—

"We don't think it either possible or desirable to convert the various concessions into an increase in money wages. The coolie, like most working men, is improvident, and unless the garden came to his assistance in cases of child-birth, sickness, etc., the mortality would greatly increase."

Jorhat :—

"We do not consider it possible or desirable from both the coolies and the garden point of view that present concessions should be converted into an increase in money wages. Take housing—is the garden to charge a rent? If so, this would have to be cut from the coolies' pay and the result be the same, besides creating material for a grievance. If coolies had to build their houses the position would be impossible. And what about new coolies?"

"In hospitals it would be impossible to charge for medical attendance, and in any case the coolie would be earning nothing at the time. There would be no medical arrangements at all if the coolie had to provide them himself."

"Cheap rice being supplied is a guarantee against profiteering on the part of local shopkeepers and as a check, in this way alone is invaluable."

"The Manager must always take personal charge of the weak, the thriftless, improvident and lazy or they would drift from bad to worse. These concessions form an inseparable part of this personal touch and if done away with there would be no obligation on the part of the Manager to look after such. The sick would be neglected and thieving and begging become rife among the lazy and thriftless."

Panitola (Lakhimpur) :—

"It is most desirable from the point of view of the garden that indirect remuneration should cease, but this is absolutely impracticable. The average coolie is a child in point of mentality and his thinking has to be done for him. To give him a large sum of money weekly or monthly and expect him to feed, clothe and be responsible for the welfare of his family and himself is to court disaster. His money, more often than not, would be spent on liquor, there would be no food and he and his family would have to beg, steal or starve as a man cannot work without food. At present his food and housing are assured and his money may be wasted without vitally affecting him or his dependents."

Nowgong :—

"In the interests of the garden—No; in the interests of the coolie—No."

70. The view of the Committee as regards housing, medical attendance and land for cultivation is that though there is a theoretical possibility of converting these concessions into a money equivalent this is impracticable and undesirable both from the point of view of the labourer and of the garden. As regards rice and clothing concessions, the Committee think that the labourer should have the opportunity of earning a sufficient wage without working overtime to enable him to buy rice and clothing in the open market, unless they are abnormally dear when he might reasonably expect the garden to come to his assistance. It is recognised that it is necessary to show special consideration to new coolies and weakly individuals but the Committee hold that the principle of payment in kind is open to objection in that it is optional, uncertain, and liable to abuse where the management is inexperienced or careless. In replying to question 25—as to what constitutes a decent living wage for a coolie—most witnesses in their evidence, and Managers in their replies assume that the price of rice does not exceed Rs. 5 a maund. This corresponds to the average retail price of common rice for the last ten years at district and subdivisional headquarters. In years of great scarcity like 1920 it would probably be necessary for a garden to sell rice at reduced rates to the coolies; and generally speaking, it would be advisable for gardens to have rice in stock with a view to check profiteering in the bazaar—not with the intention of selling it to the coolie at a specially cheap rate but at a reasonable market price.

71. The case of gardens where rice has always been sold at a fixed low rate is different. A possible solution of the question of concession rice is to be found in the policy adopted by the Assam Frontier Company who, in order to discourage sales from the estate godowns, give an extra wage of Rs. 3 *per mensem* to coolies who make their own arrangements as regards rice. But it is entirely left to the option of the

coolies to say which system of payment they prefer. Mr. Grayburn, the Superintendent, states that 45 *per cent.* of his labour force prefer the higher wage. The Company possesses a considerable area of land for rice cultivation, and coolies, who grow rice for their own consumption, probably prefer the higher cash wage. The Doom-Dooma Tea Company follows the same practice, but there are very few coolies who do not take rice. In the same district the Pabhojan Tea Company sell rice at Rs. 3 per maund to about 90 *per cent.* of their labour force. Both Companies possess only a limited amount of land for rice cultivation. The monthly rate of pay for rice-takers in the gardens of the Assam Frontier Company, with one exception, is Rs. 6 for men and Rs. 5 for women, whereas in the gardens of the Doom-Dooma and Pabhojan Companies, the rates are one rupee more. In all three concerns, the rates for non-rice-takers are Rs. 9 for men and Rs. 8 for women. Mr. Braddock, Superintendent of the Brahmaputra Company, states that two years ago he offered the coolies Rs. 2 extra a month if they bought their own rice. There was no response to the offer. Apparently the labourers had no desire to alter an old custom but preferred a comparatively low rate of wages coupled with cheap concession rice.

72. The Committee are of opinion that when rice was dear in 1919 and 1920 and when concession rice was given by so many gardens, an increase of money wages would have attained the same object, but they realise that to give a rise in wages would have been difficult in many cases owing to the financial position of the industry, quite apart from the question of the difficulty of subsequently reducing wages once a rise has taken place. The Committee regard the loss on rice in those years as the equivalent, to a varying extent, of money wages and as a reasonable method of meeting fluctuations in the cost of living without incurring the risk of a permanent rise in wages.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAP. IV.
PARAS. 73-76.

WAGES.

PART I.—PRELIMINARY : WAGES AND TASKS : COST OF LIVING.

73. The wages of tea-garden labourers are, for the most part, piece-work earnings, depending on the quantity and quality of the work turned out. Whether expressed in terms of a daily or monthly wage, they are contingent on the execution of a standard daily task or *nirikkh*, the payment for which is known as the *hazira*. A labourer who completes the full *nirikkh* on each working day of the month would be entitled to receive the monthly wage. The employer fulfils his obligation to the labourer if he affords him the opportunity of earning this minimum daily or monthly wage. In addition to this, however, it is usual for certain work and at certain seasons, to give the coolie the opportunity of supplementing his earnings by the performance of a second task, the payment for which is known as *ticca*. General.

74. There are obvious limitations to the possibilities of *ticca* earnings. The rule of the maximum efficiency at the minimum cost holds good in tea gardens as in other industries. It would be unsound business to do more hoeing or pruning than absolutely necessary. The larger the labour force, the less the opportunity for earning *ticca*. Again, in times of depression, when it is necessary to curtail expenditure and to accept a lower standard of cultivation, *ticca* earnings are restricted. Seasonal variations such as a spell of drought, by checking the growth of the leaf, will restrict a plucker's earnings. As a rule, *ticca* earnings are less in the cold weather. On the other hand, the labourer may not avail himself of the opportunities for earning *ticca*. He may wish to spend his spare time in cultivating his fields, he may be content to earn only sufficient for a bare maintenance, or his state of health may prevent him from doing more than the minimum daily task. *Ticca* work is often paid for at an enhanced rate, on the analogy of overtime earnings in other industries. *Ticca* earnings.

75. In recent years, gardens instead of raising the rate of wages, have frequently afforded the labourers increased facilities for earning *ticca* so as to enable them to meet the increased cost of living. This had to be done where the labour force had been reduced below its normal strength by the ravages of disease or by desertions, if the standard of cultivation on an estate was to be maintained. The coolie, with less leisure for his cultivation or for his private business, naturally did not regard the provision of more work on these conditions, as the equivalent of a rise in the rate of wages. On the other hand when gardens were making heavy losses, the labourer found it difficult to understand the restrictions imposed on his *ticca* earnings.

76. A modification of *hazira* and *ticca* occurs in what is known as the unit system. This system was started some years ago in the Darrang district and has since been introduced on gardens in the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. It is based on the one-anna unit in the case of hoeing and pruning, and on the *pice* unit in plucking. The idea is that a coolie should have unlimited opportunities of earning as much or as little as he chooses, and that he should know beforehand what his earnings will be for an equivalent amount of work done. Under the unit system payments are usually made weekly as it is believed that this practice tends to less indebtedness among the labour force, in so far as a coolie earning ready money weekly is perhaps less likely to require advances from the garden or from money-lenders. It is also said that the unit system makes it easier to reduce tasks when such a course is considered advisable. It may also facilitate the correct maintenance of the wage registers. As regards the disadvantages of the system, there is perhaps a tendency to sacrifice quality to quantity. As the coolie is not bound to complete a minimum day's task, it must be more difficult, especially in the case of hoeing, to make measurements. Though the system undoubtedly gives a chance to the hard-working coolie, it tends to impoverish those who are lazy or improvident. The opinions of Managers who work on this system are somewhat conflicting. Mr. Smiles, the Superintendent of the Moran Tea Company remarks :— Unit system.

"I am convinced that the unit system tends to bad work. The unit system, however, is a fairer system as the hard-working coolie is sufficiently remunerated, while the lazy one is penalised through his own indolence."

The Committee feel some difficulty in criticising the system. They think it is reasonable to expect the completion of a standard daily task. One advantage of the *hazira* system is that it is easier for the employer to estimate the time required to complete a given piece of work. Perhaps it would be correct to say that the unit system is an honest attempt to induce the coolie to increase his earnings by doing more work, while leaving it to him to decide how much he does.

CHAP. IV,
PARAS. 77-82.
Modified unit
system.

77. Another modification of the *hazira* and *ticca* system is to be found in gardens which, after completion of the standard task, offer extra work at so much for an anna, the coolie doing as little or as much as he likes.

Time
earnings.

78. There are cases in which it is impracticable to prescribe a definite task. An example is leaf plucking at the beginning and end of the season. In such cases, payment is made according to the time spent on the work provided, of course, a certain amount of work is done. Chowkidars and sardars are usually paid a monthly wage. Sardars are sometimes paid by commission on the work done by coolies in their gang. These are cases of time-earnings.

Rates of
wages and
total earn-
ings of la-
bourers.

79. The daily or monthly rate of wage is not the measure of the coolies' earnings. Subject to the limitations already referred to, the fixed wage may be supplemented by *ticca* work. In considering the adequacy of the remuneration of labour on tea-gardens, it would be more correct to use the term "earnings" rather than "wages". There are also other extras which fall under this head. The bonus paid to the coolie on execution of an agreement to work on the garden for a definite term may fairly be regarded as a pre-payment of wages. Hospital diet or sick *haziras* are also part of earnings. All those items are included in "Total wages earned" in column 8 of the half-yearly wage returns submitted by tea-garden Managers to Government. To what extent "concessions" form part of wages, has already been discussed in Chapter III.

Joint family
earnings.

80. Two distinctive features of service on tea-gardens have an important bearing on wages. In the first place, the joint earnings of the family must always be taken into consideration. As a rule, a coolie brings his family with him to the garden. In industries, like the jute mills and coal mines, the labourer frequently leaves his family in his native district and remits money to them or returns home after some months with his savings. Managers have been asked whether the earnings of a man are ordinarily sufficient to maintain himself and his family in health and reasonable comfort. The usual reply is that the earnings would not suffice, especially in the case of a large family. It is pointed out, however, that in similar employments and in agricultural operations generally, it is the custom for the wife—and sometimes for the children—to supplement the family earnings by their work. Mr. Melitus, formerly Commissioner of the Assam Valley, calculated that the average coolie family consisted of one working man, one working woman, about three-tenths of a working child, about one non-working child, and about two-tenths of an adult non-working dependant. This may be accepted. An individual family may comprise a stronger or a weaker group of wage-earners, but any exaggerated deviation need not be considered.

Subsidiary
occupations
of the la-
bourer.

81. The second feature is that tea-garden coolies usually belong to the agricultural class. They look forward to the time when they will be in a position to acquire a holding of their own inside or outside the garden. How far they have been able to realise this ambition has been indicated by the statistics given in Chapter III. In this respect, the tea-garden labourer may be contrasted with workers in jute mills or coal mines many of whom leave members of their families to look after their land till they return home.

Percentage
of absentees
from work.

82. It follows, therefore, that the subsidiary occupations of the man, particularly rice cultivation, and the household duties of the woman, are responsible for a considerable percentage of the absentees in the daily muster roll, without taking into consideration cases of absence due to sickness. The returns in the Annual Immigration Reports give two sets of figures for wages; (1) calculated on the total number of labourers on the books, (2) calculated on the average daily working strength. The percentages of the average daily working strength to the total number on the books have been worked out, for the purposes of this Enquiry, for the years ending March 1906, 1908, 1914, and 1918 to 1922. The percentages are based on the returns for September and March—typically busy and slack months—and may be taken as giving a tolerably correct idea of the average throughout the year. Excluding the few gardens in Kamrup, the percentages for other tea districts in the Province are:—

	1906.	1908.	1914.	1918.	1919.	1920.	1931.	1923.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Men	76.5	77	75	76	76	76.5	77.5	77.5
Women	71	72	72	73	71	74.5	73	74
Children	68	...	73	...	..	...	72	72.5

The average of these 8 years shows that a little over 75 per cent. of the men and a little under 75 per cent. of the women, turn out to work. The percentages are remarkably consistent for each of these years. The efficient working force is thus about 75 per cent. of the total. Detailed figures for those years showing the percentage of men and women turning out to work in the various districts will be found in the Appendix.

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83. Low earnings are not necessarily an indication of unfavourable conditions. Where the labourer is allowed ample leisure to attend to his cultivation and liberal off-time generally, he is more likely to be contented with comparatively low earnings. The attractiveness of service often depends not on money earnings alone, but on the net advantages derived from it. On the other hand, gardens where discontent has broken out, can frequently point to high earnings, the result of strictness of management and of turning the coolies out to work against their will.

Low earnings
and high
earnings how
far an indi-
cation
favours the
conditions.

84. An elaborate account of tasks would be unprofitable as they vary so much according to the season of the year and in different gardens. Only those who have a practical working knowledge of the conditions of different gardens, are in a position to criticise the comparative severity or lightness of any particular task. Hoeing furnishes work for the men for the most part of the year. It may be either light—more or less a surface hoe, carried out five to seven times in the year—or deep, a much harder task, which is done once a year. The usual *nirikh* for the former is 25 to 30 square *nals* and for the latter 12 to 16 square *nals*. A *nal* is equal to 12 to 13 feet. Of late years, many gardens have replaced the deep hoeing task by a medium hoe, probably in many cases owing to a reduced labour force. The light hoeing task takes 3 to 5 hours to complete, and deep hoeing somewhat longer. Much depends on the nature of the soil—light or stiff—and also on whether the garden has been kept clean or has been allowed to become jungly. The Special Report on the Working of Act I, published in 1890, gives details of the tasks on various gardens in different districts. A comparison with the answers submitted by Managers shows little alteration in the light hoeing task, but a decrease in deep hoeing. In many gardens, however, where the unit system has been introduced, hoeing tasks have been reduced. Some gardens working on the *hazira* system have also adopted this method of raising wages. In so far as the tasks have been reduced, or a lower standard of work accepted, or better tilth has made tasks easier, the labourer has benefited. Measurements of work are made either by the *nal* rod or by counting the rows of bushes. As planting is not everywhere uniform, the two measurements may not coincide, but the coolie understands the practice on his particular garden, and he knows how much work he has to do for a fixed equivalent.

Hoeing
tasks.

85. In plucking, earnings depend on the quantity of leaf brought in, but important considerations are the season, the method of plucking—coarse or fine—and the species of the tea bush. The important point is that the task should be so adjusted as to allow of its completion in a reasonable time and that weighments should be carefully supervised and correctly recorded for each individual coolie. Many gardens in Upper Assam have always plucked fine, producing high grade teas which command good prices. On most gardens in the Surma Valley, up to the last year or so, coarse plucking was the usual practice. The heavy yield partly compensated for the lower prices realised in the market. During the war, when quality became to some extent a secondary consideration, the result was still coarser plucking. The consequence was that after the Armistice there was an accumulation of large stocks of more or less unsaleable tea. Last year, garden Agents realised that in order to equate supply and demand, the remedy lay in resorting to fine plucking. The change was especially marked in the Surma Valley. In coarse plucking, the usual *nirikh* was from 20 to 24 pounds of green leaf for a *hazira*. Fine plucking involved a substantial reduction in the task which required more time and more care. The usual rate for payment for fine plucking was one pice for each pound of leaf which corresponds more or less to the standard rate in Upper Assam. Any quantity plucked above the fixed task is paid for proportionately, and sometimes at an enhanced rate.

Plucking.

86. In weighing leaf, deductions are made for the weight of the basket, for wet leaf and, in some cases, for wastage in manufacture sometimes called "factory charges." The calculation is based on the supposition that 4 maunds of green leaf make one maund of manufactured tea. Experience shows, however, that in the height of the season when leaf is abundant and when, unless the plucker is very careful, there is a tendency to pluck stalk and undesirable leaf, 4 maunds do not make quite so much. There is also a certain amount of wastage in the different processes of manufacture. It is fair that a certain deduction should be made on wet days when

CHAP. IV. the weight of the basket and of the leaf is increased. No hard-and-fast rule is observed
 PARAS. 86-88. in regard to deductions. Deductions for any particular day may be excessive or insufficient. It largely depends on the weather which makes exact calculation impossible. Deductions for the weight of the basket must often be rough and ready. In some gardens, especially in the Surma Valley, deductions varying from 25 to 50 per cent. are made. For example, if a woman brings in 24 pounds of leaf, she would only get credit for 12 pounds in a garden where a 50 per cent. deduction is customary. Managers have been asked to explain the origin of the system of such large deductions and the Committee have failed to elicit any intelligible answer. The real test of the fairness of any task or measurement is that afforded by the wages paid. In framing his annual budget the Manager estimates how much his leaf will cost to pluck per maund. Throughout the year he has to bear this in mind and to adjust the task and the deductions accordingly. Sometimes he may find at the end of a year that he has been able to work cheaper than his estimate. This would particularly be the case when the season was favourable for the growth of leaf. On the other hand, where climatic conditions have been adverse and the coolie has not found it possible to pluck a normal quantity in a given time, the task has to be lowered so as to enable him to earn a living wage. In cases where Managers in 1921 resorted to fine plucking, estimates were exceeded. The task was, of course, reduced, but in many cases the plucker was not able to earn so much in a given time as when coarse plucking was the practice. Only experience can show how the task should be properly adjusted. The cost of fine plucking is much greater; it is true that the tea made fetches better prices, but the total crop manufactured is much less. As a rule, at the beginning of the season there is no fixed plucking task. A woman goes out in the morning and returns in the late afternoon and receives the full day's wage for whatever she brings in unless it is obvious that she has been idling. Owing to the scarcity of leaf, it is often impossible at that season to impose a fixed task and it is necessary to avoid the risk of damage to the bushes which might result from over-plucking when they are being 'formed'. Similarly, frequently, at the end of the season when leaf is again scarce, no fixed task is imposed. In most gardens in the height of the season there is a fixed task; in others, however, it is the practice at the end of the day to weigh the total amount of leaf brought in and to divide the weight by the number of pluckers. The resultant is taken as the daily task and any weight in excess is paid for at a proportionate rate. One objection to this average system is that the good plucker is penalised. Another objection is that the plucker does not know when she goes out in the morning, how much she has to pluck for her daily wage. Still, if coolies in a particular garden are accustomed to this system there might be some hesitation in changing it as the coolie is suspicious of any new *dastur*. The Committee find it difficult to understand the principle on which deductions are made on some estates. They admit that where conditions differ so much, uniformity in the system of deductions is perhaps impossible, but they think it would be desirable to have a system which is not so open to criticism. It might be possible, as a result of experiment, to ascertain the average loss throughout the year due to wet leaf or wastage in manufacture, and on this basis, to make a standard deduction throughout the year. The necessity for the personal attendance of the Manager or his Assistant at weighing time cannot be too strongly emphasised and the Committee are glad to find that in the great majority of cases this is realised. Sometimes, working on the basis that one maund of tea is manufactured for every 4 maunds of leaf paid for, a garden finds at the end of the season, that there is a surplus of tea to its credit in excess of this proportion. In cases where the surplus is considerable, this indicates that there has been a failure to adjust tasks or that excessive deductions have been made. In the case of gardens where there is a fixed task in the height of the season, the Committee would draw attention to the necessity of adjusting the task if, for any reason, such as a spell of drought, it is impossible for the coolie to complete her task in a reasonable time.

Miscellaneous tasks.

87. It is unnecessary to deal in detail with miscellaneous work, such as forking, transplanting and the various kinds of pruning, as there is no fixed standard to render any comparison possible. In opening out new extensions, especially where there is a good deal of jungle cutting, higher rates have often to be paid and sometimes outside labour is employed for particularly heavy work.

Systems of payment.

88. In many gardens in the Surma Valley, it is the practice, at morning muster, to pay for the previous day's work with brass tokens of different face values; once a week, the gardens cash the tokens or pay commission to a shop-keeper. These tokens to a large extent take the place of current coin in the neighbouring shops and bazar. The Committee have heard of cases where the tokens were not honoured at their full face value by shop-keepers. There is this advantage in the system that a coolie

knows exactly what he has earned for a given piece of work, as he gets a cash equivalent at once. If care is taken to check abuses such as discount being charged by shop-keepers, there seems to be no objection to this old-established system. It might be inconvenient for gardens to keep a stock of small coin for daily payments. Under this system, *ticca* is usually paid in a lump sum weekly. A Manager in Sylhet informed Members of the Committee who inspected his garden that the only merit of the ticket system was that it ensured a good muster every morning and in this way conduced to better discipline. Other gardens in the province pay weekly, fortnightly or at the end of the month. It is largely a matter of custom or convenience to the management. Coolies are creatures of habit and dislike and are suspicious of changes. The evidence of Mr. Woodward of the Tingri Tea Company is to the point. On his garden the coolies are given the option of weekly or monthly payments and although weekly payments mean more money to the coolie, the majority prefer monthly payments. It may be that they like to receive a lump sum at the end of the month in preference to small amounts paid at short intervals. One argument in favour of weekly payments is that it tends to make the coolie more provident. It really depends on individual idiosyncrasy. The careful and thrifty coolie doubtless would prefer a lump sum at the end of the month. In the case of gardens where rice advances are given out weekly and where the cost is realised by deductions from pay at the end of the month, the result may be that improvident coolies have practically nothing in hand after paying for the rice. If payments are made weekly and the rice is paid for in cash, it is probable that the ordinary coolie would be more careful how much rice he took, and, if necessary, would do more work in order to have enough money for other necessaries. The Committee have found on some gardens that there is a conflict between the daily rate of wage paid and the monthly rate as entered in the Act XIII contracts. The matter came to notice on inspection of the *hazira* books (payment registers). Section 124 of Act VI provided for this contingency by declaring that the minimum payment for each daily task shall be the quotient resulting from dividing the monthly wage of the labourer concerned by the number of working days in the month. On one of the gardens of the Jorhat Tea Company—Bokahula—the system of writing up the *hazira* register in full annas so as to avoid fractions resulted in women receiving less than the contract monthly wage of Rs. 6 in short months, notably in February when the full monthly wage was Rs. 5-8 on 24 working days. The amount lost, 8 annas, was never recovered in the course of the year. The week's wage for women was Rs. 1-6 and the recurring entries in annas were shown as follows—344 344, so that the wage for 52 weeks is Rs. 71-8 and not Rs. 72. In some gardens where monthly payment is the system, there are a certain number, usually physically unfit or improvident coolies, who are paid weekly. On the whole, the Committee do not feel justified in recommending any particular method of payment, but content themselves with pointing out what seem to be the advantages and disadvantages of the different systems.

89. In question 25, Managers were asked to give some idea of the rise in the cost of living between 1913 and 1920. In most cases, the sub-committees have also replied to the question, and their answers may be summarised :—

Difference
between cost
of living in
1913 and
1920.

North Sylhet.—50 per cent.

Lungla—Juri-Doloi Valleys.—33 per cent.

Longai Valley.—25 per cent. (taking into consideration the concessions given by the garden).

Laskerpore Valley (Habiganj).—100 per cent.

Chargola Valley.—30 per cent.

North Cachar.—55 per cent.

Happy Valley (Cachar).—50 per cent.

Golaghat.—60 per cent.

Jorhat.—44.4 per cent. (based on prices of rice).

Doom Dooma.—50 per cent.

Panitola.—25 per cent. (as rice is still supplied to the coolie at the same rate as in 1913).

Tezpur.—50 per cent to 75 per cent.

Nowgong.—50 per cent. to 75 per cent.

Moran Committee (Lakhimpur).—Whereas a coolie needed Rs. 5-6 a month in 1913, he would require Rs. 6-5 in 1920.

Luckipore Committee (Cachar).—No comparison can be made as 1920 was a famine year.

The figures submitted by Managers more or less correspond with these percentages. These estimates do not appear to be the result of precise calculations. The

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Manager of Hoogrijan Tea Estate (Lakhimpur) states that a coolie could live on Rs. 4-13 in 1913, but required Rs. 7-13 in 1920. He assumes that in both years rice was sold to the coolies at Rs. 5 a maund. The European Accountant of the Empire of India Company in Tezpur has calculated the difference in the cost of living in 1913 as compared with 1920 at 100 per cent. taking rice at the current market rates. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang is of opinion that 75 per cent. would be a fairer figure. The Committee admit that 1920 was an exceptional year when the price of rice and other foodstuffs and cloth was abnormal. In 1913 prices were more or less normal. Mr. Coubrough in No. 16 of the Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour, has shown a curve, representing the basis of calculation for the total value of Indian mill-produced piece-goods. It gives the annual average price of piece-goods in annas per yard. The variations are :—

1909-10	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.3
1910-11	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.4
1911-12	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.5
1912-13	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.6
1913-14	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.7
1914-15	..	...	...	...	...	...	3.5
1915-16	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.5
1916-17	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.3
1917-18	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.5
1918-19	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
1919-20	...	...	...	...	...	..	6.7
1920-21	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.7

A comparison of prices in 1913 and in 1920 is useful in so far as it affords an explanation of discontent and unrest among the labour force. It is only fair to state that most gardens endeavoured to help the labourer in every way by giving concessions in the form of cheap rice and clothing. Mr. McMorran has recorded a note on the financial position of the tea industry during the years 1919 to 1921. The note will be found in the Appendix. It deals with the question of unfavourable exchange and the fall in the market price of tea which were the main causes of the financial difficulties in which the tea industry became involved in those years. When exchange was most unfavourable in the cold weather of 1919-20, good prices were being realised in the tea market. After March 1920, however, a serious fall in prices occurred while the rate of exchange still remained unfavourable till towards the end of the year 1920. The Committee agree that the period from about the middle of 1920 till the spring of 1921 was one of acute financial difficulty in the case of most gardens, especially in the Surma Valley. The majority of the Committee, however, think that in 1918 and 1919, many gardens which were making good profits could have done more to assist the labourer. A striking fact is that gardens in 1918-19 and also in 1919-20 spent large sums in recruiting labour which seems to indicate that money was available. Details will be given in the last Chapter in which recruiting is dealt with. In 1918 rice was abnormally cheap, so that it was easier for the labourer to meet the cost of other necessities—cloth, salt, kerosene oil, etc.—which had risen in price. In 1919 rice was not only dear but the price of other commodities continued to rise. The coolie must have felt it increasingly difficult in that year to adjust his expenditure, even allowing for the help he received in the shape of concession rice and clothing. The fact that in many gardens in the Assam Valley wages were raised at or before this time on the ground of the increased cost of living disposes of the contention that there was no necessity for a rise before 1919 or 1920. In some important Companies in the Assam Valley, *e.g.*, the Doom-Dooma Company, the necessity of increasing wages was realised by Managers in 1918. The majority of the Committee admit that the depletion of the labour force by death and disease during the prevalence of the influenza epidemic, necessitated a certain amount of recruiting. They believe, however, that it would have been better policy on many estates, especially in the Surma Valley, to have spent money in raising wages rather than in extensive recruiting operations. It might also have been a sounder policy to declare smaller dividends and to spend more on the existing labour force. It has frequently been said that in the years 1919 and 1920 the coolie was not singular in feeling the stress of adverse economic conditions but that this was an experience common to all classes. Some line of distinction must, however, in fairness, be drawn between those who had a large margin of saving as compared with the tea garden labourer whose margin for saving or for petty luxuries was insignificant

and in many cases non-existent. On the other hand, the villager who had surplus crops to sell appreciably benefited by the high prices of grain and foodstuffs.

90. The Committee have endeavoured to arrive at some idea of what the average coolie spends. Coolies differ so much in their habits and tastes that it is difficult to generalise. There is the coolie from the United Provinces, the so-called North-wester, who often practically starves himself in order to save money. At the other extreme, there is the aboriginal coolie, such as the Munda, who looks after his personal comforts and not infrequently spends a considerable sum on liquor; he is an excellent worker, but as a rule, not inclined to save. It was impossible for the Committee to arrange for the collection of hundreds of budgets which would have been a necessary preliminary to the framing of an average budget. Besides the cost of living varies considerably in the different tea districts. It would have been useful if the Committee had had at its disposal typical domestic budgets for tea-garden labourers on the lines of the budgets framed for the cultivators in Faridpur by the late Major J. C. Jack, D.S.O., M.C., in his 'Economic Life of a Bengal District.' The Committee are under a debt of obligation to that work. They think that a budget similar to the one on page 59 "for a family living in comfort" gives a fair idea of what a coolie can reasonably be expected to spend though there are some items, *e.g.*, local taxation and medical treatment, which would have to be excluded from the coolie's budget. The budgets framed by Major Jack for "a family in comfort," and for "a family in extreme indigence," will be found in the Appendix. They are useful as showing that the proportion of the total family budget spent on food by a family living in comfort is about 58 per cent. and by a family in indigence about 69 per cent. These budgets were compiled on the basis of figures collected between 1906 and 1910, so that the cost of the various items would be very much higher now. The price of unhusked rice was taken at Rs 2 a maund which would be equivalent to about Rs. 3 a maund for husked rice. One maund of paddy or unhusked rice, *i.e.*, about 27½ seers of rice, was allowed to an adult per month, which is about 20 per cent. more than the standard adopted by the Famine Commission. The late Major Jack states (page 61) :—

Cost of living at the present time.

"Very careful enquiries go to show that while adult males will eat one seer of husked rice a day adult females will eat less than half a seer and small children about half a seer. A prosperous family of five (*i.e.*, two adult males, one adult female, one male and one female child) would therefore, in all probability, eat considerably less than five maunds (of unhusked rice) per month which is adopted in the scale."

It should be noted that luxuries were not included in these budgets so that jewellery was entirely eliminated. It is not unreasonable to hold that a certain amount of jewellery is more or less a necessity among certain classes of coolie women, but as savings are often invested in coin necklaces and other jewellery, it would perhaps be fairer to consider jewellery less as an item on the expenditure side of the budget than as an indication of the extent of the coolie's savings. Major Jack admitted that the money spent on certain ceremonies and entertainments should properly form a part of the budget, but individual caprice made it difficult to strike a reasonable average. In the instructions issued to the officers who collected the figures it was laid down that "comfort" implies a condition in which the material necessities of life can be fully satisfied. They were also asked to remember that luxuries were no part of a standard of comfort "which is attained when the body is sufficiently sheltered from the weather, the stomach sufficiently filled with food, and the limbs decently clothed with garments."

91. In the course of the economic enquiries made at the time of the census of 1921, district officers compiled or collected some budgets of tea-garden labourers which are given in the Appendix. They are few in number, and some are obviously incorrect. It would be misleading to base any general conclusions on them. More accurate estimates have been framed by one or two Managers in the course of the present enquiry. There are two budgets from gardens in Sylhet; two from Lakhimpur and one framed by Mr. S. P. Borua, M.L.C., a planter member of the present Committee. Khan Sahib Wali Mohamed, another Member of the Committee, has also prepared a budget with explanatory notes. These budgets will perhaps give some idea of what a coolie spends or might be expected to spend, and the differences in the budgets indicate how difficult it is to generalise. After discussing the wages paid in different districts, the Committee will endeavour to frame a budget with reference to present conditions.

92. Rice is the chief item in the labourer's budget. The following table gives the average annual retail prices of common rice in seers per rupee at the district and subdivisional headquarters stations of tea districts in Assam from 1912 to 1921. The

figures have been compiled by striking the average of the prices published in the *Assam Gazette* for corresponding fortnights in January, April, July and October in each year :

Average annual prices of common rice in seers per rupee at district and subdivision headquarters stations of tea districts in Assam, calculated on the average prices in the last fortnight of January, April, July and October of each year as given in the Assam Gazette.

Headquarters station.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.	1921.	Average price in seers per rupee, 1912-21.	Average price in rupees and decimal of rupee per maund.	Last week of April 1921—seers per rupee.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Sylhet Sadr	10½	9½	7½	7½	7½	8½	12	6½	6½	6½	8.2	4.87	6
Karimganj	9½	8½	9½	8½	7½	9	12½	6½	6½	6½	8.2	4.87	7
Habiganj	9½	8½	7½	5½	7½	8½	11½	6½	5½	6½	8	5	7
South Sylhet	9½	8½	7½	7½	7½	8½	11½	6½	6½	6½	7.9	5.13	7
Cachar Sadr	11½	9½	9	8½	7½	9½	12½	7½	6½	7½	9.6	4.55	7½
Hailakandi	11½	9½	8½	8	7½	8½	12½	6½	5½	7½	8.5	4.70	8½
Terpur Sadr	11	8½	8½	7½	7½	8½	11½	7½	6½	6½	8.2	4.87	8
Mangaldai	12	10½	7½	7½	8	9½	13½	7½	6½	6½	8.9	4.49	7
Kamrup	10	8½	8	8½	8	8½	10	6½	6½	6	7.9	5.06	8½
Nowgong	11½	9½	7½	7½	8	8½	11½	7	5½	5½	8.3	4.81	7
Dibrugarh	9½	8	7½	9½	7	7½	8½	5½	5	5	7.1	5.63	8
North Lakhimpur	10½	10½	9½	7½	8½	8½	12½	9	6	6½	8.9	4.49	8
Sibsagar	11½	10	8½	7	8	9½	11½	7½	5½	6½	8.5	4.70	9½
Jorhat	11½	9½	7½	6½	7	8	8½	7	5½	6½	7.6	5.27	7
Golaghat	11½	8½	7½	6½	7½	7½	8½	7	5½	5½	7.6	5.27	7½

In many cases, however, on tea-gardens at a distance from headquarters, especially when they are in the centre of a rice-producing area, rice is cheaper than at headquarters. A Calcutta Agency house has supplied the Committee with figures showing the local bazaar rates for rice since 1914 in respect of certain gardens in South Sylhet, Habiganj, Cachar, Hailakandi and Mangaldai. As a rule, these rates are lower than at headquarters, particularly in the case of gardens near the Hill Tippera border in South Sylhet, where the area under rice is considerable and communications are not of the best. On the other hand, there are cases where prices run higher in a compact block of tea-gardens where there is little rice cultivation. On the whole, the figures in the preceding table may be taken as roughly indicating fluctuations in prices. The average price of rice from 1912 to 1921 may be taken at Rs. 5 a maund. In 1918, rice was abnormally cheap and in 1920 very dear. The following table gives the average annual retail prices of rice for the year 1873 and also for the period 1895 to 1921 at the headquarters stations of Sylhet, Cachar, Nowgong and Lakhimpur. The figures have been taken from "Prices and Wages in India" (Thirty-sixth issue), except in the case of the year 1921 for which the prices given in the preceding table have been taken.

Average annual retail prices of rice (common) in rupees and decimals of a rupee per maund of 82.236 pounds.

	1873	1886	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Sylhet	3.313	3.402	3.745	4.296	3.636	3.039	2.592	3.06	3.661	3.38	2.287	3.672	4.872	5.195	4.7	3.263
Cachar	3.500	3.626	3.933	4.734	3.546	2.633	3.067	3.419	3.355	3.714	3.323	3.611	4.357	4.432	4.449	3.534
Nowgong	3.148	3.438	3.763	5.464	4.343	3.827	3.674	3.953	3.630	3.351	3.743	3.086	4.802	5.305	4.695	4.083
Lakhimpur	3.233	3.17	3.831	4.734	3.902	3.086	3.593	4.171	3.707	3.817	3.157	3.271	4.873	5.263	4.723	4.391
	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	Average price, 1902-1917.	Average price 1912-21.		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32		
Sylhet	3.46	3.925	3.831	4.464	5.141	5.07	5.031	4.366	3.113	6.07	7.505	6.06	3.612	5.097		
Cachar	3.738	3.6	3.607	4.233	4.614	4.996	5.175	4.346	3.137	5.674	7.229	5.41	3.5	4.984		
Nowgong	4.103	3.984	3.453	4.228	5.457	5.391	5.109	4.51	3.587	5.628	7.905	6.78	4.002	5.202		
Lakhimpur	3.639	3.846	4.009	5.148	5.301	6.279	5.086	5.168	4.489	6.745	7.963	6.00	4.039	5.855		

It will be observed that the average prices for the period 1912-21 are higher in the second table than in the first. The reason probably is that the average prices of each fortnight throughout the year have been taken in "Prices and Wages in India" whereas the first table is only a rough approximation based on a typical fortnight in each of the four quarters of the year. In any case, the striking feature is the great rise in the price of rice in the decade 1912-21 as compared with the previous decade; for example, in the case of Sylhet, Rs. 5.067 per maund as against Rs 3.612.

93. Mr. K. L. Datta in his "Report on the Enquiry into the Rise of Prices in India," published in 1914, arrived at the conclusion that the history of Indian price since 1890 may be divided into two well-marked periods, dominated on the whole by widely different conditions. From 1890 to 1904 internal factors were the chief factors in the determination of the price level, depending on the changes of agricultural conditions from year to year. The Resolution of the Government of India of October 1914, in reviewing Mr. Datta's Report, observes (page ix):—

"With the year 1905, Indian prices entered upon a new phase. Prices rose rapidly to unprecedented heights and so far (1914) there is nothing to suggest the probability of a reversion to the levels of former years. The explanation of this remarkable phenomenon cannot be found in changes of an internal nature; and examination of the statistics of prices in other countries indicates clearly that the increase in Indian prices has been broadly synchronous with a general upward movement in price levels throughout the world and that its origin must accordingly be sought in causes more or less common to the whole civilised world."

In dealing with the future course of prices, the same Resolution states (page xiii):—

"It has been shown that the prolonged rise in Indian prices dates from the year 1905, and that its ultimate origin must be sought in causes which have been operative throughout the civilised world. As the growth of communications within India has tended to equalise prices throughout the country, so the parallel development of communications with foreign countries has tended more and more to bring Indian prices into line with those of the world in general. The prices of Indian exports are governed by those prevailing in the world's markets, and through the growing influence of foreign trade, Indian prices apart from temporary fluctuations resulting from the character of the seasons, tend to follow the same course as world prices. The problem of the future course of prices in India is one therefore to which no solution can be found in the analysis of Indian conditions only. It is essentially bound up with the question of the movement of prices throughout the world. Prices have so far shown no sign of reverting to former levels. As regards the future, the factors involved even under normal conditions of evolution, are too numerous, too complex, and too incalculable in their operation to warrant any definite and confident prediction; and the normal course has now been interrupted by the catastrophe of general war, the total effect of which upon the highly organised western systems of production, trade and finance it is quite impossible to forecast."

Mr. Datta's own opinion is that "an analysis of the factors affecting prices, whether confined to India or pervading the whole world, shows that leaving out of

account exceptional movements, both up and down, in exceptional times of famine and commercial crisis, the present general price level will be maintained, if not raised" (page 135).

94. Since Mr. Datta wrote this the Great War has resulted in a marked rise of world prices which Assam has felt in common with other parts of India. How far the present tendency of prices to fall will continue, it is impossible to say, but it would probably be safe to predict that, not for many years, if ever, will the level which ruled before the war be regained; and the Committee think a rate of wages which may have been sufficient in pre-war days, is obviously insufficient now. Mr. Datta selected the period from 1890 to 1894 as his basic or standard period for the purpose of estimating the fluctuations in price levels. In reviewing rises in wages in subsequent years, he observes that in rural areas in India, wages of agricultural labourers and village artisans have risen enormously as measured by their purchasing power. About 1912 they were about 38 per cent. above the level of the standard period. The rise in the wages of industrial labour had not been so large. Nominal wages had increased in every case, but the rise was not, in all cases, as great as the rise in prices.

95. Speaking of wages in tea-gardens in Assam, he remarks that "the coolies in tea-gardens appear to be in the worst position, as their *real* wages have fallen 5 per cent. below those in the basic period." (page 171).

In a footnote he adds:—

"It should, however, be noted that tea-garden coolies get some special concessions in addition to wages, e.g., they get rice at a fixed rate, generally lower than the market rate."

This is certainly true of gardens in the Doom-Dooma district and in the Brahmaputra Company, but the concession elsewhere, at least before the war, was of a limited character. Perhaps mention might also have been made of other concessions such as land for cultivation. It may be of interest to give from the Report (pages 169-70) a comparative statement showing nominal and real wages of rural agricultural labourers and tea-garden labourers. The index numbers are given relative to an index number of 100 for the period from 1890 to 1894:—

	Nominal wages-					Real wages.				
	1895	1900	1905	1910	1912	1895 to 1899	1900 to 1904	1905 to 1909	1910	1912
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Agricultural labourers	106	125	147	170	189	103	120	128	124	138
Tea-garden ditto	106	103	106	117	120	101	98	90	98	95

By 'nominal' or money wages is meant the actual cash which a man earns for a period of time. By 'real' wages is meant the amount of commodities which a man can buy with his money wages. In making comparisons between the economic conditions of different districts, trades, or periods, 'real' wages must be taken.

Whether the remuneration of tea-garden coolies at the present time is sufficient.

96. The Committee have been asked to enquire "whether the remuneration in money payments together with the concessions received by the coolies in the way of free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice, clothing, garden land, etc., is sufficient to maintain the labourers in health and reasonable comfort." The expression "health and reasonable comfort" is elastic enough to admit of various interpretations. The Committee think that they are placing a fair construction on the term if they take it to mean a decent living wage, that is, not a mere subsistence allowance, but a wage that would suffice to keep a coolie in health and reasonable comfort with the possibility of saving a little. The Committee believe that the term "reasonable comfort" connotes the possibility of saving a little. Much depends on the individual coolie as to whether he will save or spend whatever margin may remain after providing for food and clothing. He may prefer to spend it on petty luxuries, but the Committee think that the coolie should in any case have a small margin to be utilised as he chooses. Dr. Forsyth of Tezpur may be quoted:—

"By the expression 'reasonable comfort from the coolie point of view,' I mean that he ought to have enough to fill his stomach with good, wholesome, food. He should have enough to buy clothes for himself and also have a little left over for luxuries. It is certainly desirable that a coolie should have some savings, but that depends on whether he is extravagant or not."

The Committee agree with this view.

In reply to question 24, Managers have stated the figure which, in their opinion, constitutes a decent monthly living wage. The Committee propose to apply this figure as a test in coming to a decision as regards the adequacy of the remuneration of the tea-garden labourer. The Committee know the rate of wages paid in most gardens in the Province and the wage returns for a series of years are available from the Immigration Reports. Consequently, the Committee think it possible to arrive at certain conclusions based on these data.

97. It is true that the value of the wage returns is open to some criticism. Members of the Committee have found on more than one garden that the returns were not quite accurate. It was difficult to ascertain the exact *ticca* earnings; in some cases the wages of outside labour were wrongly entered in the return; and in others loss on rice had been included. There were also items which should have been added but were omitted. Still, it is not unfair to assume that errors in these returns, on the whole, cancel each other. Taking a series of years, the figures in column 10 which show the average earnings per head (including wages proper, extras such as *ticca* and a proportion of the agreement bonus) calculated on the average daily working strength, indicate the extent of the rise in cash earnings. These wage returns give the average earnings in March and September which are typical slack and busy months. The Commissioner of the Surma Valley Division was asked whether the wage returns were a reasonable indication of wages on a garden. He stated in reply:—

“I believe so. I imagine that under the usual law of averages these mistakes cancel each other by the time one gets to the figures of the whole Province.”

The wage returns published in the last Resolution on Immigrant Labour are those for the year ending 30th June 1921. These are based on the averages of September 1920 and March 1921 and relate to a period when many gardens had to curtail expenditure. The wage returns for September 1921 and March 1922 have recently been received by the Committee from most gardens in the Province. The averages for these months for each tea district, as well as the averages for the year 1921-22, based on the earnings of these two typical months, have been calculated. As *all* gardens have not submitted their wage returns, some difference may be expected in the figures which will be published in the Immigration Report of 1921-22, but for the purpose of the present Enquiry, the averages which have now been worked out, may be accepted as tolerably accurate.

98. Many of the returns of wages for March 1922 were not received until towards the end of May. The collection and compilation of these statistics for September 1921 and March 1922 involved a considerable amount of time and trouble, and some delay in the submission of the Report has been inevitable, but it is only fair to the tea industry that an effort should have been made to obtain and include them in the Report. The industry has recently come through a period of depression and has survived the crisis, and with the dawn of rosier prospects many estates have taken advantage of the return of better days to improve the conditions and increase the emoluments of the labour force on whose well-being the prosperity of the industry so largely depends. In September 1920 meetings of representatives of the tea industry and members of the Government were held in Shillong to devise ways and means for the employment of tea-garden labourers especially in Sylhet and Cachar on public works, so great was the apprehension that gardens would be unable to provide funds for the payment of the labour force during the crisis. Statistics of wages collected during a period of depression are calculated to convey a wrong impression and the Committee have welcomed the opportunity of placing these wage figures before the public. In any case the statistics have the advantage and possess the merit of being up to date.

PART II.—WAGES IN DIFFERENT TEA DISTRICTS.

99. *Assam Valley—Lakhimpur Sadr.*—The 79 answers received from Managers as well as oral evidence indicate that there has been a general increase in the monthly rate of wages. In some gardens where wages have not been raised, tasks have been reduced. In practically all cases where wages have been raised tasks have remained unaltered. Wages are highest in the Doom-Dooma district where living is more expensive than in other tea districts in the Province. As most of the land is under tea the opportunities for supplementing earnings by cultivation or by work in the villages are restricted. The locality is also not particularly healthy. For these reasons it is necessary to pay higher wages to attract and retain labour. As most of the Companies make large profits they are in a position to do so.

100. In the Assam Frontier Company, with its 10 estates, there have been, for many years, two different rates of wages, viz., one rate for coolies who take factory rice at Rs. 3 a maund, and another for those who do not. In 1913 the rates were: non-rice takers, men Rs. 7 a month, women Rs. 6 a month; rice takers men Rs. 6 and women Rs. 5. Early in 1919 the rates for non-rice takers were raised to Rs. 8 and Rs. 7; the pay of rice takers was not raised. In November 1920 the non-rice takers received another increase to Rs. 9 and Rs. 8. Simultaneously the rates of the rice takers in Sookerating were raised to Rs. 7 and Rs. 6, as living in that garden was more expensive. Rice takers in the other gardens are still paid Rs. 6 and Rs. 5, though the rice ration was raised in November 1920 from 6 to 7 seers for men, and from 5 to 6 seers for women. Early in 1919 new coolies who used to be paid monthly at Rs. 6 for men and Rs. 5 for women were put on a weekly pay of 5 annas a day for men and 4 annas for women. A new coolie can purchase rice for cash on pay-day, receiving 6 seers for 10 annas (i.e., at the rate of Rs. 4-2-8 a maund). The Superintendent states that the policy of the Company is to try and induce the labour force to give up taking factory rice, in order to make them independent of the estates as regards the supply of rice. In a letter to the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, with reference to the wages paid in his Company, he remarks that this policy has been fairly successful in the past, but in the last two years the number of non-rice takers has not risen owing to the high cost of rice. He also notes that a satisfactory feature of the system is that once coolies become non-rice takers they seldom come back for factory rice. His evidence before the Committee shows that 45 per cent. of the labour force prefer the higher rate of wage. The coolie has the option of accepting the lower wage with concession rice or of taking the higher rate of pay. The total labour force is 13,934. The workers are more fortunate than those on most gardens in the Doom-Dooma district, in having over 10,000 *bighas* for cultivation, the major portion of which lies within the estate grants. The gardens are healthy. There can be no doubt that this Company pays a decent living wage and that the coolies are contented. It is worthy of note that there has been no unrest on these estates.

101. In the Doom-Dooma Company wages were not raised until the end of 1920, after the riots at Hansara and other gardens, when wages of rice takers were raised from Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 to Rs. 7 and Rs. 6 for men and women, respectively. Non-rice takers were paid at the rate of Rs. 9 and Rs. 8. There are very few coolies who do not take rice. The Superintendent does not think that coolies had any economic grievances till 1918 when there was a general rise of prices, especially in the case of clothing. In August 1918 he realised the necessity for an increase in wages. He has sent the Committee an extract from the proceedings of a meeting of the Doom-Dooma sub-committee, held on 2nd August 1918, from which it appears that a resolution, with one dissentient, was carried to the effect that the monthly pay of adults should be raised by Rs. 2, with a proportionate increase to children. At a subsequent meeting on the 28th of August 1918, this resolution was rescinded in favour of an amendment to the effect that the existing monthly wage should be converted into a daily wage ranging from 2 annas to 5 annas. The rates for rice takers were at that time, men Rs. 6, women Rs. 5 and children Rs. 3 and Rs. 2-8. Under the new scheme, men would receive 5 annas a day; women 4 annas, children 3 annas and 2 annas. It was thought that a daily wage as expressed in annas would be better understood by the labourer and would facilitate the maintenance of the pay registers. Women would have benefited less under this scheme than by a Rs. 2 monthly rise, but men and children would receive more. The Company, however, was losing heavily on concession rice and the prospects of the tea industry were gloomy; accordingly, no increase was granted till November 1920 when a rise of Re. 1 all round was given after the riots. It is important to note that the cost of living by August 1918 had, in the opinion of the local planters, risen to such an extent as to necessitate a rise in wages. As rice was always available at Rs. 3 a maund, the increase which affected the coolie was in the price of other necessaries. The wage returns of the gardens of the Doom-Dooma and other Companies in this locality which pay the same rates indicate that the labourer is adequately remunerated. The Deputy Commissioner has criticised the action of the Agents of the Jokai Company who refused to come into line with other gardens in the Doom-Dooma district in respect of Kachujan and Tippuk estates. In the case of the latter garden, the rise was ultimately granted. On Hukanpukri, the out-garden of Kachujan, the old rates of Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 seem still to be in force, but the Manager states that he has suggested an increase.

102. On the gardens in the Dibrugarh and Panitola Circles, there has been a general rise from Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 to Rs. 7 and Rs. 6. In April 1921 there were strikes on many of these gardens. On the 27th of April 1921 at a meeting of the

local planters, a resolution in favour of raising wages by Re. 1 a month was passed by a very large majority. Managers were inclined to think that the high price of rice and cloth demanded a rise in wages. The gardens in the Dibrugarh and Panitola groups are fairly well off for land for cultivation, and rice concessions are liberal. In the Panitola Circle a decent living wage is stated to be Rs. 8 for men and Rs. 7 for women, provided the usual concessions of rice at reduced rates are given. This, however, does not include *ticca* earnings which considerably add to the labourer's comfort and ability to save. In the Dibrugarh district, a decent living wage is stated to be Rs. 7 for men and Rs. 6 for women, with concession rice at reduced rates; some managers add that this wage requires to be supplemented by *ticca* earnings in the busy season.

103. In the Tinsukia district, there has also been a rise in wages. The Manager of the Deohall Division of the Dikora Company, increased wages in 1918 from Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 per mensem by giving a daily rate of 4 annas to men and women; again in 1921 men got a further rise to 5 annas a day. The reason for the rise given in both years was the increased cost of living. The Manager of the Hoogrija Division of the Tingri Tea Company realised the necessity for an increase in 1921, but owing to the financial position, this could not be granted till 1st January 1922. The Manager of the Itakhoolie Tea Company realised in 1918 that a rise was desirable, but "the district kept him back." He had no desire to upset labour on other gardens. In 1921 wages were raised on two occasions. The reason was the increased cost of living. In the Tinsukia district, Managers state that a decent living wage is Rs. 8 or Rs. 7 for a man and Rs. 7-8 to Rs. 6 for a woman. Some would add concession rice when the market rate is high. Many of the gardens have a considerable area of land for rice cultivation.

104. The wage returns for Lakhimpur Sadr indicate that since 1914 there has been a considerable rise in earnings.

LAKHIMPUR SADR.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including *ticca*, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	6 9 0	4 14 7	2 15 9	...	...	...
1906	6 14 9	5 0 2	3 1 3	8 8 8	6 9 10	3 13 11
1907	7 0 0	5 5 8	3 3 3	8 8 2	6 14 10	3 15 10
1908	6 15 7	5 5 11	3 3 7	8 11 11	7 3 0	4 2 2
1909	6 11 2	4 15 6	3 0 3	8 8 8	6 14 6	3 15 7
1910	6 13 6	5 2 6	3 1 10	8 14 4	7 1 3	4 1 4
1911	6 14 6	5 5 2	3 7 9	10 0 8	7 4 8	4 8 2
1912	7 14 7	5 5 11	3 4 0	10 10 9	7 7 1	4 3 6
1913	7 4 4	5 12 4	3 10 2	9 7 0	7 11 4	4 9 8
1914	7 7 5	5 12 7	3 7 10	9 8 2	7 5 4	4 5 5
1915	7 4 5	5 9 7	3 5 6	9 9 5	7 15 10	4 8 0
1916	7 4 2	6 3 5	3 4 1	10 6 4	7 11 2	4 5 8
1917	5 11 1	6 2 5	3 11 3	7 11 8	8 5 10	4 12 1
1918	7 9 4	6 2 5	2 12 7	10 6 1	8 12 4	4 9 4
1919	7 12 0	6 6 10	3 11 11	10 8 1	9 1 5	5 3 7
1920	7 12 7	7 1 9	4 1 8	11 14 1	9 9 1	5 14 8
1921	8 7 9	7 12 7	4 5 3	10 11 6	9 7 9	5 10 5
1922	8 4 8	7 1 7	4 5 6	10 8 3	9 11 7	5 11 2
September 1921	8 15 5	8 0 5	4 13 6	11 4 5	11 1 6	6 7 7
March 1922	7 9 11	6 2 8	3 13 5	9 12 1	8 5 8	4 14 9

Family earnings (on average daily working strength) { 1914 ... 18 2 4
 { 1922 ... 21 15 2
 Percentage of rise in family earnings ... 21 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

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105.

Since 1914 there has been a considerable rise in earnings; women especially have benefited, which seems to point to the conclusion that they shared in the prosperity of good seasons. The Deputy Commissioner has referred to Naharkatia and Tinkong as instances of gardens where wages appear to be low. The monthly rates of Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 have not been altered since 1913. The Manager of Naharkatia gives the average earnings in 1913 and 1920 as Rs. 6-2-1 and Rs. 7-1-7, respectively; these are certainly below the district average. The cheapness of rice, however, in that locality is a factor in the situation. The Committee have no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that in gardens in Lakhimpur Sadr, though there may be one or two exceptions, labour is adequately remunerated.

North La-
khimpur.

105. Members of the Committee visited two gardens in this subdivision, and answers have been received from the majority of the Managers. Living is appreciably cheaper than in the Dibrugarh subdivision of the district. The coolies on most gardens are well off for land. In some cases there has been a rise of Re. 1 in the monthly wage in 1920 or 1921; in other cases the unit system has been adopted. In Dejoo Tea Estate the wages were Rs. 7 and Rs. 6 for men and women in 1913 and it has not been found necessary to raise them. On this estate, the agreement advance which used to be recovered has been treated as a bonus with effect from December 1921. The wage returns below show a very appreciable rise since 1914 both in the case of men and women. It is clear that the labourer is getting a decent living wage, which the Managers estimate at Rs. 8 for a man and Rs. 7 for a woman.

NORTH LAKHIMPUR.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticoa, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year,	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 8 1	3 10 3	2 2 5	...	...	...
1906	5 12 1	3 13 11	2 2 11	7 7 0	5 5 8	3 3 11
1907	5 9 6	4 0 0	2 4 3	7 10 2	5 13 7	3 6 2
1908	5 2 11	4 1 5	2 6 10	6 12 5	5 4 9	3 9 3
1909	5 3 1	3 15 6	2 2 4	6 13 5	5 7 6	3 4 3
1910	5 14 11	4 7 1	2 6 11	7 10 1	6 2 4	3 10 3
1911	5 7 4	4 9 6	2 6 5	7 5 0	6 6 9	3 8 1
1912	5 9 1	4 7 2	2 7 2	7 6 6	6 3 11	3 5 1
1913	5 9 10	4 10 2	2 8 7	7 8 8	6 6 9	3 6 9
1914	5 11 9	4 12 4	2 9 3	7 14 6	6 13 9	3 10 9
1915	5 10 2	5 1 7	2 9 1	8 9 11	7 14 0	3 14 2
1916	6 1 8	5 8 7	2 15 10	8 12 9	7 15 7	4 4 6
1917	6 7 0	5 9 5	3 1 8	8 14 8	8 0 1	4 4 6
1918	6 5 2	5 10 7	3 1 6	8 4 4	7 1 8	3 14 1
1919	6 7 4	5 15 3	3 4 10	8 11 6	8 8 9	4 6 9
1920	6 11 1	5 15 11	3 7 2	9 2 2	8 6 8	4 8 1
1921	6 7 7	5 4 1	3 5 11	8 13 8	7 6 7	4 8 2
1922	7 5 9	6 7 4	3 11 2	10 0 4	8 12 0	4 15 8
September 1921	7 10 0	7 2 11	3 15 4	9 14 1	9 6 2	5 4 2
March 1922	7 1 5	5 11 8	3 7 0	10 2 6	8 5 9	4 11 2

Rs. a. p.
Family earnings (on average daily working strength). { 1914 15 13 10
1922 20 4 3
Percentage of rise in family earnings 28 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

106. The answers received from 45 Managers show that in many gardens wages have been raised in recent years. Up to about 1916-17, the monthly rates of Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 which were the *minimum* rates under Act VI of 1901 in the first year of contract were by no means uncommon in this district. It is true that the agreement bonus has to be taken into consideration, but this was generally a nominal sum in the case of new coolies placed under 3-year agreements under Act XIII. And, of course, the benefit of cheap rice at Rs. 3 per maund, which had to be supplied in the case of Act VI coolies when the market price exceeded that figure, was discontinued. With the rise in the cost of living, it would have been remarkable if the rate of wages had remained stationary.

On the gardens of the Empire of India Company, the rates of Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 continued up to 1916. There was a rise in 1916 and 1917 to 3 annas 6 pies or 4 annas a day for men and 3 annas for women, and a further increase in 1920 to 5 annas and 4 annas 6 pies a day for men and 4 annas for women. The Manager of Namgaon, one of the Empire of India Company's gardens, states that from 1916 onwards there was unrest due to economic conditions and that coolies had grievances of which the agitators made capital. The Manager of the Dikorai Division of the Bishnath Tea Company recommended a rise in 1920 which was given effect to in 1921. The evidence of the Manager of the Majulighur Tea Company indicates that the cost of living was felt by the coolie as early as 1. 18 :—

".....When the cost of living went up in 1918 I suggested to the Agents that it was necessary to enable our labour force to earn more pay in order to meet the same."

The result was an appreciable reduction in the tasks to enable a man, woman or child to earn a daily wage of 6 annas, 5 annas and 3 annas. This garden is worked on the unit system.

Throughout the district there has been a tendency to raise daily rates to 5 annas for men and 4 annas for women. The general opinion of Managers is that a decent living wage is Rs. 8 for a man and Rs. 7 for a woman. There are several gardens where the daily rates are 4 annas and 3 annas which seem to fall short of this estimate of a decent living wage. In most of these gardens, coolies are able to supplement their earnings by cultivation, but this is also true of gardens which pay the higher rates. To quote the Deputy Commissioner :—

"There has been a slight reduction in food prices, but there is no guarantee that this will continue. There are still a number of gardens where I think wages should be raised."

The Committee are prepared to say that on the whole the average coolie in Darrang Sadr receives a decent living wage. The wage returns show a steady advance since 1914 :—

DARRANG SADR.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticca diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 3 3	3 13 0	2 4 8	...	...	...
1906	5 5 5	4 2 7	2 9 5	6 15 0	5 13 8	3 5 2
1907	5 4 0	4 0 11	2 9 2	6 11 8	5 9 6	3 10 7
1908	4 15 4	4 2 11	2 9 6	6 7 2	5 8 7	3 10 10
1909	5 0 10	4 2 8	2 10 4	6 13 6	5 8 8	3 15 6
1910	5 0 5	4 6 9	2 12 8	6 3 11	5 12 8	3 12 1
1911	5 6 0	4 12 3	2 9 11	6 14 0	6 6 6	3 4 10
1912	5 10 7	5 0 3	2 12 10	7 0 10	6 8 6	3 7 7
1913	5 13 4	4 15 8	2 12 2	7 7 11	6 9 0	3 9 9
1914	5 12 11	4 15 9	2 13 11	7 4 9	6 7 11	3 12 6
1915	5 15 4	5 6 0	3 0 2	7 13 8	7 3 10	4 2 6
1916	5 11 3	7 5 10	3 3 3	7 10 8	7 7 5	4 4 7
1917	7 11 10	5 13 0	3 2 8	10 1 7	7 9 1	4 2 7
1918	6 0 10	5 15 3	3 3 8	7 8 1	7 10 4	4 1 6
1919	6 13 10	5 11 4	3 3 9	7 14 5	7 13 8	4 4 5
1920	6 12 6	6 13 7	3 12 2	8 4 2	8 6 9	4 6 5
1921	7 5 2	6 12 7	3 13 5	9 0 3	7 12 8	4 15 7
1922	7 3 10	6 7 7	3 13 2	9 0 2	8 6 11	5 1 6
September 1921	7 1 1	7 2 9	3 15 5	8 10 11	9 4 1	5 4 10
March 1922	7 6 6	5 12 4	3 10 10	9 5 4	7 9 9	4 14 2

	Rs. a. p.
Family earnings (on average daily working strength)	{ 1914 14 14 10
Percentage of rise in family earnings	{ 1922 18 15 8
	... 27 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

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PARA. 107.
Mangaldai.

107. Fourteen gardens have submitted answers. Mangaldai is a comparatively cheap district for rice. In the gardens of the Mangaldai Tea Company in the south of the subdivision near Mangaldai town, rice is probably cheaper than in the north where most of the gardens are situated. In the northern group the tendency has been to raise daily rates to 4 annas and 3 annas for men and women, respectively. In 1913 the rates on some gardens were very low—Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 a month,—and on one garden the daily rates were only 3 annas for men and 2 annas 6 pies for women. Four gardens work on the unit system. On Orangajuli rates in 1918 were Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 a month; now they are 4 annas and 3 annas daily. If the Manager's answers are correct, a woman, even in a month of 26 working days, seems to be a loser. On this garden there has been little alteration in tasks; light hoeing has been reduced from 35 to 34 *nals* and deep hoeing from 15 to 12. *Ticca* light hoeing remains the same at 25 *nals*. The labour force being under strength, coolies are now allowed to earn *ticca* where formerly they were restricted to a single *hazira*. The Manager states a decent living wage to be Rs. 8 and Rs. 6; most other Managers say Rs. 8 and Rs. 6-8. Low rates obtain in the Mangaldai Tea Company—3 annas 3 pies for men, and 2 annas 3 pies for women. The Manager has suggested increased rates of pay and *ticca* all round to which effect has been given from the current year, 1922. A decent living wage, in his opinion, is Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 for a man and Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 for a woman. The Superintendent of the Company has supplied figures showing the cheapness of rice in South Mangaldai which probably accounts for the low wages. He states that in December 1921 rice was as cheap as in 1913. There seems to have been no reduction in the *hazira* task for light or deep hoeing but for *ticca* light hoe 4 annas is now paid for 25 *nals* as against 3 annas previously. Inside the grant the coolies have 10 acres of land, and 30 per cent. of the male adults have cultivation inside or outside. The Committee think that a Manager in such circumstances has reasonable grounds for suggesting an increase in wages. The wage returns for Mangaldai show a steady rise in the earnings of both men and women since 1914:—

MANGALDAI.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticca, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 5 10	3 5 9	2 2 8	...	...	...
1906	5 4 6	3 1 8	2 1 3	6 14 10	4 5 6	2 15 9
1907	5 7 0	3 10 4	2 1 11	7 2 4	5 1 2	3 3 3
1908	5 13 3	4 2 5	2 6 7	7 4 1	5 5 5	3 3 7
1909	5 2 7	4 3 9	2 5 10	6 14 3	5 13 6	3 2 3
1910	5 11 10	3 15 11	2 6 0	7 3 6	5 5 6	3 3 6
1911	6 3 5	4 9 11	2 3 10	7 9 5	6 1 2	3 4 3
1912	6 1 9	4 9 7	2 6 6	7 9 6	6 2 8	3 5 1
1913	6 1 8	4 7 4	2 7 2	7 11 8	5 12 1	3 6 9
1914	6 9 6	4 7 5	2 6 7	8 10 4	6 0 8	3 6 8
1915	6 0 9	4 6 6	2 8 0	8 0 0	6 4 8	3 12 0
1916	6 4 11	5 0 8	2 8 11	8 4 1	6 13 2	3 12 4
1917	6 3 5	4 13 4	2 4 8	8 1 11	6 8 9	3 9 7
1918	6 1 9	4 14 10	2 6 0	8 1 7	6 14 7	3 11 4
1919	6 8 10	2 15 11	2 7 0	8 13 8	7 4 10	3 13 3
1920	7 5 4	5 9 5	2 10 10	9 11 4	7 7 7	4 0 9
1921	6 5 9	5 4 5	2 6 10	9 14 4	7 15 4	4 0 8
1922	7 10 11	6 5 11	3 2 2	9 11 6	7 14 10	4 6 0
September 1921	7 15 3	7 2 4	3 8 5	9 15 10	8 11 3	4 11 8
March 1922	7 6 7	5 9 6	3 11 10	9 7 1	7 2 5	4 0 3

		Rs. a. p.
Family earnings (on average daily working strength)	{ 1914	15 11 5
	{ 1922	18 15 4
Percentage of rise in family earnings	...	21 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

The Committee think it reasonable to hold that where gardens have realised the increased cost of living and have taken steps to enable the labourers to meet it, a decent living wage is paid. CHAP. IV,
PARAS. 107-
108.

108. The 28 answers received indicate that in over 50 per cent. of the gardens the rate of wages has been increased in recent years and that in several others tasks have been reduced. It will be convenient to examine the action taken by some of the leading Companies. In several of the gardens of the Assam Company, which owns the largest acreage of tea in the Assam Valley, wages of Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 a month were not uncommon in 1913 and subsequent years, but in 1918 and 1919 when the cost of living rose, wages were raised to Rs. 6 and Rs. 5; in others, wages in 1913 were Rs. 6 and Rs. 5. About the end of 1920 or the beginning of 1921, the unit system was introduced in the gardens of the Company. The result is said to be a further increase of about 20 per cent. in the coolies' earnings. Under the unit system as worked in this Company, a man's daily wage varies from 4 annas 6 pies to 5 annas, and a woman's from 3 annas 9 pies to 4 annas. Most gardens of this Company have large areas of land for cultivation. Mr. Ronald, one of the leading Managers of the Company, states that the rise of Re. 1 in 1918 was given on account of the increased cost of foodstuffs and cloth. Sibsagar
Subdivision.

In the Amguri Tea Company wages were Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 up to 1917 when they were raised to Rs. 6 and Rs. 5. In 1920 a further rise to Rs. 7 and Rs. 6 was given. In addition to this, there has been a considerable reduction in tasks. The evidence and answers of the General Manager are interesting. He states:—

"I wanted to raise the rate still further to Rs. 8 and Rs. 7 and my Directors agreed. The Directors left it to me, but I was not supported by the Tea Association, the majority of whom were against it. I did not raise the wages as I thought it might give rise to friction between my neighbours and myself."

He adds that the majority of the Members of the Nazira Circle Sub-Committee agreed with his proposal to raise wages in January 1921, but the Assam Valley Branch of the Indian Tea Association disagreed and the proposal was thrown out. According to the General Manager, the successive increments of pay given from time to time were necessitated by the increased cost of living.

In the gardens of the Jhanzie Tea Association, the unit system was adopted in 1920 in place of the old daily rates of 4 annas and 3 annas. This meant a rise of about one anna daily. On the other hand, there are several gardens in this subdivision where the rate of wages has not been raised. In the four divisions of the Singlo Company, in normal years a prosperous concern, the rates of Rs. 6 for men and Rs. 5 for women have not been altered. According to the answers, tasks have been reduced 20 per cent. and coolies' earnings increased by 33½ per cent. The details given as to reduction of tasks are rather vague. The wage returns of the gardens for 1920 and 1921 show high earnings. Labourers in this Company are under 3 year Act XIII agreements with bonuses of Rs. 36 for men and Rs. 30 for women. The coolies have a considerable area of land for cultivation inside and outside the estate grants. During the past cold weather there was trouble on some of the gardens of this Company including a riot at Suffry in February 1922. On the Teek Estate of the Jorhat Tea Company, rates remain at Rs. 6 and Rs. 5. Hoeing tasks are said to be much the same as before, but an inferior standard of work is said to be accepted. The rate for *ticca* plucking is the same as before the war. About 89 per cent. of the coolies are in debt to the garden. There is no cultivation within the grant but 67 acres of land outside are held by 25 per cent. of the adult male population. Some of the gardens where rates have not been raised have a good deal of land for cultivation. In some the light hoeing task remains unaltered; in others there has been a reduction in the deep hoeing task. In this subdivision, a decent living wage is said to be Rs. 8 or Rs. 7 for a man and Rs. 6 or Rs. 5 for a woman. The estimates given vary

according to the locality. The wage returns especially from 1920 show a steady rise and point to the conclusion that the labourer is receiving an adequate wage:—

SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticca, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 8 10	4 1 4	2 8 3	...	...	...
1906	5 12 5	3 14 6	2 6 9	8 1 1	5 11 2	3 9 2
1907	5 10 8	4 2 4	2 8 5	7 4 5	5 8 10	3 6 1
1908	5 8 6	4 4 5	2 8 2	6 14 3	5 14 0	3 5 8
1909	5 8 5	4 5 2	2 8 4	6 15 0	5 14 9	3 5 10
1910	5 14 6	4 12 3	2 9 11	7 6 4	6 7 11	3 6 11
1911	5 12 8	4 9 2	2 12 7	7 1 0	4 5 5	2 12 4
1912	5 11 11	4 10 2	2 14 0	7 4 7	6 3 2	3 12 5
1913	6 0 10	4 12 0	2 15 2	7 2 9	6 7 5	4 1 7
1914	5 15 10	4 15 11	2 13 3	8 2 0	6 12 4	3 10 8
1915	6 3 6	5 1 3	2 14 10	7 13 9	6 10 3	3 14 4
1916	6 2 3	5 3 2	2 15 11	7 9 3	6 11 9	3 13 11
1917	6 1 2	5 5 5	2 13 6	7 13 11	6 15 3	3 12 10
1918	6 3 10	5 1 4	3 0 10	7 10 11	6 3 4	3 12 11
1919	6 2 6	5 5 0	3 2 9	8 0 7	7 6 9	4 6 10
1920	6 14 3	6 0 11	3 8 5	8 12 5	8 2 4	4 9 6
1921	7 0 5	5 14 10	3 12 3	8 12 3	7 13 0	4 12 2
1922	7 10 9	6 9 11	4 1 0	9 11 5	8 12 4	5 4 1
September 1921	7 14 2	7 8 0	4 6 10	9 11 11	9 13 8	5 10 5
March 1922	7 7 4	5 11 0	3 11 1	9 10 11	7 11 0	4 13 8

Family earnings (on average daily working strength).
 { 1914 15 15 11
 { 1922 20 1 0
 Percentage of rise in family earnings 26 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

Jorhat Sadr.

109. The replies indicate that in 14 out of 16 gardens of which 5 belong to the Jorhat Tea Company, wages have been raised in recent years. In the remaining 2 gardens, the unit system with reduced tasks has been introduced. In the Jorhat Company gardens situated in this subdivision, the wages in 1913 were Rs. 5 for men and Rs. 4 for women. These were raised to Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 in 1916. In 1920 and again in the end of 1921 or in January 1922, further increases were granted until the wages stand now at Rs. 7 and Rs. 6. The figures of average wages given by the Superintendent in his written answer bear out this rise of Rs. 2 since 1913:—

	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1913	6 9 10	5 7 2	3 12 11
1920	8 7 9	7 4 11	4 6 5
1921	8 13 10	7 6 9	5 0 11

The Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company raised wages from Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 CHAP. IV in 1917 by giving a bonus of Re. 1 a month for 24 days' work completed; wages were raised to Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 in October 1920, and to Rs. 7 and Rs. 6 in December 1921.

On the Kathalguri garden of the Salonah Tea Company wages used to be Rs. 5 and Rs. 4, but the unit system has been introduced, under which "the daily rate for an average *kazira* is men 4 annas 3 pies, and women 3 annas 9 pies." The coolies owe Rs. 10,440 to the garden which, considering the adult working population of 552 men and 546 women, is an excessive amount. Most gardens in the subdivision have large areas of land for rice cultivation. A decent living wage has been generally estimated at Rs. 7 for a man and Rs. 6 for a woman. The wage returns show a satisfactory increase and the Committee, on the information at their disposal, think that the coolies on the gardens in the Jorhat subdivision are receiving a decent living wage:—

JORHAT SUBDIVISION.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March of monthly cash wages including ticca, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 2 2	3 7 8	2 7 1	...	...	...
1906	5 4 8	3 9 11	2 6 1	6 15 6	4 10 10	3 1 4
1907	5 5 5	3 11 8	2 7 5	6 12 0	4 14 6	3 2 8
1908	5 4 2	3 12 11	2 8 10	6 9 6	5 1 9	3 6 2
1909	4 12 6	3 5 4	2 7 1	6 4 10	4 9 10	3 6 0
1910	5 4 2	3 11 2	2 6 6	6 9 2	5 1 2	3 6 0
1911	5 4 1	3 14 2	2 10 1	6 11 9	5 4 6	3 10 8
1912	5 6 0	3 13 3	2 10 11	6 13 8	5 2 9	3 10 10
1913	5 7 7	4 0 10	2 11 6	6 13 6	5 7 4	3 10 4
1914	5 8 8	4 6 10	2 15 9	8 7 7	5 14 2	3 11 7
1915	5 12 10	4 5 7	2 14 2	6 11 7	4 13 4	3 7 6
1916	6 1 0	5 0 1	3 1 9	7 5 2	6 1 4	3 15 10
1917	6 7 3	5 1 4	3 1 2	7 14 0	6 7 4	4 1 0
1918	6 7 6	5 1 2	3 10 1	7 12 7	6 6 4	4 11 11
1919	6 3 11	5 1 10	3 3 2	8 4 6	6 10 5	4 2 9
1920	6 10 1	6 13 1	3 6 6	8 15 4	9 2 2	4 7 2
1921	6 12 0	5 12 1	3 11 3	8 10 9	7 2 9	4 9 3
1922	7 8 4	5 12 2	4 0 4	9 3 8	7 6 3	4 12 8
September 1921	7 7 6	6 4 8	4 3 7	9 3 3	8 0 9	5 4 10
March 1922	7 9 1	5 3 8	3 13 1	9 4 0	6 11 9	4 4 6

				Rs. a. p.
Family earnings (on average daily working strength)	...	{	1914	15 7 7
			1922	18 0 11
Percentage of rise in family earnings	..	...	...	17 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

Golaghat.

110. Twenty-one gardens in Golaghat have sent replies. In 14 at least the rates of wages have been increased since 1913, the usual wage now paid being Rs. 6 for men and Rs. 5 for women. In many cases the old rates were Rs. 5 and Rs. 4, but from 1915 onwards there was a general movement to raise wages to Rs. 6 and Rs. 5. Some gardens pay Rs. 6-8-0 to men. Two new gardens pay higher rates. The Dooria estate adopted the unit system in 1916 in supersession of a monthly wage of Rs. 5 and Rs. 4. The Manager has given figures for the average wages under the two systems :—

	Hozira system.			Unit system.					
	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.	1921.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Men ...	7 4 0	7 10 0	7 15 6	8 0 0	8 5 0	9 6 0	10 2 9	9 4 0	9 5 6
W men ...	5 12 0	6 2 0	6 8 0	6 15 0	7 11 0	7 14 0	9 1 0	8 15 0	7 15 0
Children ...	4 5 6	4 6 6	4 13 0	4 11 0	5 1 6	6 9 3	5 5 0	6 13 0	6 1 0

Another garden working on the unit system is Barkatonee (Kingsley Golaghat Tea Company). The date of the introduction of this system is not given. The average earnings in March and September from 1916 to 1921 are :—

	1916.	1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.	1921.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Men ...	8 6 6	8 13 4	8 9 4	8 8 5	6 12 2	6 10 0
Women ...	6 15 0	6 11 6	6 11 5	6 0 0	5 1 6	5 12 0
Children ...	3 13 5	4 3 6	3 13 1	4 5 5	3 7 0	3 14 0

This Company in normal times is a prosperous one. Previous to 1922 pregnant women got no sick pay ; they now receive half *haziras*. In both Borkatonee and Dooria the coolies have large areas for cultivation. The Brahmaputra Company raised the rates from 3 annas for men and 2 annas 6 pies for women, to 4 annas for men in 1920 and to 3 annas for women in 1921, and still continues to give paddy at Rs. 2 a maund.

In one garden of the Consolidated Tea and Lands Company—Hathikhuli—the rates remain unaltered at 3 annas 9 pies for men and 3 annas for women. The Manager in his answers states that there has been a slight *increase* in the light hoeing task of 30 *nals* since 1913 but a reduction in deep hoeing. He also adds that there is hardly “ so much money to be made by the coolie in fine plucking, and the *ticca* plucking rate remains the same as before the war ”. There is, however, a good deal of land for cultivation. The garden is very isolated. In the opinion of most Managers a decent living wage is Rs. 7 or Rs. 6 for a man and Rs. 6 or Rs. 5 for a woman, although the Manager of Borkatonee reckons it at Rs. 4 for a man and Rs. 3 for a woman which is absurdly low. The wage returns show an upward tendency and indicate that the coolies receive a decent living wage. There are gardens where

the rates seem low, but the Committee are satisfied that, on the whole, the coolies are adequately remunerated :—

GOLAGHAT.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including tioca, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 11 5	3 9 1	2 0 11	...	...	...
1906	5 2 8	3 12 6	2 9 6	6 11 4	5 1 9	3 6 4
1907	5 6 8	3 14 11	2 11 9	6 8 10	5 5 8	3 9 8
1908	5 5 6	4 0 0	2 14 6	6 11 11	5 8 8	3 14 6
1909	5 2 1	3 12 0	2 9 3	6 12 2	5 7 3	3 10 4
1910	5 8 4	3 10 7	2 10 3	6 5 11	4 10 10	3 9 9
1911	5 9 6	4 5 4	3 2 4	7 9 2	5 14 5	4 6 3
1912	5 6 6	3 14 5	2 9 1	7 0 10	5 0 3	3 12 3
1913	5 9 2	4 5 7	2 14 11	6 14 7	5 14 8	3 13 1
1914	5 9 6	4 7 1	2 15 7	7 0 3	5 14 3	3 13 6
1915	6 4 5	4 6 7	3 10 1	7 6 1	5 8 5	4 13 6
1916	6 0 7	5 0 6	3 5 7	7 6 1	6 5 10	4 1 7
1917	6 4 5	5 14 1	3 8 9	8 6 2	8 2 9	4 10 1
1918	6 4 3	5 3 1	3 7 3	7 15 3	6 12 9	4 4 5
1919	6 0 4	5 1 3	3 8 5	7 13 3	6 13 2	4 6 0
1920	6 13 6	5 5 6	4 5 9	8 14 4	6 9 6	5 2 9
1921	7 3 11	5 3 11	4 2 7	8 7 10	6 4 11	4 14 10
1922	7 5 4	5 11 4	3 10 8	8 13 6	7 3 6	4 10 6
September 1921	7 7 8	6 3 6	4 0 6	8 14 3	7 15 1	5 2 0
March 1922	7 3 0	5 3 1	3 4 9	8 12 8	6 7 11	4 2 11

				Rs. a. p.
Family earnings (on average daily working strength) ...	{	1914 ...	14 0 11	
		1922 ...	17 7 4	
Percentage of rise in family earnings ... ..			...25 per cent.	

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

111. Replies have been received from most of the gardens. The rates of Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 seem to have disappeared at a fairly early stage—probably before 1906—and to have given place to rates generally of Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 a month or 3 annas 6 pies for men and 3 annas for women as a daily wage. In 1911 Siconee garden raised the rates to Rs. 7 and Rs. 6. Amluckie gave an increase from 1919, Kellyden from 1920 and other gardens more recently. The general monthly wage varies from Rs. 6-8 to Rs. 7 for men and from Rs. 5-11 to Rs. 6 for women. The Manager of Amluckie states that there was a meeting of the Nowgong Sub-Committee which recommended that when prices of food-stuffs were high an average daily rate of 4 annas 6 pies for men and 4 annas for women should be paid. He has been paying these rates himself. The wage returns show that the percentage of increase since 1914 is less than in other districts in the Assam Valley. But in 1914 the wages

Nowgong.

earned were higher than in other districts except Lakhimpur Sadr. This is probably due to the fact that the rates of Rs. 5 and Rs. 4 had been raised previous to 1906 :—

NOWGONG.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticca, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 3 1	3 15 3	2 7 7	.....	.....	.....
1906	5 4 9	4 1 4	2 9 2	7 6 8	6 4 6	3 10 3
1907	5 12 10	4 5 10	2 12 0	7 11 6	6 6 6	3 15 5
1908	5 12 6	4 14 10	2 13 1	7 9 7	6 10 10	3 12 10
1909	5 3 7	4 5 6	2 11 1	7 2 1	6 7 10	3 15 8
1910	5 11 7	4 11 1	2 12 10	7 7 1	6 12 9	4 1 9
1911	5 12 8	4 12 3	2 13 3	7 12 4	6 13 0	3 11 11
1912	6 0 5	5 2 10	2 14 7	8 0 9	7 8 9	4 1 10
1913	5 11 8	5 0 6	3 0 3	7 10 1	7 6 11	4 5 1
1914	5 15 1	5 0 0	3 0 3	8 1 8	7 5 11	4 3 4
1915	5 10 8	4 14 11	2 15 3	7 15 3	7 5 3	4 5 10
1916	5 8 11	4 15 9	2 14 8	7 9 9	7 5 9	4 1 3
1917	5 12 4	5 6 11	3 1 8	7 13 8	7 14 9	4 4 6
1918	6 1 9	5 3 9	2 15 1	8 3 3	7 9 2	4 3 0
1919	6 1 3	4 15 9	3 1 11	8 7 5	7 9 9	4 11 11
1920	6 4 3	5 7 0	2 14 3	8 6 11	7 8 5	4 6 5
1921	6 7 3	5 8 8	3 3 2	8 7 7	7 9 7	4 11 7
1922	6 12 3	5 14 10	4 0 0	8 13 6	8 2 9	5 2 1
September 1921	7 8 5	6 10 5	4 0 9	9 9 0	9 2 5	5 10 6
March 1922	6 0 0	5 3 3	3 15 3	8 2 0	7 3 0	4 9 7

		Rs. a. p.
Family earnings (on average daily working strength).	{ 1914	... 16 11 9
	{ 1922	... 18 8 10
Percentage of rise in family earnings	...	11 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

On most of the gardens the coolies are well provided with land for cultivation. Managers have been alive to the rise in prices and have done their best to make it easier for the labourer. The fact that practically the only trouble on any garden was a 24-hour strike at Kondoli in May 1921, in spite of the existence of a considerable amount of political agitation in the district during the past year, speaks well for the garden management generally. The Committee are satisfied that the coolies earn a decent living wage which, in the opinion of the Nowgong Sub-Committee, is Rs. 7 and Rs. 6.

112. *Surma Valley.—Cachar Sadr.*—The answers sent by the Managers of 56 gardens in the Cachar Sadr subdivision show that the usual *hazira* now paid is 4 annas a day for men and 3 annas for women. The rates vary from 5 annas for men down to 2 annas 8 pies for women. The number of gardens paying these varying

rates for the standard daily task is given below :—

	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
	0 5 0	0 4 9	0 4 8	0 4 0	0 3 6	0 3 2	0 3 0	0 2 8
Men ...	3	1	2	42	4	...	4	...
Women ...	...	...	...	8	3	1	43	1

In 22 gardens wages have been raised in the case of men or women, and occasionally for both. In the majority of cases an increase was given in 1920 and 1921 and also in January 1922. On a few gardens a rise was given at an earlier date. On Ruttonpore men's *haziras* were increased from 3 annas to 3 annas 6 pies in 1915 because prices showed a tendency to rise and also because some of the neighbouring gardens had raised their rates. At Polarbund, where the rates of 4 annas for men and 3 annas for women have remained unchanged since 1913, the Manager states that his predecessor in 1918 suggested to the Agents the advisability of raising the rates in the near future. The tasks have since been reduced. The Manager of Vernerpur Tea Estate raised the wages for men and women in 1913 from 3 annas to 3 annas 6 pies, the rate prevailing on neighbouring gardens, and increased the wage again to 4 annas 6 pies and 4 annas in 1921 owing to the high cost of living. In the Burtoll Division of the Tarapore Tea Company in 1913-14 the rate for men was raised from 3 annas 6 pies to 4 annas and for women from 3 annas to 3 annas 6 pies. There was a further rise to 4 annas for women in May 1921. On the Labac Tea Estate of the same Company, on the other hand, the wages of men and women were 3 annas 6 pies and 3 annas respectively until 1st January 1922 when wages were raised to 4 annas and 3 annas 6 pies. There was a strike on this garden in December 1921. Till then, apparently the Manager had been able to hold out against a rise in wages. The garden has a large area of rice cultivation. Borakai affords an example of low wages; the rate is 3 annas for men and women. There are 409 men on the garden books. Four hundred and sixty acres of paddy land in the grant are held by 440 men, workers and non-workers, at the rate of Re. 1 to 8 annas a *bigha*. The hoeing task has not been altered. The Manager stated in January 1922 that it is proposed to give men 4 annas and women 3 annas 6 pies because tea prospects are improving. In this garden, women do not receive the agreement bonus as they are not placed under Act XIII contracts. In some other gardens the agreement bonus is small, e.g., Rs. 3. In 21 gardens, rates of 4 annas and 3 annas were paid in 1913 to men and women and have remained unaltered. In these cases, the task was reduced for fine plucking, but there seems to have been little reduction in the hoeing task. Rates of 3 annas are paid to men and women in Boro Jaliaga where a *bigha* of land is given free to all working coolies, men and women. Many gardens have reduced tasks instead of raising wages. Mr. Cresswell, a leading Cachar planter, has stated that, in his opinion, it would be more satisfactory to raise wages instead of reducing tasks. The Committee agree and do not consider reduction of tasks a satisfactory solution of the wage question. Many Managers, in answering question No. 23 as to whether cash earnings have increased since 1913, have replied in the negative. On Doodputlee garden, the average monthly earnings in 1913 of men, women and children were Rs. 5-11-5 and in 1920 Rs. 5-15-3. This excludes agreement bonus and sick allowances. 1,546 coolies owe Rs. 12,765 to the estate for rice, cloth and miscellaneous advances. The labour force consists of 882 men and 833 women. The *haziras* are 4 annas and 3 annas. In Doyapore garden with the same *hazira* rates the average earnings are :—

	Men.	Women.	Children.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1913 ...	6 4 1	5 6 6	3 10 3
1921 ...	7 8 8	5 4 11	3 11 9

The labour force comprises 203 men and 186 women, and the coolies owe Rs. 4,302 to the garden. In Monierkhal garden with a labour force of 461 men and 487 women, the coolies are indebted to the garden to the extent of Rs. 16,632. The *hazira* rates were increased in 1915 to 4 annas and 3 annas from 3 annas and 2 annas 6 pies for men and women. One characteristic feature of gardens in Cachar is the large area of land available in the grants for rice cultivation by the coolies. In several cases, an economic rent is charged, but ordinarily the land is given rent-free or at a nominal rate.

113. The wage returns of Cachar Sadr, on the whole, up to 1921, show little rise since 1914 and even as compared with previous years. The averages of September 1921 and March 1922 indicate an improvement, probably the result of raising the rates of wages :—

CACHAR SADR.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticoa, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 4 0	3 9 1	2 12 5	...	...	...
1906	2 15 8	2 6 3	1 1 9	6 7 8	5 10 11	3 5 6
1907	3 0 7	2 6 9	1 1 1	6 14 0	6 0 1	3 5 4
1908	2 13 5	2 10 9	1 0 10	6 8 9	6 7 7	3 3 2
1909	4 7 1	3 12 9	2 2 9	6 3 11	6 15 3	3 2 4
1910	5 3 1	4 2 1	2 2 10	6 12 1	5 13 8	3 5 10
1911	4 15 0	3 10 10	2 2 4	6 12 3	6 6 9	3 6 10
1912	5 4 5	3 14 6	2 4 6	6 13 6	5 10 10	3 7 8
1913	5 8 0	3 14 7	2 5 0	6 15 10	5 11 2	3 7 8
1914	5 7 11	4 1 2	2 6 10	7 0 4	5 12 4	3 8 2
1915	5 6 3	3 14 7	2 4 6	6 15 2	5 8 0	3 5 6
1916	5 9 10	4 3 6	2 8 4	7 1 4	5 13 1	3 8 8
1917	5 11 1	4 6 10	2 10 10	7 3 1	5 15 8	3 9 8
1918	5 11 5	4 3 2	2 8 8	7 1 9	5 11 0	3 8 7
1919	5 8 10	4 1 11	2 8 8	7 2 3	5 12 7	3 8 10
1920	6 4 7	4 13 9	2 12 9	7 15 4	6 9 9	3 13 7
1921	5 14 10	4 4 8	2 10 6	7 8 10	5 14 6	3 10 7
1922	6 3 4	4 7 9	2 10 4	7 11 6	6 2 10	3 12 0
September 1921	5 12 9	4 8 3	2 9 4	7 3 8	6 9 6	3 13 6
March 1922	6 9 11	4 7 2	2 11 4	8 3 5	5 12 1	3 10 6
Family earnings (on average daily working strength).	1914			Rs. a. p.	13 13 6	
	1922			Rs. a. p.	15 0 4	
Percentage of rise in family earnings	. . . . .			Rs. a. p.	9 per cent.	

Notes.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

The earnings for women in particular show little advance. According to the replies of the Sub-Committees, a decent living wages is Rs. 8 or Rs. 7 for a man and Rs. 7 or Rs. 6 for a woman. On the whole, the average earnings as given in the wage returns hardly attain this standard. The Commissioner of the Surma Valley Division states that at present to live in comfort, a man would require to earn Rs. 10, a woman Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 and a child Rs. 4 a month. Concessions might be given which would enable the wages to be decreased by a corresponding amount. In the opinion of this witness, a family consisting of a man, his wife and 3 or 4 non-working children, would be quite well off on these earnings if they had a little land, but not otherwise. He was asked whether a rise of wages was necessary in other parts of his division apart from the Chargola Valley. His reply may be quoted :—

“On a good many other gardens it would be desirable, but I find it very difficult to generalise. It depends on a great many things. On some gardens even with low rates coolies could earn quite good pay owing to the facilities for *ticoa*. There are some coolies who would only do a minimum

amount of work and earn merely the *hazira*; other coolies make as much money as they can. I think, however, that a great many gardens ought to have increased the wages on the ground that the rise in wages has not been proportional to the rise in the cost of living. I find from the reports that as long ago as in 1889 a coolie family consisting of a man, his wife and one or two children, earned on an average about Rs. 10. The cost of living for a coolie was then estimated to be Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 a month for the family, so that income and expenditure about balanced. Now I find that a coolie family, as far as I am able to judge from statistics, makes about Rs. 13 to Rs. 18 and the cost of living has gone up to about Rs. 20 on the same scale as that of 1889, so that relatively the labourer is worse off and that is perhaps due partly to the fact that he does less work I think foodstuffs have gone up about 50 per cent. and cloth twice to three times the former price

After careful consideration, the Committee are not prepared to give an unqualified answer to the effect that coolies in Cachar gardens are earning a decent living wage. The Committee, however, recognise that, of late, there has been a tendency to raise wages, and it is hoped that steps will be taken to give an increase in all cases where this is necessary.

114. *Hailakandi*.—Replies have been received from 18 gardens in Hailakandi. The *hazira* rates vary. The number of gardens paying the different rates are given below:—

	Rs. a. p. 0 6 0	Rs. a. p. 0 4 6	Rs. a. p. 0 4 0	Rs. a. p. 0 3 6	Rs. a. p. 0 3 0	Rs. a. p. 0 2 6
Men	1	1	13	2	1	...
Women ... ..	...	...	3	6	8	1

Between 1916 and January 1922, there was a rise in the rate of wages in 10 of these gardens. In two cases where the *hazira* is 4 annas for men and 3 annas 6 pies for women, a weekly bonus of 3 annas is paid for a six days' full work. Most gardens where rates have remained unchanged since 1913, pay 4 annas and 3 annas. Sultancherra garden, which was opened in 1913, has all along paid 6 annas to men and 4 annas to women in addition to an agreement bonus of Rs. 12 and 10; tasks for this wage do not seem to be higher than on other gardens. The average earnings on this garden in September 1921 and March 1922 are:—

	September 1921. Rs. a. p.	March 1922. Rs. a. p.
Men	9 1 4	10 9 2
Women	9 6 10	9 10 0
Children	4 12 10	3 12 10

This is distinctly above the average earnings on the gardens in the Subdivision for the same months. These were:—

	September 1921. Rs. a. p.	March 1922. Rs. a. p.
Men	7 2 5	8 6 11
Women	6 10 4	6 7 11
Children	3 14 8	4 0 8

The Manager of Kalacherra garden, who pays 3 annas to men and women, states in reply to question 26(a) that the earnings of the coolie "do not leave him much to come and go on; also he has to work more regularly than in 1913." On this garden, hoeing tasks do not seem to have been altered; 90 per cent. of the adult male coolies have land. The Manager of Dholai who pays 4 annas to men and 3 annas to women, gives the average earnings per head monthly from 1914 to 1920 as follows:—

	Rs. a. p.
1914	6 2 0
1915	6 4 7
1916	6 9 10
1917	7 5 2
1918	6 0 0
1919	6 6 0
1920	6 5 0

About 75 per cent. of the men on this estate have land for cultivation. Most of the gardens in the subdivision are well off in this respect, as is the case with gardens in the Sadr subdivision of Cachar. This fact should be taken into account in criticising the wage returns which are given below :—

HAILAKANDI

Average calculated on the figures for September and March; of monthly cash wages including ticon, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	4 11 3	3 11 3	2 4 8	...	...	...
1906	4 11 10	3 9 11	2 4 9	6 1 5	5 3 4	3 12 10
1907	4 10 1	3 11 3	2 5 1	6 0 3	5 3 1	3 13 4
1908	5 0 1	3 14 4	2 8 3	6 15 10	5 13 6	4 13 0
1909	4 10 1	3 10 7	2 3 7	6 8 4	5 9 5	3 8 2
1910	4 14 2	3 13 7	2 2 2	6 9 0	5 15 1	3 8 4
1911	5 0 9	3 13 11	2 3 8	6 14 10	5 15 6	3 9 10
1912	4 12 4	3 15 4	2 4 10	6 10 9	6 2 5	3 10 9
1913	4 15 4	3 14 7	2 5 0	6 15 6	6 3 9	3 8 0
1914	5 0 11	3 12 5	2 1 8	6 13 11	5 12 1	3 10 7
1915	4 11 5	3 9 2	2 0 6	6 7 4	5 8 2	3 7 2
1916	4 14 9	3 15 6	2 2 5	6 11 7	5 13 6	3 8 5
1917	5 3 5	4 3 6	2 3 0	6 7 10	5 14 3	3 6 11
1918	5 0 8	3 13 8	2 1 4	6 12 5	5 11 8	3 6 5
1919	5 0 3	3 12 9	2 1 7	6 10 6	5 11 1	3 5 9
1920	5 8 7	4 3 8	2 6 8	7 5 1	6 5 6	3 9 11
1921	5 3 2	4 2 4	2 1 4	6 7 4	5 15 10	3 2 3
1922	5 11 10	4 2 7	2 3 4	7 12 8	6 9 1	3 15 8
September 1921	5 4 3	4 1 1	1 15 10	7 2 5	6 10 4	3 14 8
March 1922	6 3 5	4 4 2	2 6 10	8 6 11	6 7 11	4 0 8

				Rs. a. p.
Family earnings (on average daily working strength).	{	1914	...	13 11 7
		1922	...	15 8 10
Percentage of rise in family earnings	...	...	...	14 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

There is an actual fall in the joint family earnings in 1921 as compared with 1914. Earnings in 1920 were distinctly better. The returns for September 1921 and March 1922 show an appreciable rise. Managers state that a decent living wage in the case of a man and his wife living together varies from Rs. 12 to Rs. 14. Some think concessions in the way of cheap rice necessary in addition to these cash wages. Generally speaking, the conclusion arrived at by the Committee, as regards Cachar Sadr would apply to Hailakandi.

North Sylhet. 115. The tea-gardens in North Sylhet are not of much importance. Answers have been received from 7 gardens. Jafflong Tea Estate, which is situated at the foot of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, is more or less isolated. The rates of 4 annas and 3 annas have remained unchanged but tasks are said to have been reduced though no details are given. About 25 per cent. of the men have land inside or outside the grant. In the last five years, a sum of Rs. 69,281 has been spent in

recruiting, but owing to the influenza epidemic and coolies leaving the garden to take up land in the villages, there is no increase in the labour force which is said to be insufficient. On Malnicberra Tea Estate wages are 3 annas 9 pies for men, and 3 annas for women; these rates have not been changed in recent years, but from the 1st of January 1922, men are getting 4 annas. The agreement advances of Rs. 12 and Rs. 10 are not recovered. Mr. Steward has submitted a useful note which is reproduced below:—

"... Early in October 1921 Managers in this district met and discussed wages, rates, etc., suitable in their opinion for this district. A copy of their opinions is enclosed* herewith. In the middle of October, when commencing deep hoeing, I revised the task and rates as follows: 30 *nals* instead of 24 *nals*, offering 6 annas for completed task of 30 *nals*, 3 annas 9 pies for 24 *nals* (the old rates). As ground becomes harder, the rate for 24 *nals* was raised to 5 annas and the old rate given for less than 24 *nals*. Thus making it worth a coolie's while to complete tasks. The result has been most successful from both the garden and the coolie's point of view. I am strongly in favour of carrying out the same principle in light hoeing, pruning, etc. Coolies can easily complete the tasks set, in 4 hours, and get the chance of earning, a man 6 annas, and a woman 5 annas per day, which I consider a really good wage, taking into consideration the short working hours, and the time of year when foodstuff is cheapest. From 15th March onwards, coolies can largely increase these earnings, when works are of a lighter nature. From the 1st January 1922, the 3 annas 9 pies rate of pay will be done away with and 4 annas rate instituted....."

* "At a meeting of the North Sylhet District Committee, the following resolutions were passed:—

1. Gardens in this district are so situated, being close to the town of Sylhet, where there is an unlimited demand for milk, fuel and grass thereby offering great opportunities to garden labour of largely increasing their incomes, that great difficulty is experienced in obtaining full time service.

2. To remedy this and to guard the interests of employers, we consider it most necessary to pay coolies on a sliding scale giving a lower rate of wage for uncompleted tasks.

3. In fixing tasks, we have carefully considered the extremely light and sandy nature of the soil and though the tasks may appear high in comparison to other districts we consider them to be absolutely fair and reasonable.

4. That field labourers are to be especially encouraged by offering improved scale of wages and that odd job coolies cannot be included.

5. *Tasks.*—Deep hoe—completed 30 *nals* at 6 annas—Rs. 3-12-0 an acre. Light hoe—completed 48 *nals* at 6 annas—Rs. 2-8-0 an acre. Forking—Rs. 3 an acre. Pruning averaging Rs. 3-8-0 to Rs. 4 an acre. Factory hands at 6 annas, 5 annas and 4 annas, according to the nature of the work. These rates, reckoning on 26 working days to the month, fix the wages at men Rs. 9-12-0 per month, women at Rs. 6-8-0 per month for field and factory workers. For all other works pay will not be less than Rs. 6-8-0 per month of completed tasks. Agreement bonus men Rs. 12; women Rs. 10; thus making the lowest pay not less than Rs. 7-5-0 per month.

				Rs. a. p.
Men doing 26 days' full work	...	...	...	10 12 0
Women " " "	...	...	...	7 5 0"

Mr. Steward's note is interesting as showing that where the task for *ticca* is considerably reduced the coolie will do more work. On Lackatoorah, wages are Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 to non-agreement men and women. Those who take agreements get one rupee less. Agreement advances used to be recovered, but from 1922 they will be treated as bonus. The Manager has now altered *ticca* tasks so that a coolie can earn more as described in the note above by the Manager of Malnicberra. The case of these two gardens is hardly typical in that the coolies add considerably to their earnings by selling milk, fuel, grass, to the people of Sylhet town: they have also got a good deal of cultivation. The North Sylhet Sub-Committee estimates a decent living wage at Rs. 8-6-0 for men and Rs. 6-8-0 for women in addition to the

agreement bonus. The wage returns for September 1921 and March 1922 show only a slight advance on the earnings of 1914.

NORTH SYLHET.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticca, diet, ration, subsistence allowances and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 0 1	3 0 9	2 1 0	...	...	...
1906	4 12 6	3 3 1	2 1 11	6 1 0	4 12 0	3 1 3
1907	4 14 5	3 6 1	2 0 0	6 2 5	4 9 10	2 14 11
1908	5 2 4	3 8 7	2 6 5	6 9 7	4 14 1	3 3 5
1909	5 1 9	3 7 8	2 4 5	6 10 1	5 2 4	3 0 6
1910	4 14 6	3 4 9	2 7 4	6 0 11	4 14 11	3 6 8
1911	5 4 2	3 10 8	2 9 2	6 1 8	5 6 0	3 6 1
1912	5 2 2	3 7 2	2 7 9	6 9 9	4 13 10	3 3 1
1913	5 2 11	3 8 2	2 9 9	6 13 1	5 0 6	3 5 1
1914	5 6 8	3 8 4	2 9 2	7 0 0	5 0 7	3 4 6
1915	5 2 4	3 8 2	2 6 5	6 11 10	4 14 2	3 2 4
1916	5 11 2	4 1 0	2 12 9	7 2 1	5 3 11	3 11 7
1917	6 8 11	4 1 5	2 7 0	6 15 3	5 7 0	3 5 7
1918	5 8 1	3 14 3	2 4 1	6 14 11	5 9 7	3 0 7
1919	5 13 4	3 14 3	2 5 4	7 3 10	5 4 4	3 3 10
1920	6 5 4	4 8 5	2 8 9	7 14 7	5 10 9	3 13 2
1921	5 12 11	4 3 7	2 1 4	7 8 10	5 14 6	3 10 7
1922	5 11 0	3 15 6	2 4 6	7 9 0	5 9 0	3 8 0
September 1921	5 2 6	3 15 6	2 1 1	7 0 1	5 10 7	3 5 11
March 1922	6 3 7	3 15 7	2 7 11	8 2 0	5 7 4	3 10 3

Family earnings (on average daily working strength)	{ 1914	...	Rs. a. p.	13 0 4
	{ 1922	...	...	14 2 10
Percentage of rise in family earnings	...	...	...	5.8 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

With the opportunities recently afforded for earning higher wages, the position will doubtless be further improved. On gardens like Lackatoorah and Malnicherrah, where the coolie can supplement his income so largely by ancillary earnings, the Committee have no hesitation in saying that a decent living wage is given.

116. *Habiganj*.—Most of the Habiganj gardens are situated in the Laskerpore Valley. Sixteen replies have been received. The *hazira* rates vary. The number of gardens paying the different rates are as follows:

	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
	0 5 0	0 4 6	0 4 0	0 3 9	0 3 6	0 3 0
Men	3	3	6	3	...	1
Women	...	...	3	1	2	10

On two gardens the rate of wages has been raised since 1913. In 1919 Amoo increased men's wages from 3 annas to 3 annas 9 pies. On Teliapara agreement bonuses have been increased from Rs. 8 and Rs. 6 to Rs. 12 and Rs. 10 for men and women, respectively. Some gardens have reduced hoeing tasks and also lowered tasks for fine plucking. The Manager of Daragaon states:—

"The only real grievance the coolies have is that the cost of living has increased and that their pay has not gone up with the increased prices; cash earnings of the coolies have remained practically the same since 1913;

and again,

"The coolies get enough to keep them in health and reasonable comfort, but cannot save to any large extent.

His rates are 3 annas 9 pies and 3 annas. On Deundi which pays 5 annas and 4 annas, the average wages are:—

	Men.	Women.	Children.
	1	2	3
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
September 1913	10 12 2	10 1 4	6 15 10
" 1920	11 6 9	10 1 6	8 2 7

Though the rise is small, the earnings are relatively high. As September is a typically busy month, the annual averages would be lower. On Teliapara which pays 4 annas and 3 annas, the average earnings in 1913 were Rs. 7-6-3 and Rs. 5-3-11 for men and women respectively, and in 1921 Rs. 8-0-5 and Rs. 6-5-8. The Manager of Satchuri, who pays men 4 annas 6 pies and women 3 annas 6 pies, gives figures for 1915 and 1921 as follows:—

	March 1915.	September 1915.	March 1921.	September 1921.
	1	2	3	4
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Men	7 5 11	8 13 7	8 1 9	8 5 1
Women	5 0 4	7 6 10	6 14 5	8 4 9
Children	2 12 10	3 12 5	2 13 3	3 13 2

The Manager of Amoo in his answer to question No. 18 states that the remuneration is not proportionate with the cost of living, but rice, *dhari* and clothes were sold to the labour force under bazaar rates, and they were allowed to do unlimited *ticca*.

The Manager of Nayapara who pays 5 annas to men and 4 annas to women admits that the high price of cloth and foodstuffs has been the cause of discontent. On Surma, which pays 4 annas and 3 annas to agreement coolies, there has been no increase in cash earnings since 1913. Certain gardens near the border of Hill Tipperah have had their labour forces depleted by coolies absconding into that State. Coolies were attracted by promises of land for cultivation and of higher wages on new Indian tea-gardens. One result of this reduction in the labour force by desertion is that the employers have been able to provide more *ticca* work for the coolies left on the garden. In the opinion of the local Sub-Committee, Rs 8 with no concessions is a decent living wage. Most of the gardens have considerable areas available for rice-cultivation. Concessions in the way of cheap rice and cloth and blanket

to a smaller extent, were granted especially in 1919 and 1920. The wage returns show a tendency to rise:—

HABIGANJ.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticca, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	5 4 0	3 15 4	2 13 1	...	...	...
1906	5 4 5	3 13 4	2 12 9	6 8 10	5 1 8	3 15 3
1907	5 5 7	4 2 3	2 10 4	6 9 2	5 8 5	3 7 10
1908	5 1 3	3 14 8	2 5 10	6 11 1	5 10 11	3 7 5
1909	5 3 1	3 11 7	2 5 3	6 11 11	4 15 7	3 8 3
1910	5 4 11	3 12 11	2 4 2	6 14 0	5 15 4	3 10 10
1911	5 5 10	3 15 11	2 8 3	6 10 8	5 12 0	3 11 10
1912	5 11 4	4 3 11	2 8 7	7 3 1	6 3 9	3 14 9
1913	5 7 5	4 1 1	2 9 1	7 4 5	5 14 3	3 12 10
1914	5 8 6	4 3 8	2 10 3	7 6 11	6 1 7	4 1 3
1915	5 7 3	4 0 7	2 6 4	7 1 7	5 9 5	3 13 9
1916	5 11 4	4 7 6	2 14 0	7 7 3	6 3 7	3 6 5
1917	5 12 6	4 5 11	2 10 3	7 8 10	6 0 9	3 15 1
1918	3 6 8	2 5 11	1 13 10	5 13 3	4 2 11	2 8 10
1919	5 7 8	4 1 6	2 10 2	7 6 3	5 15 4	3 14 0
1920	6 10 2	4 14 9	3 0 0	8 6 6	6 9 5	4 4 10
1921	6 4 8	4 9 10	2 12 5	8 2 2	6 4 5	4 4 1
1922	6 10 10	4 14 3	2 13 11	9 2 9	6 1 4	4 4 11
September 1921	6 10 0	4 12 3	2 13 1	8 14 4	5 11 2	4 6 7
March 1922	6 11 8	5 0 3	2 14 8	9 7 2	6 7 6	4 3 3

Rs. a. p.

Family earnings (on average daily working strength) { 1914 14 12 1
1922 16 8 9

Percentage of rise in family earnings 12 per cent. .

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

The Committee are of opinion that although there may be one or two gardens where some increase of wages is necessary, on the whole, are getting a decent living wage. There has been no trouble on the gardens in this subdivision.

117. *South Sylhet.*—Replies have been received from 37 Managers. The *hazira* rates are not uniform. The number of gardens paying the different rates are given below:—

	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
	0 5 0	0 4 0	0 3 9	0 3 0	0 2 3
Men	1	13	10	13	...
Women	...	4	2	29	2

Since 1913, only 8 gardens have increased their rate of wages. From the 1st of January 1922, the Consolidated Tea and Lands Company raised rates for men from 3 annas 9 pies to 4 annas in two or three of their gardens so as to make the rates

uniform on their various gardens in South Sylhet. Including out-gardens, this Company owns some 20 gardens in this subdivision. As regards other Companies, Phultola Tea Estate increased men's wages from 3 annas to 3 annas 9 pies in 1920. The Manager states:—

"We raised our pay and I do not consider we have had less work in consequence."

The Rajnagar Tea Company, in recent years, raised women's wages from 2 annas 3 pies to 3 annas. Hingajia (Chargola Tea Association) in 1919 increased men's wages from 3 annas 6 pies to 4 annas. On Gobindpur, an Indian garden, an advance of 1 anna has been given to men and women bringing the *bazira* up to 4 annas. Shamsbernagar (Lungla Tea Company) raised women's rates from 2 annas 3 pies to 3 annas in the present year, 1922. The majority of the gardens in this subdivision belong to the Consolidated Tea and Lands Company, the Patrakhola Tea Company, the Alinagar Tea Company, and the Lungla Tea Company. There are also a few other gardens of minor importance belonging to other concerns. Most of the estates of the Consolidated Tea and Lands Company are situated in the Balisera Valley. The rates since the 1st of January 1922 are 4 annas and 3 annas for men and women. Previous to that date some of the gardens paid 3 annas 9 pies to men. This rate seems to be still in force in the Sagurnal Tea Estate of this Company which lies in an isolated corner of the subdivision. In all gardens of this Company, the rate for women is 3 annas. An additional rupee is given as a bonus if the full daily task has been completed on 24 or 25 days in the month. Coolies also receive an agreement bonus of Rs. 12 and Rs. 10 on contracts for 313 working days. The task has been reduced for fine plucking; on two gardens the *ticca* plucking rate is the pre-war rate. The plucking task is said to take from 4 to 5 hours. The light hoeing task on three gardens is the same as before the war; in *ticca* hoeing, there is also no alteration on two gardens. The hoeing task can be completed in 4 to 5 hours. Some of the estates possess a considerable extent of land for rice cultivation. In three of the four gardens of the Patrakhola Tea Company, the rates for men and women are 3 annas; but on Champarai, a comparatively new garden, which is rather isolated, the rates are 4 annas. The only case of alteration in hoeing rates seems to be at Madhubpur where the rate for deep hoeing has been slightly reduced. Tasks were reduced for fine plucking. One of the Managers of this Company admits that, notwithstanding this reduction, women could not earn as much as in coarse plucking. Most of the gardens have a considerable amount of rice land cultivated by the coolies. The percentage of labourers holding land ranges from 30 to 75 per cent. In recent years rice was sold to the coolies, at Rs. 5 per maund when the market price exceeded that figure. Clothes and blankets were sold at reduced rates to a very limited extent, and in some cases, were given free. The Manager of Madhubpur Tea Estate which belongs to the Patrakhola Company, has stated that coolies are largely indebted to the garden, and, save to a very small extent, that many loans are irrecoverable, and that all land suitable for paddy and sugarcane has already been allotted. On the two gardens of the Alinagar Tea Company, rates are 3 annas for men and women. There has been a reduction in the light and deep hoeing tasks on Alinagar and in the deep hoeing task at Chatlapur. Rates were reduced for fine plucking. On both gardens most of the coolies have land. The plucking task is said to take from 4 to 6 hours to complete and the hoeing task from 4 to 5 hours. From 1919 to 1921 rice concessions were given. The proximity of some of the gardens of these two Companies to Hill Tipperah, where rice is cheap, may partly account for the low rate of wages. On the gardens of the Lungla Company, the rates are:—

					Men.	Women.
1					2	3
					Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Kanhatti	...	...	...	...	0 3 0	0 2 3
Shamsbernagar	...	...	...	...	0 3 0	0 3 0
Bhagicherra	...	...	...	...	0 4 0	0 3 0
Lungla	...	...	...	...	0 3 0	0 2 3
Etah	...	...	...	...	0 3 0	0 3 0

The Manager of Kanibatti explains that these rates "are really a recognised minimum wage for various classes," and that coolies can earn more if they wish to and are encouraged to do so. There has been a reduction in plucking tasks due to the introduction of fine plucking. Except at Etah, hoeing tasks have also been reduced. The coolies on most of these gardens, especially on Lungla, are well off as regards land for cultivation. On Etah this is also the case to a smaller extent. Rice was sold, especially in 1920, at a concession rate of Rs. 4 a maund and the gain to the labour force per head was considerable; in some divisions, it meant an addition of over Re. 1 per month to their pay. On some of the gardens, the advances outstanding against the coolies are considerable. At Shamsbernagar, 460 coolies owe the garden Rs. 6,592. On Shamsbernagar and Bhagicherra up to the present year, the *haziras* for women were 2 annas 3 pies. On Doloi Tea Estate near Patrakhola, the rates are 3 annas 9 pies and 3 annas which have remained unaltered since 1913. *Hazira* and *ticca* light and deep hoeing tasks are the same as in 1913 but the Manager states that the standard of work is inferior.

118. The most striking fact as regards the gardens in this subdivision is the conservative adherence to the old rates which appear to be low. It is true that a coolie can add to his earnings by doing *ticca*, but the opportunities for this on some gardens up to recent years were restricted. The rate of wages also appears to be low taking into consideration the time taken to complete the task. The Patrakhola, Alinagar, and Lungla Tea Companies are in normal times prosperous concerns, and make large profits per acre, but little has been done in the way of raising the *hazira* rates and there has been no appreciable reduction in hoeing tasks except in a few cases. On some of the gardens the average earnings are not unduly low. The wage returns for Patrakhola and Lungla estates, showing the average earnings calculated on the daily working strength, are given :—

Patrakhola.

	1920.				1921.				1922.
	March.		September.		March.		September.		March.
	Rs.	a. p.	Rs.	a. p.	Rs.	a. p.	Rs.	a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Men ...	8	1 11	8	0 2	6	15 7	8	11 6	5 10 10
Women ...	5	2 7	7	2 11	5	3 3	7	13 0	4 13 5
Children ...	2	11 8	3	15 0	2	10 1	4	5 8	2 5 10

Lungla.

Men ...	8	8 1	8	5 2	8	4 1	6	7 10	7 4 2
Women ...	5	1 6	6	6 11	4	5 6	5	6 7	5 2 2
Children ...	3	8 11	3	7 4	3	2 3	2	15 9	3 4 7

In April 1921 there was a three weeks' strike on Lungla. In May 1921 and on two subsequent occasions, there has been trouble at Patrakhola. In spite of heavy recruiting, the labour force on some of the gardens in this sub-division has been greatly reduced as the result of the influenza epidemic and by desertions into Hill Tipperah. The Committee are inclined to think that while there may have been no undue pressure on the labourer to do extra work, he had no alternative if he wished to earn a decent living wage. When prices rose, the daily rate of wage which works out at less than Rs. 5 a month, could hardly be called sufficient even with the agreement bonus. Extra work, while it meant increased earnings, would not conduce to the contentment of the labour force. The coolie does not welcome curtailment of his leisure. This may partially explain why many gardens, in spite of large sums spent in recruiting, have been unable to keep their labour force up to strength. Possibly desertions into Hill Tipperah would have been fewer had the rate of daily wage been raised. The Committee are far from suggesting that the labourer should not be expected to do extra work, but, when the cost of living rose, it would have been reasonable to follow the example of other tea districts and to raise the rate for the standard task. These Companies, when large profits per acre were being made and when the cost of living was rising, could, by declaring smaller dividends, have

afforded to pay an enhanced rate of wages. The wage returns of South Sylhet show that the average earnings remained more or less steady from 1914 up to 1920 :—

SOUTH SYLHET.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including ticca, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	4 15 9	3 5 9	1 15 4	.....	.....	.....
1906	5 0 6	3 9 5	2 2 4	6 6 6	4 15 10	3 5 5
1907	4 15 9	3 2 5	2 1 6	6 5 8	4 14 2	3 9 11
1908	5 5 1	3 11 8	2 4 7	6 10 4	5 5 11	3 9 3
1909	4 9 9	3 15 3	2 3 0	6 8 6	5 7 2	3 7 4
1910	5 0 9	3 10 0	2 1 8	6 6 10	4 14 11	3 5 5
1911	5 6 6	4 2 6	2 6 6	7 0 3	5 7 11	3 11 3
1912	5 7 3	4 4 4	2 4 10	7 0 10	5 11 9	3 9 8
1913	5 10 0	4 2 0	2 6 3	7 2 11	5 9 9	3 7 8
1914	5 10 5	4 3 3	2 6 2	7 4 2	5 9 10	3 8 7
1915	5 10 7	4 2 2	2 5 10	7 5 2	5 9 7	3 9 5
1916	5 10 7	4 3 2	2 6 2	7 5 4	5 10 10	3 8 10
1917	5 10 6	4 2 8	2 6 4	7 5 3	5 10 6	3 9 5
1918	5 10 9	4 3 2	2 6 1	7 5 4	5 11 0	3 9 8
1919	5 10 10	4 1 7	2 6 8	7 5 6	5 11 0	3 9 10
1920	5 11 11	4 5 6	2 8 8	7 6 5	5 13 3	3 11 10
1921	6 3 11	4 12 2	2 13 1	7 15 10	6 9 1	4 1 11
1922	6 5 1	5 0 1	2 5 7	7 15 7	6 13 7	3 8 1
September 1921	6 5 10	5 7 0	2 6 8	8 2 3	7 10 5	3 7 4
March 1922	6 4 4	4 9 2	2 4 6	7 12 11	6 0 9	3 8 11

		Rs. a. p.
Family earnings (on average daily working strength)	1914	13 15 6
	1922	15 13 8
Percentage of rise in family earnings	...	... 13 per cent.

NOTE.—The figures of any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

The figures for 1921 show a distinct rise which is mainly due to the fact that the coolie did more work at the old rates. The rise is maintained in 1922 though there is a slight falling off in family earnings as compared with 1921. During the war, women's earnings in the Assam Valley Districts, with few exceptions, showed a gradual advance, indicating that they shared in the prosperity of the gardens by receiving a more generous payment for leaf plucking. The figures show that this does not apply to the South Sylhet gardens. Managers differ in their estimates of what constitutes a decent living wage. There seems to be a general agreement, however, that Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 for a man and Rs. 6 or Rs. 7 for a woman is a reasonable figure. Some would add the bonus to this. If the wage returns are to be taken as a test, coolies were hardly earning a decent living wage prior to 1921. To judge from the latest returns, many coolies are probably earning a decent living wage now. But this is only to a very small extent the result of an increase in the rate of wages.

Now that the tea industry is in a more flourishing condition, the Committee would recommend that an increase of wages should be given on gardens where low rates still prevail.

113. *Karimganj*.—Thirty Managers of gardens in the Karimganj sub-division have sent in replies. The *haziras* paid are tabulated below and give the number of gardens paying the various rates :—

	Rs. a. p. 0 6 0	Rs. a. p. 0 5 0	Rs. a. p. 0 4 6	Rs. a. p. 0 4 0	Rs. a. p. 0 3 9	Rs. a. p. 0 3 6	Rs. a. p. 0 3 0
Men	8	3	3	12	2	1	1
Women	—	1	—	10	—	4	15

In the Chargola Valley, gardens at the time of the exodus in May 1921, raised the rates for men and women from 4 and 3 annas to 6 and 4 annas a day with the exception of Kalinagar, an Indian garden which raised its rates to 5 annas and 4 annas. Tasks were not increased. Agreement bonuses are no longer given. Excluding the Chargola Valley, there has been a rise on only four other gardens in the sub-division. In 1914 Bhubrighat Tea Estate raised *haziras* from 3 annas 6 pies and 2 annas 6 pies to 4 annas and 3 annas. In addition, this garden gives a weekly bonus of one day's pay for six days' work, and has considerably reduced hoeing tasks. In 1913 men's *haziras* in the Longai Division of the Longai Company were advanced from 3 annas to 4 annas. On Sonarupa since 1913 *haziras* have been increased to 4 annas and 3 annas from 3 annas and 2 annas 6 pies. Sabazpur, an Indian garden, raised the *haziras* of men and women from 3 annas to 3 annas 6 pies. Outside the Chargola Valley the usual rates are 4 annas for men and 3 annas for women. *Haziras* of 3 annas for men and women are paid only on Samanbagh in the Juri Valley. On this garden the task for light hoeing is 25 *nals* and for deep hoeing 12 *nals*. The task for *ticca* light hoeing is 20 *nals* for 4 annas. There has been no alteration in these tasks since 1913. The Manager states :—

“The necessity for doing more *ticca* work and thus earning more pay to counterbalance higher prices was continually instilled into them (the coolies).”

His reply to question No. 17 is :—

“The unrest, if any, amongst coolies was, I think, mainly due to the cutting down of expenditure. In our own case it meant that coolies were not given the usual agreement bonuses, and a smaller amount of *ticca*, and were also encouraged, and in some cases, forced to take more leave than they wanted and could not, of course, understand the reason. This fact combined with ‘Gandhi talk’ that was openly being instilled into them by Bengalis in the *bustee* and bazaar, had the effect of unsettling them and making them think there was something wrong.”

There is a large area of about 1,200 bighas for rice cultivation on rent-free terms. The labour force consists of 552 men and 573 women. No clothing or blankets are supplied free or at reduced rates. No figures are given as to the loss in rice, but the Manager states that when rice is scarce, it is supplied at 15 per cent. below market rates. The Company is in normal times a prosperous one though a considerable loss was incurred in 1920.

120. Some particulars with regard to gardens in the Longai Valley which have not raised rates may be of interest.

Pathini Tea Company.—The monthly wages of Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 remain unchanged since 1913. The Manager, in his replies, has stated that earnings have not increased since 1913, but in his evidence, he explains that he has not actually examined the question. The *hazira* tasks for hoeing—light hoe 30 *nals*, deep hoe 12 to 18 *nals*—have not been altered. The *ticca* light hoeing task seems to be unaltered, but the *ticca* deep hoeing task has been slightly reduced. The *ticca* plucking task is 3 pounds for 2 pice as against 3 pounds for one pice before the war. A plucking or hoeing task is said to take about six hours. There are about 680 acres rent-free land held by 88 per cent. of the labourers out of a labour force of 833 men and 1,128 women; clothing and blankets were issued at reduced rates in deserving cases. No pregnant leave allowance or bonus on the birth of a child is given. A sum of Rs. 20,708 is outstanding against coolies for advances, partly on account of rice issued. The loss on rice for the three years, 1919-21 was Rs. 21,872. It was sold at 7 seers to the rupee. In ordinary circumstances, this is a very prosperous Company.

Sephinjuri.—The rates for men and women are 4 annas with no alteration since 1913. In this Company, earnings are high. Taking two children as equal to one adult, the Manager gives the average pay earned on the average working strength as follows :—

1913.	1921.
Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
6 11 6	8 14 11

There has been a reduction of about one *nal* per *anna* for light and deep hoeing. 1,088 coolies hold 350 acres of rice land at 9 annas an acre. The loss in rice in the last four years was Rs. 32,816-4. The present labour force is: 589 men, 925 women; 334 children.

In the *Longai Tea Company*, the rates are:—

	Men.			Women.			
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	
Chandkhira	0	3	9	and	0	3	0
Lalkhira	0	4	0	,,	0	4	0
Longai Division	0	4	0	,,	0	3	0

Since 1913, men's *haziras* in the Longai Division have been raised from 3 to 4 annas: otherwise there seems to have been no advance.

In all cases, hoeing tasks are practically the same as before the war. An average coolie takes 5 to 6 hours to complete the plucking or hoeing tasks. On Chandkhira and Lalkhira about 85 per cent. of the labourers hold land inside or outside the grant. The rent for garden land is Rs. 1 a *heer* and for Government land the ordinary land revenue rates. On Longai about 95 per cent. of the coolies hold land on rent-free terms. For Chandkhira the loss on rice has not been given, but at Longai it amounted to Rs. 13,113 for the years 1916 to 1920.

Hattikhira.—The *haziras* are 4 annas and 3 annas and have not been altered since 1913. Hoeing tasks remain practically the same. The labour force is inadequate and shows no increase although 1½ lakhs were spent in recruiting in the last five years. There have been many desertions to the villages. An average coolie takes about 5 hours to complete his plucking or hoeing task. There are about 486 acres of rice land in the garden held free or at a nominal rent and 200 acres of paddy and sugar-cane land outside. The loss on rice in the last five years was Rs. 34,378.

Isabheel.—The rates are 4 annas and 3 annas for men and women. The light hoeing task has been reduced from 40 to $\frac{32}{24}$ *nals*, and in the case of deep hoeing from 20 to $\frac{15}{12}$ *nals*. There are 265 *bighas* of land held rent-free by 20 per cent. of the coolies. Women get pregnant leave for three months on full pay. The loss on rice was Rs. 3,000 for 1919 and 1920. In 1920, Dr. McLaughlin, one of the Directors, proposed an increase in pay in the form of a bonus to coolies who did 24 days' work in a month, but the proposal was not carried out.

121. For the Juri Valley, a decent living wage is said to be Rs. 7 for an adult. In the Longai Valley Rs. 7 and Rs. 6, and in the Chargola Valley Rs. 8 and Rs. 6 are the estimates for men and women respectively. The wage returns of Karimganj sub-division show no appreciable increase between 1914 and 1920 and 1921:—

KARIMGANJ.

Average calculated on the figures for September and March, of monthly cash wages including *ticca*, diet, rations, subsistence allowance and bonus per head.

Year.	Of total number on books.			Of average daily working strength.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1905	4 10 6	3 5 11	2 9 11	...	...	...
1906	4 10 10	3 5 9	2 8 8	6 6 8	5 3 9	3 12 2
1907	4 11 0	3 6 10	2 6 1	6 8 9	5 1 6	3 8 7
1908	4 12 1	3 7 1	2 7 8	6 11 7	5 3 5	4 4 11
1909	4 10 11	3 7 8	2 6 5	6 7 2	5 3 4	3 11 3
1910	4 14 5	3 11 11	2 7 0	6 7 11	5 1 3	3 9 2
1911	4 11 5	3 12 4	2 8 2	6 7 7	5 6 6	3 11 3
1912	4 13 1	3 11 1	2 7 7	7 2 2	5 10 10	3 4 10
1913	4 5 11	3 6 8	2 6 7	7 2 1	5 10 2	3 14 1
1914	4 14 2	3 12 4	2 10 5	6 14 4	5 6 7	3 14 4
1915	3 15 11	3 4 4	2 5 1	6 15 7	5 3 6	3 10 9
1916	4 0 8	3 5 10	2 7 7	6 10 2	5 8 6	3 11 10
1917	5 1 4	4 0 1	2 11 9	6 7 6	5 5 10	3 10 8
1918	4 14 6	3 13 3	2 9 8	6 10 8	5 7 6	3 9 1
1919	5 6 1	4 2 4	2 11 9	6 15 11	5 10 2	3 13 0
1920	5 10 7	4 11 3	3 9 4	5 13 0	6 5 6	3 15 6
1921	5 14 0	4 1 4	2 15 10	7 10 0	5 11 10	4 1 11
1922	5 13 1	4 1 9	2 13 1	8 3 4	6 5 4	4 7 4
September 1921	6 0 3	4 4 5	2 12 5	8 4 1	6 12 11	4 9 5
March 1922	5 9 11	3 15 0	2 13 8	8 2 7	5 13 5	4 5 3

Family earnings (on average daily working strength) {	1914	Rs. a. p.	13 7 7
	1922	15 14 1	
Percentage of rise in family earnings	...	18 per cent.	

NOTE.—The figures for any particular year are the averages of March of that year and of September of the previous year.

Men's wages for 1920 show a severe drop though women's wages rose appreciably. In 1921 there was a considerable increase in men's wages as compared with 1914, but women's earnings only show a few annas increase. As regards gardens in the Chargola Valley, where wages have been raised, there can be no doubt that the coolies receive a decent living wage. This is corroborated by the wage returns for these estates for September 1921 and March 1922. The average earnings for the whole sub-division for these months show an appreciable advance, but this is largely due to the increased earnings in the Chargola Valley. Outside the Chargola Valley, there seems to be an unfortunate reluctance to raise the rate of wages to meet the increased cost of living. In making this statement, the large area of rice land under cultivation on many of the gardens has been taken into consideration. All coolies, however, have not got cultivation. There has been little appreciable reduction in hoeing tasks. Speaking generally, it is doubtful if the earnings outside the Chargola Valley correspond to the estimates of what constitutes a decent living wage. It is only fair to state that the earnings of coolies on some gardens, for instance, Sephinjuri and Blubrightat, are adequate. The following are the wage returns for Blubrightat :—

	1920.		1921.		1922.
	March.	September.	March.	September.	March.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Men	10 7 10	10 2 11	9 3 8	8 10 0	8 8 9
Women	7 10 0	7 3 2	6 5 7	6 5 8	7 10 2
Children	4 7 1	5 1 5	3 15 8	3 15 1	4 9 0

This garden in 1920-21 sold concession rice at Rs. 5 a maund. On other estates in the Longai Valley the rate was 7 seers to the rupee, which is equivalent to Rs. 5-12-0 a maund. From the coolie's point of view, this was dear rice. The Committee consider that there is room for an increase in wages on gardens where low rates prevail.

PART III.—GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

Cost of working relative to a rise in wages.

122. An increase in the rate of wages or a reduction in tasks would naturally result in an increase in the cost of working a garden. In the case of leaf plucking, the effect of a rise of wages is obscured by the tendency in recent years to resort to fine plucking. On a garden in the Nowgong district, where the rate of wages has remained unaltered since 1913, the cost per maund of manufactured tea was :—

1913.	1920.	1921.	Estimate for 1922.
1	2	3	4
Rs. a. p. 5 1 10	Rs. a. p. 4 12 3	Rs. a. p. 6 6 2	Rs. a. p. 5 11 2

The increase in cost in 1921 is due to the adoption of fine plucking. On Bokahula garden of the Jorhat Tea Company the wages are Rs. 7 and Rs. 6 since January 1922. Previous to 1916 when they were raised to Rs. 6 and Rs. 5, wages were Rs. 5 and Rs. 4. The cost of plucking per seer of green leaf was as follows :—

1913.	1918.	1919.	1920.	1921.	Estimate for 1922.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Pies. 4-554	Pies. 4-42	Pies. 4-44	Pies. 4-53	Pies. 5-52	Pies. 5-10

Though the cost has risen in 1921 and 1922, it is impossible to say how far this is due to a rise in wages and how far to the introduction of fine plucking.

Generally speaking, there has not been much increase in the cost of light hoeing. In the case of deep hoeing, the difference is more appreciable. The figures of cost are, however, not always easy to understand. For example, on Bokahula garden, the cost was :—

---				1913.	1921.	Estimate for 1922.
1				2	3	4
				Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Light hoeing	...	...	...	2 7 0	2 8 7 (<i>bazira</i>) 2 9 3 (<i>ticca</i>).	2 8 0 (including <i>ticca</i>).
Deep "	...	...	...	4 9 0	4 10 8	4 4 0

The hoeing tasks are said to have remained unaltered. As men's wages have been increased by two rupees a month since 1913, a wider difference between the actual cost of light hoeing in 1913 and the estimated cost in 1922 might have been expected. It was suggested by the Superintendent of the Jorhat Tea Company that the cost in 1913 was high, on account of employment of village labour which was paid at higher rates than ordinary garden labour. On a garden in the Nowgong district, where wages have not been raised and tasks have not been reduced, the cost per acre was :—

---				1913.	1920.	1921.
1				2	3	4
				Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Deep hoeing	...	...	...	6 6 6	6 1 9	6 6 0
Light "	...	...	...	3 7 6	3 6 6	3 1 0

The Committee recognise that the factors which enter into the cost of working are complex and that Managers are in the best position to explain variations.

123. Stress has rightly been laid on the necessity of taking into consideration joint family earnings in the case of tea-garden labourers. It may be convenient to adopt Mr. Melitus' standard of an average working family as consisting of one working man, one working woman, and three-tenths of a working child. The figures tabulated below show the family earnings calculated on the average daily working strength. For 1914 the figures are based on the average earnings of September 1913 and March 1914, and for 1922 on the average earnings of September 1921 and March 1922. The last column in the table indicates the percentage of increase in 1922 as compared with 1914 :—

Comparison
of family
earnings in
1914 and at
the present
time.

District.	1914.	1922.	Percentage of rise.
1	2	3	4
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
Lakhimpur Sadr	18 2 4	21 15 2	21
North Lakhimpur	15 13 10	20 4 3	28
Darrang	14 14 10	18 15 8	27
Mangaklai	15 11 5	18 15 4	21
Sibsagar	15 15 11	20 1 0	26
Jorhat	15 7 7	19 0 11	17
Golaghat	14 0 11	17 7 4	25
Nowgong	16 11 9	18 8 10	11
Cachar	13 13 6	15 0 4	9
Hailakandi	13 11 7	15 8 10	14
North Sylhet	13 0 4	14 2 10	9
Habiganj	14 12 1	16 8 9	12
South Sylhet	13 15 0	15 13 8	13
Karimganj	13 7 7	15 14 1	18

For each of those years, the average earnings calculated on the total number of labourers on the books would be approximately 25 per cent. less than these figures. Earnings are highest in Lakhimpur Sadr, and lowest in North Sylhet. Several gardens in the latter subdivision are, however, hardly typical. Excluding North Sylhet, Cachar shows the lowest earnings. In Cachar, a family earns approximately 7 rupees less than in Lakhimpur Sadr. In both North Sylhet and in Cachar earnings have increased only 9 per cent. since 1914 as compared with a rise of 21 per cent. in Lakhimpur Sadr. The largest increase is in North Lakhimpur, Darrang, Sibsagar and Golaghat. The rise in Nowgong is much the lowest in the Assam Valley. But in 1914 the average earnings in that district exceeded those of all other districts in that Valley except Lakhimpur Sadr. Generally speaking, the cost of living in the Surma Valley is less than in any district of the Assam Valley. This would partly account for the average earnings being less. Many Companies in Upper Assam are also in a better position to pay higher wages than gardens in the Surma Valley. The low percentage of rise in the Surma Valley since 1914 is, however, noteworthy. Habiganj, though it shows a smaller rise than some other subdivisions in the Valley, heads the list for average earnings. The explanation given in the analogous case of Nowgong applies equally to Habiganj. Calculated on the basis of the adult labour force in the different tea districts, excluding Kamrup, on the 30th of June 1921, the percentage of the rise in family earnings for the whole Province is 19.2. On a similar basis, the percentage for the Assam Valley is 22.3 and for the Surma Valley 12.3.

Cost of living in March 1914 and in March 1922.

121. The absence of any index number for Assam, coupled with the wide variations in the budgets of coolie families which are available, makes it difficult to frame any reliable estimate of the relative cost of living in tea-gardens at the present time. Schedule B, appended to the rules under Act VI of 1901, lays down the daily allowance of food to be provided for an adult emigrant *en route* to Assam. The quantities fixed in *chattaks* are: rice 12, *dal* 2, vegetables 3, salt $\frac{1}{2}$, mustard oil $\frac{2}{16}$, and condiments of various kinds $\frac{2}{8}$. The monthly quantities, in seers, are approximately:—rice 23, *dal* 3 $\frac{1}{2}$, vegetables 6, salt 1, mustard, oil 1, and condiments about $\frac{3}{4}$. Managers ordinarily estimate 25 seers of rice as the monthly requirement for a working coolie, which is somewhat in excess of the scheduled scale given above. The *Assam Gazette* quotes the market rates of the chief foodstuffs and also of kerosene oil at the headquarters of districts and subdivisions. The average of these, in the tea districts, has been taken as the basis of calculation. The periods selected for comparison are the last fortnight of March in 1914 and 1922. For spices, vegetables, fish, household utensils and furniture, tobacco and molasses, price statistics are not published. With the information derived from Major Jack's "Economic Life of a Bengal District" and from such coolie budgets as are available, it is possible to ascertain the approximate expenditure on these items in 1914 in relation to the total budget expenditure. In his budget of "a family in comfort," Major Jack has assumed that the amount spent in clothing is one-tenth of the total expenditure. Managers generally would agree with this estimate. According to information kindly furnished by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the wholesale price in March 1914, of a pair of coolie *dhotis* was Re. 1-2-3 and in March 1922 Rs. 2-12-0. In April 1914 the wholesale price of a pair of coolie *saris* was Re. 1-6-4 and in March 1922 Rs. 2-14-0. Owing to the high cost of clothing at the present time, a coolie probably spends less on extra clothes such as cold weather coats, but he would probably still purchase the minimum amount of necessary clothing.

125. Budgets for 1914 and 1922, for an adult male labourer have been framed on these lines :—

Names of commodity.	Budget of an adult male labourer in March 1914.	Percentage weight assigned to each commodity in proportion to the aggregate expenditure in March 1914.	Index number of the price of each item in March 1922, taking March 1914 as the basic period.	Index number multiplied by the weight, the total giving the index number of the cost of living in March 1922, compared with March 1914.	Budget of an adult male labourer in March 1922, on the standard of March 1914.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.				Rs. a. p.
Rice	3 0 0 (at Rs. 4-13 per maund).	58	108	62.64	3 4 0 (at Rs. 5-3 per maund).
Dal	0 7 6 (at Rs. 6 per maund).	9	200	18.00	0 15 0 (at Rs. 10 per maund).
Salt	0 1 0 (at Rs. 2-9 per maund).	1½	183	2.20	0 1 9 (at Rs. 4-11 per maund).
Mustard oil	0 7 0 (at Rs. 17-10 per maund).	8	146	11.68	0 10 3 (at Rs. 25-12 per maund).
Spices	0 1 0 ...	1½	150	1.80	0 1 6.
Vegetables and fish	0 5 0 ...	6	150	9.00	0 7 6.
Clothes	0 8 6 ...	10	241	24.10	1 4 5.
Kerosene oil	0 1 0 (at Rs. 5-3 per maund).	1½	203	2.43	0 2 0 (at Rs. 10-7 per maund).
Utensils and furniture	0 2 6 ...	3	150	4.50	0 3 9.
Tobacco and molasses	0 2 0 ...	2½	150	3.60	0 3 0.
Total	5 3 6 ...	100	...	139.95	7 5 2.

No allowance has been made for milk, betel-nut, ceremonies, entertainments and liquor. Many coolies have their own cattle, and gardens often supply milk free of cost to mothers and children. Betelnut is a negligible item. Expenditure on religious ceremonies and on occasional feasts to fellow caste-men forms part of a coolie's budget. It is difficult, however, to strike an average. Probably since the cost of living rose less is spent in this way. It may perhaps be assumed that where liquor is consumed, the cost is met from the balance which remains after the purchase of food, clothing and other necessaries. Owing to the present high price of *dal* probably less of this commodity is used. Cheaper pulses are consumed just as margarine was freely substituted for butter in Britain during the war. Expenditure on mustard oil, vegetables and fish is likely to be more restricted at the present time. Rice is subject to seasonal fluctuations of price. Owing to the high proportion which this article of diet bears to the total expenditure, any large variation in its market price would cause an appreciable effect on the index number. It is interesting to note that in the second fortnight of April 1914, the average price of rice in the tea districts was Rs. 4-13-7 a maund; for the same period in 1922 the price was Rs. 5-7-6 as against Rs. 5-3-0 in the previous month. In the second fortnight of May 1922, the average price had risen to Rs. 5-9-9 a maund. The budgets (*vide* appendix) framed by Mr. Powell of the Dekhari Tea Company (Lakhimpur) show a difference of about 37 or 38 per cent. between the cost of living in 1914 and the latter part of 1921. The price of rice has been assumed to be Rs. 5 per maund in both these years. The rise was therefore in respect of articles other than rice.

126. The index number—139.95—makes no pretence to accuracy. It represents a diffident attempt to arrive at the approximate difference in the cost of living in 1914 as compared with the present time. Any conclusions based on this index number must be accepted with caution. If all-India or preferably provincial mass units of consumption of the various articles in the budget were available for weighing purposes, a more accurate result might perhaps be obtained. This, however, is doubtful. The personal equation enters largely into the budgets of tea-garden coolies; the proportionate expenditure on different items may present wide variations. How far

this would affect the index number, now calculated, would depend on whether an article to which too large or too small a weight had been assigned varied in price much more or less than other commodities. Though the cost of living in the case of an adult male labourer has been estimated at Rs. 7-5-2 in March 1922, variations will be found in different districts and in gardens of the same district. Thus, outside the area where rice is sold by the gardens at Rs. 3 a maund, living is cheaper in Sylhet than in Dibrugarh. In so far as a coolie purchases concession rice from the garden or grows a portion of his own foodstuffs, the cost of living would be reduced. A woman, and to a greater degree a child, would live cheaper than a man and if all live in a family, there would be a considerable reduction in expenditure. The estimate takes no account of savings or expenditure on petty luxuries, and hence a decent living wage would exceed the figure given for the bare cost of living.

127. The joint earnings in different districts have been tabulated in a previous paragraph. It will be seen that they have not kept pace with the rise in the cost of living as represented by the index number for March 1922. In other words, the rise in *real* wages is appreciably less than the rise in *nominal* wages. The purchasing power of the present level of wages is less than in 1914. This is more especially the case in the Surma Valley. Reference is invited to Mr. Dutta's statement in the "Enquiry into the rise of prices in India", that in 1912 the *real* wages of tea-garden coolies in Assam had fallen 5 per cent. *below* while those of agricultural labourers in India had risen 38 per cent. *above* the level of the standard period (1890-94). The Report of the Board of Revenue on the Revenue administration of the United Provinces for the year ending 30th September 1921 states (paragraph 60) :—

"The demand for labour was again in excess of the supply, and wages rose in consequence proportionately to the increase in the cost of living, so that labourers did not suffer."

It can hardly be a matter of surprise if, under these favourable conditions, labourers from the United Provinces should regard the attractions offered on many estates in Assam as insufficient and should hesitate to leave their home districts.

Finding of the Committee on the first term of reference.

128. Managers have expressed the opinion that the remuneration in money payments together with the various concessions is sufficient to maintain the labourers in health and reasonable comfort. The Committee find it difficult to give a definite answer to the question. In a matter of this kind the evidence of the eye is often more valuable than verbal testimony, but as it has been a physical impossibility to visit more than a small proportion of the numerous gardens in the Province, it has not been easy to come to any definite conclusion. The attractiveness to the coolie of a particular garden often depends on the net advantages and not on money earnings alone. Other important factors are the possibility of obtaining land for cultivation, the opportunities of other subsidiary means of livelihood, proximity to a bazaar, ample leisure, the healthiness of the locality, and last but by no means least, the personality of the Manager. It would be a mistake to adopt, in the case of any individual garden, the general conclusion arrived at as regards the adequacy or inadequacy of wages in any particular tea district without taking into consideration the conditions prevailing on the estate. The Committee believe that the analysis which has been made of the wages earned, district by district, is of more practical utility than any attempt to sum up the position as regards the whole Province. They are satisfied, however, that, speaking generally, the remuneration is adequate on gardens in the Assam Valley. In the case of the Surma Valley, they can only endorse that finding subject to the reservations made in the detailed analysis.

It seems reasonable to infer that the coolie's standard of living must have been lowered of late years. If earnings have not kept pace with the rise in the cost of living, this is inevitable. There is no reason, however, to believe that, speaking generally, the labourer has not had sufficient food to maintain him in health which is the primary consideration, but obviously he must have had less money to spend on clothing and petty luxuries, while the possibilities of saving must have been very limited in most cases. At the same time, it is difficult to believe that a lower standard of living has been voluntarily adopted by the labourer. Only force of circumstances has compelled him to accept the lower standard of living. The Committee would express the hope that the Tea Industry will, before long, be in a position to enable him to regain, if not to raise, the standard which he had attained when the cost of living was less.

Tea District Sub-Committees should recommend rates of wages.

129. The Committee suggest that the present district Sub-Committees should recommend what they consider to be a decent monthly or daily rate of wage, not a mere subsistence allowance, but a wage that would suffice to keep the labourer in health and reasonable comfort with the possibility of saving a little. This should be

a wage which the average coolie can earn in a reasonable time. It may be supplemented by *ticca* earnings. It has been suggested that the task for this wage should not occupy more than six hours and that an anna for an hour's work is a fair rate. The Committee refrain from passing any definite opinion on this point as they believe that Managers are a reasonable and fair-minded body of men and that the district Sub-Committees are in the best position to say what is a fair task for a decent living wage. It is possible that certain tasks might have to be altered; for example, a task of deep hoeing takes longer than one of light hoeing. Managers in the Assam Valley, in reply to question 24—as to what constitutes a decent living monthly wage—have, with few exceptions, given a figure which corresponds to the monthly or daily rate of wage for the ordinary daily task which is at present in force on the gardens. In the Surma Valley, however, the daily rate of wage paid for the fixed task is, in many cases, considerably below the figure given by Managers in estimating a decent living wage. The rate of wages should be fixed on the assumption that a coolie has no cultivation or other subsidiary means of livelihood. It does not seem fair to pay a low rate of wages on the ground that a garden is well off for land for rice cultivation. It may be that all the land available has already been distributed. The new coolie is not likely, as a rule, to be in a position to take to cultivation till he has been some years on the garden.

130. It is true that district Sub-Committees have no executive power and that the ultimate decision must rest with the Agents or Directors. At the same time, due consideration should be given to the recommendations of those who are on the spot and know best what is required. The Committee are glad to note the tendency to attach greater weight to the deliberations of the Sub-Committees. Mr. Crawford of Messrs. James Finlay and Company, at the annual meeting of the Indian Tea Association in Calcutta in March 1922, stated that it was imperative that each sub-district should carefully consider its own particular problems and work together in harmony while it was essential that Managers should freely discuss wage problems. Where a neighbouring estate had decided to increase wages or had altered tasks, the Sub-Committee should record their opinion in the minutes which should be communicated to the Directors and Agents, as well as to the estates interested. He further remarked :

"My visits up-country and conversations with representatives of the Branches in Calcutta, confirm the opinion I have held that sufficient importance is not being attached to the District Sub-Committees."

131. The general opinion of Managers is that earnings in the cold weather are less than at other seasons. In the last two or three years, many gardens, by introducing the unit system or by allowing more opportunities for *ticca* earnings in the cold weather, have endeavoured to equalise earnings throughout the year. The fixing of a decent living wage as suggested in the preceding paragraph would have a similar effect. Coolies who have got their own crops to reap or who can find profitable employment as harvesters in the villages are not likely to work full time in the garden. Others again, who have done well in the busy season, can also afford to have an easy time in the off season.

The comparative cheapness of paddy in the cold weather when the crops are being reaped is a partial explanation of the smaller musters at this time of year.

132. Question 41 reads :—

"How far do you think it true that any appreciable rise in the rate of wages would result in the coolie not earning more from the garden, but in his doing less work for the same pay?"

The effect of a rise in the rate of wages on coolies' earnings.

A few answers may be quoted :—

Manager of Saphinjuri :—"It can safely be said that this would occur in 90 per cent. of cases."

Manager of Bhubrighat :—"I believe that improvident and intemperate coolies would do less work in response to an appreciable rise in the rate of wages. Probably the thrifty worker would not do less."

Manager of Samanbagh :—"Up to a certain point 'Yes'; beyond that 'No.'"

Manager of Malnicherra :—"About 50 per cent. of the coolies would, I believe, do less work unless the system is adopted of giving a high wage for full work and a considerably lower wage for part work."

Manager of Laskarpur :—"The good class coolie would no doubt earn more from the garden. Coolies who have no idea of saving money would very likely do less work for the same money."

Manager of Chattapore :—"In the majority of cases the coolie will limit his earnings to the amount necessary for his requirements."

- Manager of Deanston* :—"The higher the wages the less work."
- Manager of Shamsnernagar* :—"A good coolie will earn more, but a poor one I do not think would."
- Manager of Burtoll* :—"They would work less and earn much about the same."
- Manager of Pallorbund* :—"Any large increase in the rate of wages would result in the coolie doing less work and earning little more pay."
- Manager of Koomber* :—"In all probability as is common at home and abroad so with the coolie, more pay would result in less work."
- Manager of Doodpullee* :—"I am convinced that a large number of coolies only do enough work to cover their actual food requirements and trust to chance for their clothes, and if they get this amount of pay for less work, they will do less."
- Manager of Hattigarh* :—"He will do less work for the same pay or alternative periods of hard work with periods of doing nothing."
- Manager of Rupajuli* :—"Experience is that the lowering of tasks almost invariably results in the coolie doing less work."
- Manager of Halem* :—"My experience here has proved that the average coolie will not work more than he needs to. Increased wages mean less work given."
- Manager of Majulighur* :—"To a very considerable extent."
- Manager of Nahorani* :—"Many coolies aim at a certain amount weekly and only do enough work to bring them in that amount."
- Manager of Ambuckie* :—"I have had practical experience that it is the case."
- Manager of Jiajuri* :—"This is well known and proved not only among such people in India but also at home."
- Manager of Rungajoun* :—"Generally less work."
- Superintendent of Jorhat Tea Company* :—"Yes this is shown from a decrease in musters that the coolies' desire is to have as easy a time as possible and earn sufficient to keep themselves in comfort according to their standard of living."
- Manager of Kanu* :—"There is not in my mind the slightest doubt that an appreciable rise in the rate of wages will most certainly result in the coolie not earning more from the garden but in his doing less work for the same pay."
- Manager of Dooria* :—"Certain classes of *lettra* (lazy) labour will not earn more money than is sufficient to keep them in existence and *lettra* labour would do less work for the same pay."
- Manager of Anguri* :—"Perhaps in the case of coolies who have saved money."
- Manager of Maijan* :—"From experience acquired from the working of the present increase of pay given to the coolies in this district, the average coolie only cares to earn sufficient for his necessary wants."
- Manager of Panitola* :—"It is my opinion that any further rise in the rate of pay in the garden would only result in less work for the same pay."
- Manager of Pabhojan* :—"To a very considerable extent."
- Manager of Tingri Tea Company* :—"I consider it absolutely true without any qualification."
- Manager of Dekhari* :—"Coolies work a less number of days since the rates have been increased."
- Superintendent of Assam Frontier Company* :—"He would do less work."

133. There is thus a practical consensus of opinion that any appreciable rise in the rate of wages would result in the labourer doing just sufficient work to enable him to earn the same amount as before. The Committee are not disposed to accept this view without some qualification. If the increase in the rate of wages corresponds more or less to the rise in the cost of living, they think it probable, unless the standard of living has fallen, that the average coolie will be inclined to do as much work while some may even be encouraged by the higher wage to do more. If the rise in wages is in excess of the increased cost of living, many would probably do less work. There are of course lazy individuals who will be content to earn just enough to keep themselves alive whatever the wage may be. The correctness of the view expressed by the Committee is corroborated by the wage returns of the various districts which show an appreciable increase in earnings of late years. In some measure, this is the result of increased *ticca* earnings, but the successive rises granted in the rate of wages have contributed largely to the result. Two concrete examples may be cited. In the Jorhat Company, the wages in 1913, were Rs. 5 and Rs. 4. In 1921, they were raised to Rs. 7 and Rs. 6. The Superintendent has stated the average earnings to be as follows :—

	Men.			Women.			Children.					
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.			
1913	6	9	10	5	7	2	3	12	11
1921	8	13	10	7	6	9	5	0	11

The wage returns of typical gardens in the Chargola Valley, where the rates were raised in May 1921, illustrate the rise in earnings due to the increase in the rate of wages :—

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	March. 1920.	September. 1920.	March. 1921.	September. 1921.	March. 1922.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
<i>Maguracherra.—</i>					
Men	7 6 3	6 11 0	8 4 4	8 14 0	8 15 0
Women	5 7 1	5 10 2	4 7 9	7 6 4	6 2 1
Children	4 2 8	4 2 11	2 11 7	4 13 9	4 7 6
<i>Bidyanagar.—</i>					
Men	7 11 9	9 0 4	9 6 2	11 1 6	9 14 5
Women	4 12 3	5 2 1	5 11 7	7 10 10	5 15 2
Children	3 6 1	3 9 2	4 14 1	5 5 4	4 5 6
<i>Kalinagar.—</i>					
Men	6 12 5	7 13 1	6 4 11	8 12 8	8 13 10
Women	5 10 3	6 14 7	4 15 0	9 14 0	6 8 0
Children	4 3 10	4 13 6	2 15 9	6 10 6	5 1 6
<i>Goomphira.—</i>					
Men	5 15 3	6 1 6	5 10 1	10 0 5	9 10 4
Women	5 6 4	6 0 7	5 5 7	7 14 8	7 1 4
Children	3 9 6	3 7 3	4 7 1	4 15 0	5 12 3
<i>Mukamcherra.—</i>					
Men	5 5 10	6 3 3	5 5 1	10 9 2	9 4 0
Women	4 4 2	5 1 0	3 11 7	9 9 0	5 9 6
Children	3 6 11	4 8 6	3 2 0	6 4 2	4 13 3
<i>Anipur.—</i>					
Men	6 4 5	7 15 7	6 1 1	9 13 2	9 8 8
Women	4 14 10	5 14 7	4 5 9	7 2 5	5 12 9
Children	3 12 4	4 10 4	3 4 5	5 8 11	5 13 5

134. In February 1921, in the course of a discussion with representatives of the tea industry, the late Governor of Assam, Sir Nicholas Beatson Bell, raised the question whether coolies in the past had ever received a bonus on profits corresponding to the commission which is given to Managers and the staff. The answer was in the negative. Managers pointed out that in bad years coolies would not understand why it was impossible to give a bonus. The late Governor was, however, of opinion that the question merited further consideration.

Question of a bonus to coolies proportionate to the prosperity of the garden.

Question 34 (b) reads :—

“ Do you favour the idea of giving coolies a bonus proportionate to the prosperity of the garden, year by year? If so, what form should it take?”

The general reply given by Managers is that coolies would not understand why no bonus or a reduced bonus was given in bad years. It would be unfair to criticise the industry for not spending money in prosperous years for the benefit of the labourer in the shape of hospitals, water-supply, improved housing and sanitation, including a system of conservancy. In Britain, where the standard of education and general intelligence among the working classes, is infinitely higher than in India, schemes of profit-sharing have not made much progress. The Committee are of opinion that a distribution of a cash bonus is impracticable and undesirable. The Bombay Industrial Disputes Committee, in their Report, which was recently issued, have remarked that bonuses are wasteful. They state that it is an almost universal experience that a bonus has no permanent effect on the standard of living, and that it is immediately dissipated in increased absenteeism

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or else in the grog shop. The present Committee agree with this view. In their opinion the first essential of Indian labour is a higher standard of living. Any spare money which employers have would be better spent on education, superannuation benefits, and welfare work generally.

Indebtedness
of coolies to
estates.

135. One result of issuing rations of concession rice weekly on credit and of realising the cost at the end of the month by deductions from the coolies' earnings is that the labourer not infrequently finds himself left with little or nothing in hand for the purchase of other necessaries. Moreover, rice advances are sometimes kept outstanding against the labourer over a series of years. From time to time, when his earnings permit, deductions are made with a view to reduce the debt. A system of this kind is bound to create discontent and misunderstanding. When rice is issued on credit, there is perhaps a tendency for a labourer to take more than he actually requires. If cash payment had to be made at the time of issue, he might be more careful. The necessity of doing more work to pay for other necessaries might be more obvious. The Committee have no hesitation in condemning the system of rice advances on credit as pernicious. They are entirely in favour of cash payments. The economic position of the labourer is undoubtedly unsatisfactory, when he is heavily in debt to the garden on account of rice advances. In Chapter V, cases have been cited where coolies who were not under Act XIII agreements were refused discharge certificates on the ground that they owed money to the estate. It would not, therefore, be unfair to hold that the indebtedness of the labourer affects his freedom.

CHAPTER V.

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136. Act XIII of 1859 had to a large extent replaced Act VI of 1901 before the final repeal of Act VI in 1915. In Chapter X of the Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906 a brief account is given of the reasons for the enactment of Act XIII and of the previous history of the working of the Act in the labour districts up to 1906. As far back as 1890, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Mr. Quinton, expressed the opinion that Act XIII was serving the purpose of a transitional stage from a strict penal contract to one enforceable only in the Civil Court, a result which, in his opinion, all were anxious to reach. But, after the lapse of over 30 years, the tea industry still profess their inability to dispense with the particular form of penal contract embodied in the Act. By Act XII of 1920 which came into force on the 12th March of 1920 the original Act of 1859 has been considerably modified.

137. From the Statement of Objects and Reasons it appears that the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, XIII of 1859, is recognised to be in its present form unsuited in many respects to modern conditions, and has also been found capable of abuse by employers. In the first place the amending Act fixes a period of limitation for a complaint at three months, and confines the utilization by employers of the provisions of the Act to cases where the advance does not exceed Rs. 300, and the time for performance of the contract, where a time is fixed, does not exceed one year. In all cases whether a time is fixed or not, the Magistrate may in his discretion refuse to put the Act in operation if he considers the terms of the contract are substantially unfair to the workman. Similarly, the Act empowers the Magistrate to throw out a complaint after examining the complainant on oath and without compelling the appearance of the workman if he thinks there is no ground for proceeding; and, by a provision analogous to that of section 250 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, to award the workman compensation if the complaint is false or frivolous or vexatious. Further where a breach of contract has been proved, the Magistrate has discretion to order either repayment of the advance, or performance of the contract and is no longer bound by the option of the complainant. He also has power to allow time for repayment and to order payment by instalments, and if the order is for performance of the contract, to fix a time not exceeding one year therefor. Any such order may be varied at the discretion of the Magistrate but not so as to extend the period fixed for performance of a contract beyond one year. Finally the Act enables imprisonment of either description to be ordered as a punishment for a breach of contract. Under the old law (Act XIII of 1859) imprisonment, if ordered, had to be rigorous.

138. It will be seen that the alterations in the amended Act were all in favour of the labourer. In the Legislative Assembly on the 10th of September 1921, Mr. Iishi brought forward a Resolution that Act XIII should be repealed. The Honourable Sir William Vincent admitted that the repeal of an Act which included a penalty of imprisonment for breach of contract was in accordance with modern feeling. He pointed out that, so far as his information went, the Act was at present worked very fairly and no complaints to the contrary had been made; further that it was important to consider what the practical effect of the repeal would be on industry and that, in case of repeal, employers of labour should be given a reasonable opportunity to adjust themselves to new conditions. In summing up, the Honourable Home Member said that the Government were prepared to adopt the view that the repeal of this law was desirable on general grounds of principle and that if after consulting local Governments and public opinion it was found that there was a fairly general consensus of opinion in favour of repeal a Bill would be introduced to give effect to the principle. Meantime, enquiries would be made as to how the Act as amended had worked, whether it was unfair, whether its retention was necessary, and whether its repeal would materially affect the industrial progress of this country. In letter No. 553F. of the 18th January 1922, the Government of Assam informed the Committee that Government would be glad to receive their views on the subject of Act XIII, whether the Committee recorded a definite finding or not in their Report. Quite apart from this letter, the Committee from the first have felt that the question of Act XIII contracts had an intimate concern with wages. It was for this reason that all Managers were asked in the questionnaire to furnish information about the working of the Act (Questions 74 to 78). Most witnesses have been asked to state their views and Members of the Committee have usually made enquiries on the subject of contracts and agreements on the occasion of visits to gardens.

139. It may be useful to sum up the findings of the 1906 Committee on the working of Act XIII. They found that it had "continued to gain in popularity with employers as a stepping stone towards free labour." Abuses were said to be few. Owing to the association of Act XIII with Act VI, there was a tendency to exercise the powers of private arrest in the case of Act XIII absconders and even of free labourers. The benefits enjoyed by labourers under Act VI were, however, generally extended to those under Act XIII. Statistics were quoted to show that owing to the small number of punishments the Act was not harshly administered. There was no reason to suppose that agreements were obtained by force or fraud. Frequently agreements were for a number of days or completed tasks and were open to abuse. The Committee disapproved of contracts for a longer term than 313 days. They were of opinion that "if Act XIII were abolished to-morrow, probably most gardens would have to continue the same procedure as at present of giving advances or bonuses and taking agreements in return, for coolies are accustomed to the system and would most likely resent its stoppage." The Committee considered that Act XIII worked fairly well in practice, notwithstanding that there was some uncertainty in its administration. They were inclined to endorse the opinions expressed by Sir W. Ward and Mr. Quinton which were accepted by the Government of India in their despatch of 5th October 1891 to the Secretary of State, who agreed to the retention of the Act. The Secretary of State, however, directed that the working of Act XIII should be watched as carefully as that of the Labour Act I of 1882 as he considered "its continued retention is not without serious prospective dangers." The Committee were averse to the amendment of an Act which applied to the whole of India simply to suit the needs of a particular industry. They did not recommend its replacement by a special local Act, as they were inclined to believe that penal labour legislation in the past had not been in the best interests of the tea industry. The planter, in their opinion, would not welcome a new Act unless it gave him a hold over his labour almost as strong as he had under Act VI. The significant summary was that "although it is clearly right that in flagrant cases of dishonesty the labourer should be liable to imprisonment, still the less the planter relies on the criminal law to secure work from his labour force the better." The Committee were under the impression that Act XIII contracts were generally limited to a period of 313 days but occasionally extended to long terms of 939 days.

Administra-
tion of the
Act at the
present time.

140. The Committee propose to examine the working of the Act in the Criminal Courts since 1st July 1920. Records of cases from that date have been called for and examined by the Secretary of the Committee. In addition to complaints by Managers against coolies, for absconding, or neglect of work, there are what is known as discharge certificate cases, that is to say, a coolie frequently comes to Court and applies for a discharge certificate on the ground that he has finished his agreement. There is no provision in the Act which entitles the applicant to such a certificate, but it is a well established practice, when such an application is made, to enquire from the employer if he has any claim on the coolie, and, if he has none, to grant a certificate upon which the coolie places considerable value. The procedure is indicated in section 155 of Act VI whereby when a labour contract was completed the employer was bound to endorse on the labourer's copy of the contract the fact of determination, and, in case of his failure to do so, the Inspector could make the endorsement, or grant a certificate.

SURMA VALLEY DIVISION.

SYLHET DISTRICT.

141. *North Sylhet.*—There are very few gardens in the Sadr subdivision, and from 1st July 1920 to March 1922 there was no case against absconders.

South Sylhet subdivision.—In South Sylhet, from 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921, there were 241 cases mostly against coolies who had absconded or had been enticed into Hill Tipperah. In some instances there seems to have been considerable disproportion in the sentences awarded; for example, a coolie, who worked 229 days out of 313, was sentenced to 3 months' hard labour; another who completed 225 days out of 313 received a sentence of one month. From 1st July 1921 up to March 1922 there have only been 29 cases.

142. *Karimganj subdivision.*—From 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921 there were 62 cases, of which about half were for discharge certificates. In one case a Manager reported that the coolie was not under agreement but that he owed money to the garden. The Subdivisional Officer rightly gave him a discharge certificate and informed

the Manager that his remedy lay in the Civil Court. In the case of a garden in the Chargola Valley, the Manager reported that the applicant for a discharge certificate was not under agreement but he would be glad if the Subdivisional Officer returned the coolie to him for discharge. Since the exodus of May 1921 the Chargola gardens have ceased to give advances and contracts under Act XIII but have raised wages.

143. *Habiganj subdivision*.—From 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921 there were 216 cases, practically all against absconders into Hill Tipperah. Most of the cases were struck off because the accused could not be traced. There are 4 cases pending where agreements were given for 939 days with an advance of Rs. 25; in one case of an agreement executed on 11th February 1919, 778 days had been worked off. In 5 cases of another garden the complainant, a garden clerk, stated in his deposition that a chowkidar had been sent to bring back the coolies but had returned unsuccessful.

CACHAR DISTRICT.

144. *Sadr subdivision*.—From 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921 there were only 10 cases, of which 9 were for discharge certificates. From 1st July 1921 up to date there have been 84 cases, 50 being against absconders. In one or two cases although the coolies had no agreement, the Magistrate ordered that they should refund certain advances before he granted discharge certificates.

145. *Hailakandi subdivision*.—From 1st July 1921 up to date there have been 14 cases. On 30th July 1921 the Manager of New Kanchanpur Tea Estate filed 5 cases against absconders. In all these cases the coolies had taken an advance of Rs. 4 only to work for 939 days and had worked for about two years. All the accused were arrested. On the day of the trial the complainant was absent and the accused persons were acquitted, having returned to the garden. On the 10th of January 1922 the same Manager obtained warrants against three coolies under Act XIII, and against three coolies under Section 208 of Act VI for enticing labour. In one case the coolie on the 5th of May 1920 had taken an agreement on an advance of Rs. 4 to work for 939 days and had completed 810 days; another coolie on the 24th of May 1920 had taken an agreement for 939 days with an advance of Rs. 4 and had worked 405 days; in a third case a woman on 2nd July 1919 had taken an agreement for 939 days with an advance of Rs. 4 and had completed 463 days. In two out of the three cases under Section 208 of Act VI of 1901, the coolies do not seem to have entered into any agreement under Act XIII. On the date fixed for the trial the Manager wrote to the Magistrate that as the six accused were working satisfactorily and giving no trouble, he withdrew the cases and did not produce the accused. The order of the Subdivisional Officer is that as the contracts were for three years the cases could not proceed under the amended Act XII of 1920. He also discovered that Section 208 of Act VI was not in force in the district and the accused were all acquitted. On the record of one of these cases (No. 12 of 1922) there is a letter from the Manager to the Inspector of Police asking that a Sub-Inspector and a few constables should be sent at 9 A.M. on 7th January as it was apprehended that the new Madras coolies would strike work. The note of the Sub-Inspector who went records :

"On enquiry I came to know that on account of insufficient pay there are about 150 new Madras coolies who did not work on the morning of 7th January 1922."

The answers submitted by the Manager of New Kanchanpur show that wages have been raised from 3 annas for men and women to 4 annas and $3\frac{1}{2}$ annas only from 1st January 1922. The Hailakandi cases are not a creditable episode but as regards the Surma Valley generally, the Committee are of opinion that the Act is not unduly strained, except in so far as the practice obtains in some gardens of placing children under agreements. Contracts are usually for a period not exceeding 313 days. On many gardens, new coolies are put under agreement very shortly after arrival.

ASSAM VALLEY DIVISION.

NOWGONG DISTRICT.

146. *Nowgong*.—In 1921 there were 101 cases. In fifteen cases the maximum sentence of three months' rigorous imprisonment was awarded. In November 1921 12 cases were instituted against absconders from Kuturi garden, and in each case the agreement was for 313 days. Sentences of three months' hard labour were passed

in 8 of the 12 cases, the number of days worked being 173, 157, 168, 163, 171, 164, 174 and 169. In two cases the Magistrate held that the coolies were obviously under age. In a third case a girl was certified by the Civil Surgeon to be only 14 years old. The girl had been in jail awaiting trial for 17 days. All the minors were acquitted. There are also cases of 939-day agreements most of them entered into before the Act was amended. In several cases the advances were nominal. In one case (No. 1797 of 1921, Chapanalla Tea Estate, Chubwa Tea Company) the agreement for 939 days was dated 31st August 1918. The man who had taken an advance of Rs. 30 had worked off 834 days, but was directed by order dated the 28th July 1921 to return to the garden and complete the balance of 105 days and on refusal was sentenced to three months' hard labour in default. In another garden, Kellyden (Chubwa Company), in five cases, Nos. 1596, 1597, 1616, 1617 and 1620 of 1921, the coolies, on refusal to return to work, were sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment on July 7th, 1921, but were released from jail on 12th August on agreeing to return to the garden and work off 271, 279, 275, 315 and 313 days. Two women had received an advance of Rs. 3 only. There is also the case of another garden (Amluckie) where in similar circumstances a coolie after serving part of his sentence was released to finish his contract. This procedure is possibly a survival of the provisions contained in section 202 of Act VI under which the employer of a labourer sentenced to imprisonment for any offence under Act VI could apply to the Magistrate to have the labourer made over to him for the purpose of completing his contract. In case No. 1618 of Kellyden Tea Estate (Chubwa Tea Company) a woman who had been given an agreement on 10th June 1919 for 939 days with an advance of Rs. 9 absconded on 28th June 1921, having worked only 42 days. The *hazira* book was not produced but the Deputy Commissioner, taking the calendar period into consideration, assumed that she had completed 652 days and ordered her to return to the garden to work off the balance of 287 days. She refused to do so and was sentenced to three months' hard labour on 8th July 1921. On the 12th August 1921 she was released from jail as she is said to have expressed her willingness to return to the garden. In case No. 2321 of Messa garden (Chubwa Tea Company) a woman, aged 18, executed an agreement on 23rd August 1917 with an advance of Rs. 10 for 939 days. The wage entered in the contract was Rs 3 a month. She absconded on 1st September 1919, having worked 214 days. No complaint was preferred till the 15th October 1920. The Deputy Commissioner held that the wage was unreasonably low and acquitted the woman on repayment of the advance of Rs. 10. In case No. 2322 of the same garden, a woman, aged 18, executed an agreement on 16th June 1918 for 939 days on an advance of Rs. 12 with a monthly wage of Rs. 4. She worked 134 days and absconded on 1st September 1919. The complaint was brought on 15th October 1920. The woman admitted the agreement but refused to return to complete the balance of 805 days and was sentenced to three months' hard labour. The sentence was carried out. In case No. 2326 of 15th October 1920, Chubwa Tea Company (Kellyden Division) *versus* Matia Uraon, the accused was ordered to return and work off 830 days. The Deputy Commissioner states that minors are concerned in possibly about 5 per cent. of the cases. The Act appears to be administered with considerable rigour in this district. Details as regards some recent cases of illegal arrest in which a man, a woman, and a girl were seized and taken back to the garden and forced to enter into agreements are given in another place. These cases came to light at the inspection of Rangamati garden of the Chubwa Tea Company. In two of these cases, the agreements were for 626 days and the dates 12th December 1921 and 20th February 1922.

SIBSAGAR DISTRICT.

147. *Jorhat*.—From 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921 there were 59 cases of which 39 are for discharge certificates. In one case an *ex-sepoy* executed, on the 25th November 1920, a 3-year agreement on an advance of Rs. 30. On the 26th May 1921 he complained to the Magistrate that he could not work like a common garden coolie and wanted either a discharge certificate or to be given congenial work. The Manager reported that he had worked for six months and still owed Rs. 25. The agreement was of course illegal under the amending Act, but the Deputy Commissioner directed him to return to complete his contract although the Manager was willing to accept a refund of the money. From 1st July 1921 up to date there have been 22 cases.

148. *Sibsagar*.—From 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921 there were 34 cases. There is no instance of any accused person having been sent to jail. This subdivision and Jorhat afford an instance of the unreliability of conclusions based on statistics of cases and convictions. From case records it would appear as if the

Act is worked without friction and that it does not involve any hardship to the labourer or any restrictions on his freedom. As a matter of fact two of the most important Companies in the subdivision, the Assam Company and the Singlo Tea Company, continue to give 939-day agreements, and several other gardens follow the same practice. The Assam Company give a commission to clerks and sardars on the execution of these illegal agreements.

149. *Golaghat*.—From 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921 there were 180 cases, about half of which are for discharge certificates. From 1st July 1921 up to date there have been 84 cases. In only 8 cases was sentence of imprisonment awarded varying from two weeks' simple to six weeks' rigorous imprisonment. In several cases the Manager reported that the coolie had no agreement but owed some money to the garden. The Subdivisional Officer refused certificates until the advances were paid up. The Extra Assistant Commissioner, however, in two similar cases, granted certificates and referred the Manager to the Civil Court. One curious order reads:

"Accused took Rs. 8 and did five weeks' work. As the agreement was against her will and she was not in good health she is ordered to repay Rs. 6 to the garden, failing which she will undergo simple imprisonment."

The Rs. 6 was paid up.

LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT.

150. *Sadr subdivision*.—From 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921 there were 117 cases, of which about half are for discharge certificates. There is nothing calling for particular comment. For the most part gardens of minor importance were concerned and a large number of the cases against absconders were brought by Managers of Indian gardens. It is noticeable that large Companies, such as the Doom-Dooma Company, do not institute cases. In three cases sentences of imprisonment ranging from two to three months were imposed. From 1st July 1921 up to date, 22 cases have been instituted with only one case of imprisonment—for six weeks. In two cases where the Manager stated that the coolies had not worked off their long-term agreements, the Deputy Commissioner granted discharge certificates on the ground that agreements for over one year would not be enforced. In another case the Manager reported that the applicant for a discharge certificate was not under contract, but that there had been an understanding that he should work out the agreement of another coolie. The Deputy Commissioner granted a discharge certificate. In another case where a woman had taken an advance of Rs. 16 on 14th October 1919 for 626 days and had worked for one year, nine and a half months, the Deputy Commissioner refused to send her back to the garden.

151. *North Lakhimpur subdivision*.—From 1st July 1920 to 30th June 1921 there were 25 cases; from 1st July 1921 up to date, 22 cases. On the whole, these were dealt with correctly. One case, however, may be noted. The Manager of Dejuo Tea Estate on 31st August 1921 applied for process against a woman aged 18. The record contains an agreement executed on the 18th of June 1920 for 623 days on an advance of Rs. 10. It appears that the woman got an advance of Rs. 10 on 18th June 1920 and a second advance of a similar amount on the 17th of June 1921 though only Rs. 9 is endorsed on the back of the agreement. She absconded on 21st August 1921. She was convicted and ordered either to repay Rs. 10 or work out the remaining 313 days. This is a clear attempt to evade the provisions of the amended Act. The complainant stated in evidence that this was the practice on the garden in taking 626-day agreements.

DARRANG DISTRICT.

152. *Mangaldai*.—From 1st July 1920 to the 30th June 1921, 92 cases were instituted. Sixty-five of these refer to discharge certificates, of which 30 relate to the Bhutiachang Tea Estate. In most of the Bhutiachang cases, the Manager sent no reply to the Magistrate's enquiries as to whether the garden had any claim on the coolies. Discharge certificates were accordingly granted. In one or two cases where coolies were not under contract, the Subdivisional Officer granted a certificate only after some miscellaneous dues had been paid to the garden. From 1st July 1921 up to date there have been 97 cases. These include 66 applications for discharge certificates, of which no less than 52 are from the Bhutiachang Tea Estate. A discharge certificate was refused in the following circumstances to a coolie of Dharmjuli Tea Estate (Petition No. 66 of 1921-22). An agreement was given on the 23rd April 1920 for 313 days, of which 277 days had been worked off up to February 1922, leaving a balance of 36 days. In another case (No. 74 of 1922, Manager, Khoirabari Tea Estate *versus* Musst. Jhilia), the Subdivisional Officer records:

"The girl appears. She is obviously under age and no agreement will hold. Discharged."

153. *Darrang Sadr*.—From the 1st July 1920 to the 30th June 1921 there were 446 cases; and from the 1st July 1921 to the 28th March 1922, 205 cases. The case records show that up to the time when Act XII of 1920 came into force the general practice on gardens in the Tezpur and Bishnath Circles was to put labourers under long-term contracts, almost invariably expressed in terms of working days, usually 939 or 626. When the amending Act was under consideration, the Deputy Commissioner reported in a letter dated 31st October 1919 that the usual practice was to give agreements for three years to new coolies. In the case of new coolies, the advance given was often nominal. In the case of coolies who had been settled on the estate for some time, advances were usually Rs. 30 for men and Rs. 24 for women. So far as can be gathered from records of cases instituted, the usual period now is 313 days. There are, however, a few cases in which long-term contracts have been executed after the new Act came into force.

Having regard to the tea-garden population, the number of cases instituted in Tezpur (*Darrang Sadr* Subdivision) indicates that the assistance of the courts is invoked to a far greater extent than in other tea districts. It is notorious that garden discipline in this district has always been fairly strict. Many of the case-records since 1st July 1920 show that Managers insist on their pound of flesh. The Committee have frequently been told in other districts that though a contract may be expressed in terms of working days, it does not in practice run beyond a calendar year in the case of a 313-day contract, or three years in the case of a 939-day contract. In *Darrang Sadr* there are many cases which show that Managers insist on a strict performance of the terms of contract.

A few cases of special interest may be quoted.

Cases of
strict en-
forcement
of the terms
of the con-
tract.

Case 985 of 1920.—Mijikijan Tea Estate.—On 29th July 1920 a woman applied to the Deputy Commissioner for a discharge certificate on the ground that she had finished her agreement. The Manager was asked to report by 9th August 1920 if the garden had any claim on her. On that date the Manager filed a complaint against her for absconding and she was arrested in Court. On 21st July 1919 she had been given an agreement for 313 days with a Rs. 10 advance. She left the garden on 26th July 1920, having a balance of 27 days to work. The Deputy Commissioner ordered her to return to the garden, and, as she refused to do so, sentenced her to six weeks' hard labour.

This case may be contrasted with case 1487 of 1920 where a coolie had taken an agreement on 1st September 1920 to work for 313 days and absconded on 11th October 1920, having still 279 days to work. On refusal to return to the garden, she was sentenced on 29th November 1920 to six weeks' hard labour.

1056 of 1920.—Dhulli Tea Estate.—A woman entered into a contract for 626 days on 11th December 1916, receiving an advance of Rs. 20. She absconded on 13th July 1917, having still 473 days to work. Complaint was not lodged till the 23rd August 1920. She was arrested on a warrant but discharged as the Manager failed to produce evidence.

Case 1317 of 1920.—Sonajuli Tea Estate.—On 9th February 1917 a coolie executed an agreement for 939 days, receiving an advance of Rs. 45. He absconded on 20th September 1920 with 20 days still to be worked off. The Deputy Commissioner refused to issue process as the balance of days was trifling and the agreement had been entered into more than 3½ years before.

Case 438 of 1920.—Dhulli Tea Estate.—An agreement was taken on 13th April 1918 for 626 days with an advance of Rs. 24. Up to the end of June 1921 only 345 days had been worked off. Process was refused.

Discharge certificate case 315 of 1920-21.—Majuligarh Tea Estate.—A woman applied for a discharge certificate. The Manager reported that on 4th April 1919 she had given an agreement for 313 days and had absconded on 10th February 1921, having worked for 245 days only. Certificate was refused.

Case 565 of 1920.—Singri Tea Estate.—An agreement was taken on 21st March 1918 for 861 days with an advance of Rs. 24. The coolie absconded on 16th April 1921, with 28 days remaining. Process was refused on 19th May 1921, as the agreement, according to the calendar period, had already expired.

Case 612.—Bindukuri Tea Estate.—Agreement is dated 26th June 1920 for 313 days with advance Rs. 12. The coolie absconded on the 27th June 1921, leaving 50 days to be completed. Warrant was issued but accused was not found.

Case 597.—Monabari Tea Estate.—Agreement is dated 4th May 1919 for 626 days with an advance of Rs. 24. The coolie absconded on 6th May 1921, with 128 days to be worked off. Accused could not be found, so the warrant was returned unexecuted.

Case 556.—Singri Tea Estate.—Agreement is dated 12th July 1918 for 939 days with an advance of Rs 9. The coolie absconded on 15th May 1921 with 757 days still to be worked off. Warrant issued. Accused could not be found.

Case 557.—Singri Tea Estate.—Agreement dated 15th March 1919 for 626 days with advance Rs. 2). The coolie absconded on 14th March 1921, with 83 days to be worked out. Warrant issued. Accused could not be found.

Case 559.—Singri Tea Estate.—Agreement dated 23th March 1918 for 939 days with advance Rs. 36; the coolie absconded on 18th April 1921, with 637 days remaining. Warrant issued. Accused could not be found.

Case 682.—Singri Tea Estate.—Agreement dated 4th July 1920 for 313 days with advance Rs. 10; the coolie absconded on 3rd August 1921, with 14 days remaining. Warrant issued. Accused was not found.

Case 941.—Modopee Tea Estate.—Agreement dated 28th July 1920 for 313 days with advance Rs. 9. The woman absconded on 16th August 1921 with 41 days to be worked off. The Deputy Commissioner ordered her to return to the garden; she refused and was sentenced to three weeks' simple imprisonment on 29th August 1921.

Case 495.—Thakurbari.—Agreement dated 9th December 1919 for 939 days with advance Rs. 30-8; the coolie absconded on 14th November 1921, leaving a balance of 831 days. The case was withdrawn by the Manager.

Case 1623.—Majuligarh.—Agreement dated 13th May 1918 for 626 days with advance Rs. 24; the coolie absconded on 13th May 1920, leaving 133 days to be worked off; the complaint was lodged on 20th December; the coolie was arrested and committed to jail from 10th to 25th January 1921, pending trial, and then ordered to complete the agreement.

Case 86 of 1921.—Rungapara Tea Estate.—On the 31st May 1919 a coolie entered into an agreement for 939 days on a Rs. 9 advance and absconded on 29th December 1919. Complaint was lodged on 22nd January 1921. Warrant was issued in this as well as in 18 similar cases of the same garden but the accused were not found. Cases of long-term agreements with nominal advances.

Case 395 of 1921.—Kathalguri Tea Estate.—A woman took an agreement on the 6th July 1913 for 1,252 days with an advance of Rs. 10 and absconded on 15th March 1921, having still 518 days to work. On 1st April 1921 process was refused as the advance was considered altogether disproportionate. It is interesting to contrast this case with case 252 of 1921, relating to an out-garden of the same Company. A coolie was placed under contract for 1,252 days on the 11th April 1919 with a Rs. 10 advance and absconded on the 16th February 1921, leaving 696 days still to be worked. In this case warrant of arrest was issued, but the accused was not found.

Case 655 of 1920.—Ghoiralli Tea Estate.—On 20th April 1919 a coolie entered into an agreement for 313 days with an advance of Rs. 15 and absconded on 26th March 1920, leaving 46 days to be worked off. He refused to return to the garden and was sentenced to two months' hard labour. Cases of disproportionate sentences.

Case 656 of 1920.—Ghoiralli Tea Estate.—On 20th May 1919 a coolie entered into an agreement for 313 days with an advance of Rs. 10 and absconded on 18th May 1920, with a balance of 164 days to be completed. The order was the same as in case 655, two months' hard labour.

Case 1342.—Dhulli Tea Estate.—Agreement dated 12th October 1920 for 939 days with Rs. 9 advance; the coolie absconded on 5th September 1921, leaving 776 days to be worked off. As the agreement for 939 days was entered into after Act XII of 1920 came into force, process was refused. Cases of illegal agreements.

Case 810.—Dhulli.—Agreement dated 17th August 1920 for 939 days with Rs. 9 advance; the coolie absconded on 18th July 1921 with 712 days to be completed. In this as in two other cases of the same garden (811 and 813) process was refused as the long-term agreement was entered into after Act XII of 1920 came into force.

Monabari Tea Estate.—On the 4th February 1921, the Manager brought 45 cases against absconders. In 18 cases agreements were for 939 days with advances of Rs. 9. There were also agreements for 313 days and also long-term agreements with larger advances. Most of the coolies had absconded in November and December 1920 after the riot of October 1920. In Chapter II of the Report the causes of the riot have been fully discussed. In most of the cases, the accused were not found and the warrants were returned unexecuted; in some cases, the coolies, after arrest, elected to return to the garden, but in two cases they refused to go back and were sentenced to one month's hard labour. Cases of Monabari Tea Estate.

Case against a minor.

Case 1611.—Pertabgarh.—Agreement for 313 days, dated 29th May 1920, with advance Rs. 10; the coolie absconded on 13th December 1920, was arrested and sent to *hajat*. The Civil Surgeon as Superintendent of the Jail asked for the early disposal of the case as the girl was only 15 years of age. The Deputy Commissioner acquitted her on the ground that she was obviously a minor.

Cases of refusal to issue warrants against absconders in their home district.

In April 1921, the Manager, *Thakurbari Tea Estate*, lodged three complaints; in one case the contract was for 626 days, and in two cases for 939 days. The accused had gone to Singbhum, their home district. The Deputy Commissioner refused to issue process as there is an executive order against issuing warrants to the recruiting districts.

In 1920, the Manager *Rangapara Tea Estate*, applied for warrants against 11 coolies (cases 780 to 790) who had taken agreements for 939 days and returned to their own districts. Process was refused for a similar reason.

There are a few cases in which the Deputy Commissioner refused to issue warrants on the ground that the complaint had not been brought within three months of the date of absconding (Section 2 of Act XIII as amended by Act XII of 1920). There are also a few applications for discharge certificates where the Manager reported that the applicant was not under agreement, but owed some petty sums to the garden. In these cases, discharge certificates were granted only after these sums had been paid into Court.

In several cases in which the contract was for 313 working days and the coolie absconded after the elapse of one calendar year from the date of contract without having completed 313 standard tasks, it seems doubtful if process should have been issued. Section 4 of the Act, as amended, states that nothing in the Act shall apply to contracts where, a period having been specified for performance, such period exceeds one year. There is nothing to show that this means anything except one calendar year. If the labourer neglects or refuses, without reasonable cause, to perform the task on any date within the calendar period, the Manager has his remedy by complaint in Court.

Statistics of cases against Act XIII coolies and of applications for discharge certificates since 1900.

1.4. The following table gives the number of cases brought for non-fulfilment of contract against Act XIII coolies, the number decided in favour of the complainant, the number of persons imprisoned and also the number of applications made by coolies for discharge certificates from 1900 to 1920-21. The Committee have not been able to trace any cases in which compensation has been awarded to the labourer under Section 2(B) of the amended Act in false, frivolous or vexatious complaints. Action might have been suitably taken in cases of illegal contracts, particularly when minors were concerned.

Year.	Total number of cases against coolies.	Decided in favour of complainant.	Number of persons imprisoned.	Applications by coolies for discharge certificates.
1	2	3	4	5
1900	430	139	38	.....
1901	336	102	36	.....
1902-3	492	228	64	.....
1903-4	568	274	63	.....
1904-5	599	209	45	7
1905-6	686	273	70	10
1906-7	808	390	66	32
1907-8	1,158	523	74	57
1908-9	974	474	52	72
1909-10	813	352	49	77
1910-11	823	402	49	85
1911-12	928	391	103	74
1912-13	983	441	45	114
1913-14	1,192	370	111	187
1914-15	1,228	324	90	170
1915-16	780	289	39	200
1916-17	663	187	40	255
1917-18	701	188	19	198
1918-19	532	168	19	196
1919-20	912	222	22	216
1920-21	1,604	278	63	193

155. There were at the end of June 1921, 270,443 contracts under Act XIII in the tea districts and the proportion of cases instituted in 1920-21 is about 59% of the total number of contracts. By the year 1913-14 Act VI had fallen into disuse though the Act was not finally withdrawn from the four labour districts of Upper Assam until 1915. The Immigration Reports give the number of Act VI contracts and the number of cases against coolies. It has been found that between 1904-5 and 1913-14, the percentage of Act VI cases to the total number of contracts in force in these years varies from about 6% to 1.3%. There is, therefore, no very marked difference in the proportion of cases to contracts under the respective Acts. But under Act VI the number of cases in which a sentence of imprisonment was imposed is very much higher. It should be stated, however, that under Section 198 of Act VI, the maximum punishment for desertion for a first offence was one month's imprisonment or a fine or both. Cases instituted in 1920-21 and sentences of imprisonment show an appreciable increase over the figures of recent years. Another fact is that in recent years a much larger proportion of cases have been decided against the complainant. The Committee content themselves with pointing out the cases of mal-administration of the law, in particular the recognition of illegal contracts and the disproportionate sentences awarded, in the belief that Government will take such steps as may be necessary to prevent a recurrence. It is understood that in May 1920 the attention of district officers was specially invited to the changes effected by the Amending Act XII of 1920.

156. From enquiries made on the occasion of visits to gardens it appears that contracts for a period exceeding one year are still not uncommon in some districts in spite of the amended Act. Agreements are frequently given to minors and new coolies are often put under contract immediately on arrival on the garden. The following notes indicate how the Act is worked on some gardens.

Results of
enquiries on
gardens as to
the working
of Act XIII
contracts.

157. *Nahorani (Darrang)*.—New coolies are put under agreement at once for 313 days with Rs. 10 bonus and Rs. 3 *ad interim* settling advance.

Anipur (Chargola Valley, Sylhet).—The *haciras* have been raised to 6 annas for men and 4 annas for women since May 1921, and no agreements are now given. Many children of 7 years of age and upwards were entered in the agreement book for 1918 and 1919 as having taken agreements for three years with advances ranging from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 5. The parents got the money.

Labac Tea Estate, Cachar.—Agreements are for one year with a bonus of Rs. 12 and Rs. 10 for men and women. Girls and boys get Rs. 8 and Rs. 9. Recoveries for other advances are deducted from this money as shown in the register so that the actual amount is not always paid.

Sessa and Mankatta Tea Estate (British India Tea Company), Dibrugarh.—A contract bonus of Rs. 10 is given to men and women. This advance is not recovered. New coolies are not put under agreement until they have been one year on the garden. Coolies are given contracts if they desire them. The contracts are written but not on stamped paper. The Manager considers agreements necessary for the moral effect but would give advances and take agreements if Act XIII were repealed and only the civil remedy left. The gardens are close to Dibrugarh.

Bokel (Jokai Company, Lakhimpur).—New coolies are not put under contract until they have been about 4 years on the garden.

Naharoli (Lakhimpur).—A new coolie gets a settling advance of Rs. 3 with an umbrella and a blanket: on the expiry of the first six months he gets Rs. 6 bonus and at the end of the second six months, another Rs. 6. At the end of the first year he is given his first agreement with an advance of Rs. 12 which is not recovered.

Bokpara (Budla Beta Company, Lakhimpur).—The form of agreement which is for one year of 313 working days provides that when the coolie is absent on leave, or on account of sickness, days of absence due to these causes shall be added on to the term of contract. This is also a common proviso in the agreements of other Companies.

Kanu (Sibsagar).—This garden still gives agreements for three years with advances of Rs. 36 and Rs. 24 which are not recovered. There are no agreement forms but the coolie's thumb impression is taken in the agreement book when the advance is paid.

Suntok (Assam Company, Sibsagar).—Agreements are for 939 days with advance of Rs. 36. There is a proviso that days of absence on account of leave or sickness shall be added to the term of contract. In the agreement book the contracts are shown as being for three calendar years. Minors are not put under direct agreement.

There is a special printed form for parents who covenant with the Company that their children will work at a certain rate of monthly pay, varying according to age, the parents receiving a cash bonus as consideration. It is further stipulated that if the child is absent without reasonable cause, the parent shall pay compensation to the Company. In this Company, the sardar of each gang of coolies gets a commission of Rs. 2 for each agreement executed, and the head clerk receives a smaller sum on the total number of agreements.

Bihubar (Sibsagar).—Coolies are put under agreement for three years. The Manager states that the coolie understands that he has to work for the garden for three years. Children of the age of 8 years and upwards receive agreements for three years with an advance of Rs. 6. The Manager states that they regard the contract as binding. Boys of 12 years and upwards get a larger advance. About 450 children are under agreement.

Kharikatia (Jorhat Company, Jorhat subdivision).—The majority of the coolies are under contract for one year and some for two years. New coolies are put under agreement for 939 days. Two agreements of new coolies for 939 days executed on the 14th February 1922 were produced. No sum whatever was entered as bonus or advance paid. The Manager explained that it was the custom to put new coolies under three years' agreement. He has stated that a small cash advance is given according to the number of dependents, also some household furniture such as a *charpoy*, *karai*, *kalsi*, etc. Children are put under agreement for 313 days on an advance of Rs. 4. This is entered in a separate book which contains the thumb impressions of the children.

Hunuwal (Jorhat subdivision).—Agreements are for one year only since the amendment of the Act.

Dahingapar (Jorhat subdivision).—Most of the agreements are for 313 days: children from 9 or 10 years upwards are put under agreement with a bonus of Rs. 9. In the stamped printed agreement for adults there is a clause to the effect that if a coolie before the expiry of his agreement absents himself from work or disobeys any lawful order, he will be liable to punishment under Act XIII and will also have to refund his advance together with Rs. 25 as compensation for loss.

Gotonga (Moabund Company, Jorhat subdivision).—Agreements for one year only are given. Previously 3-year agreements were taken from new coolies immediately on arrival with an advance of Rs. 9 instead of the usual Rs. 36 given to old coolies. According to the Manager, the intention was that the new coolie should bear part of the recruiting expenses. At present a new coolie receives Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 on executing an agreement for 313 days, and the balance is given afterwards.

Bokahula (Jorhat Company, Jorhat subdivision).—Agreements for three years are not given now; occasionally they are for two years. Children sometimes are put under agreement.

Meleng (Jorhat).—Agreements are given for one year. Two-year agreements are very exceptional and not encouraged. The advance is Rs. 12 to men and Rs. 6 to women which is refunded monthly at the rate of 8 annas and one rupee in the case of women and men, respectively. The wages are shown as Rs. 8 and Rs. 6-8-0, but the amount actually paid after deduction of advance is Rs. 7 and Rs. 6, the usual district rate. The daily wage is calculated, however, on a monthly wage of Rs. 8 and Rs. 6-8-0. There is no agreement book, but entries are made in the cash book. One year is taken to mean 313 working days. Agreements are not given to children and new coolies are not put under agreement until about a year after arrival. The proportion of coolies under agreement is :—

	Total.	Under agreement.	Not under agreement.
Men	982	911=92.75	71=7.25
Women	251	717=84.25	134=15.25

The Manager is of opinion that Act XIII is not of much use and that he could do without it.

Dcoria (Golaghat).—Agreements are for 626 days with advances of Rs. 12 a year for men and Rs. 6 for women and boys and girls. Previously, agreements for three years were given but for the last two years this has not been done owing to financial stringency. Present agreements show the monthly wage of men as Rs. 5 and of women as Rs. 4 though the garden works on the unit system.

Khuntai (Badlipur Company), Golaghat.—All agreements are for 313 days with advances of Rs. 10 for men and Rs. 5 for women and boys and Rs. 4 for girls. New coolies are not put under agreement till one year after their arrival. Sometimes children of nine or ten years of age get a bonus of Rs. 3 and are put down in the agreement book as having to work for 313 days. Up to the middle of 1917, most agreements were for 939 days on advances of Rs. 30 to men and Rs. 15 to women. Up to April 1920, agreements were taken for 623 days and since then for 313 days.

Rungajan Division, Rungajan Tea Company (Golaghat).—930-day agreements were given up to the end of 1920. The advance given to new coolies put under agreement varied from Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 and Rs. 7 according to sex and age. Men and women, old coolies, got advances of Rs. 30 and Rs. 20. From 1921 agreements are given for 313 days—the rates being Rs. 12, Rs. 10, Rs. 8 and down to Rs. 5 in the case of children.

Borjan Tea Company (Golaghat).—Agreements are for 313 days: advances Rs. 12, Rs. 10, and Rs. 8. This advance or bonus is not recovered, but pencil entries in the agreement book show sums of Rs. 4, Rs. 3, and Rs. 2 recovered on account of other advances, e.g., in February 1922, Rs. 388 was advanced in bonuses and deductions of Rs. 49-6-0 were made on account of other outstanding advances. The manager does not think it necessary to retain Act XIII.

Jiajuri Tea Estate (Nowgong).—Coolies are now given 313-day agreements with a bonus of Rs. 12 and Rs. 10 for men and women. This advance is not recovered. 939-day agreements were common till 1920 when the Act was amended. The last 939-day agreement was apparently given in July 1920. Agreements are rarely given to children. The register has a column for each month to show the number of days worked off and brought over from the previous month. There are still some coolies under 939-day agreements with entries against them of 645, 671, 759, 562, etc., days brought over at the end of 1921 to January 1922.

Salonah (Nowgong).—New coolies are put under agreement, Rs. 3 being paid at first, and the rest kept in deposit and given out during the year when required. Act XIII agreements are sometimes given for two years in the case of old coolies who require money. The yearly bonus or advance is Rs. 12 and Rs. 10 for men and women and is entered in the agreement book. There are no written contracts. Minors, boys and girls, get Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 if they ask for agreements.

Siconee (Nowgong).—Agreements are for 313 days with advances of Rs. 12 and 10. For some time after the Act was amended agreements were given for 626 days mainly during the absence of the manager on leave, but this has ceased. Children from 10 years of age upwards sometimes are given agreements.

Rangamati (Nowgong).—The practice was to give 939-day agreements, and cases filed in Court show that the practice was continued after the amending Act was passed. (Cases Nos. 553, 554, 1717 of 1921). The agreements were executed on 24th, 25th and 30th May 1920. Warrants were issued but were returned unexecuted. At present agreements are usually for 313 days with advances of Rs. 10 and Rs. 8 to men and women, but instructions have recently been received from the Board to increase advances to Rs. 12 and Rs. 10. An agreement executed on 20th February 1922 for 626 days with an advance of Rs. 20 was entered in the agreement book. Enquiry from the Manager elicited the fact that in this case the coolie who was a free labourer had got leave to cut paddy in the village. As he overstayed his leave, a garden clerk and chowkidars were sent to search for him: he was brought back to the garden and forced to give an agreement for 626 days; "as a matter of discipline," according to the Manager. It appeared that the coolie only received a small proportion of the Rs. 20, the balance being deducted for expenses incurred in effecting his capture. His wife at the same time was put under contract for one year. The sum of Rs. 8 was entered on the agreement form, as an advance, but the woman actually received nothing. She had also absconded but had been illegally arrested and brought back to the garden. The Manager stated she would probably get something at "*Fagua*." The third case is that of a girl aged 15 who on 6th January 1921 was given a one year agreement, but absconded before getting the advance. She was brought back by a babu of the garden from Messa village and put under a 626-day agreement on 12th December 1921 with an advance of Rs. 12 which she seems to have received. In this garden an agreement for 1,252 days executed on 21st July 1919 with an advance of Rs. 40 came to light.

On 7th July 1919 a coolie entered into an agreement for 939 days with an advance of Rs. 30 and on 2nd August 1921 a case was instituted and the court

ordered him to return to work for 434 days or in default to undergo two months' rigorous imprisonment. The coolie went to jail.

158. There is a considerable amount of oral evidence to the effect that three-year agreements are not uncommon particularly in Sibsagar. The answers sent by Managers corroborate this, and also indicate that the practice of putting new coolies under agreement immediately on arrival on the garden is not unusual.

159. The Committee desire to record their strong disapproval of the irregularities which have come to their notice, especially the practice of placing coolies, particularly new immigrants, under illegal long-term agreements, the illegal arrest of absconders, and the practice of taking contracts from minors. They cannot believe that large concerns, at any rate, were unaware of the amending Act XII of 1920. It is contended by some that long-term agreements are only given because the coolie asks for them as he requires a substantial sum of money, and that cases are never taken to court. The Committee are prepared to believe that in many cases coolies voluntarily come up and ask for agreements, as they require the money, and that cases of coolies being compelled to execute agreements by force or fraud are exceptional. At the same time, the payment of commission on agreements, a practice followed by one important Company, rather conflicts with this view. There is also some force in the argument that if the coolie was not given a lump sum when money is required for the purchase of cattle or for some ceremony, he might fall into the clutches of the shop-keeper or money lender. There can be little doubt, however, that a coolie who executes a long-term agreement believes that he is bound to the garden for a term of years, and that these long-term agreements defeat the intention of the amending Act.

In 1906 in discussing the abolition of local labour contracts under Act VI in connection with the renewal of agreements the practice of giving the labourer three or four years' bonus in a lump sum as an inducement to stay on was condemned, especially in the case of unhealthy and unpopular gardens, and the Committee were of opinion that these heavy advances and long agreements were to be discouraged. The present Committee are of opinion that these strictures have equal, if not greater force, in respect of long-term contracts under Act XIII, which, as expressed in days, may be made to extend over an indefinite period. The advocates of large bonuses under Act XIII appear to have forgotten that the practice of giving advances on renewal of contracts was quite common under Act VI.

160. There is also reason to believe that in some districts obstacles are placed in the way of the coolie obtaining work on one garden after he has finished his agreement on another. Mr. G. Bridge of Mangaldai stated before the Committee of 1906 "the local Tezpur rule by which a coolie cannot go to a new garden until he has been two years in a *bustea* is I consider a most unfair rule to the coolie." Tezpur is perhaps the most conservative tea district in Assam and some enquiries were made as to how far this rule was still observed. Members were informed that the period had been reduced to one year. As regards marriages, Mr. Nicholls of Bishnath, states the custom in his district:—

"If a man in one garden wishes to marry a girl in another an exchange is generally made or we pay Rs. 150 which covers the expenses of recruiting her—even though the girl may not be under agreement. I do not consider it a restriction on the coolie's freedom."

161. As regards the illegal arrest of absconding coolies, admitted instances have been given in the case of a Nowgong garden. Mr. Nicholls of Bishnath states:—

"I do not know the rule in other gardens, but speaking personally, if a coolie absconds, his whereabouts are ascertained, and he is generally brought back, and the cause of his absconding enquired into and grievance, if any, remedied....." "There is no chowkidari system on our gardens to ensure that coolies do not run away."

At Monabari in Bishnath, one of the first gardens visited, Members of the Committee found a chowkidar's hut at the junction of the garden road with the public road leading to Tezpur and Bishnath Steamer Ghat, and were informed by the chowkidar that he and two others were employed to watch for and arrest runaway coolies. The Manager of Bidyanagar Tea Estate in the Chargola Valley, brought to notice a case in which the Manager of a neighbouring garden sent chowkidars to bring back a woman whose husband had left in the Chargola exodus: he declined to allow the woman to be taken away. The Committee are unable to say how far the practice of private arrest prevails, but that it is exercised they have no doubt, and they regret that this practice which was commented on in the Report of the 1906 Committee has not yet disappeared.

162. As regards the practice of placing minors under contract the Committee have already expressed their disapproval. Nowgong and Tezpur records show that

children have been arrested and sent to jail pending trial. The Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, states that possibly in about 5 per cent. of the cases brought into Court, the coolies would be under-age. It may be stated that the Tea Districts Labour Association classify children of 12 as adults for the purpose of charging for commission and outfit. A working coolie is defined by the Association as one of the age of 12 years and over who, in the opinion of the local agent or agency medical officer, is physically fit to complete his garden task. The ageing and classification of coolies by the agency medical officer is to be considered as final. The Assam Labour Board cess was fixed at the rate of 4 annas by the Government of India for 1921-22 and is charged on emigrants, i.e., working coolies of the age of 16 and over *challaned* by the local agencies. Under Act VI of 1901 it was illegal to place minors under the age of 16 under contract.

163. Another point is that the agreements often seem to be one-sided and in favour of the employer. It is true that in consideration of so many days' work the Manager undertakes to pay a certain wage, but nothing is said as to whether any compensation will be given, if the labourer's services have to be dispensed with for any reason other than his own fault. When certain gardens had to reduce their labour force in 1919 and 1920 during the financial crisis, the question of compensation to labourers brought hundreds of miles away from their homes might not unreasonably have been considered.

164. Under Act VI of 1901 men received in the first year Rs. 5 monthly and women Rs. 4; Rs. 5-8 and Rs. 4-8 in the second and third years, and Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 in the fourth year. In addition, when rice was dear, the garden was bound to supply it at a price not exceeding Rs. 3 a maund. At page 103 of the Special Report published in 1890 reasons are given for the extensive use of Act XIII in the Surma Valley in preference to Act I of 1882 which was afterwards replaced by Act VI of 1901. It is stated that Act XIII was in use before Act I of 1882 was enacted and that it was continued, partly because it had been established, and partly to avoid the expenses and the supervision connected with Act I contracts. Under Act XIII there was a saving in stamp duties and in capitation fees; agreements had not to be registered and need not be in writing; registers and returns were simpler; coolies had not to be produced before the Inspector for verification of their contracts, nor had the expiry of contracts to be reported. There was also an idea that Government had less concern with Act XIII than with Act I coolies, and that accordingly Act XIII coolies regarded the Managers rather than Government as their masters and thus authority over the coolies was strengthened. Act I contracts were chiefly used in the case of new immigrants and of coolies who were likely to desert or give trouble. In paragraph 119 of the same Report, it is pointed out that Act XIII coolies earned higher wages than Act I coolies, not because of any special virtue in Act XIII, but because of the application of the Act to old coolies, who had become acclimatised, and who had learned the conditions of garden life and garden work; and so were better able to earn higher wages.

Effect of
Act XIII
Contracts on
wages.

165. It is a striking fact that in many gardens in the Sibsagar and Darrang districts up to quite a recent date, coolies, whether free or under Act XIII contracts, received a monthly wage of Rs. 5 and Rs. 4, the initial rate for newly imported coolies in the first year under the old Act. It is true that they got a bonus, though in the case of new coolies the bonus was often quite a trivial sum in consideration of long agreements for two and three years. But at the same time, so far as the Committee are aware, rice at Rs. 3 a maund was never provided though sometimes in the case of new coolies or when rice was unusually dear, it was available at concession rates. A coolie, in addition to the daily task work, usually had an opportunity of earning *ticca* under the old labour Acts.

166. The majority of the Committee are inclined to believe that the effect of Act XIII is to make the coolie accept a lower wage than he would if labour was entirely free. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the abolition of the Act will have an effect on wages, in that it will be more difficult under a free labour system to retain discontented labourers on estates where the attractions offered are insufficient, or conditions otherwise unfavourable. Gardens which pay wages below the market rate would have to raise them or suffer the consequences. Unhealthy and unpopular gardens would be forced by competition to raise their rates of pay. Much prominence has been given to the question of enticement of labourers from gardens in Sylhet into Hill Tipperah. In recent years a number of gardens owned by Indians have been opened. In some cases, gardens in Hill Tipperah held out promises of higher wages than were being paid in Sylhet. New gardens which are being opened, as a rule, pay higher rates. Land for cultivation free of rent for a term of two or three years

was another inducement offered. In many cases the coolies found that these promises were not substantiated, especially when the proprietors or companies concerned found it difficult to get money to continue operations. A few coolies have returned to their old gardens many of which had their labour force seriously depleted by these desertions. On some of these gardens in Sylhet, the daily rate of wages was low. It is highly probable that if higher wages had been paid there would have been fewer absconders.

Effect of Act
XIII on re-
cruiting.

167. In 1903 the Government of India requested the Governments of Bengal, Madras, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces to issue a notification under Section 91(b) of Act VI of 1901, to give effect to the recommendations contained in paragraph 283 of the Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906 in regard to recruitment by garden sardars. At the same time the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam were instructed to issue a notification under Section 221 of the Act withdrawing from the Assam Labour districts Sections 118-121 and Sections 195-196 which provided for local labour contracts and conferred upon employers the right of arrest without warrant. It was hoped that the withdrawal of the power of arrest and the abolition of local contracts would facilitate recruiting and decrease the expenses. But there is no doubt that the result has been disappointing. Recruiting is as difficult and as expensive as ever except when scarcity or famine conditions prevail in the recruiting districts. The question is 'Can this be remedied?' Reports from the recruiting districts indicate that the old objections persist, the uncertainty of return and the fact that the attractions offered to emigrants are insufficient. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the class of coolie recruited is often far from satisfactory. As is well known, under section 118 of Act VI, contracts for one year had to be verified by the Inspector of Labourers when he visited the estate, and contracts under Section 121, the maximum period being four years, had to be executed before the Inspector or Magistrate.

168. The effect of the withdrawal of these sections appears to have been nullified to a great extent, by the practice of entering into long-term local labour contracts under Act XIII of 1859 for periods of 626 and 939 days on the garden without any of the restrictions or safeguards imposed under Act VI. The coolie was, therefore, in this respect, in a worse position than he was under Act VI and unfortunately this practice has continued up to date though more than two years have elapsed since the amendment of Act XIII by Act XII of 1920. It is puerile to suppose that large and wealthy Companies were ignorant of the change in the law. They simply elected to ignore it. In any case, when Act VI fell into disuse the labourer was placed at any rate in some districts, in a worse position. Advantage was taken to lower the wage to an all-round rate of Rs. 5 and Rs. 4—the initial wages of new coolies under Act VI—while the supply of rice at Rs. 3 per maund was discontinued. It is true that an advance or bonus was given on Act XIII contracts but it was often only Rs. 6 in the case of women and a nominal sum in the case of newly imported coolies. The most unfortunate result, however, has been the effect in the recruiting districts not only on emigration but on the attitude of the local Governments. In accordance with the orders of the Government of India, the Bengal Government, in their Notification No. 2486, dated 5th July 1909, exempted garden sardars under the control of the Tea Districts Labour Association and certain other associations from some of the provisions of Act VI, one of the conditions being that no persons engaged by such sardars should be required to enter into a labour contract under the Act. The Bengal Government has held that one of the objects of the concessions granted to these associations was the fostering of *bona fide*, free recruitment and that the placing of unindentured labourers recruited through approved associations under a penal contract under Act XIII of 1859 immediately on arrival in the garden was an evasion of the spirit of the agreement between the associations and the Government. The Chairman of the Assam Labour Board, in his evidence, has referred confidently to the exploitation of fresh fields, especially for the recruitment of aboriginal labour, in Chota Nagpur and presumably the Feudatory States in Bihar and Orissa and the Central Provinces, but in view of the facts which have now come to light as regards the working of Act XIII, it does not seem probable that greater facilities will be afforded if indeed existing concessions are not imperilled.

Absence of
riots and col-
lisions under
a free labour
system.

169. The Doars Committee in their report (paragraph 46) state that one of the chief merits of the Doars' system of free labour is that a coolie is able to leave a garden when he finds that it does not suit his health or wishes to leave it for any other reason such as a marriage, or the desire to join relatives or friends on another garden and that they have no doubt that this freedom of movement makes for the happiness of the labourer. And it is noteworthy that the recorded evidence

of tea planters in the Dooars many of whom had experience of Assam is unanimously in favour of a free labour system.

170. The attention of the Government of India was attracted in 1899 and again in 1903 to the prevalence of riots and collisions between employers and labourers on the Assam tea-gardens and statistics were collected for the years 1890-1903 by the Assam Government who admitted in their reply to the Government of India in August 1904 that the figures showed that though cases of collisions between employers and labourers were not numerous, they had shown a steady increase and that conditions in Assam were less satisfactory than those which obtained in the neighbouring tea districts of Bengal. Leaving out of account the occurrences of the last 18 months when political agitation was a complicating factor, there does not appear to have been much improvement in this respect. Statistics of cases of rioting, unlawful assembly and assault or intimidation are given in the Annual Immigration Reports from 1904 onwards.

In the 17 years 1904-05 to 1920-21, 210 cases have been recorded, of which 141 are cases of rioting and unlawful assembly. Act VI of 1901 was withdrawn from Sylhet and Cachar, Kamrup and Goalpara in 1908 and finally from the four upper districts of the Assam Valley in 1915. On the other hand, in the Dooars under a free labour system disturbances of the kind have been conspicuous by their absence. In a period of more than thirty years (1889-1921) there appear to have been only two cases of rioting by coolies directed against their employers or of serious collision between employers and labourers. With free labour an occurrence such as the Monabari riot of October 1920 is inconceivable. It will be remembered that on this garden the coolies had been practically reduced to a condition of servitude, their wages being swallowed up in the repayment of rice advances, which, in the aggregate, amounted to Rs. 28,300. Comparing the Dooars with any Assam tea district of the same size and importance, for instance, the Darrang district, it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that the Assam labour system is to a large extent responsible for the frequent occurrence of these regrettable incidents on Assam tea-gardens.

171. There are 136 gardens in the Dooars and the Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri, gives the garden population as 190,263, of whom 126,825 are adult labourers. The adult labour force in the Dooars is about 22 per cent. of the total adult labour population on the tea-gardens in the Province of Assam which on 30th June 1921 was 571,526. In the Darrang district there are 132 gardens with a population of 142,688 including 82,101 adults. As has been observed, conditions in the Darrang district are various. It is divided into the three local tea districts of Bishnath, Tezpur and Mangaldai. Conditions in Mangaldai are favourable. In the north the physical aspects of the country resemble the Dooars. Living is cheap and the district usually not unhealthy. Excluding Mangaldai, there is a still greater disparity between the adult labour population of the gardens in the Tezpur subdivision which includes Bishnath, as compared with the Dooars or Jalpaiguri district of Bengal. On the 30th June 1921, the adult labour force on the gardens in the Tezpur subdivision was 61,526. When the question of repealing Act XIII came under consideration in 1917, figures for the previous triennium were called for. The Darrang district returned 1,231 cases in which 105 labourers were convicted and sent to jail. The figures exceeded those for all the other tea districts in the Province and showed that the gardens in the Tezpur or Sadr subdivision were almost entirely responsible for the result. Figures for the year ending 30th June 1921 indicate that more advantage is taken of the Act in Tezpur than in any other district in the Province. In October 1921 the riots on the Tezpur tea-gardens finally induced the decision to appoint the present Committee of enquiry. The opinion has been expressed that the comparative prevalence of rioting on Assam gardens is the result of Act VI—a sort of aftermath of that well-intentioned but stringent piece of labour legislation.

172. Most planters are opposed to the withdrawal of the Act. In the first place, it is urged that the tea industry which imports labour at considerable cost should have some guarantee against labourers deserting or being enticed away by other gardens, and next that the coolie is more content with an agreement because it affords the opportunity of an annual bonus for any special item of expenditure. There is a marked distinction between the attitude of planters in the Surma Valley as compared with the Assam Valley. There is a considerable body of evidence to the effect that the Act could be dispensed with in the Surma Valley, and that it is probable the bonus would be continued though the privilege might be restricted to hardworking, settled coolies. It is well known that labour in the Surma Valley has always enjoyed a larger measure of freedom than in the sister Valley, and the fact has been commented on in the Special Report on the Working of Act I of 1882 which covered the years

Opinion of the tea industry as to whether Act XIII should be repealed.

1886-1889. The planters in the Surma Valley at the same time point out that Act XIII has worked satisfactorily from the point of view of employer and labourer as evidenced by the small number of cases brought into Court. Emphasis is laid on the fact that the bonus given under the Act is much appreciated by tea-garden coolies. If the Act is repealed they suggest the withdrawal of the restrictions still imposed by certain sections of Act VI and the introduction of a free recruiting system.

173. Planters in the Assam Valley point to the negligible number of cases taken into Court. They also lay stress on the moral effect of the Act, in so far as the coolie generally understands that he is bound to carry out the terms of the contract in consideration of the bonus advanced and as a rule does so willingly. There is the further argument that coolies by getting the bonus or advance are saved from the professional money-lender. They apprehend that the discontinuance of the old established custom of giving substantial advances would result in trouble with labour.

174. The Committee have been informed that the honest, respectable labourer is unlikely to abscond if the agreement is discontinued. Managers have also stated that if the Act is withdrawn they will continue to give the bonus. In the Chargola Valley since the increase of wages was given, agreement bonuses have ceased and coolies are no longer placed under contract. Some Managers state their willingness to give a bonus on the completion of a year's work. The Committee do not believe that where labour is well treated the absence of a contract will have any effect on desertions. Quite a number of witnesses have stated that they do not put new coolies under contract. On the gardens of the Jokai Company in Lakhimpur, it is not the custom to give an agreement to new coolies till they have been three or four years on the estate. In the same district, the Superintendent, Assam Frontier Tea Company, states that new coolies are not put under agreement for the first three years and that they do not abscond. The Doom-Dooma Tea Company follows the same practice. The Manager of the Sessa Division, British India Tea Company, does not put new coolies under agreement until they have been one year on the garden. In view of the fact that leading Companies in Lakhimpur consider it unnecessary to place new coolies under contract the Committee cannot attach much weight to the argument that the Act is necessary in order to retain newly imported labour on the estate. About 95 per cent. of the gardens in Assam are signatories to the "Memorandum of agreement in connection with the enticement of labour from tea-gardens and other concerns in the Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys". A copy of the rules will be found in the Appendix. It is perhaps unfortunate that Act XIII was not discarded at the same time as Act VI, when legislation to deal with the enticement of labour by providing a summary remedy for the recovery of actual importation expenses in certain circumstances and subject to a fixed maximum was under consideration. The Secretary of State, however, refused in August 1914 to accept the principle of the Assam Labour Enticement Act, one of the reasons being that Act XIII contracts are tolerated on account of their weakness and that to supplement them in the manner proposed must raise the question of allowing them to continue.

Opinion of officials as to whether Act XIII should be repealed.

175. Speaking generally, official witnesses are in favour of the retention of Act XIII. The Commissioner of the Surma Valley would continue the system of agreements with a modification in the Act. He considers it is an advantage to the coolie to receive a small lump sum once a year in the shape of a bonus. But he would transfer to the labourer the option of repaying the advance as an alternative to completing the contract. At present the decision rests with the Magistrate. In his letter No. 32, dated the 16th January 1922, to the Government of Assam, the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Division reported that the Act is worked in a humane and lenient manner, and that in the course of his inspections he called for and examined the proceedings of all cases tried under it, and that he was unable to recall any case to which exception could be taken. The Committee, after a careful examination of records, venture to think that there is some room for a difference of opinion.

Conclusions of the Committee.

176. The Committee are divided on the question as to whether Act XIII should be retained, modified or repealed. Two members connected with the tea industry, are in favour of the retention of the Act as it stands at present. They agree with the rest of the Committee in condemning the abuses which have come to light. In so far as the Act is not properly administered by Magistrates, they think it the duty of Government to rectify this and they also consider that it is incumbent on the tea industry in its own interests to see that the provisions of the Act are strictly adhered to. It is argued that the Act was amended as recently as 1920 and that some Managers may not yet have realised the changes which have taken place in the old Act. They think that it would be a mistake to disregard the considered opinion of the majority of planters who wish to retain the Act and they believe that the coolie himself favours

the retention of an Act under which he receives a bonus once a year. The small number of cases taken into Court is quoted as proof that the Act does not bear heavily on the labourer. Another factor which cannot be ignored is that the planter has to incur heavy expenditure in recruiting labour—a coolie nowadays may cost anything from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150. Another member connected with the tea industry, who is in favour of retaining the Act, thinks that if all restrictions on recruiting were removed and if Assam was free to adopt the system prevailing in the Doars, all need of the Act would disappear after the few years necessary to meet the altered conditions.

177. The majority of the Committee are in favour of the abolition of Act XIII. One Member of the Committee, a practical planter, is of opinion that the tea industry could dispense with the Act. The irregularities which have been brought to light have convinced him that the Act should be repealed. Important Companies which have disregarded the provisions of the Act cannot reasonably be supposed to have acted in ignorance. His belief is that if agreements are abolished Managers would be obliged to take more interest in ~~the welfare of their labour force.~~ The repeal of the Act would lead to greater contentment among labour with the result that recruiting would also benefit. His view is that to place a new coolie under a long-term agreement with or without a money bonus, does infinite harm. The fact that the placing of new coolies under long-term agreements immediately on arrival in the labour districts must exercise a prejudicial effect on recruitment has been lost sight of in the anxiety to retain labour which has been recruited at considerable expense.

178. The majority of the Committee consider it an anachronism that there should be any penal contract at all. They believe that the freedom of the coolie is considerably restricted under the present system and that the repeal of the Act, so far from being detrimental to the tea industry, would result in stimulating recruitment and the attraction of a better class of labour. On this point, the opinion of the Committee of 1906 is worth quoting :—

“ If Assam desires to attract labour, it will ask for no contracts of any kind from emigrants who are engaged by garden sardars. The one hope for emigration lies in sardari recruitment. In this way alone can a satisfactory class of emigrants be obtained and if their lot in Assam is made agreeable to them, the Committee do not believe that difficulty will be experienced in keeping them on the garden, free of contract of any kind.”

179. For decades not only the Government of Assam but Commissions appointed from time to time have advocated the abolition of all contracts and the introduction of an entirely free labour system as the goal to be aimed at. It may be doubted if the Labour Committee of 1906 would have expressed even a qualified approval of the working of Act XIII of 1859 if they had known that their proposals to abolish local contracts under Act VI would have been defeated by the practice which grew up in the Assam Valley Districts—notably Darrang and Sibsagar—of replacing long-term local contracts under Act VI by similar agreements under Act XIII. The Committee, in their Report, referred to the inadvisability of demanding contracts under Act XIII from intending emigrants in the recruiting districts, but they could hardly have contemplated that free labourers would be placed immediately on arrival on the garden under contract for a term of years expressed in days. As regards the theory that the labourer is in a better position to contract after he has been on the garden for a few days the Committee were most emphatic “ that experience has shown that the further the emigrant gets from his home the more helpless he becomes.”

180. The remark has often been made that Act XIII has suffered from its association with Act VI in the Assam Valley and though seven years have elapsed since the repeal of that Act, the extraordinary permanence of its effects is still in evidence. The Committee of 1906 observed that the powers of private arrest conferred by Act VI have not infrequently been illegally exercised in the case of Act XIII absconders and even of free labourers. On the question of “ moral effect ” of which the present Committee have heard so much in connection with Act XIII, their predecessors in recommending the withdrawal of the right of private arrest which was strenuously opposed by planters and the Commissioner and most of the district officers in the Assam Valley made the following observations (paragraph 214) :—

“ But it is urged that the sections (195 and 196) authorising private arrest have a moral effect on the labour force which enables the planter to keep his labour on the garden. This, which employers consider the sovereign virtue of the sections, appears to the Committee to carry their condemnation with it. It is not the fact that the precise nature of these sections is understood in the recruiting districts and that they in themselves deter intending emigrants. But the ‘ moral effect’

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which seems so valuable to employers is understood in the recruiting districts. It is known that Assam is a country where labour is not free, and where the employer is more powerful than elsewhere and this knowledge is one of the factors of the dislike of the country which is so marked. The more importance employers attach to the 'moral effect' of these sections, the more important it is that the sections should be withdrawn, because it is evidence that they are really effective; and their effect is to perpetuate a state of affairs which so long as it lasts will render a free flow of labour to Assam impossible."

The present Committee have found that the illegal arrest of absconders continues, that long-term agreements under Act XIII have replaced local agreements under Act VI and are common in some districts and approved by leading Companies, the alteration in the law notwithstanding. Minors are placed under contract and in some instances, as must be inevitable as long as the practice is so common, are arrested and sent to jail. The Act does not even secure finality as in one district coolies are illegally returned from jail to complete their contracts on the garden. In these circumstances, the majority of the Committee are unable to agree to the suggestion that the Act as amended should be given a further trial or that further amendments should be considered.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

181. In this Chapter the Committee propose to deal with subjects affecting the health of the labour force, with special reference to medical and sanitary arrangements. Some tentative suggestions are also made for the promotion of the general welfare and contentment of the labourer. Introductory.

The Committee of 1906 in Chapter VIII of their Report dealt exhaustively with the question of the birth and death-rate on tea-gardens and though in their opinion it was useless to attempt to arrive at figures that could pretend to any accuracy, they endeavoured to assign reasons for the low birth-rate and the high death-rate. The Committee laid stress on the "superior efficiency of the machinery for collecting vital statistics which exists on tea-gardens," and were of opinion that as regards births the figures were more accurate and reliable than for the general population. The present Committee do not propose to travel over the same ground or to repeat the reasons given for the low birth-rate, such as for instance the practice of abortion and the prevalence of malaria, syphilis and *anchylostomiasis* with regard to which medical evidence was recorded. They have, however, referred to the question of leave to pregnant women and agree that where greater liberality is shown it is reflected in an improved birth-rate. As regards the death-rate the opinion was expressed that the reported figures were not of much value. "Deaths of infants are admittedly incorrectly reported and probably the same is the case with the deaths of older people who are no longer actual workers." The conclusion was that though the figures are "not absolutely correct, the percentage of error is probably fairly constant, and if this is so, there has been a decline in the death-rate and a rise in the birth-rate in the last 15 years which is eminently satisfactory." The decline in the death-rate was attributed to the fact that new immigrants in recent years constituted a smaller percentage of the total tea-garden population, but apart from statistics the Committee formed the opinion that "lighter work and the opening up of the country had led to a general improvement in the health of the labour force which is showing itself in a lower death-rate and higher birth-rate." The present Committee are inclined to agree generally with these conclusions. In 1906 the Committee commented on the high death-rate among Act VI labourers which is "usually attributed to the constant importation of anæmic and poverty-stricken coolies," and they accepted the explanation as regards part of the period under review, especially in respect of importations of coolies from the Central Provinces in the years 1895-98 from districts affected by scarcity. History has a habit of repeating itself and the influx of enormous numbers of famine-stricken and enfeebled labourers in 1918-19 imported under similar conditions led to serious mortality on the tea-gardens of Assam during the prevalence of the influenza epidemic.

An interesting expression of opinion is contained in paragraphs 190-192 of the Report as regards the effect of penal contracts for long terms on sickness and mortality in the case of new immigrants. After quoting the opinions of authorities in the Federated Malay States as regards the unfavourable effect of a system of indenture on the death-rate, the Committee concluded by observing that "it is only too probable that the disillusionment following upon the immigrant's arrival on the garden, aggravated by the feeling that he is bound to remain there, should, in many cases, have had a prejudicial effect on his health, and the circumstances cannot be left out of account in considering the mortality of the past."

These remarks might well have been written with reference to the free immigrant who, on arrival on a tea-garden in Assam, up to a recent date, and even now in certain districts, is being placed under long-term contracts expressed in terms of days, in consideration of trivial advances and in direct contravention of the law. The unfairness of placing new immigrants who come up to Assam as free labourers under contract immediately on arrival on the garden was commented on and condemned in the Report of the 1906 Committee. It is significant that the highest adult death-rate recorded in the Resolution on Immigrant Labour for 1920-21 is reported from the Tezpur district where full advantage is taken of the provisions of Act XIII especially in the case of new immigrants. The birth-rate is also the lowest with the exception of Nowgong, another district in which the penal contract system is worked with considerable rigour and where allowances to pregnant women do not err on the side of liberality.

Vital Statistics.

182. The following table compiled from the Immigration Reports gives the mortality among the estate population including children from 1904-05 to 1920-21 :—

Year.	Mean annual strength.	Cholera.	Diarrhoea.	Dysentery.	Malarial fever.	Anemia of scollie or anachylostomiasis.	Respiratory diseases.	Kala-azar.	Infu ena.	Other causes.	Total deaths.	Ratio per mille.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1904-05	660-700	813	1,661	2,386	2,130	1,655	2,895	...	...	4,095	15,145	22.9
1905-06	670-663	2,057	1,607	2,843	2,429	1,499	1,933	...	...	3,735	16,103	24.0
1906-07	680-772	1,164	1,628	2,769	2,204	1,668	1,805	...	...	3,769	15,007	22.0
1907-08	712-002	3,603	1,936	3,558	2,740	1,926	2,296	...	...	4,713	20,772	29.3
1908-09	747-812	2,905	2,130	5,628	3,149	2,674	2,743	...	...	6,901	25,630	34.3
1909-10	757-076	1,638	1,614	4,794	2,491	2,424	3,281	...	...	5,234	21,476	28.4
1910-11	760-776	1,554	1,845	4,580	2,365	2,496	2,666	...	...	5,608	21,132	27.8
1911-12	777-347	1,733	1,863	4,186	2,015	2,642	2,802	...	...	5,322	20,573	26.6
1912-13	806-595	1,625	1,748	4,060	2,241	2,414	2,682	...	...	5,777	19,947	24.7
1913-14	834-148	1,579	1,753	3,917	2,174	2,696	2,928	...	...	5,530	20,577	24.7
1914-15	862-945	1,212	2,046	3,651	2,169	2,266	2,333	...	...	7,199	20,876	24.2
1915-16	916-268	2,565	2,411	4,612	2,613	2,212	2,436	...	...	8,302	25,151	27.4
1916-17	954-920	993	2,254	4,680	2,833	2,610	3,864	...	...	7,656	24,890	26.0
1917-18	948-598	748	1,882	3,284	3,062	2,540	3,189	...	...	7,256	21,961	23.2
1918-19	1,012-716	5,268	2,647	4,145	3,380	2,361	6,310	47	28,852	9,146	62,176	61.4
1919-20	1,097-600	893	2,375	6,784	4,627	4,028	5,221	15	9,604	11,217	44,866	43.8
1920-21	1,060-948	1,180	1,912	4,024	3,114	2,818	5,009	8	2,024	8,838	26,927	27.3

The period covered in each year is from the 1st July to the 30th June of the following year. The statistics do not agree with those in the Annual Sanitary Reports which are for *calendar* years. The percentages *per mille* from 1912 to 1920 for births and deaths in tea-gardens and in the province, as given in those reports, are :—

Year.	Tea-gardens.		Provincial.		
	Birth-rate.	Death-rate.	Birth-rate.	Death-rate.	
1	2	3	4	5	
1912	...	27.22	28.64	32.16	25.04
1913	...	26.66	25.47	33.06	27.36
1914	...	24.54	21.93	32.94	24.66
1915	...	26.27	26.47	30.86	33.60
1916	...	25.15	30.96	30.52	28.59
1917	...	31.10	30.41	31.35	27.09
1918	...	35.41	55.23	34.98	46.10
1919	...	31.58	68.82	30.52	50.09
1920	...	25.89	31.54	31.53	28.98

The figures for tea-gardens and for the province as a whole, must be accepted with considerable reserve. The reporting agency for rural areas outside Municipalities is still undoubtedly defective and unreliable. In 1916 the attention of garden authorities was invited to the desirability, in their own interests, of furnishing more accurate statistics as regards births. Deaths among adult labourers and working children are likely to be accurately recorded as continued absence from work and muster would lead to enquiries being made. In recent years efforts to obtain more reliable statistics regarding vital occurrences on tea-gardens appear to have resulted in some improvement. But there are instances in which the figures reported are still incredibly low, notably in the case of deaths of children. In Nowgong and Sylhet for the year 1920-21 the rate *per mille* is given as 14.4 and 15.8.

183. Cholera and influenza are largely responsible for the abnormal death-rate in 1918 and 1919. The population in the lines on an ordinary tea-garden is more congested than in the villages and the risk of the propagation and spread of disease proportionately greater, especially in the case of epidemics. The high mortality, however, was primarily due to the importation of hordes of famine-stricken and diseased coolies who were sent up to the Assam tea-gardens in the expectation that the artificial war-time prosperity of the industry justified large extensions of tea cultivation on old estates and the opening of new gardens. As might have been anticipated, disease broke out among these new recruits on the way up and on the tea-gardens to which they were consigned. The districts from which the immigrants came were affected by scarcity and the universal epidemic of influenza. The fact that the best medical attention on the gardens could often do little to save life in such circumstances conduced to a feeling of despair, and even to a belief among the more ignorant and superstitious that the garden was haunted by some evil spirit. It is not, therefore, a matter for surprise that some of these unfortunate immigrants lost faith in European medicines and methods of treatment and that when ill-health began to prey on body and mind and the earning capacity was diminished, they became discontented with the conditions of tea-garden life.

High mor-
tality in
1918-19.

184. The large proportion of deaths from dysentery, diarrhoea and anæmia has from time to time attracted the attention of the Sanitary Commissioner who states in his Report for 1917 :—

Deaths from
dysentery,
diarrhoea
and anæmia.

"...A pamphlet was drawn up by the Sanitary Commissioner and issued by the local Administration to persons and firms connected with the tea industry in Assam calling attention to the substantial improvement which may be expected in the health of the labour force by introducing a system of conservancy to reduce the mortality and inefficiency caused by bowel complaints and hookworm, quoting facts and figures in support of this contention. It appears from opinions gathered in the course of the cold weather tour that few, if any, of those connected with the tea industry now seriously contest the soundness of this view, and only a fear that the innate conservatism of the garden coolie may prevent the use of suitable conveniences, coupled with an unwillingness at the present juncture to undertake new expenditure, is delaying the realisation of this improvement. Signs are not lacking that when the first one or two septic tank latrines or other suitable installations have been provided to be useful, workable, and popular with the labour force, this reform will be widely adopted, and unless all previous experience in this connection is belied, a substantial reduction in these mortality figures may be expected to follow..."

Now that the prospects of the tea industry are brighter, it is to be hoped that these suggestions will be acted upon. It seems superfluous to point out that a coolie's capacity for work must be lessened by these diseases and by malaria. The layman perhaps is too prone to attribute the failure to do a fair day's work to inherent indolence on the part of the labourer. Doubtless there are coolies who, so to speak, are born lazy, and the tendency of the normal man to do no more than he is obliged to has to be reckoned with. At the same time, it is often the case that anæmia is the real cause of so-called laziness. It is significant that the name "lazy disease" is applied to *anchylostomiasis* in Porto Rico and the Southern States of America, as stated by Captain Christophers, I.M.S., in the Doorns Report of 1910.

185. "Speaking generally, a high birth-rate is a better index that conditions on a garden are satisfactory than anything else." On the other hand, the number of still-born children on some gardens indicates the prevalence of unfavourable conditions. In the five divisions of the Doom-Dooma Company, the number of children born alive in 1918 and 1919 was 674 and 569 respectively, but in the same years the figures were 86 and 113 still-born. In some gardens the mortality among infants under two years of age seemed to be abnormally low and this is reflected in the reported death-rate of children in at least two districts in the Province—Nowgong and Sylhet.

Births.

186. The Committee have recorded the evidence of 15 European Medical Officers of tea-gardens. The chief points on which the Committee desired to elicit an expression of opinion were as regards the treatment of anæmia and hookworm disease, the

Medical and
Sanitary
arrange-
ments.

practicability of introducing a system of conservancy, the alleged aversion of coolies to undergo in-door treatment in hospitals, and the assistance given to pregnant women. In formulating their conclusions, the Committee have derived much assistance from the evidence not only of Medical Officers, but also of Managers.

Anæmia and
hookworm.

187. In recent years appreciable progress has been made in the treatment of anæmia and hookworm on tea-gardens. These diseases seem to be more prevalent in certain parts of the Assam Valley than in the Surma Valley and treatment is certainly more systematic in the Assam Valley. There is a consensus of opinion among Medical Officers and Managers that the prevalence of anæmia or hookworm disease in a garden very considerably diminishes the efficiency of the labour force. Dr. Ramsay states that hookworm reduces the efficiency of the coolie by 50 per cent. Anæmia is mainly the result of malaria or dysentery or hookworm infection. The type of anæmia which has its origin in hookworm causes most anxiety because of the difficulty in getting rid of the initial infection. There are two methods of checking anæmia, (a) by direct treatment, (b) by prevention of hookworm infection. The ordinary method of treatment where the disease is prevalent on an estate has been described by a medical witness. The European Medical Officer, once a year, or oftener, has the whole labour force mustered before him. He then picks out coolies who seem to be affected and, after further examination, a list is made of those who are to undergo treatment which usually takes the form of dosing with anthelmintic. It is generally the practice at regular intervals to apply the Hæmoglobin test. Those under treatment are not discharged until the European Medical Officer is satisfied that they have recovered. Dr. Joly has stated that his practice is to grade the sick coolies into three different classes—A, B and T. The coolies suffering from anæmia are placed in A *chalan*, are given a dose of anthelmintic once a month and every morning receive a free meal and get full pay for doing one-third work. As they improve in health, they are transferred to B *chalan* and are given a light meal together with a dose of medicine and receive full pay for two-thirds work. Coolies in A or B *chalans* can only be discharged by the Medical Officer, who expects to find on the occasion of his weekly visits fresh coolies in A and B *chalans*, selected on the initiative of the Manager or Assistant Manager. T *chalan* coolies are simply placed under treatment without interference with their ordinary work. All coolies on being discharged from hospital, whether suffering from anæmia or not, automatically go into A or B *chalans* for light work for, at least, one fortnight before they return to their ordinary tasks. All coolies who have had malaria automatically go into B *chalan* as the coolies in that *chalan* get quinine every morning. Dr. Joly states that the health of the labour force on all gardens in his charge is improving under this routine treatment.

Dr. Abraham of the Lungla Valley in Sylhet, states that hookworm is very prevalent in the gardens in his practice and that he has met with considerable success in treating coolies suffering from it with medicine. These gardens are not as yet provided with latrines. Dr. Smith of the Balisera Valley in Sylhet, who has also had experience in Assam, says that hookworm disease is not so bad in the Surma Valley. Members of the Committee who visited two hospitals in Tezpur under the charge of Dr. Forsyth were much impressed by the methodical treatment of anæmic patients. Dr. Dodds-Price of Nowgong, states that hookworm in his district is now negligible and he attributes this to the result of regular musters and systematic treatment in the past.

System of
conservancy.

188. The installation of a conservancy system on tea-gardens in Assam has not advanced beyond the experimental stage though in the last year or two considerable progress has been effected. Medical Officers advocate the desirability of conducting an intensive campaign against hookworm infection by this method. The Committee note with satisfaction that many Managers are in favour of some system of conservancy. Several witnesses, however, have stated that the coolie will not use latrines but in most cases it was found that latrines had never been given a trial. On the other hand, there is the positive testimony of Medical Officers and Managers who have actually introduced latrines that they are a success in so far that coolies do use them with the result that in many cases there is an appreciable fall in the incidence of anæmia. The Committee have seen latrines of different kinds in use. On Tara garden in Lakhimpur, the bucket system of latrines is in vogue. This necessitates the maintenance of a staff of sweepers. Dr. Joly has pronounced this system satisfactory. At Panitola there is a system of *aqua* privy. The Manager said it was regularly used and that the health of the adjoining coolie lines had much improved. At Gotonga, Members of the Committee were much impressed by a septic tank

erected by Messrs. Bird and Company, which had cost about Rs. 8,000. The Manager expressed his satisfaction with it, and avowed his intention of installing a similar septic tank in another of his gardens. He was further of opinion that he could build one for about half the cost of the Gotonga tank. In places where latrines exist, the Committee have been assured that, with few exceptions, the coolies do not object to using them. There is, of course, always a difficulty about children. It is not, however, to be expected that latrines will be regularly used unless they are kept clean. Sometimes there may be a difficulty in enlisting a staff of sweepers. Dr. Joly made the pertinent remark that unless Managers themselves are interested in such schemes and have a reasonable belief in their success, there is little hope of progress. In some gardens trench latrines have been tried. In such cases supervision is difficult and there is the risk of fly infection which may lead to other dangers, but it is a step in the right direction. The ideal is the septic tank, but there are two difficulties: (a) the question of initial expense, and (b) the difficulty in getting an adequate water supply. It has been stated that four to five gallons of water a day are required for each person using the latrine. As regards the question of cost which some gardens might consider prohibitive, Dr. Joly has observed that, in his opinion, the septic tank would decrease the cost of production of tea by saving garden labour. Without putting the figure of diminished efficiency as high as Dr. Ramsay, the Committee have no doubt that the average coolie suffering from anaemia cannot be expected to do a full day's work and where such cases are numerous, either the cultivation of the garden must suffer or an additional labour force must be imported. An anaemic coolie is obviously a financial burden to the garden. Prevention is better than cure, and practical efforts to improve sanitation with this object are to be welcomed. The Committee do not think that where the labour population lives in scattered hamlets, latrines are either so necessary or indeed practicable, but they have no hesitation in saying that where congested barrack lines, with a large population living under artificial conditions, are concerned, the introduction of some system of conservancy is essential. The Empire of India Tea Company in Tezpur, since 1919, have made considerable progress in the erection of latrines and the Medical Officer, Dr. Jameson, regards a latrine system as a sound business proposition. Latrines are sometimes attached to hospitals, especially in the Assam Valley. No system of conservancy will eradicate hookworm disease, but the Committee are satisfied from the medical evidence, that the chance of infection will be appreciably diminished. Most medical witnesses state that coolies are infected with hookworm when they come up from their country. Dr. Jameson is of opinion that hookworm is mostly contracted on the garden. It was suggested to a medical witness that as the question of the introduction of a conservancy system on tea-gardens was in a more or less experimental stage, it might be advisable for Medical Officers to confer together and discuss the matter, and the Committee think that action on these lines might have useful and practical results.

189. Medical Officers and Managers have expressed various opinions on the attitude of coolies with regard to in-door treatment in hospitals. In the Surma Valley, it is generally stated that the coolie, if he enters hospital at all, only does so in the last resort, after he has tried to treat himself after his own fashion in the lines. Where a hospital is attractive, where good and careful treatment is provided and where the garden doctor babu is competent and sympathetic, there seems to be no reason why in-door accommodation in the Surma Valley should not be more popular than appears to be the case. Dr. Dunlop of the Chargola Valley has mentioned that part of the Gandhi propaganda was to induce people to have nothing to do with hospitals and Western medicines. It was observed about the time of the Chargola exodus that coolies declined to go to hospital and in particular complained that in hospital they were "cut up", the reference being to the intravenous treatment for cholera. Members of the Committee who visited Dr. Forsyth's hospitals, were shown pictorial representations of certain diseases. These pictures are periodically explained by way of lectures to the coolies. As regards in-door treatment, much depends on the inducements held out to the coolie to remain in hospital.

190. The Committee regret to learn that *kala-azar*, which, about a generation ago, played havoc in the tea-gardens and villages in the Nowgong district has re-appeared. Dr. Dodds-Price who, for about 30 years, has had a unique experience in dealing with the disease in that district, states that the present method of treatment by injection of *antimony tartrate* is proving very successful. He says that whereas formerly the death-rate from *kala-azar* was 95 per cent. of those infected, that figure now represents the percentage of recoveries. Two Members of the Committee visited Dooria garden in Golaghat where between 1916 and December 1921, 270 coolies out

of about 500 attacked died of *kala-azar*. At the time of the visit there were 7 cases. The Directors of the Company have spared no expense and have made every effort to eradicate the disease. The hypothecated losses on the *kala-azar* account stand at between £ 40,000 and £ 50,000 sterling, i.e., £ 40 to £ 50 per acre. Hundreds of infected houses were burned down, new lines erected, and hospitals with a special staff established. The treatment of *kala-azar* patients in hospital is on a generous scale, men being paid 4 annas a day, and women 3 annas, with a double *hazira* on the day when the European Medical Officer inspects. If a man is ill, his wife is also paid to look after him. In this garden a coolie suffering from any disease which, in the opinion of the Manager, requires in-door treatment, is paid a full *hazira* while in hospital. There is a danger of encouraging shirking, but, on the whole, the Manager believes that it is in the interest of the garden to give full pay during stay in hospital. There is, thus, a chance of rapid recovery. The alternative is to allow the coolie to treat himself in his own way in his own house with the probable result that the garden will lose his services for a considerable time. Needless to say, there is very little trouble in getting patients to remain in hospital until they are cured. The Committee hope that Hautley garden in Gola-ghat, where *kala-azar* is prevalent, will be equally successful in getting rid of the disease.

Pregnant
leave.

191. The question of the help that should be extended to pregnant women, particularly of the labouring classes, is one which has attained international importance, as is evidenced by the proceedings of the Washington Labour Conference. Now-a-days when it is so difficult to obtain labour from the recruiting districts, it is, apart from humanitarian motives, a matter of enlightened self-interest to be generous in the treatment of women during and after confinement. The Committee have noted with satisfaction the tendency towards increased liberality in the granting of pregnant leave and allowances. They have been told that, as a rule, a pregnant woman can get as much leave as she likes. While there is no reason to criticise the amount of leave given, it may be pointed out that unless the woman receives considerable help in the shape of pay as well as food, she may return to work too soon in order to avoid the loss of wages entailed by absence on leave. The health of the child in this case is particularly liable to be affected and even its prospect of survival endangered. There are concerns which in normal times are prosperous but which are illiberal and shortsighted in this respect; penny-wise and pound-foolish. The Committee have been told that in some gardens the woman can get free meals if she comes to hospital, but it is hardly to be expected that the average woman will do so. In other cases, pregnant allowances are only given when absolutely necessary, for instance, when there is no other working member in the family. When the family is well off sometimes no assistance is given. On the other hand some gardens are very generous in their treatment of pregnant women. The Budla Beta Company give leave for three months before and three months after birth with full pay for the whole period. Pay may be given for a still longer period according to the advice of the doctor. The Doom-Dooma Company allow a similar period of leave with five seers of rice a week free of cost and Re. 1-8 a month in cash. The Pabhajan Company is equally liberal. In the Jorhat Company, pregnant women get three months full pay, and a bonus Rs. 2 when the child is born, Rs. 2 when the woman goes out to work, Rs. 2 when the child is six months old, and Rs. 4 when it is one year old. The Consolidated Tea and Lands Company in Sylhet, grant three months' leave on half pay, with a bonus of Rs. 3 at birth and of Rs. 2 after 12 months. The Empire of India Tea Company in Tezpur give leave for three months before and three months after childbirth, and the cash allowance is one rupee a week in addition to free milk supplied from the hospital. Dr. Dodds-Price of Nowgong is of opinion that light work during pregnancy is not prejudicial, but he advocates liberal leave after childbirth up to 5 or 6 months. The practice of deducting rice advances from the half-pay allowance prevails on some estates in this district, with the result that the balance paid in cash at the end of the month is insignificant. On some gardens it is the rule in addition to giving rice, to give a minimum of one rupee over and above the food provided. This is not an extravagant allowance for a woman and her infant child, but it was explained that gardens were hard hit during the depression, and that, after all, a tea-garden is not a philanthropic institution. This seems to miss the point and in any case represents a narrow view. Economy on these lines is the worst kind of parsimony. The Committee endorse the opinion expressed by their predecessors that "if children are to be born, and to live, six months' leave on half pay after childbirth would seem to be advisable."

192. With few exceptions, gardens are equipped with a qualified medical staff. On some outgardens—and to a large extent on small gardens owned by Indians—a compounder is often in charge. The Committee, however, found a compounder in charge of two hospitals at the headquarter garden of a leading Tea Company at Doom-Dooma, and a proposal of the Medical Officer to have a qualified doctor tabu placed in charge of each hospital had been disallowed on the score of expense. This seems to be a poor kind of economy.

The efficiency of the subordinate Indian medical staff, of course, depends to a great extent on adequate and competent European medical supervision. Dr. Joly has stated that there is a difficulty in getting good doctor babus. There is a percentage of registered men who apply, but far more unregistered men apply who are not qualified. Dr. Ramsay has urged the necessity of opening a medical school at Silchar to train Indian doctors for tea-garden work on the ground that the Berry-White School at Dibrugarh and the Calcutta Colleges do not provide sufficient candidates of that class. The men trained in these institutions are of the Sub-Assistant Surgeon type, who are limited in number, and naturally demand high rates of pay. Dr. Ramsay is of opinion that the men trained by him at the Labac Central Hospital in Cachar are as efficient as the medical students passed out from those Colleges, and, in present circumstances, he considers it advisable to train his own men for the various garden hospitals in his extensive practice. He further is of opinion that it was a mistake to abolish the Government Local Board examination which doctor babus were required to pass and he has suggested that the men trained by him at his Central Hospital should be allowed to appear at the Dibrugarh and Dacca examinations. The Committee desire to bring to the notice of the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, the question of the establishment of a medical school at Silchar, and the revival of the Board examination. It is understood, however, that the proposal to establish a medical school for the Surma Valley at Sylhet is under the consideration of Government.

193. In the Doom-Dooma district, *anchylostomiasis* combined with malaria is said to be responsible for 90 per cent. of the deaths, and the higher death-rate in the rains is attributed to the increased incidence of malaria. Dr. Ramsay has stated that he does not know of a coolie who has not had malaria. Medical witnesses have called attention to the high spleen index in Tezpur and also in the Balisera Valley, particularly among children. Prophylactic doses of quinine, especially during the rainy season, are commonly administered to check malaria. Many witnesses have alluded to the great mortality due to influenza, in 1918 and 1919, and it was found that in some gardens in the Doom-Dooma district, the malady was still prevalent. Every care and attention is shown to influenza patients. Two medical witnesses have spoken of the increase in the number of cases of tuberculosis. Statistics show that pneumonia cases are prevalent especially in Upper Assam, and this indicates the necessity of the provision of proper clothing and blankets where variations of temperature are sudden and extreme. Dr. Forsyth has expressed his preference for thatched houses. Dr. Joly thinks that it is desirable that barrack lines should contain fewer houses as supervision is facilitated. Dr. Ramsay has referred to the numerous operations for cataract in his Central Hospital. Many coolies must be indebted to his skill for the recovery of their sight. In most gardens, no expense is spared to provide a pure water-supply and the pipe system from closed wells or fenced tanks which is common on many gardens is admirable. In many cases cholera is said to be traceable to the villages, or, to streams which bring the infection from a source outside the garden. Dr. Ramsay speaks of a type of dysentery which is due to infection carried by pigs which are kept by certain classes of coolies. In connection with the mortality from dysentery and diarrhoea the Sanitary Report for 1920 gives the ratio in gardens in Assam as 6.95 *per mille* which considerably exceeds the average of the province—1.84. "This indicates the necessity for improving the sanitary conditions where there are large aggregations of labour." Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Darrang are the tea districts where mortality from these diseases is highest.

Miscellaneous
medical
matters.

194. In reply to question 70, Managers have stated the practice as regards Sick *haziras*. giving free meals or sick *haziras* to children or weakly coolies who are unable to work. Information as regards the treatment of men or women who are unable to earn a sufficient wage on account of ill-health has also been supplied. The Committee are satisfied that in most gardens adequate assistance is given. As a rule, sick coolies receive half pay or hospital diet. The Committee have no definite information as to how far the total number of days due to absence through sickness is added on to Act XIII contracts when they are expressed in terms of working days

Under Section 130 of Act VI this was permissible only when the total exceeded 30 days in any one year and the sanction of the Inspector of Labourers was essential. In the case of weakly coolies, it is usual in many gardens to give them light work on full pay until they recover strength.

Treatment
of new
coolies.

195. Owing to the change in climate, in diet, and in work, a new coolie takes some time to get acclimatised. Speaking generally, the Committee are satisfied that Managers, as a rule, recognise that it is good policy to make conditions as easy as possible for the new immigrant; on some estates full pay for the first month or two is given irrespective of the amount of work done, and special rice concessions are often allowed. It may be recalled that Section 5 of Act VI specifically laid down that, during the first six months, a labourer shall be entitled to full pay on completion of half the daily task unless the Inspector certified that he was physically fit to perform the whole task. Some witnesses have stated that coolies of inferior physique are often recruited and that they are not of the same agricultural class as formerly. This seems to indicate the necessity for greater care and attention in the case of new immigrants. Dr. Ramsay has stated in evidence that coolies recruited in recent years are unsatisfactory and that more than 25 per cent. die and another 25 per cent. live on the hospitality of the Company.

Leisure of
the coolie.

196. To the question whether the coolie has more time to devote to his own pursuits and more leisure generally than he used to enjoy, the answer is unanimously in the affirmative. Managers realise that coolies are impatient of the severe discipline which used to prevail on some estates. Where reasonable leave for domestic needs or for cultivation is withheld, discontent is the inevitable result. The Committee are prepared to admit that there must be a certain measure of discipline and that excessive leave may tend to idleness, if not to the physical deterioration of the labourer. At the same time they are convinced that there are gardens where the liberty of the coolie is unduly restricted by refusal of leave when reasonably required, for instance, to cut his crops, or by compulsory work on days when he is entitled to a holiday. This point is brought out in the Deputy Commissioner's report on the causes of the riots in the Tezpur district in October last. The Committee, however, believe that such cases are the exception.

Recreation.

197. The Committee in the course of their tour noted with satisfaction that efforts have been made on some gardens to make the coolie's life more interesting. Many estates are fortunate in having large grants of land attached where the coolie can vary the monotony of his daily work by some form of recreation. In the remoter districts there are opportunities for hunting and fishing which appeal to the aboriginal races. Other gardens in more populated centres are not so happily situated and in such cases football, cinematograph entertainments and sports would be suitable amusements on a holiday and would form a counter-attraction to the liquor shop. Football is becoming increasingly popular and an itinerating bioscope show is a regular event in the cold weather in some districts. Most estates contribute towards the Durga Pujah festivities. The suggestion of a Saturday half-holiday has been put forward by Captain Mackie, President of the Darjeeling Planters' Association, in a recent address :—

“What I think we could do now is to encourage healthy recreation among them.....I would go further and close down on Saturday afternoons, at any rate during the non-manufacturing season, so as to give coolies an opportunity for inter-garden matches. In all countries the working man has a half-holiday on Saturday and there seems no reason to deprive the tea-garden coolies of this privilege. I commend the suggestion for the consideration of Sub-District Committees.”

Garden
schools.

198. Some years ago, the Assam Government deputed an officer on special duty to enquire into the question of education among garden coolies, and the possibility of establishing schools on tea-gardens. As a result, a certain number of schools were started on various estates. These have not been a success, not for want of encouragement on the part of Managers, but for other reasons. In the first place, children are a valuable asset to the garden. Their earnings are a welcome addition to the family income, and schools are naturally not popular with parents. The children themselves probably prefer an out-door life with light work. It is possible that the custom which prevails in some gardens, of parents giving an undertaking that in consideration of a bonus paid, their children will work for the estate, militates against the success of these schools, and there is also the question of placing minors themselves under Act XIII Contracts. It is, however, problematical how far, if at all, an increase in the day of adult labourers would result in a better response to the efforts which have been made to establish garden schools.

199. Most Managers are of opinion that co-operative societies on tea-gardens hold out little hope of success and are not a promising proposition. Mr. Ballantine, Superintendent of Police, Sylhet, has propounded a scheme that garden agents should combine and get up goods cheap for their coolies. His point is that at present the garden shop-keeper waxes fat on the coolies' earnings. He has been successful in organising a co-operative store for police-officers and constables and the suggestion seems worthy of further consideration by those interested.

200. Some gardens give small pensions in cash to deserving coolies who have earned them by long and faithful service on the estate, but the practice can hardly be described as common, though it is admitted that there is scope for an extension of the system. Old coolies are often given light work, and sometimes an allotment is made of garden land for cultivation. This form of pension is much appreciated. But as a rule under the family system on old-established tea-gardens with plenty of land available, the old people and dependents generally, who are unable to work, are not badly off. At the same time, the provision of superannuation benefits is a matter which might well receive more attention.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

201. The Committee have already expressed their opinion on the main questions of adequacy of wages, and the possibility and desirability of converting the indirect remuneration represented by concessions into an increase of money wages. The Committee were also asked to make any recommendations which seemed desirable for improving the conditions of labour on tea-gardens. Chapters V and VI contain certain suggestions which come under this head and others are put forward in the present Chapter.

Labour
legislation
from 1906
onwards.

202. Orders issued by the Government of India in February 1908, on the recommendation of the Committee which was appointed in 1906 to enquire into certain matters affecting the supply of labour for the tea gardens of Assam substantially altered the conditions regulating recruitment. In January 1908 a notification was published by the Local Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, declaring that the labour districts had ceased to be subject to the provisions of sections 118 to 121, and 195 and 196 of Act VI of 1901. The effect of this order was that a labourer could only be put under an Act VI contract in the recruiting district. If he was brought up to Assam as a free immigrant, he could no longer be placed under an Act VI contract on arrival. Further, a time-expired labourer could not be re-engaged under Act VI on the expiry of his contract. The right of private arrest was abolished by the withdrawal of sections 195 and 196. At the same time control over contractors was tightened, recruitment by unlicensed contractors abolished and increased facilities given to recruitment by garden sardars working under the local agents of the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association and similar associations. It was understood that coolies recruited by these sardars could not be placed under labour contracts in the recruiting district. Previous to the appointment of the Committee of 1906, the Government of India had announced their intention of withdrawing Act VI from the Surma Valley Districts, and from Kamrup and Goalpara, but as complete withdrawal might lead to abuses in recruitment a notification was issued by the Local Government that from 1st November 1908, Cachar, Sylhet, Kamrup and Goalpara would cease to be subject to the provisions of certain sections of Chapters VII and IX of Act VI of 1901 and that these districts would be exempt from the restrictions imposed by Chapter VII except in respect of the maintenance of registers and returns, inspection of gardens, and the liability to repatriation of labourers physically incapacitated or wrongfully recruited. The Government anticipated that as a result of the increased facilities accorded to sardari recruitment a great impetus would be given to the free movement of labour. Contracts under Act VI could now only be taken in the recruiting districts for immigrants to Lakhimpur, Darrang, Sibsagar and Nowgong in the Assam Valley, but labourers destined for these districts who were recruited by sardars working under the Associations to which special privileges had been conceded could not be placed under contract. In August 1908, Mr. J. F. Gruning, I.C.S., was placed on special duty to visit the recruiting districts with a view to removing existing prejudices against emigration to Assam. He reported that these prejudices would not disappear until the Act was withdrawn from all labour districts and recruiting through contractors abolished. The Government of India in October 1913 decided to withdraw the labour district provisions of Act VI from the remaining districts of the Assam Valley with effect from 1st July 1914. To meet the changed conditions due to the abolition of contracts under Act VI and to provide employers with some remedy against the enticement of labour a Bill was administratively approved by the Government of India which enabled the employer to recover by a summary procedure the cost of importation of the labourer from any one who unlawfully employed him within three years of his arrival on the estate. Pending consideration of this Bill, the withdrawal of the labour districts provisions of the Act was deferred. The Secretary of State for India was, however, unable to accept the principles of the Bill. In 1915 was passed the Assam Labour and Emigration (Amendment) Act (VIII of 1915), under which the system of recruitment by contractors was abolished, and a Labour Board for the supervision of local agents and of the recruitment, engagement and emigration to labour districts of natives of India under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act VI of 1901 was constituted. The labour districts provisions of Act VI were withdrawn from Lakhimpur, Darrang, Sibsagar and Nowgong with effect from 1st July 1915.

203. Managers were asked to state the expenditure incurred on recruiting during the last five years and, if possible, to explain the reasons if the increase in expenditure was incommensurate with the results obtained. An expression of opinion was also invited as regards the type of coolie recruited in recent years as compared with the previous decade. There is a consensus of opinion that the results of recruitment have been most unsatisfactory and that the class of immigrant now recruited is of an inferior type. Recruiting results.

The following statement gives statistics of emigration to tea-gardens in Assam since 1900 :—

	Adults.	Children.	Total.
1	2	3	4
1900	45,044	17,689	62,733
1901	19,887	6,336	26,223
1902-03	20,199	6,485	26,684
1903-04	17,769	4,893	22,162
1904-05	19,050	5,159	24,209
1905-06	24,595	7,135	31,830
1906-07	20,043	5,574	25,617
1907-08	58,934	25,890	84,824
1908-09	42,524	18,249	60,773
1909-10	29,397	9,935	39,332
1910-11	24,292	9,365	43,657
1911-12	45,905	12,741	58,646
1912-13	46,239	13,634	59,873
1913-14	45,849	13,020	58,646
1914-15	46,212	17,426	63,638
1915-16	72,608	37,768	110,376
1916-17	33,998	14,132	48,130
1917-18	15,084	4,323	19,107
1918-19	135,028	87,143	222,171
1919-20	65,463	36,626	102,089
1920-21	16,850	8,622	25,472

The following notes are taken from the Annual Immigration Reports :—

1907-08.—The marked increase was due to the existence of famine or scarcity in some of the recruiting areas.

1915-16.—The increase is attributed partly to the prosperity of the tea industry and the extension of the area under tea, and partly to conditions favouring emigration in the recruiting districts; the influence of the Assam Labour Board was probably a contributory cause during the latter part of the year.

1916-17.—The decrease is ascribed to good harvests in the recruiting districts; to the increased demand in those districts for labour for industries connected with the war; to the heavy importations of the preceding year; and, in part, to the curtailment of tea-garden expenditure owing to the difficulty of disposing of the crop.

1917-18.—The great decrease is said to be due to good crops in the recruiting districts and to the increased demand for labour in those districts for industries connected with the war. Other factors were the raising of labour corps in some of the recruiting districts for military service, a larger supply

than usual of local labour owing to economic conditions in Assam, and a general disposition on the part of Managers to carry on without increasing the labour force more than was absolutely necessary in view of the probable difficulty of disposing of the tea crop.

1918-19.—The number was the highest for many years and was chiefly due to scarcity in the recruiting districts and the stoppage of the abnormal war demand for labour. Also influenza in the labour districts had depleted the labour force; again, the number of immigrants was comparatively small during the later years of the war and this induced employers to import large numbers to make good the loss. The mortality in transit in this year was abnormally high. The number of deaths was 1,485 against 7 in the preceding year, of which 665 were due to cholera. Conditions in the recruiting districts pre-disposed immigrants to disease; hence outbreaks of cholera and influenza.

1919-20.—The falling off was partly due to the fact of the abnormal recruiting in the previous year, but, even so, the number was large. In this year deaths in transit fell to 133, which was comparatively high but allowance has to be made for the after-effects of influenza and scarcity.

1920-21.—Recruiting was on a very small scale.

Comments on
recruiting in
1918-19.

204. Many Managers have expressed their unqualified dissatisfaction with the class of coolies recruited in 1918-19. In that season influenza was epidemic in the recruiting districts, and in some areas there had been a failure of crops. The result was that large numbers of emigrants were sent up in an enfeebled state of health and physically quite unfit for tea-garden work. This accounts for the heavy mortality *en route* and was largely responsible for the high death-rate in the gardens in that year. Many of the survivors were unable to earn a decent living wage. The basic idea of sardari recruiting is the recruitment of families and not of single individuals. It is frequently the case that one or two adult members in a family may be unfit for tea-garden work. Under normal conditions, however, it is only reasonable that they should be allowed to accompany the others. If the local recruiting agent declined to pass them, the whole family might refuse to emigrate. Conditions in 1918-19 were, however, exceptional. On this subject, the evidence of Mr. Milligan, the Chairman of the Assam Labour Board, merits careful perusal. In his opinion, the local agents of the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association were responsible for the bad results and cannot be held blameless for passing numbers of unfit coolies. The fact that medical examination was not at that time compulsory aggravated the situation. The Committee consider that the local agents, in so far as they failed to exercise proper supervision over recruiting, rendered a great disservice to the tea industry.

205. One of the reasons given in the Reports on Immigrant Labour for the decrease in the number of emigrants in 1916-17 and 1917-18 is that the policy of gardens was to curtail expenditure owing to the difficulty in disposing of accumulated stocks of tea. If this is true, it is difficult to understand how in 1918-19 when the rate of exchange was unfavourable and when the market was flooded with immense stocks of tea, gardens were able to be so lavish in their recruiting expenditure. In the following year also, in spite of a still more unfavourable exchange, more than 100,000 individuals were recruited. A reference is invited to Mr. McMorran's note in the Appendix on the financial position of the tea industry during the years 1919-21. In one or two districts between 1918 and 1920, proposals were afoot to open new tea-gardens, and doubtless much of the subscribed capital was spent on the recruitment of labour. The Committee believe, however, that the majority of the importations were on account of old gardens which had been in existence for years, but some of which contemplated further extensions of cultivation. Some of the estates in South Sylhet lost many labourers by desertions into Independent Tipperah. Throughout the province, deaths by influenza and cholera in 1918-19 had, it is true, depleted the labour force and in 1917-18, comparatively few coolies had been imported. It was therefore, only natural to expect that recruiting in 1918-19 would exceed the normal figure. In the absence of complete information as regards the requirements and policy of the tea industry, the Committee are not in a position to say whether these reasons are sufficient to account for the extraordinary number of immigrants imported in those years which constitutes an absolute record. They desire, however, to point to one result which followed.

When the financial position of the tea industry became critical, not only had all ideas of further extensions to be abandoned, but some gardens, in their inability to pay the wage-bill of an increased labour force, were obliged to dispense with the services of immigrants who left the estates and drifted elsewhere in search of employment. The case of the Pertabgurh Tea Estate in Bishnath which was visited by Members of the Committee in December 1921 is an instance.

Present improved recruiting conditions.

206. The Chairman of the Assam Labour Board has stated that conditions with regard to recruitment have much improved. All emigrants are now medically examined. Local agents are bound to accept as final the opinion of the Medical

Officers as to the age and physical fitness of the recruits. The possibility of exploiting new recruiting grounds is said to warrant the expectation of better results in future. There are still, however, instances of batches of unsuitable recruits being sent up to gardens. Only close supervision on the part of local agents can check the recruitment of bazaar waifs and strays. At the same time, a great responsibility rests with the tea industry. To quote Mr. Milligan:—

"I should advise gardens to recruit only the labour which is suitable for them and they should not take advantage of famine or other similar conditions to rush up a large number of coolies, many of whom may die or abscond."

To sum up, the Committee are of opinion that the industry was badly served in the matter of the importation of large numbers of unfit and diseased coolies in the year 1918-19. It is devoutly to be hoped that compulsory and thorough medical examination and stricter supervision over local agents will prevent a recurrence of the disastrous recruiting experiences of 1918-19.

207. The Committee agree that ordinary inspections of tea-gardens by junior and inexperienced Government officials are not of much value, and that, as a rule, the Deputy Commissioner is unable to devote much time to inspection work of this kind. The general relaxation of control which followed on the abolition of Act VI inclined officers to regard these biennial inspections as a matter of routine. Inspections of unhealthy gardens by Civil Surgeons produce a good effect, as they are directed to special points in connection with health and sanitation. The Committee are of opinion that if ordinary inspections are to be continued it will be necessary to issue instructions for the guidance of inspecting officers. They have been struck with the meagreness of detail which is a characteristic feature of ordinary inspection reports. Their utility would be considerably enhanced if they contained more information with regard to wages and the general conditions of labour. On more than one garden, Members have found the wage returns inaccurately compiled. The inspecting officer might occasionally check the accuracy of the figures. Returns showing low cash earnings often convey a wrong impression. A reasonable explanation may lie in the fact that the labourers have a considerable area of rice land; or it may be the case that they are underpaid. The general indebtedness of the labour force to the estate is an important point and should not be overlooked. Had inspections been less perfunctory, irregularities in the working of Act XIII would have been noticed and probably rectified. Mortality statistics, especially as regards the deaths of children, might receive greater attention. The treatment of anæmia, the assistance given to pregnant women, and conservancy arrangements provide suitable subjects for comment. The Committee are of opinion that it would be a mistake to discontinue inspections.

208. The Committee believe that vital statistics are usually compiled with reference to the calendar year. In the case of tea-gardens the practice obtains of taking the figure for the varying period between two dates of inspection. It is more than doubtful whether, under this system, the average death or birth-rate for the period of 12 months can be accurately calculated. The practice may explain why certain gardens have been erroneously classed as unhealthy in Statement XI of the Resolution on Immigrant Labour for 1920-21; also the apparent inexactitude of the figures which are arithmetically wrong in the absence of any explanation. The Committee recommend that vital statistics in future should be for the calendar year.

Suggestion
as to forms
and returns.

Mention has already been made of the inaccurate compilation of wage returns. This is largely due to the incorrect inclusion—or occasional omission—of certain items. Sometimes the earnings of coolies from outside villages who do occasional work in the garden and whose names are not borne on the books as regular workers are wrongly shown in the wage returns. Since 1921, Managers are at liberty to show in a separate column or note the loss incurred by the garden on rice sold to coolies. Instances have occurred where this loss has been included in column 9 or 10 of the wage return which shows the average wages per head. Such information should be kept distinct. The Committee recommend that column 6 which shows "extras (*ticca*, diet, rations, subsistence allowance)" should be sub-divided and that *ticca* cash earnings should be shown in a separate column. In some cases it was found impossible to reconcile the figures shown in the returns as "Extras" with figures given in the cashbook.

209. The general reply to question No. 20 is that during the previous five years, suggestions made by Managers to Agents or Directors for ameliorating the lot of the labour force, have met with a favourable response. There is also oral evidence to the same effect. On the other hand some witnesses have criticised the policy of Agency Houses in refusing to sanction an increase of wages in cases where managers urged that it was necessary. The Commissioner of the Surma Valley has stated that his impression at

Responsibilities
of
Agency
Houses and
Managing
Directors.

the time of the Chargola exodus was that Calcutta Agents had placed the Managers in a difficult position by withholding consent to the increase of pay proposed. He admitted that gardens were not making a profit but he pointed out that the Managers believed that an increase in wages would conduce to greater efficiency and that the cost of production would not be materially increased especially if the concessions of cheap rice and agreement bonus were withdrawn. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur has given four instances in which he believed sanction to an increase had been refused. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, has stated that letters from Calcutta Agents sometimes betray ignorance of local conditions. The Committee admit that it is difficult to give any increase of wages when no profits are being made. In many cases, Calcutta Agents have only limited powers and have to refer to the Home Boards. Sometimes Agents may be wrongly criticised for not granting an increase in cases where managers had not suggested it. The Committee realise that though it may be difficult at times to decide between the claims of the shareholders on the one hand and of the workers on the other, it is recognised that one of the main considerations is the contentment of the labour force. Most, if not all, Agency houses have visiting agents who periodically visit the estates and have opportunities of acquiring first-hand knowledge of the condition of the labour force. All that the Committee would urge is that sympathetic consideration should be shown by Agents and Directors to any proposals for improving the lot of the labourer.

210. The tea-garden labourer is often swayed by gusts of unreasoning passion and, in the last year or so, has not infrequently been the tool of the self-seeking political agitator. ~~He has no Trade Union to back his case.~~ He has to look to the Manager as his best advocate and adviser and the comparative steadiness of tea-garden labour in recent disturbed times must be attributed largely to the sympathetic attitude of the Manager towards the ignorant coolie. The tea industry in Assam lives in a world of competition. It has to compete with other rival industries to obtain its labour and, in selling the finished product, it has to face keen competition with other tea-producing countries and other districts in India and Ceylon. There is a limit to the wage the industry can afford to pay. At the same time there is an awakening among the working classes in India as elsewhere in the world. The tea-garden labourer is not likely to lag behind in his desire to attain a higher standard of living and this factor will have to be reckoned with in the future.

J. C. ARBUTHNOTT.
D. S. WITHERS.
O. O. WILLIAMS.
S. P. BARUA.
R. M. DAS.
WALI MUHAMMAD.
J. A. DAWSON.

19th August 1922.

NOTE BY SRIJUT S. P. BARUA, M. L. C.

Page 4, paragraph 8.—“The Committee by its presence had encouraged labour unrest and strikes,” hardly conveys a true impression. “The presence of the Committee was utilized by the agitators to encourage and foment labour unrest and strikes” is a truer rendering of opinion.

ASSAM LABOUR ENQUIRY COMMITTEE.

MINORITY REPORT BY MAJOR H. B. FOX AND MR. T. McMORRAN.

1. We regret that we are unable to sign the Report, and we explain in the following paragraphs the reasons for our inability to do so.

2. The Committee was appointed "to enquire whether in view of the great rise in prices which has occurred during recent years the remuneration paid to the labour force on the tea gardens of the Province is sufficient to maintain the labourers in health and a reasonable degree of comfort" and in particular:—

- (1) to enquire whether the remuneration in money payments together with the concessions received by the coolies in the way of free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice and clothing, garden-land, and the like, is sufficient to maintain the coolies in health and reasonable comfort; and
- (2) to enquire whether it is possible and desirable that the indirect remuneration represented by the abovementioned concessions should be converted into an increase of money wages; or, if not, whether it is possible for the value of such indirect remuneration to be so expressed in terms of money wages that the actual total remuneration received by the coolies can be readily exhibited; and
- (3) to make any recommendation which seems desirable for improving the conditions of labour on the tea gardens.

3. We reply to the two questions (1) and (2) as follows:—

- (1) At the present time the remuneration in money payments, together with the concessions received by the coolies in the way of free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice and clothing, garden-land, and the like, is sufficient to maintain the coolies in health and reasonable comfort.
- (2) It is, broadly speaking, impossible, and in the interest of the labour force, it is undesirable, to attempt to convert the indirect remuneration represented by the abovementioned concessions into an increase of money wages; and it is difficult to express, in terms of money wages, the value of such indirect remuneration so as readily to exhibit the actual total remuneration received by the coolies.

4. We will try to set forth as shortly as possible the reasons which have led us to these conclusions, and we will begin with question (1). It was not until 1919 that the cost of living in Assam increased to any great extent. It is true that in 1918 the price of cloth rose sharply. But it has to be remembered that the coolie does not spend more than a moderate percentage of his income on cloth. And, moreover, the rise coincided with a heavy fall—approximately 45 per cent. in the Surma Valley—in the price of rice. In 1919 and in 1920, scarcity conditions enhanced the price of food-stuffs; and the tea garden coolie was affected by the increase, as were of course other sections of the community. There is no automatic way of ensuring that the relation of income to outlay shall always remain stable. But the difficulties of the tea garden coolie were tided over, during the period of scarcity, in some cases by an advance in wages and in others by his being supplied with rice at concession rates.

5. Exchange began to rise in 1918, and it reached its highest point in 1920. The rise necessarily put up the cost of producing and manufacturing tea; and it was accompanied by a disastrous fall in tea prices. The two causes brought about such a shrinkage in the income of almost all tea companies as not only to exhaust their reserves, but also to make borrowing unvoidable. Economies in the cost of production were imperative. But they took the form of the starvation of equipment, rather than the reduction of wages. Indeed, we are convinced that in almost every estate the last thing to be touched was the wages bill; and that in only a small percentage of cases was this impinged on by a reduction of the labour force.

6. It was at this time, and in these circumstances, that certain political agitators set about deliberately to organise the destruction of the tea industry. That such was their object was made clear at a meeting of the Surma Valley Conference, which was held at Sylhet in September 1920, and at which it was resolved; (a) to refuse to take service under European planters and merchants; and (b) to secure the gradual withdrawal of those who were already in such service. It has since transpired that a widespread secret campaign, which culminated in the Chārgola exodus, was carried on among the coolies. That it should have met with such comparatively limited success is, we consider, a testimony to the fact that the relations, both personal and otherwise, between tea garden labourers and managers were, on the whole, satisfactory.

7. At the time of our enquiry the prices of foodstuffs and cloth had fallen, and, in consequence of the improved position of the tea industry, extra work, which enabled the labourer to increase his earnings, was available. In some cases advances of pay had also been conceded. And, as we have already indicated, we are clearly of the opinion, after most carefully weighing and considering the evidence submitted to us, that the first question may be unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative. That is to say, the remuneration in money payments, taken together with the concessions received in the way of free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice, clothing, garden-land, etc., is, at the present time, sufficient to maintain the labourers in health and reasonable comfort.

8. Before leaving the first question we would also like to point out that resources which might have been applied to improving the position of labour, when short crops made food dear in 1919 and 1920, were being absorbed by taxation. For, even at the time when most estates were working at a loss, the export duty of Rs. 1-8 per 100 lbs. of tea exported was still maintained. This duty was introduced, as a war measure, on the 1st March 1916. In the years 1919-20 and 1920-21 it yielded in the aggregate not less than Rs. 96,56,000 or, in other words, rather more than Rs. 11 per head of the daily average working force employed on the tea estates in India in those two years. In the absence of profits such a duty is practically a tax on wages. Indeed we are in a position to assert that agency houses were prepared, if the tax were abrogated, to apply the amount of it to the supplementing of the labour budget. It follows that, if there was any foundation for the assertion that the labourers had an economic grievance it must be acknowledged that the Government of India by thus depleting the wages fund, were in part responsible.

9. We now turn to the second question, namely, whether it is possible and desirable that the indirect remuneration represented by the concessions should be converted into an increase in money wages, or if not whether it is possible for the value of such indirect remuneration to be so expressed in terms of money wages that the actual total remuneration received by the coolies can be readily exhibited. Without exception the witnesses who came before us considered that it would not be advantageous to the labour force to convert these concessions into cash even if, which would be difficult, it were possible to do so. We agree with this conclusion which expresses our own opinion on the subject. There are certain gardens in which the coolies are offered a 50 per cent. increase of wages in lieu of rice at Rs. 3 per maund. In this connection we would point out that it is in evidence that a majority of the labourers on these gardens prefer to be allowed to buy rice at the concession rate rather than to be given the higher cash wage. It follows that if the coolie, in the exercise of his free choice, takes this course his freedom of action ought not to be limited.

10. The terms of reference suggest that, in addition to replying to the two questions with which we have already dealt, the Committee should make any recommendation which may seem desirable for improving the conditions of labour on the tea gardens. Under this head we would urge that measures for the eradication of the disease known as *hookworm* should be steadily pursued. We do not propose to enter at length into the subject, but during the course of our enquiry we have been impressed by the urgent necessity for a well-organised campaign against this disease. In connection with paragraph 188 of the Majority Report we desire to call attention to the following statement which appears in the Report of the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine on the work done during 1921 in the Hookworm Laboratory of the School, namely, "The septic tank has up till now been regarded as a destructor of Hookworm ova. So no doubt it would be if the contents of the liquefying Chamber were at rest. This however is not the case * * * * In this laboratory we examined samples of effluent from 56 septic tanks, and found living ankylostome larvae or eggs in 19 of them."

11. In addition to the questions raised in the terms of reference another matter was brought before the Committee at a later stage by the Government of Assam. The Government asked, in a letter dated 18th January 1922, for the views of the Committee on the subject of Act XIII of 1859—The Workman's Breach of Contract Act. Judging by the information which we obtained on tour we have come to the conclusion that the Act, as amended in 1920, is of value to employers and employed. To the former because it promises to them a year's service; and to the latter because, in consideration of such service, they receive a substantial bonus over and above their wages, so that, contrary to what is said in paragraph 166 of the Majority Report, those coolies who are under agreement receive remuneration in excess of those who are not under agreement. The evidence showed that there are still a few

cases in which a contract for a term longer than one year is given. But even when these contracts are asked for by coolies we consider that the amended law should be respected. There are said to be about 270,000 adults who executed agreements under the Act during the year ending 30th June 1921 out of a total adult population of about 571,000. The number of complaints of non-fulfilment of contracts was 1,604 or '6 of 1 per cent., and 63 persons were sentenced to imprisonment—'024 per cent. This record shows that the Act rests very lightly on those who take service under it. We, therefore, favour its retention in its amended form. But we would transfer to the coolie the option of repaying the advance if he wishes to cancel the agreement, as proposed by Mr. Webster, Commissioner of the Surma Valley and Hill Division.

12. We have now briefly stated our conclusions on the questions which were submitted to the Committee for investigation. It may be, we quite realise, objected that—except as regards Act XIII of 1859—these conclusions do not differ so materially from those arrived at by the majority of our colleagues as to justify us in framing a minority report. And, in view of the possibility of this objection, it may be desirable for us to explain our position. Our touring ended on the 8th March 1922; and, on the understanding that the report would be completed in the latter half of April, we postponed our departure for England until the beginning of May. Drafts of Chapters I and III were given to us on the 18th April. But the remaining chapters were not produced until we again met, as arranged, at Shillong on the 29th April. These chapters had not been duplicated, only the Secretary's copy being available. They were revised after we, and other members of the Committee, had left Shillong; but no detailed discussion of the report by the Committee as a whole has taken place except in respect of Chapters I and III. And, when the report reached us in England it had been signed by the other members; and we were informed, by cable, that modifications could not then be made in it.

13. We cannot accept the Report because of the manner in which it presents the conclusions stated in it; and because it does not, as we think, fairly reflect the evidence recorded. It is indeed so framed as to suggest that the conclusions on the two main issues have been grudgingly arrived at. And then again it enters into what we consider to be an unnecessary academic discussion of the various concessions, the object being to diminish the advantages of these concessions to the labourer. Indeed Chapter III consistently seeks throughout to minimise the benefits which are conferred on the labour force by outlay under this head. We consider it to be ill-advised and wrong, for the Committee to endeavour to belittle these items of expenditure. And the statement which is made in paragraph 57 in support of this attitude namely, that "it would be as reasonable to expect the policeman or the sepoy to regard money spent on hospitals, medicines and doctors as part of his pay" requires explanation. Surely if these public servants are "reasonable" they must regard such concessions as advantages, and as being in fact equivalent to pay. For our part we favour outlay on coolie welfare, and we would encourage the industry to persevere in the provision of such aids to efficiency.

14. In Chapter V (paragraph 177) of the Majority Report it is stated that the majority of the Committee favour the abolition of Act XIII of 1859. We, on the contrary, favour the retention of the Act in its amended form: and in paragraph 11 above we have explained our reasons for holding this view. We wish to add here that we entirely disagree with most of what is said in Chapter V. It should be, we think, remembered that an enquiry into the working of the Act formed no part of the terms of reference as defined in the Government of Assam's Resolution, dated 26th November 1921, by which the Committee was appointed. As we have mentioned above it was in a supplementary letter dated 18th January 1922 that the Government asked the Committee to express their views on the Act. But the supplementary letter was not put before the members of the Committee—at least it did not come before us—until after we arrived at Shillong on the 21st March 1922, when our touring had ended. Moreover the Questionnaire, which is referred to in paragraph 138, and which was issued in the name of the Committee, was actually drawn up and sent out before the members assembled. And the inclusion in it of questions 74 to 78 respecting the Act, means no more, therefore, than that those who compiled these questions gave a certain direction to the enquiry without reference—so far as we know—to their colleagues, and certainly without reference to us.

15. We regard the whole of Chapter V as a prejudiced denunciation of the Act and its working and administration, and we regret that we cannot associate ourselves with it. The review of the administration of the Act (paragraphs 140-153) with which the Chapter is weighted was not called for by the Committee, nor it was ever discussed by them. We were even unaware until after we had left Shillong that it

was the work of the Secretary. The statement in paragraph 161 was controverted by the Manager of Monabarie, who explained that the purpose of the Chaukidars was to prevent undesirable people coming into the garden—a quite reasonable precaution when agitators were endeavouring to stir up trouble everywhere.

16. There are certain particular references which we desire to make because the Report has gone beyond the stage when it can be corrected. In various paragraphs *e.g.*, 16, 20 and 105, it is suggested that agreement bonuses were recovered from coolies. We are unaware of any cases where this was done, but it may be that such bonuses were entered as an advance and were written off monthly, as the contract was fulfilled, by charging the amount to Expenditure Account. But the amounts were not in such cases recovered from the coolies.

In paragraph 68 it is erroneous to speak of Mr. Rhodes as "the representative of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce." That Chamber has no representative in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Rhodes represents the European Community in Bengal by whom he was elected.

In paragraph 70 the expression "without working overtime" is misleading unless the words "working overtime" are defined. A single task, as the evidence shows may be completed in 3 to 4 hours.

In paragraph 89 2nd line of italics should read Lungla Juri-Doloi Valley and not as printed.

In paragraph 95 the information unless brought up to date seems to us irrelevant.

In paragraph 109 the question of indebtedness is one on which we hesitate to express a dogmatic opinion. One Indian witness in Tezpur gave it in evidence that he paid up a debt of Rs. 800 due to a Marwari by a coolie family residing in a *busti*, and that the family came to his Estate to work giving him an acknowledgment in writing of the debt. Such indebtedness is much in excess of that commented on in the paragraph (which averaged Rs. 10 per head) but no special mention is made of it. Perhaps it has a bearing on the application of the last sentence in paragraph 135.

In paragraph 117 the rates quoted for Lungla Company are a recognised minimum for "coolies below average efficiency" and do not represent the earnings of the average coolie.

In paragraph 118 which quotes the average wages at Patrakhola Estate for March 1922 there is no mention of the fact that the coolies were on strike for ten days during that month as the result of the activities of agitators, four of whom were subsequently arrested and sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment.

In paragraph 127 the conclusions drawn from one year's experience of recruiting seem to us fallacious. Labourers, as a rule, only leave their home districts when they are subject to economic pressure. There is unfortunately no assurance that years of scarcity or years of famine will not recur. The figures of recruitment on page 103 do not lend support to the opinion expressed in this paragraph.

In paragraph 121 the third paragraph dealing with F. M. S. conditions does not apply, for the Medical evidence given before us indicated that the coolies improved physically after arrival in the Tea Districts.

17. Then again there are certain points of procedure to which we also take exception. For instance, the questionnaire to which we have already referred, and which contained no fewer than eighty-five enquiries was issued "on behalf of the Committee" to all the Estates:—876 in number—in the province. But although we were members of the Committee we were not consulted before the issue of this document, which, we are disposed to think, gave a direction to the enquiry other than that which might have been decided upon by a majority of the Committee. Furthermore, although the Committee were on tour for three months no meetings were convened to enable us to compare impressions of the typical Estates visited, and to record these impressions while we were actually in the district. It was not until we reached Shillong that personal impressions were discussed. But it was then obviously impossible for those, who like ourselves may have seen little amiss, to verify the impressions of other members who may have found occasion for adverse comment. And it must also be noted that some of the members of the Committee did not visit certain districts at all, and their acceptance of the Report must be clearly subject to this qualification.

18. In conclusion we feel bound to add that, in our opinion, it would have been advantageous if the functions of Secretary and member of Committee had not been united. For their union had the effect, as we think, of keeping the direction of the enquiry too exclusively in one hand; and of causing information, which was really intended for the Committee, to be regarded as a personal possession.

H. B. FOX,
T. McMORRAN.

London, 7th September 1922.

APPENDIX I.

Dated Shillong, the 30th November 1921.

From—J. A. DAWSON, Esq., I.C.S., Secretary, Assam Labour Enquiry Committee,
To—The Managers of Tea-Gardens in Assam Valley and Surma Valley.

On behalf of the Committee appointed to enquire into the conditions of tea-garden labour in Assam, I have the honour to append a list of questions, and should be glad if you would answer them as far as they relate to gardens under your control. Should you not be in a position to supply all the information asked for, the Committee would still be glad to be favoured with replies on those points on which you may be able to enlighten them. They would welcome any other facts or statistics illustrative of the economic conditions under which tea-garden coolies in Assam live and opinions as to whether any, and if so, what, remedial measures are required.

2. The terms of reference are :—

To enquire into conditions of coolie labour on tea gardens in Assam and in particular—

- (i) to enquire whether the remuneration in money payments together with the concessions received by the coolies in the way of free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice, clothing, garden land, etc., is sufficient to maintain the labourers in health and reasonable comfort ;
- (ii) to enquire whether it is possible and desirable that the indirect remuneration represented by the abovementioned concessions should be converted into an increase of money wages ; and to make any recommendation which seems desirable for improving the conditions of labour.

3. The Committee regret that there has been some delay in framing the questions, but feel sure that you will, in the interests of the tea industry, treat the matter as urgent and will send the answers—it will suffice to quote the numbers of the questions—as soon as possible to the Secretary, Assam Labour Enquiry Committee, Shillong. I may say that the Committee intend to examine witnesses at convenient centres, and also to visit typical tea gardens. If you would like to give evidence before the Committee, this fact may be communicated to the Secretary. The tour programme will be sent out as soon as it is finally settled. Provisionally, it is intended to visit Darrang in December, Sylhet and Cachar in January, and Sibsagar, Nowgong and Lakhimpur in February.

QUESTIONS.

I.—Labour Force.

1. What is the working population living on the garden—men, women and children? Can you give the approximate percentage of the different classes of coolies in your garden—Oriyas, Santals, etc.?

2. How many coolies, not residing on the garden, do you usually employ—men, women, and children? Are they employed throughout the year or usually at a particular season?

3. What is the acreage of tea under cultivation and the average yield per acre? Is your labour force sufficient? If all your coolies worked 8 hours a day, how many approximately would you require to work your garden?

4. If you employ outside labour, would it be possible to have all the work done by your coolies residing in the garden? If so, can you give any reason why this is not done?

5. (a) What is the explanation of the difference between the total labour force on the books and the average daily working strength, which is in some cases considerable?

(b) How many hours' work is done per week on the average in a normal year by (1) your best coolies, (2) your average coolies, in (a) busy season and (b) slack season?

6. (a) How much have you spent in recruiting during the last five years? Trace the increase in your labour force as a result of recruiting.

(b) If the increase appears to be incommensurate with the expenditure, how do you explain the unsatisfactory net results?

(c) In the circumstances stated in (b), would it, in your opinion, have been more profitable to spend the bulk of the money devoted to recruiting on the coolies you already hold? If so, in what directions?

(d) If little or no recruiting has been done, can you explain how you have managed to maintain an adequate labour force with so little recruiting?

(e) Is it a fact that some gardens are more popular with labour than others? If so, please state what you consider to be the most important factors of such popularity?

7. Leaving out of consideration times of cholera and influenza epidemics, how does the birth-rate in your garden compare with the death-rate?

8. Is the type of coolie recruited at the present day as good as ten years ago? If inferior, in what respect?

II.—Organisation and Discipline.

9. State briefly but as fully as possible the customary duties of manager, assistants, and Indian staff on your garden.

10. What are the duties, powers and privileges of sardars and line chaukidars on your garden? On what principle are they selected? Are they popular in general with the labour force?

11. Have there been cases of abuse of power on the part of your staff (all grades) in your experience? Have these been common? What is the best way to avoid such abuses?

12. Do you consider it essential that the European staff on a garden should be thoroughly conversant with some vernacular understood by the coolies? In your experience is this always the case?

13. Do you have a system of fines? If so, what is it, *i.e.*, who have the power to fine and on what principles are they allowed to do so?
14. It is said that in some gardens everything is done for the old settled coolie and that on other gardens everything is done for the new coolie. Is it possible so to arrange matters as to keep the old coolies contented while in no way discouraging the new? If so, how is it done?
15. Is it a fact that there has been a widespread feeling of unrest among tea-garden labour during the past few years? If so, to what do you attribute it? State your own experience. Were you aware of a feeling of unrest apart from any caused by the efforts of political agitators and do you think that without these efforts the unrest would have manifested itself?
16. To what extent do you attribute recent disturbances among tea-garden labour to the incitement of agitators? If possible, give your own experience.
17. Have coolies had any real grievances—economic or personal of which agitators could make capital? If not, how do you account for the sporadic nature of the troubles that have occurred?
18. During the past few years of enhanced cost of living (1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920) has the remuneration of the staff, European and Indian, and of the labour force increased? If so, please give details. If not, were any other steps taken to mitigate the hardship of the increased cost of living?
19. What dividends did your garden or Company pay during the abovementioned five years?
20. Have you on any occasion during the past five years suggested to your agents or directors any measures for ameliorating the lot of your labour force? If so, with what results?

III.—Wages.

21. What is your system of payment, daily or monthly? What is the daily rate of wages (*hazira*) paid to men, women, and children living in the garden for a full task? If payment is according to a monthly rate, what is it for men, women, and children? If the daily or monthly rates have changed since 1913, please give details.
22. If different rates from above are given in the case of labour living outside the lines, please state them.
23. Have the cash earnings of coolies for work done on the garden increased since 1913? Can you give any figures to show the difference? The figures should include regular *haziras* and also *ticca* earnings (*i.e.*, additional pay for work over and above the standard task).
24. What do you consider a decent living monthly wage for a working coolie—man and woman—not a mere subsistence allowance, but a wage that would suffice to keep them in health and reasonable comfort with a possibility of saving a little?
25. Can you give any idea of the extent of difference in the cost of living in 1913 and 1920?
26. (a) Taking into account all the earnings and concessions received by an average coolie, would you say that he gets enough to keep him in health and reasonable comfort with the present price of necessities?
- (b) Please state the total sanctioned provision for remuneration of labour in your garden budget year by year for 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920 and 1921 and side by side with these figures please give the strength of your labour force in the same years.
- (c) Please give in tabular form the actual earnings of a number of your best working coolies—men, women, and children—month by month for a year showing number of days' work done,—total *hazira* earned and total *ticca* earned—for the years abovementioned.
- (d) Please state the average daily number turning out to work on your garden (1) during the period July to September inclusive and (2) during the period December to February inclusive. Also the average number of coolies who earn *ticca* during these periods. The figures should be for the years 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920 and 1921.
27. Can you give any idea of the indebtedness of coolies in your garden either to the garden or to outside *mahajans*? Can you give any idea of how many of your coolies are free of debt either to the garden or to the *mahajans*?
28. Can you say to what extent coolies in your garden remit money to their home districts?
29. To what extent do your coolies save money to buy cattle, buffaloes, land and the like? Do any of them lend money to other coolies?
30. Are payments made daily, weekly, fortnightly, or monthly for regular task work? What would the coolies prefer? When are *ticca* payments made?
31. Are payments made in cash or in tickets? If the latter, does the garden cash the tickets or the shopkeeper? Is there any reason to believe that the latter does not pay the coolie the full value of the tickets?
32. If rice or *dhan* is issued, is the cost or any part of it recovered? Please describe your system in detail.
33. Do you think the fixing of a standard wage is feasible for the district, for the sub-district, or for a group of gardens?
34. (a) Do you favour the idea of a provident fund for your Indian staff?
- (b) Do you favour the idea of giving coolies a bonus proportionate to the prosperity of the garden year by year? If so, what form should it take?
35. Does the unit system exist in your garden, *i.e.*, a system of remuneration based on small units of work, the coolies being paid in terms of multiples of such unit. If you have such a unit system, describe it. Is the coolie allowed to earn as much or as little as he chooses, both in busy and slack

season, or is there a limit? Under the unit system does the coolie tend to sacrifice quality to quantity? If the unit system is not in force in your garden, would you be in favour of its introduction?

36. Is it the case that earnings are inadequate in the cold weather as compared with the rest of the year? Can this be remedied?

37. Are wages paid into the hands of the coolies by the Manager or Assistant Manager?

Is this an invariable rule in your garden?

38. In the case of your garden, to what extent do coolies supplement their regular and *ticca* earnings by cultivation of paddy or other crops, sale of firewood, milk, fodder or vegetables, by rearing cattle, by hiring carts, or in other ways such as working on Government or Local Board roads?

39. In the case of a coolie living with his wife and children would you say, as a general rule, that his own total earnings are sufficient to maintain himself and his family in health and reasonable comfort?

40. Is it your experience that increased wages encourage labourers to work substantially longer hours?

41. How far do you think it true that any appreciable rise in the rate of wages would result in the coolie not earning more from the garden but in his doing less work for the same pay?

IV.—Tasks.

42. What is the task for plucking? Does it differ at different times of the year? Has it altered in recent years, say from 1913? If so, how? How many hours does it take the average woman to do the task?

43. Has fine plucking altered the task? With a reduced task for fine plucking is it possible for a coolie to earn as much in a given time as was the case when coarser plucking was the practice?

44. What is the *ticca* rate for plucking and how does it compare with the rate before the war? Granted that there is leaf to pluck, can a coolie earn as much *ticca* as he or she chooses or is there a limit? Can a coolie earn as much by *ticca* plucking now as during the war boom in tea?

45. In weighing leaf what deduction is made for the basket? Is the deduction always the same? What other deductions are made, e.g., for wet or stinky leaf or for factory charges? Suppose a plucker brings in 25 pounds of *actual* leaf in a basket weighing 5 pounds, the leaf being perfectly dry, for what weight of leaf will she get credit in your garden?

46. Is leaf weighing made in presence of the Manager or Assistant Manager? Is this the invariable rule?

47. What is the task for (a) light hoeing, (b) deep hoeing? Has it altered in recent years, say from 1913? If so, how?

48. Does the hoeing task differ at various times of the year or for different soils in the garden? How many hours does it take the average man to do the work?

49. What is the *ticca* rate for hoeing and how does it compare with the rate before the war? Can a coolie earn as much *ticca* in hoeing as he chooses, or is there a limit? Can he earn as much now by *ticca* hoeing as he could before the war?

50. How are hoeing measurements made? By a *nal* rod or by so many *galis* (rows) of bushes? Are the results identical? How many feet in your garden *nal*?

51. To what extent and in what circumstances are fractional *haziras* given in your garden?

V.—Concessions.

52. (a) To what extent have coolies in your garden got land for cultivation of paddy or other crops (1) Within the garden grant, (2) outside? In the case of (1) can you say what amount of land is so held and by how many adult coolies? On what conditions do the coolies hold land inside the grant; if not on rent-free terms, what is the rate of rent? Are they liable to be turned out of their land, and for what reasons?

(b) What percentage of the adult male coolies in the garden have got land for cultivation either inside or outside the grant?

53. Is it your experience that coolies living in the garden who hold land inside or outside the estate do a reasonable amount of garden work, either by themselves or by other family members?

54. Have you still got land within the estate which the coolies could take up for cultivation? If so, is there any desire to take it up? If not, why not?

55. Is it your experience that new coolies are keen on taking up land for cultivation or only coolies who have been settled in the garden for some time?

56. Do you give facilities to new coolies to cultivate, or do you prefer to give this privilege only to those who have been for some time on the garden?

57. Is there much Government waste land in the neighbourhood of your garden suitable for cultivation which your coolies could take up?

58. Can you give any idea as to what extent coolies in your garden hold land outside the estate and whether as direct tenants of Government or as sub-tenants of others?

59. Does the coolie as a rule sell the produce of his land in the open market or to other coolies, or does he keep it chiefly for his own consumption?

60. Is the coolie in your garden allowed leave freely to cultivate his land or are restrictions placed?

61. Are the coolies housed in lines or houses built at garden expense? Or are they allowed to build their own houses? In the latter case, does the garden supply materials and pay the coolies for a reasonable time while building them? Can you give any idea of the money value of free housing? Do they prefer to build their own houses or to live in the houses built by the garden? Have they a plot for growing vegetables, etc.?

62. Is there free grazing land available in the garden? If so, does the garden provide cowherds?

63. Apart from agreement advances, does the garden lend money to the coolies for miscellaneous purposes? Is interest charged? How are the loans recovered? Does the borrower mortgage his cattle or anything? If he takes the money to buy cattle, do you consider the cattle garden property until the advance is repaid?

64. Are many of these loans irrecoverable? On an average how much do you write-off annually as irrecoverable?

65. Do the coolies have any difficulty in finding fuel within the estate? If so, is any help given to them?

66. On the occasion of festive days like the *Durga Pujas*, is anything given to the coolies?

67. Have you accommodation for in-door patients in your hospital and is it much used?

68. Do you supply clothing or blankets free or at a reduced rates, and in what cases?

69. What pregnant sick leave is given before and after birth? What sick pay, if any is given during that time? Is any bonus given on the birth of a child? Are any arrangements made for nursing?

70. In the case of children or weakly coolies unable to work, are free meals or sick *haziras* given? In the case of the latter, what amounts? If men or women fall below par and are unable to earn sufficient to keep them in good health, do you do anything to assist them such as by feeding them till they are fit for work?

71. Have you a garden school and would you call it a success? If, in the past, you have had such a school which has now ceased to exist, can you give the reason for its abolition?

72. (a) When rice is dear, is it your practice to sell it to the coolies at concession rates? Taking the last 5 years or any other suitable period, what has been your loss by making this concession? What is your guiding principle in fixing the rate at which you sell rice to the coolie or have you a fixed rate? If you have a fixed rate, what is it?

(b) Is this concession of cheap rice granted over and above the full rates of pay, or do those who avail themselves of the cheap rice concession get less pay than those who do not? How much concession rice may a working coolie—man, woman, or child—purchase per week?

73. Is it possible and desirable that the indirect remuneration represented by the various concessions in the shape of free housing, medical attendance, cheap rice, clothing, garden land, etc., should be converted into an increase of money wages? The question may be considered from the points of view both of the garden and the coolie?

V I.—Contract.

74. (a) Do you put coolies in your garden under Act XIII agreement? If so, what advance is given to men and women? Do you recover the advances? Do you put newly-recruited coolies under agreement as soon as they come up from their country?

(b) Has the amending Act XII of 1920 which restricts the term of agreement to one year, altered the amount you give as advance? How has your garden practice been altered as the result of this Act?

75. Do you think it necessary to put the coolie under contract at all? Probably many coolies put themselves under contract in order to get the advance. Would you be willing to make the present advances if the coolie was not put under contract? Would you be willing to give the coolie the money as a bonus at the expiry of a year's work?

76. Do you think the coolie would be more content if he was not under contract?

77. Do you file many cases under Act XIII against absconding coolies? If so, do they usually go back to the garden, refund the advance, or go to jail?

78. If it is the practice in your garden not to put coolies under contract, do you find that this is satisfactory? And do many coolies abscond?

V II.—General.

79. Is there a shop in the garden from which coolies can get supplies and are prices controlled by the management? Have the coolies any complaints against the shops?

80. Is it the custom to hold muster parade before the coolies go out to work in the morning? Is this necessary?

81. Do the coolies in your garden spend much money on liquor or on opium? In recent years the price of these commodities has increased, do you think that this has led to a decrease in consumption among your coolies? Where there has been an increase of wages, is there any reason to believe that much of this has gone in liquor or in opium? In the case of the heavy drinker or confirmed opium-eater, have these habits caused diminished earnings among these classes?

82. Is there any co-operative society in your garden where coolies can get goods at reasonable prices? Do you think there is any prospect of success if this is tried?

83. Do you think the coolie has more time to devote to his own pursuits at the present day than he used to have? Can you explain why?

84. In the case of disputes in your garden among the coolies themselves, do they prefer settlement by the Manager to going to court?

85. What is your opinion about giving pensions to coolies who have done long and faithful service?

APPENDIX II.

COMMUNIQUE OF 5TH JUNE 1921.

On May 2nd, 1921, the coolies on a number of tea-gardens in the Chargola Valley in the Karimganj subdivision struck work and demanded largely increased rates of pay. On being told that the demand was impossible they left the gardens and proceeded to Karimganj. The movement spread rapidly throughout the Chargola Valley and affected also certain gardens in the neighbouring Longai Valley.

On May 6th, it was decided at a meeting of Managers of the Chargola Valley, which the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner attended, to offer new rates of wages, which though less than what the strikers demanded amounted to an increase of from thirty to fifty per cent. This offer was made at once on several gardens but did not produce the effect anticipated. By about the middle of the month between six and seven thousand coolies had left the gardens. Two gardens in the Chargola Valley had lost practically their entire labour force, and all gardens but one in the Valley had lost from 30 to 60 per cent. In the Longai Valley three gardens only were affected and the proportion of losses was smaller.

This influx of coolies into the little town of Karimganj caused great trouble to the municipal authorities and no little suffering to the coolies themselves. Food was provided by Government for those in need of it and one issue of rice was accepted. Then the coolies were led to believe that the acceptance of food from Government would entail their being sent back to the gardens. Gradually the great majority of the coolies made their way as far as Chandpur in the Tippera district of Bengal, some by train from Karimganj and others from stations further down the line which they had reached on foot. In the first instance many forced their way on to the trains without tickets while others took tickets for short distances and then refused to leave the trains. There are still some five or six hundred coolies in the town of Karimganj.

2. It is unquestioned that great suffering and hardship have been caused by these events, and the allegation has been repeatedly and publicly made that the exodus was spontaneous and was due to the inadequate pay and brutal treatment received by the coolies on the gardens. On the other hand the employers are convinced that the coolies would not have left the gardens but for the efforts of unscrupulous persons who have been filling their minds with wild suggestions. It is a fact that the first batches to leave the gardens invoked the name of "Maharaj Gandhi" and declared that they were obeying his orders. It is also beyond dispute that many of them sold their cattle and household belongings, in some cases at ridiculously low prices, in order to be unencumbered on their travels.

As between the two extreme views it has been suggested that, whatever campaign of misrepresentation may have been undertaken, it would have met with no success had not real grievances existed; and that the Government have failed to redress such grievances and have identified themselves with Europeans and capital as against Indians and labour.

3. It is therefore desirable to review the general conditions of the tea industry in this part of Assam. Most gardens in this part of the Surma Valley produce a comparatively coarse quality of tea and depend for their profits on the heaviness of their outturn rather than on its quality. These gardens have therefore been particularly hard hit by the low prices which have prevailed during the past year for the inferior grades of tea. While tea was controlled by Government during the war and fixed prices were obtained with little regard to quality, it was easy even for unskilled labourers, owing to the coarse plucking which was allowed, to add materially to their daily earnings by doing what is known as "*ticca*" or extra work in addition to the standard task. It is a well known fact that this standard task can be completed by the average labourer by midday. When war conditions ceased to stimulate production in the Surma Valley, it is probable that, apart from any economies in working necessitated by the fall in prices, the coolie's opportunities of supplementing his daily wage in this manner were restricted. Previous to 1908 the law itself fixed minimum wages for contract labour on the Surma Valley gardens; and the Government have never ceased to acknowledge and to discharge definite responsibilities in connection with earnings. Periodical returns of wages are received and in the inspections which are made at regular intervals by the officers of Government particular attention is paid to the wages earned. If as has been alleged there had actually been in force the preposterously inadequate rate of two or three pice for a day's work a grave responsibility would have rested with Government. It would have been their duty to intervene and in the last resort to assist the labourers who were refused a living wage to return to their homes. As a matter of fact the information in the possession of Government shows that on the affected gardens in the Chargola and Longai Valleys immediately before the strike the rate for the daily task (which is frequently supplemented by *ticca* earnings) was from four to five annas for men and from three to four annas for women. This is corroborated by statements made by the deserting coolies at a late stage of their homeward journey, which leave no doubt that the stories of wage rates of a few pice a day are false.

As regards the allegations of habitual ill-treatment the Government are perfectly prepared to investigate any case of which specific details are placed before them by responsible people, but they have no hesitation in describing many of the stories to which currency has been given as deliberate and

malicious inventions calculated to arouse racial feeling. The gardens are regularly inspected by Government officers, they are connected by good roads with the subdivisional headquarters at Karimganj and as experience has shown nothing would have been easier than for any aggrieved labourers to go in and lay complaints.

4. It has also been stated that the coolies assembled at Chandpur are in a state of emaciation which could not have been caused by the hardships of a few days of uncomfortable travel and under-feeding, but affords clear proof of long-drawn-out starvation on the gardens. This view derives some support from the report of the Travelling Inspector of Emigrants who accompanied one batch from Chandpur to Goalundo three weeks after the exodus began. He gives it as his opinion that they "had not had sufficient nourishment for some time" referring evidently to a longer period than that of their journey. The evidence of those who saw the coolies nearer to their start is to the opposite effect. The Subdivisional Officer of Karimganj reports that the majority of the coolies were in good condition when they first arrived there. A medical officer who knows the home district of a large number of the coolies states definitely that the condition of the coolies at Karimganj compared most favourably with that of people of their class in their own district. The Hon'ble Mr. Reid, the Member in charge, who has just returned from a visit to Karimganj saw large numbers of the coolies still collected there and found no signs of emaciation among them though some had been there for a fortnight. An intelligent observer who saw batches of coolies at a late stage of their homeward journey noted that their bodies were well nourished and muscular although their faces had the strained hungry look that is brought about by short rations for a few days.

A factor which cannot be ignored in considering the condition of the migrating coolies is that most of them were comparatively recent arrivals in the district. It is common knowledge that new coolies are less well off than old ones. For one thing they do not at first have land to cultivate. For another they have not the dexterity of the older coolies and find it a harder matter to perform the allotted tasks. It is unquestionable that the coolies suffered great privation and hardship on their way from the gardens to their homes. It is certain that they were insufficiently fed both at Karimganj and on the journey while some of them performed largely on foot and without shelter at night a large part of the journey. It must be remembered also that the prevalence of scarcity in some of the recruiting districts had led of recent years to the immigration of labourers of impaired physique and that the after effects of the influenza epidemic were severely felt by them. In view of these facts the Government are unable to accept accounts of observers of the condition of the coolies *en route* to their homes as establishing the conclusion that they had been starved upon the gardens.

5. It remains to deal with the statement that efforts have been made by persons unconnected with the industry to promote discontent among the coolies. The Government know for a fact that such efforts have for some time been actively made, apparently with the intention of arousing ill-will against Europeans and the Government, although those concerned have for the most part been careful to keep outside the reach of the ordinary criminal law. An indication of this policy is to be seen in one of the resolutions passed at the Surma Valley Conference which was held at Sylhet in September 1920. This referred to the oppressions of European merchants and planters and called on people not to serve under them and those in such service gradually to withdraw. Again at a non-co-operation meeting at Ratabari in the Chergola Valley on 1st May tea-garden coolies were addressed in Hindustani and urged to demand a rate of pay which it was certain that the gardens could not afford to give. This rate was demanded next day by the strikers. As has been stated earlier the coolies left the gardens with shouts of "*Gandhi Maharaj ki Jai*" and asserted that they were acting under the orders of "Maharaj" Gandhi. Many of them believed that arrangements had been made by the same authority for their repatriation.

The statements made by many to officers of Government and to Managers left no doubt that they were obeying an appeal made to them on other than economic grounds.

6. It is the case that the gardens in the area concerned, like other gardens in the Surma Valley, have been specially affected by the depression in the tea industry, and it is recognised that the rates of wages have not been raised as they have in some other parts of the province on account of the general rise in the cost of living. It is moreover not unlikely that there has been some actual reduction in the amounts that could be earned as *ticca*. There is however clearly a vast difference between these conditions and starvation wages, and the Government are forced to the conclusion that these causes alone could not have produced the sudden stampede which occurred, and that the real reason was the activities referred to in the last paragraph. The exodus has led to deplorable sufferings, and those responsible for it have created ill-will which did not exist before.

The situation was a difficult one, and the Government's action or inaction has been criticised. It would have been unwise, even if it had been legally possible, to attempt to compel the coolies to go back to the gardens. Many of them had taken advances from the gardens either as a consideration for the execution of agreements under Act, XIII of 1859, or to enable them to purchase cattle; but the employers forbore to add to the difficulty of the situation by attempting to enforce their rights in the courts. On the other hand Government were not prepared to provide a passage home free to labourers who were voluntarily leaving their employment. Moreover, it was by no means certain that the labourers when they reached their homes would find a living awaiting them. But the most serious objection to repatriation (which would have been by far the easiest way out of the difficulty) was that this step was likely to encourage a similar stampede from other parts of the province, and on a much larger scale. The Government therefore declined to repatriate the coolies at the public cost, but placed no hindrance in the way of their travelling home at their own expense or with the aid of private charity. Also, while disclaiming responsibility for the maintenance of able-bodied labourers who had voluntarily abandoned their means of livelihood, the Government arranged that the sick and the destitute, the women and the children, the aged and the infirm should be fed and cared for. Every precaution was taken to prevent destitution and disease at Karimganj where the situation was ably handled by the Subdivisional Officer and the

Chairman of the Municipality, and elsewhere in the district. In actual fact the amount of cholera and other sickness which occurred was happily in the circumstances extremely small.

7. The Government and the tea industry have for some time past recognised that in view of the rise in prices some re-adjustment of wages is called for throughout the province, and special enquiries which are nearly complete have already been made. The only reason why a commission had not been appointed to go into the matter is the depressed state of the industry which makes it impossible for most gardens to contemplate any increase in expenditure. But the Government repudiate altogether the allegation that the wages given in the case of the striking coolies were starvation wages; and they are fully prepared to examine further the whole question of wages when the present excitement has subsided and they consider the time to be opportune.

Meanwhile, as regards the Charga Valley increased rates were, as already stated, announced by some of the local managers on their own authority. It will be for the Calcutta Agents who are responsible for the finance of the gardens to say whether working at these rates is or is not a practical proposition. The Government understand that it has been decided in the case of most of the gardens in the Charga and Longai Valleys to adopt the unit system of wages by which the pay of a coolie will depend directly on the amount of work which he is willing to do.

APPENDIX III.

Conference of Charga Valley Tea Planters and Government Officials, 6th May 1921.

PRESENT :

Officials.	Tea planters.
Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division.	Mr. Bather, Dullabcherra.
Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet.	" Hunter, Bidyanagar.
Superintendent of Police, Sylhet.	" Simpson, Singlacherra.
	" Macleod, Mookhamcherra.
	" Dunlop, Gumbhira.
	" Wray, Maguracherra.

The position presented to the conference was :—

(1) General unrest among the labour force, the coolies having been instigated to make a united demand for 0-8-0, 0-6-0 and 0-4-0 annas " *haziras* ",

(2) Already over 1,000 coolies from Anipore, Mookhamcherra and Damcherra have left their gardens and are being fed by Government in Karimganj and the coolies of Balacherra are on strike.

(3) More strikes are apprehended immediately or after next pay day.

(4) Unless something is done to satisfy the coolies the gardens throughout the Valley risk losing the greater part of their labour force.

(5) There is grave fear of strikes ending in rioting.

(6) There is a consensus of opinion that present wages are too low and that the wage of a man for a fair task should be 0-8-0 annas and of a woman annas 0-4-0 and that unless these rates are conceded a large proportion of the coolies will strike work or desert.

(7) From the official standpoint it was considered inadvisable to attempt to enforce Act XIII agreements and impracticable to force deserters to return to their gardens.

(8) While recognising the danger of yielding to pressure and the encouragement that such yielding may give to agitation elsewhere the officials did not consider this a sufficient reason for refusing concessions justly due and absolutely necessary to keep the labour on the gardens. In coming to this conclusion we took into consideration the isolated position of the Valley, which lessens the effect of concessions here on the tea industry elsewhere.

(9) We therefore advised all present to concede the rates they had unanimously agreed on, and to do this at once and not wait for further trouble.

APPENDIX IV.

Percentage of average daily working strength to total number on the books.

		1906.	1908.	1914.	1915.	1919.	1920.	1921.	1922.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Cachar :—</i>									
Men	...	46	42	79	80	78	80	77	80
Women	...	44	41	71	74	71	74	73	72.5

For 1906 and 1908, the wage returns of the total number on the books seem to be incorrect and the percentage figures cannot be accepted. The probable percentages are :—

	1906.	1908.
Men	78	73
Women	74	71

APPENDIX IV—concl'd.

Percentage of average daily working strength to total number on the books—concl'd.

	1906.	1907.	1914.	1918.	1919.	1920.	1921.	1922.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Hailakandi :—</i>								
Men	78	71	73	72	75	76	80	74
Women	70	68	65	67	67	67	69	63·5
<i>North Sylhet :—</i>								
Men	78	78	78	79	80	79	77	74·5
Women	67	73	70	74	74	79	72	71
<i>Karimganj :—</i>								
Men	73	70	71	73	77	97*	77	70·5
Women	64	66	69	70	73	74	71	65·5
* The wage averages calculated on the daily working strength for men in 1920 seem to be incorrect, the correct percentage is probably 82.								
<i>South Sylhet :—</i>								
Men	80	80	78	78	77	77	79	79
Women	72	70	74	74	73	74	72	73
<i>Habiganj :—</i>								
Men	80	76	74	60*	75	79	76	73
Women	74	69	70	57	68	75	74	81·5
* The accuracy of the wage returns for men and women in 1918 is doubtful.								
<i>Darrang :—</i>								
Men	77	77	79	80	75	82	81	81
Women	70	75	77	78	72	82	87	76·5
<i>Mangaldai :—</i>								
Men	76	80	76	75	74	75	65	79
Women	71	78	74	71	41*	74	66	79
* The wage returns of the total number of women on the books seem to be incorrect, the correct percentage is probably 68.								
<i>Nowgong :—</i>								
Men	72	75	73	75	72	74	76	76
Women	65	74	68	70	66	72	73	72·5
<i>Jorhat :—</i>								
Men	77	80	65	82	76	74	77	81·5
Women	77	74	76	80	77	75	80	78
<i>Sibsagar :—</i>								
Men	71	80	74	81	77	79	80	79
Women	68	72	74	82	71	74	76	75
<i>Golaghat :—</i>								
Men	77	79	80	79	77	77	85	83
Women	74	72	76	76	75	81	83	79·5
<i>Lakhimpur Sadr :—</i>								
Men	81	80	78	73	74	66	80	78·5
Women	75	75	80	70	71	74	82	73·0
<i>North Lakhimpur :—</i>								
Men	77	77	73	77	74	73	73	73
Women	72	76	69	79	69	71	71	72
<i>Provincial Averages.</i>								
Men	76·5	77	75	76	76	76·5	77·5	77
Women	71	72	72	73	71	74·5	75	74
Children	68	...	73	...	...	...	72	72·5

For these 8 years the provincial average for men is 76·5 per cent. and for women 70 per cent.

APPENDIX V.

Percentage of average daily working strength to total number on the books.

	September 1921.	March 1922.	Average of both.
1	2	3	4
<i>Cachar—</i>			
Men ...	80	80	80
Women ...	68	77	72.5
Children ...	67	74	70.5
<i>Hailakandi—</i>			
Men ...	74	74	74
Women ...	61	66	63.5
Children ...	50	59	54.5
<i>North Sylhet—</i>			
Men ...	73	76	74.5
Women ...	70	72	71
Children ...	62	67	64.5
<i>Karimgani—</i>			
Men ...	73	68	70.5
Women ...	63	68	65.5
Children ...	60	65	62.5
<i>South Sylhet—</i>			
Men ...	78	81	79.5
Women ...	71	76	73.5
Children ...	69	66	67.5
<i>Habiganj—</i>			
Men ...	75	71	73
Women ...	83	80	81.5
Children ...	60	63	61.5
<i>Darrang Sadr—</i>			
Men ...	82	80	81
Women ...	77	76	76.5
Children ...	75	74	74.5
<i>Mangaldai—</i>			
Men ...	80	78	79
Women ...	80	78	79
Children ...	71	67	69
<i>Nowgong—</i>			
Men ...	78	74	76
Women ...	73	72	72.5
Children ...	70	83	76.5
<i>Jorhat—</i>			
Men ...	81	82	81.5
Women ...	78	78	78
Children ...	80	90	85
<i>Sibsagar—</i>			
Men ...	81	77	79
Women ...	76	74	75
Children ...	77	85	81
<i>Golaghat—</i>			
Men ...	84	82	83
Women ...	78	81	79.5
Children ...	79	78	78.5
<i>Lakhimpur Sadr—</i>			
Men ...	79	78	78.5
Women ...	72	74	73
Children ...	75	78	76
<i>North Lakhimpur—</i>			
Men ...	77	69	73
Women ...	76	68	72
Children ...	75	73	74

APPENDIX VI.

Note on the financial position of the Tea industry in the years 1919-1921.

The financial difficulties in which the tea industry became involved in 1919, 1920 and 1921 were due to two main causes both of which were beyond the control of tea-growers, viz :—

- (1) the rise in the rate of Exchange.
- (2) the fall in the market price of tea.

As to the first cause *Exchange* began to advance in 1917, remained stationary for 4 months in 1918 at about 1/5 13/32 per rupee for 3 months Bills on London, was quoted about 1/6 13/16 for 12 months ending May 1919 and therefore advanced steadily month by month to 2/3½ in December 1919 reaching the high level of 2/11 in February 1920. The average rates for the years 1919 and 1920 were approximately 1s. 9d. and 2s. 1d. per rupee. After February 1920 the rate slowly declined and the level of 1/4 was again reached in February 1921.

In addition to the advance in rates, there was great difficulty in selling bills in India or in sending remittances out from London as Banks were reluctant to operate without cover in a rising market. During August and September 1919 this difficulty was so acute that Tea Companies were paying to Merchants a premium of over 10 % above the official rate of 1s. 10d. in order to get Rupees to meet the wages bills on their Estates.

The effect on the finance of a Tea Company of high Exchange will be apparent from a comparison of the number of rupees received for £ 1,000 at Exchange 1s. 4d. and at the various higher rates which prevailed in 1918, 1919 and 1920 :—

	Rs.
£ 1,000 @ Exchange 1/4 per rupee	15,000
£ 1,000 " 2 "	10,000
£ 1,000 " 2/8 "	7,500

To meet a fixed monthly expenditure of, say, Rs. 15,000 for coolie wages a Sterling Company had to pay when Exchange at was 2s. 8d. say £2,000, when at 2s. say £ 1,500 as compared with £ 1,000 when Exchange was at 1s. 4d.

As the plucking season only begins about April-May and crops are small until July-October a large part of the year's outlay has to be met before cash comes in from the sale of the produce. This delay in sale was increased in 1919 by shortage of shipping space and in 1920 by congestion in the Port of London which made it necessary to regulate shipments from India. Thus the 1919 crop was not completely shipped till June 1920. The great disadvantage of this was that teas had to be kept on the gardens a considerable time after manufacture during the worst part of the monsoon and they arrived at market flat and dull showing the effects of storage. Then unfavourable financial conditions in London rendered necessary a limitation of the quantity of tea offered at the weekly auctions in Mincing Lane as the dealers were unable to finance or pay for larger quantities.

The effect of these causes was to delay by many months the receipt of income so that, even when Companies had reserves for financing their outlay, these were found quite inadequate to meet the increased monthly outlay for remittances to India, attributable to exchange, during the prolonged period in which no sale proceeds, or reduced sale proceeds were coming in.

Prices.—Besides the serious increase in the cost of production due to the rise in exchange there was a cataclysmic fall in the market price of tea. This was partly due to the action of the Food Ministry,—when Government control was abrogated—in putting on the market their large stocks of unsold tea, and partly to the loss of the Russian market which in 1916 took no less than 90 million pounds of Indian and Ceylon Tea.

Owing to a feared shortage of supply in 1919 due to lack of transport the Food Controller arranged with the Ministry of Shipping for the necessary steamers. The result was that while shipments to London from India and Ceylon were 27 million pounds in July 1919 the total quantity shipped in the 3 months October—December 1919 was no less than 188 million pounds. Congestion in London followed and in February 1920 the Ministry of Shipping took the drastic step of diverting to out ports—Greenock, Glasgow Leith and Plymouth—about 8 steamers with full cargoes of tea totalling many million of pounds.

Most of this Tea had to be brought months later to London to face a market which had in the interval fallen by 8d per pound.

The stock of Tea in bond in the United Kingdom at 31st December 1913 was 117 million pounds it was 129 million pounds at 31st December 1918 and 213 million pounds at 31st December 1921.

The fall in the market affected all teas but Common Teas suffered more than did medium to fine teas. Common Pekoe Souchong fell from 1s. 3d. in March 1920 to 4d. per pound in September of the same year. In November 1919 the average price of Cachar and Sylhet Teas sold in public auction was 1s. 7d. per pound, in May 1920 it has fallen to 8d. per pound, in October 1920 the average was less than 6d. per pound, and it was only in August 1921 that the market again began to recover.

The Accounts of Tea Companies for 1919 and 1920 have shown the practical effects of adverse Exchange and low prices. It is no exaggeration to say that out of the 319 Estates in Cachar and Sylhet only two showed a profit in Season 1920 and that of the 557 Estates in Assam the greater part made losses in 1920 ranging from 1d. to as much as 5d. per pound.

Details of the aggregate losses are not available, but Messrs J. Thomas & Co., the Tea Brokers, publish an analysis of the working of some Calcutta Tea Companies for 1920. In that statement there are included 17 Assam Companies producing 9½ million pounds of Tea, 13 of them show losses totalling Rs. 11,99,676 and 4 show profits amounting to Rs. 1,88,853; 15 of these Companies paid no dividend in 1920 and 12 of them also passed their dividends in 1919.

The same statement gives particulars of 18 Companies operating in Cachar and Sylhet. These Companies produced 8½ million pounds of Tea. Sixteen show losses amounting to Rs. 13,84,257 and 2 show profits of in all Rs. 47,944. None of these companies paid any dividend in 1920 and six of them paid nothing in 1919.

A Sterling Company in South Sylhet producing over 2¼ million pounds of tea showed a loss in 1920 of over £73,000 or approximately 6½d. per pound. The cost of production of this Company which was in pre-war years under 5d. per pound rose to 1s. 0½ per pound in 1920. Another Company with Estates in Cachar producing about 1 million pounds of Tea made a loss of £34,500 or 9d. per pound. In Tezpur a Company producing 4 million pounds of Tea had a loss of £43,000 or rather over 2½d. per pound.

Many Companies have had to borrow money on mortgage at high rates of interest to meet the losses incurred in 1919 and 1920. Such debts must for many years prove a serious burden and preclude the hope of dividends on ordinary shares until the borrowings have been repaid.

In spite of losses Rice concessions were given and when a temporary rise in foodstuffs is due to special circumstances as in 1919 and 1920 the needs of labour are better met by such concessions than by increasing wages. The experience of Britain has shown how disturbing it is to have to reduce wages when under the pressure of economic law this becomes necessary.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that an industry which is working at a loss cannot increase wages. If it is unable to economize in production costs the unfortunate alternative confronting it is to stop operations and disband its labour force.

Fortunately the policy of finer plucking, aided as it has been by unfavourable climatic conditions in 1921, has led to some recovery in prices. This in conjunction with a reduced rate of exchange has improved the outlook and enabled the question of wages to be considered by the Industry. Of this we have had evidence in the course of our Enquiry. A fall in the prices of foodstuffs and of cloth is also affording relief to tea-garden employees as well as to the general public.

Reference has been made to the dividends paid by some Tea Companies and it appeared that some members of the Committee imagined these to be tax free. It is only fair to point out that in so far as the reference is to Sterling Companies or to Rupee Company shares held by shareholders resident in the United Kingdom such dividends are subject to deduction of an income-tax of 6s. in the pound or 30%. Before the war the rate was 6%. Besides this a Corporation tax of 5% has been recently imposed as a first charge on all profits earned.

APPENDIX VII.

Budgets framed by the late Major J. C. Jack in "The Economic Life of a Bengal District."

Item of expenditure.	Amount spent annually by a family in comfort.	Amount spent annually by a family in extreme indigence.
1	2	3
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
<i>Food—</i>		
Rice	8 0 0	4 0 0
Salt	0 2 8	0 2 0
Oil	0 8 0	0 4 0
Spices	0 2 8	0 1 4
Fish	0 6 8	...
Vegetables	0 10 0	0 2 0
Milk and butter (<i>ghee</i>)	0 4 0	0 2 0
<i>Other necessities—</i>		
Kerosene oil	0 2 8	0 1 4
Tobacco and molasses	0 2 8	0 1 0
Betel nut	0 4 0	0 1 4
Clothes	1 13 4	0 12 0
Household utensils	0 1 4	0 1 4
Petty house repairs	0 6 8	0 2 0
Furniture	0 4 0	0 2 0
<i>Miscellaneous—</i>		
Rent	1 13 4	0 6 0
Local taxation	0 2 0	0 1 0
Medical treatment	0 6 8	0 2 0
Purchase of cattle	0 10 8	(hire). 0 2 0
" boat	0 1 4	...
Thorough house repairs	0 10 8	0 5 0
Domestic festivals and entertainments	1 0 0	0 5 0
	16 13 4	6 13 4

APPENDIX VII(a).

NORTH LAKHIMPUR—DOOLAHAT TEA ESTATE.

Family consisting of one working man, two working women, one working child, and one non-working child.

Particular of Income.	Income.	Monthly Income.	Yearly Income. Rs.
1. Pay or wages drawing from garden	...	1 at Rs. 6, 2 at Rs. 5 and 1 at Rs. 3.	228
2. <i>Ticca</i> , etc.	...	say Rs. 2	24
3. Agreement bonus	27
4. Value of crops grown after deducting value of seed Rs. 2 (<i>Dhan</i> , say 40 maunds at Rs. $\frac{1}{2}$ per maund.	158
		Grand total	437

Expenditure.

Name of articles.	Particulars of weekly requirements.	Particulars of monthly requirements.	Particulars of yearly requirements.	Rates.	Cost. Rs. a. p.
1. Rice for 5 souls, 1 at 6 seers, 2 5 seers, 1 at 4 seers and 1 at 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ seers.	24 $\frac{1}{2}$ seers	2 maunds 18 seers	29 maunds 16 seers	Rs. 7-8-0 per md.	220 8 0
Dall	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ seers	6 seers	1 maund 32 seers.	at annas 5 seer	22 8 0
Vegetables	at 2 annas	8 annas	Rs. 6	...	6 0 0
Fish and flesh	say 2 as. 6 p.	10 annas	Rs. 7-8	...	7 8 0
Salt	say $\frac{1}{2}$ seer	3 seers	36 seers	at 2 as. 6 p. seer	5 1 0
Mustard oil	$\frac{1}{2}$ seer	1 seer	12 seers	1 Re. seer	12 0 0
Spices	at 2 annas	8 annas	Rs. 6	...	6 0 0
Milk	2 annas	8 annas	Rs. 6	...	6 0 0
Sugar and <i>Gur</i>	4 annas	Rs. 1	Rs. 12	...	12 0 0
Kerosene oil	1 as. 6 p.	5 as. 6 p.	Rs. 4-2	...	4 2 0
Betelnut, Pan	1 anna	4 annas	Rs. 3	...	3 0 0
Tobacco and tobacco leaf	2 annas	8 annas	Rs. 6	...	6 0 0
Liquor, etc.	...	...	...	...	3 0 0
2. <i>Clothes</i> —Blankets 4 (1 new at Rs. 5), 3 are 2 year old cost Rs. 10-8 present value is Rs. 5-4.	...	...	...	...	10 4 0
<i>Dhotis</i> 4-2 at Rs. 2 and 2' at Re. 1-12).	...	...	...	...	7 8 0
Coats 2 (1 at Rs. 4 and 1 at Rs. 3-4).	...	...	...	...	7 4 0
Shirts 2 (at Rs. 2-8 each)	...	...	...	...	5 0 0
Baniens or vest 2 at 14 annas each	...	...	...	...	1 12 0
<i>Shawls</i> 2 (1 at Rs. 3-8 and 1 at Rs. 2).	...	...	...	...	5 8 0
Small or <i>sari Khoynshya</i> 1	...	...	...	...	0 12 0
Jackets 2 (1 at Rs. 3 and 1 at Rs. 2-4).	...	...	...	...	5 4 0
Children's clothes	...	...	...	...	3 0 0
Household utensils— <i>Botova</i> 1 (old of last 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years...)	value was Rs. 3.	Present value Rs. 1-8.	Household utensils. This calculation is much too high. The total should not be more than Rs. 6 (six) yearly according to calculation made by me and Sub-Deputy Collector in the families done by us.	...	1 8 0
<i>Kerahi</i> 3 (old of last 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years)	Rs. 5	Rs. 2-8	S. D. O.	...	2 8 0
<i>Batti</i> 5 (" of 4 years)	" 8-8	" 4-4	...	...	4 4 0
<i>Thala</i> 3 (" of 3 ")	" 10-8	" 5-4	...	...	5 4 0
<i>Ghahi</i> 3 (" of 2 ")	" 3-12	" 1-14	...	...	1 14 0
<i>Kaloo</i> (Brass) of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	" 9-14	" 4-15	...	...	4 15 0
4. <i>Raw materials and implements</i> — <i>Kadathie</i> 1 (old cost was Re. 1-8)	...	cost 12 annas	...	...	0 12 0
<i>Dan</i> 1 (new) cost was Re. 1-8	...	" Re. 1-8	...	...	1 8 0
<i>Kotaries</i> 2 (old cost was Rs. 3)	...	" " 1-8	...	...	1 8 0
<i>Kuthar</i> 1 (Rs. 3)	...	" " 1-8	...	...	1 8 0
Cost of making plough	...	" " 1-8	...	...	1 8 0
5. <i>Land Revenue</i> — Purchase of cattle Rs. 50 but become old.	Present value say Rs. 30.	...	...	...	30 0 0
Total	...	...	...	...	423 4 0
Savings	...	...	...	...	14 12 0

Calculated by P. C. Sirkar, Head Clerk of the Doolahat Tea Estate the most capable garden clerk in the district. The family was to be a good but not exceptional and an old coolie in the cultivation of his own land besides garden work.

APPENDIX VIII (b).

LAKHIMPUR SADR.

Tingrai Tea Company, Limited (Tinsukia Circle).

Income and expenses of one coolie family consisting of 2 male adults, 1 female adult, 1 male and 1 female child for one complete year.

Items of income.	Rs. a. p.	Items of expenditure.	Rs. a. p.
1. Value of crops grown with fruits and live-stock (less value of seeds); live-stock includes poultry, goats, pigeons, eggs, milch cow and calves—		A.—Food—	
<i>Dhan</i> 11 maunds 20 seers—less seed 18 seers.	44 4 0	Rice from godown, sold by Company at Rs. 3 per maund.	64 0 0
Milk	22 8 0	<i>Dhan</i>	44 4 0
Eggs	2 4 0	Salt	6 0 0
Chickens	3 0 0	Oil	2 13 0
		Spices	1 8 0
2. Pay or wages... ..	179 3 9	Pulses	4 0 0
House, medical attendance, medicines all given free by the Company and not calculated.		Vegetables	1 2 0
		Milk and <i>ghee</i>	22 8 0
		B.—Other Household expenses—	
		Kerosene oil	5 8 9
		Tobacco and molasses	3 4 0
		Clothes	17 4 0
		Opium, <i>ganja</i> , or liquor	14 10 0
		Household utensils	0 6 0
		C.—Miscellaneous—	
		Domestic festivals and entertainment.	7 0 0
		Purchase of raw materials and implements.	1 0 0
		Land revenue or rent	1 14 0
		Other expenses	3 4 0
	251 3 9		200 5 9

APPENDIX VIII (c).

LAKHIMPUR SADR.

Jaipur Tea Company—Tinsukia Circle.

A Domestic budget (for one average month).

Of a typical tea-garden coolie family living in village and commonly known as "*Faltoo*" consisting of husband, wife, brother, mother (old) and 2 non-working children,—3 able-bodied adults and dependents.

Income.	Rs. a. p.	Expenditure.	Rs. a. p.
(<i>Ticca</i>) Work on tea garden ...	10 0 0	Rice 3 mds. 30 srs. at Rs. 7 ...	26 4
Cultivation of 4 <i>poorahs</i> of land	42 0 0	Salt 2 srs.	0 4
Sale of vegetables	1 0 0	Mustard oil 1½ srs.	1 2
Profits on cattle or goats and fowls	1 0 0	Spices ¼ sr.	0 8
		Fish and meat	1 0
		Pulses (<i>dal</i> , etc)	1 8
		Milk 4 srs.	0 12
		Molasses 2 srs.	0 10
		Betel nut, etc.	1 0
		Tobacco	0 7
		Tobacco leaf	0 8
		Kerosene oil	0 10
		Clothes, etc.	7 8
		Opium, <i>ganja</i> , liquor	2 8
		Rent on rice land	3 12
	54 0 0		
		Possible savings per month ...	48 8
			5 8

Their rice, being grown by themselves, does not really cost Rs. 7 but is taken at market rate.

APPENDIX VIII(d)

LAKHIMPUR SADE—JAIPUR TEA COMPANY, TINSUKIA CIRCLE.

A Domestic budget (for one average month) of a typical family of tea garden coolies living on the Estate, consisting of husband, wife and 2 working children.

Income.		Rs. a. p.	Expenditure.		Rs. a. p.
Average pay ... ..	...	18 11 0	Rice 2 mds. 16 srs. at Rs. 7 ...	...	16 12 0
One month <i>tacca</i> ... ..	...	9 11 0	Salt $\frac{1}{2}$ sr. ... ..	...	0 3 0
Cultivation of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre rice land	...	5 4 0	Oil $\frac{1}{2}$ sr. ... ..	...	0 9 0
Sale of vegetables, etc. ... ..	...	0 8 0	Spices ... ..	...	0 8 0
Sale of milk ... ..	...	4 3 6	Fish and meat ... ..	...	1 0 0
Profits on cattle or goats and fowls ... ..	...	3 0 0	Pulses (<i>dal</i> , etc.) ... ..	...	0 12 0
			Vegetables ... ..	...	0 12 0
			Milk ... ..	...	0 6 0
			Molasses ... ..	...	1 0 0
			Betel nut, etc. ... ..	...	1 0 0
			Tobacco ... ..	...	0 10 0
			Tobacco leaf ... ..	...	0 4 0
			Kerosene oil ... ..	...	0 10 0
			Clothes, etc. ... ..	...	5 8 0
			Opium, <i>ganja</i> , liquor ... ..	...	6 2 0
			Rent on rice land (one <i>bigha</i>) ..	...	0 4 0
					36 4 0
		41 5 6	Possible savings ... ..	...	5 0 9

Man is an opium eater, which unfortunately is not uncommon in Assam.

APPENDIX VIII(e).

LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT—DOOM-DOOMA TEA COMPANY, LIMITED, BEESAKOPIE DIVISION.

Family (b) Tea-garden coolie,—1 male adult, 1 female adult, 2 boys, workers, and 1 male and 1 female child.

Items of income.	Rs. a. p.	Items of expenditure.	Rs. a. p.
Value of crops grown with fruits and live-stock (less value of seeds); live-stock includes poultry, goats, pigeons, eggs, milch cow and calves	15 0 0	A.—Food—	
Pay or wages	210 13 0	Rice 29 mds. 8 srs. at Rs. 3 per maund	88 0 0
Any other receipts	104 3 9	Salt	6 8 0
Children's earnings, catching insects	20 0 0	Oil	12 0 0
		Spices	3 0 0
		Fish (refers to all classes)	12 0 0
		Pulses	12 0 0
		Vegetables	24 0 0
		Milk and <i>ghee</i>	4 8 0
		Live-stock, poultry, goats, pigeons eggs milch cow and calves	12 0 0
		B.—Other household expenses—	
		Kerosene oil	9 0 0
		Tobacco and molasses	3 0 0
		Clothes	42 12 0
		Opium, <i>ganja</i> or liquor	15 0 0
		Household utensils	5 0 0
		C.—Miscellaneous—	
		Domestic festival and entertainment	5 0 0
Total	850 0 9	Total	253 12 0

APPENDIX VIII(f).

KAMRUP DISTRICT.—MANDAKATA TEA ESTATE.

A family consisting of 3 members—Father, mother and a son, aged 17 years. All work.

Income.			Rs.	Expenditure.		
Wages—				A.—Food—		Rs. a. p.
(a) Husband—				Rice 21 maunds	...	105 0 0
Pay	...	...	60	Salt 24 seers	...	3 0 0
Ticca	...	...	43	Oil 12 seers	...	2 4 0
(b) Wife—				Spices	...	3 0 0
Pay	...	...	36	Fish	...	3 0 0
Ticca	...	...	12	Pulses	...	9 0 0
(c) Son	...	...	30	Vegetables	...	1 8 0
Ticca	...	...	Nil			
				B.—Other expenses—		
				Kerosene oil, Re. 0-12-0...	...	2 4 0
				Tobacco	...	3 0 0
				Clothes	...	8 0 0
				Utensils	...	0 8 0
				C.—Miscellaneous—		
				Festival	...	8 0 0
Total	...	...	186			
				Total	...	148 8 0

The family lives hand-to-mouth. There is no saving.

APPENDIX VIII (g).

KAMRUP DISTRICT.—MANDAKATA TEA ESTATE

A family consisting of 5 members—husband, wife, 1 son aged 6 months, and 2 daughters aged 8 and 5 years, respectively.

Income.			Rs.	Expenditure.		
Wages—				A.—Food—		Rs. a. p.
(a) Husband—				Rice 3 maunds 24 seers	...	24 0 0
Pay	...	...	48	Dhan 32 maunds	...	80 0 0
Ticca	...	...	60	Salt 1 maund 8 seers	...	6 0 0
(b) Wife—				Oil 12 seers	...	12 0 0
Pay	...	...	36	Spices	...	6 0 0
Ticca	...	...	27	Fish	...	6 0 0
Advance	...	...	8	Flesh	...	3 0 0
				Pulses	...	9 0 0
				Vegetables	...	2 0 0
				Tea, etc.	...	3 0 0
				B.—Other expenses—		
				Betel-nut	...	6 0 0
				Kerosene oil, 12 seers	...	2 4 0
				Tobacco, etc.	...	6 0 0
				Clothes	...	12 0 0
				Opium	...	6 0 0
				C.—Miscellaneous—		
				Nil.		
Total	...	...	179	Total	...	183 4 0

The family lives hand-to-mouth and is not in debt.

APPENDIX VIII (A),
CINNAMARA TEA ESTATE.
Jorhat Sadr Subdivision.
Monthly Family Budget.

Family—1 male adult, 1 female adult (working), 1 boy 6 years (non-working), 1 girl 4 years (non-working).

Works in tea-house for part of year, in garden for remainder.

Income.			Expenditure.				
	Rs.	a.	p.		Rs.	a.	p.
Pay for man ...	9	8	0	Rice ...	8	8	0
Pay for wife ...	8	8	0	Salt ...	0	2	0
Value of paddy grown in his own land for the whole year, i.e., Re. 1-10 per month.	1	10	0	Oil ...	0	7	0
				Spices and small fish ...	0	10	0
				Pulses ...	0	12	0
				Vegetables ...	0	3	0
				Sugar, etc. ...	0	4	0
				<i>Other household expenses—</i>			
				Betul-nut ...	0	5	0
				Tobacco ...	0	12	0
				Kerosene oil ...	0	3	0
				Clothes ...	3	8	0
				Liquor ...	2	0	0
				Household utensils... ..	0	3	0
				<i>C.—Miscellaneous—</i>			
				Domestic festivals ...	0	8	0
				Hire of cattle ...	0	2	0
				Rent ...	0	4	0
Total ...	19	10	0	Total ...	18	11	0

This family is an average good tea-garden family. The family is a little above the average.

I should estimate that 20 per cent. of the families are above this standard, 30 per cent. of this standard and the remainder below.

Sd.
for Deputy Commissioner, Sibsagar.

APPENDIX VIII (i).
CINNAMARA TEA ESTATE.
Jorhat Sadr Subdivision.
Monthly Family Budget.

Family—1 male, 1 female adult (non-working), 2 children 5 and 3 years, both girls (non-working)
Tea-garden coolie—works in tea-house for half the year and the rest of the time in the garden.

Income.			Expenditure.				
	Rs.	a.	p.		Rs.	a.	p.
Pay for man... ..	10	8	0	Rice ...	8	0	0
Value of paddy grown in own land, Rs. 36 a year, i.e., Rs. 3 a month ...	3	0	0	Salt ...	0	4	0
Sale of milk (including that used by himself) ...	2	0	0	Oil ...	0	7	0
				Spices and small fish ...	0	8	0
				Pulses ...	0	7	0
				Vegetables ...	0	4	0
				Milk ...	1	0	0
				Sugar (gur) ...	0	10	0
				<i>Other household expenses—</i>			
				Betul-nut ...	1	0	0
				Kerosene oil ...	0	3	0
				Tobacco ...	0	8	0
				Clothes ...	1	4	0
				Liquor ...	1	0	0
				Household utensils ...	0	4	0
				<i>C.—Miscellaneous—</i>			
				Festivals ...	0	3	0
				Purchase of cattle... ..	0	5	0
				Rent ...	0	4	0
Total ...	15	8	0	Total ...	16	7	0

N. B.—I should estimate that 20 per cent. of the families are above this standard of comfort, 30 per cent. of this standard, and the remainder below.

Sd.
Deputy Commissioner, Sibsagar.

APPENDIX VIII (j).

JORHAT SADR SUBDIVISION.

Dukhlangia Tea Estate.

Monthly Family Budget.

One man, woman and child 5 years old. Man and woman earning—

Items of income.	Per month.			Expenditure.	Rs. a. p.		
	Rs.	a.	p.		Rs.	a.	p.
Wages—				A.— <i>Dhan</i> (rice) ...	...	...	11 0 0
Man Rs. 5 and Re. 1 bonus ...	6	0	0	Salt ...	...	...	0 8 0
Woman at Rs. 4-8 and annas 13 bonus.	5	5	0	Spices ...	...	...	0 2 0
Average <i>ticca</i> Rs. 3 ...	3	0	0	Mustard oil ...	...	...	0 4 0
Value of crops grown—				Cocoanut oil ...	...	...	0 3 0
From <i>dhan</i> ...	3	4	0	Fish or flesh ...	...	...	0 4 0
„ millet ...	0	12	0	Pulses ...	...	...	0 8 0
„ tobacco ...	0	4	0	Vegetables ...	...	...	0 4 0
„ vegetables ...	0	4	0	Betel-nut ...	...	...	0 6 0
Interest on money lent out ...	2	8	0	Kerosene oil ...	...	...	0 4 0
Total ...	21	3	0	Tobacco ...	...	...	0 4 0
				Clothes ...	...	...	1 11 0
				Household utensils ...	...	...	0 8 0
				Ceremonies ...	...	...	2 0 0
				Rent ...	...	...	1 12 0
				Cost of cattle (estimated to cost originally Rs. 70 to last 10 years).	...	...	0 10 0
				Total ...	...	...	20 8 0

This family was from Berhampore, Ganjam, and was well off, being very intelligent. They have been on the garden for some 13 years.

I would roughly estimate 10 per cent. of families in the garden being above this standard of comfort, 30 per cent. as being of this standard, and the remainder below.

APPENDIX VIII (k).

SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.

Suntok Tea Estate.

Tea-garden coolie family of 5 members—2 males, 1 female and 2 children, the elder being 12 years old.

Item of income—Annual.

	Rs.	a.	p.
Wages.—Rupees 276-2-0.—Annual earnings as could be found from garden register and given by members—	276	2	0
<i>Viz.</i> —(a) Male—Father ...	61	6	0
(b) „ —Son ...	56	2	0
(c) „ —Boy ...	20	10	0
(d) Female—Mother ...	49	7	0
Total <i>ticca</i> wages—Rs. 88-9-0.			
Loan—Rupees 12—Advance to be retrenched ...	12	0	0
Other receipts—Rupees 6 annual proceeds of <i>bhusi</i> ...	6	0	0
Total income ...	294	2	0

Items of expenditure—Annual.

A.—Food.—

Rice, Rs. 216-0-0; purchased paddy for Rs. 18-0-0 monthly at 3½ <i>dhons</i> a rupee.	216	0	0
Salt, Rs. 3; 2 seers is the monthly consumption ...	3	0	0
Oil, Rs. 3—rough calculation ...	3	0	0
Spices, Rs. 1-8 ditto ...	1	8	0
Fish, Rs. 3 ditto ...	3	0	0
Vegetables, Rs. 1-8 ditto ...	1	8	0
Milk ...	1	2	0

APPENDIX VIII (A)—concl'd.
Items of expenditure—Annual—concl'd.

				Rs.	a.	p.
B.—Other household expenses—						
Betel-nut, Rs. 1-8 rough calculation	...	...	...	1	8	0
Kerosene, Rs. 1-8 ditto	...	...	...	1	8	0
Tobacco, Rs. 1-8 ditto	...	...	...	1	8	0
Clothes, Rs. 21-4 ditto	...	...	...	21	4	0
Annual purchase—						
Three 7 cubit <i>dhotis</i>	...	...	...	5	4	0
One 6 cubit <i>dhoti</i>	...	...	...	1	10	0
Two <i>saris</i>	...	...	...	5	4	0
Two blankets, ordinary	...	...	...	5	0	0
One drill coat	...	...	...	4	2	0
Liquor (a) Rs. 18	...	...	...	} 21 0 0		
<i>Ganja</i> (b) Rs. 3	...	...	...
Household utensils	...	...	...	} 4 8 0		
Two earthen jugs	...	...	...
One brass plate	...	...	...	} 1 14 0		
C.—Miscellaneous—						
Festivals and entertainments, Rs. 6 rough calculation	...	...	...	6	0	0
Other expenses	...	...	...	} 7 8 0		
Purchased flesh	...	...	...
Cigarettes	...	...	...	} 1 8 0		
Total				...	293	14 0

APPENDIX VIII (J).
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.
Barapukhuri Tea-Estate.

Tea-garden coolie family of five members, one male, two females and two children, one boy, and the other girl.

				Rs.	a.	p.
Items of income—Annual—						
Paddy cultivation of 80 <i>dangaris</i> yielding 240 <i>dons</i> at 3 <i>dons</i> a rupee	...	...	...	80	0	0
Sale of five pigs at Rs. 3-4-0 each	...	...	...	16	4	0
Wages Rs. 195-12-0 annual earnings	...	...	...	195	12	0
Rs. a. p.						
(1) Male	...	...	...	} 24 0 0		
(2) Female	...	...	...
(3) Mother	...	...	...
(4) <i>Ticca</i>	...	...	...
Loan Rs. 24. Advanced to be retrenched	...	...	...	24	0	0
Total income				...	316	0 0
Items of expenditure—						
A.—Food—						
1. Rice Rs. 210 value of 60 maunds of unhusked rice at Rs. 3-8-0 per maund. Actual purchase was of 30 maunds only.	...	...	...	210	0	0
2. Salt, rough calculation	...	...	...	3	0	0
3. Oil ditto	...	...	...	3	0	0
4. Spices ditto	...	...	...	1	8	0
5. Fish ditto	...	...	...	1	0	0
6. Pulse ditto	...	...	...	3	0	0
7. Vegetable ditto	...	...	...	2	0	0
8. Milk ditto	...	...	...	0	12	0
B.—Other household expenses—						
1. Betel-nut, rough calculation	...	...	...	1	8	0
2. Kerosene oil ditto	...	...	...	1	2	0
3. Tobacco ditto	...	...	...	1	2	0
4. Clothes ditto	...	...	...	21	2	0
Rs. a. p.						
(1) 4 <i>saris</i>	...	...	...	} 24 0 0		
(2) <i>Dhotis</i>	...	...	...
(3) One female <i>kurta</i>	...	...	...
(4) Two blankets	...	...	...
(5) Liquor	...	...	...
(6) Utensils	...	...	...
Rs. 2 0 purchased one bucket	...	...	...	3	2	0
C.—Miscellaneous—						
1. Festivals and entertainments, rough calculation	...	...	...	3	0	0
2. Hired a buffalo at Rs. 15 for two months	...	...	...	15	0	0
3. Land Revenue	...	...	...	8	0	0
4. Repayment of debt Rs. 9 retrenched	...	...	...	9	0	0
5. Other expenses (a) Rs. 3 purchase of fowl and flesh, rough calculation, (b) Rs. 1 purchase of cigarettes.	...	...	...	4	0	0
Total expenditure Rs.				...	315	4 0

APPENDIX VIII (m).

GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION.

Budget for garden coolies.

Constitution of family	...	...	...	...	1 man.
					1 woman.
					1 working boy of 12.
					3 non-working boys.

Total ... 6

<i>Income.</i>			<i>Expenditure.</i>						
	Rs.	a. p.		Rs.	a. p.				
Wages including <i>ticcá</i>	...	300	0	A.—Rice or <i>dhan</i>	...	180	0	0	
Produce of <i>dhan</i> crop	...	75	0	0	Potatoes	...	8	0	0
Produce of vegetable garden	...	10	0	0	<i>Dal</i>	...	12	0	0
Hire of cattle	...	10	0	0	Salt	...	5	0	0
					Spices	...	3	0	0
Total	...	395	0	0	Vegetable	...	6	0	0
					B.—Oil	...	12	0	0
					<i>Pan, Tamul</i>	...	10	0	0
					Clothes	...	35	0	0
					Utensils	...	5	0	0
					C.—Rent	...	6	0	0
					Total	...	282	0	0

The balance had been saved by this coolie and expended when sufficient on cart and bullock and plough-bullocks.

Coolies of this status	...	...	...	...	60 per cent.
Ditto of lower "	...	...	...	...	30 per cent.
Ditto of higher "	...	...	...	...	10 per cent.

(Sd.) A. G. PATTON,

Sub-Divisional Officer, Golaghat.

APPENDIX VIII(n).

SOUTH SYLHET.

Caste—Manjhi—(Sonthal).

Man, wife, daughter (adult) and 2 minor children—3½ workers.

<i>Receipts.</i>			<i>Expenditure.</i>						
	Rs.	a. p.		Rs.	a. p.				
Wages	...	216	2	0	Rice	...	182	0	0
Advance	...	32	0	0	Salt	...	4	14	0
Wood, fuel for sale	...	8	12	0	Oil	...	4	14	0
House repairs	...	3	4	0	Spices	...	3	4	0
Medical	9	0	0	Fish	...	9	12	0
					Pulse	...	14	10	0
					Vegetables	...	6	8	0
					Milk	...	5	11	0
					<i>Gur</i>	...	6	8	0
					Kerosene	...	6	8	0
					Tobacco	...	4	14	0
					Liquor	...	13	4	0
					House repairs	...	3	4	0
					Medical	...	9	0	0
					Festivities	...	6	0	0
					Clothes	...	24	0	0
					Bed bags	...	1	8	0
					Utensils	...	2	8	0
Total	...	288	8	0	Total	...	311	15	0

APPENDIX VIII(o).

SOUTH SYLHET.

Caste—Gond.

Man, mother, wife and 2 children—3 workers :—

Yearly Budget.

Receipts.			Expenditure.		
	Rs.	a. p.		Rs.	a. p.
Rice	6	0 0	Rice	156	0 0
Wages	221	13 0	Salt	6	8 0
Wood, fuel	39	0 0	Oil	16	4 0
Milk	9	12 0	Spices	8	4 0
Vegetables	13	0 0	Fish	16	4 0
House repairs	2	0 0	Pulse	24	6 0
Medical attendance	6	0 0	Vegetable	25	0 0
Blankets	5	0 0	Milk	9	12 0
Bed bag	1	0 0	Gur	9	12 0
Agreement advance	32	0 0	Kerosene	9	12 0
Bonus, monthly	18	0 0	Tobacco	6	8 0
House	9	0 0	Liquor	52	0 0
			Interest	29	4 0
			House repairs	2	0 0
			Medical	6	0 0
			Festivities	2	0 0
			Clothes	24	0 0
			Bed bag	1	0 0
			Utensils	1	0 0
			Blankets	5	0 0
Total	362	9 0	Total	406	10 0

APPENDIX VIII (p).

SOUTH SYLHET.

Caste—Oorca.

Man, wife, sister (aged) old mother, child—2½ workers.

Yearly Budget.

Receipts.			Expenditure.		
	Rs.	a. p.		Rs.	a. p.
Wages	204	12 0	Rice	104	0 0
Advance agreement	22	0 0	Salt	3	4 0
Bonus, monthly	9	0 0	Oil	3	4 0
House repairs	2	0 0	Spices	1	10 0
Medical	6	0 0	Fish	1	10 0
Bed bags	1	0 0	Pulse	3	4 0
			Vegetables	3	4 0
			Milk	5	11 0
			Gur	5	11 0
			Kerosene	3	4 0
			Tobacco	7	5 0
			Liquor	52	0 0
			House repairs	2	0 0
			Medical	6	0 0
			Festivities	2	0 0
			Clothes	16	7 0
			Bed bags	1	0 0
			Utensils	2	0 0
Total	244	12 0	Total	223	10 0

APPENDIX VIII (q).

SOUTH SYLHET.

Caste—Yuria (Hazaribagh).

Man, mother, 2 sisters ; father—basket maker—4 workers.

Yearly Budget.

Receipts.			Expenditure.				
	Rs.	a.	p.		Rs.	a.	p.
Rice	50	0	0	Rice	260	0	0
Wages	286	0	0	Salt	8	2	0
Advance	42	0	0	Oil	26	0	0
Bonus	20	0	0	Spices	4	14	0
Baskets	48	0	0	Fish	9	12	0
House repairs	2	8	0	Pulses	26	0	0
Medical	5	0	0	Vegetables	13	0	0
Bad bags	0	12	0	Milk	22	12	0
House	8	0	0	Gur	26	0	0
				Kerosene	3	4	0
				Tobacco	8	2	0
				Liquor			Nil
				Interest	12	0	0
				House repairs	2	8	0
				Medical	5	0	0
				Festivities	10	0	0
				Clothes	52	0	0
				Bed bags	0	12	0
				Utensils	2	0	0
				Blanket			Nil
Total	472	4	0	Total	492	4	0

APPENDIX VIII (r).

SOUTH SYLHET.

Caste—Dom (Purulia).

Man, wife, son (adult), boy (minor), 2 children—3½ workers.

Receipts.			Expenditure.				
	Rs.	a.	p.		Rs.	a.	p.
Wages	307	7	0	Rice	156	0	0
Advance	32	0	0	Salt	9	12	0
Bonus	12	0	0	Oil	26	0	0
Fish caught for sale	16	4	0	Spices	13	0	0
House repairs	2	8	0	Fish	19	8	0
Medical	6	0	0	Pulse	26	0	0
Bed bags	1	0	0	Vegetables	19	8	0
House	16	0	0	Milk	13	0	0
				Gur	26	0	0
				Kerosene	6	8	0
				Tobacco	13	0	0
				Liquor	19	8	0
				Interest	24	0	0
				House repairs	2	8	0
				Medical	6	0	0
				Festivities	21	0	0
				Clothes	34	0	0
				Bed bags	1	0	0
				Utensils	2	0	0
Total	387	3	0	Total	462	10	0

APPENDIX IX (a).

SHAMSHERNAGAR TEA ESTATE (SYLHET).

(Man, Woman and 3 Children).

					Rs. a. p.
Food, weekly—					
Rice (17 seers at Rs. 4 a maund)	...	...	...	...	1 11 2
Dal (1½ seers at annas 4)	...	...	...	...	0 6 0
Mustard oil	...	...	...	...	0 4 9
Salt—½ seer	...	...	...	...	0 1 6
Vegetables and fish	...	...	...	...	0 1 6
Gur and chira	...	...	...	...	0 10 0
Milk	...	...	...	...	0 1 9
Tobacco	...	...	...	...	0 1 6
Sundries	...	...	...	...	0 4 3
					<hr/>
Total	...	...	...	...	3 10 5
					<hr/>
Clothes, annually—					
28 yards Markin cloth	...	...	...	...	14 0 0
3 blankets	...	...	...	...	6 0 0
4 vests	...	...	...	...	5 0 0
1 coat	...	...	...	...	3 8 0
4 Saris	...	...	...	...	9 0 0
2 Jhulas	...	...	...	...	2 0 0
6 Dhotis for children	...	...	...	...	6 12 0
					<hr/>
Total	...	...	...	...	46 4 0
					<hr/>

APPENDIX IX (b).

ALINAGAR TEA ESTATE (SYLHET).

(Man, wife and 2 children).

					Rs. a. p.
Food, weekly—					
Rice (16 seers at Rs. 4 a maund)	...	...	...	...	1 9 9
Dal (one seer at annas 4)	...	...	...	...	0 4 0
Mustard oil	...	...	...	...	0 5 6
Salt—half seer	...	...	...	...	0 0 9
Vegetables and fish	...	...	...	...	0 4 0
Gur and chira	...	...	...	...	0 10 6
Milk	...	...	...	...	0 2 0
Tobacco	...	...	...	...	0 1 3
Sundries	...	...	...	...	0 6 0
					<hr/>
Total	...	...	...	...	3 11 9
					<hr/>
Clothes, annually—					
3 Dhotis	...	...	...	...	7 8 0
3 Gamchas	...	...	...	...	2 10 0
1 Coat	...	...	...	...	2 4 0
3 Saris	...	...	...	...	9 0 0
3 Jhulas	...	...	...	...	1 8 0
Blankets	...	...	...	...	4 0 9
Dhotis and coat for children	...	...	...	...	4 0 0
					<hr/>
Total	...	...	...	...	30 14 9
					<hr/>

APPENDIX IX (c).

ITAKHULI TEA ESTATE (LAKHIMPUR).

What it costs a coolie family consisting of 3 people—man, woman, working boy or girl.
Foodstuffs:—

Rice—Man—12 ch.
Woman—10 ch.
Boy or girl—8 ch. } daily = 13 seers weekly.

	Rs.	a.	p.
This is 17 maunds for a year at Rs. 5 a maund	85	0	0
Mustard oil, 4 chattaek (weekly) 12 seers at Rs. 30 a maund	9	0	0
Salt, 4 chattaek " " Rs.4-10 "	1	7	6
Dal, 1 chattaek (daily), 23 seers at Rs. 10 a maund	5	12	0
Spices, <i>haldi</i> , onions, etc., at annas 2-3 a week	7	5	0
Sundries	5	0	0
	<hr/>		
	113	8	6

Clothes—

	Rs.	a.	p.
2 <i>dhotis</i>	4	0	0
3 <i>saris</i>	7	8	0
3 " "	4	8	0
1 coat	3	0	0
2 jackets	3	0	0
2 " "	2	0	0
			<hr/>
			24 0 0

Total Rs. 137 8 6

Rupees 137-8-6 ÷ 12 = Rs. 11-7-4, roughly worked out for month for the family.

Earnings of the family—man, woman, boy or girl.

	Rs.	a.	p.
Man	7	0	0
Woman	6	0	0
Boy or girl	5	0	0

18-0-0 × 12 = Rs. 216-0-0

Less expenditure for a year " 187-8-6

Net saving* Rs. 78-7-6

*Besides this they have got their *ticca* earnings.

APPENDIX IX(d).

What it costs a coolie man for a year.

	Rs.	a.	p.
Rice—12 ch. a day = 3 mds. 25 srs. at Rs. 5 per maund	33	2	0
Mustard oil—1½ ch. weekly = 4 srs. 14 ch. at annas 12 a seer	3	10	0
Salt—1½ ch. " = 4 srs. 14 ch. at annas 12 a seer	0	11	6
Dal—2½ ch. " = 8 srs. 2 ch. at annas 4 a seer	2	0	6
Spices, <i>haldi</i> , onions, etc. = 9 pies a week	2	7	0
Tobacco	2	0	0
	<hr/>		
	43	15	0

Clothes—

	Rs.	a.	p.
2 <i>dhotis</i>	4	0	0
1 coat	3	0	0
	<hr/>		
	7	0	0

Total 50 15 0

Earnings of a man for a year.

Rs. 7 a month (only wages)

Rs. 7 × Rs. 12 = ... 84 0 0

Less expenditure ... 50 15 0

Rs. 50-15-0 ÷ 12 = Rs. 4-3-11.

* Net saving ... 34 15 0

* Besides this the man has his *ticca* earnings.

APPENDIX IX(e).

ITAKHULI TEA ESTATE.

What it costs a coolie woman for a year.

Foodstuffs—		Rs. a. p.
Rice—10 ch. a day=5 mds. 30 srs. at Rs. 5 per maund	...	28 12 0
Mustard oil—1½ ch. weekly =4 srs. 14 ch. at annas 12 a seer	...	3 10 0
Salt—1½ ch. „ =4 srs. 14 ch. at annas 2 „	...	0 11 6
Dal—2½ ch. „ =8 srs. 2 ch. at annas 4 „	...	2 0 6
Spices, <i>haldi</i> , onions, etc.=9 pies a week	...	2 7 0
Tobacco	...	2 0 0
		<hr/>
		39 9 0
		Rs. a. p.
Clothes—		
3 saris	...	7 8 0
2 jackets	...	3 0 0
		<hr/>
Total	...	50 1 0

Rs. 50-1-0 + 12 = Rs. 4-2-9 roughly, worked for a month.

Earnings of a woman for a year.

Rs. 6 a month (only wages).		Rs. a. p.
Rs. 6 × 12 =	...	72 0 0
Less expenditure	...	50 1 0
		<hr/>
* Net saving	...	21 15 0

* Besides this a woman has got *ticca* earnings.

APPENDIX IX(f).

ITAKHULI TEA ESTATE.

What it costs a coolie girl or boy for a year.

Foodstuffs—		Rs. a. p.
Rice— 8 ch. a day = 4 mds. 25 srs. at Rs.5 per maund	...	23 2 0
Mustard oil—1½ ch. weekly = 4 srs. 1 ch. at annas 12 a seer	...	3 0 9
Salt— 1½ ch. „ = 4 srs. 1 ch. at annas 2 „	...	0 8 3
Dal— 2½ ch. „ = 7 srs. 5 ch. at annas 4 „	...	1 13 3
Spices, <i>haldi</i> , onions, etc = 9 pies a week	...	2 7 0
Tobacco	...	1 0 0
		<hr/>
		31 15 3
		Rs. a. p.
Clothes—		
3 saris	...	4 8 0
2 jackets	...	2 0 0
		<hr/>
Total	...	33 7 3

Rupees 33-7-3 + 12 = Rs. 3-3-3 roughly, worked out for a month.

Earnings of a boy or girl for a year.

Rs. 5 a month (only wages).		Rs. a. p.
Rs. 5 × 12 =	...	60 0 0
Less expenditure	...	33 7 3
		<hr/>
* Net saving	...	21 8 9

* Besides this a boy or girl has got *ticca* earnings.

APPENDIX IX (g)

DEKHARI TEA COMPANY, LAKHIMPUR.

Male adult's monthly budget by Mr. Powell, Dekhari Tea Company (Lakhimpur).

			1921.	1919.
			Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Rice—25 seers at Rs. 5 a maund	...	...	8 2 0	8 2 0
Dal—3 seers at annas 4 a seer	...	...	0 12 0	0 7 6
Salt—1½ seers at annas 2 a seer	...	...	0 3 0	0 1 6
Mustard oil—1 seer at annas 12 a seer	...	...	0 12 0	0 6 0
Spices—anna 1 a week	...	...	0 4 0	0 1 0
Vegetables and fish—annas 4 a week	...	...	1 0 0	0 8 0
Tobacco	...	...	0 4 0	0 2 0
Clothing per year—				
		Rs. a. p.		
1 coat	...	3 0 0	}	1 1 3
2 pairs dhotis	...	6 0 0		
1 blanket	...	2 0 0		
1 umbrella	...	2 0 0		
Total	...	13 0 0		0 9, 0
			7 6 3	5 5 0

APPENDIX IX (h).

Mr. S. P. Barua's budget for a family consisting of a man, wife, & non-working children.

Monthly—

				Rs. a. p.
Paddy—2 maunds, 10 seers at Rs. 3 a maund (i.e., rice at about Rs. 4-8).				6 12 0
Mixed Dal—4 seers	...	...	...	0 14 0
Salt—2 seers	...	...	...	0 4 0
Mustard oil—¾ seer	...	...	...	0 9 0
Vegetables	...	...	...	0 6 0
Fish	...	...	...	0 6 0
Spices	...	...	...	0 4 0
Tobacco	...	...	...	0 2 0
Betel nut	...	...	...	0 4 0
Molasses	...	...	...	0 4 0
Kerosene oil	...	...	...	0 4 0
Cocconut oil	...	...	...	0 2 0
Vermilion	...	...	...	0 0 6
Soap	...	...	...	0 2 0
Lime	...	...	...	0 0 6
Paddy for rice beer	...	...	...	0 8 0
Chilies	...	...	...	0 1 0

Clothes, yearly—

				Rs. a. p.
1 coat	...	...	...	2 8 0
3 dhotis	...	...	...	3 12 0
1 blanket	...	...	...	2 8 0
3 kurtas	...	...	...	2 4 0
3 saris	...	...	...	5 4 0
1 blanket	...	...	...	2 8 0
4 kurtas for children	...	...	...	2 0 0
				20 12 0
Clothes	...	...	...	1 13 0
For entertainments and ceremonies	...	...	...	0 12 0
Total	...	...	...	13 12 0

APPENDIX IX(c).

Budget estimate of a coolie's expenses framed by Khan Sahib Wali Mohamed.

Serial No.	Name of article required.	Daily allowance to each coolie or his dependent.			Monthly (30 days) allowance to each coolie or his dependent.			Average retail.	Monthly price of each article.			
		Adults over 18 years.	Adolescents (12-18).	Children (4-11).	Adults over 18 years.	Adolescents (12-18).	Children (4-11).	Prices of articles.	Adults over 18 years.	Adolescents (12-18).	Children (4-11).	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		S. ch.	S. ch.	S. ch.	S. ch.	S. ch.	S. ch.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
1	Rice ...	0 12	0 9	0 6	22 8	16 14	11 4	5 0 0 per md.	2 13 0	2 1 9	1 6 6	
2	Dal (arhar) ...	0 2	0 1½	0 1	3 12	2 13	1 12	10 0 0 "	0 15 0	0 11 3	0 7 6	
3	Vegetables ...	0 3	0 2½	0 1½	5 10	4 3½	2 13	0 2 0 per sr.	0 5 6	0 4 0	0 2 9	
4	Salt ...	0 ½	0 ½	0 ½	0 15	0 11½	0 7½	0 1 6 "	0 1 6	0 1 0	0 0 9	
5	Mustard oil (average).	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	1 ½	12 ¾	8 ½	0 12 0 "	1 0 9	0 12 0	0 8 0	
6	Onions and garlic	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	0 2½	0 1½	0 1½	0 3 0 "	0 7 6	0 5 9	0 3 9	
7	Turmeric ...	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	0 3 0 "	0 0 6	0 0 3	0 0 3	
8	Tamarind ...	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	0 1½	not sold.	...	...	...
9	Chillies ...	0 ½	0 1½	0 ½	0 7½	0 4½	0 3½	1 8 0 per sr.	0 10 9	0 8 0	0 5 3	
10	Tobacco for smoking.	0 ½	0 1½	0 ½	0 7½	...	...	0 8 0 "	0 4 0	...	...
11	Firewood ...	1 8	1 2	0 12	45 0	37 8	22 8	0 8 0 per md.	0 9 0	0 6 9	0 4 6	
12	Kerosene oil ...	(to be given in cash only)							Lump sum ...	0 4 0	0 3 0	0 2 0
	Total ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	.....	7 6 6	5 5 9	3 9 3
Articles required yearly—												
Adults		Males—3 dhotis worth Rs. 5, 3 kurtas Rs. 3, 2 safas Rs. 2 = Rs. 10 ...						0 13 6		...		
		Females—3 saris worth Rs. 7, 3 kurtas or photoi worth Rs. 3 = Rs. 10 ...						...		...
Adolescents		Males—3 dhotis Rs. 4, 3 kurtas Rs. 2—total Rs. 6 ...						...		0 8 0	
		Females—3 saris Rs. 4-8, 3 kurtas Rs. 1-8—total Rs. 6 ...						...		...
Children		2 small dhotis worth Rs. 1-8 ...						...		0 2 0	
Articles required once in 2 years—												
Adults		2 blankets and a gudhri (poor quality)—Rs. 6 ...						0 4 0		...		
Adolescents		2 blankets smaller dimensions (poor quality)—Rs. 4-3 ...						0 3 0		...		
Children		Not provided for specially.						...		...
Miscellaneous—												
		Household utensils for cooking, drinking and other purposes ...						0 2 0		0 1 0		
		Festivals, deaths, marriages, births, etc. ...						0 8 0		0 4 0		
		Grand total ...						9 2 0		6 5 9		
		As in living together some economy is effected. I would put these in round figures as ...						9 0 0		6 4 0		
										3 8 0		

Note—1. In the articles for daily expenses, with the exception of kerosene oil, the articles and their weight exactly as given in Schedule B of the rules under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act VI of 1901, are strictly followed though in his work called "The Economic Life of a Bengal District," Mr. Jack admits of adult males eating a seer a day. A coolie is supposed to eat more than an agriculturist who gets milk, ghee and other rich articles to enjoy. Kerosene oil seems required in the case of coolie to a small extent and that too is provided for. Prices charged are somewhat cheaper than prevailing at present in most localities.

2. In providing for clothes, if the standard prescribed by Schedule A of the said rules were followed, the budget would have run up very high. It is an admitted fact that the present prices of cloth are very high. On page 7 of Bulletin of Indian Industries and Labour, No. 16, Mr. C. A. Coubrong says:—"Prices have at times reached three times their pre-war value." The rise in price of Indian mill-produced piece-goods rose in the following proportions:—

1909-11.	1910-11.	1911-12.	1912-13.	1913-14.	1914-15.	1915-16.	1916-17.	1917-18.	1918-19.	1919-20.	1920-21.
2-3	3-4	2-5	2-6	2-7	2-8	2-5	3-9	4-5	6-0	6-7	7-7

A coolie does require some clothes to protect himself against Assam weather. No provision is made for umbrellas, etc., budgetted for by some Managers of the gardens.

3. In Schedule B referred to above emigrants are divided into two classes only, i.e., "of and above 10 years of age" and "Between 2 and 10 years of age" and to the second class persons half the rations allowed to first class are allowed. If that division were followed here the budget would have gone up much. But three classes of coolies as made herein would give little better estimate of coolies' requirements, hence this is done.

APPENDIX X.

Act XIII.

Articles of Agreement made and entered into this 14th day of February 1922. Between Morakhan whose description is given below of the one part and A. B. Esq. of Jorehaut Tea Company, Limited (hereinafter called the employer) of the other part. Whereby it is mutually covenanted and agreed as follows :—

1. In consideration of the sum of Rs. paid by the said employer to the said Morakhan as an advance on account of the work hereinafter agreed to be performed and the receipt whereof the said Morakhan hereby acknowledges he the said hereby agrees to labour as a garden coolie on the Kharikutia tea-garden belonging to the employer for three years of 939 working days from the date of this agreement and during that period, unless prevented by sickness, to perform such daily tasks as may be assigned to him and the said Morakhan hereby further covenants that unless prevented as aforesaid he will not absent himself from work or refuse or neglect to perform the daily tasks which may be assigned him or such other duties as he may reasonably be called on to perform and that any such neglect or refusal as aforesaid shall render him liable to the provisions of Act XIII of 1859 and that for every day he shall be absent either from sickness or on leave he will work another day so as to complete the full nine hundred and thirty-nine days and that the said advance of Rs. shall be worked out by him and deducted from his pay during the last thirty-six months of the said term by equal monthly instalments of Rs. each.

2. In consideration of the Covenants on the part of the said A. B. Esq., hereinafter contained the said employer hereby covenants that if the said shall labour on the employer's said estate for the period and in manner aforesaid the employer shall and will pay to him from the date on which he joins work on such estate monthly wages at the rate of Rs. 7. As witness the hands of the parties hereto the day and year first above written.

A. B.

Description of Labourer.

Name.	Father's name.	Age.	Sex.	Caste.	Zillah.	Village.	Thana.	Descriptive mark.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Morakhan ...	Bhagela ...	36	Male.	Gour ...	Raipur...	Mohena...	Nanaghat.	

APPENDIX XI.

(WITH ONE ANNA STAMP).

Articles of Agreement made and entered into this _____ day of _____ 192. between _____ (whose description is given below hereinafter called the labourer of the one part, and the Manager of _____ for & on behalf of the Assam Company, hereinafter called the employer of the other part whereby it is mutually covenanted and agreed as follows:—

1. That in consideration of Rs. _____ paid to-day by the said employer to the said labourer as an advance on account of the work herein after contracted to be performed by the said labourer, and the receipt where of the said labourer hereby acknowledges ^{he}/_{she} the said labourer agrees to labour as a coolie on the _____ Tea garden of the Assam Company, and to do ³¹² and perform ⁹³⁶ full and complete *haziras*, Sundays not being counted as working days, according to the usual and customary mode comportation of daily *haziras* in the said garden from the date of the agreement the labourer undertaking to perform such work as is provided by the employer on six out of seven consecutive days. And the said labourer hereby further covenants that ^{he}/_{she} will not absent ^{himself}/_{herself} from work without permission of the employer or refuse or neglect to perform the daily *haziras* till ³¹² ⁶²⁴ full and complete *haziras* are worked off, and that such neglect or refusal to perform or non-per- ⁹³⁶ formance of the said number of full and complete *haziras* shall render the labourer liable to the provisions of Act XIII of 1859, and the labourer hereby further covenants that this contract will continue until the said number of full and complete *haziras* hereby agreed to be performed are worked

off unless the labourer is declared to be permanently unfit to labour by a competent Medical Officer. And the labourer hereby further covenants that the said advance of Rs _____ received to-day ^{him} will be worked off by ^{him} _{her} at the rate of Rs _____ for each full and complete 26 *baziras* or proportionately.

2. That in consideration of the covenants on the part of the labourer herein before set forth, the said employer hereby covenants that if the said labourer shall labour on the employer's said garden in the manner aforesaid, the employer shall and will pay wages to ^{him} _{her} at the rate of Rs. _____ for each full and complete 26 *baziras*.

In witness whereof the parties hereto set their hands the day and year first abovementioned.

DESCRIPTION OF LABOURER.

Name.	Father's Name.	Age.	Sex.	Caste.	RESIDENCE.			Descriptive marks.
					Zilla.	Thanna.	Village.	

Signed, sealed and delivered
in the presence of

EMPLOYER.
for the Assam Company.

WITNESS.

LABOURER.

APPENDIX XII.

THE MANAGER, ASSAM COMPANY.

FACTORY,

I _____ Son of _____ Caste _____
do hereby enter into an Agreement with the Assam Company that my _____
will work as a coolie on the Factories of the Assam Company for _____ years on
a salary of Rs. _____ per month. To make this Agreement binding, I this
day received an advance of Rs. _____ to be deducted from my said
_____ monthly wages at annas _____ per month I agree that if my said
_____ absent _____ from work without reason I will pay to
the Company at the rate of Annas _____ per day on account of loss of _____
services, and I will be liable for any other loss that may be caused in case this contract is not
fulfilled. Dated _____ day of _____ 19 _____

Signature {
of Father {

Witnesses _____

APPENDIX XIII.



CONTRACT under Act XIII of 1859, between the undersigned Laborer of the first part and the Manager of the Dahingeapar Estate of the second part, WHEREAS I _____ the said Laborer _____ do now hereby bind myself to serve as a coolie for a period of _____ days in the Dahingeapar Estate for which I hereby acknowledge to have received from the Manager of the said Estate, the sum of Rs. _____ as an advance, and I do hereby make the following Covenants :—

1. That I shall like other imported laborers work out the said period of my contract for _____ days without any break or objection and do all the works of a coolie or any work that is required of me of whatever description, under the direction and orders of the Manager or the representatives of the Estate.

2. That the time of my service, viz., _____ days, shall be made up of full daily attendance to my work. I shall serve for _____ days, calculating a day according to the measure of work, which is, or may be, prevalent in the said Estate for determining a daily attendance or full task and I accept the garden Hazrah Book as a true and proper account of the number of my attendance at work from which book the date of the termination of my contract shall be determined.

3. That my wages shall be at the rate of Rs. _____ per month and that every month's wages shall be paid to me within the following month.

4. The amount of any advance made to me, by the Manager in cash or otherwise and the price of rice or any other food I may receive from the Garden Godown shall be deducted from my monthly wages, and I shall only be entitled to receive the balance of my wages after such deductions have been made.

5. That if before the expiry of this my contract I absent myself from the work without leave, or abscond, or if by disobedience to any lawful command or in any other way I cause any loss to my Employer, I shall be liable to punishment under the said Act according to Law, and I further bind myself to refund to my said Employer the said amount of my _____ together with Rs. 25 as compensation for loss, in all Rs. _____ which sum I shall pay without any objection.

Dated the _____

Number.	Name of Coolie.	Father's Name.	Age.	Sex.	Caste.	Zillah.	Pergunah.	Thannah.	Village.	Signature.
										H. Mark. Witness. Witness. Manager.

APPENDIX XIV.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT in connection with ENTICEMENT OF LABOUR FROM TEA GARDENS AND OTHER CONCERNS

IN THE

BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY AND SURMA VALLEY.

The proprietors or accredited representatives of the several companies or concerns who have signed copies of this Agreement do and each of them doth by these presents mutually bind the said companies and concerns to abide by the following Rules and Provisions which are aimed at discouraging and preventing the enticement, harbouring, detention or employment (here-after called "offences") of garden or other coolies without the consent of the companies and concerns by or for whom such coolies may have been imported recruited or employed and at prescribing certain fines or penalties by way of damages for infringement of such Rules and Provisions, which Rules and Provisions are framed and subscribed on the assurance or assumption that all proprietors, Boards of Directors, and Managing or other Agents or Secretaries of the said companies and concerns may be depended on to enforce due compliance with all awards made in pursuance of such Rules and Provisions, their active support in that behalf being deemed essential to the same being successfully carried out.

For the purposes of this agreement the following definitions will obtain :—

- (1) *Offence*.—A person is guilty of an offence against these rules who employs or harbours or entices any coolie who is claimable, under these rules, by another concern.
- (2) *Defaulter* means any free coolie who has absconded while under *bona fide* advances to his concern or a coolie recruited by one concern who has proceeded direct from the recruiting district to another concern without reporting to, and obtaining the sanction of, the first concern.
- (3) *Bona fide advances* means advances made by a concern or its recognised agents and do not include shop-keeper's bills or line debts.
- (4) *To employ and/or employment* shall include special contract work and/or work under contractors engaged by and/or on the concern.

IT IS AGREED THAT—

1. All coolies living within the area of a concern's grant or premises are to be considered coolies of such concern whether regularly employed or not, but coolies living in the vicinity of a concern and outside its boundaries shall not be considered as coolies of such concern unless under agreement to the concern.

2. No subscriber to these rules shall employ directly or indirectly or harbour or detain any coolie (whether under contract or not) who has been imported by another concern, within the period of 3 years after importation, it being understood, however, that no claim under this rule shall be made or entertained unless duly formulated within two calendar years after the coolie has left the importing concern.

3. No subscriber to these rules shall employ directly or indirectly or harbour or detain any coolie other than mentioned in Rule 2 who may be under Act XIII agreement to another concern, as shown by such concern's Cash and Agreement Books, it being understood, however, that no claim under this rule shall be made or entertained unless duly formulated within two calendar years after the coolie has left the concern to which he was under contract.

4. No subscriber to these rules shall employ directly or indirectly or harbour or detain a coolie who is a defaulter to another concern, it being understood, however, that no claim under this rule shall be made or entertained unless duly formulated within two calendar years after such coolie has defaulted.

5. No subscriber to these rules shall directly or indirectly entice or endeavour to entice any coolies employed on another concern from such employment.

6. No subscriber to these rules shall employ directly or indirectly or harbour or detain any coolie who has been imported *bona fide* by him and has been employed as a coolie and/or as a recruiter, but who, it is proved, was either originally imported, or employed under Act, XIII agreement, or employed as a free coolie, by another concern.

Should any coolie be employed, harboured or detained under the above circumstances no proceedings shall be taken under Rules 2, 3 and 4, but the coolie and his or her wife, husband, child or children shall be claimable under this rule, on tender of the recruiting expenses as provided hereunder in Rule 8.

No claim shall lie in any case where such coolie has been employed as a recruiter in respect of any coolie or coolies so recruited other than the wife or husband child or children of the recruiting coolie as the case may be.

No claim shall lie in any case under this rule unless made within two years from the time such coolie left the claiming concern.

7. The respective penalties for breaches of the foregoing rules No. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 shall not exceed the maximum penalties respectively laid down for breaches of these respective rules in the schedule hereto. Such sum or sums as may be awarded under this Schedule shall be in addition to any other sum, properly claimable under Rule 8 as recruiting expenses.

8. In all cases in which under these Rules (save as hereafter provided in cases coming under the provisions of Rule 6) coolies are properly claimable from one concern by another and are returned to the claiming concern the claiming concern shall not be responsible to pay the concern from which

such coolies return, any sums of money advanced or any bonuses or other like sums paid by such latter concern to such coolies. In cases of claims under Rule 6, where the recruiting coolie and his or her wife husband child or children are returned to the claiming concern the claiming concern shall be liable to pay the actual recruiting expenses paid by the concern from which such coolies are claimed in respect of such coolies.

9. Every complaint as to the alleged infringement of the foregoing rules or as to an offence of the kind or nature in such Rules indicated shall be in writing signed by the Superintendent or Manager in charge who is directly responsible to the Agents or Proprietors of the complainant concern and addressed and delivered or sent to the like Superintendent or Manager of the concern complained against and every such complaint shall state :—

(1) In the case of an alleged infringement of either Rules 2, 3, 4, or 6 as above, such of the following particulars as are applicable to the particular case :—

(a) All particulars necessary for the identification of the coolies who are the subject matter of the complaint.

(b) The period, if any, of the coolie's non-expired service compulsory or otherwise :

Such complaint shall also contain a statement that in the event of the non-return of the coolies the following sums will be claimed, viz. :

(c) The amount of penalty.

(d) The cost of importing and recruiting the coolies when claimed under Rule 2.

(e) The amount of advances outstanding when claimed under Rules 3 and 4.

(2) In the case of an alleged infringement of Rule 5 the grounds which it is alleged constitute the alleged offence.

10. The recipient of any such complaint within three days from the receipt thereof, shall, if the complaint be made under Rules 2, 3 or 4 hereof, and in the event of his not repudiating the same either—

(a) Pay or remit or settle the amount claimed in which case he may retain the coolie, or

(b) Forthwith eject (in the presence of complainant's representative if so required) such coolie with all his belongings from his concern.

11. If the complaint be made under Rule 6, and in the event of his not repudiating the same he shall forthwith eject (in the presence of complainant's representative if so required) such coolie with his or her wife, husband, child or children and all his belongings from his concern.

12. In the event of the recipient of any such complaint (whether made under Rules 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6) repudiating responsibility therefor—

(c) he shall deliver or send to the complainant a written statement recording the grounds on which he disputes liability in the whole or in part, as the case may be, provided that if he adopts this course his liability shall not be affected should the coolies or any of them abscond before final award or payment thereof.

13. If the recipient of any such complaint should fail or neglect to take either of these courses, he shall stand liable for the full amount of the claim and/or penalties provided by the rules as the case may be.

14. If the dispute be not otherwise adjusted, the complainant may send—

(a) to the Secretary of the Assam Branch :—

(i) when the complainant concern and the concern complained against are both in the Brahmaputra Valley ;

(ii) when the complainant concern is in the Surma Valley and the concern complained against is in the Brahmaputra Valley ;

(b) to the Secretary of the Surma Valley Branch :—

(i) when the complainant concern and the concern complained against are both in the Surma Valley ;

(ii) when the complainant concern is in the Brahmaputra Valley and the concern complained against is in the Surma Valley ;

under registered post, a full copy of his complaint and of the other side's statement to be adjudicated upon by a Court of Arbitration to be constituted in accordance with the following Rules and Bye-Laws, viz. :—

RULES FOR ARBITRATIONS.

(a) The Court shall be constituted by the Branch Committee on receipt of the papers which must contain the full complaint as set out in Rule 9.

(b) The Court shall consist of three Arbitrators who shall be selected by the Branch Committee from any recognised and impartial tea planters or local representatives of concerns other than tea concerns who are willing to serve.

(c) The Court appointed as aforesaid shall elect their own Chairman.

(d) The Court may call for such evidence whether oral or documentary as they require to enable them to deal with any matter coming before them, and the parties to the arbitration or their agents or representatives shall if required submit to examination on oath or affirmation in relation to the matters in dispute and shall produce before the Court all books, papers, accounts or other documents in their possession or power which may be required or called for and do all other things which the Court may require.

- (e) The decision of the majority of the Court shall be taken as the decision of the Court.
- (f) The names of the arbitrators constituting the Court shall not be ordinarily disclosed to the parties nor shall the parties be entitled to such information as of right but the whole question shall be in the absolute discretion of the Branch Committee.
- (g) The non-disclosure of the said names shall not in any case affect the validity of the proceedings or any Award made therein nor afford any ground for objection to the filing of the award.
- (h) If any Arbitrator declines or fails to act or dies or becomes incapable of acting the Branch Committee may substitute a new arbitrator in his place and the Court so reconstituted shall proceed with the arbitration with liberty to act on the record of the proceedings as then existing (if any) or to commence the arbitration *de novo*, as they may decide.
- (i) The Court may at their own instance before making their final award and at the expense of the parties consult, refer to and act on the advice recommendations or suggestions of any two impartial tea planters or local representatives of concerns other than tea concerns not being in any way interested in or connected with either concern involved in the dispute.
- (j) The Court may also at the like expense of the parties consult and take the advice of Solicitors or Counsel upon any question of law evidence, practice or procedure arising in the course of the reference, or as to the form and nature of their award.
- (k) The Court shall make their award in writing within 90 days from the time of entering upon the reference or within such extended time as they may notify. Such Award shall be signed by the Court and when completed a copy shall be sent by them to the Branch Committee who shall forward a copy to each of the parties interested.
- (l) The parties shall in all matters abide by and obey the Award which shall be binding on the parties and their respective representatives.
- (m) Alteration in the constitution of any Firm Company or Concern being a party to the arbitration either by resignation, death or in any other manner either before or after making the award shall not operate as a revocation of the submission or invalidate any proceedings on the arbitration or any Award.
- (n) Neither of the parties shall bring or prosecute any suit or proceedings whatever against the Court or any member thereof for and in respect of the matters in dispute or any of them nor any such suit or proceedings against the other party except for the purpose of enforcing the Award.
- (o) The decision of the Court shall be final. All procedure not otherwise hereby provided for shall be regulated by the Court and no objection shall be taken or entertained by reason of any irregularity in procedure.
- (p) The Court shall have power to award a sum to cover costs and expenses of any party to the arbitration and to direct by and to whom the same shall be paid.
- (q) Subject as aforesaid the Court shall not by their decision or award impose larger sums by way of damages than those prescribed according to the scale and under the provisions in the Schedule hereof.

15. After constitution of the Court as aforesaid the Branch Committee shall give notice by registered post to both parties of the place and date and time when and where the dispute will be investigated and either party may appear in person or by any tea garden Superintendent or Manager or by the local representative of a concern other than a tea concern to conduct his case but neither side shall be at liberty to be represented by counsel, attorney or any legal adviser.

16. Upon receipt of such notice the concern complained against shall have the right to forward to the Secretary a further copy of his written statement of the grounds upon which liability is disputed.

17. Failing satisfactory settlement or compliance with an Award, by the Superintendent or Manager of the concern involved, the case first shall be reported for action to the Proprietors, Boards or Agents concerned. If no satisfactory action is taken within sixty days after such report by the Proprietors, Boards or Agents of the concern involved, the other party shall be at liberty to take such steps to enforce his Award under the Civil Procedure Code or otherwise as may be open to him.

18. In the case of a company or private concern being signatory to these Rules, it is understood that the same apply to all branches of the said company or private concern, whether devoted to the culture of tea or other produce or to other industrial pursuits.

19. These provisions shall be binding on any other tea company or concern on whose behalf these presents or a copy thereof be hereafter signed by its proprietor or accredited representative.

20. This agreement shall continue in force until the fifteenth day of October 1923 subject to previous termination hereof in respect of any signatory by giving twelve calendar months' notice in writing of his or their intention so to terminate the same, such notice to be addressed to the Secretary, Indian Tea Association, Calcutta.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO.

1. For an offence against Rule 2 the penalty will be a maximum sum of Rs. 300 for each coolie for the first offence, and of Rs. 500 for each coolie for a second or subsequent offence, such penalty to be in addition to any sum awarded by way of damages under Clause 4 hereof.
2. For an offence against Rule 3 the penalty will be a maximum sum of Rs. 200 for each coolie for the first offence and of Rs. 300 for each coolie for a second or subsequent offence,

such penalty to be in addition to any sum awarded by way of damages under Clause 4 hereof.

3. For an offence affecting any coolie who is a defaulter to another concern as provided under Rule 4, the penalty will be Rs. 50 for each coolie in addition to payment of all *bona fide* advances shown against such coolie in the concern books and such sum as may be awarded by way of damages under Clause 4 hereof.
4. For an offence against Rule 5 the penalty will be a maximum sum of Rs. 500 for the first offence and of Rs. 1,000 for a second or subsequent offence, irrespective of any penalties which may have been previously enforced under Rules 2, 3, and 4.
5. For failure to comply with the terms of Rule 6 the penalty will be a maximum sum of Rs. 1,000 for each offence.

APPENDIX XV.

Number of tea-gardens employing more than 50 labourers with the number of adult labourers (working and non-working) and children living in garden lines or on garden land on 30th June 1921:—

District.	Number of gardens.	Adults.	Children.
1	2	3	4
Cachar	179	80,838	57,159
Sylhet	155	96,896	77,879
Kamrup	14	2,829	1,628
Darrang	130	82,101	60,587
Nowgong	33	15,330	10,979
Sibsagar	158	141,211	118,381
Lakhimpur	142	152,921	113,406
Total	811	571,526	439,518