



ROYAL COMMISSION  
ON  
LABOUR IN INDIA.

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EVIDENCE.

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Vol. VII.—Part 1.

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and  
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## NOTE TO PART I.

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

#### NOTE TO PART I.

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## LIST OF SUBJECTS.

## I. Recruitment.

- (1) *Origin of Labour.*
  - (i) Extent of migration.
  - (ii) Causes of particular streams of migration.
  - (iii) Changes in recent years.
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Value of.

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

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55	Miss M. Sage, M.A.	Joint Principal, The Buckingham and Carnatic School, Madras	56	Mr. K. O. Anthoni..		
56	Mr. K. O. Anthoni..	Secretary, The Buckingham & Carnatic Mills Workpeople Welfare Committee.				

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65	Mr. Selvapathy Chetty	Representatives of the Employers' Federation of Southern India, Madras.	Mr. Shiva Rao's Memo.				
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67	Mr. J. Gray, O.B.E., I.C.S.				Commissioner of Labour, Madras.	37—56	
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68b	M. R. Ry. M. Krishnaswami Ayyar Avargal (not examined orally)				Offg. Chief Inspector of Factories, Madras.	60—68	
69	Capt. N. R. Ubhaya, I.M.S.				Director of Public Health, Madras.	68—74	
70	Mr. W. E. Smith, M.A., I.E.S.				Offg. Director of Public Instruction, Madras.	74—75	280—282, G.-3071.
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72	Mr. C. E. Wood, M.L.C.				of Messrs. Parry & Co., Ltd.		
73	Mr. F. G. Luker ..				of Messrs. Addison & Co., Ltd.		

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14 <sup>a</sup> 76	Col. R. McCarrison, C.I.E.; I.M.S.	Director, Nutritional Research, Pasteur Institute, Coonoor.	225—238	302—307, G.-3305.
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81	Lt.-Col. L. L. Porter, O.B.E., V.D.	Managing Director, Nonesuch Tea Estates Co., Coonoor.	..	311—317, G.-3360.
82	Lt. Commander L. G. Elkington, R.N. (retd.)	Manager, Ibex Lodge Estate, Coonoor.	..	317—322, G.-3445.
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87	Rangammal ..	Do. ..	..	327—328, G.-3581.
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24	Mr. J. E. Sampson	Manager, Pachamalai Estate, Valparai, (Anamalai Hills).	..	338—351, G.-3680.
25	Vyrahvan			
26	Mr. J. E. Sampson			
26	Mr. J. E. Sampson			
100	Mr. W. H. Martin ..			
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102	Mr. E. Johnson ..	Representatives of the Anamalai Planters' Association.	..	351—373, G.-3889.
103	Mr. A. W. F. Mills ..			
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111	Mr. F. L. Schwinde	Manager, Do. ...		
112	Mr. Eric Johnson ..	Group Manager, Mudis Group of Estates.	..	380—384, G.-4167.
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114	Mr. J. C. Blackham	Group Manager	..	384—396, G.-4215.
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117	Mr. E. F. Thomas ..	Collector and District Magistrate, Coimbatore.	..	414—421, G. 4535.
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147	Mr. J. H. Sprott ..	Manager of the Hallori & Santaghurry Coffee Estate, Coorg.	..	425—431, G.-4639.

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158	Mr. A. B. Madapa	Owner, Heroor Coffee, Plantations, Sidapur, Coorg.	..	449—452, G.-4987.
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163	Mr. G. W. Priestly, I.C.S.	Commissioner	340—341	458—466, G.-5037.
164	Major F. R. Thornton, I.M.S.	Civil Surgeon		
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2	Mr. S. Joseph ..						
3	Mr. Mntu Krishnan						
23	Mr. S. Ramaswami ..						
24	Mr. S. L.G.	The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway	1—358	491—521, K. 4943.			
25	Vyrahvan S. Wathen ..				Agent		
6	Mr. C. C. Fink ..				Chief Auditor & Accountant.		
7	Mr. H. D. Sinclair				Chief Transportation Superintendent and Traffic Manager.		
8	Mr. R. D. Thompson				Chief Mechanical Engineer.		
9	Mr. J. A. Cruickshank				Chief Medical Officer.		
10	Mr. G. Charlton ..				Deputy Agent.		
11	Mr. W. E. Marsh ..				Press Superintendent.		
12	Mr. N. Grayson ..				Architect.		
13	Mr. Syed Madhar ..				Representatives of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union.	549—564	522—536, K. 5292.
14	Mr. A. S. Fernandez						
15	Mr. S. M. Sundar-chari						
16	Mr. K. Veerasami ..						
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18	Mr. G. Krishnamurti						
19	Mr. Lakshminarayana						
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21	Mr. P. Rothera ..	Agent.	The South Indian Railway 1-358	537-560, K.-5446.
22	Mr. A. H. Smyth ..	Chief Transportation Superintendent.		
23	Mr. H. A. Reid ..	Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer.		
24	Dr. C. E. R. Norman	Chief Medical Officer.		
25	Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyer	Assistant Auditor.		
26	Mr. P. Govindaraj	Assistant Secretary to the Agent.		
27	Mr. T. V. K. Naidu	Representatives of the South Indian Railway Labour Union, Trinopoly.	564-569 582-588	560-564, K.-5736.
28	Mr. S. Mohan Swarna.			
29	Mr. Mudalamuthu Mudaliar			
30	Mr. S. V. Aiyar ..			
31	Mr. Ernest Kirk ..	Representatives of the South Indian Railway Labour Union, Coimbatore.	588-590	565-571, K.-5819.
32	Mr. A. Ekambaram			
33	Mr. P. S. Krishnaswamy Iyer			
34	Mr. A. Sundramurthy			
35	Mr. R. R. Birmamuthano			
36	Dr. R. V. N. Nayudu	Ex-President, South Indian Railway Employees' Central Association, Dhanushkodi.	590-601	....
37	Lieut.-Col. H. A. J. Gidney, M.L.A. I.M.S. (Retd.)	On behalf of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Railway Employees.	602-618	....

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38	Mr. R. W. Suarez ..	} Of the Madras and Southern Maharashtra Railway.	618—634	571—578, K.-5891.									
39	Mr. Dias ..				} Of the South Indian Railway								
40	Mr. Thomman ..						} Of the South Indian Railway						
41	Mr. S. Hockins ..								} Of the South Indian Railway				
42	Mr. Freeman ..										} Of the South Indian Railway		
43	Mr. French ..												} Of the South Indian Railway
26   6	Mr. S. Guruswami	Assistant Secretary, All-India Railwaymen's Federation, Berhampore.	634—652	579—592, K.-5995.									

# GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

## PREFACE.

This memorandum follows the terms of the questionnaire issued by the Royal Commission and therefore does not deal with the conditions of agricultural labour, other than labour employed on plantations. But although an enquiry into the conditions of agricultural labour, other than that employed on plantations, is not included in the terms of reference to the Commission, this Government consider that without such enquiry it is impossible to obtain an accurate idea of the general labour conditions in the province. As some of the succeeding paragraphs of the memorandum indicate, agricultural labour and industrial labour are often so closely inter-related that a man may spend part of the year on agricultural labour and part on industrial labour ; and even a man employed continuously on industrial labour often lives in a village along with the agriculturists, or returns to it whenever he can. If, therefore, attention is concentrated solely on the conditions in industries and on plantations, the appreciation of the general standard of living amongst the labouring classes in the province cannot be anything but imperfect.

Secondly, it is not clear why labour on plantations is regarded differently from other forms of agricultural labour. From the point of view of the labourer the conditions of ordinary agricultural labour merit enquiry as much as, if not more than, the conditions of plantation labour. A general sketch on "Labour and its Movement", by the late Sir George Paddison, is annexed and will serve to illustrate this point which the Government consider to be of considerable importance.

NOTE BY THE LATE SIR GEORGE PADDISON, K.B.E., C.S.I., I.C.S.

### Labour and its Movement.

*Strength.*—Cultivation in this Presidency supports as workers and dependants 30,000,000 out of 43,000,000 inhabitants as enumerated in the census of 1921, or 7 out of every 10 persons. Of these, farm servants and field labourers number 3 out of every 10 as is shown in the following table :—

Class.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Dependants.
Farm servants .. ..	2,927,459	961,911	630,055	1,335,493
Field labourers .. ..	5,323,686	1,354,260	1,676,339	2,293,087
Total .. ..	8,251,145	2,316,171	2,306,394	3,628,580

This gives only one labourer for every four acres of cultivated land, including irrigated land in the Presidency. A very large number of persons, however, classed as cultivating owners and tenants are also labourers, but the exact number cannot be calculated. In a number of typical villages at the recent resettlement in Bellary and Anantapur districts, 28 per cent. of the farmers combined with their own job that of agricultural labourer. In Tanjore district, a typical delta district, there is a regular system of tenancy which is practically a wage contract, the landowner giving his tenants a share of the crop in lieu of the wages but advancing a considerable proportion of the cost of cultivation and often employing other labourers to help them in reaping and transplanting the crop. Often, too, the smaller owners or tenants assist each other without any payment in times of urgency such as transplantation and harvest seasons.

The village workmen who chiefly affect the agriculturists are the blacksmith and the carpenter and the farm labourer proper. The panchangamdar, who predicts the weather and is paid by the farmers, can hardly be considered a labourer. The blacksmith and the carpenter belong to particular castes and their job is generally hereditary. Their pay is sometimes in the shape of a plot of land held free of assessment on condition of service and in addition (if the land is not enough to support him) a percentage of the crop given at harvest time, calculated on the basis of so much for each plough. Sometimes a cash wage is given. These workers are generally well off.

The farm labourers proper are divided for the purposes of the wages census into ploughmen, sowers and transplanters, weeders, reapers and harvesters, and others. As a matter of fact, in this Presidency, except ploughmen whose special duty is to look after the cattle, these workmen are all the same persons. It is true that at the time of transplantation or harvesting, extra labour may be secured if possible. The sowing is frequently done by the farmer himself as it is a difficult task. If seed is broadcasted and even if a drill is used as each seed is dropped in by hand into the hopper, it requires care to see that the right amount of seed is used. The herdsman who looks after the cattle or goats is generally a small boy or an aged man. Transplantation of rice is generally done by women, reaping sometimes by both men and women, but often women are engaged in carrying the crop to the stack or threshing-floor on their heads. Cotton-picking, tea and coffee plucking and ground-nut picking are also done by both women and men.

Wages given in different districts vary a great deal. In the agency tracts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam, the average for an ordinary unskilled labourer is only about 2 annas a day; similarly in the northern part of South Kanara, in Vizagapatam and on the Deccan plateaux which is mostly unirrigated land, wages are low. The higher wages are to be found in the delta tracts near large towns and large centres of industry, or near the hill stations. For example, in Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Madura (in the tracts irrigated by the Cauvery and the Periyar) 6 annas or over is generally paid; near Kodaikanal, Coonoor and Ootacamund, similar labourers get 8 annas; the wages in Saidapet taluk, close to Madras, are over 8 annas a day, while in Conjeeveram and Madurantakam taluks in the same district but farther from Madras, it is just over 4 annas. Ploughmen get rather more than ordinary agricultural labourers except at such times of urgency as transplanting or reaping seasons when the occasional labourer also gets more than at other seasons. But it must be remembered that ploughmen, as a rule, take part in harvesting and reaping. All these figures must be taken with a certain amount of salt as very frequently wages are paid in grain and the exact rate at which it should be commuted is not easy to estimate. Moreover, an agricultural labourer frequently gets a number of perquisites such as cloth, a pair of shoes, money for betel or tobacco and an annual sum in cash. The same persons will be paid at different times in cash and in grain. Without vouching for the absolute accuracy for the figures, it may be said that an ordinary labourer gets between 5 and 6 annas, ploughmen between 6 and 7 annas, and those engaged in reaping and harvesting about 7 annas. As a rule, but not universally, women get less than men, in most cases about two-thirds of what the men get. In the last census the number of women employed in proportion to the men showed a reduction from 1,187 to 996 to every thousand men. This is a sign of increasing prosperity. Another distinction between classes of labourers is that between farm servants and occasional labourers. On the face of it, the farm servant has a better time of the two as he frequently gets one or two daily meals, and in bad seasons is kept on at the expense of the farmer, whereas the daily labourer has to go to some other district in search of work or to migrate generally to Burma or Assam from the north of the Presidency, to Ceylon or Malaya States from the south, and from the west coast to the plantations of tea and coffee on the Anaimalais, on the Nilgiris, in Mysore or in Coorg.

The most fortunate type of the farm servant is one whose caste approximates to that of his master and who "lives in". Such a man is often treated as one of the family and shares their fortunes in good and bad times. On the other hand, a large number of these farm servants, especially of the low castes, who have no access to their masters' houses, are frequently very badly off. They are given an advance on some special occasions such as a wedding, and nominally the loan is to be repaid by service. If the workman is invaluable the master takes care that this loan shall not be worked off, and this man is attached compulsorily to his master for life, and sometimes also his sons inherit the debt after their father's death. If the farm is sold the farm servants and the debt are taken over. The only way of their keeping from this form of servitude is emigration.

After an inquiry by Mr. Gray, O.B.E., I.C.S., the present Registrar of Co-operative Societies, great efforts are being made by Government to change this state of affairs: co-operative credit societies are being formed specially for the low caste labourers, house-sites are being acquired for them, schools are being started, water-supply improved, in many cases a well is being dug for the first time where before they were dependent on water from irrigation channels or were waiting at the well open to higher castes for some one to come and draw water for them. Land is being assigned to them wherever available either in the form of allotments which is the usual method adopted or in large blocks where colonies are being started and worked generally on a co-operative basis. The position of these labourers is worse in the mirasi districts of Chingleput, South Arcot, Tanjore and Trichinopoly. In these districts a few high-caste persons called mirasidars claim, rightly or wrongly, to

have a prior right over all the land in the village, including unoccupied areas and including the house-sites of the labourers. It is in villages of this type that emigration is most frequent as the low-caste labourer has no chance of acquiring any land and is at the mercy of his master, being liable to be expelled from the only land available for the house-sites if he should offend him. Great efforts are being made to improve conditions in this respect also, house-sites are being acquired and money advanced by loans from Government through co-operative societies and though the landowners objected most strongly when this work was begun and sometimes refused to employ their own labourers for some time, they soon found that the labourer who has a house of his own is much less liable to run away, has more self-respect, has acquired a habit of thrift, has frequently, in order to repay his instalments of the loan, given up drinking and is much more a valuable asset to his master than he was when he had no hope of improvement.

*Conditions of life.*—No statistics are available showing the hours of labour. It varies in different districts both as regards the time of starting and leaving work and the number of hours worked. In one district, the workers wait till the morning mists are cleared before starting, in another in the dry heat of the east coast or the Deccan, they start earlier to have a longer time off in the burning heat. The Madras labourer works long hours but works fairly leisurely. The whole family often set out together for the fields, the baby is strung from the branch of a tree watched by one of the elder children, while the father and the mother are at work. Sometimes the mother arrives later than the rest of the family as she first sees to her household work. The mother will leave her work to give her child nourishment, and in the midst of the day they all foregather under the shade of the tree to rest and have their meal. On the whole, there is no articulate desire for any regulation of the hours of labour, and it would be impossible to enforce such regulation even if it were insisted on. Similarly, it would be impossible to insist on accident or sickness insurance or maternity benefits. The mother will not stay away long from her work after her child is born. Nature does not require it in the case of persons bred in the open air in a hot climate. A real danger is the ignorance of the midwives whose insanitary methods may cause danger both to mother and child. Great efforts are being made to train these women, but the Indian labourer is very conservative and often prefers the old ways. There is no regular weekly rest-day, but Hindu and Muhammadan festivals are frequent, and Muhammadans and Hindus in this Presidency attend them all.

*Health and sanitation.*—Hookworm is almost universal and though it does not often kill, it largely increases the danger from other diseases, and reduces the efficiency of the labourers. Efforts are being made to stamp it out, but this is by no means easy owing to the habits of the ordinarily bare-footed labourers. Of epidemics, plague, cholera and fevers are largely due to the insanitary surroundings. Here again, efforts are being made by lantern lectures and other propaganda to educate the labourers in more sanitary ways. Water-supplies are being improved, less congested house-sites are being acquired; on some of the plantations especially, improvements are being made in these directions. This question, however, is rather a matter for the health officers to deal with than a mere layman.

*Recreation.*—The ordinary labourer has not the time or the money for any elaborate form of recreation. His chief delights are a festival, a marriage ceremony, singing songs, or beating the tom-tom. The telling of stories is a source of constant delight. If money can be secured, a pilgrimage is sometimes undertaken to sacred places. There is also the toddy and the arrack shop, which sometimes absorb too much of the labourers' earnings.

*Scarcity, famine and unemployment.*—The elaborate system of famine-relief, which has been organized by the Government of India and the local governments over a series of years will doubtless have been explained in detail by other and more experienced writers. The Government attempt to maintain the normal level of subsistence but not of comfort. In consequence, during these periods, migration to other and more favoured districts or to more distant parts increases. It is in the season of scarcity that the problem of unemployment becomes important. In ordinary years, there is no lack of employment amongst most of the labourers, except in the hot weather when some of the labourers find it difficult to get continuous employment throughout the week.

*Migration.*—There is a normal movement of population every year from the poorer districts to the highly irrigated tracts of the deltas. The number who so move cannot be ascertained. But thousands move every year from Vizagapatam, from the uplands of Godavari, Kistna and Guntur to the lands watered by the Kistna and the Godavari. In some cases these people, finding conditions favourable, settle down in the districts to which they have come. As however these tracts consist of almost an unbroken sea of irrigated rice fields they crowd very often on mounds

rising out of the waters and their congestion is a serious problem which has been dealt with by acquisition of better sites and raising the level of the land acquired. Wherever possible, land in the possession of Government or taluk boards by the side of roads or channels is being allotted free. Similarly there is an inflow of labour in transplanting and harvesting seasons in delta tracts of Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Madura. From the West Coast, large numbers go every year to the tea, coffee and rubber plantations on the Nilgiris, in Mysore and Coorg, from Salem to the coffee plantations on the Shevaroy's; from Coimbatore they flock to the Anaimalais to the tea plantations recently started there; from Ramnad, Madura and Tinnevely a very large number go annually across the borders to Travancore. They generally stay on these plantations from 10 months to a year and then return to their own villages. They are recruited by maistris who receive some commission and also receive some money for advances to the labourer which is repaid out of his wages. The hours of work on these estates is about 10 hours a day including an hour's rest at noon, but, generally speaking, the labourers are set a certain task which they may complete in their own time. If they do more than the task they are paid by weight according to the amount they have plucked. The men earn from 7 annas to 8 annas a day, women 5 annas and children 3 or 4 annas. In some cases the estate pays the expenses of the labourers' coming and returning to their villages. In the matter of educational facilities, medical attendance and the water-supply, they are better looked after than they are in the plains. What they dislike is the cold and the wet on the hills as compared with the warmer weather in the plains. In fact if they do not find conditions better they would not go as the Indian labourer is a great lover of his home. The chief migration in India itself is to Assam and Burma. This is different from the migration to Travancore, Mysore and Coorg mentioned above, as there the labourers go and return as a rule in a single year and if they do not like the conditions there, they are able to return without much difficulty. Assam and Burma need a long and expensive journey. In fact they are a good deal farther and more different from the conditions at home than in Ceylon. The total number recruited to Assam last year was 13,684 of which Ganjam and Vizagapatam contributed 9,000. Owing to the immense demand for labour in this and other tea growing areas consequent upon the rise in the price of tea, an effort to open up new districts in Assam was pushed on too quickly at first and a number of labourers returned. This was due to the fact that the emigrants did not understand the conditions under which they were recruited to the places to which they were coming. The proper method of recruitment to which they have now returned is to send to each village a person who has worked for some time in the plantation and can explain to the people what the conditions are like and what they may expect.

No figures are available for the annual migration to Burma where the Madras labourer goes to work in the rice fields and in the rice-mills as the Burman is not a labourer by nature. Probably about 12,000 go every year. Most of them go from Ganjam, Vizagapatam and Godavari in the north of the Presidency. A certain number go from the south—Tanjore, Madura, Ramnad, Malabar and Tinnevely.

With regard to emigration outside India, the assisted unskilled labourers who are almost entirely agricultural labourers can only at present go to Ceylon and Malaya. A few have recently also been sent to Mauritius and there is talk of re-opening emigration to British Guiana. For practical purposes, the only places outside India which affect this Presidency are Ceylon and Malaya. The boom in tea has enormously increased the demand for labour in Ceylon and similarly in Malaya the demand for work on the Singapore Docks and also the removal of the embargo on the export of rubber have very greatly increased emigration to that colony. Representatives of the Government of India are stationed in both these colonies to look after the interests of the Indian labourers and considerable improvements in their conditions have recently been effected in both the colonies. On an average, 90,000 persons a year went to Ceylon as agricultural coolies in the last five years. A very considerable number of them were persons who had been there before. To Malaya as many as 70,000 were sent last year. A greater part of the emigrants both to Ceylon and Malaya came from the Tamil districts on the East Coast, Trichinopoly, North Arcot, Madura, Tanjore and Salem also contributed a considerable number. Tinnevely, considering its proximity to Ceylon, sent remarkably few.

On the whole, according to the latest Census report for the decade up to 1921, this province suffered a net loss of a million and a half of labourers in excess of emigration over immigration. Since then there has been a steady increase every year in the number of emigrants. This of course necessarily means that the demand for those agricultural labourers who stayed behind increases and conditions of employment are also growing better. The labourers who return from Ceylon or Malaya with considerable savings and the wider idea of the world must necessarily increase the ambition of those who stay in their own villages. However unpleasant it may be

to the farmer in India, on the whole the lot of the labourer is improved by this emigration so long as the conditions in the countries to which he emigrates are carefully watched and provision is made so that he can return if he wishes to do so.

*Conclusion.*—On the whole the lot of the agricultural labourer is not so bad as would appear to be from the low wages which he receives. His wants are few; owing to the fact that there is no cold weather he need spend very little on his clothes. In time of scarcity he certainly suffers, but the alternative of migrating either to other parts of India or to Ceylon or Malaya give him the chance of improving his lot. Wages though very low show a continuous tendency to rise. Even the depressed classes whose lot is far worse are beginning to improve, through the action of Government and of few, too few, social workers. And if these efforts are redoubled, education is made universal, water-supply, sanitation and housing are taken even more vigorously in hand than they are at present, a great advance may come in the next ten years.

## MEMORANDUM.

### PART I.

#### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) In the Presidency of Madras, the recruitment of labour for industrial concerns is mainly local. Most of the factories are situated in the larger towns and the workers, skilled and unskilled, employed in these factories are as a rule recruited from these towns themselves or from the adjoining villages. Workers of whom a specially high degree of skill is expected are sometimes brought from a distance but these cases are believed to be relatively few. Some migration of labour does take place, as in the case of field labourers seeking employment in seasonal factories, e.g., in the ground-nut season; but such migration is very rarely from any great distance. But the recruitment of labour for the tea and coffee plantations of the Malabar, Nilgiris and Coimbatore districts involves migration from much longer distances. Some labour is obtained locally for plantations but the bulk of it comes from areas outside the planting districts proper, e.g., from the plains portion of Malabar, from Trichinopoly, Tinnevely, etc.

(ii) The chief cause of the migration of agricultural labourers to plantations or to seasonal factories is lack of continuous and remunerative employment in their own villages. Lack of local employment may be due to the regularly recurring stoppage of agricultural activities between seasons, or to unfavourable seasonal conditions affecting the demand for labour. The labouring classes in this Presidency are ordinarily of a stay-at-home character and it is only the stimulus of need or the lure of better and more regular employment that induces them to migrate.

(iii) No conspicuous change in regard to the recruitment of labour for plantations or for industrial concerns has taken place in recent years.

2. (i) Factory workers recruited from villages near the factories return to their villages as a rule whenever they have an opportunity, e.g., if they have to cease work on account of strikes, reduction of staff, illness, etc. In this way they maintain contact with the villages. Labourers recruited for plantations from other districts generally return to their villages for a few months every year.

(ii) The permanent (industrial) labour force in this Presidency is comparatively small. Many of the labourers on plantations recruited from other districts return year after year to the same estates.

The total number of industrial labourers (including casual employees) in establishments containing not less than ten persons is less than 200,000, while the total number of labourers on estates is about 50,000.

3. (i) Except in the case of labour from Assam, for plantations in the Presidency and for emigration overseas, recruitment has not been systematized. The applicant for industrial employment presents himself at the factory gate. For isolated casual vacancies, the ordinary method of recruitment in the bigger factories (apart from the formal putting up of a notice on the gate) is to leave the matter to the foreman or maistri of the branch concerned, who finds some one employed in a similar capacity in a smaller factory on less advantageous terms than the larger factory can offer.

(ii) No suggestions.

(iii) The question of establishing public employment agencies has twice been considered in recent years. The result of the inquiry made in 1921 was overwhelmingly in favour of the view that no useful purpose would be served by the establishment of a system of such agencies. In 1928 the matter was again examined as it was suggested that recent industrial developments in India might have been such as to modify to some extent the situation which had led the Government of India to decide



in the negative the question of the establishment of employment agencies. The examination then made showed that in this Presidency the position had not changed substantially since 1921 and that there was nothing to indicate that a public employment agency would be of any use. The main reason was that though aspirants for employment would probably resort to such an agency in large numbers, employers would seldom or never use it, since they find it easier and more satisfactory to recruit the labour they require through the medium of their own servants or by picking it up at the factory gates where an ample supply is generally to be found.

5. There is practically no deep-sea maritime population in this Presidency and recruitment of seamen is of no practical importance.

6. The recruitment of labour for the tea gardens of Assam is conducted under the general supervision of the Assam Labour Board. The Board itself does not conduct recruiting operations; its functions are confined to giving advice to applicants for local agents' licences and to exercising general supervision over recruitment. The actual recruitment is carried on under the auspices of the Tea Districts Labour Association, which is composed of representatives of companies in the Assam valley, etc. Only one form of recruitment is now permitted, viz., recruitment by garden sardars licensed under the Labour and Emigration (Assam) Act of 1901. Under that Act local agents may be licensed for the purpose of representing employers in all matters connected with the supervision of the garden sardars within the local areas. Licences for garden sardars are granted only to bona fide labourers on the books of the tea gardens and each licence must be countersigned by a Magistrate in Assam. Such sardars when sent to recruit must, on arrival in the district from which they intend to recruit labour report themselves to the local agents mentioned above. The sardars work under the supervision of the local agents who usually give them advances which come from the Assam Tea Districts Labour Association. The association charges a commission on all coolies recruited through its agency.

This system has been evolved as the result of numerous enquiries and commissions, and was strongly recommended by the Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906. It is believed to encourage emigration by families, and since the activities of recruiters are carefully supervised, the system is believed to be free from serious abuse. No serious defects in the system have been pointed out by District Magistrates on the working of the Act. In this Presidency the bulk of recruiting for Assam has for many years been carried on in the districts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam especially in the Agency tracts of those districts where the people are hardly yet sophisticated. Apart from the case of Agency tracts where it would not yet be safe to abolish control, experience in recent years has shown that precaution is particularly necessary in districts where efforts have been made to open up new areas to recruiting. It is therefore essential that control over recruiting should be maintained in all districts of the Presidency.

As the existing Act has become exceedingly difficult to interpret owing to numerous additions and alterations, the question of repealing the Act and enacting a simple measure instead is under the consideration of the Government of India.

7. (i) and (ii) There is no doubt unemployment, in the sense that there are numerous applicants for employment who are unable to obtain it. But as a rule such unemployment is that of persons seeking jobs for which they are not qualified, e.g., high school students trying to get skilled artisans' jobs, young men who on the strength of a course in a technical institute aim at highly paid engineering appointments before they have had any practical experience in the lower ranks. Such misfits are lamentably common, but very few cases have come to notice of men adequately equipped for specific industrial employment who remain long out of a job. Unemployment as understood in Europe is not a feature of the industrial life of this Presidency as it is essentially an agricultural province and there is no need to take action on the lines indicated in the international conventions.

8. (i) and (ii) Nearly one-third of the number of registered factories in this province are of a seasonal character. Such factories are gradually increasing in number. The employment which these factories offer is necessarily casual and lasts only for limited periods during particular seasons. These seasons, e.g., the cotton-ginning or the ground-nut decorticating season, do not exceed four months each and if allowance is made for the fact that in many of the seasonal factories ground-nut decorticating and cotton-ginning are both carried on the workers will normally find employment there for about six months in a year.

Labourers generally stay on plantations from ten months to a year and then return to their villages.

9. As far as this Presidency is concerned, the Apprentices Act of 1850 has been of little value to the trades, or employers of labour or to the apprentice. The Act appears to have been originally designed to provide adequate protection and guardianship to orphans from military orphanages and charitable institutions and

to regulate their training in suitable trades and occupations with special reference to marine work. The provisions of the Act were of such a nature that they could not be availed of by the general youth of this Presidency. Military orphanages and charitable institutions being few and far between, and opportunities for marine work being limited, the Act has remained more or less a dead letter. The desirability of suitably amending the Act so as to render it useful to all classes of apprentices desirous of learning various trades was first suggested by the Committee on Industrial and Technical Education of 1922. In accordance with this suggestion a further committee was appointed in 1924 to examine the whole question. Its main recommendations were that provision should be made for a mutually binding indenture between the employer and the apprentice in certain specified trades, that certain safeguards should be provided against one employer enticing away the apprentice indentured to another employer, that the minimum age of an apprentice should be restricted to fifteen so as to ensure a minimum standard of general education and that provision should be made for the settlement of disputes between an indentured apprentice and his employer and for ensuring the strict observance of mutual obligations. The Government of Madras after carefully considering these recommendations came to the conclusion that the time was not ripe for the introduction of legislation on the lines proposed.

## II.—Staff Organization.

11. In the larger and more important industrial concerns, the selection of managing staff is well made, but in the smaller concerns men with little or no experience and without suitable training or qualifications are sometimes appointed.

12. (i) and (ii) The training of persons for subordinate supervising posts in various industries is now undertaken at the Madras Trades School run by the Industries Department where lads of good education are put through a course of theoretical and practical training in technological subjects such as electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, printing, etc. The courses are designed to turn out men suitable for employment as foremen, supervisors and chargemen. There are also other institutions such as the Government Engineering College, the Chengalvaroya Naicker Technical Institute, the Government Textile Institute, etc., where subordinate staff are trained in civil engineering, weaving, etc. The above institutions adequately meet the present need for subordinate supervising staff. At present, recruitment of supervising staff is made in two ways: (i) by direct appointment of men technically trained in the above institutions and in institutions outside the Presidency and (ii) by promotion of able workmen who have put in long and satisfactory service. Until recently it was the usual practice of employers to choose from among their workmen the foremen and supervisors required for the various departments. These foremen and supervisors were generally by no means well educated nor were they technically trained in a school or institute. They were mere craftsmen with long experience of the particular class of work in which their workshops were engaged, and as long as the work carried out did not call for technical knowledge they served the purpose well. They, however, looked down upon the educated apprentices attending evening classes and to that extent acted as a drag on the progress of apprentice education. The introduction of special machinery and precision tools and the increasing tendency to adapt and fabricate various kinds of machinery in this country has necessitated the employment of educated and technically trained men as foremen and supervisors, and in consequence direct recruitment of suitable technical men with practical experience is resorted to more frequently than before. There seems to be, however, no uniform system of recruitment not any recognized minimum standard of technical training that may be considered as suitable for direct recruitment. Facilities for training and promotion of workmen in this Presidency have improved considerably during the past few years through the medium of Government and aided industrial schools. There are at present about 60 industrial schools in different parts of the Presidency, where boys are trained for various kinds of trades as craftsmen. These schools turn out skilled artisans who would in future form the cream of the labouring class.

An attempt has been also made by the Industries Department to raise the general level of the working classes of the future by instituting a preparatory section in the Madras Trades School for prospective workmen. In this section, sons of workmen are put through a three years' course of general education with a bias towards industry. The course includes training in drawing, metal work, elementary science, hygiene, good citizenship, etc. The Department of Industries is also tackling the difficult problem of the education of the adult workmen by instituting evening classes in the Madras Trades School. The increasing numbers that enrol themselves for these classes is a healthy sign and it is contemplated to expand this section in various directions in the near future.

13. (i) As stated above, the usual practice until recently has been to promote workmen of long and satisfactory service to the positions of foremen and supervisors and not unnaturally these men do not always command very much respect from their former comrades and co-workers in the rank and file. The complaints of the men have in many cases been against the "tyranny" of the foremen of the factories rather than against the strictness of their employers.

(ii) No works committees are functioning anywhere in this Presidency except in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras, where the welfare committee, as it is called, is working very satisfactorily.

15. (i) and (ii) In the case of industrial concerns, the work that is given out on the contract system generally falls under one or the other of the following classes: Loading, unloading, receiving and despatching of goods, weighing of finished articles and the curing of raw produce. In the case of seasonal factories it is not uncommon to let the factories themselves on contract, but no precise information is available as to the extent to which the system prevails, nor is there information regarding the extent to which sub-contracting in industrial concerns prevails. So far as letting out on contract of seasonal factories is concerned, the extent must obviously depend in part on the nature of the season as affecting the particular produce dealt with in those factories.

(iii) All labour employed in a registered factory, whether employed directly by the owner, occupier or manager, or indirectly through contractors, sub-contractors or other intermediaries, is subject to the regulations prescribed in and under the Indian Factories Act, but the contractor himself, unless he has taken the whole factory on contract, is not responsible for compliance with these regulations.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) to (iv) The percentage of each kind of house in this Presidency for the five decades ending with 1921, is as follows:—

	1871.	1891.	1921.
Terraced .. .. .	7.2	9.4	12.1
Tiled .. .. .	7.8	8.9	10.2
Thatched .. .. .	85.0	81.7	77.7

In Madras City there are more than 25,000 huts and one-roomed buildings having 150,000 workers and labourers; in Madura, 9,326 huts and kacha dwellings having a total labour population of 50,000; in Tuticorin 3,276 similar houses wherein 16,000 people live; in Mangalore 6,500 kacha houses and thatched huts accommodating about 30,000 people; and in Vizagapatam 5,320 kacha buildings accommodating about 30,000 workmen.

By the exertion of the Labour department and the co-operative building societies and a number of local authorities, some houses have been built for the poor workmen in the City of Madras and in a few other towns. Manufacturers, industrial firms, railway companies and harbour authorities have to some extent provided for the housing of their employees. In the City of Madras, a leading firm has provided houses at Re. 1-8 per mensem for a few of their workmen whose monthly income falls short of Rs. 30. There are still many labourers however without shelter. In Madras City, in the vicinity of the Esplanade and Harbour, the working population that squat in the streets and in the narrow verandas of godowns number over 1,500 or 400 families.

At the Golden Rock, Trichinopoly, the South Indian Railway Company has built houses for the workers in the New Railway Colony. At Madura, the Madura Mills Company has provided houses for 675 labourers (which is about 10 per cent. of the total number of labourers actually working in the mills) in an area close to the mills.

Out of 1,480 registered factories in this Presidency only 211 factories provide housing accommodation for employees and these too as a rule only for a small proportion of their employees. Housing accommodation for labourers at Mettur is provided by Government in connection with the Mettur Project Works. Almost all the planting estates in the Nilgiris, Malabar and Coimbatore districts provide lines for their coolies.

Existing legislation provides for: (1) Expenditure on model dwellings and the encouragement of co-operative building under rule 40 of the Finance Rules in Schedule IV of the Madras District Municipalities Act, and under rule 4 (a), Schedule V of the Madras City Municipal Act (a number of local authorities including Madras, Vizagapatam, Madura and other cities carried into effect some great clearance; but there is much to be done in the shape of slum clearance and model dwellings); (2) Provision of sites and the construction of houses for the labouring classes within

town-planning schemes under Section 4 (k) and (l) of the Madras Town-Planning Act. For financial assistance for such schemes, Section 32 of the said Act provides for the creation of a Provincial Town-Planning Fund. The fund has not been constituted.

On a smaller scale certain municipalities, viz., Vizagapatam, Madura, Madras, Mangalore, Tuticorin, Cochin, Calicut, etc., have undertaken to prepare civic surveys which will also deal with the general housing conditions in their cities or towns.

18. Coolie lines on estates are generally fairly good. Accommodation provided by factories generally consists of rows of eight or ten rooms each 10 ft. by 8 ft. or so with a veranda along the front of the row. A protected water-supply is available only in a few cases and in many cases the sanitary arrangements are not satisfactory.

The following recent statistics regarding tenements in Government cheris in the City of Madras indicate the housing conditions of the workmen at Madras :—

Character of dwelling.	Number of dwellings.	Number of rooms.	Monthly rent. Rs. a. p.	Area of room in sq. feet.
<i>A.—Thatched hut.</i>				
(i) With one room only ..	640	640	1 8 0 to 2 0 0 (per hut).	64 to 80
(ii) With one room and veranda	310	310	Do.	64 to 80
(iii) With two rooms ..	271	342	2 0 0 to 2 8 0 (per hut).	120 to 216
<i>B.—Tiled house.</i>				
(i) With two rooms .. ..	51	62	1 4 0 to 3 8 0 (per room).	64 to 100
(ii) With three rooms ..	100	300	Do.	64 to 100

The above figures relate to twelve labourers' cheris which occupy a total extent of 30 acres of land fetching an annual lease rent of about Rs. 1,200 to Government. Seven thousand and twenty-two workmen (or 1,757 families) including coolies, cartmen, fitters, weavers, spinners, constables, goldsmiths, beedi-makers, sweepers, bricklayers, boatmen, motor-drivers, rickshaw-wallahs and fishermen live in these cheris.

20. No rent is charged as a rule for housing accommodation provided by the employers and even when charged it is only nominal.

#### IV. Health.

23. The Director of Public Health is of opinion that the health conditions of industrial labour are not generally good. In the absence of any organized system of record-keeping of cases of sickness and death among industrial employees no statistical evidence is available as to the ultimate effects of industry on the health of the worker.

24. Very few factories have provided dispensaries in charge of medical officers. Some maintain first-aid appliances; some engage part-time medical officers and a few have got hospitals of their own. But these remarks apply only to large concerns and most of the factories do not provide medical facilities at all. Medical facilities in the planting areas are excellent.

In towns, the local bodies or the Government have established hospitals where medical aid can be got, but the factories in these towns are in many cases at considerable distances from the hospitals.

Mission hospitals are sometimes located in industrial centres, e.g., the Mission Hospital at Ranipet where Messrs. Parry and Company have a large factory.

25. Where medical facilities are available they are generally utilized by the workers except in case of minor ailments, when they resort to indigenous treatment. Women workers would probably make greater use of medical facilities if it were possible to arrange for their treatment in all cases by lady doctors.

26. All factories have to provide latrines for their workers, unless exempted from the relevant regulations. Such exemptions are few and they are not granted unless extensive uninhabited waste land is available in the neighbourhood. In most cases however, the provision of latrine accommodation is ineffective as the operatives do

not use them but prefer to resort to the open fields. This reluctance to use the latrines provided is probably due, in the case of factories in rural areas to the inadequacy of the scavenging arrangements.

27. Half-yearly inspections of factories including tea factories in plantations are made by the Factory Inspection staff; District Health Officers, Municipal Health Officers and the Certifying Surgeons also pay periodical visits to factories in their areas. The Director of Public Health and his assistant have been appointed additional Inspectors of Factories.

28. *Suitability of existing Factories Rules.*—Due care is taken to prevent excessive temperature in factories by the enforcement of proper ventilation.

The Ventilation and Humidification Rules framed by the Local Government for regulating the degree of humidity in cotton mills have been in force for two years and have been working satisfactorily.

30. The question of ratifying and accepting the draft conventions and recommendation of the 10th International Labour Conference concerning sickness insurance was definitely opposed by the two Houses of the Central Legislature and the Government of India decided not to introduce any comprehensive scheme on the lines of the Convention. However, the Government of India were of opinion that the possibility of introducing some provision for sickness insurance required further examination. The question was accordingly referred to certain bodies and persons interested in labour in this Presidency. As such a question had never been considered in this country, and as there was no systematically collected information on the subject, the opinions received were somewhat general and represented conventional attitudes rather than an informed study of the question. On the one hand employers generally were opposed to the scheme on the ground that it imposed only an additional burden on industry to secure an illusory benefit for the workmen, and on the other hand, the proposal was welcomed fervently as ostensibly designed to secure for labour a further share in the advantage of enlightened civilization.

After a careful consideration of the existing conditions in this Province the Government have come to the conclusion that any scheme of sickness insurance would be impracticable and is not necessary. The labourers themselves would be unwilling to share the cost of any such scheme, the labour population is floating and it would be difficult to provide the necessary medical facilities.

31. *Maternity benefits.*—(i) *Extent and Working of Existing Schemes.*—Precise information on these points is in most cases not available. The schemes are voluntary, the benefits vary with the enlightenment and generosity of the particular employers. Messrs. Binny & Co. allow three months' leave to their female operatives during pregnancy and an allowance of 4 annas a day. On some estates on the Anamalais in Coimbatore district, female coolies are fed free for one month before and one month after confinement. On other estates in that area, a maternity allowance of Rs. 3 is paid, and the mother is fed at estate cost for three weeks and looked after for a few days by a woman paid by the estate. On other estates maternity allowances ranging from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 are paid while on still other estates free feeding of the woman for two weeks before and three weeks after confinement is arranged.

In industrial undertakings in this Province women ordinarily stay away from work about the sixth to the eighth month of pregnancy, but some work right up to the time of delivery. Women do not return to work within one month after delivery, but they usually take two or three months and in some cases even six months. Ordinarily women have no difficulty in retaining their employment in spite of absence on account of pregnancy and confinement.

(iii) *Possibility of Legislation.*—Legislation in respect of maternity benefits may prejudicially affect the employment of female labour as there may be a tendency to avoid the employment of women or to reduce their wages to compensate for the new burden. Legislation would also be difficult to work in the present conditions of this Presidency as a great proportion of female labour is casual and seasonal labour. In spite of these considerations, a step forward may be taken as the principle involved is sound. The necessary provisions may be made by an amendment of the Indian Factories Act rather than by a separate enactment.

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

32. It is impossible to treat the industrial worker in isolation in this Presidency for the good reason that he does not live in separate communities. For example, the Adi-Dravida in Madras who is employed in the mill or factory lives in a paracheri among members of his community following a great variety of other occupations while the caste artisan or factory employee similarly lives among other people who

earn their living in different ways. The opening of a public park or recreation ground, an additional dispensary, a new ward to a hospital, improved drainage, a co-operative society, a new school, are benefits which the operatives equally share with their neighbours and it is to the general extension of such activities that one must look for improvement of the conditions under which the operatives as well as the other section of the work-a-day communities live. Any attempt to show what is actually being done would require a complete analysis of the work of the Department of Industries, Co-operation and Education, all municipal activities and of the work of the various educational and philanthropic agencies of a non-official character.

A large proportion of the labour employed in this Presidency is of a casual nature and in some cases labour is supplied by contractors and is therefore not wholly under the control of the factory owners. The coolie who one week is carrying bags of rice in a factory may the following week prefer to labour in the fields. Besides this, many of the factories are of a seasonal character and so provide employment only during particular seasons. With such a large proportion of labour of this kind, there is not much scope for welfare work except in big establishments of a permanent nature and in railways. The small factory owners can neither pay nor arrange for these schemes nor can the casual labourers expect such concessions from their employer as their employment itself is not permanent. The only concerns that have regular welfare schemes for their employees are the larger undertakings like the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras, the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway and the South Indian Railway. There is also a Welfare Committee in the Government Cordite Factory, Aravankadu. There are a few outside agencies which are doing welfare work for labourers, e.g., the Madras Social Service League, the Triplicane Sociological Brotherhood and the Y.M.C.A. These agencies do a certain amount of welfare work outside the factories, chiefly for the Adi-Dravidas.

Of late, some of the registered Trade Unions in the City of Madras (the Madras Labour Union in particular) are helping the workers by giving them legal advice in regard to the recovery of compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

33. The "All-India Industrial Welfare Conference, 1922" held in Bombay passed a resolution that social service organizations be asked to take up the work of training welfare workers, and urging the establishment of workers' committees in all industrial establishments but nothing further seems to have been done on these lines.

34 and 35. Many factories have a provident fund, gratuity or pension fund schemes for the benefit of employees who retire on account of old age or after a specified period of service. Each factory has its own rules for the payment of these funds. In some cases, the employees are required to contribute a small percentage of their pay towards the fund and the employers contribute a moiety and allow interest on the accumulated amount. The actual payment of the employers' contribution is conditional upon the good conduct and service of the men.

In other cases, the employers do not require the men to subscribe to the fund. A bonus of one to one and a half month's pay is granted to the monthly paid staff in almost all the factories managed by Europeans. In factories owned by Indians a bonus or presents of cloths and money are distributed on Deepavali or Ayudapuja holidays and other important festival days. Money presents of about Rs. 5 are given to girls on attaining puberty and Rs. 10 for marriage, Rs. 5 for deaths (burial) are also given.

36. Seventy factories registered under the Indian Factories Act have provided schools for half-timers and in some cases for employees' children also. There are also schools for adult workers, one night school at Aravankadu, one at the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras, and one in Coimbatore town run by the Y.M.C.A. and attended by mill hands who want to better their prospects in the mills.

There are schools for the children employed in factories at Nellimarla and Chittivalasa in the Vizagapatam district, at Peelamedu in the Coimbatore district and at Bepore in Malabar. Seven salt factories have schools attached to them and there is a part-time school attached to the Cordite Factory at Aravankadu in the Nilgiris. At Madras the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills maintain one day school and one night school. The day school is an elementary school with five standards and has a technical section attached to it in which carpentry, tailoring, black-smithy and tin-smithy, turning, fitting and weaving are taught. The night school has eight standards and includes a commercial class for advanced English and typewriting.

There are two part-time estate schools in the Nilgiris, one at Glenavans and one at Kullakombay. There are also three estate schools in the Palani hills, Madura district.

There is one recognized school in the Anaimalais and a number of unrecognized ones.

The South Indian Railway are maintaining primary schools at certain important centres on the line, for the education of European and Anglo-Indian children. Only

nominal fees are collected. In respect of the children of Indian employees whose pay is Rs. 100 or below, the Company pays subject to certain limitations one-half of their Middle School or High School fees for three years. Apprentices are given training in the special school provided by the Company. The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway maintain Indian schools at some places on the Railway where children of employees are given education on payment of small fees according to the salaries of the employees.

The Madras Elementary Education Act has been framed with a view to the ultimate introduction of compulsory education. There are ordinary schools maintained by local boards and private agencies. It may be generally stated that it is possible for the children of all workers in industrial concerns of any size to secure a general elementary education.

38. Co-operative societies for the supply of the ordinary domestic requirements of workers are to be found in connection with some of the larger industrial concerns, particularly the Railways. Credit societies for employees are also to be found in connection with some of the larger concerns. Co-operative societies for building purposes have also been organized in stray cases.

### VII. Safety.

43. The Chief Inspector of Factories reports that the regulations in force, for securing safe working in factories, are adequate. The fencing and guarding of dangerous machinery are on the whole well attended to. The danger involved in not fencing the dangerous parts of machinery is explained both to employers and employees by the Factory Inspectors wherever necessary and constant efforts are made to see that the orders issued by the Inspectors for the rectification of defects in this respect and for the safety of ways, works and plant are complied with. The wearing of tight clothing by persons replacing belts, oilers and drivers is being enforced and the attention of the factory owners is drawn to the importance of allowing only trained and experienced men to replace belts, etc.

44. and 45. The number of accidents in factories is about 1,300 per annum of which 10 to 15 are fatal. The incidence is highest in Railway workshops, Cotton spinning and weaving factories coming next. A very large proportion of the accidents are of a trivial character.

Most of the accidents are due to carelessness on the part of the operatives, which in turn is due to ignorance and illiteracy. Careful measures are being taken to educate the workmen in ordinary prudence but results can only be attained very gradually.

46. *Accident Prevention.*—Measures have been taken to educate the worker in ordinary prudence, viz., the amendment of the danger notice to make it more comprehensive and instructive to the workmen. Proposals are also under consideration for printing and for free supply to factory owners and managers and their employees of a book illustrating the dangerous parts of machinery and showing how to fence them, the object being to make them realize by pictorial visualization the dangerous parts of machinery which requires careful handling and to educate them in the methods of avoiding dangers.

But the average Indian worker's psychology is not very responsive to such ideas of "Safety First." In the majority of the factories in the mufassal at least we must for some time rely on the preventive regulations of the Indian Factories Act and on the deterrent effects of the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act. When circulating for opinion the resolution adopted at the Eleventh International Labour Conference regarding the prevention of industrial accidents, the International Labour Office, Geneva, suggested that a works' investigation of every accident might be useful in tending to prevent a recurrence of accidents of the same kind. "Works investigations" and joint action on the part of the employers and employees may be feasible in the larger factories.

47. Accidents do occur in non-registered establishments, i.e., in unregistered factories, but no statistics are available.

48. Factories employing 500 or more persons are required by law to keep first-aid appliances ready and available at all times.

49. *Stringency of Inspection and Enforcement of Regulations.*—The regulations on this subject are being strictly enforced both in industry generally and in seasonal industries. The number of prosecutions launched against factory managers for default during each of the last two years is 72 and 52.

50. *Effect of Health, Hours, Light and Working Conditions on Accidents.*—The Chief Inspector of Factories reports that the health of operatives working in ginning factories at night is affected by the inadequate lighting arrangements. Reliable data are not available.

## VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (i) The Workmen's Compensation Act came into force from 1st July, 1924. The extent of its use in this Presidency will be evident from the following statistics :—

Year.	As reported by employers.		Number of cases filed in the court of the Commissioner.		
	Number of accidents.	Amount of compensation paid.			
				Rs.	a.
1924	334	4,191	7	0	3
1925	372	9,299	3	6	31
1926	503	18,907	6	10	96
1927	569	31,899	5	8	175
1928	632	27,395	14	5	237

(ii) *Comparison with extent of possible claims.*—Such a comparison is not possible, as no information is available as to the extent of possible claims.

(iii) The Act has had no noticeable effect on industry.

(iv) So far as this Presidency is concerned, only a few employers have covered their liabilities under the Act by insurance. This is not due to lack of facilities for insurance but to apathy and lack of foresight on the part of employers. Many of the smaller factory owners are ignorant of their liabilities under the Act and of the advantages of insurance. For a small employer, especially, insurance would seem to be particularly desirable.

Insurance is optional under the Act. Compulsory insurance has not been instituted.

The value of insurance from the point of view of the workmen cannot be over-estimated. First and foremost is the security afforded in regard to the payment of any compensation for which he may be eligible under the Act. The claim of the workman for the compensation for which he is eligible becomes a secured debt in case of liquidation when the employer is insured. Secondly, workmen who meet with accidents are generally urgently in need of compensation and any delay in payment causes great hardship to them or to their dependants. Insurance may save delay in the payment of claims. Thirdly, insurance tends to minimise disputes between employers and employees. An employer who has insured is not so likely to contest a really good claim as one who has not.

52. The benefits of the Act are at present extended to a large proportion of the workmen who are employed in organized industries and to some others whose occupations are of a hazardous nature, but they have not been extended to agricultural labourers, domestic servants or menial servants.

As regards the question of extending the Act to other occupations generally, the only limiting factor to the inclusion of all classes of workmen within the scope of the Act should be the possibility of fixing responsibility for payment of compensation. Adopting this criterion, workmen employed in factories which can be notified under Section 2 (3) (b) of the Indian Factories Act, may be brought within the benefit of the Act, and Clause v in Schedule II of the Act may be altered so as to include all workmen engaged in handling heavy materials in or at godowns and warehouses, whether for the purpose of loading a ship or otherwise. It is, however, unnecessary to extend the scope of the Act to labourers in plantations other than those in factories on tea estates to whom the Act already applies. The labour force in plantations, excepting those employed in factories, consists of agricultural labourers; part of the labour is seasonal and accidents are rare; the nature of employment does not expose the labourers to the risk of accident and there is no liability to occupational disease. It would be difficult to administer the Act if it were extended to them.

As regards provision against insolvency of employers, security could be obtained only by a system of compulsory insurance. Such a system is neither necessary nor would it be practicable. The Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation has reported that no such contingency has arisen till now in the administration of the Act in this Presidency.

53. (i) The scales of compensation at present provided by the Act are inadequate. The majority of accidents occur to workmen earning between Rs. 15 and Rs. 25 per mensem. In cases of fatal accidents, the deceased leave on an average not less than four dependants and the maximum compensation admissible is not enough to maintain them even for a short period. In cases of non-fatal accidents resulting in permanent disablement, the injured workmen are entitled to a lump sum compensation of only a few hundred rupees and they have to maintain themselves and their dependants with this amount (and any small additional sum they may still be able to earn) for the rest of their lives. In almost all cases of serious (but non-fatal)



accidents, the injured workmen lose their posts; and as a rule these men are unable to get any employment suitable to their impaired physical condition and even if they do the pay is very small. The Indian Act does not provide for any separate additional allowances for the children of deceased workmen such as are provided for in the corresponding Acts of certain western countries. The minimum scales of compensation may be raised generally at least in respect of poorly paid workmen.

(ii) No compensation is payable in respect of the first ten days of temporary disablement. In such cases the system of "dating back" the waiting period may be adopted and it may be from the fourth day of disablement. Compensation is not payable for accidents which are attributable to the fault of the workmen themselves. In the majority of contested claims the dispute centres round this proviso and the employers attempt to take undue advantage of this provision, though the plea has seldom been successful. The Act requires evidence of wilful disobedience of orders expressly framed for safety. The standard of management and discipline in factories in this Presidency rarely justifies the inference without the most incontestable proof that adequate precautions have been taken to prevent ignorant workmen from running risks of injury. The English law is even less lenient to employers, since under it even proof of wilful misbehaviour on the part of an injured workman does not exempt an employer from liability when the accident results in death or serious permanent disablement.

(iii) So far as this Presidency is concerned, no application for compensation for industrial disease has been received.

(iv) *Machinery of Administration*.—In the Madras Presidency the Commissioner of Labour is the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation. The Commissioner is also in charge of the administration of the Indian Factories Act, and the combination of these functions in one officer has obvious advantages.

## IX.—Hours.

### A.—Factories.

55. About 300 factories observe 8 hours a day and 48 hours per week; about 250 factories observe 9 hours a day and 54 hours per week; about 900 factories observe 10 hours per day and 60 hours per week. Including overtime the working hours per week do not exceed 66, and in exceptional cases 12 hours a day and 72 hours a week.

56. Factories generally work only six days a week.

57 and 58. The 60 hours' restriction and the 10 hours' ordinary daily limit are not only advantageous to the workers but have not adversely affected the monthly outturn.

59. The Chief Inspector of Factories suggests that the maximum weekly limit may be reduced to 54 hours and the daily limit to 9 hours.

60. (i) and (ii) *Intervals*.—An hour rest at mid-day is allowed in most factories. The proviso to Clause (a) of Section 21 of the Indian Factories Act introduced by the amending Act of 1926 has been welcomed and is working satisfactorily. The Commissioner of Labour considers that no further legislation in respect of rest intervals seems necessary; but that if 9 hours in a day is accepted a 2-hour recess may be arranged; some factories do in fact give 2 hours' rest for mid-day meal.

61. *Day of Rest*.—Sunday is generally observed as the weekly holiday. Where Sunday cannot be so observed a substituted day in accordance with Section 22 (1) (a) and (b) of the Indian Factories Act is allowed as a holiday. In some cases the local weekly shandy (i.e., market) day is observed as the weekly holiday in lieu of Sunday. In the opinion of the Commissioner of Labour the law in regard to the weekly holiday requires no alteration.

62. *Exempting Provisions and the Use made of them*.—Exemptions are granted sparingly and only for adequate reasons.

### D.—Other Establishments.

78 and 79. *Plantations*.—The hours of work are usually about 8 per day and Sunday is generally a holiday. Work on Sundays and in the evenings is often available but is not compulsory.

#### Ports.

#### Dry Docks.

(a) Normal hours worked per day—

(i) From Monday to Friday:—

Tuticorin—8 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. } 8 hours.

1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. }  
Cochin—7.30 a.m. to 12 noon } 8 hours.

1 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. }

Saturdays—

Tuticorin—8 a.m. to 3 p.m. } 7 hours.

Cochin—7.30 a.m. to 12 noon } 7 hours.

1 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. }

*Dry Docks.*—contd.

(b) Normal hours worked per week—  
47 hours at each of the docks.

(ii) Occasionally overtime is worked as necessary on extra payment.

Days worked per week—6 (normal).

**X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.***A.—Factories.*

81. It is reported that the 1922 Act has considerably ameliorated the conditions of employment of women and children, and the employers prefer adult labour to women and children.

82. Admission of infants to factories is much restricted, but infants are still seen in some coir factories in the West Coast.

83. *Suitability of Regulations for Women's Work.*—The Commissioner of Labour considers that in respect of women an 8-hour day and 48-hour week (the time of beginning of work in the morning not to be within 2 hours after sunrise) may be fixed and that legislation on these lines may be undertaken. He also thinks that employment of women in the blow rooms and spinning rooms of textile mills should be prohibited.

84. *Suitability of Regulations Affecting Children.*—The Commissioner of Labour is of opinion that regulations may be made prohibiting the employment of children in textile mills.

85. *Double Employment of Children.*—No case of double employment of children has been detected.

88. The existing system of working periods for women, young adults and children is satisfactory. The double-shift system is not generally in force, but factories work throughout with different sets of persons for different periods.

		I period.	II period.
I set	.. ..	6.30 to 10.30	1.30 to 5.30
II set	.. ..	7.30 to 11.30	2.30 to 6.30
III set	.. ..	9 to 2.	3 to 6.

The single-shift system is in vogue in some factories for more than 6 hours at a stretch in respect of young male adults, but provision is made for mid-day meals, though not at a fixed period. The above system works all right and does not affect the health of young male adults, women and children.

89. *Work of Women and Children in Factories not Subject to Act.*—Unregistered factories mostly employ women and children in preference to male adults as it pays them to do so, and they are worked at odd hours without proper intervals or weekly holidays under dangerous and insanitary conditions. Some factories have come to know of the provisions of Section 2 (3) (b) of the Indian Factories Act, and hence purposely keep down the number of workers in their registers to below ten, though ordinarily more than 10 persons and at times even more than 19 are employed.

Only a very small number (about a dozen factories in all) have been notified under Section 2 (3) (b). Owing to inadequacy of staff, the proposals for further notifications under that section have been held up. Unless they are also brought under the Act, such factories may create unhealthy competition, especially where there are other registered factories in the locality engaged on the same work. The tendency is to start small concerns with only a few employees in order to evade the Act. The Commissioner of Labour is of opinion that all factories using power, irrespective of the number of persons employed, should be brought under the Act.

Mention may be made here of the difficulties which have arisen in connection with the question of the employment of children under 12 years of age in coffee garbling sheds in coffee curing factories in this Presidency. The employment of such children is prohibited under the Indian Factories (Amendment) Act, 1922. There are 14 or 15 coffee curing factories on the West Coast employing on an average annually about 3,500 women. The coffee curing firms represented that the prohibition of employment of children should be removed on the ground that the work of garbling was carried out entirely by women and children, in healthy open sheds on a piece-work basis, the families working together in groups. \* Owing to the easy nature of work, it is customary for women to bring other children as well as their own to work, thus freeing the elder women for more strenuous work elsewhere. These firms express serious doubt whether if this labour is lost it would be possible to replace it especially during the season of heavy demand from January to May which could not be extended owing to the monsoon. This particular occupation has many features which distinguish it from factory employment as contemplated in Section

2 (2) of the Indian Factories Act. The children are not directly employed. They are not paid by the management. They come with their mothers and supplement their earnings. They are not included in the register maintained under Section 35. Like the women they accompany, they have no fixed hours of work and can come and go as they like. Their work is light and safe, and is carried on in healthy sheds, and in the absence of machinery and other ordinary concomitants to factory work.

Two methods have been suggested by which the coffee curers can continue to employ children under 12 without breach of the law. One is to wall off the garbling sheds and separate them in such a way that they do not form part of the factory at all, and the other is to instal a creche for the children outside the factory but close by it, in charge of a competent matron who can look after the children when the mothers are working. The objection to the creche method is that it would merely serve to segregate the infants whom there is no intention to employ, and would not meet the case of children between 6 and 12, whom the coffee curers desire to employ and whose labour goes to augment the income of the employees themselves. The remedy of walling off the garbling sheds from the main factory building is being tried and has been found satisfactory.

## XII.—WAGES.

96. The rates of wages paid for certain classes of industrial labour are as follows :—

Main classes of labour.	Average daily rate of wages paid.											
	In all factories in the Presidency.		In factories in the Coimbatore district.		Prevailing rates outside the factories in the Coimbatore district.							
	1927.	1928.	1928.	1928.	1928.							
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.			
<i>Skilled Labour.</i>												
Engine-driver .. .. .	1	5	11	1	6	2	1	12	9	1	4	0
Fireman .. .. .	0	11	1	0	11	6	0	13	2	0	10	0
Oilman .. .. .	0	8	10	0	8	10	0	10	11	0	7	0
Fitter .. .. .	1	2	1	1	2	4	1	3	0	0	12	0
Turner .. .. .	1	3	5	1	2	1	1	6	6	0	14	0
Rivetter .. .. .	0	11	11	0	13	5	0	14	5	0	12	0
Boilersmith .. .. .	1	5	0	1	11	1	1	8	1	0	14	0
Blacksmith .. .. .	1	1	11	1	1	2	1	7	5	0	14	0
Moulder .. .. .	1	1	11	1	0	0	1	4	2	0	14	0
Carpenter .. .. .	1	1	8	1	1	4	1	6	7	0	12	0
Bricklayer .. .. .	1	1	9	1	0	0	1	3	7	0	12	0
Compositor (printer) .. .. .	0	14	5	1	0	4	1	1	0	0	12	0
Machinist .. .. .	0	14	10	1	2	8	1	0	0	0	14	0
Weaver (cotton) man .. .. .	1	0	3	0	15	11	0	9	10	0	7	0
Do. boy .. .. .	0	5	10	0	5	4	—	—	—	0	3	0
Spinner (cotton) man .. .. .	0	10	7	0	9	9	0	7	6	—	—	—
Do. boy .. .. .	0	4	11	0	4	10	0	5	10	—	—	—
Weaver (jute) man .. .. .	0	8	4	0	14	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Do. boy .. .. .	0	5	8	0	6	6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spinner (jute) man .. .. .	0	7	6	0	8	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Unskilled Labour.</i>												
Female coolie (gin) .. .. .	0	4	11	0	5	1	0	5	7	0	4	6
Male do. .. .. .	0	8	5	0	8	0	0	7	3	0	7	0
Female do. (press) .. .. .	0	5	8	0	5	10	0	6	2	0	5	0
Male do. .. .. .	0	9	6	0	9	6	0	11	9	0	8	0
Female do. (rice mill) .. .. .	0	4	7	0	4	8	0	5	6	0	4	6
Male do. .. .. .	0	8	0	0	7	10	0	9	11	0	7	0
Female coolies in fields .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	4	0
Male do. .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	6	0

The rates of wages for labour on plantations are generally about 7 annas a day for a man, 5 annas for a woman, 4 annas for a boy and 3 annas for a girl.

97. *Movement in recent years.*—It is doubtful if the figures mentioned above are sufficiently reliable to afford a basis for comparison. On the whole there has been a slight rise in recent years in industrial wages.

99. There are very few factories in this Presidency in which payment of wages is made in kind. It is the practice in many factories to supply necessaries such as rice at or below market rates and to recover the cost thereof from the wages of the workmen concerned at the end of the month. This system is never forced on the employees; on the other hand it is looked upon as a privilege.

A few factories run stores for their employees at which necessaries are obtainable below bazaar rates, and recover the cost of the supplies made from the wages of those concerned. This system again is voluntary and is of great help to the workmen.

101. We have not yet reached the stage in this Presidency at which wages of industrial labour are fixed by negotiated agreements. There is no agreement, nor uniformity of system, amongst different industrial concerns of the same kind regarding the fixing of wages. The wages of plantation labour are however fairly uniform.

103. The question of standardization of wages naturally presupposes some standardization of work and in the majority of factories, there appears to be no attempt at such standardization. There are two industries of considerable importance (textile and printing) which appear to offer a fair scope for standardization of both work and wages. In other industries, conditions are hardly favourable for any attempt at standardization.

105. If standardization of wages is difficult, the fixing of a minimum wage is at present impracticable. No minimum wage based on the cost of living could be fixed as low as many wages that are actually being paid—and eagerly sought. No serious attempt has yet been made to estimate the cost of living in the mufassal and the estimates made for the City of Madras are open to criticism. An attempt to fix a minimum wage at present would involve impracticable complexities of calculation or by an arbitrary avoidance of such complexities would risk throwing hundreds out of employment.

106. The Chief Inspector of Factories estimates the extent of deductions from wages at about 25 per cent. of the total wages paid. An enquiry made in 1926 revealed that fines are not often imposed, especially in the smaller industrial concerns but that some of the bigger factories occasionally resort to fining in order to enforce discipline or to punish culpable neglect of duty or wilful waste of material. Legislation to control or regulate fines was considered neither desirable nor practicable. It was pointed out that if the system of fining was abolished or brought under control employers would have no alternative save to resort to more severe forms of punishment such as reduction, dismissal, etc.

The amounts collected in the shape of fines are utilized for the general benefit of the employees.

107. In most of the larger industrial concerns wages are paid by the month. In some of the smaller concerns payment is by the fortnight. Seasonal factories pay by the week. Daily payments are common in the case of piece-work. In the case of monthly payments, six weeks generally elapse before a new worker can receive his pay for the first month. A Bill to enforce weekly payment of wages was introduced in the Assembly in 1924 but it did not receive any appreciable support from this Presidency. The Bill made no attempt to ensure punctuality of payment which is far more important than payment at frequent intervals.

The question of legislating for the purpose of preventing undue delay in the payment of wages to industrial workers was taken up in the following year and general opinion was sympathetic towards the object in view. But there was a considerable volume of opinion against the proposed legislation on the ground that it was not practicable or desirable.

Unclaimed wages, are it is understood, treated as a charity fund.

108. The indebtedness of the worker is heavy especially in the case of plantation labour where it is reported that 75 per cent. of the wages are taken away by money-lenders on pay days.

109. Profit-sharing schemes are not in operation anywhere in this Presidency.

110. No statistics are available as to the extent to which annual leave is taken by workers or countenanced and/or assisted by employers, except in the case of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras. In those mills the average number of days leave granted, per employee, excluding Sundays and substituted holidays, but including holidays for festival days is 15.3 days for the Buckingham Mills and 17.4 days for the Carnatic Mills for the half-year—January to June, 1929. For these mills absence (i.e., without leave) per employee is .69 days and 1.24 days respectively for the same half-year. The Choolai Mills, Madras, recently agreed to allow each employee with five years' service privilege leave on half pay for 15 days per annum.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. It is reported that there has been a great improvement in the efficiency of Indian workers in recent years, but no precise information is available on the point.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i and ii) Exact information is not available as to the extent to which employers are organized into trade associations or combinations. But there is little doubt that the employers' organizations of various kinds in the Presidency include the bulk of the larger employers of industrial labour.

As regards the organization of employees it may be pointed out that the average daily number of operatives employed in the 1,393 registered factories in commission in the year 1928 was roughly 137,000, of whom about 6,400 were children. Even taking into account all the industrial establishments containing not less than ten persons the total number employed in such establishments is probably not more than 200,000. The figure (200,000) gives a rough idea of the industrial population which may be regarded as organizable for Trade Union purposes. No information is available (nor is it easily obtainable) regarding the membership of unregistered Trade Unions. Several of the ten registered Trade Unions which are now in existence in the Presidency have not yet submitted the annual returns which were due at the end of July. It is not therefore possible to give statistics of their membership. At a rough estimate, however, the total membership of registered trade unions is probably 18,000 to 20,000.

118. *Effects of organization on (i) Industry ; (ii) Conditions of workers generally.*—Materials are not available on which to base an estimate and in any case most of the trade unions are still of comparatively recent origin. There are indications however, that, with the growth of trade unions, some of the employers who were formerly inclined to be unsympathetic are showing a greater appreciation of the workers' point of view and are more readily responsive to their complaints and demands.

119. Perhaps the most noticeable activity of the employers' organizations is their discussion of, and the formulation of the employers' views upon, the numerous proposals involving legislation or other action by Government in matters affecting labour and industry, which have been before the country in recent years.

So far as the trade unions are concerned the nature of their activities has been described in the extracts from the annual administration reports of the Labour department which are printed as Appendix A. Many of them, especially the unregistered trade unions, come into prominence only when there is an impending labour dispute and at other times are practically dormant. In the case of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union strenuous attempts are now being made to increase the membership and thereby to strengthen its position and increase its claims to be representative of the workmen. The Madras Labour Union for Textile Workers is endeavouring to assist workmen or their dependants in the prosecution of claims under the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act.

120. *Individual Trade Unions.*—A list of registered trade unions showing in each case the date of registration is given below :—

Name of Trade Union.	Date of Registration.
(1) The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, Madras .. .. .	20th June, 1927
(2) The Madras Labour Union for Textile Mill Workers, Madras .. .. .	24th " "
(3) The Madras Government Press Employees' Association, Madras .. .. .	19th Nov., "
(4) The Public Works Department Workers' Union, Madras .. .. .	7th Apr., 1928.
(5) The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union, Madras .. .. .	12th May, "
(6) The South Indian Railway Employees' Association, Trichinopoly .. .. .	14th July, "
(7) The Madras Aluminium Labour Union, Madras .. .. .	1st Aug., "
(8) The Ranipet Labour Union, Ranipet .. .. .	30th " "
(9) The Madras Electric Tramways and Supply Corporation Employees' Union, Madras .. .. .	18th Jan., 1929.
(10) The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Non-Workshop Employees' Union, Madras .. .. .	5th Feb., "

A certain amount of information under this head is available in the paragraphs on labour unions in the annual administration reports of the Labour department which have been printed as Appendix A

121. (i) and (ii) The Trade Unions Act, 1926, came into force in this Presidency on 1st June, 1927. Of the ten unions which have been registered, one (the Madras Government Press Employees' Association) is defunct owing to the orders of the Government issued in May, 1928, prohibiting Government servants from becoming or continuing to be members of a registered trade union. It is too early to gauge the effects of the Act.

(iii) *Possible amendments.*—As the Act stands at present, it is permissible for half the executive of a trade union to consist of persons not employed in the industry. It is difficult, of course, to resist the argument that a curtailment of the outside element might deprive many unions of the education and knowledge of affairs which are lacking in their own ranks. But control of unions by outsiders and the political exploitation to which it is only too apt to lead have obvious disadvantages and when so much depends on a good understanding between employer and workmen it does not seem expedient to thrust between them the irritating intervention of irresponsible outsiders. It is a question for consideration whether it would not be better to reduce considerably the proportion of outsiders who may be members of the executive of trade unions.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. *Extent of Strikes and Lock-outs.*—Information under this head is given in the relevant sections of the Annual Administration Reports of the Labour Department and reports from the Commissioner of Labour, which are printed as Appendix B.

124. (i) *Conciliation and arbitration machinery.*—About 1920, the increasing number of labour strikes in the country suggested to the Government of India the consideration of the question whether legislation could be usefully attempted and a machinery devised to prevent such strikes. In December, 1920, and January, 1921, the Labour Advisory Board carefully considered the question in the light of the legislative enactments in force in the United Kingdom (the Conciliation Act of 1896, and the Industrial Courts Act of 1919) and of such information as was then available regarding the nature and working of the legislation in force in some of the countries in which effect had been given to the principle of compulsion. The Labour Advisory Board recorded its conclusions as follows :—

(1) In recording its conclusions noted below the Advisory Board wishes to premise (a) that external action under legislative authority should be regarded solely as supplementary to mutual negotiations between the parties concerned and resorted to only when negotiation has failed to secure a settlement. In all cases the possibilities of a settlement by mutual agreement should be fully explored, and in the opinion of the Board it is desirable that in all industrial concerns of such magnitude that direct personal touch with the different grades of employees is no longer possible, measures should be adopted to regularize and facilitate the discussion and arrangement of differences. (b) It is essential to the successful working of any external machinery for promoting conciliation that both parties should accept and accord recognition to each other's organization or representatives, and legislation must therefore presuppose a settlement of the question of the constitution and functions of unions or federations of employers and of employees. (c) The Advisory Board in its recommendations has had regard solely to conditions in the Madras Presidency. It has not been in a position to advise whether legislation applicable to all-India would be possible.

(2) If legislation to promote conciliation where a deadlock has arisen between the parties to a dispute is to be attempted it is essential that some department of Government should have the responsibility laid upon it of keeping in touch with the circumstances, of anticipating the possibility of labour disputes arising, and of asking for information as to their origin and progress and the issues in dispute with a view, should a dead-lock arise, to take such further action as is provided for by the legislation to be enacted. The Advisory Board is of the opinion that it is desirable that there should be statutory recognition of that responsibility.

(3) As regards the methods of promoting a settlement to be adopted by the responsible department should intervention become necessary, the Advisory Board is of the opinion that the legislation should lay down that the first aim should be to bring the parties together again to settle their differences by discussion, such discussion if necessary and by mutual agreement, to be in the presence of a conciliator, and that should conciliation fail provision should be made for endeavouring to secure a reference to arbitration.

(4) The Advisory Board recognizes that cases may arise where endeavours to secure either conciliation or enquiry may fail, and to meet such cases is of the opinion that provision should be made authorizing the Government to appoint Courts of Enquiry into trade disputes, if necessary, irrespective of any application from either party, and empowering such courts to summon witnesses and if necessary to put them on oath.

(5) The Advisory Board is not at present prepared to recommend that acceptance of the awards of arbitrators or of the recommendations of such Courts of Enquiry should be made compulsory. They trust that in conformity with the experience of such courts in this Presidency and, they believe, in the United Kingdom, the publicity given to the findings of a court and the weight of public opinion in favour of reasonable recommendations will as a rule ensure their acceptance by both sides. The Advisory Board recognizes that courts of enquiry are more appropriate to important or general disputes, and while other cases may arise in which they may be desirable considers that they should not be resorted to except where real justification exists.

(6) As stated above, the Advisory Board is not in favour of giving legal force to awards or to the recommendations of courts of enquiry, nor is it prepared at present to advocate the introduction of the principle of compulsory arbitration in any other form. There is, however, one class of disputes in respect of which they consider that the community is entitled to claim that its interests shall be considered by both parties, namely those affecting public utility services. They have carefully considered the measure of protection which should be given and have come to the conclusion that there should be a legal prohibition against any lock-out or strike being declared in connection with any such service unless due notice has been given of the intention to do so, and until one month has elapsed from the date of the notice. The Advisory Board does not anticipate any real difficulty in defining such public utility services. They realize, of course, that here as elsewhere the absolute enforcement of such a prohibition may not be possible, but they are of the opinion that such a statutory prohibition would have a deterrent effect and that neither party would as a rule be likely to risk alienating all public sympathy by defying it. Further, this interval of a month will allow the conciliation and investigation machinery provided for above to be set in motion.

(7) The Advisory Board is of the opinion that subject to the provisos referred to in paragraph 1 legislation on these lines is desirable and would make it possible to guard against and to deal with labour disputes more satisfactorily than is possible under existing conditions.

The question of conciliation and arbitration machinery was again considered in 1922 and 1923 but without definite results. In 1924, the Government of India considered that the position had considerably altered since 1920 and that the time was ripe for undertaking legislation with a view to assisting in the prevention and settlement of trade disputes. They published a draft Bill to make provision for enabling the investigation and settlement of trade disputes. The Trade Disputes Act however was only passed a few months ago.

(iv) *Joint standing machinery for regulation of relations between employers and workpeople.*—No such machinery exists except in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills where there is a joint committee called "The Welfare Committee" containing representatives of the employers and of the employees.

(v) *Opportunity afforded to workpeople of making representations.*—So far as known there has been no complaint that such opportunities are not afforded, whether the representations are made by individual workmen or by the union authorities on their behalf.

125. *Trade Disputes Act.*—The Act came into force on 8th May last and no rules have yet been framed for setting in motion the machinery provided by the Act. So far there has been no necessity to utilize the machinery in this Presidency.

#### XVI.—Law of Master and Servant.

127. The Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, which was enacted in the year 1859, was finally repealed with effect from 1st April, 1926. The only information at present available regarding the effect of the repeal of the Act relates to the plantations in the Anamalais in Coimbatore district. It was recently brought to notice that maistris on some of the estates there complain that the repeal of the Act has hit them hard, by making it difficult to recover advances and that many cases occur in which advances are taken from two maistris with no intention of working under either.

128. *Types of contract commonly in use.*—As regards industrial labour, it is not customary for employers to enter into agreement with their workmen as to the conditions of employment.

As regards labour on plantations the only information available relates to the Anamalais. The labourer there is required to work for periods ranging from 240 to 300 days a year at eight hours a day.

129. The Madras Planters Labour Act has been repealed with effect from 1st January, 1929. The Workmen's Breach of Contract Act also was repealed with effect from 1st April, 1926. No information is available regarding the extent to which the ordinary civil law is used for enforcement of contracts between employer and labourer.

130. *Madras Planters Labour Act, 1903.*—The Act was repealed with effect from 1st January, 1929.

The Madras Planters Labour Act I of 1903 provided among other matters, for the imposition of penalties, for breach of labour contracts. Modern public opinion regards with disapproval the existence of penal laws against one class of the community, and the tendency of recent legislation is to abolish all such laws leaving labour contracts on exactly the same footing as other civil contracts. The abolition of penal provisions has been effected in the colonies where Indian labour is employed and it was difficult to justify the retention of such provisions in India. The repeal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act XIII of 1859 gave to planters in the two districts (Malabar and the Nilgiris) to which alone the Madras Planters Labour Act of 1903 was applied, a statutory control over their labour which was not enjoyed by any other employer of labour in the Presidency. It was therefore considered desirable to expunge from this Act all provisions imposing penalties on labourers and as the effect would be to deprive the Act of its principal features the entire Act was repealed.

132. *Employers and Workmen's Dispute Act. Is it Used?*—It is not used so far as known.

#### XVII.—Administration.

136. It is the duty of the labour commissioner to watch and study at all times the conditions of labour, particularly industrial labour, throughout the Presidency and to keep Government informed by periodical reports of its movements and tendencies and of the existence of any friction or disputes between employers and employees which tend towards actual strike or lock-out. The settlement of labour disputes and prevention of strikes are important features of his work, but his interference in such disputes is limited to tendering his offices to settle them. In the case of disputes affecting the internal administration of a railway, he may interfere only if both sides agree to his intervention, but he must obtain the previous sanction of Government in each case. Labour questions other than the administration of the Indian Factories Act are dealt with by the local government in the public works and labour department. District magistrates in the mufassal and the commissioner of police in the Madras City keep the commissioner of labour informed of all labour movements and disputes. The administration of the Indian Factories Act and the rules thereunder is carried out by a staff consisting of a chief inspector of factories, five factory inspectors and one assistant inspector of factories under the control of the commissioner of labour. The functions of the inspection staff do not include any concern with the economic conditions of factory labour beyond the formal matters to which the prescribed returns and reports apply. Matters relating to the administration of the Indian Factories Act are dealt with by the local government in the development department.

138. Factory workers in this Presidency are generally illiterate, and have very little knowledge of factory legislation except perhaps in regard to the matter of hours of work.

139. (i) Details of the existing factory inspection staff and the number of districts, factories and employees in their respective circles are given below in a tabular form :—

Circle.	Number of factories.			Number of employees.
	Perennial.	Seasonal.	Total.	
I. (C.I.F. & Asst. I.F.)	134	—	134	34,866
II. (I. F.) .. ..	216	13	229	16,515
III. (I. F.) .. ..	178	86	264	12,881
IV. (I. F.) .. ..	82	174	256	10,446
V. (I. F.) .. ..	226	56	282	32,785
VI. (I. F.) .. ..	196	88	284	29,480

Factory inspectors are required to inspect all factories other than seasonal factories twice yearly, and all seasonal factories at least once during each season of work. In practice, however, they find it difficult to work up to this standard.



(ii) Uniformity of administration in the various provinces can be secured only if there is an exchange of views and mutual discussion of the difficulties in the administration of the Act and Rules between the officers in charge of the administration of the Act in the several provinces. This can be achieved by an All-India Conference of Factory Inspectors. One such conference was held in 1924.

(iii) The Act is rigidly administered in this province.

(iv) The number of prosecutions launched and the number of convictions obtained during the years from 1920 to 1928 were as under :—

	Number of factories in respect of which prosecutions were launched.	Number of persons involved.	Number of persons convicted.
1920 ..	20	32	29
1921 ..	11	14	11
1922 ...	8	9	9
1923 ..	30	34	30
1924 ..	53	63	56
1925 ..	68	86	78
1926 ..	84	94	90
1927 ..	145	160	150
1928 ..	87	100	86

The above statistics show a gradual increase in the number of prosecutions till 1927 and then a noticeable reduction in 1928. The large reduction in the number of prosecutions is to be regarded with satisfaction. Endeavours are made to concentrate on the essentials of factory control, and a considerable advance was made during the year 1928 in the exercise of discretion by the inspecting staff.

#### XVIII.—Intelligence.

143. (i) and (ii) Statistics in respect of the following subjects are collected in this Presidency.

*A. Factory labour.*—(a) The daily average rate of wages earned by various classes of labour employed in factories; (b) number of factories arranged by districts and classified according to the particular industry; (c) accidents to workers employed in the several factories classified under the respective industries; (d) average daily number of persons employed in different industries according to districts; (e) average daily number of persons employed classified into adults and children; (f) particulars of intervals, holidays and hours of work of employees in factories. These statistics are prepared by the factory inspection staff and published every year in the annual administration report prepared by the chief inspector of factories.

*B. Wages census.*—A quinquennial wages census is taken, showing in respect of homogeneous tracts and districts, the average wages of certain artisans (as well as of farm servants employed in agricultural labour). The first census was taken in 1908 and the fifth in 1926. These statistics are collected through the agency of the revenue department. The Commissioner of Labour is entrusted with the duty of preparing the census.

The quinquennial wages census relates only to rural and urban wages, and not to industrial wages. A census of industrial wages would be possible only if a large trained staff is employed for the purpose and legislation is passed making it obligatory on the employers to furnish the necessary statistics.

*C. Labour in plantations.*—With the assistance of the Chairman of the Anamalai Planters' Associations, statistics were collected by the Commissioner of Labour in January last, from certain estates in the Anamalai Hills regarding the areas from which the labour force is drawn, the castes of which it is composed, the occupation of the labourers in the plains, the period ordinarily spent annually in the hills and at home respectively, the extent to which the same individual labourer returns year after year, the method of recruitment and other special difficulties involved and the wages earned by men, women and children together with the value of concessions and their consumption of food and other necessities.

*D. Labour strikes.*—District Magistrates and the Commissioner of Police in Madras, when reporting to the Commissioner of Labour about strikes or lock-outs, furnish the following information: (a) the places where and the dates on which strikes or lock-outs occur; (b) the factories, etc., involved; (c) the full strength of such factories; (d) the number on strike or locked out from such factories; (e) whether a trade union has been formed, and if so, such details of its organization as may be

available; (f) specific demands of those concerned; (g) any other item of special interest or importance concerning the labour situation; (h) the extension or reduction in the number of factories, etc., affected; (i) the trend of events; and (j) the date and terms of settlement.

*E. Trade unions.*—Under Section 28 of the Indian Trade Unions Act, and the rules framed thereunder, registered trade unions submit to the registrar a return for every official year showing the number of members in the union and the receipts and expenditure under general and political funds.

(iii) The information collected under items *A* (other than wages) *D* and *E* above is reasonably accurate. The figures under item *A* relating to wages cannot be regarded as particularly reliable and considering the agency and method by which they are collected, accuracy can hardly be expected. Information under item *C* is accurate so far as it goes. Information under item *B* has not very much bearing on the problem of industrial labour.

145. *Nature of Special Investigations Conducted.*—An attempt (initiated by the Government of India) was made in the year 1921 to start a systematic collection of working class family budgets and the fixing of an index number to ascertain the fluctuation in the cost of living. The lines of enquiry were laid down in Bombay under the guidance of representatives of the Board of Trade. It has been in practical application in Bombay for several years and a similar investigation has recently been made in Rangoon. In Madras, however, the idea was dropped. A spirit of research—semi-philanthropic, semi-scientific—manifested itself during the troubled years of 1917 and 1918 in a few unpublished, or sparsely-circulated, pamphlets on the cost of living for working men in Madras, the minimum wage, and so on—efforts associated with the names of Dr. Gilbert Slater, the Rev. D. G. M. Leith of the Kellett Institute, and a number of students. In 1917 their enquiries resulted in the publication in the press of certain calculations which arrived at a figure of Rs. 17 per mensem as the minimum on which a family consisting of husband and wife and two children, could subsist in the City of Madras. Economic conditions changed so rapidly immediately afterwards that another attempt was made in 1920 by the same group (known as the Triplicane Sociological Brotherhood). The 1920 estimate gave a figure of Rs. 22-8-10 per mensem, but some members of the group regarded this as too low, especially in the item of rent, which they preferred to raise from Rs. 1-8-6 to Rs. 3 per mensem, giving a total of Rs. 24 per mensem. Numerous criticisms were made of the various items in the estimate. The estimate for food (totalling Rs. 17-10-4) was based not on actual, but on conventional data, i.e., it represented the prevailing price of articles of jail diet, the standard being selected as representing scientific precision. The allowances for rent, clothing, and miscellaneous, were criticized as low. The absence of any provision for liquor consumption was commented on, and it was pointed out that with an ascertained expenditure on arrack and toddy in Madras City of 71 lakhs in a year, the average monthly consumption per head of the drinking population (which was put at 300,000) must be Rs. 2, or Rs. 8 for a family for four—a somewhat disturbing factor in a total estimate of little over Rs. 20.

#### APPENDIX B.

#### Extracts from the Administration Report of the Labour Department Relating to Industrial Disputes.

(See 123 of Memorandum.)

1920-21.

5. *Industrial Disputes.*—The labour situation in Madras, especially in Madras City, was greatly disturbed, particularly in the first half of the year, on account of the rise in the cost of living and the consequent demands of the employees for increased wages. A number of industrial strikes occurred both in Madras and elsewhere. Throughout a great part of the year questions connected with these strikes made almost exclusive demands on the Commissioner's time. In Madras City alone 30 strikes occurred during the year. The predisposing causes of this unrest were manifest. The great and continuous rise in prices throughout 1919 caused an economic upheaval. Wages, in spite of temporary palliatives such as rice allowances, bonuses, etc., had failed to keep pace with the increase in the cost of living and strikes became increasingly numerous, while unions sprang up in all directions, mostly ill-organized and with a plethora of self-appointed leaders, many belonging to the extreme section in politics. The employers refused to recognize or negotiate with such leaders, and their connection with the unions simply hampered negotiations.

In the earlier strikes the main issue was one of wages, and in some of the more important cases a settlement was arrived at through the mediation of courts of inquiry. The recommendations of these courts, of which leading public men in Madras were members, were readily accepted by the employers so far as an adjustment of wages and other conditions were concerned. In others the mediation of His Excellency the Governor had most happy results. In some of the later strikes, questions of wages became almost subordinate to issues of a much more far-reaching nature. Much eloquence was expended at union meetings on arguments derived from syndicalism, and national guildism and their influence was manifest in some of the claims put forward on behalf of the workmen. To such demands the employers opposed a flat negative; the right to manage and conduct their business was to them not matter for argument or arbitration.

With the shifting of controversy to these more subtle grounds was also evidenced a distinct effort on the part of political wire-pullers to manipulate the trade union movement on behalf of non-co-operation. By the end of the year political influences had largely usurped the place of these economic demands which were prominent in the earlier part of the year.

The strikes had not been free from disorders, sometimes of a serious nature, and in order to secure a full inquiry into the causes of labour unrest, and an examination of remedies, the Government proposed in July, 1920, the appointment of a committee containing representatives of both employers and employed, but this proposal had to be abandoned owing to the refusal of the Central Labour Board to nominate representatives on behalf of the employees. This short-sighted action on the part of the advisers of labour simply delayed to its own detriment the examination of problems closely affecting its interests. That examination has since been taken up by this department with the aid of the Labour Advisory Board.

#### 1921-22

5. *Labour and Allied Subjects*—(i) *Industrial disputes*.—The labour situation in Madras remained unsettled during the greater part of the year. No less than 33 strikes occurred during the year, of which 19 were in Madras City, though most of them were of minor importance. The most serious and disastrous of these strikes was in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras. Government have already been informed in full detail of this unfortunate affair. Through the agency of the Welfare Committee excellent relations now prevail between the employers and employed. There is, therefore, nothing to be gained by reviving the bitter animosities excited by the struggle. The strikers surrendered unconditionally in October, 1921.

#### 1922-23

5. *Labour*—(i) *Labour disputes*.—It is pleasing to note that the labour situation was on the whole very quiet during the year. Twenty-three strikes occurred during the year, but almost all of them were not of much importance.

Of the 10 strikes that occurred in Madras City, 2 were in printing presses, 1 in aluminium works, 2 in iron foundries, 2 in a cotton mill, 1 in an oil installation, 1 in a clothing depot, and 1 in a railway workshop. Of the remaining 13 which occurred in the mufassal, 2 were in cotton mills, 2 in jute mills, 1 in a railway workshop, 1 in a brick and tile works, 1 in a rice mill, and 6 others in miscellaneous occupations.

The demands in 13 cases related to pay, in 2 to leave and hours, in 4 to personal matters, and in the remaining 4 to other causes.

The strikers were successful in 6 cases, partially successful in 4 and unsuccessful in 10; in the remaining 3 cases the results were indefinite. The strikes lasted for periods varying from 2 hours to 89 days.

#### 1923-24

5. *Labour Disputes*.—As in the previous year, the labour situation was generally calm. Only 13 strikes occurred during the year, and these were of minor importance.

Of the 13 strikes that took place, 4 were in cotton spinning mills, 2 in jute mills, 2 in printing presses, 1 in a cotton ginning press, 1 in engineering works, and 3 others in miscellaneous works.

In 6 cases the demands related to pay, in 3 to bonus and in 4 to other causes. The strikers were successful in 2 cases and in others they failed. The strikes lasted for very short periods varying from a few hours to 17 days.

## 1924-25.

4. *Labour Disputes.*—The most important was the strike of the firemen on the metre gauge and of the firemen, drivers and workshopmen at Podanur, etc., on the broad gauge of the South Indian Railway. After prolonged discussion and negotiation the strike was brought to an end through the intervention of the District Magistrate, Mr. H. A. B. Vernon, I.C.S. In connection with the trouble at the Podanur workshop the Commissioner visited Coimbatore and discussed the question at length with the Collector and the District Superintendent of Police. He also interviewed Mr. Reynolds, District Loco. Superintendent, about 20 of the workmen, and Mr. Kirk, a theosophical worker and leader of the men.

Of the fourteen strikes, seven related to scavengers, cart-drivers, drainage workmen, etc., employed in municipalities, three to textile workers, two to railwaymen, one to boatmen, and the remaining one to agricultural labourers.

The demands related to pay in six cases, to personnel in one and to other causes in seven.

The strikers were successful in two cases, unsuccessful in five, and partially successful in four. The result was indefinite in one and not known in the other.

The strikes lasted for periods ranging from a day to a fortnight. The strike of the Podanur railwaymen was of the longest duration.

## 1925-26.

4. *Labour Disputes.*—The labour situation has been generally very calm. There were four strikes during the year, the most important of which was the strike of the weavers of the Mali Mills and the Spinning and Weaving Mills, Coimbatore, consequent on the announcement of a reduction by 20 per cent. of the wages of weavers employed on narrow looms. This strike was novel in the form of the fight it put up, resembling, as it did, a *satyagraha*. The men turned up for work on 25th April, 1925, after mid-day meal and sat down beside the looms on the floor refusing either to work or leave the premises. They remained without food or water till 3.30 p.m. the next day, when the Collector, Mr. A. R. Cox, I.C.S., interfered and persuaded them to leave on the following conditions. Wages at the old rate were to be paid for March and at the new rates for April, and that the masters and men should meet in a conference and arrive at an amicable settlement regarding the rates to be paid from 1st May, failing which the Collector should settle the dispute. They met on 28th May, 1926, but could not agree. The Collector decided that from 1st May wages of weavers working two looms should be reduced by 15 per cent. and those working a single loom 12½ per cent.

Deduction in wages was also the cause of a strike in seven weaving mills in Mangalore. In some cases men resumed work on the reduced wages and in others the percentage of reduction was fixed at half the rate originally proposed.

Towards the end of the year the scavengers employed in the Port Trust, Madras, struck work as a protest against the dismissal of one of them for absence without leave. Little inconvenience was caused as some of the latrines were built on the flush-out system and new men were speedily engaged to carry on the work. The yard watering and sweeping coolies went on strike in sympathy but soon resumed work. The strike collapsed as the anticipations of sympathetic strikes by other unions in the city were not realized. Those who returned to work were taken as new hands.

## 1926-27.

4. *Labour Disputes.*—Except for the strike on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway which affected to some extent the menials and skilled workmen of Waltair and Vizagapatam stations no strike or lock-out of a serious nature took place during the year. Nevertheless two cases of dispute took serious turn and might have led to grave results but for the good sense displayed by the parties. For some time before July, 1926, the hardships of the women employees of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills were represented in somewhat lurid colours at the meetings of the Madras Labour Union. The management of the mills thought it better in the circumstances not to employ any female labour at all and in July, 1926, served a month's notice of discharge on about a hundred women workers. The Madras Labour Union at once adopted all available methods of protest. A public meeting was arranged under the auspices of the Women's Association to protest against the action of the mill authorities. In the meanwhile, a deputation of the labourers waited on the management to explain their point of view and the management withdrew the notices on the day previous to the public meeting. At the meeting the management was thanked for the generous action.

In August, 1926, the South Indian Railway decided to send the first batch of men from their workshops at Negapatam to the Golden Rock shops in pursuance of the plan to transfer the entire staff of the workshops to the latter place. The Agent issued certain instructions regarding the conditions under which work should start in the new place. Among the changes made was included the withdrawal of the concession of three days' absence without leave, and the men felt that this was an infringement of established rights and refused to go to the new station unless the old rule was restored. For a time there seemed no prospect of an agreement. The Agent referred the matter to the Commissioner for arbitration. The union of the men wished to send a deputation to the Commissioner before deciding to accept his arbitration but he replied that if he was to arbitrate he could not hear the union in advance. Eventually the men consented to accept the Commissioner's arbitration. Sir George Paddison went to Negapatam in November, 1926, heard both sides and pronounced his award which was favourably received by both parties and has, on the whole, been adhered to.

Two cases of lightning strikes occurred during the year, one in the Madras Electric Tramways and the other in the Choolai Mills. In the former about 250 drivers and conductors refused to go on the line one afternoon as a protest against the punishment of dismissal and suspension inflicted on two men. This action was not approved by the other workers and the Tramwaymen's Union condemned the hasty step taken by the drivers and conductors referred to. The men were therefore obliged to go back to duty. The workers of the Choolai Mills submitted a list of their grievances to the management, the chief demand being a half-yearly bonus. Impatient of the delay in getting a reply they struck work on the 24th January, 1927, but resumed work immediately on the persuasion of the Madras Labour Union which intimated to them that they had not the sanction of all the men for this extreme course.

#### 1927-28.

4. *Labour Disputes.*—There was unrest during the first half of the year in the City of Madras, and in August and September the unrest spread to Coimbatore. The worst period was during April and May, when there was acute trouble in the oil industry, beginning with a strike among the workmen of the Burma Oil Company on account of reduction of the staff made by the company and the removal of certain benches in the machine shop which were previously provided for some of the men. The union of the oil workers became very active and the management was asked to concede a series of demands. Official and unofficial mediation had almost succeeded in bringing the dispute to an end when, unfortunately, on the 10th May, 1927, a lorry coming from the Burma Oil Company installation at Tondiarpet was attacked by riotous strikers and set on fire. A fight ensued between some of the Burma Oil Company staff and the strikers and police intervention became necessary.

In the general excitement which then prevailed, the workmen of the Asiatic Petroleum Company and Standard Oil Company struck in sympathy. Violence rapidly subsided, however, after the collision with the police, and wiser counsels gradually prevailed, with the result that the men returned to work on the 17th May, 1927. In view of the better relations then established between employers and workmen, the criminal cases ensuing on the fracas of the 10th May were withdrawn; and proceedings taken under the security section against Mr. Singaravelu Chetti were dropped, on his undertaking to refrain from inciting to disorders.

The strikes of the oil workers were followed by other strikes of considerable importance in the Diocesan Press, Messrs. Massey & Co., and Government Public Works Workshops. The strike in the Public Works Workshops ended in a few days, but those in the other two concerns lasted for three or four months. The leaders, failing to secure what the men demanded, attempted to bring about a general strike of all the labourers in the city. This idea, however, did not find favour with the other workers, who had been the spectators of the sufferings caused by the strikes.

In Coimbatore three strikes occurred during the year. On the first two occasions they passed off without any serious incidents. But on the third occasion there was a general strike of all the labourers in the 3 mills, the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills, the Mall Mills, and the Kaleeswarar Mills. The trouble first arose on the 16th August, 1927, in the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills owing to the suspension of three weavers who were charged by the police for assaulting a member of the company's staff. As the other weavers refused to work the loom of the three suspended men, three men were brought from the Mall Mills, but they were intimidated by the other workers. The following morning the weaving section of the mills broke off work ten minutes after it had begun and sat down by their looms. The infection spread rapidly and all the workers in the mills were on strike in a few hours. The news of the trouble reacted on the other two mills in the city and the

men there followed suit. Thus about 4,800 workers of the three mills struck work and refused to leave the mill premises even after closing hours. Police assistance had to be called for and it was with great difficulty and by the exercise of much tact that they were able to eject the men. There was some rowdyism and stone-throwing in the streets, but nothing serious happened. The strikers held frequent meetings, and there was a procession of the strikers and their sympathisers. Legal proceedings were instituted against Mr. N. S. Ramaswami Ayyangar, the President of the Coimbatore Labour Union, for inciting the labourers to violence. After prolonged attempts at negotiations the strikes came to an end on the 9th and 10th September, 1927.

The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway men at the Perambur Workshops were much agitated over the orders of the management, issued as a measure of economy, to cut down the hours of work with a consequent reduction of earnings. The situation caused anxiety for some time, but fortunately nothing untoward happened and the activities of the union were confined to sending deputations to meet the Agent to discuss with him their grievances.

Considerable discontent has been caused also in the South Indian Railway Workshops by the decision of the administration to concentrate all the workshops at a single centre, viz., Golden Rock, with consequent large reduction in establishment. There was much talk of a general strike, but fortunately at the interview which the men had with the Agent in December, 1927, it was decided that nothing should be done by either party till the result of the enquiry to be made by a Committee appointed by the Government of India was known.

#### 1928-29.

*Labour Disputes.*—The most important event of the year was the extensive and violent strike on the South Indian Railway consequent on reductions in the Railway workshops owing to concentration at Golden Rock and the introduction of improved machinery and methods.

Strikes were threatened in the Choolai (Textile) Mills, Madras, at intervals during the year. The employees' chief grievances related to the piece-work system which had been introduced in the Carding and Spinning Departments in August, 1927, and to the decision taken in May, 1928, to put the weavers in charge of two looms instead of one. Certain other grievances were also put forward at the same time, e.g., in the matter of sick leave and maternity benefits. After some controversy the management agreed to raise the spinning rates by 10 per cent. There still remained the other points of dispute, and on the 17th August, 1928, when an attempt was made to put a few weavers on two looms, a strike occurred. The men however returned to work the next morning, presumably on the understanding that a committee of experts would, as suggested by the Labour Commissioner, be appointed to advise as to a suitable rate for a second loom, the rate offered by the management (viz., half of that for the first loom) being considered unacceptable. A committee was accordingly appointed, and in the course of the following month produced a report which led to a substantial increase in the rates paid for the second loom and to the active consideration of the other grievances and defects. After further parley, several concessions were obtained from the management. With the exception of one or two slight outbreaks of discontent subsequently, tranquillity was on the whole maintained in the mills during the year.

The most important strike in the mufassal, next of course to the South Indian Railway strike, was the strike in the Chittivalsa Jute Mills in Vizagapatam district. The strike was serious both because of the large number of men involved and of the number of days the men remained out of work. The strike began on 17th January, 1929, when 2,000 men out of a total strength of 2,144 downed tools. The chief demand of the workmen was for the grant of a half-yearly bonus of 10 per cent. of their wages for the Pongal festival. After some time the Labour Commissioner's intervention was sought by the workmen but before he actually reached Chittivalsa, the strike was brought to an end (on 4th March, 1929), as a result of negotiations conducted by a local union of the strikers of which Mr. V. V. Giri was the President. The men were given a 10 per cent. increase of wages in all cases where the former pay did not exceed Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 per mensem. Various other concessions were also given.

#### From 1st April, 1929, to 3rd August, 1929.

A strike occurred on the 2nd April, in the Mall Mills, Coimbatore. The cause of the strike was the dissatisfaction on the part of the labourers with the remuneration offered to them by the management for working two looms instead of only one as previously. The number of men affected was 100. The Labour union representative

informed the Commissioner of Labour that the trouble arose partly from the retrenchment of some 200 weavers, without notice (owing to shortage of work) and partly from the low rate offered for work on the second loom. The strikes spread on the 6th to the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills and the number affected was about 600. The Commissioner of Labour visited Coimbatore on the 19th April, 1929, and interviewed the management, Messrs. Stanes & Co., and had a talk with the men. As a result of further negotiations, the employees of the Spinning and Weaving Mills returned to work on the 23rd April, 1929, and those of the Mall Mills on the 24th April, 1929. The terms of settlement offered by the management and finally accepted by the men were that weavers working on two looms up to 50 in. width should be paid at 75 per cent. of the old rates for each loom and those attending to 1½ looms of over 50 in. width should be given 85 per cent. of the old rate for each loom worked. The management stated that these rates conformed to those ruling in local competing mills. As a matter of concession, the weavers of the Spinning and Weaving Mills who worked two looms in March were paid at the old rates. Practically all the looms in the Spinning and Weaving Company and more than three-fourths of the looms in Mall Mills were reported to be working on the 26th May, 1929, and it was anticipated that the rest of the looms would be fully at work as soon as suitable orders were available. 83 men of the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills and 118 of the Mall Mills have been thrown out of work as a result of the introduction of the two looms system. These men were paid only for the days they worked and no notice of discharge was given to them, nor payment made in lieu of notice, because they struck work without notice and thereby broke the terms of agreement.

The workers in the Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills (Choolai Mills) went on strike on the 12th June, 1929, as a result of an assault of a mill hand by a Gurkha watchman at the gate. Certain officials of the Madras Labour Union for Textile workers interviewed the agent who informed them that he had dismissed the watchman concerned. The men, however, were rather excited over the incident as a similar assault had been made a few weeks ago by two Gurkha watchmen of the mills on the Manager of the Madras Labour Union for Textile workers. All the workmen, numbering about 2,000, took part in the strike. The strikers originally demanded the dismissal of all the other Gurkha watchmen, but on the advice of the union officials this demand was not pressed and the men returned to work on the 13th June, 1929, apparently satisfied with the action of the management in dismissing the watchman who actually committed the assault.

The employees of the Weaving Department of the above mills, some 400 in number, struck work on the 16th July, 1929, alleging, (i) that the wages they were getting were not in proportion to the work turned out, (ii) that the wages had fallen considerably as a result of the cutting down by the management of the rates per unit and pattern of work, and (iii) that accounts for the actual work turned out by each weaver, were not properly maintained by the management. The employees in the other departments in the mills did not participate in the strike but the management did not want them to continue at work while the weaving department was idle. They accordingly put up a notice declaring a lock-out until further orders. As a result of a series of conferences between the management and the representatives of the Madras Labour Union in the presence of the Labour Commissioner the mills were re-opened and normal work resumed on the 25th July, 1929, on the understanding that an expert committee would be appointed to report to the Labour Commissioner on the following lines:—

(1) To report to the Labour Commissioner, whether, since the introduction of the two-loom system, there has been any alteration in the basic rates on which wages in the weaving department are calculated, and if so, to indicate the nature, extent and time of the alteration or alterations.

(2) To examine and report to the Labour Commissioner on the figures of production embodied in the statements which have been furnished by the management of the Choolai Mills at the conferences in the Labour Commissioner's office on the 23rd and 24th July, 1929, for each of the twelve months ended June last.

(3) To report to the Labour Commissioner whether the production in the weaving department at any time since the beginning of November last has been seriously affected by the inferior quality of the warp and weft supplied.

The Committee has made the necessary investigations and its report is almost ready.

## PART II.

### Conditions of Labour in Mines.

The mining industry in this Presidency is insignificant. The total labour force employed numbers less than five thousand and the mines are for the most part open

pits of no great depth in which quarrying is done by unskilled, and often casual, labour drawn from the neighbouring villages. The statement below shows the number and nature of these mines :—

Minerals worked.	District.	Number of mines (in 1928).
Manganese	{ Vizagapatam .. ..	9
	{ Bellary .. ..	5
	{ Kurnool .. ..	1
Magnesite .. ..	{ Salem .. ..	4
Mica .. ..	{ Nellore .. ..	75
	{ The Nilgiris .. ..	3 (2 were closed during the year).
Barytes .. ..	Kurnool .. ..	6
Corandum .. ..	Salem .. ..	2
Asbestos .. ..	Cuddapah .. ..	2

### I.—Recruitment.

1. The labourers employed in the mines in Salem, Nellore, Cuddapah, Kurnool and Vizagapatam districts come from the neighbouring villages. Only three of the five manganese mines in Bellary and the mine in the Nilgiris employ imported labour. In the Nilgiris, ordinary labour is local, while skilled labourers to run shafts are imported from outside the district. In Bellary the imported labour comes from the Mysore State and Bombay Presidency and only for a short period in the year.

The supply of labour in Salem and Cuddapah districts is subject to seasonal variations; there is a shortage of labour during the harvest season and a slight excess during drought. The labourers prefer agricultural labour to industrial labour.

2. (i) Generally the labourers resort to the mines for work in the morning and return home to their villages in the evening.

(ii) Twenty per cent, of the labourers employed in the Nellore district and 50 per cent of those in the Cuddapah district reside in huts provided for the purpose in the neighbourhood of the mines. No permanent labour force is employed in the mines in the Vizagapatam district. The extent of permanent labour force in Bellary district is not known.

3. Labourers are not recruited on any definite basis. Villagers know when labour is in demand at the mines and offer themselves for work. The selection is made by the managers of mines. In Salem and Vizagapatam districts the labourers are engaged through the agency of contractors, but no written agreements exist.

8. In most of the mines employment is continuous throughout the year but some of the less remunerative mica mines in Nellore work only for six months in the year. Under 5 per cent. of the labourers employed in the mines in the Nellore district are casual employees.

### II.—Staff Organization.

11. The selection of managing staff rests with the proprietors or directors of the mining companies. In Salem district and in the manganese mines of Bellary and Vizagapatam the managers are educated persons with technical qualifications. In the Nilgiris the one mica mine is under personal supervision of the proprietor.

12. In the Salem district, quarry superintendents and clerks are selected by the managers. Intelligent and capable labourers are appointed as maistris by the managers in consultation with quarry superintendents. No such system appears to exist in other districts.

12. The relations between labourers and employers are generally satisfactory.

15. In the Salem district the quarrying work is mostly given on contract. The contractors select an area for quarrying, subject to the approval of the manager of the company, and the labourers work directly under these contractors who pay them their daily wages. Sub-contracting is discouraged by the company and has been practically closed. Payments to contractors are subject to check measurements by the manager who has also the power to cancel the contract at any time. The contractors have to follow the rules and conditions laid down by the company which has reserved to itself the power of cancelling the contract at will. In the Vizagapatam district also a similar system of entrusting the work of mining manganese ore in mines to contractors is prevalent; these contractors have sub-contractors who get the work done. The system of engaging contractors as intermediaries does not appear to exist in other districts.



### III.—Housing.

16 and 18. In the Nilgiris suitable house accommodation is provided by mine owners while the labourers in Vizagapatam district are not housed near the mines, as no imported labour is engaged. In the Salem and Kurnool districts the provision of housing accommodation has not been found necessary as the labourers reside in the neighbouring villages. Most of the labourers employed in the mines in the Nellore district reside in the surrounding villages; they go to the mines in the morning and return home in the evening. Such of the labourers as reside about the mines are supplied with building materials with which they construct huts of the type they are accustomed to live in. In Cuddapah district some of the labourers are provided with huts, while in Bellary district huts have been provided for the labourers employed in three of the five manganese mines.

19. In Nellore those labourers, who reside in the mining area occupy huts constructed for them. Out of 35 huts provided for the labourers in the Cuddapah district only 12 are occupied by workmen.

20. The housing accommodation provided by the mine owners in the Nilgiris, Cuddapah and Nellore districts to their labourers is free of rent. Information in respect of Bellary district is not available.

### IV.—Health.

23. The general health of workers appears to be satisfactory. Vital statistics are not available for birth-rate and infant mortality among the labourers, but there appears to be no striking difference between the mine areas and the rest of the district in this respect. It is reported that the birth-rate and infant mortality have not been adversely affected by the special nature of the work done by the labourers in the mines in Salem district and mica mining does not appear to affect the health of workers in Nellore district as mines are mainly worked on the open cast system and tunnelling is not deep. Water supply was reported to be inadequate in most of the mines in the Nellore district and the District Health Officer has recommended that every mine owner should be called upon to sink a sanitary well at his mine and also that the mine owners should stock medicines for cholera and for simple ailments. Instructions have been issued to the mine owners to carry out these recommendations. The supply of drinking water in the mines in Salem district is reported to be adequate. In Vizagapatam district the labourers employed in the Vizianagram Mining Company obtain drinking water from the wells in the neighbouring fields. The resting accommodation in the mines at Kanjamalai, Salem district, has been reported to be inadequate and the District Health Officer has suggested the construction of three more huts to be used as tiffin sheds for the labourers. In Cuddapah district malaria prevails and at every change of season there is wide spread fever. In Bellary district malaria prevails in the mines of Thummaragudi throughout the year and as a preventive measure the mine owners administer quinine to the labourers twice a week free of cost. During the rainy season the cold winds from the Sandur Hills affect the health of the labourers in the mines of Tonasigeri.

24. The magnesite mines at Suramangalam, Salem district, maintain a dispensary which is in charge of a medical officer who attends for two hours a day twice a week and when necessary daily. Three medical attendants are provided by mine owners for work in Garvide and Garbham mines in the Vizagapatam district. The labourers employed in the mines in the Nilgiris are sent for treatment to the hospital on a neighbouring tea estate. Labourers in the mines in Cuddapah district are attended to by a whole-time doctor attached to the mines. A small dispensary is also maintained. The District Health Officer, Nellore, reported that the surgical outfit at most of the mines in that district was inadequate and the mine owners have been instructed to rectify the defect. A dispensary is also maintained by the mine owners at the Thummaragudi manganese mines for the benefit of the employees.

25. The average attendance at the dispensary attached to the Garbham mines in the Vizagapatam district was thirty during the year 1928 out of a total of 124 labourers employed in this mine. First aid is rendered in cases of accidents in Nellore and the labourers (both men and women) in the Cuddapah and Salem districts freely utilize the medical facilities provided.

26. Sanitary and conservancy arrangements in the mines in Kurnool and Salem districts are reported to be adequate. Sanitary conditions on the mines in Vizagapatam, the Nilgiris, and Nellore districts are reported to be fair. The doctor employed for the mines in the Cuddapah district is in charge of the sanitary arrangements and on the whole sanitation is reported to be satisfactory. No special conservancy arrangements exist at present at the mines in Nellore district. Government have issued orders that the bore-hole type of latrine should be erected on the surface of the mines for the use of the work people. In the Garbham mines each house is provided with a private latrine.

27. No special Boards of Health exist for the inspection of mines in this Presidency. The mines are inspected by the District Health Officers who report to the collectors on the sanitary conditions and suggest improvements. In Salem district the District Medical Officer also inspects the mines.

28. The existing mines rules appear to be suitable.

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

Owing to lack of competition, prices of foodstuffs and clothing are somewhat high in Nellore district and one or two mine owners in this district supplied these necessities to the labourers employed under them at moderate prices. The practice is not general.

There are no schools at most of the mines for the education of employees or their children. The establishment of such schools near the mines appears hardly practicable as the mines are generally scattered and most of the employees return to their homes in the evening. In Salem district, however, there is an aided night school for the benefit of the labourers at Suramangalam, and about 44 labourers attend the school every night.

**IX.—Hours.**

**B.—MINES.**

63. (i) Hours worked per day and per week in the mines in the several districts are:—

District.	Hours per day.	Hours per week.
Nellore .. .. .	7	42
Cuddapah .. .. .	8½	51
Salem .. .. .	9	54
Vizagapatam .. .. .	9	54
The Nilgiris .. .. .	7½	45

The hours of work are as below:—

Nellore	{ 8 a.m. to 12 noon 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. }	7 hours.
Salem	{ 7 a.m. to 12 noon 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. }	9 hours.
Cuddapah	{ 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. 10 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. }	8½ hours.

(ii) No overtime is worked in the mines in Cuddapah, Kurnool and Nellore districts. Fitters in Cuddapah district work overtime one hour a week. The actual number of hours including overtime may be estimated at ten hours and the spread over at 11 hours in the Salem district. Average hours worked per week during 1928 ranged from 9 to 56 in the Vizagapatam district, 9 to 48 in Kurnool district and 46 to 54 in Salem district. In Cuddapah and Bellary districts the average hours worked per week were 51 and 48 respectively. The Peripai and Garbham mines in the Vizagapatam district worked 48 and 54 hours per week respectively.

64. All the days with the exception of Sundays in Nellore, Vizagapatam and the Nilgiris, Mondays in Salem, and Thursdays in Cuddapah, are working days.

65. *Effect of Restriction of Hours.*

67. *Suitability of the Law Relating to Shifts.*

68. *Possibility of Introducing an Effective Daily Limitation.*—Sixty hours' restriction per week has proved beneficial in the Salem district and the limitation of 8 hours per day appears reasonable. There appears to be no necessity for these measures in other districts.

69. Intervals are as follows:—

Nellore ..	2 hours between 12 noon and 2 p.m.
Salem ..	1 hour between 12 noon and 1 p.m., or 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. as the workmen come at 7 or 8 o'clock.
Kurnool ..	1 hour between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.
Cuddapah ..	1½ hours (9.30 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.).

This interval is workers' meal time.

70. *Day of Rest.*—The Hindu festivals and Sundays in Nellore and Vizagapatam, Mondays in Salem and Thursdays in Cuddapah are holidays.

71. The existing provisions are adequate.

**X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.**

**B.—MINES.**

90. *Effect of Act of 1922—Suitability of certification provisions.*—The certification provisions appear to be suitable wherever applied.

91. *Exclusion of Women.*—Women have lately been excluded from work in the mines in Nellore and Cuddapah districts. The entire exclusion of women labour would result in hardship to the labourers' family from a pecuniary point of view. Husband and wife prefer to work together at the mines. Owing to the exclusion of women 50 per cent. of the workers in the Cuddapah district left service and have secured employment elsewhere. In the magnesite mines at Suramangalam, women are engaged in dressing and cleansing the mineral after extraction, before calcination. Children are employed in carrying as headloads baskets of spoils from the workspots to the trolleys for conveyance to the spoil banks. Women and children are not employed for work in the nights at the above mines.

## XII.—Wages.

96. In the Nilgiris district the daily average number of persons employed in and around the mines that were at work during the year 1928 was 74, of whom 50 were men and 24 women. The average wages paid to an unskilled labourer was 6 annas and to a skilled labourer Re. 1-1-0 per day. In the Vizagapatam district the daily average number of persons employed in and about the mines was 193 as against 356 in the previous year. All of them worked on the surface and none worked underground. In the Salem district the total daily average number of persons employed in the magnesite mines (Government Hills) at Suramangalam was 674 males and 463 females on open workings and 143 males and 2 females on surface, the daily average earnings being 6 As. 9 pies in the case of males employed on open workings, 6 annas in the case of males employed on surface operations and 3 As. 6 pies in the case of females. In the Jaghir Hill mines the daily average number of labourers employed was 150 males and 107 females and they were paid 4 As. 8 pies per diem. In the Kanjamalai mines the daily average number of male and female workers was 18 and 24 respectively. In the Kurambapatti magnesite mines the daily average number of persons employed was 30 males and 6 females in the open workings, and 7 males and 10 females on surface, the daily average earnings being 4 As. 10 pies and 2 As. 6 pies in the case of males and females employed on open workings respectively, and 6 As. 3 pies and 3 As. 7 pies in the case of males and females employed on surface operations respectively. In the corundum mines the daily average number of labourers employed was 12 males and 19 females. The male workers received 4 annas and female workers 2 annas a day. The wages paid to labourers in the Nellore district were 4 annas to 8 annas for men, 3 annas to 4 annas for women and 1½ annas to 3 annas for children. In the Kurnool district the average daily number of persons employed in and about the mines during the year was 51 as against 65 in the previous year, the average daily earnings of a labourer ranging from 10 to 12 annas during the harvest seasons and 6 to 8 annas at other times. The average daily number of persons employed in the asbestos mines in the Cuddapah district during the year was 34 males and 12 females in the underground workings and 173 males and 52 females on the surface. The daily average earnings in the case of unskilled male workers employed underground were As. 6-10 while skilled male labourers employed on the surface were on an average paid Rs. 1-2-1 and unskilled labourers 9 annas per day. The female labourers employed both underground and on the surface were paid 5 annas per day. In the Bellary district the average daily number of persons employed in the mines was 232, of whom 174 were men and 58 women. The wages are paid in cash.

105. *Minimum Wages.*—There has been no complaint about the adequacy or otherwise of the wages at the mines.

106. *Deductions.*—Nil. Labourers are very rarely fined.

107. The periods of wage payment in the several districts are as follows:—

District.	Periods of payment.
Kurnool .. .. .	Daily or weekly.
Cuddapah .. .. .	Daily or fortnightly.
Salem .. .. .	Daily.
Nellore .. .. .	Fortnightly.
Vizagapatam .. .. .	Weekly or monthly.

In\*the Kurnool and Nellore districts the payment is made on the following day, week or fortnight as the case may be and there has been generally no complaint about this system. In the Nellore district there have been one or two complaints of delay in the payment of wages and in these cases the mine owners disbursed the pay on receipt of a warning from the collector. No legislation appears to be necessary or called for. The undisbursed wages in Nellore remain with the employer until they are claimed.

108. A certain amount of indebtedness is reported among the labourers in Nellore and Salem districts.

Statement.

Name of port and source of information.	Hours worked per week, per day.	Days worked per week.	Desirability of regulation.	Wages.	Other information of interest.
Cocanada, Port Officer ..	48 hours a week and eight hours a day.	6.	Nil.	Menials—Rs. 12–18. Skilled labour—Rs. 20–80. Men in charge of dredgers — Rs. 120 to Rs. 490.	Labour is paid at local rates in regard to menials but very much higher for trained men.
Cochin, Port Officer .. ..	Labour is casual and is had on contract by parties.	All through the week as per requirement.	No regulation appears to be necessary.	Wages are as agreed to be between contractors and coolies.	The hours of work on board steamers, other sea going vessels and licensed lighter, etc., working vessels, are between sun-rise and sunset with intervals for meals.
Mangalore, Port Officer ..	No fixed hours. Work according to the amount of cargo to be handled. Work on contract system.	Same as in column 2. Practically no work during the South-west monsoon months of June, July and August.	Regulation could not be beneficial to the labourers or to the employers, as work is on contract system.	No daily, weekly or monthly wages. Coolies are paid by contractors at so much per ton.	During the South-west monsoon months, no work is available for the coolies, but the contractors advance money to the coolies under them and recover it during the working season.
Mandapam, Marine Superintendent, South Indian Railway, Mandapam.	Pier staff 8 hours a day ..	All days. Rest is given by turns.	Nil.	—	Nil.
Negapatam, Port Officer ..	From 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on steamer days. Overtime is not usual. They arrange amongst themselves the actual number of hours of work.	Six ; seven, if work is available.	None. The labourers work of their own free-will and are only too glad to get more money.	Paid at the rate of six to nine pies per bag, according to distance carried for landing or loading.	Nil.

Statement.—contd.

Name of port and source of information.	Hours worked per week, per day.	Days worked per week.	Desirability of regulation.	Wages.	Other information of interest.
Negapatam— <i>contd.</i> , A. K. Mohamad Mohideen Maricar, Deck Passenger Broker and Dubash, British India Steam Navigation Company, Limited, Negapatam, through Port Officer.	Eight hours a day. There is no custom in practice as to the hours of work a coolie should work in a week. There is no agreement in force regarding the normal hours of work. For night work, full day's wage is paid.	Depends upon the nature of the work and the time required by the coolies to do it. No regular system in practice.	No regulation is in force at present. The present system in practice is quite safe and the work is carried on safely.	Re. 1, 14 annas, 12 annas and 11 annas per day.	The present system is very satisfactory.
Negapatam, A. Seenimathar Rowther, Nattami for coolies, Negapatam, through Port Officer.	6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with two hours' rest in the interval. At times of emergencies the labourers work even on Sundays and other holidays. They are used to work in batches whenever called for during the hours noted above.	Six days. Each coolie is used to take one day's complete rest in a week.	Eight hours' work per day from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. is desirable.	Rs. 2, 12 annas, to Rs. 4, 11 annas per 100 bags according to the distance over which they have to be carried.	—
Cuddalore, South Coromandel Chamber of Commerce, Cuddalore.	Labourers employed are generally and mostly paid on the piece-work system.	—	—	—	—
Tuticorin, Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce, through Port Officer.	No regular hours; time or work depends on amount of cargo to be handled.	Six days; provided there is work. On Sundays steamers are not working and cargo is rarely handled.	Employers and labourers are satisfied. No need for regulation.	Work through contractors. Wages paid not known.	—
Tuticorin, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Tuticorin, through Port Officer.	Sixty hours per week and ten hours per day from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Coal landing coolies do night-work till 12 midnight. They have quarters within foreshore and are on call at all hours of the day and night.	Six.	Highly desired.	Coolies are paid 12 annas per day. Lightermen earn per month Rs. 12 to 15.	Coolies carry heavy loads and lightermen are underpaid.

## Mr. J. GRAY, O.B.E., I.C.S., Commissioner of Labour.

Practically all the information at my disposal on the various matters included in the schedule of subjects falling within the terms of reference to the Royal Commission on Labour in India, was submitted to the Government of Madras in the beginning of August last, and has been included in Part I of their printed memorandum already submitted to the Royal Commission. The repetition in my evidence of the greater part of that memorandum would serve no purpose and I shall accordingly confine my written evidence to those matters in regard to which I am now in a position to supply additional information or to bring the information already embodied in the Government memorandum referred to above up to date.

With regard to Section XIV—*Trade Combinations*, item (117)—*Extent of Organization of Employees*, the total membership of registered trade unions on 31st March last, according to the annual returns of those unions, was made up as follows :—

(1) The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, Madras .. .. .	2,060
(2) The Madras Labour Union for Textile Mill Workers, Madras .. .. .	4,035
(3) The Madras Government Press Employees' Association Madras .. .. .	Defunct
(4) The Public Works Department, Workers' Union, Madras	352
(5) The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union, Madras .. .. .	7,334
(6) The South Indian Railway Employees' Association, Trichinopoly .. .. .	250
(7) The Madras Aluminium Labour Union, Madras .. .. .	196
(8) The Ranipet Labour Union, Ranipet .. .. .	312
(9) The Madras Electric Tramways and Supply Corporation Employees' Union, Madras .. .. .	1,190
(10) The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Non- Workshop Employees' Union, Madras .. .. .	884
Total .. .. .	<u>16,613</u>

The M. & S.M. Railway Employees' Union has added very considerably to its strength during the last few months and its present membership is, I understand, about 15,000, and so the total membership of registered trade unions in the Presidency is now probably about 25,000.

120. *Individual Trade Unions*.—A list of the ten registered trade unions in this Presidency, showing the dates on which they were registered, is given in Part I of the memorandum of the Madras Government, referred to above. There are, however, several other trade unions in the Presidency which have not applied for registration under the Indian Trade Unions Act.

## Registered Trade Unions.

1. *The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, Madras*.—This union was started in 1926. Early in February of that year some of the workpeople of these mills approached the management and stated that they were anxious to form under the new Trades Unions Act a union of their own under their own control, but before doing so would like to ascertain what attitude the management would take in the matter. The reply of the management was that they would readily accord their recognition to a legally constituted trade union of the workmen. Several meetings of the union were held in April, 1926, for drafting rules to regulate the working of the union. The union was finally registered in June, 1927. The membership of the union on 31st March last was 2,060. The mills employees number about 10,000.

As will be seen from the history of the Madras Labour Union there has been much controversy and bitterness of feeling between that union and the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, and although attempts have been made at various times to amalgamate the two unions they have not met with any success.

2. *The Madras Labour Union for Textile Mill Workers, Madras*.—The following extract from a compilation in my office gives the early history of this union :—

The very early history of the Madras Labour Union is the same as that of the labour movement in Madras. Through the efforts of the members of Sri Venkatesa Gumritha Varshini Sabha, the union was formed on 27th April, 1918, under the Presidentship of Mr. B. P. Wadia. The formulation of the grievances of the workpeople of both the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills and some of the concessions granted

by the management of the mills, the opening on 26th May, 1918, of a provision stores for the benefit of the members of the union, the renting of a room and the opening of a library by the union on 21st September, 1918, were the circumstances which made the union a popular institution among the workpeople of the mills. Mr. Wadia pressed for further concessions to the mill hands. The following represent the struggles carried on by the union with the management of the mills.

The chief demands made by Mr. Wadia were a rise of 20 per cent. in wages and the extension of the time for mid-day meal from forty minutes to one hour. Time was allowed to the management to consider the demands, but as no reply was received from the management even after some time, Mr. Wadia resumed the agitation and in his address to the labourers on 13th July, 1918, he reviewed his work in the labour field, referred to his interview with His Excellency the Governor in regard to his connection with the union and His Excellency's advice to him, and also advised the labourers not to strike work since such a step on their part would be attributed to his instigation and would probably result in proceedings being taken against him and the union under the Defence of India Act.

*The First Lock-out—(28th October, 1918 to 30th October, 1918).*—From the formation of the union there was unrest in the mills, and on many occasions this led to acts of insubordination on the part of the employees. Though the usual time for beginning work was 6.15 a.m., the weaving department had been granted a concession and allowed to come in up to 6.30 a.m. Now the spinning department demanded the same concession which the management refused to grant. On 26th October, 1918, the management put up a notice to the effect that the gates would be closed punctually at 6.15 a.m. On 28th October, 1918, the concession granted to the weavers was done away with owing to the demands made by other departments. About half the number of weavers turned up late on 28th October, 1918, and the other half who went in refused to do any work. Under these circumstances the mill authorities closed the mills on 28th October, 1918. The men remained out for three days and on Mr. Wadia's advice to them to resume work, they went back to work on 31st October, 1918. The men were quiet during the lock-out period.

*The Second Lock-out—(27th November, 1918, to 16th December, 1918).*—The men keenly felt their defeat in the first lock-out. They would not have yielded so easily had it not been for the advice of Mr. Wadia who said that their strike or lock-out would interfere with the munition work the mills were carrying on. But no such higher considerations appealed to the labourers and they grew restive again with the result that within another month, the mill authorities declared the second lock-out. The immediate causes of the lock-out were the suspension of a jobber in connection with an assault on the weaving master of the Carnatic Mill and the refusal of the men to work unless the jobber was taken back and the refusal also of the men to give the names of assailants in this case, as well as in another case of assault on the manager of the Buckingham Mill on the same day. The management closed the mills on 27th November 1918. The management demanded that the names of the assailants should be furnished by the employees. The demand was not conceded, and Mr. Wadia advised the men to hold out, collected subscriptions from the public for maintaining the men and also requested Mr. Gandhi to come down to lead the men. On 7th December, 1918, the management put up a notice offering to reopen the mills excepting the weaving department and promising a full day's wages to the men for working from 6 a.m. to 12 noon every day. They wanted an expression of regret from the weaving department men if they were to be taken back. Mr. Wadia advised against resumption of work by the men. On 10th December, 1918, Mr. C. F. Andrews arrived on the scene, having been sent by Mr. Gandhi, who could not come himself owing to ill-health. Mr. Andrews intervened on behalf of the workpeople, and the mills reopened on 17th December, 1918, the conditions of the settlement being, that the management would pay seven days' wages for the lock-out period as an act of grace and not as a legal right, that the management refused to refer to arbitration the points on which they were at variance with the workpeople and that they declined to take back the dismissed men.

During the lock-out period, the strength of the union considerably increased, because the men joined the union in large numbers for the purpose of receiving relief money. Women workers were also enrolled as members, and child labourers as associates of the union. Generally speaking, the men were quiet and kept themselves within bounds during the lock-out period. During the daily meetings, Mr. Wadia and the other political workers who came to his help indulged in violent denunciations of the capitalists and the Government.

On 23rd November, 1918, the union rented a bungalow on Rs. 50 per mensem, on Perambur Barracks Gate Road, for the location of the union office and for holding meetings. Mr. Wadia then turned his attention to constituting the union on regular lines and a committee was appointed to look after the co-operative bank of the union. A fund was in the meanwhile started for acquiring a permanent building for the union.

The united spinning and weaving mill employees were eligible for membership in the union. A small number of the employees of this mill had joined the union, and at their instance, the workpeople there agitated for concessions similar to those granted by the management of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. On 2nd October, 1918, they left the mill in a body at 5.35 p.m. instead of at 6 p.m., the usual time. The manager of the mill drew Mr. Wadia's notice to the conduct of the men and Mr. Wadia thereupon mediated and brought about an amicable settlement between the employers and the employees there.

During the year, 1919, the union grew in strength and importance. Better counsels seem to have prevailed with both the labourers and the management, and differences between them were settled without pushing matters to the extent of declaring a strike or lock-out. The union celebrated its first anniversary on 13th April, 1919. Mr. Wadia left India in May to go to America to attend the International Labour Conference, and Mr. Arundale acted as President during his absence. During the latter part of the year, the union began to discuss the question of further concessions for the men on account of the steadily increasing price of food-stuffs and other necessities of life, but it was only in 1920 that a formal demand was made to the management.

In their meeting of 2nd February, 1920, the union drew up a list of their grievances and sent it to Messrs. Binny & Co., managing agents of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, in the name of the executive committee of the union. By this time the capitalists in the city had begun to view with apprehension and disfavour the influence of outsiders in the labour union. The management of the mills, therefore, asked the union whether the executive committee was composed of employees of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. This the union resented. Very soon troubles began to crop up in the mills. On 8th February, 1920, two firemen who had been detailed for duty stayed away from work without specifying any grounds for their action (these were men detailed for duty on Sunday in order to attend to the engines). Thereupon the management put up a notice to the effect that the engineering staff men working for seven hours on Sunday would be paid  $1\frac{1}{2}$  days' wages. Mr. Arundale disapproved of the action of the men in practising passive resistance in that form. On 12th February, 1920, the representatives of the mill-hands interviewed the directors who promised the following concessions to the men: (1) (a) increase of 10 per cent. to those who drew one rupee and above per day; (b) 15 per cent. to those who drew between 9 annas and one rupee; and (c) 20 per cent. to those who drew less than 9 annas; (2) 2 annas per rupee as rice allowance to those who drew between Rs. 25 and Rs. 75 per mensem, and 3 annas for those drawing up to Rs. 25; (3) houses to be built for mill employees; (4) gazetted holidays and six to fifteen days privilege leave; (5) bonus would be increased from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. At the same time the management condemned the influence of outsiders in the union and asked for the co-operation of the men which should be shown by turning out better work, and further stipulated that no further increase would be granted for another two years. The men were dissatisfied with the conditions and advocated a strike, but Mr. Arundale dissuaded them. The Labour Commissioner intervened and a court of enquiry was appointed. In their meeting of 8th March, 1920, the labour union approved of the "award" of the court of enquiry, viz., (1) grant of 4 annas rice allowance per rupee, (2) increase of 20, 25 and 30 per cent. in wages, (3) full pay for gazetted holidays, (4) minimum wage to be not less than 9 annas 7 pies, (5) a fortnight's privilege leave after five years, (6) establishment of a contributory provident fund instead of the gratuity fund. On 23rd March, 1920, the management declared that they would not grant gratuity to men with less than ten years' service, and that the 4 annas rice allowance would take effect only from March 15th. On 23rd March, 1920, the union representatives interviewed the managing director in regard to a disagreement with regard to the interpretation of the award and since they could not come to any agreement, the men struck work the same day. This was the third dead-lock in the mills and the *first strike of the mill employees*. As soon as the men struck work, Mr. Arundale advised them to resume work and promised to interview His Excellency on their behalf, but the men were stubborn. His Excellency advised the labourers through the Labour Commissioner to join duty and promised a sympathetic consideration of their case. After prolonged persuasion from the leaders, the men joined duty on 27th March, 1920. During this strike the men were reported to have assaulted the menials of the European assistants of the mills on their way to and from the Moore Market. The men resumed work and then consented to the interpretation of the award by the Labour Commissioner.

After the termination of the strike the men went on with the union work quietly. They celebrated the second anniversary of the union in the middle of the year and subsequently organized a grand welcome to Mr. Wadia, their president, who returned to Madras on 8th August, 1920. Mr. Wadia then resumed charge of the duties of the union president from Mr. Arundale. In October, 1920, troubles again



commenced, this time only in the Buckingham Mill, owing to the passing over of the claims of one, Natesa Mudali, a side jobber, for promotion which, the management stated, was due to the unsatisfactory nature of his duties, but the labourers believed, was due to his active working for the cause of the union, the labourers began to practise "passive resistance" in the mill. A number of men who were offered the vacant place declined it; the head jobber when ordered by the manager to look after the duties of the vacant jobber's place refused to do so, and the weavers refused to work there. The management instituted a campaign of dismissals and about fifty men were dismissed in a few days. This fight between the employers and the employees culminated in a disturbance in the weaving shed on 20th October, 1920. Naturally the disturbance has been differently described by the management and the labourers. According to the management a section of the weavers refused to work the "dhobby looms" prescribed for them and to attend to its repairs; they refused as well to work the ordinary looms and demanded that they must be paid their allowance of 4 annas a day, which the management refused. Thereupon when the weaving master (Mr. A. Bentley) went inside his office room a number of weavers went and sat at the doorway of his office room and would not allow him to go out. When, after waiting for a long time, he attempted to get out the weavers assaulted him and threw spindles at him, and when he took out a revolver he had in his pocket they rushed at him, snatched the revolver from his hands and assaulted him and chased him to the manager's office. The labour version was that when the weavers went to the weaving master's room and explained matters to him he got wild, took out the revolver and pointed it at them to shoot them when they managed to snatch it away from him. Anyway, the revolver was taken by the labourers at once to Mr. Wadia. The mill worked that day, and the next morning, 21st October, 1920, the management declared a lock-out "in view of the assault on the weaving master and the general turbulent attitude of the workpeople." Thus commenced the third lock-out, this time only in the Buckingham Mill. After about a fortnight the management put up a notice giving the numbers of the employees dismissed in the various departments (about 150 in number) and specifying the conditions under which the rest might return to work. But the men were stubborn and did not take any notice of that or the subsequent notice the management put up. The union held meetings every day, appointed a "lock-out committee" with Mr. Wadia as president and set about working in right earnest to defeat the employers. In the meanwhile Mr. Wadia went to Bombay to attend the All-India Trade Union Conference meeting, and on his return brought a few looms and started work in the union premises. Money was collected in Bombay, subscriptions were raised from the Carnatic Mill employees and relief money distributed to the lock-out men. About a month after the lock-out Messrs. Binny and Co. filed a suit against Mr. Wadia and the other members of the lock-out committee for interfering with the workpeople and dissuading them from working and thereby causing serious loss to the company, and claimed damages to the extent of Rs. 75,000. They also applied for an interim "injunction" against the defendants, which was first granted temporarily and then made permanent until the disposal of the civil suit. Then the labour union opened correspondence with the management and laid down their conditions preparatory to opening negotiations, viz., that the union be recognized as then constituted; the "gagging" order and the law suit must be withdrawn and there should be no victimization of any sort. The management did not view the proposals favourably, and nothing resulted from the communication. The Carnatic Mill men, who had been quietly working during all this time came out finally on a "sympathetic strike" on the 24th January, 1921. But in the meanwhile Mr. Purushothama Das Thakur Das of Bombay and Mrs. Besant opened negotiations on behalf of the men, and as the result thereof a settlement was arrived at whereby the management promised to take back all the dismissed men except 13 ringleaders and also to withdraw the civil suit if Mr. Wadia and other outsiders would leave the union for the workpeople themselves to manage. The management enforced the other conditions as regards pay, gratuity, bonus, etc., which they had already notified. Both the mills reopened on the 27th January, 1921.

If this lock-out was important from a Labour v. Capital viewpoint, it was still more so from a police standpoint. In the early days of the lock-out various cases of assaults on the mill assistants who were still working in the mill occurred. The men who had been locked out attacked the police and the motor lorries conveying coolies from the harbour to the mill for doing temporary work in the mills. The men were comparatively quiet in November, but as soon as the High Court judgment extending the injunction order against Mr. Wadia and others came out the men began to get out of hand and made organized attempts to attack the mill lorries. One such attack was made on 8th December, 1920, evening and another on 9th December, 1920, morning; and in view of the growing menace and danger the police lorry under Deputy Commissioner of Police, Southern Range, escorted the mill lorry on the 9th evening. It was on this day that the attack became severe and that the police opened fire on two occasions under orders of Deputy Commissioner of Police, Southern

Range, and Commissioner of Police, being driven to that extent by the violent attacks of the mob who had collected on both sides of the road to throw stones on the lorries and the police. Fifteen were injured as a result of firing, out of whom two died. The police also sustained injuries. On 10th December, 1920, morning, there was an attack inside the mill lasting for a few minutes, but everything was quiet after that, though the locked-out men indulged till the very last in attacking the coolies who went to the mill for work before the termination of the lock-out. Needless to say there were meetings held to condemn and protest against the action of the police in opening fire on the 9th December, 1920, and in one of the meetings an independent committee of enquiry was also appointed, with what result no one as yet knows.

The bulk of the men felt greatly relieved at the termination of the lock-out.

After the troubles of 1920-21 there was a lull for some time in the activities of the union. In November, 1921, it was reported that the union had become a rendezvous of unemployed hands who had no hope of ever being re-employed in the mills. Meetings of the union were few and far between and subscriptions were not collected.

But in May, 1922, it was reported that a vigorous propaganda was going on for the purpose of reviving the union and that a number of Adi-Dravidas who had recently been thrown out of work for misconduct or other reasons were joining the ranks of the union workers. Hoping that the revival of union could be brought about by depreciating the Welfare Committee, the union propagandists did their best to influence the bulk of the workpeople to boycott the committee, but their efforts did not meet with great success. The leaders were handicapped in their efforts to revive the union by the lack of cohesion and solidarity amongst the workmen. Appeals were made to the men by recalling the prosperous days of the union and contrasting the position to which the union had fallen. But the workmen remained indifferent, and there were very little signs of activity in the union until the last quarter of 1923, when new office-bearers were elected and Mr. Arundale became the president. Frequent meetings were then held and a definite set of rules for the union was drawn up. About the middle of 1924 the union began to interest itself in general problems affecting labour, and at the instance of Mr. Arundale it passed a resolution in June, 1924, that Mrs. Besant and Mr. Arundale be elected to represent the union at the British Commonwealth Conference to be held in London in August that year, and also passed a resolution urging upon the Government of India the necessity for early legislation for the registration of trade unions. The union also resolved to make a representation to the management of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills and to the Choolai Mills, and also the local Government to introduce a system of weekly or fortnightly payments of wages instead of monthly payments.

For some time after that, little was heard of the activities of the union until in December, 1925, Major Graham Pole, Mr. Ernest Kirk and Mr. V. Chakkarai Chetti addressed a meeting which was apparently convened for the purpose of inducing the workmen to take an interest in the Trade Union Congress.

On the receipt of news that the Trade Unions Act had been passed, vigorous attempts were made to resuscitate the Madras Labour Union. Several meetings were held in March, 1926, to which leading politicians were invited to address the union. At the same time, a section of the workmen of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills who were dissatisfied with the way in which the affairs of the Madras Labour Union were conducted started a new union of their own. Each charged the other with intimidation for the purpose of compelling workmen to join. Mr. Shiva Rao, who was at the time President of the Madras Labour Union, attempted to persuade the Government to bring influence to bear on the employees of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills to join the Madras Labour Union and at the same time, Mrs. Besant's paper made several violent attacks on the management of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, charging them with having created a new union and compelling their employees to join it. The management, in a letter to the paper, denied these allegations *in toto*. During April, 1926, the Madras Labour Union continued to hold meetings to protest against the formation of a rival union. The charge of deliberately creating a rival union formerly levelled against the management of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills was later modified into one of active sympathy with the promoters of the rival union and allowing the canvassing of membership of the new union within the premises of the mills. Mr. Kay, the managing director of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, declined an invitation to attend a meeting so long as the union indulged in violent and unjust attacks upon the management. Ultimately, the Madras Labour Union realized that its attempts to stifle the birth of the new union were a failure and it began to attempt to persuade the new union to join it by preaching that any genuine labour union ought to be independent of the support of the employers. About this time the Madras Labour Union redrafted its rules with a view to seeking registration under the Trade Unions Act. In May, 1926, it was reported that the existence of the rival union was receiving less attention

than in the past, the only complaint against it being that subscriptions for it were forcibly collected. Mr. Kay, the managing director, was, however, exonerated by the spokesmen of the Madras Labour Union from any share in this alleged forcible collection of subscriptions for the new union and it was also admitted that he had promised to enquire if definite cases were brought to his notice. The Madras Labour Union made attempts about this time to get recognition from the management of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, but recognition has never been conceded.

The grievances of textile workers, especially in the Choolai Mills, and the attempts to improve their economic condition by formation of co-operative societies in order to free them from debt were the chief subjects dwelt upon at the meetings held in May, 1926. Mr. Shiva Rao interviewed the directors of the Choolai Mills in Bombay, and got an assurance from them that the grievances of the employees would be enquired into if they were properly set forth. He asked the employees to present a list of their grievances to enable him to do so. Dismissal of workmen without payment of a month's wages and dismissal of pregnant women were the two grievances brought to notice. The union at this time was also interesting itself in bringing to the notice of the authorities cases where compensation for injuries resulting from accidents was due but had not been paid. The union held the first special meeting for women employees about this time and the starting of a Baby Welcome and Welfare Home at an early date was promised with the hope that it would in due course develop into a maternity hospital.

In June, 1926, the attacks against the rival union which had shown signs of abating, were revived with greater vigour. The election of Mr. T. V. Subramania Pillai as deputy president of the new union was claimed to deprive it of its main ground for existence, as it introduced outsiders into the conduct of its affairs. Although Mr. Ernest Kirk and others urged the two unions to amalgamate, the bickerings continued. In July, 1926, a month's notice was served on the women workers in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. The Madras Labour Union took up their cause and held several meetings to denounce the action of the employers. Mr. Shiva Rao, the president of the union, started correspondence with Mr. Kay, the managing director of the mills. A public meeting to protest against the action of the mill management was held under the auspices of the Women's Association on the evening before the meeting of the Legislative Council. The managing director had, however, cancelled the notices the previous evening on the representation of a deputation of the employees. So at the public meeting the management was thanked for their generous action. A situation which might otherwise have had serious developments was happily averted. In November, 1926, Mr. Pethick Lawrence, who was on a visit to Madras, addressed the union and enunciated the principles of unity, self-respect and self-reliance as necessary for the amelioration of the condition of the labour. One afternoon, in February, 1927, a few boys of the spinning department of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, who had reached the age of 15 that month (when they ceased to be boys under the Indian Factories Act), disappointed at not getting an increase of salary for want of vacancies walked out of the factory. The management explained the position to them and assured them that when vacancies arose in the higher grades they would be appointed. The same evening the Madras Labour Union held a meeting where the action of the boys in taking it upon themselves to come away was condemned and the boys were advised to go back. The next day the boys returned to work possibly as a result both of the assurances of the management and the condemnations of the Labour Union.

In March, 1927, the main topic that came up for discussion at the weekly meetings of this union was the dismissal of over 100 workers in the spinning department of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. The trouble originally arose on account of the discharge of some six boys in the spinning department. The other men in that department resented this discharge and as a protest struck work. The management put up a notice next day stating that those who did not return to work the following day would be considered as discharged. The union did not approve of the action of the men in having gone on strike without its consent and urged them to return to work. The men, however, did not return to duty until the 7th March, when all, except some 157 men, were taken back. Within a few days, a few more were taken back, but 105 were still kept out. The union agitated both at its meetings and in the press on behalf of these 105 men who were kept out, but the agitation was in vain. In April, 1927, the union decided to give maternity and death benefits to its regular members. A noteworthy feature of the activities of the union about this time is that at the third anniversary meeting held on 30th April, Mr. Chambers, the managing director of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, was present. In June, 1927, the union was registered under the Trade Unions Act. In December, 1927, Messrs. Purcell and Hallsworth, members of the British Trade Union Delegation, who were visiting Madras for the purpose of studying labour conditions, addressed a meeting of the Madras Labour Union. They described labour conditions in Madras in very unfavourable terms and exhorted their hearers to strengthen the union.

Since the beginning of 1928, the union has devoted itself mainly to attempts at ameliorating the condition of labourers in the Choolai Mills. In March, 1928, Miss Matheson and Miss Wingate, members of the National Christian Council, visited Madras in the course of their tour in India to study labour conditions, and after inspecting some of the mills addressed a meeting of the Madras Labour Union. They pleaded for mass education and greater care for the workers' health. An important step in the progress of the union was taken about this time by the formation of a branch for women workers under the leadership of Miss Patwardhan. In July, 1928, the union put forward certain grievances in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, particularly the hardships of requiring one weaver to work six Northrop looms, the alleged unfair penalization of jobbers and the unsatisfied demands for the establishment of a provident fund. The description given in Part I of the printed memorandum of the Madras Government submitted to the Royal Commission, of the various strikes and labour troubles in the Choolai Mills, Madras, during 1928 and the first seven months of 1929, shows the part played in those struggles by the Madras Labour Union.

3. *The Madras Government Press Employees' Association, Madras.*—The refusal of the Superintendent, Government Press, to consider a request for increase of wages and the transfer of two or three men who took a prominent part in making the request are alleged to be responsible for the resuscitation in January, 1927, of the Government Press Labour Union, which was started in 1921, but since then had ceased to work. The technical section of the Government Press formed its members. At the inaugural meeting in January, 1927, the aim of the union was announced to be not to work against the employers but to represent the grievances of the men and improve their conditions. At another inaugural meeting held in February, 1927, Mr. S. Satyamurthi, M.L.C., was elected patron; Mr. K. Bashyam, as president; Mr. T. Govindaswami Mudaliyar, printer, as working president; Mr. S. Subramania Ayyar, as vice-president. Mr. Bashyam, the president, informed the men that he had had an interview with the Superintendent, Government Press, and that the superintendent had promised to consider their grievances sympathetically so far as it lay in his power. The union was registered under the Indian Trade Union Act, on 19th November, 1927. At a meeting held in May, 1928, the union passed a number of resolutions requesting the Government to recognize the union and to institute a committee to enquire into the hostile attitude of the superintendent and his personal assistant towards the members of the association and into the disproportionately severe punishments inflicted on the employees who were members of the association, and requesting consideration of an increase in the wages of the piece-workers. The president of the union soon afterwards asked the Commissioner of Labour to cancel its registration under the Indian Trade Unions Act, but as his application did not comply with the provisions of the Act on the subject, it was returned for revision. The president's action was prompted by a Government order which had recently been issued forbidding Government servants to become or continue members of an association which has sought or may seek registration under the Trade Unions Act. "Government servant" is defined in the Government Servants Conduct Rules as including every person holding or exercising any civil office, other than a menial office, under the Government. The union is for all practical purposes defunct, although the formalities necessary for the cancellation of its registration have not yet been completed.

4. *The Public Works Department Workers' Union, Madras.*—The union came into existence in the month of July, 1926. In the following month it prepared a list of grievances and submitted them to the superintendent of the workshops. He replied that he was not cognizant of the existence of such a union. During the excitement which followed the strike of the oil workers in Madras City in May, 1927, the men in the Public Works Workshops went on strike. The union alleged that it had been representing the men's grievances since August, 1926, and that no heed was paid to them. But the real cause of the strike was sympathy with Massey and Co.'s employees, who had gone on strike on May 25th, 1927. The Public Works Workshops men were out from 31st May to 2nd June, and again struck work on 9th June, demanding an all-round increase of pay instead of the increase according to grade and service which the superintendent had suggested. A deputation of the employees waited on the Honourable the Minister for Public Works, and on his promising to consider their grievances the men resumed duty on the 16th. Some increases in wages were subsequently given. Little has since been heard of the activities of the union, though it occasionally holds meetings at which reference is made to the lack of interest in the union evidenced by the poor attendance and by arrears of subscriptions. The union was registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act on April 7th, 1928. The membership on 31st March last was 352, the total number of employees in the workshops being about 1,050.

5. *The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union, Madras.*—The early history of this union as recorded in my office is as follows:—" Though it was in the Perambur workshops that some of the earliest known strikes in the city took place, no organization appears to have been formed then except a few *ad hoc* strike committees. No proper organization existed at the time the labour movement began in the city. And when the Madras Labour Union was started primarily for the mill employees, some of the Perambur workshop men also joined that union. Throughout the whole of 1918 Mr. Wadia organized an association called the Mahajanopakara Sangam for the benefit of the Perambur labourers. This appears to have been an institution more for social welfare work than for the improvement of labour conditions. But early in May, 1919, Mr. Kalyanasundara Mudaliyar addressed a body of workpeople and formed a labour union for them with one Ranganatham Nayudu as president. This union was not able to do anything substantial, for a counter-movement was soon set on foot by another section of labourers. It was rumoured that this counter-movement received some support from the railway authorities. Mr. V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, the president of this rival union, was an ardent Congressman, and his efforts were directed to form a union under the auspices of the Congress. Violent controversies ensued between these two organizations for a short time. On February 10th, 1920, both the unions were amalgamated and the present Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union was formed with Mr. Arundale as the elected president thereof. Shortly after the formation of the union the men formulated their grievances. Since the management did not reply to their communication for some time the men began to get restive, and on 8th April, 1920, discontent showed itself in the refusal of 20 men of the blacksmith department to do overtime work. The agent, however, issued a circular in May, 1920, granting slight increases to the men and consolidating all allowances and adding them to the pay, conceding privilege leave and ordering fresh passes to the employees to travel in trains. The circular was extremely disappointing to the men and a strike in the workshop threatened. The position created by the agent's circular was rendered worse by the Arkonam situation, where a number of men were dismissed, according to the men's version, for their activities in the Arkonam branch of the union. A large number of men in the Perambur Union advocated a strike, but Mr. Arundale deprecated the idea, and the bulk of the men afterwards supported him. After that the idea of a strike was dropped; but occasionally the men of individual departments stopped work suddenly for some grievance or other particular to their department. Thus, on July 15th, 1920, the foundry department men struck work owing to the dismissal of one of their men and the refusal of the authorities to take him back as demanded by them; and on July 26th, 1920, the locomotive and carriage department struck work for a similar cause. These departmental strikes did not develop into a general strike on any occasion as the locomotive superintendent pacified the men and promised consideration of their representations."

In November, 1921, it was reported that the union was not working at all, and that, with the exception of a certain maistri and a small clique attached to him, practically no one was taking any interest in the union affairs. Subscriptions were not being collected, and weekly meetings were not being held. So much party spirit existed among the men that any united action at that time was impossible. In March, 1922, the following report was recorded: "The union is showing signs of revival. Of late weekly meetings of the union are being held, which are addressed by a few workers and Mr. Chakkarai Chetti." In the following month it was recorded that though weekly meetings were held more regularly than before, the attendance was very poor, that in addition to the Adi-Dravidas who had seceded from the union, quite a large number of caste Hindus of the workshops were now open enemies of the union. The way in which the union was conducted was not approved of, and the men did not desire to have the leaders of the non-co-operation party, in the union. Vigorous propaganda was carried on by some members to discredit the union and dissuade the men from attending its meetings. At a meeting of the union in April, 1922, only about 150 of the workers of the Perambur workshops attended. At that meeting suggestions were made for the opening of a co-operative society and for constructing a building or getting a rented one for locating the union. In June, 1922, it was reported that though meetings were held regularly they were poorly attended and very few leaders turned up. The subjects discussed related mainly to khaddar and Charka propaganda and even this was carried on only by a few of the union enthusiasts inside the workshops. There being no unanimity among the workpeople, the union was gradually dwindling in power and importance. During the whole of 1923 the meetings of the union continued to be poorly attended. The union became more active in the following year (1924). In April it drew up and submitted a list of grievances relating to pay, gratuity, leave, latrine accommodation, etc. The agent asked the men to elect a representative from each department to form a deputation to discuss the grievances. But the men were unwilling to do so for fear of

victimization and accordingly decided to request the agent to call a meeting of all the men. Later in the year the union passed a resolution requesting Dr. Besant and Mr. Arundale to represent it at the British Commonwealth Labour Conference in London and to insist on the necessity of extending the franchise to the working classes. It also authorized Mr. Arundale to represent its grievances to the Railway Home Board. The union was reorganized in July, 1924, with a new set of office bearers drawn from the employees of the railway, apparently in order to get the union recognized by the Agent. This question of recognition was discussed by the Agent with the Perambur workshops' representatives at a meeting held in August.

About the end of the year, it was reported that the executive of the union was negotiating with the railway company for the recognition of the union and for the redress of the men's grievances, also that the union had framed a draft set of rules and regulations and submitted them to the loco superintendent for approval. About this time, the secretary stated that the strength of the union had increased to 5,600 and that the Arkonam union had been affiliated.

In 1925 the union began a vigorous propaganda, authorizing the secretary to tour on the line to get the support of the branch unions, station-masters, etc., for holding a conference of all the railway employees which they thought would greatly increase their strength. The members agreed to contribute a day's wage to meet the expenses of the conference. After much correspondence between the agent and the union officials and the Commissioner of Labour, the question of the recognition of this union by the railway company seemed to be almost settled (in August, 1925). The agent at last consented to meet the union officials and discuss the points in dispute. The agent's chief objection to recognition appeared to have been the naming of the union "the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union" as he persisted in regarding it as a union of Perambur workshop employees only. To this objection the men pointed out that their union consisted not only of the workmen of the Perambur workshop but also the employees at Gooty, Guntakal, Arkonam and other places. The agent considered that the rules made no proper provision for the inclusion of employees other than those of the Perambur workshop and for the proper organization of branches in other centres and replied that he could not consent to the recognition until the constitution was altered to make proper provision for that. The other objection related to the grievances of individual employees which the agent said should not be taken up by the union.

After a full discussion with the loco superintendent of the railway, the union altered its rules agreeably to the suggestions of the railway agent so as to provide for membership of all the employees of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Company.

In October, 1925, the officials of the union interviewed the agent and it was hoped that the union would be recognized shortly. The union was doing vigorous propaganda work for enrolling more members and started branch unions for the employees at Salt Cotaurs, Rayapuram and Central Station. But the agent did not approve of branch unions in the city and suggested that one union would do for the whole of Madras and one or two branches at important stations for the up-country employees. The total strength of the union then was 8,352.

Negotiations in regard to the recognition of the union by the agent were still in progress in November and December, 1925. The rules of the union were further amended to meet the views of the agent. The accounts of the union were audited by an auditor of the railway company.

Major D. Graham Pole, Messrs. Ernest Kirk and B. Shiva Rao addressed meetings of the union in December, 1925. The need for a strong organization was impressed on the men and they were advised on the question of their organization and conduct. Mr. Shiva Rao gave an account of his work in England on behalf of the union. At one of the meetings in December a resolution was passed urging on the Government of India the immediate necessity of appointing a committee of enquiry as recommended by the Legislative Assembly on 5th December, 1925, to go into the details of the grievances of a serious nature said to exist among all classes of employees on the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway, to take evidence from workers' representatives and to formulate measures for their redress.

The first conference of Madras and Southern Mahratta railway employees was held in Madras on 6th and 7th January, 1926, under the presidentship of Mr. N. M. Joshi. Most of those who had come for the Trade Union Congress and the Railwaymen's Federation attended the conference. The attendance on the first day was only 120, but on the second there were about 3,500 workmen. On the 5th January the labour leaders, Messrs. Joshi, Rao Sahib Chandrika Prasad, V. V. Giri, Ernest Kirk, Thengade and others were taken in procession.

Panchakshara Achari, the Chairman of the reception committee, welcomed the delegates in a short speech in Tamil and in doing so said the conference was to voice the grievances of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway employees and to ask

for their redress. Mr. N. M. Joshi, the president of the conference, made an extempore speech. He referred to the necessity for strengthening the union and having sufficient funds to carry on their work. He then dwelt on the attitude of the agent of the railway in imposing conditions for the recognition of the union and on their grievances as to wages, leave, medical relief, provident fund, gratuity, housing accommodation, etc. The secretary of the union then read a history of the union since its inception in 1919.

During the second day's proceedings the office-bearers of the union were re-elected.

At a meeting of the union held in February, 1926, Messrs. E. L. Ayyar and Gnanamuthu were deputed to go to Delhi to represent their grievances to the members of the Legislative Assembly which was then discussing the railway budget.

The second annual conference of the union took place on the 8th and 9th January, 1927. No reference was made in the annual report to the strength and financial condition of the union. A great fall in the number of members was attributed to the "fixing of the subscription at a day's wage instead of a flat rate of an anna per month." Several resolutions relating to the men's grievances were passed by the union. At a meeting of the union held on 24th January, 1927, the resolutions passed at the conference were explained to the men. The attendance was very poor and the meeting had to be adjourned precipitately owing to the disorder that was caused by the men on lower wages who grumbled that in spite of their regular payment of subscriptions, the union had not done anything for them. In April, 1927, the union sent a deputation to the agent to discuss some of their grievances, but were greatly disappointed at the reply given. In May, 1927, the union was agitated over the orders of the management cutting down the hours of work. It was at one time feared that the situation would become serious but the agent's assurance that the order restricting days of work to Monday to Friday would be reconsidered if the men showed a better outturn helped to pacify the men. Again, the stiffening of rules about absenteeism made the men uneasy. The management however agreed to restore the original hours of work and to resume work on Saturdays, and this satisfied the men for the time being. Shortly afterwards (i.e., in July, 1927) a deputation of the union representatives waited on the agent, and the question of minimum wages for skilled and unskilled labourers, wages for commercial holidays and the recent orders about absenteeism were discussed. Much satisfaction was expressed at the friendly way in which the agent met the men and discussed their grievances. A special meeting of the union was called on 3rd August, 1927, to consider the order of suspension passed on 72 workmen that morning. A workman of the stores section died on 1st August, 1927, and all the workmen applied for permission to attend his funeral on 2nd August, 1927. The foreman refused to grant the permission applied for, whereupon the men handed him an application for leave for transmission to the works manager, and left the workshops in anticipation of sanction. The next morning when they went to work as usual, they were informed that 72 men who were signatories to the leave application were suspended from duty for the day. This created a stir among them and some of them suggested a strike. But they were dissuaded by the president and secretary of the union. On 31st December, 1927, Mr. Hallsworth opened the third conference of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees at Madras. Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayyangar was elected as the general president of the union. In February, 1927, a deputation of the union waited on Sir Francis Couchman and laid the grievances of the men before him. As a result, the authorities appear to have agreed to the raising of the wages of unskilled workers to ten annas a day.

The union was registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act on 12th May, 1928. This gave a stimulus to the union and vigorous propaganda was undertaken all along the line to enlist members for the union and to organize branch unions in important centres. In July, 1928, the old question of the attitude of the agent to the union again came into prominence. Complaints were made at union meetings that he ignored the letters addressed to him and that the promised increase in the wages of coolies and menials had not taken place, nor the rise in the pay of clerks and that their request for payment of wages on commercial holidays had not been attended to. Reference was made at a meeting of the union in October, 1928, to the retrenchment in the Arkonam workshops which was ascribed by the speakers to the new practice of buying machine parts, etc., instead of having them manufactured in the workshops.

In January, 1929, the annual Railway Employee's Conference was held under the presidency of Mr. V. V. Giri. One result was a change in the personnel of the executive of the union, the office of "General President" (till then held by Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayyangar, M.L.A.) being abolished and the joint presidents being converted into vice-presidents. The new president is Mr. V. V. Giri, and Mr. R. Shiva Rao became a vice-president. The former joint president, Mr. Panchakshara Achari, an employee in the workshops, is no longer an office-bearer. It may perhaps be

conjectured that he was regarded with too much favour by the employers, and if so, his replacement by a non-resident president and a vice-president who is president of the largest union in Madras (both of them being outside the industry) must perhaps be regarded as a retrograde step.

The other joint president of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union, Mr. S. V. Ayyar, apparently severed his connection with that union, and became president of a new union formed by certain members who seceded and started a union for non-workshop people only. The new union applied for registration under the Act and this was bitterly opposed by the older union. The objections were untenable and the union was registered on 5th February, 1929. The membership on 31st March, 1929, was 834.

In May last, the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union started a journal which is to be its official organ for ventilating the grievances of its members and to keep them informed from time to time, about the efforts taken by the union for its advancement. At a meeting of the union held in July, 1929, satisfaction was expressed at the attitude of the agent regarding various grievances of the employees put before him by the union officials. In the month of August, 1929, the members of the union were agitated over the proposal of the authorities to start staff committees in the Traffic Department. The union had broadcast a circular to all the employees of the Railway warning them against these staff committees and urging them that the underlying idea is to undermine the influence of the union. At almost every meeting of the union since, reference has been made to the danger of these committees to the union movement. The strength of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union on 31st March, 1929, was 7,334. It is now reported to be 15,000.

6. *The South Indian Railway Employees' Central Association.* (Registered under the Trade Unions Act under the name of the South Indian Railway Employees' Association, Trichinopoly).—The union was started in the year 1921. The objects of the association were to promote a spirit of co-operation, unity and mutual help and brotherhood among the railway workers, to encourage the formation of local railway unions and close federation of such unions through the organization of the Central Association, to improve the conditions of railwaymen and promote their interests by securing for them from the railway administration adequate living wages, reasonable hours of work, decent housing accommodation, to settle disputes between the railway and the employees and regulate the relations between them by collective bargaining or otherwise, and to develop and improve the morality of the employees.

The original office-bearers of the union were railway employees themselves.

In April, 1921, a conference was held to decide on the constitution of the union. The conference also passed several resolutions requesting a minimum wage of Re. 1-8-0 and Re. 1 for non-coolies and coolies per day, a 44-hour week, house rent allowance of 10 per cent of the wages. It also pointed out to the agent "the undeserved and disproportionately severe punishments meted out to the staff".

At the first meeting of the union held in February, 1922, it was resolved that all the unions should be composed of railwaymen only, that the office of the central association shall be where the president resided, that the increase granted to the station-masters and assistant station-masters being inadequate, the agent be requested to adopt the time-scale of pay recommended by the special conference of the South Indian Railway Employees, that pending sanction of the time-scale of pay the increase be modified so that the minimum of the higher grade may be above the maximum of the lower grade, that the agent be advised that it is not the intention of the Central Association to approach the managing director in any case provided the agent will settle the question of the time-scale of pay, etc., before the managing director leaves India.

It was reported in April, 1922, that the union had no funds as the other unions affiliated to it had not yet remitted their contributions.

The second conference of the association was held at Negapatam in March, 1924, when several resolutions relating to pay, leave, allowances, and other questions relating to the welfare of the labourers were passed. It is gathered that the agent recognized the union in 1924.

The third conference of the association was held in May, 1925, under the presidency of Mr. A. Rangaswami Ayyangar, M.L.A. The conference was mainly intended for improving the position of the subordinate employees of the railway, such as station-masters, assistant station-masters, clerks, guards, etc. A series of resolutions relating to pay, promotion, provident fund, leave, hours of work, and other matters for their welfare were passed at the conference.

The union held a special conference in the year 1927, for taking steps to get the association registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act. The association was



actually registered on 14th July, 1928, under the name of the South Indian Railway Employees' Association, Trichinopoly. The membership on 31st March, 1929, was 250.

I have no detailed information about the activities of the branch unions of this union except that of the South Indian Railway Labour Union, Negapatam, the history of which is given separately.

7. *The Madras Aluminium Labour Union, Madras.*—The first time that this union came into prominence was in May, 1922, when over 300 men employed in the Indian Aluminium Company went on strike.

The management gradually took in new hands and the strike collapsed, many of the strikers being eventually taken on as new hands. The full strength of the factory was reached early in September.

After this unsuccessful strike the union does not appear to have displayed much activity. It was registered on 1st August, 1928, and the number of members on 31st March, 1929, was 196.

The union celebrated its 12th anniversary on 12th July, 1929, and passed resolutions, the most important of which were (i) to request the management to introduce a provident fund scheme, and (ii) to request the company to make labourers who have put in five years' service permanent members of the company's service.

8. *The Ranipet Labour Union, Ranipet.*—The union was organized as the result of a strike in Messrs. Parry and Co.'s factory at Ranipet in July, 1921. But nothing further was heard of it until another strike in January, 1928, led to its revival, on the advice of Mr. B. Shiva Rao, President of the Madras Labour Union.

It was registered under the Trade Unions Act on the 30th day of August, 1928, and its membership on 31st March, 1929, was 312, out of a strength of about 700 employees in the factory.

As a protest against certain disciplinary measures taken by the local agent to enforce greater regularity of attendance and better work on the part of some of the employees, the workmen in Messrs. Parry and Co.'s factory struck work on April 29th, 1929, but they returned to work again on 1st May. It is significant that the men did not put forward their grievances and demands through their registered trade union.

9. *The Madras Electric Tramways and Supply Corporation Employees' Union, Madras.*—The early history of this union as recorded in my office is as follows:—

“ Within a short time after the formation of the Madras Labour Union the employees of the tramway company laid foundations for the formation of a union for themselves. On August 3rd, 1918, a batch of conductors and motormen approached Diwan Bahadur Kesava Pillai and asked for his support. Mr. Kesava Pillai directed them to Mr. Wadia, since the latter had by the time progressed fairly well with his work in the Madras Labour Union. On 6th August, 1918, a batch of about 150 men went to Mr. Wadia and represented their grievances to him. These men appear to have been actuated more by an anxiety to get their grievances redressed than to form a union. The chief demands the men then made were: (1) to increase their shifts from 2 to 3, (2) salaries to be Rs. 20, Rs. 25, and Rs. 30, (3) settlement of a fixed period of leave, (4) absence from duty should not entail fine, (5) no fine to be levied for trifling causes, (6) the Traffic Superintendent should not use insulting language to the men. Mr. Wadia counselled patience and advised against a strike, and the men accordingly sent a petition to the joint manager on 16th August, 1918, asking for increase of pay, (2) 8 hours' duty, and one month's leave with pay. Since there was no reply, the men (who had in the meanwhile formed themselves into a union) sent a second petition on 26th August, 1918, threatening strike within 24 hours if no reply was received in the meantime. No reply was received within that time and consequently the men went on strike on 27th August, 1918. This was the first strike.

(A detailed account of this and two following strikes which took place in 1918–20 is omitted.)

The union, after the termination of the third strike, sunk into comparative insignificance for some time, and though sundry misunderstandings between the management and the union arose from time to time, nothing serious happened owing mainly to the clever and tactful handling of the union by the management. The president, Mr. Venkataramanjulu Naidu, was on the whole a sobering influence, and, while most of the men had great regard for him, the management treated his views with great consideration. Unfortunately, however, the outsiders—other labour leaders—wanted to assert their rights and their interests in the union, and about June, 1920, Mr. Venkataramanjulu Naidu had to resign owing to a difference of opinion in regard to such a comparatively small matter as the use of the union

premises. The withdrawal of Mr. Venkataramanjulu marked the downfall of the union both in the estimation of the management and in the eyes of the men themselves. The union was a prey to outside political influence.

There were wide differences of opinion between the management and the men still in regard to the provident fund rules, and the men were complaining in a series of letters to the management that reduction in establishment was being given effect to irrespective of the services of men and that a former pledge given by the firm that only the most junior men would be turned out in case the establishment were to be reduced was not being redeemed. Meanwhile H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught's visit to Madras on the 10th January, 1921, was announced, and the union leaders advised the men to send another ultimatum to the management asking for the appointment of an enquiry officer to look into all cases of removals of men from service and demanding a reply within 12 hours. The Labour Commissioner intervened at this stage, attended their midnight meeting and advised the men to refer the grievances to him according to the last condition in the previous settlement; but this advice was not heeded. Though the strike lasted for one month and sixteen days the termination of the Buckingham Mills strike on the 27th January was a signal that this strike would also either collapse or come to an end soon. During the course of the strike the strikers committed a number of assaults on the new employees engaged by the company. Various efforts were made both by members of the public and by the Labour Commissioner to bring about a settlement but none succeeded, and the men finally surrendered on the 26th February, 1921. One of the engines in the Madras Electric Supply Corporation got out of order meanwhile, and when the Madras Electric Tramway men surrendered, the management could not take all the men back at once even if they were willing.

With the collapse of the strike in February, 1921, and the starting of motor bus services in the City, the union practically ceased to exist. Attempts were made to collect subscriptions, but the response was practically nil, and the union held no meetings for a considerable period. The only signs of activity which the union exhibited during 1922 and 1923 were a poorly attended meeting in October, 1922, and another in October, 1923. At the latter meeting Mr. E. L. Ayyar exhorted the men to revive the union activities and pay a monthly subscription of 4 annas per member. In February, 1924, the union held several meetings to discuss certain grievances of the members. In March, 1924, as the management refused to recognize the union because the president was an outsider, an employee of the company was elected as president in place of Mr. E. L. Ayyar. Mr. E. L. Ayyar made an attempt to send an elected deputation of the men of the union to wait on His Excellency the Governor, but nothing came of this attempt and representations were then made direct to the management. These representations elicited no reply, apparently because the newly elected president was already under notice of dismissal at the time when he was elected. Very little was heard of the union after this until July, 1925, when it was formally revived under the presidentship of Mr. E. L. Ayyar. In the following month Mr. E. L. Ayyar became the patron of the union and Mr. Surendranath Arya was elected as president. Mr. Arya, it is alleged, supported the candidature of one Mr. Vasu Naidu against Mr. E. L. Ayyar in the Corporation election. This created a sensation among the workers, who severely condemned Mr. Arya and the secretary, Mr. Sriramulu, and at a meeting in September deposed them and elected Mr. E. L. Ayyar and one, R. Subbarayalu, an ex-tramway employee, as president and secretary respectively. In October, 1925, the union submitted a list of grievances relating to pay, gratuity, hours of work, inadequacy of staff, etc. The company agreed to meet Mr. E. L. Ayyar, the president of the union as a private gentleman and explain to him their attitude on the various points raised by the union. In the discussion that took place later on, the company practically agreed to accede to many of the demands of the men.

The union did not come into prominence again until January, 1927, when, as a protest against the dismissal of a conductor for absence without leave and the suspension of a driver for misconduct, the second shift men (about 250 drivers and conductors) refused to go on the line one afternoon. Work was continued with the morning shiftmen so that no inconvenience was caused to the public. The management notified that if the men did not return to work the next day they would be considered to have been dismissed. The men held a meeting the same night under the auspices of the union and resolved to work the next day and requested the management not to inflict punishment on the two men. Mr. E. L. Ayyar, the president, took them to task for their precipitate action taken without the sanction of the union.

The activities of the union towards the end of the year 1927 were chiefly confined to holding occasional meetings at which (1) the heavy fines inflicted for trivial offences, (2) unjust dismissals, and (3) framing of a set of rules for securing registration under the Trade Unions Act, were discussed.

In the month of September, 1928, there was a stir in the union. Shafi Mohamed, the then president, and E. L. Ayyar, the then vice-president, were ousted from their offices (the latter apparently due to his acceptance of the appointment of legal adviser to the company, a position which the majority not unnaturally regarded as incompatible with holding offices in the union). Messrs. Surendranath Arya and Dandapani Pillai were elected as president and vice-president respectively at a midnight meeting of the union. There was, however, some difference of opinion among the members about the new selections and the affairs of the union were in a confused state. Both E. L. Ayyar and Mr. Surendranath Arya were convening meetings of the union, each claiming that he was the leader. The union was registered on the 18th January, 1929. A series of conversations took place in the latter half of March, 1929, between representatives of the union and the agent and the agent-designate and the Commissioner of Labour. The result was embodied in a number of agreements providing for the recognition of the union by the employers subject to various stipulations and for the manner in which grievances and other matters should be represented to the company. This represents an important step in the formation of a definite understanding between employers and the union of their employees.

During the last few months the union has passed resolutions protesting against indiscriminate dismissals and reductions in the traffic department, requesting the authorities to introduce a provident fund scheme, urging a reversion to the old system of treating Saturdays as full holidays for the purposes of wages to the employees; disapproving the attitude of the organizers of the Madras Electric Tramways and Supply Corporation Athletic Club, the starting of which (the union considers) is calculated to weaken the union and appealing to the authorities to re-entertain the men in the workshops and car-shed, whose services have been terminated without sufficient reason.

The membership of the union on 31st March, 1929, was 1,190.

#### Unregistered Unions.

1. *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union, Madras.*—The early history of this union as recorded in my office is as follows:—

This is a union of all the workers in the three oil companies, viz., the Asiatic Petroleum Company, the Burma Oil Company, and the Standard Oil Company. This union was formed on March 27th, 1920.

Long before the formation of the union there were troubles in one or other of the installations. During the first outburst of labour activities in the City in December, 1918, the Burma Oil Company men struck work, their grievances being inadequate pay, heavy fines and ill-treatment of the employees. But fortunately Mr. C. F. Andrews, who was then in Madras in connection with the second Buckingham and Carnatic Mills lock-out, immediately interceded on behalf of the men and brought about a settlement the following day. Again the men struck work on February 1st, 1919, owing to the dispensing with the services of about 70 men by the company on account of their abandonment of the installation at the harbour. But there again the men did not long remain out but joined duty on February 3rd, 1919. During the year 1919 the individual installations formed separate unions; it was reserved to the beginning of 1920 to start the combined union of the employees of the three installations under the presidency of Mr. V. Chakkarai Chettiar. (A detailed account of three strikes which took place in 1920 is omitted here.)

It was reported in November, 1921, that the union had been showing very little activity.

A meeting of the Asiatic Petroleum Company workers was held in December, 1922, and 100 men were present. Reference was made to the attitude of the management in dismissing about 37 men on the alleged ground of reduction of establishment. It was pointed out that the management were taking new hands and also worked overtime, and that the so-called reduction was made only to get rid of the union men and to break the union. It was announced that a sum of Rs. 150 was awarded by the committee from union funds to a workman whose services were dispensed with by the management in recognition of his services to the union as its secretary and in view of the fact that his services to the union was the real cause of his dismissal. Another sum of Rs. 250 was awarded to the other removed hands.

In May, 1926, the workmen of the Burma Oil Company held two meetings to compose the differences among the members and to revive the activities of the union with a view to restore it to its former position of importance.

The union was very active in the early part of 1927 when there was acute labour trouble in the oil industry (see Part I of the memorandum submitted by the Madras Government).

In September of the same year the workers of the Asiatic Petroleum Company held a meeting to consider how the funds of the union were to be invested.

In January, 1928, Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayyangar addressed a meeting of the Asiatic Petroleum Company workers suggesting the registration of the union under the Indian Trade Unions Act.

Some 120 oil workers were discharged by the Burma Oil Company consequent on the amalgamation of the Burma Oil Company and the Asiatic Petroleum Company. But happily this led to no untoward consequences, although it was a similar reduction which among other causes led to a strike in the previous year.

The revival and reorganization of the union was considered at a meeting of the oil workers in April, 1928, when Mr. Singaravelu Chetti and Mr. Shiva Rao spoke. Mr. Gnanamuthu, secretary, M. and S.M. Railway Employees' Union, exhorted the men to have their union registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act.

In November, 1928, several meetings of the unions were held at which the speeches were mainly devoted to attempts to revive the union as an active force, and to amalgamate it with the workers in the Tondiarpet installations.

2. *The Madras Corporation Scavengers' Union.*—My records do not show when this union was started, but in November, 1921, it was reported that the union had recently shown new signs of life and had elected Mr. E. L. Ayyar as president and Sriramulu of the Tramway Union as secretary. The union displayed no further activity until November, 1922, when a meeting of the Corporation Scavengers was arranged for the 25th. A large number attended, but no discussion took place as neither the secretary nor the speakers turned up.

The union held a meeting in March, 1924, when it was resolved that the maistries of all depots should meet in a committee and wait in deputation on the Corporation authorities to discuss their grievances regarding pay and distribution of rice. As a result of the representations made by this deputation the Corporation decided to grant the scavengers an increase of Re. 1 per head and supply of four full measures of rice.

In April, 1925, the scavengers met to consider their grievances in connection with the reduction of establishment ordered by the Corporation owing to the introduction of new methods of collection and disposal of pails by motor lorries and decided to ask the authorities to reconsider their order or at least to give them their former wages.

In May, 1925, the scavengers met again, and resolved to request the Corporation to give effect to the increase of 8 annas promised in the previous year. For about a year after this the union exhibited no signs of activity. Attempts were made in May, 1926, to revive its activities in view of a proposed resolution of the Corporation for the extension of the flush-out system of latrines. After that there was again no sign of activity for some considerable time. On 19th April, 1928, the scavengers of Pudupet Depot went out on a lightning strike without even consulting their leaders as a protest against the new system of taking muster by which the coolies were required to appear at a conveniently chosen centre for each division in lieu of the old central muster system which was inconvenient and led to fraud. The strikers were persuaded to return to work on the same day. The union by a resolution at its meeting on 21st April gave an ultimatum to the Corporation claiming that if its requests were not granted within a fortnight, it was free to take such direct action as might be necessary. But in view of the clear statement made in the press by the Commissioner of the Corporation on the whole question the demands of the strikers received no public sympathy.

The union held a meeting in July, 1928, to remind the Commissioner of the Corporation of their requests to have the muster taken at the division instead of at the depots, to arrange payment of wages and distribution of rice on days other than Saturdays when they had to hold their weekly union meetings, and to stop the frequent transfer of men to distant depots.

I have heard very little about the activities of the union since then.

3. *The Corporation Workshop Employees' Union.*—The earliest mention of this union in my official records is in November, 1922, when it was reported that the union which had for some time been defunct was likely to be revived. A feeling of dissatisfaction was prevalent at the time among the men owing to non-payment of a gratuity, said to have been promised. The union showed little signs of activity, however, till May, 1926, when it held two meetings at which the lack of harmony among its members was deplored.

The union held a meeting on the 26th April, 1928, at which some of the speakers complained that the Corporation was getting its requirements from local firms on contract instead of getting them carried out at the workshops. This, it was pointed out, led to a decrease in the volume of work and consequently some of the men were thrown out of employment. Such temporarily discharged men were obliged to call at the workshops daily to see if they can be reinstated, or else run the risk of losing their employment permanently.

Mr. Chakkarai Chetti, the Chairman of the meeting (speaking no doubt partly in his capacity as a Councillor), pointed out that some insecurity of service was inevitable.

4. *The Central Labour Board.*—The Central Labour Board came into existence some time before the middle of 1920.

In March, 1922, a meeting of the Board resolved that all the trade unions in the City should be reconstituted, that the labour leaders should be asked to take special interest in the matter of reviving the unions and that the unions should be run on the lines laid down at the second session of the All-India Labour Conference held at Jaria.

In December, 1922, the Board resolved to hold a labour conference in Madras and requested all labour unions to send their delegates to the conference. An appeal was also made to the Indian National Congress to grant the Board some funds for labour propaganda.

But the proposed labour conference did not take place till 16th February, 1924.

A public meeting under the auspices of the Board was held on 22nd August, 1923, and the following resolutions were passed:—

That certain trustees be appointed "to administer the balance still unspent out of a grant of Rs. 30,000 by the Provincial Congress Committee and to hold the properties bought out of the same for the benefit of the labourers in Madras."

The Provincial Labour Conference was held under the auspices of the Central Labour Board on 16th and 17th February, 1924, under the Presidentship of Dr. Varadarajulu Nayudu. The weakness of the labour movement which was attributed to the interference of Government in the struggle between capital and labour and a series of resolutions for the betterment of the conditions of labour were the chief matters talked about.

I have no record of the activities of the Board since then.

5. *Massey & Co. Workshop Employees' Union.*—A union for the workers of Messrs. Massey & Co. was newly formed during the month of May, 1927. As a result of the dismissal of 29 men from the workshops about this time the men went on strike. Apparently the men alleged that the dismissal was the result of the formation of the union. Daily meetings of the union were held and the strikers were successful in bringing out the men of the P.W.D. Workshops in sympathy. Messrs. Singaravelu Chetti, Adikesavalu Naicker, and Chakkarai Chetti advised the strikers to hold out giving them hopes of a speedy settlement. But the management started recruiting new hands.

The strike was called off on 18th July and the management agreed to take back the men as work was found for them. They were unable, however, to re-employ all the strikers and in August it was reported that frequent meetings of the unemployed residue were being held. I have heard nothing since regarding the activities of this union.

6. *The Diocesan Printers' Union.*—A union of the Diocesan Press employees which was practically defunct, was revived in March, 1927, with Mr. D. Kūlandai as its President. A list of grievances relating to leave, overtime, and piece-work was formulated. On 30th April, 1927, the Superintendent of the Press dispensed with the services of a few men and when the gates were opened two days later, the men about 200 in number refused to work unless the dismissed men were reinstated. It was alleged that the dismissal of the men was due to their taking an active part in the affairs of the union.

The union held frequent meetings and appealed to the public and to other unions for financial help to carry on the strike. Attempts to bring about a settlement proved abortive and the strike dragged on for some months. The men returned to work unconditionally, but it was not possible to re-entertain all of them at once.

Since this set back the union appears to have been dormant.

7. *The Aruvanahādu Cordite Factory Labour Union.*—This union owes its inception chiefly to Mr. S. R. Narayanan, a local (Coonoor) wakil, and Mr. N. S. Ramaswami Ayyangar, of Coimbatore. An inaugural conference was held at Coonoor on the 23rd and 24th August, 1924, when resolutions on the following and other subjects were passed.

(i) The minimum daily wage for labourers should be Re. 1 for men and 10 annas for boys instead of 12 annas and 8 annas respectively, in view of the higher cost of living on hills.

(ii) Promotions should be based upon ability and service and without distinction of race.

(iii) A provident fund should be started.

(iv) A gratuity should be given of at least one month's pay for each year of service over three years.

(v) Regularly employed men on daily wages should not be forced to take leave and all such regular daily-wage earners should be converted into monthly paid workers.

(vi) Danger allowance should be given to workers in sections where superiors enjoy it.

It was also resolved that no strike or suspension of work should be undertaken without a three-fourths majority vote of the general body and without the consent of the advisory board by a four-fifth majority.

I have no further record about the activities of the union till August, 1925. On the 29th and 30th of August, 1925, another conference was held under the presidency of Mr. C. V. Venkatarama Ayyangar, in which various resolutions regarding pay, leave and other benefits for the labourers were passed.

In June, 1926, the union instituted a benefit call fund to provide against sickness, old age, death, etc. The Hon'ble Sir C. Sankaran Nayar paid a visit to the meeting where this was discussed and gave the men some advice. The third conference of the union was held on 28th September, 1926, under the presidency of Mr. Surendranath Arya. The Superintendent of the factory was also present. Various resolutions regarding pay, leave, etc., were passed.

In March, 1928, a meeting of the union was assembled to consider a Government Order requesting the union to refrain from affiliation with the All-India Trade Union Congress. As the alternative to a refusal was the non-recognition of the union, it was decided to agree to the disaffiliation.

8. *The Madras Harbour and Port Trust Workmen's Union.*—The union was started in October, 1925, with Mr. V. L. Sastri and Mr. N. Sriramulu, as its President and Secretary respectively. Efforts were made in November, 1925, to secure admission to the union of all the workmen employed in the Port Trust, including Anglo-Indians. But the majority of the Anglo-Indians disliked the idea of joining a union run by men with no *locus standi* in the Port Trust. The President and the Secretary of the union sent a letter to the Chairman of the Madras Port Trust asking him to grant them an interview for the representation of the men's grievances. The chairman refused on the ground that the President and Secretary were outsiders.

In March of the following year, the scavengers in the Port Trust struck work, as one of them was dismissed for repeated absence without leave. No difficulty or inconvenience was felt on account of the strike and the men who went out simply lost their jobs. Attempts were made to induce the corporation scavengers to strike in sympathy, but without success. At a meeting of the union held in May, 1926, Mr. Singaravelu Chetti was appointed as president in place of Mr. V. L. Sastri.

In October, 1926, a special meeting of the union was held under the presidency of Mr. Singaravelu Chetti to get signatures for a memorial protesting against the dismissal of five workmen for loss of their admission tickets. Sixty men had already signed and 20 more signatures were obtained at the meeting on some persuasion.

I have no records of activities of the union after that.

9. *The Madras Printers' Union.*—The union is said to have been in existence in August, 1921, with a membership of 7,000, but I have no record of its earlier activities. It was apparently dormant for a long time, but in August, 1925, attempts were made to revive it. A meeting of printers working in Mount Road and the neighbourhood was held for that purpose. About 200 attended and Mr. Arya was elected president, and Mr. V. L. Sastri, vice-president. After that the union held frequent meetings, and an attempt was made to start a branch union for the benefit of the printers in Georgetown.

In November, 1925, Mr. V. L. Sastri presented a memorial to Messrs. Addison and Co., on behalf of the printers employed by that firm, complaining against the rules in vogue regarding gratuity, permission to employees to answer calls of nature, attendance, leave, etc., and also regarding the dismissal of four employees. The management replied that the grievances were imaginary and even if true, were only trivial. Mr. V. L. Sastri wanted to send a reply to the company based on information obtained from the workers themselves, but as no members of the union would come forward to give information, he himself wrote a reply to the company pointing out to them the false notion they entertained as regards the aims and objects of the union and requesting an interview for personal discussion. Apparently nothing happened and the union became dormant again until about July, 1928, when the union held a meeting at which the non-payment of subscriptions and the lack of interest in the union were discussed.

10. *The Chittivalsa Labour Union.*—The workers of the Chittivalsa Jute Mill, numbering about 3,700, struck work on 16th January, 1929, on various grounds, the chief among which was the refusal of the management to grant half-yearly bonus. The strikers held several meetings and in one of these held on 31st January, 1929, it was resolved to form a labour union. The union asked the Labour Commis-

sioner to intervene. But before he could do so the strike was settled. One of the terms of settlement was that the labour union should be recognized as long as it works on constitutional lines.

In March, 1929, the union applied for forms of application for registration of the union, but there the matter rests and no application for registration under the Trade Unions Act has yet been received.

11. *Railway Labourers' Union, Negapatam.*—The union was started in 1918, with Mr. V. P. Pakkiriswami Pillai as its life-president. All coolies employed in the Negapatam loco and general stores department, including clerks and others who might be selected by the members at the general meetings were eligible to become members. The chief objects of the union were:—(1) To safeguard the interests of members; (2) to afford facilities for imparting general and technical education to the members and their families and to educate them in general; (3) to establish co-operative stores, banks, and workhouses for the benefit of members, and (4) generally to improve the status of members and to promote their welfare.

All the workmen in the railway workshop were enrolled as members and by August, 1921, the total number of members had risen to about 3,000. The members were of three grades and their subscriptions were fixed at 8, 4 and 2 annas respectively.

In April, 1923, the agent, South Indian Railway, decided to cut down the weekly hours of work by making Saturday a non-working day in the Negapatam workshops in pursuance of the recommendations of the Inchcape Committee. The union protested against this proposal and made representations to the agent. Though the agent refused to recognize the union (until it was run by the men's own representatives for the welfare of the men and not for political exploitation), he agreed to revert to the old system of working subject to a reduction of the working hours by half an hour daily.

An association called "The Progressive Labourers' Union" was formed at Negapatam. It was a small inner association formed among the members of the wider labour union of Negapatam and consisted of those few members, some 150 or 200 in number, who alone paid their subscriptions regularly and who objected to the continual alterations of the rules of the larger union which had been attempted by the other members. The majority of the members of the larger union were in default and had lost interest in the union. They tried to get a refund of the subscriptions paid and one member even brought a suit in the local Munsif's Court. Failing in this they secured an alteration of the union's rule to allow a refund on death or retirement less any subscription unpaid. The object of the new union was to prevent similar changes. This matter threw an interesting light upon the apathy of the majority of the members.

The union came into prominence in connection with the labour disputes between the railway authorities and their employees in 1927 and 1928. These disputes are briefly described in Part I of the memorandum submitted by the Madras Government. Since the collapse of the general strike the union seems to have been dormant.

12. *The Coimbatore Labour Union.*—In a report received in September, 1921, it was stated as follows:—

"This union draws its members from the spinning and weaving mills at Coimbatore. It has a fixed constitution and a set of printed rules.

"The Executive Committee consists of 100 members all of whom are drawn from the labourers. The funds of the union are made up of subscriptions and donations."

"The present strength is reported to be about 5,000. Meetings are held every Saturday after 6 p.m.

"The president, vice-president, the two elected secretaries and the manager are political workers. The two working secretaries are employed in the mills.

Until about November, 1924, the union showed little sign of activity. In that month, the Coimbatore Labour Conference was held under the auspices of the union and resolutions relating to hours of work, wages, leave and various other matters were passed.

The activities of the union in connection with the mill strikes in Coimbatore in 1927, are briefly described in Part I of the memorandum submitted by the Madras Government.

Nothing was heard of the union after the collapse of the strike in September, 1927, until April, 1929, when a strike occurred in the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills and Mill Mills. The president of the labour union asked the Commissioner of Labour to intervene. The Commissioner of Labour proceeded to Coimbatore and discussed the matter with the management of the mills and with the men. After some further negotiations the men returned to work.

*With regard to Section XV—Industrial disputes, item (123)—Extent of strikes and lock-outs, information is given up to 3rd August last, in Appendix B of the Government memorandum. The following paragraphs bring the information up to the date of writing, viz., 18th October, 1929 :—*

A strike of two days' duration occurred in July on the Achur Tea Estate in Malabar district. About 700 out of a total of 1,296 coolies joined the strike. The cause was as follows :—

The estate is divided in two by the Achur river which is crossed by a suspension bridge. Leaf from the northern side of the river is brought across the bridge to the factory on the southern side. On 21st June, 1929, the bridge gave way owing to the coolies overcrowding on it and a coolie was drowned. The bridge was repaired and thrown open to the coolies again on 12th July, 1929. During the time when the bridge was under repair the leaf had been taken across the river in rafts at the expense of the estate by coolies working under a certain maistri. This maistri and some other coolies combined to prevent the women coolies who were bringing leaf from the northern side of the river, from using the bridge when it was reopened. The argument used was that the bridge was not safe. The leaf plucked on the northern side of the river on Saturday the 13th July, had to be thrown away as the estate superintendent insisted that the bridge which had been put in good order should be used instead of rafts for bringing the leaf, as the latter method would cause unnecessary expense to the estate. On Monday the 15th, the coolies on the northern side of the river struck work. On the 16th, coolies from the southern side (the side on which the factory lies) were sent to pluck leaf on the northern side; but the maistri mentioned above intimidated them. The dispute was amicably settled on the 16th by the intervention of the local sub-inspector of police and all the coolies except a few working under the maistri referred to began to use the bridge as before. It is reported that the whole trouble was engineered by the maistri who was anxious not to lose the profitable source of income which the supply of rafts afforded him while the bridge was out of action. Steps have been taken by the estate superintendent to prevent overcrowding on the bridge; a watchman has been posted at each end.

It is reported that the collapse of the bridge was not due to any negligence on the part of the estate authorities who had it inspected by an engineer in February last. The engineer suggested certain repairs which had been carried out before the bridge gave way.

In Part I of the memorandum submitted to the Royal Commission by the Madras Government reference is made to the appointment of an expert committee to report to the Labour Commissioner in connection with the strike which commenced on the 16th July last, in the Weaving department of the Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills (Choolai Mills). The committee reported on 6th August, and copies of the report were at once communicated to the management of the mills and to the union. No further developments have taken place. The weavers continue at work as usual. A copy of the report of the expert committee is appended.

During September there were two brief strikes in the Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills (Choolai Mills). The circumstances are as follows :—

*Choolai Mills strike, 5th September, 1929.*—On 5th September, 1929, the management of the mill dismissed a jobber and another workman who were in charge of a roving machine as the steel cover of the indicator was found to have been damaged. The labourers working in the roving department approached the management with a request to have the dismissed men reinstated; but they were asked to wait till the return of the local agent of the mill from Bombay. The local agent arrived on the morning of the 17th and was approached by the men with the same request. But he is reported to have refused to interfere in the matter. As a result of this, all the 125 men of the roving department of the mill downed tools at 12.30 p.m. on 17th September, 1929. The secretary of the Madras Labour Union for Textile Workers interviewed the management and pointed out to them that in the absence of reasonable proof to show that the two dismissed men were responsible for the damages, it was not fair to dismiss them. The local agent replied that he would consider the matter and pass order on the 29th September, 1929. On this assurance, the men resumed work on the morning of the 18th September. It is understood that the two dismissed men were taken back on the 21st September, 1929.

*Choolai Mills strike on 23rd September, 1929.*—It appears that the management of the Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills, Choolai, Madras, were preparing a list of operatives who had put in five years' approved services since 1st January, 1924, in order to find out the number of men eligible for privilege leave according to the terms of agreement arrived at after the strike in April, 1929. It is said that when some of the operatives applied for leave application forms they were informed by a member of the clerical staff of the mills that 7½ days' wages in lieu of privilege leave would be paid to all men who were eligible for the leave. The operatives of the roving department of the mill who were ignorant of the terms of agreement



demanding on 23rd September, 1929, that 15 days' privilege leave on half pay or 7½ days' wages in lieu thereof should be granted to them immediately. As the management did not concede this demand, about 70 men of the roving department struck work and persuaded others to join them. After the midday mealhour all the 2,047 operatives struck work. On the forenoon of the 24th September, Mr. Shiva Rao, the president of the union, interviewed the management who asked him for an assurance that lightning strikes would not be resorted to in future. Later in the day, he told the strikers that the management were not yet ready with the list of persons who had put in five years' service, but that the list would be completed by the end of September. He also told the men that the management would pay leave pay to those who were granted privilege leave, on the third Saturday of the following month and in the case of those to whom leave was refused, a sum equal to half their wages for the period of leave to which they were entitled but which was refused would be paid in January of the following year. He found fault with the men for having gone on strike without consulting the union. In the evening he again met the strikers and got an assurance from them that they would not again go on strike without informing the union. He told the men he would see the Labour Commissioner next day, and discuss with him the grievances of the men who at present are not allowed to take their privilege leave by instalments. He also said he would discuss with the Labour Commissioner the question of the payment on the usual pay days of the wages for leave periods.

The strikers resumed work on the morning of the 25th on the assurance that either privilege leave or wages in lieu thereof would be given to the men eligible therefor.

Mr. Shiva Rao interviewed the Commissioner of Labour on the 28th September, and put forward certain grievances of the men. The Commissioner advised Mr. Shiva Rao to place the demands of the mill workers before the management in the form of a letter explaining the various demands in detail.

Mr. S. A. CARTLEDGE, Chief Inspector of Factories, Madras.

#### IV.—Health.

26. (i) Drinking water is provided in all factories on a scale of one gallon per person per day. The water is not always good as there is no proper supply in some places. The supply is from tanks, shallow wells and canals. In towns where a proper supply is provided by the Local Boards it is usual to provide taps for the use of the operatives.

(iii) Practically as provision.

28. (i) There is no provision in the Factory Act for the control of temperatures in factories; it is practically impossible to make rules for the control of temperature as the majority, say, 75 per cent. of factories, could not instal the necessary plant, also the cost would be prohibitive. Factory Inspectors, where possible, insist on the provision of fans to improve ventilation. A great deal of the excessive temperatures in factories is caused by the methods of constructing, e.g., corrugated iron walls and roof without water spraying appliances.

(ii) (a) An investigation in connection with humidity was made by Mr. Maloney in 1921 and 1922 and, as a result, humidity rules were made in 1926.

(b) Owing to favourable weather conditions in this Presidency the rules are seldom if ever contravened.

#### VII.—Safety.

44. The number of accidents, the percentage of persons injured to the average number of operatives employed in the factories for the last ten years is as follows:—

Year.	Number of persons injured.				Average per 100 operatives employed.
	Fatal.	Serious.	Minor.	Total.	
1919 .. .. .	7	6	643	656.	.67
1920 .. .. .	6	5	733	744	.73
1921 .. .. .	8	4	979	991	.97
1922 .. .. .	13	6	862	881	.80
1923 .. .. .	8	41	889	938	.81
1924 .. .. .	11	196	779	986	.81
1925 .. .. .	15	210	667	1,092	.88
1926 .. .. .	15	267	981	1,263	.99
1927 .. .. .	11	260	962	1,233	.92
1928 .. .. .	12	258	1,088	1,358	.99

The accidents for 1928 were classed as follows :—

Caused by machinery moved by mechanical power .. ..	195
Cuts .. .. .	39
Falling weights .. .. .	309
Carriage wheels .. .. .	17
Burns .. .. .	46
Hot liquids and molten metals .. .. .	19
Flying splinters .. .. .	248
Treading on splinters .. .. .	28
Trapping between bodies .. .. .	120
Falls .. .. .	44
Missing the mark .. .. .	7
Slips .. .. .	42
Handles of hammer, etc., breaking .. .. .	9
Shuttles flying .. .. .	15
Electric shock .. .. .	1
Escape of steam and fumes .. .. .	2
Rebounding of bodies .. .. .	7
Snapping of chains .. .. .	1
Miscellaneous .. .. .	209
Total .. .. .	1,358

The statement below gives the important industries in which the accidents occurred and the percentage to the average number of the operatives employed in them :—

Industry.	Men.			Women.			Children.			Total.	The average daily number of operatives.	Percentage.
	Fatal.	Serious.	Minor.	Fatal.	Serious.	Minor.	Fatal.	Serious.	Minor.			
Cotton and spinning and weaving ..	—	65	152	—	2	2	—	1	1	223	31,036	.72
Cotton gin and press	2	5	8	—	2	1	2	—	—	20	18,929	.16
Rice mills	1	7	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	15,994	.07
Railway workshops	—	56	661	—	—	—	—	—	—	717	16,858	4.25
Others ..	7	117	255	—	2	4	—	1	—	386	54,156	.71
Total	10	250	1,080	—	6	7	2	2	1	1,358	136,973	.99

45. Causes are varied ; but a great many of the accidents are caused by carelessness also by the workmen being unable to appreciate dangerous conditions.

46. Danger notices in English and the vernacular are hung in all rooms in which machinery is in use. At the M. & S.M. Rly. Workshops at Perambur an officer inspects all fences and guards periodically to see that they are in good condition. every accident is investigated and if any provision can be made to prevent similar accidents, orders are served on the manager to put things right. A majority of accidents occur in railway workshops and the Commissioner of Labour inspected the railway workshops of the M. & S.M. Rly. Co., Perambur, in connection with the accidents and expressed his opinion that the precautions taken were excellent.

49. (i) and (ii) Inspections and enforcement of regulations is under the direct control of the Chief Inspector of Factories. On the first inspection of a factory a full and detailed report must be made by the Factory Inspector, on second and subsequent inspections a further report, but less detailed, is made out. On each report orders are served for defects found and these are checked at the next inspection. A copy of each list of orders by the Factory Inspectors is sent to the Chief Inspector of Factories for scrutiny, orders and amendments if the Chief Inspector of Factories thinks necessary.

Collectors, District Health Officers, municipal health officers in municipalities having health officers, Director of Public Health and his assistants are all additional Factory Inspectors. On the whole 543 visits were paid by the Additional Inspectors.

50. The result of enforcing the regulations has been to reduce the tendency for illegal overtime work; improvement in lighting and working conditions generally.

#### IX.—Hours.

55. The number of factories in which the normal weekly hours were not above 48 was 277 for men and 250 for women; above 48 and not above 54 was 232 for men and 187 for women; and above 54 was 810 for men and 675 for women; for children working not above 30 hours the number was 37 and above 30 was 157.

62. Exemptions are granted subject to the condition of 66 hours per week and a fortnightly holiday in very special cases.

#### Exemptions.

Class of Factories.	Number of Factories.	Exempted from sections.	Remarks.
Water pumping stations.	3	21 & 22	—
Electrical generating Stations.	2	21, 22 & 28	—
Forge presses ..	1	22 (1) (b)	—
Breweries and distilleries.	8	22	—
Coffee factories ..	15	22, 27 & 28	The period of exemption from sections 27 and 28 is for January, February, March, April and May. Exemption for section 22 is for curing yards only.
Tea factories ..	60	21, 22, 26, 27 & 28	The period of exemption from sections 27 and 28 is for March to November inclusive.
Ice and soda factories	5	22	—
Rice mills .. ..	462	22 (1) (b) and 26	Only labourers employed for the purpose of steeping, boiling and drying of paddy.
Sugar factories ..	8	21, 22 & 28	—
Gas works .. ..	1	22	—
Tile factories .. ..	52	22	Work of persons employed in burning of bricks and tiles.
Tanneries .. ..	6	21 & 22	Work of all persons from section 21.
Kerosene tinning and packing—Oil installations.	8	21, 22, 27 and 28	In respect of section 21, the number is to be fixed by the Commissioner of Labour.
Fish curing .. ..	2	22, 24 & 26	—
Railway workshops..	20	21 & 22 (1) (b)	In respect of section 21, the number is to be fixed by the Commissioner of Labour.
Turmeric - polishing factories.	6	22	—
Cordite factories ..	1	21 & 22	Only work of persons engaged in the manufacture of acids, recovery of acetone and steam production.
All factories ..	—	22 & 26	Work of persons engaged in packing, bundling of finished articles or the receiving and despatching of raw material and goods.

In addition under the powers conferred on him by the local Government the Commissioner of Labour has exempted a certain number of persons of 39 factories from the provision of sections 21, 22, 27 and 28 to attend to running repairs.

#### X.—Women and Children.

82. There are only two classes of labour recognized under the Factory Act (except in special process), viz., children and adults. Children are allowed to work in factories on condition that they are not below 12 years of age and that they are

medically fit and work only six hours maximum per day. The number of children employed in factories is given hereunder for the years 1922-28. Persons below 18 and women are not allowed to work in certain classes of work involving the use of lead compounds.

*Number of children employed in factories.*—1922, 7,334 ; 1923, 6,807 ; 1924, 7,112 ; 1925, 6,428 ; 1926, 5,841 ; 1927, 6,708 ; 1928, 6,366.

83 and 84. Existing regulations appear to be suitable.

85. The department has not detected any cases of the employment of children in more than one factory in the same day.

87. This department has not come across any cases where children have been dismissed on attaining the age of 15 years.

89. (i) There are 18 factories on the register of factories that have been notified as factories under Section 2 (3) (b). All these have been so notified on account of (1) the bad conditions of the factory itself ; (2) the excessive working hours of the persons employed ; (3) employment of children below 12 years of age ; or (4) the employment of women at night or from a combination of the above.

(ii) I am of opinion that the provisions of Section 2 (3) (b) should be extended so as to include premises which are worked under bad conditions and which cannot be brought under Section 2 (3) (a) of the Act. I, therefore, recommend that in the case of Section 2 (3) (b) the number of persons employed should not be specified in the Act. Each case would be submitted to the Commissioner of Labour for his decision. Many employers at present purposely keep the number of employed down to below the specified number "10" [Section 2 (3) (b)] to evade the notification of the premises and so escape supervision. Although it has nothing to do with the factory inspection department, it is often noticed that a great many small premises employing less than 10 persons commence work similar to that of a factory that is under the Act in the same locality. This often causes unfair competition as the unregistered premises work with child and female labour for longer hours than the registered factory is allowed to, and give no holidays or proper rest periods.

I may, however, state in this connection that unless the staff of this department is strengthened the above recommendations cannot be carried out.

106. (i) and (iv) *Deductions.*—An investigation was made in 1926 by the Chief Inspector of Factories and it was found that the fines imposed are hardly worth taking notice of. In small factories fines are seldom levied. An average of four large concerns paying on the whole a salary of Rs. 2,92,100 per month was taken and it was found that fines imposed came to 18 per cent. Fines are generally levied for late attendance, bad work and insubordination. The fines collected usually go to the gratuity fund.

107. An enquiry was made in 1924 and I give below in a tabulated form the results of the enquiry :—

Establishment.	Period of payment (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)	Number of days normally elapsing between conclusion of period of work and actual payment.
Cotton and spinning mills .. .. .	Monthly .. .. .	12 to 15 days.
Cotton ginning and pressing mills ..	—	—
Jute spinning and weaving mills ..	—	—
Engineering works .. .. .	Monthly .. .. .	10 to 13 days.
Iron and steel works .. .. .	Do. .. .. .	10 days.
	Fortnightly .. .. .	10 days.
	Weekly .. .. .	At end.
Brick factories .. .. .	—	—
Cement works .. .. .	Monthly .. .. .	2nd Saturday.
Flour mills .. .. .	—	—
Printing presses .. .. .	Monthly .. .. .	7 to 20 days.
Rice mills .. .. .	Daily, weekly and monthly.	At end.
Sugar mills .. .. .	—	—
Tanneries .. .. .	Fortnightly .. .. .	10 to 12 days.
Coal mines .. .. .	—	—
Mica mines .. .. .	—	—
Tea gardens .. .. .	—	—
Docks (port trust work) .. .. .	Monthly .. .. .	Paid on 8th.
Tramways .. .. .	Do. .. .. .	Paid on 10th.
Municipalities .. .. .	Do. .. .. .	Do.
Local Government factories .. .. .	{ Do. .. .. .	1 to 8 days.
	{ Fortnightly .. .. .	4 days.

### XVII.—Administration.

138. In my opinion there are very few work people with any knowledge at all of the provisions of the Act, even the parts of the Act concerning the work people.

139. (i) The staff in the province is inadequate to efficiently carry out the Act and I give below the average number of inspections made by each factory inspector for five years :—

*Average number of inspections during the past five years 1924 to 1928.*

Chief Inspector of Factories and personal Assistant ..	193
Northern circle .. .. .	522
Southern circle .. .. .	334
Central circle .. .. .	389
Western circle .. .. .	441

(iii) There were 1,480 factories at the end of the year 1928. Figures for the last ten years commencing with 1911 onwards show that 512 factories have been prosecuted for a total of about 2,700 violations of the various sections of the Act. The amount of fines imposed averages to about Rs. 20 per count.

(iv) In view of the smallness of fines imposed, prosecutions have little effect, for it pays at times for the factory owner to violate the provisions of the Act, etc.

All circles are visited each year by the Chief Inspector of Factories who makes check inspections of factories in different districts, any laxness or inefficient inspection work is reported to the Commissioner of Labour.

L.R.Ry. M. KRISHNASWAMI AYYAR AVARGAL, ACTING CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FACTORIES, MADRAS, dated 9th September, 1929.

### I.—Recruitment.

(1) The population of the Madras Presidency according to 1921 census was 42,794,155 persons. For every 100 persons, 75 are engaged in agriculture, 15 are in industries, 6 are in trade and 4 are in miscellaneous occupation.

The industrial population according to 1921 census was 2.4 millions. The number of persons depending on them for existence was 2.9 millions. Deducting the factory labour from this 2.4 millions, 2.3 millions of labour population are not subject to any statutory control.

The number of persons who migrated to other places in India from this Presidency was 917,000 and the number of persons who migrated outside India was 814,000. The number of persons born outside this Presidency who emigrated into this Presidency was 210,000. On the balance of immigration and emigration, Madras has lost over 1½ millions of her population.

Out of 100 emigrants 55 go to Ceylon, 20 to Malay States and 25 to plantations in the Nilgiris, Wynnaad (Malabar), Coimbatore districts and to Assam.

The average daily number of operatives employed in factories were 136,973 in 1928, 134,074 in 1927 and 127,411 in 1926. The increase is due to the increase in the number of factories. Of the 136,973 operatives employed in 1928, 6,527 were employed in Government and local fund factories and the rest in private factories.

Thirty-one thousand and thirty-six operatives were employed in cotton spinning and weaving mills and 5,845 were employed in jute spinning and weaving mills.

The total number of women and children employed during the last five years were :—

Year.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.
1924 ..	25,429	4,722	2,390
1925 ..	26,884	4,006	2,422
1926 ..	27,096	3,748	2,095
1927 ..	30,860	4,253	2,455
1928 ..	32,095	4,091	2,275

The increase in women is due to the increase of factories and the employment of adult labour in preference to child labour accounts for reduction in child labour.

(ii) The chief cause of migration to plantations is due to want of continuous work in their own places.

(iii) There is no change worth mentioning in the method of recruitment in recent years.

2. (i) Labourers working in the plains very frequently visit their villages for all important festivities and also during the period of any temporary illness. The plantation worker generally returns to his village every year for a month or two during the monsoon time.

(ii) There is permanent industrial labour in the textiles and printing works in the cities of Madras, Coimbatore and Madura ; in the latter two centres only textile workers.

3. (i) There is no systematic way of recruitment of labour. Generally the worker calls at the factories and through the maistris or jobbers or foremen to find work.

(ii) The present system of recruitment for plantations by which the labourers, without any independent advice are made to believe by the persons responsible for recruitment the existence of conditions which do not really exist must be modified. The recruit before he is called upon to sign any contract must be made aware, by an independent body of persons who ought not to have any interest, financial or otherwise, with the organization which recruits these labourers, of the actual conditions of their contract. I mean by the above that these persons must be informed in their language of the climatic conditions of the places to which they are asked to go, the probable expenditure that they may require for their maintenance there, and the wages that they would earn.

(iii) No desirable effect is feasible.

7. I may say that 75 per cent. of the population who take to agriculture are never unemployed ; the brief period during which they have no work is really not unemployment. As regards the other 25 per cent., 15 per cent. of them are in the establishment of factories and other industrial concerns, and it might be taken to be practically certain that about four-fifths of them are never unemployed. It is only therefore one-fifth that are affected by retrenchment and dismissals for inefficiency. Retrenchment is chiefly the direct consequence arising out of the replacement of human labour by mechanical power. This can be obviated only by industrial expansion of the country which must be the work of time.

Unemployment of others can also be solved by bringing under cultivation vast areas of lands and development of irrigational facilities on a large scale.

8. Absenteeism may be generally put down to 10 per cent. and provision has to be made for 10 per cent. absentees in general. But I have generally observed that the number of absentees increases considerably after a day's respite (Sunday) and a day or two after the pay day in each month. This is due to the excessive indulgence the workmen are addicted to on holidays, and their consequent disinclination to resume work on the next day. To minimize this kind of absenteeism the concern itself may adopt the course of finding some kind of entertainment which will tend to relieve the monotony of the week's strenuous labour, on a holiday. This may have the desired effect and, if it has, the number of absentees without any real cause will be minimized. It may also be noted that the number of absentees will appreciably increase during the marriage season and during the sowing and the harvesting seasons also, when the agriculturists by promise of a substantial increase in the daily wages, divert a number of casual labourers to do work in the fields. This class of diversion is particularly noticeable in the deltaic tracts in this Presidency.

## II.—Staff Organization.

The recruitment of persons who are appointed as administrative and departmental heads of a concern may be considered to be satisfactory. I believe there ought to be some improvement in the selection of managing staff. It is these persons who are generally placed at the head of the supervising staff, superior and subordinate. Consequently unless the managing staff consists of persons who are technically qualified besides possessing practical experience the management will not be efficient. The present procedure as it obtains in many of the bigger concerns is to ignore the claims of really qualified men who are available and to bring in raw men and place them at the head of affairs and leave the actual task of supervising to persons who may be practically qualified and who have no theoretical qualifications, and hence are devoid of organizing capacity. For instance, if the jobbers are grafted on to the supervising staff they certainly do not possess the capacity for organization although they may carry on their duties mechanically. This must be remedied by the appointment of qualified men, both theoretically and practically, with a knowledge of the local language and the customs of the people to assist the management of the concern. In this connection special mention may also be made of tea estates where the necessity for qualified men who are required, and are not employed is felt. If for instances, the agricultural graduates, say from the Agricultural College, Coimbatore, are employed under the planter to supervise the field work the quality and quantity of the work turned out will certainly be more satisfactory than at present.

14. For regular employees attendance register is kept by timekeepers and for contract labour by contractors or their clerks, if any. Piece-work rates are shown in the price lists prepared by mill staff and approved of by the workers' representative through their jobbers and are prepared by the mill staff in each manufacturing section

where the productions are recorded. They are finally sent to the manager's office for audit purposes. Wages are paid in cash by the cashiers or shroffs in the presence of jobbers, and in some instances in the presence of assistant masters.

15. The work turned out on contract system is mainly one of loading, unloading, receiving and despatch of goods, weighing of finished goods, and curing of raw produce. The extent of sub-contract varies with the seasons of the industries concerned. The concern has no control over this class of labour but they are within the protection afforded by the Factories Act, and the notified manager of the concern is answerable for any breach of the factory laws. Under the provision of the Act the manager on whom the responsibility primarily rests, is competent to prove that the breach was occasioned not by any neglect of duty on his part but by reason of some act referable to the contractor. In these cases on occasions there is the difficulty of tracing out and bringing home any violation of law relating to the hours of employment and periods of rest. This is only a difficulty arising once in a way and generally this class of labour is very essential for the working of the concern.

#### IV.—Health.

23. The health of the operatives is generally good in the plains and abnormal in the plantations.

24. Few factories provide dispensaries in charge of medical officers. Some engage part-time medical officers and a few have got hospitals of their own. These remarks apply only to large concerns and most of the factories do not provide medical facilities at all. Medical facilities in planting areas are good, but the recruits as a rule are poverty-stricken, due firstly to the state of their health (brought about by their stay in unhealthy tracts, as most of the plantations are) and during the first few years of their migration, succumb to malaria and other intestinal diseases. There is a great room for improvement. The dispensaries where the coolie has free access are as a rule in charge of compounders. These dispensaries on estate lands are badly kept and these compounders do not pay the required attention to their work. The qualified doctor is not easily accessible to a coolie, except on emergent occasions. I would therefore suggest that the medicine that is to be given to any invalid should always be prescribed by a qualified doctor, at least of the rank of an L.M.P., and not by compounders who know no more than dispensing. Towards this end it is highly desirable that these dispensaries should be put in charge of an L.M.P., or if that is not practicable an L.M.P. should be deputed at least to visit these dispensaries every day. These L.M.Ps. may be under the control of the resident Medical Officer who, I take it, would at least be an L.M. & S. This suggestion is made because it will be too much to expect of the doctor in charge of the group hospitals who has already taxing work to bestow the attention that is requisite to these dispensaries. Railway workshops maintain dispensaries under qualified doctors. In towns the local boards or the Government have established hospitals where medical aid is obtained, but these are generally at considerable distances from wayside factories. Some mission hospitals also exist in some centres. Midwives are employed in some estate hospitals.

25. The medical aid is generally utilized by the workers except in cases of minor ailments when they have recourse to indigenous treatment. Persuasion is needed to make the workmen to avail of the medical aid. Women do not like to take treatment where lady doctors are not employed.

28. Mill ventilation and humidification are problems that have exercised the minds of the vast majority of mill-owners. It may be said that in a way this problem has been solved. Due care is taken to minimize the excessive temperature and to extricate the vitiated air by the enforcement of the Act to install propeller fans. The ventilation and humidification rules framed by the local government have mitigated the excess in humidity used in the weaving department where a discomfort to the operatives was great. The existing rules are working fairly satisfactorily.

31. There are few concerns where free medical aid for labour cases and small sum of money are offered during the maternity period and they are not worth mentioning. No scheme therefore exists at present.

A private Bill to place maternity benefit on statute was introduced in 1924 but with no success. Government should undertake legislation. Such an action will receive public support and sympathy and will be no sudden innovation in India.

#### V.—Welfare.

37. It is certainly desirable that there ought to be a provision made for old age and premature retirement. In case of such workmen as continue in service of the concern for a fairly long period, a provision started on the lines of a provident fund

wherein the concern undertakes to contribute an amount equal to that which the employee is called upon to subscribe (this may vary according to the earning capacity of the subscriber) will answer the requirements of the situation. But the difficulty will arise in case of the proprietary concerns and in the case of workers who do not serve for a long period, and in such cases it may be possible to grant bonus of one month's wages for every 12 months of approved service, to accumulate such amount in a bank, the concern having no rights to utilize that money, and pay each workman when he leaves the service the accumulated bonus standing to his credit on that day. There must be a condition that the amount once paid into the bank as a bonus to a particular workman belongs from that date onwards to that workman.

38. Co-operative credit societies and stores do benefit the workers. When a worker arrives at an industrial town he is generally penniless and it takes four to six weeks before he can get his wages in his hands. He is consequently obliged to borrow from a money-lender or from a Chetti grocer to buy the necessities of life to maintain himself. In case of a marriage or a funeral he is obliged to borrow at a prohibitive rate of interest from a greedy Marwadi. A co-operative store where the necessities of life chiefly rice and other condiments of unadulterated quality bought and sold at a price little below the prevailing market rate will be of much help to the labourer. I have felt the necessity for the above chiefly in plantation districts where the quality of rice supplied to the recruit by the estates is much inferior to the quality obtainable in the plains.

Similarly if a credit society is started by the employers for the employees workers may take advantage of such societies and save themselves from the usury money-lenders.

It is only in Madras that Messrs. Binny & Co. have given these benefits to their workers.

#### IX.—Hours.

57. The effect of 60 hours restriction and 10 hours ordinary daily limit is conducive both to the industry and the worker. The monthly outturn has not in any way been affected.

58. The maximum daily limit of 11 hours a day gives opportunity to workers to enjoy another half a day on Saturdays. But to be employed for 11 hours continuously during hot months is not conducive to the health of labourers especially to women.

59. It is suggested that the maximum be reduced to 54 hours a week, i.e., nine hours a day.

60. One hour rest during midday is observed in most of the factories and the provision of half-an-hour rest for eight and a half hours in a day is welcomed and is working satisfactorily and no further legislation in respect of interval seems necessary; but if nine hours in a day is accepted, a two-hour recess may be arranged—some factories do give two hours rest for midday meal. Generally, four holidays in a month are granted.

#### X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

81. 1922 Act has considerably ameliorated the conditions of employment of women and child labour, and the employers prefer adult labour to women and children.

82. Admission of infants to factories is much restricted but still a good number of them are found in coir factories along with their parents in the hanking rooms where volume of dust is caused. Under the law power has been given to the inspector to prohibit the presence of little children in factories if in his opinion such presence would involve danger to them. By experience it is found that employers invariably come to know of the presence of the inspector in the vicinity and are able to remove the children out of the work rooms to schools or playgrounds and thus escape detection. A most stringent provision is therefore required to prohibit the presence of children anywhere within the precincts of a factory and thus protect them being present along with their parents inside the factory near dangerous machinery liable to accidents, and also at such working places as produce volume of dust and fine impurities in the course of manufacturing articles the inhaling of which will bring on diseases on them.

83. Long hours of work are detrimental to the health of women in tropical countries, for they have to attend to domestic duties as well. The time taken to go and return to and from the factory should also be considered when fixing the working hours. The 1922 Act though ameliorated their condition in other directions has not improved their working hours which still continue to a maximum of 11 hours



the daily limit. In respect of women an eight-hour day and 48-hour week is preferred and legislation on these lines may be made, the time of beginning of work in the morning not to be within two hours after sunrise. Women should be prohibited from employment in the card room and spinning room and willow machines of textile mills.

84. The existing system of working periods for children is satisfactory. The periods of their employment is generally divided into two portions, half the period in the forenoon and another half of the period in the afternoon with an interval of three hours between these two. A single shift system is in vogue in some factories chiefly in textile mills where children work six hours at a stretch with a half an hour interval within this period.

88. The existing system of working periods for women and young adults in rice mills is of double shift system as stated below :—

	First period.	Second period.
First set .. .. .	6.30 to 10.30	1.30 to 5.30
Second set .. .. .	7.30 to 11.30	2.30 to 6.30
Third set .. .. .	9 to 2	3 to 6

etc., the factory working throughout the day without stoppage. This system is popular amongst them when compared with single shift extending over 11 hours for women and young adults and six for children. The long interval between one shift period to another shift period helps them to attend to domestic duties especially women.

89. Unregistered factories mostly employ women and children in preference to male adults as it pays them to do so and they are worked at odd hours with no interval and no weekly holiday and under dangerous and insanitary conditions. Some factories have come to know of the provisions of Section 2 (3) (b) and hence purposely keep down the number of workers in their registers to below ten to evade Factory Act, though ordinarily more than ten persons and at times more than 19 are also employed. Only a very small number about a dozen factories have been notified till now under Section 2 (3) (b). Owing to the inadequacy of staff the proposal for notifying further is held up. Unless these are also got under the Act, these factories create unhealthy competition in the locality, especially where there are other registered factories dealing in the same trade. The present day tendency is to start smaller concerns with few persons to evade the Act. All factories using power, irrespective of the number of persons employed, should be brought under regulation. Large numbers of children are employed in match factories, tobacco-curing works, beedi factories (country-made cigarettes), cashewnut-curing works, coir fibre works, woollen carpet manufacture, aluminium industries and tanneries. In the above no power is used. They may be brought under Section 2 (3) (b).

## XII.—Wages.

97. There has been an increase of wages by 20 per cent. in the casual labour employed in seasonal factories during the current year. The groundnut cultivation has extended over all dry land areas and detortivating factories have sprung in almost every important village centre.

105. Impracticable to fix maximum and minimum. However, a minimum wage may be fixed for plantation labour considering the unhealthy tract of the country :—

	Annas.	} With payment for one weekly holiday and half wages during the period of illness.
Men .. .. .	9	
Women .. .. .	7	
Boys .. .. .	5	
Girls .. .. .	4	

106. Deductions work out on an average about 0.25 per cent. on the total wages. No legislation is needed. Fine amount is generally utilized for charity purposes.

107. All seasonal factories pay the wages of coolies on shandy days. In other concerns, fortnightly; and in cities monthly. Generally two weeks elapse before payment when payment is made monthly. No legislation is desirable to regulate the periods of payment. Unclaimed wages are treated as charity fund.

108. Indebtedness heavy especially in plantations. Practically 75 per cent. of the wages are taken away by money-lenders on payment days.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

In all my experience an Indian worker as an absolute standard had never been inefficient. At the same time I must say that, in individual concerns, there are workmen who are found to be inefficient due to their not turning out sufficient work. That in my opinion is not due to inefficiency on the part of the workmen but to other causes (which I shall detail later) which make him sluggish.

An Indian worker is as efficient as a foreign worker, but, due to the surroundings and the facilities which a foreign worker has, it is possible that he may exhibit a greater amount of efficiency than the Indian worker. But placed under the same conditions and atmosphere, I am sure an Indian worker will turn out as much and as substantial a work as a foreign worker.

I shall now proceed to illustrate these.

An Indian worker is expected to work usually for 11 hours a day and mostly they will have to work in places where there is little or no ventilation and there is absolute penury of fresh air. The direct consequence of this is after he works for an hour or two, he gets totally exhausted and there is nothing to which he can resort to relieve his exhaustion. These are due to three causes, firstly, the concern does not provide satisfactory working conditions, does not provide proper sanitary and health conditions, and does not provide facilities by which they can have some kind of stimulant like coffee or tea within the concern itself to relieve them partially at least of their fatigue. Therefore if the concern should cut down the working hours from long period that now exists into a fairly reasonable period, it can be expected that the quantity of work turned out by a labourer per hour will substantially increase for the reason that the labourer with the prospect of enjoying recreation after an early hour in the evening will work with increased energy and thereby exhibit his full energy. Secondly, the working conditions must be altered to increase the working efficiency. In this connection a comparison of the conditions existing in two mills in this City will demonstrate what I have to say clearly. The Binny Mills is situated in a building which has high roofs, and a fairly large area of moving space, well ventilated and having an extensive compound all around it. They have provided up-to-date machinery and they are prepared to act on any advice given to them towards the working of their concern. Accordingly the labourer employed by them finds on entering on his duties an atmosphere eminently suited to the exhibition of his full capacity. They provide him with tidn-sheds and resting places and afford such facilities as a labourer ought to have to relieve him of monotony and exhaustion. On the other hand I have found in the Choolai Mills that these facilities are non-existent and they have not chosen to take any advice which is being repeatedly given to them. Under these conditions one must expect a lower output of work from a labourer there. That does not mean that that particular labourer is not capable of better work. Given the proper facilities he can certainly be expected to be more efficient. It is very essential that a labourer in cities should be provided with housing accommodation by concerns. If they do not do it, the labourer perforce takes shelter in most unhealthy quarters, which causes him to be sick, off and on. It is the concern which is the loser by the sickness of a workman.

Production of labour will be eminently satisfactory by the standardization of wages and by certain changes in the method of disbursements. Ordinarily a labourer of a particular class should be given the same wages in whatever concern he may work and this will put an end to labourers precipitously and without notice running from concern to concern. Greater efficiency may be expected if a particular workman is made to work in the same concern for a fairly long time. This can be achieved by standardization in such well-established industries as printing and textiles. This brings on to the next subject of alterations and methods of remuneration. The concern must start a co-operative society which must provide the labourer with the necessities of life according to his condition and his cash payment of wages must be only the surplus over and above that required for making him the above provision. This method will tend to put an end to the temptations on a labourer to expend as much as possible on drink and other noxious drugs. This system will also discourage a petty money-lender from advancing moneys to a labourer and sitting tight on him on the pay day and deprive him of the last pie, thus driving the labourer to again launch on the road of borrowing. It is therefore highly essential that only the necessary amount of loose cash should reach his hands. If this is achieved the bane of existence of alcohol and drugs will cease, his dietary will improve and his efficiency will leave nothing to be required.

Migration of workers has got some salutary effect on indigenous labour, which increases in efficiency on comparative study.

### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. I fully endorse what the Bombay Committee on Industrial Unrest says :—  
“ The frequency of the strikes without notice, the absence of any clearly defined grievances before striking, the multiplicity and sometimes the extravagance of the claims put forward after the strike has begun and the absence of any effective organization (except perhaps at Ahmedabad) to formulate the claims of the operatives and to secure respect for any settlement which may be made.”

Fifty per cent. of the strikes centres on the wages. Twenty-five per cent. of the strikes includes disputes over demand for the dismissals of particular individuals and for reinstatement of persons dismissed or victimized. For the remaining 25 per cent. of strikes no particular cause can be found. They may be due to the instigation of the rowdy element or to wire-pulling of any political body of men who control labour unions.

(ii) Owing to economic conditions peculiar to this Presidency, strikers cannot keep away long from their work, starving their families and children. They are often of a very short duration except in one or two cases, and I may as well put it they are all lightning ones. So far as this Presidency is concerned, the strikers are always peaceful and capable of doing no mischief to the property of the concern or to the public.

(iii) Generally workers' representatives who are members of some union meet the management and negotiate. When such negotiations prove futile, they, both the workers' representative and the management, approach the Labour Commissioner who with the aid of an expert committee formed for the time being from persons outside the concern, and the strikers, gives his award. This award is very often accepted but it is not binding on both the parties.

(iv) Strikes should be viewed with alarm. They cause national loss in the production of wealth. Every citizen much more the Government should deem it their duty to intervene and settle without any delay, otherwise, they will be disastrous to the worker and the concern.

The worker during the strike period is generally excited and his health impaired, having no regular work to do and careworn being penniless and finding his dependants at home on starvation.

124. So far as this Presidency is concerned the results achieved by the Labour Commissioner in getting through strikes may be said satisfactory. However, placed as he is, it is too much to expect from him that he could settle all disputes and prevent the occurrence of strikes or lockouts.

No use is made of the Act of 1860.

There is no joint deliberation between employers and workpeople in any industry.

Workers are not organized. The capitalist does not budge an inch in extending any concessions or in redressing any grievances unless he is moved by a large body of workpeople. There is no love lost between employer and employee in this country. Both sides are not free from blame. Workers do not ask for legitimate grievances nor do the capitalists understand the workers' difficulties and try to meet them till at the last moment when it will be too late to mend matters.

There should be goodwill and sympathy on the part of the employees and without these virtues, no amount of legislation will ensure favourable atmosphere in any industrial centre. The employers should recognize the trade unions. The workers should be educated to form a council of their own to be known as Workers' Council for each class of workers. The employees should arrange a monthly or fortnightly discussion ; when they are unable to arrive at decision on any matter, then only this should be referred to, by the workers to their trade union, who may approach the employer and try for settlement. If no settlement is reached even at this stage then only the matter has to be referred to a conciliation board, which should be appointed for the occasion from body of men with knowledge of trade, having no interest either in the concern or in the workers under dispute. The award of this body should be binding on both.

125. The Indian worker has no education and no organizing capacity. He easily falls prey to any ill-advised leader. He does not realize what the consequence of a strike to him is. The present Trade Dispute Bill contains provisions relating to illegal strikes and lock-outs, which provisions may work all right in the West, but will aggravate the causes of discontent and frustrate the object of the legislation. He should not be punished for his action caused by an outside agency. Strikes are no doubt the greatest epidemic and should not be allowed to rage, and at the same time the legislation should be framed in such a way as could be worked without opposition.

## XVII.—Administration.

134. *International Labour Organization.*—This organization has come to stay. Labour sends one or two delegates annually to this Conference. Its deliberations are carefully watched. This organization has given an impetus to trade unions. Its effect on the Legislative Councils is very salutary and all parties sink their differences when a discussion centres around the labour subject.

Breach of factory laws has become very common with factory owners. In the absence of very frequent checks, they do not choose to conform with the provisions of law. This necessitates prosecutions. Breach of factory law do in certain state of affairs lead to minor consequences but in others to more serious consequences involving risk of human lives, e.g., violation of rules regulating health, safety and employment will lead to very serious consequences and such actions must be repressed with a very strong hand by inflicting deterrent punishments. To achieve this result it is essential that the officer who is called upon to administer the penal provisions of the Factories Act should be well versed with the nature of the offence committed and the consequences that will flow from it. Nextly the provisions themselves must, instead of providing a uniform punishment, irrespective of the gravity of the offence as at present, provide the Magistrate with sufficient power to mete out punishments in relation to the demands of justice required under particular situations. The first move consequently ought to be to alter the penal provisions of the Factory Act by providing punishments which ought to be severe or lenient according to the nature of the offence committed. Secondly as an administrative policy, only experienced Magistrates most preferably a District Magistrate who by experience can understand the degree of culpability involved in any breach of factory laws should be vested with jurisdiction to try these offences.

## XVIII.—Intelligence.

Labour intelligence may broadly be divided into (a) labour population and (b) labour wages. In regard to the former this may again be sub-divided into (1) labour inside the factory and (2) labour outside the factory. Taking first into discussion now the existing method by which we gather information is by calling upon each factory owner to maintain a register of workers employed by him. In carrying this into effect I have often found that casual labourers who number about 25 per cent. on average and 50 per cent. on seasonal factories are not included in the registers kept. In spite of the fact that the necessity for keeping this register is enforced by penal clauses provided in the Factory Act, yet the actual work of maintaining the register is entrusted not to the hands of very responsible persons, so much so when the register is called for, for the ascertainment of statistics it is possible (mostly in minor concerns, about 70 per cent. of the total number of factories) that the statement is not very accurate. To remedy this, it will be necessary so far at least as the permanent labourers in a concern are concerned to maintain a register of daily attendance. This will certainly give the most accurate information possible required for the statistics. As for the casual labourers, as the present system obtains it may not be possible to ascertain the exact number of them employed in a particular year, for the simple reason that, even in the course of one day, the contractor who employs them makes them to work in two or more factories in each for an hour or more. For gathering statistics in respect of this kind of labour that the contractors must be licensed or certified and he should be required to maintain a register of persons employed by him and statistics which will show as to how many labourers under him were employed in a particular locality for what period and for what wages. This kind of information taken along with the register of attendance kept by the factory will give a very accurate information. Next as regards the labour outside a factory as at present there is no data available. But the Labour Officers in charge of districts may be directed to gather this information and furnish the same so that the annual labour statistics may be complete.

Nextly regarding labour wages, at each inspection of a factory, the officer who inspects gathers information regarding the wages obtaining in the factory and this is mostly accurate. As for wages outside a factory, we try to gather information mostly through other district officers but we are not in a position to testify to the accuracy of this information. To this class of labour the labour officer must be requested to ascertain and give the information.

I may say that the ascertainment of this information also should be made by the factory inspection staff who are technically qualified, but they are not able to do it for the reason that they have already too much work. If they are slightly relieved of the strain of their existing work it is possible that the task of the ascertainment of the information may be entrusted to their hands, in which case the statistics which they will gather will be eminently satisfactory.

### Conclusion.

In conclusion I may state that so far as this Presidency is concerned, industry prevailing here may generally be classified into (a) textiles (jute and cotton), printing, engineering, brick and tile works, match works, etc., which when worked in a proper direction will tend to increase the national wealth of the country and (b) rice mills, groundnuts decortivating, cotton ginning and pressing, oil extracting which tend rather to enrich the pockets of individuals than substantially help in any national advancement.

I first consider that the working of both classes of industries particularly the latter class is not very satisfactory. The former are industries settled on firmer basis and they can be made to work pre-eminently well by a proper organization of labour as the standardization of wages, minimizing of migration, etc., which I have dealt with in the proper places. In the next class, the most fatal defect is the want of any permanent establishment to manage any particular concern. What I mean is this: the rice mills which are fairly numerous in the Godavari, Kistna and Cauvery deltas are not, generally speaking, in the hands of a particular responsible person. They are given on short-term leases to persons mostly middleclass men with not very much financial credit. In short, I may call them commission agents, and no more. The interest that they take in the concern may be equated in terms of the money that they will be able to get and it is sure that such interests can never advance the concern as such. If they make money, they pocket it at the end of a year or two and leave the concern to whoever may come in after them. If they do not make money, they simply seek the aid of Insolvency Courts and this procedure not only hits them but also hits the concern which is at a standstill for a fairly long time thereafter. Needless to say that the labourers as a class will be the worst sufferers. These frequent changes involve additional labour on the inspecting officers for it takes a pretty long time before a new lessee can be made acquainted with the factory legislation.

Probably this class of industry may be encouraged and be made to thrive better by acquainting these millowners of a comparative study of this class of industry. First they must be made to understand that the number of concerns in existence now is totally in disproportion to the yield the country is able to give. They must also be made to understand the evils that arise out of unhealthy competition and the good that will result from sustained and centralized activity, in which case the system of irresponsible leasing out may also be put an end to. Nextly they must be educated as to how such and similar kinds of industry are worked and thrive in other parts of India. This educative work may be undertaken by the Co-operative Department.

For the purpose of increasing the administrative efficiency of this department I would suggest the facilities being given for two officers of a Presidency for a comparative study of the lines of administration obtained in other provinces. This will not only suggest methods for improvement but will also tend towards the unification of labour. A round table annual conference may be arranged in different industrial centres, under the lead of the provincial administrative heads, where they may review and discuss the several administrative reports, with special references to the prevention of industrial accidents, the enforcement and the extent of application of the exemption provisions and the existing bureau through which the labour intelligence is obtained. This will be an occasion when officers of one province may inspect the factories in localities outside their province and gain a knowledge of the factory conditions obtaining in such places. Chiefly they can gather information about their welfare activities (inside and outside), sanitation including humidification and ventilation. It is only these that increase the efficiency and contentment of labour and by introducing in their own places whatever they find really good in outside factories, they can realize their desired object.

This is only a preliminary suggestion for further advancement. My next step will be the suggestion to depute a factory inspector annually to go to foreign countries to study the factory working conditions and to suggest improvements based on his study, as far as the conditions of this country will permit.

CAPTAIN N. R. UBHAYA, D.P.H., ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH,  
MADRAS.

### I.—Recruitment.

4. The labourers employed in the industrial establishments and plantations are usually drawn from the adjoining and in some instances even distant districts. It is not infrequently the case that a large proportion of the labourers leave their families behind in their native villages before they seek employment. It is obvious that if the workers' separation happens to be of a prolonged duration, it will adversely affect the family economically and socially.

**III.—Housing.**

16. (i) In the case of large plantations, housing accommodation has been provided in the great majority of cases.

In the case of other private industrial establishments, a few concerns have provided housing for a small proportion of their employees as for example, the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Limited, in Madras City, and the Madura Mills Limited, in Madura.

The only large undertaking in which Government have provided housing for the labourers is the Mettur Project.

(ii) The provision of housing by Government is confined practically to the depressed classes.

(iii) It may be stated that the great majority of the labour population in industries live in rented houses.

(iv) It is only in a small proportion of cases that workers have at their own cost provided themselves with houses. The provision of housing in this category may be classed under two groups, viz.—(1) where the land as well as the house belong to the workers, and (2) the house belonging to the workers while the land is leased.

18. (i) Generally speaking, excepting in the case of housing accommodation provided in recent years by the Government and to some extent by public agencies as the railway and a few private concerns as the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Limited, of Madras, it may be stated that the houses provided for the workers are extremely unsatisfactory considering the demands of the workers. Generally speaking, the houses consist of a single room, the dimensions varying from 50 to 120 square feet, the average being between 80 to 100 square feet. In a few cases, a small verandah is provided in front of the houses, a portion of the verandah being used as a fireplace. In other cases, a single room has to be utilized as the kitchen, store and sleeping room.

(ii) The number of houses is not only inadequate to meet the workers' demands, but as a rule, their condition from the health point of view is also very unsatisfactory. Generally, speaking most of them are low-roofed and grossly defective in ventilation and lighting. In many cases, the houses are situated back to back.

(iii) It is only in a small minority of instances that employers have provided satisfactory arrangements regarding conservancy and water-supply. In other cases these are either entirely wanting, and if they exist at all, they are of an extremely primitive type and objectionable from the public health standpoint.

19. If the rents are reasonable, housing accommodation provided by the employers or other agencies, is, as a general rule, availed of by the workers.

20. In the case of houses provided by Government or by the employers, the rents prescribed are reasonable, probably not exceeding Rs. 2. In the cases of houses rented from private landlords, the rent per tenement may be said to vary from Rs. 3 to 5 or even higher.

22. The housing conditions exert, as a general rule, a very adverse influence on their morals. This is probably due more to the insufficiency of the accommodation and disposition of the houses resulting in lack of privacy than other reasons. If improvement in this direction is to be achieved, it is necessary that a certain minimum standard for houses should be prescribed.

**IV.—Health.**

23. (i) and (ii) In municipalities, notification of births and deaths is compulsory by statute and registration is done by Registrars of Births and Deaths (mostly whole time employees) appointed by Municipal Councils. As regards rural areas, collectors of districts who are authorized by law to declare notification of births and deaths compulsory have introduced this measure in about two-thirds of the Presidency.

Generally speaking, it is extremely difficult to get the vital statistics of the labour population for judging their health conditions. In the first place, the industrial workers do not as a rule reside in circumscribed localities in a town (or village). Secondly, even if they live in well defined areas, information of their numbers in the ward or districts in which these localities are situated is not available in the census, and as such, it is impossible to calculate the vital statistics rates among this population

for purposes of comparison with the corresponding rates in the population of another area which is more or less identical with the former excepting the nature of employment of the population. Thirdly, information of occupation as recorded in the birth and death registers is very often of an extremely vague nature. As important as, if not more than, any of the above is the fact that, in this country the industrial labour population is, unlike in Western countries, not a stable one but is changing frequently by the influx of fresh and healthy recruits from villages and the efflux of the old hands who very often incapacitated by illness which throws them out of employment, return to their villages to die; in such cases the vital statistics of the industrial population in a locality may be apparently better than that of the rest of the population in the area whilst as a matter of fact, the reverse may actually be the case. Lastly, the labourers are affected not only by the industries in which they are employed but also by their housing and other factors associated with environment, and the difficulties in assessing the share of each of these factors in causing damage to health are almost insuperable. Unless therefore a regular research is instituted, it is almost impossible to get statistical evidence of scientific value to judge the relative health conditions of the workers different industries.

23. (iii) (a) In the case of concerns managed by large capitalists and the Government it may be stated that as a rule the working conditions in the workplaces are satisfactory. In the case, however, of smaller industrial establishments, conditions regarding health and comfort of the labourers are generally defective.

(b) The only important industry in which it may be said that home-work is being carried on is weaving and dyeing or both. Ordinarily the houses of the people employed in this industry are hardly sufficient for living purposes and the use of the premises for vocational purposes generally renders them insanitary and cramped.

(iv) The staple article of dietary of the working classes in this Presidency is rice with a small quantity of vegetables. Occasionally, about once a week, a small quantity of meat is consumed. Generally speaking, the diet of the workers is deficient in its nitrogen content and vitamins. On account of the difficulties in getting milk and also in view of its cost, milk is rarely used even in the case of children.

Apart from the quality of the dietary, it is doubtful, if on account of the economic conditions as a result of low wages, largeness of family and loss in wages as a result of frequent sickness, the quantity of food is sufficient. Also, drinking propensity which is quite a common feature among the working classes (men and to some extent even women) affects indirectly their dietary by the economic drain on the wages.

(v) in view of the facts mentioned in (iv) above, the physique of the working classes can be considered as only below par.

(vi) The only two industrial centres in which there is a marked disparity between the male and female populations are Calicut and Mangalore wherein there is a predominance of males to an extent of about 3,000 in a total population of 82,000 in the case of Calicut and 54,000 in Mangalore.

24. (i) The management of a few of the very large industrial concerns have provided individually or jointly qualified medical aid. In a few other instances, compounders are employed for prescribing and dispensing medicines and rendering first-aid. In by far the great majority of cases, however, medical assistance is not provided by employers.

(ii) Excepting the medical institutions maintained by the Government for the civil population and the institution maintained in Mettur irrigation project where the major portion of the population consists of workers, no other facilities under the auspices of the Government agency exist in other places.

(iii) The only other agencies worth mentioning as providing medical assistance, are the local bodies: these institutions as in the case of those maintained by the Government, cater to the needs of the general population including the working classes.

(iv) The provision made by employers of labour as regards the maintenance of a staff of women doctors, trained midwives and dhais is practically negligible.

25. (i) and (ii) Generally speaking, it may be stated that the limited medical facilities which are provided are availed of by the workers including women especially in cases where surgical assistance is needed.

26. (i) The latrine accommodation provided at workplaces can, on the whole, be considered to be satisfactory but the number of instances in which this is unsuitable or inadequate is not in any way insignificant.

(ii) In the great majority of cases, it may be stated that drinking water is provided in workplaces but it is extremely doubtful whether, save in a few instances where a protected water-supply exists, the quality of water is satisfactory.

(iii) It is only in an extremely limited number of instances that bathing or washing facilities are provided in the workspots.

27. (i) There is no Board of Health anywhere in this province.

(ii) In view of the fact that plantations present health problems peculiar to their own, a special Health Officer assisted by a subordinate staff has been working since June, 1927, and is in charge of the plantations in three districts, viz., Coimbatore, Malabar and the Nilgiris.

(iii) The official organisation in connection with the supervision of labour in industrial as well as non-industrial areas in the Presidency consists of :—(a) Factory Inspectors whose duties relate to inspection of factories and the working of the provisions of the Factories Act. (b) Additional Inspectors of Factories consisting mostly of District Magistrates and Health Officers of municipalities and Districts. (c) Officers of the Medical department who are certifying surgeons. (d) Labour Commissioner and District Labour Officers whose duties pertain to the health and welfare in general of the working classes.

28 (i) and (ii) A copy of this office correspondence-containing amendments to the existing legislation, Factories Act, etc., Annexure II, is herein enclosed.

29 (i) No statistics are available regarding the prevalence of industrial diseases in this Presidency.

(ii) Especially in the plantations, malaria and hookworm may be said to be more or less endemic. It may also be stated that outbreaks of relapsing fever are not uncommon in the planting districts. As regards cholera and other water-borne diseases, except in so far that migration of labourers and defective housing conditions result in greater chances of the introduction and dissemination of infection, other circumstances regarding outbreaks of these diseases are more or less the same among the workers as in the rest of the population. The outbreaks of a few other diseases notably malaria are favoured by migration and congregation of labour.

31. (i) Excepting the monetary grants given to women by the managements of a few plantations, it is doubtful whether any other scheme exists in this Presidency.

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

32. (i) and (ii) With the exception of welfare work, recreation facilities, reading rooms, gymnasia, excursions, etc., provided by the railway and one or two large industrial concerns, it is doubtful if facilities have been provided by other employers of labour.

33. Probably, the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Company of Madras is the only employer of labour in this Presidency which has provided welfare officers and workers.

34. Vide remarks under (32) above.

35. The experience gained from the working of the welfare activities initiated by the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Company for the benefit of their employees is very satisfactory.

#### VII.—Safety.

48. Suggestion has been made in the amendments in the Factories Act that there should be a statutory obligation on employers of labour to provide first-aid and medical relief.

#### X.—Special questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

82. It is of the greatest importance that in the case of factories in which women exceeding a certain number are employed, crèches should be established in order that infants may be taken proper care of.

#### XVII.—Administration.

139, 140 and 142. In so far as the sanitary aspect of the administration of factories, mines, plantations, docks and other industrial establishments is concerned there should be a special bureau of Industrial Hygiene attached to the office of the Director of Public Health. The executive officers of the department should possess



statutory powers of inspection, direction to the owners to execute such proposals as may be made to safeguard the health of the workers, and of enforcing the law in these respects.

#### Annexure No. 1.

*Letter from the Acting Director of Public Health, Madras, to the Secretary to Government, Local Self-Government (Public Health) Department, R. No. 759-3-Sany, dated 23rd July, 1929.*

#### Royal Commission on Labour.

According to the census of 1921, the proportion of population in Madras Presidency depending for their livelihood on the important occupations was as follows:—

	Per cent.
Agriculture .. .. .	71
Industry .. .. .	13
Trades and Professions .. .. .	9
Others .. .. .	7
Total .. .. .	<u>100</u>

If the population supported by agriculture is classified according to the sub-groups of this occupation, 29·72 out of 30·65 millions depend on ordinary cultivation for their sustenance; as regards the balance of about 9½ lakhs, about 4 lakhs are supported by rearing and tending of livestock, about 2 lakhs depend on plantations and gardens and the rest on other subsidiary occupations relating to agriculture.

The important industries are classified below according to the proportion of population depending on them for their livelihood:—

	Proportion per 1,000 industrial population dependent on
Textiles .. .. .	234
Industries of dress .. .. .	228
Building industries .. .. .	119
Food industries .. .. .	113
Wood .. .. .	105
Others .. .. .	191
	<u>1,000</u>

Most of these industries, especially the first two items which occupy the foremost rank, are situated in a few cities and towns or their immediate neighbourhood.

The recommendations for the amelioration in their conditions of labour referred to in the foregoing paragraphs are indicated in the following summary:—

- (1) Housing.—Local authorities and employers of labour should individually and jointly be obliged by law to provide directly or by means of co-operative efforts suitable housing accommodation for the working classes.
- (2) Provision of medical facilities by employers of labour, including periodical inspection of employees, first aid, treatment, etc.
- (3) Amendment of Workmen's Compensation Act on lines liberal to the workers.
- (4) Enactment of an Insurance Act for workers analogous to the English Act.
- (5) Enactment of Maternity Benefit Act.
- (6) Prohibition of employment of pregnant women, eight weeks before and eight weeks after confinement.
- (7) Provision by employers of labour or by local authority of crèches in cases where large numbers of women are employed.
- (8) Encouragement of the formation of trade unions on proper lines.
- (9) Establishment of arbitration boards possessing statutory standing.
- (10) Establishment of Governmental labour bureaux or exchanges in each district.
- (11) Restrictions to control the exploitation of labour by Kanganis, recruiting agents and such like persons or agencies.

(12) Improvements in the hours of working which should in no way exceed the limits prescribed under the English Acts.

(13) Encouragement of the formation of standing committees of the employers and representatives of the employees to settle grievances, etc.

(14) Encouragement of the formation of social welfare agencies by the joint efforts of the local authority and employers of labour for doing social work in the workplace and in the homes of the workers.

(15) Encouragement of the provision of amenities as cinemas, recreation grounds, libraries, sports, excursions and so forth for the workers and their families.

(16) Formation of co-operative banks, stores, etc., towards the encouragement of thrift among the employees.

(17) Feasibility of a provident fund system for the employees.

(18) Maintenance of a proper system of record keeping with respect to the health of the employees.

(19) Standardization of wages.

(20) The creation of a special bureau of industrial hygiene in Director of Public Health's office.

It will be seen from this summary that the co-operation of the State, the employer and the employee and also the general public is required in the solution of the labour problem.

With reference to paragraph 9, an investigation for determining the comparative mortality among the industrial and the non-industrial population of certain towns is being started and every possible endeavour will be made to complete it before the arrival of the Commission. The report of the investigation will be submitted as soon as it is ready.

In as far as factory labour is concerned, copy of my letter R. No. 771.3/Sany., dated 16th July, 1929, to the Commissioner of Labour, containing suggestions for amendments in legislation is herein enclosed for the information of the Government.

#### *Annexure No. II.*

Copy of letter R. No. 771.3/Sany., dated 16th July, 1929, from the Director of Public Health, Madras, to the Commissioner of Labour, Madras.

The references hereunder correspond to the Factories Manual of 1925.

(1) *Section 4, Sub-section (5).*—Inasmuch as it is definitely stated in the sub-section that the Local Government can decide the powers to be exercised by the several inspectors, the necessity for the sub-clause "and the inspectors to whom the notices are to be sent" occurring at the end of the sub-section is not apparent. Another reason for recommending the omission is that, as the additional inspectors entrusted with special branches of factory administration are the best judges of the improvements to be carried out in the factories with reference to those branches, greater expeditiousness will be secured if they are authorized to issue notices and take subsequent action.

(2) *Sections 7 and 8.*—I am strongly of opinion that those who are classified as children for purposes of employment in factories should, when they subsequently enter the class of adults, be examined a second time and granted an age certificate by the certifying surgeon.

(3) Certifying surgeons are not as a rule inspectors of factories, and their chances of exercising the powers conferred on them under Section 8 (a) are extremely limited, whereas health officers, on account of the greater opportunities they have of inspecting factories, will be able to examine the certified children, and in case they find that such children are no longer fit for employment they should be authorised to prohibit the factory managers from employing such children.

(4) *Section 13.*—I think that no exception should be made in the case of factories as regards the provision of sanitary conveniences. The proviso under this section may, therefore, be omitted.

(5) *Section 14.*—Analogous to the sub-section under Sections 11, 12 and 16 there should be a sub-section under Section 14 to authorise inspectors to issue notices upon the factory managers to provide suitable water supply where such provision has not been made.

(6) There should be definite legal provision authorizing Local Government to direct whenever necessary the factory managers to provide housing, medical relief, and such other conveniences and amenities. A section embodying these subjects (analogous to the sections in the Planters' Act—Repealed) should be introduced.

(7) Next to Section 14 there should be a new section under which factory managers should be compelled by law to provide bathing arrangements and suitable mess-rooms for the employees. I think the time has come when the question of introducing a Workmen's Insurance Act similar to the English Act but adapted to local conditions should be introduced. At any rate, legislation is necessary as regards maternity and children's benefits.

(9) *Section 19.A.*—This should be extended to women especially who are pregnant.

(10) The Local Government should have the powers of directing factory employees to provide maternity relief and nursing for the pregnant women and to open crèches for the children of the employees. Also the factory managers should be prohibited from employing pregnant women during the six weeks before confinement and four weeks after. Women after the third month of pregnancy should for the purpose of hours of employment be considered as children.

(11) If a factory inspector finds any sick or incapacitated person being employed in any factory he should be authorized by law to prohibit the factory managers from employing such persons until they are certified as fit.

(12) Every factory manager should be compelled by law to maintain registers or cards for individual employees recording therein all illnesses and any other particulars that may be prescribed by the inspector.

(13) Persons suffering from such of the diseases as are notified to be infectious under the local boards and Municipal Acts should be prohibited from being employed in factories. Factory managers should be compelled to report cases of infectious diseases and of all births and deaths to the officers of the Public Health Department.

(14) *Section 21.*—As the conditions relating to the physical constitution of the labourers, the environment in the factory as well as in the homes, wages paid to the employees and such other circumstances affecting the latter's health are in this country much more adverse to health than the corresponding conditions in England and other western countries, the hours of employment of men, women and children should not under any circumstances exceed the hours prescribed in the factory legislation in England.

(15) *Section 37.*—A sub-clause (*p*) should be added to authorize the Government to frame rules regarding health, safety, well-being and comfort of the employees.

(16) *Section 59.*—Under the schedule the Government should have the executive power of adding to the list in the schedule. To the schedule as it now stands, the manufacture of sulphuric acid may be added in view of the fact that lead vats are invariably used in its manufacture.

(17) In view of the intimate relationship between economic conditions and the health of employees, the Local Government should have statutory power of standardizing the wages of employees.

(18) It may be stated definitely in the Factories Act that the provisions contained therein are in addition to those contained in other statutes as the Local Boards and Municipal Acts.

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Mr. R. G. GRIEVE, M.A., F.R.G.S., Director of Public Instruction, Madras.

It is not possible for me to supply a comprehensive statement in respect of the various aspects of education falling within the purview of the Royal Commission. This is due to the fact that all educational activities in this Presidency do not come under the control of the Director of Public Instruction. The Salt Department has seven schools attached to salt factories; some schools for fishermen and their children are run by the Fisheries Department; Industrial schools are controlled by the Director of Industries; Labour schools—of which there are a large number—by the Commissioner of Labour; and Agricultural schools by the Director of Agriculture. Any memorandum by the Director of Public Instruction is, therefore, necessarily incomplete, but subject to this reservation the following remarks are offered.

With reference to item (36) in the schedule, the provision of educational facilities by employers—there are few cases in which such facilities have been provided for adults, half-timers or children. There are, however, notable exceptions. I may instance the excellent day and night schools maintained by the Buckingham and Carnatic Company—the former for half-timers and children, the latter for employees in the mills. The boys' day school has 888 on the rolls and the night school for adults 372. Two schools for girls have also been recently started.

Again, in the Cordite Factory school, Aravankadu, provision is made for about 100 children, and for part-time workers and apprentices. There are three other examples of schools for factory children; one in Vizagapatam district, with 83 children on rolls; one near Coimbatore for cotton factory children, with 39 boys and 22 girls on rolls; and one in Malabar.

The general conclusion thus is that little so far has been done with two exceptional cases to be referred to below, and some employers seem to be indifferent or hostile to the provision of educational facilities for any of the three categories referred to in item (36) of the schedule. The two exceptional cases are the railway administration and the planting community.

The Madras and Southern Mahratta and the South Indian Railways have for long maintained a number of schools for the children of their Anglo-Indian and Indian employees. The policy to be adopted as regards these schools in the future is at present under consideration, largely because it is considered anomalous that railway funds should be expended on what is essentially a provincial transferred subject. The present position is that these two railways maintain in this Presidency 16 European and 6 Indian schools, with a total strength of 945 and 883 respectively.

As regards the planting community, there are a number of schools for the children of employees on estates, including aided schools, and at a recent meeting of the United Planters' Association of South India, the question of making some provision for secondary education also was considered and approved in principle.

Turning to item (40) in the schedule, there are for the children of workers in industrial concerns the ordinary schools maintained by local boards and private agencies, and the general statement may safely be made that it is possible for the children of all workers in industrial concerns of any size to secure a general elementary education. For children actually employed in factories and for adults hardly any provision is made directly. An exception is the night school run by the Y.M.C.A. in Coimbatore, which is attended by mill hands who wish to better their prospects in the local mills.

Indirectly, a certain amount is done for adults; but so far only the fringe of the problem of adult education has been touched. A large number of night schools exist, but many of these are really continuation schools, while those attended by adults, illiterate or semi-literate, hardly seem to fall within the terms of reference of the Royal Commission, attended as they are for the most part by agricultural or casual labourers. Those, again, that are run by philanthropic societies have primarily in view the uplift of the depressed classes.

In brief, it may be stated, subject to modifications arising out of statements by the Commissioner of Labour and the Director of Industries, that, so far as schools under the Educational Department are concerned, with some noteworthy exceptions, little is done directly by employers or other agencies, particularly for adults and half-timers, but that the widespread facilities for general elementary education render it normally possible for children of employees to obtain education.

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Mr. T. AUSTIN, I.C.S., District Magistrate, Ganjam.

1. (6) As chairman of the Assam Labour Board from September, 1924, to April, 1928, I had the opportunity of visiting both tea gardens and recruiting centres.

(i) I consider that it is necessary to retain control over recruitment for these, among other, reasons. The majority of coolies come from jungly and backward tribes and are quite unsophisticated. There have been, in the past, a great many abuses. In spite of the present strict control, attempts are still made to kidnap minors of both sexes and to mislead others. Most of these attempts are, undoubtedly, now nipped in the bud. There is a shortage of labour in most tea gardens; with uncontrolled recruitment, planters would be tempted to employ unfit agents, who would be rewarded by results. Such men are still about and would be at once ready to take up their old calling.

(ii) I can think of nothing better than the present system, which aims at recruitment by coolies, who have worked on a garden of their own relations and friends; they have experienced work in Assam, know what they are recruiting others for and can explain it to them.

The system of local agents, as carried on by the Tea Districts Labour Association, is good, so long as the right kind of officer is employed and he keeps in touch with local officials, missionaries, etc.

(iii) The Assam Labour Board, as constituted at present, is too large and contains representatives of planters and of their Calcutta firms. As chairman, I looked on myself as the coolies' representative; and the Board looked to me to advise them on legal matters as well as on matters that came to my notice during my tours. It is an advantage that the chairman should be a Government servant; but the Board should be smaller and should contain representatives from the recruiting areas.

(iv) The existing Act is full of anomalies and anachronisms; it needs to be replaced by a short simple enactment. It would not require a very smart lawyer to pick holes in the Act; it is doubtful whether any of the proceedings, nominally taken under it, are really legal. But it is loyally worked by all concerned in the spirit in which it was framed. Thus the main defect of the present system is that it is only workable by consent. Another defect is that it is not elastic enough; no provision is made for recruitment in new areas, for instance. These defects can only be cured by legislation.

(v) It has been the expressed intention of Government and the tea industry to aim at free recruitment. Assam is undoubtedly handicapped in comparison with other industries in India; from this district, for instance, thousands go annually to Burmah, with no such control. But, for the present, I think that some control is still needed for Assam; until that is removed, no substitute is needed for the present system, provided that it be simplified and made more elastic by legislation.

Others can speak, with more intimate knowledge than myself, of actual conditions in Assam. I can only say, generally, that in some districts greater attention needs to be paid to housing, medical needs and education, although the industry, as a whole, are fully alive to this. Coolies, as a rule, are happy and well-treated on the gardens. Wages are a difficult subject and I will not discuss them. Missionaries and others in touch with the coolies at home generally agree that they benefit by going to Assam; this is true, at any rate of the hill tribes of the Ganjam agency.

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#### SRIMAN SREE VIKRAMA DEO VARMA MAHASAYA, Vizagapatam.

1. (6) Though there are two jute mills and one or two manganese mines in the district, I am not in touch with the various problems connected with the labour employed in those concerns and the relations between capital and labour. The most important labour problem that has been engaging the serious attention of the administrators and the public men interested in the economic welfare of the district is the recruitment of labour from what is known as the agency tract of the district, for the Assam gardens. Successive agents to the Governor most notable among whom is Mr. L. T. Harris, C.S.I., drew the serious attention of the Government to the necessity and desirability of closing the agency tracts to the recruitment of labour for Assam. The power of the capitalist behind the tea gardens of Assam, overrode all principles of equity and economic necessity and the agency tracts still continue to be denuded of the already scarce basic population of the area. If the natural laws of supply and demand and the attraction of higher wages and continued employment, as set forth by the authorities, as the causes for the flow of population from Jeypur to Assam were true, I would respectfully throw a challenge to the authorities to place before the public a statement showing the total number that left the agency tracts for Assam, the number that returned to their home and the wealth in savings they brought back, the number that stayed back in Assam on account of superior climatic and economic conditions and convince the public that recruitment is for the benefit of the people recruited. I would also ask the authorities to explain the need for a costly and elaborate organization with the legislative and executive co-operation of the Government direct and indirect, found necessary for the so-called freewill emigration of the agency people. Certainly this is nothing short of modern slavery, legalised by modern Acts to enrich the Assam plantations with human manure from the agency tracts. I question the wisdom of the Government in allotting millions of money for the development of the agency tracts by the provision of roads, railways and anti-malaria methods, while permitting the areas to be developed to be depopulated by emigration to another province for its development. This is simply robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The contractors of the Raipur Railway find it difficult to get local labour and I know of two contractors who brought down men from Cuttack, Sambalpur and other places to the Rayagada section of the Railway. An impartial scrutiny of the reasons for the inability of the P.W.D. divisions in the agency to spend at least a part of the amount of the allotment money would reveal the fact that the scarcity of the labour from the local areas, the sickness of the labour taken from the plains are the main reasons. If the emigration was free, why should a number of well dressed sirdars

with attractions of gramophone and harmonium penetrate into the jungle villages as decoy elephants in the khedda operations? It is, therefore, clear that emigration to Assam is a state-aided institution and the sooner the agency tracts are closed the better for the district. The time is not far distant, when the Maharajah of Jeypur will have only a rent-roll without a peasantry to cultivate the fertile virgin fields of his estate. He will be compelled to have a scheme of immigration from the United Provinces and the landless people of the Godavari and Krishna Deltas, should this stream of emigration go on for a decade more, and the indigenous population will vanish as the Red Indians of America and Maories of New Zealand. I am, therefore, strongly of opinion that in the interests of humanity and in the interests of economic future of the district, which is sure to follow the completion of the Vizagapatam and the Raipur Railway with the network of feeder railways to join it; and in view of the great need of labour for all the development schemes on hand and to be proposed, I would strongly press on the Commission and through it the Government of India to completely close the agency tracts to the recruitment of labour for Assam and to penalise any attempts of individuals or associations who place before the simple aboriginal folks the imaginary attraction of the Assam fields and decoy people into emigration lands. I am confident that as a result of the Commission's representations, this blot of the existence of slavery in British Territory will be wiped off by the nation, that spent millions of money to liberate foreign slaves.

CAPT. F. R. STEELE, LOCAL AGENT OF THE TEA DISTRICTS LABOUR ASSOCIATION, BERHAMPORE, GANJAM, MADRAS.

**I.—Recruitment.**

1. (i) The district of Ganjam is inclusive of an agency tracts division in which two aboriginal tribes reside. The Khonds, in the north-west area and the Sowras, in the south-west area. Both tribes migrate to tea estates. Other castes from the plains area who also normally emigrate to tea gardens are :—Bowris, Dandasis, Kapus, Kammars, Madigas, Malas, and Panos.

The average movement of labour from this district to tea estates is approximately 2,000 per annum. The Tea Districts Labour Association year commences on the 1st September, and ends on the 31st August. The brisk recruiting months are generally between February to June and the slack months between September to December. The busiest month during the year is March. The slack season may be attributed to the advent of rains, when ploughing operations are commenced and the harvesting seasons, when labour is absorbed in its own precincts.

I attach statistics\* for the past three years of the movement of labour, by castes, from this district, as also those for sirdars, received from gardens, during the corresponding periods.

Migration to Burma is also popular and a free flow takes place annually. The labour migrating to Burma, however, is practically confined to males and generally from the plains areas of the district. A small proportion of Khonds have ventured to cross the sea but not yet the Malia (hill) Sowra, though his brother the Kapu Sowra (plains Sowra) migrates fairly freely.

I give below as perhaps being of interest a schedule of wages as obtained, (a) in the district (b) at Burma and (c) on Assam tea estates :—

Area.	Season.	Males.	Females.	Children.
In the district	Non-harvesting	6 as. to 8 as.	3 as. to 4 as.	2 as. to 4 as.
Burma	"	Re. 1 to Rs. 1-8	—	—
Assam	Non-plucking	6 as. to 8 as.	4 as. to 5 as.	2 as. to 3 as.
In the district	Harvesting	8 as. to 10 as.	4 as. to 6 as.	3 as. to 5 as.
Burma	"	Re. 1 to Rs. 1-8	—	—
Assam	Plucking season	6 as. to 12 as.	8 as. to 12 as.	3 as. to 5 as.

The castes who normally emigrate to Burma are the Pali and other fisher castes (some fisher villages are nearly denuded of men) Kapus, Malas, Chegudi, Reddis, Kelinga and Madigas. Practically no women emigrate and in parts of the district almost every village has someone in Burma all the year round.

\* Printed in abridged form.

The three ports from which emigration to Burma takes place are :— Gopalpur, Baruva and Kalingapatam. Gopalpur is reputed to ship 1,800, Baruva 8,000 to 10,000 and Kalingapatam 8,000 every year, and receive as many returning. I am not in a position to vouch for these figures but one of the Canadian missionaries in the south of the district informed me that he would not be surprised to learn that at least 2 per cent. of the male adult population are in Burma.

The period of absence at Burma is usually one year. The nature of the work is agricultural, factory, shop, and warehouse—the fisher castes work on boats and the Malas become domestic servants.

The lowest wage is about Re. 1 per diem and fairly large sums of money are remitted home, per money orders—one post office in the south with its branch offices is reported to average payments of Rs. 40,000 per mensem—most of this money, I am given to understand, is received from Rangoon.

(ii) The general cause is economic. The contributing factors being drought, caste questions, *Khambari* and *Vetti* systems and such other factors as make the lot of the labourer a hard and needy one.

From a perusal of the castes mentioned in Subject 1 (i), it will be easily observed that the labour which emigrates is of the so called "lower" classes. The caste question and the status of the untouchable in the Madras Presidency has a particular bearing on migration. It is notorious that the lower classes are given no encouragement by the upper classes and no opportunity for economic or social advancement and for a very good reason—the Zamindars and other "higher" castes find it considerably to their interests to exploit the slave mentality of the lower and labouring classes. In this district both the *Khambari* system, as practised by landowners and the *Vetti* system, as practised by the Government exist.

The *Khambari* system is that which binds for generations to the same family of employers a labourer on a wage of bare subsistence, usually however, paid in kind. The cases of these unfortunate victims vary, but generally speaking are due to debts incurred during poor agricultural seasons or for marriage and other ceremonies. The labourer is bound down to serve his employer in whatever capacity the latter may require—the recognised rule is for the labourer to cultivate a portion of his employer's land, for which he is to receive payment in kind at the end of the harvesting season. This payment takes the shape of a cart or two of the harvested crop and is supposed to give the man an income of from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7 a month, but in practice this is far from the case. Since the labourer receives his payment annually at harvesting time and has to subsist in the meantime, he is obliged to keep on borrowing, in kind, from his employer with the result that at the end of a year, after interest on capital loaned is added and borrowings during the year have been deducted from the man's portion of his grain, the *Khambari* finds he has increased and not reduced his original debt to his employer.

Similarly in the *Vetti* system as practised by the Government exists in the agency tracts, the Sowras or Khonds (more especially the Sowras, owing to their seclusion in tracts ill-served by roads) are at the mercy of the Bissois (headmen of Muttahs—a Muttah consisting of a group of villages) and there are no taxes, and Sowras are permitted free holdings in unreserved forest areas all over their country, in return for which they have to render service to the Government whenever required. This service takes the form of road making, building, coolie labour for touring officers and, in short, meet all the demands for labour as required by the Government for various purposes. The Bissois are apt to exploit this free labour to their own ends, as it rests solely with these gentlemen to find the necessary labour whenever required by Government, and touring officers.

Migration to Assam therefore offers to the emigrant facilities which he finds next to impossible to obtain in his own home. Work is obtainable all the year round on gardens and every opportunity is given the labourer to better his economic and social status. Travel broadens outlook and this is as true with the lower classes as with his more fortunate brethren. The once timid and down-trodden Sowra or Madiga after a spell on a tea garden, returns, not only physically improved but also in his bearing and social status, and inclined even to be domineering and to demand a say in all matters governing his social welfare.

Away from the influences of his caste superiors, the untouchable reaches a higher standard both of living and personal freedom, so much so that the higher castes are for this reason very much against his migrating at all and particularly to Assam where these tendencies are more easily acquired.

(iii) The good results obtained with regard to the Sowra migration during the year 1926-27 were due almost entirely to the action of Government during that and the previous year, in enforcing their forest protection policy. Sowras are accustomed to cultivate patches for a year and then move on to new patches cleared by

"jhuming" or clearing by fire. The new policy was regarded as interference and roused considerable resentment, and the Sowra was forced to seek a means of subsistence and migrated to tea which presented itself as a solution of his difficulties.

No other changes within my knowledge are noticeable—I took over charge of this agency in April, 1927, having come up from the Ceded districts after working those areas for about three years.

Possibilities exist for an improved flow of labour from the southern portions of this district. Migration to Burma of late has not offered the same scope as heretofore, it being believed that the supply is far exceeding the demand, and it is therefore likely that this excess will divert its attention to tea estates. The popularity of Burma over Assam is not merely because of the higher wage earnable at Burma—Assam, with its free housing, firewood, bonuses and medical attention, etc., all combined, offers as good a wage—but, is because of the short period of migration (one year) as against tea employers requiring permanent settlers.

2. (i) As will be observed from the statistics attached in connection with Subject 1 (I), the number of sirdars received from gardens exceeds the migration figure. It is through means of labour returning as sirdars that contact with villages is maintained. A labourer may be anything from six months to three or four years on an estate before he is consigned as a sirdar. The average period is between one to two years. The selection and consigning of labourers as sirdars usually rests with the garden managers though, on occasions, local agents make certain recommendations in this connection.

A certain percentage of labour has not returned as sirdars since migrating, while on the other hand, a small percentage return annually as "on leave" or "name cut" coolies—these having more or less resolved to sever their connection with gardens.

Fully one third of the sirdars consigned in any one year fail to return again to their gardens, while so far as the Sowras are concerned at least 50 per cent. remain behind. Several of these however, return at later periods, after they have spent all their savings and are once again forced to do so for economic reasons.

This agency has not so far dealt in short term labour but it is quite probable that this system will eventually be introduced. Labour recruited under this system would be repatriated after the expiry of definite periods.

3. (i) Labour is recruited by means of the sirdari system, working under Act VI of 1901. The sirdar is a licensed employee of an estate and is consigned to the charge of a local agent in the recruiting district of which he is either a native or in which it is desired he should operate.

(1) The local agent is also a licensed individual whose duties are to receive, register, instruct, advance and generally supervise the operations of all sirdars consigned to his care. He has also to ensure their recruiting in accordance with the conditions of the Act and bring to the notice of the district magistrate and Assam Labour Board, any infringements or illegalities committed by them.

(2) To register all recruits as brought in by sirdars, explain terms and conditions of the estate to which the recruit is a potential emigrant, ensure that the recruit understands these and that he has not been induced to emigrate by coercion or fraud.

To illustrate: A sirdar on arrival from his garden comes up for registration before a local agent who then runs over conditions, wages earnable, etc., on his estates, with the sirdar and satisfies himself that the man has a true conception of his duties as a recruiter, pays him his first advance and sends him out into the district to recruit.

The system of advances varies even in a single district and is dependent on the distance the sirdar has to travel to his village and his means of getting there. In this district two systems are adopted: (a) The payment of a small first advance sufficient to enable the sirdar to subsist for, say, a fortnight, and at the same time have a little ready money to move about and arrange for coolies. This advance is usually Rs. 15. On the sirdar subsequently reporting and making a definite promise of coolies arranged and his ability to bring them in, a second advance is paid. This amount is usually Rs. 10. (b) The payment of a consolidated first and second advance for sirdars whose homes are at a considerable distance from the local agency. This advance is usually Rs. 20 for the agency tracts sirdars and Rs. 25 for those sirdars who are residents of one or other of the native states of Baud, Daspalla or Nayargarh, from which states recruiting is also done from this district, but from where we have of recent years had very poor results.

On sirdars bringing in recruits these are registered by the local agent, conditions, etc., explained as already stated and the emigrant forwarded to his garden through the agency of Challan peons—these are association peons who take charge of sirdars



and coolies and safely conduct them from one forwarding agency to another till they eventually reach their destination. The association maintains forwarding agencies at convenient and important junctions en route and where, as a rule, hot meals are provided.

As the sirdar is himself a labourer on his estate and when down in the recruiting district naturally recruits in the vicinity of his own village, taking up relations, friends and caste people, the system so far as the potential recruit is concerned is an ideal one and hard to improve upon. It stands to reason that a man who is himself a labourer on an estate and has personally experienced all the existing advantages and disadvantages is by far and away the best person to acquaint friends and relations of these facts, with this additional advantage to the recruit, that, should he at a later date discover that the sirdar has misled him in any respect, he will have unlimited opportunities of extracting retribution, since the sirdar will himself be working along with his recruit on the same garden and at the same work. This latter factor in itself acts as a great retarding influence on sirdars who might otherwise be led to paint too rosy a picture of a garden's advantages.

(ii) I can suggest no possible improvements to the present sirdari system which I consider, in the interests of the emigrants, the best system in force.

The sirdari system however is undoubtedly a very costly business. A great proportion of sirdars prove unsuccessful in recruiting labour. During the season 1926-27 the average coolie recruited per sirdar was 1.14, in 1927-28 .62, and in 1928-29 .60, and I believe I am correct in stating that at no time has the average exceeded 1.3 adults.

The only suggestion I would thus urge would be to increase the efficiency of the sirdar while still maintaining his unique characteristics and this can only be done by removing existing restrictions and permitting the sirdar more license and freedom to utilise and turn to good account the assistance of his relations or friends in his activities in search of labour.

I see no reason to suspect or apprehend the springing up of the professional assistant to the sirdar. Local agents can be trusted to do their duty in ensuring that no recruit is permitted to emigrate by fraud, misrepresentation or coercion, and the fact that advances are limited and that local agents are, as a whole, against the introduction of professional recruiters, would, in my opinion, successfully keep out this undesirable type.

While on this subject I would like to say that I consider that more license should be given to local agents who should be permitted not only to carry on propaganda work in the district, but also to have the power to deal with coolies who come in voluntarily and to be able to send them up to the gardens they might select or to an estate where labour is required.

(iii) As can already be derived from my report I am against the formation of any such agencies. These professional bodies would merely have a financial interest in the recruits and the result would be detrimental both to the recruits and to the gardens.

4. Recruitment to tea gardens differs from the seasonal migration to Burma in that family life is not disturbed, as gardens prefer the family group and facilities for all members to earn a wage are offered.

I give below statistics of family groups, single males and single females who have emigrated through this agency for the past three years.

Season.		Family groups.	Single males.	Single females.
1926-27	..	5,369	244	216
1927-28	..	1,783	148	117
1928-29	..	1,470	136	127

A fair proportion of single males later take up their families.

Single females are detained until enquiries are made and they are sent forward only if the consent of the husband or legal guardian is forthcoming and after the requisite detention as laid down by the rules has been carried out.

6. (i) I consider that the retention of some control is necessary, if restrictions are to be removed and sirdars and local agents allowed more freedom, but control by the district magistrate in the recruiting district is all that is necessary.

Local agents come under the continual supervision and eye of the district magistrate, working as they do in the same district and an additional supervisory body such as the Assam Labour Board is, in my opinion, superfluous.

Local agents would continue as at present is the case, to report illegalities, enter into correspondence with and give evidence at prosecutions as and when authorised

by the district magistrate and, provided some guarantee against an arbitrary cancelling of a local agent's licence by a district magistrate is possible, I can see no reason for the continuance of this additional control by the Board.

TABLE (Abridged).

Seasons.	Emigrants.		Sirdars.	
	Savaras.	Others.	Savaras.	Others.
1926-27 ..	4,428	1,191	4,013	1,286
1927-28 ..	1,302	507	2,405	797
1928-29 ..	1,156	408	1,603	836
Total ..	6,886	2,106	8,021	2,919

Mr. G. T. H. BRACKEN, I.C.S., District Magistrate and Agent to the Governor, Vizagapatam.

1. Evidence is offered only under the head I. Recruitment, (6) Recruitment for Assam.

2. The relevant Act is the Assam Labour and Emigration Act XI of 1908 as amended by subsequent Acts. Recruitment in this district is by the Tea Districts Labour Association. Most of the labour recruited is from the tract known as the "Agency." The Agency is inhabited mainly by backward hill-tribes, who require special protection. For this reason, the Agency is administered under special laws by the Collector of the district who, for this purpose, is styled "Agent to the Governor." The agent to the governor is assisted by special assistant agents. The agent to the governor has full civil and criminal powers and exercises the functions of Sessions Judge. Speaking generally, the administration is of a more paternal character than in the more advanced parts of India.

3. The following are the figures of recruitment in the last three years :—

Name of depot.	Number of labourers despatched.		Number of dependants despatched.	
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.
Waltair .. .. .	1926-27.			
	1,978	689	523*	
Waltair .. .. .	1927-28.			
	523	167	119	97
Koraput .. .. .	1,917	525	186	175
Total .. .. .	2,440	692	305	272
Waltair .. .. .	1928-29.			
	515	202	111	121
Koraput .. .. .	3,043	816	407	275
Total .. .. .	3,558	1,018	518	396

\* No distinction as to sex is made in the figures furnished.

The principal recruiting station in the Agency is Koraput where the Tea Districts Labour Association have a sub-agent. It will be observed that there has been a steady increase in recruitment.

4. The Act has worked satisfactorily and there have been very few complaints of illegalities. There were two cases of kidnapping by sirdars in 1926-27; in 1927-28 no offences were reported; and in 1928-29 one only.

It is the interest of the Tea Districts Labour Association to see that recruitment is done properly and that labourers are treated well for two reasons, (1) The Association are anxious to attract as much labour as possible and for this reason alone they

naturally treat the labourers well in order that they may give a good account of the conditions to their friends and relations on their return. The fact that recruitment is on the increase speaks for itself, and (2) The Association know that malpractices would lead to the immediate closing of the Agency to recruitment. Actually in practice the agents of the Association have shown themselves most anxious to comply with all the provisions of the Act and they co-operate readily with Government officials. In the matter of recruitment the only real danger is illegal recruitment by sardars whose interest it is to recruit as many persons as possible. Care is taken that, as far as possible, undesirable persons should not act as sardars. When any matter against a sardar comes to light steps are taken to have his licence cancelled; but as already stated, offences are the exception.

Objection is sometimes taken to recruitment for the tea gardens on the ground that it depletes the labour supply in the Agency which is not sufficient for the cultivation of all land available. On the other hand, it may be said that recruitment is a valuable outlet for labour when crops fail and work is not available. Wages in the tea gardens are far higher than those paid in the Agency and the general effect of migration to Assam is to improve the standard of living and raise the wages of agricultural labour. Recruitment for Assam is also tending to bring to an end the system known as the "Goti" system under which a man practically sells himself into bondage for life as an agricultural servant. As a rule, these "Goti" servants are fairly well treated by their masters but the practice is open to abuse and is in principle most undesirable. The following quotation from the District Gazetteer is of interest :—

"The rate of interest on loans extorted by these Sondis is 100 per cent., and if this is not cleared off in the first year, compound interest at 100 per cent. is charged on the balance. The result is that, in many instances, the cultivators are unable to pay in cash or kind and become the *gotis* or serfs of the sowcars, for whom they have to work in return for mere batta, whilst the latter take to manipulate their accounts in such a manner that the debt is never paid off. A remarkable instance of this tyranny was brought to my notice a few days since: a ryot some fifty years back borrowed Rs. 20; he paid back Rs. 50 at intervals and worked for the whole of his life and died in harness; for the same debt the sowcar claimed the services of his son, and he too died in bondage leaving two small sons, aged 13 and 9, whose services were also claimed for an alleged arrear of Rs. 30 on a debt of Rs. 20, borrowed 50 years back, for which Rs. 50 in cash had been paid in addition to the perpetual labour of a man for a similar period."

I have no suggestions to make for the improvement of the Act but it seems to me of the utmost importance that recruitment in the Agency should continue to be most strictly controlled. The Agency people are, as a rule, simple, truthful persons, easily imposed upon, and too readily tolerant of extortion and oppression. They need protection both against others and, it may be said, against themselves. It will be many years before they are in a position to stand up for their own interests.

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Mr. W. C. ASH, Engineer-in-Chief, VIZAGAPATAM HARBOUR CONSTRUCTION

## PART I.

### General.

Work was begun on the construction of the harbour in 1925. The main items comprised in the programme which is being carried out by the Government of India through the agency of the Railway Board are the dredging of the bar at the mouth of the present entrance channel, the deepening and widening of the channel for the entry of ships, the provision of water room for ships in the swamp lying to the west of the Vizagapatam town to which the entrance channel leads a graving dock and the construction of quays equipped with transit sheds and provided with road, railway and other facilities. The reclamation of considerable areas of swampy land is being effected as a result of the dredging operations. The lay-out of these features will be gathered from the attached key plan.\*

The most important section of the work is that included in the dredging and reclamation programme, and this is being carried out mainly by departmental agency. The greater part of the work on the remaining features is being executed on the petty contract system.

\* A statement of the departmental cadre is contained in Annexure I,\* and it will be seen that the number of workmen engaged is 1,043, whilst the outdoor supervising staff number 52.

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\* Not printed.

The number of men engaged by the various contractors fluctuates very considerably. The present total is about 1,500, but this is likely to be exceeded in the near future. The number of contractors at the present time is 20, and the total value of the contracts now under execution by those contractors is about 4 lakhs.

The expenditure sanctioned for the scheme is 250.31 lakhs and revised estimates amounting to Rs. 309 lakhs are being presented. Of this amount large sums are being expended on land and on interest charges, and the net sum to be spent on labour, plant, and materials for construction may be taken at Rs. 187.78 lakhs.

The time required for the execution of the dredging programme is longer than that which would normally be required for carrying out the remainder of the work; and the programme of the latter, being thus spread out, employs fewer people than would be expected on a work of this magnitude. It has, therefore, been unnecessary, so far, to recruit labour from far afield. A great number of the coolies employed on earthwork and building operations live in the villages surrounding the harbour property, whilst others reside in the town. In the dry season this force is supplemented by labour recruited by contractors over a radius of 20 miles or so. These people only take up work on the harbour when it suits them and they work intermittently, returning to their fields when these demand their attention.

The dredging and reclamation work being done mainly by mechanical effort, the muster roll here also is a short one in comparison with the expenditure incurred. The various craft have the normal crews required for the classes of work on which they are engaged, and the only materials moved by hand are the spoil dredged into certain barges not fitted with hopper doors and coal for the dredgers.

The numbers engaged on the project being limited by the circumstances referred to and outside accommodation being available in the vicinity, it has not so far been found necessary to provide dwellings for the labour. Medical attention and fresh water are furnished, but the need has not arisen for the construction and maintenance of coolie lines with corresponding conservancy lighting and other arrangements. Latrines have been provided at the workshop and at the quays.

The only employees who inhabit the working area are the crew of the dredger "Vizagapatam," who sleep on board the vessel.

Thirteen units of quarters have been erected for employees designated "upper," "senior," and "lower" subordinates at Dondaparti, near Waltair railway station. These are available to harbour employees of these respective grades for rents of 10 per cent. of their salaries, the "economic rents" being Rs. 50 2 annas, Rs. 20 4 annas, and Rs. 17 11 annas. The distance from the work is considerable, and the shopping centres, schools, etc., are also rather far away, whilst the site is no healthier than the town area. There is, therefore, no very keen demand for these quarters.

Five houses have been built for the senior officers in Waltair, and one is hired for the engineer-in-chief.

The main difficulty regarding the construction of further quarters is that whilst the harbour possesses ample land the sites, which will eventually be suitable, are now marshy and have to be reclaimed. The position of affairs and future possibilities can best be explained at site.

The scales of pay may be gathered from Annexure I.\* They are based on current rates, though in certain cases the harbour, as will be explained, pay to labour less than they receive elsewhere and in others more. Competition is experienced during the season for exporting ground-nuts, but there are no engineering works of any magnitude in the district to draw either skilled or unskilled labour away from the harbour. Reference to the bonus, depending on the volume of work done, for which certain staff are eligible, will be found below.

The leave rules applying to departmental staff are briefly stated in Annexure II in which reference is also made to certain amendments which have been recommended to meet cases in which hardships have been suffered.

The rules regulating the general provident fund, contributions to which are voluntary, are issued by the Secretary of State for India in Council. Temporary monthly-paid establishment of the superior service (i.e., above Rs. 20 per mensem) are eligible for subscribing to the fund. There are at present only 23 subscribers against a total of 150 eligible.

This fund does not carry any form of bonus and only allows for compound interest, on the employees' subscription at the rate as notified by Government from time to time.

\* Not printed.

Measures were taken early in the progress of the work to make the harbour area as free as possible of malaria. A cut-off drain 5,800 ft. long was constructed at a cost of Rs. 46,375 along the foot of the Yarada Hill, which forms the southern boundary of the property. It has succeeded in its object, and the surrounding area, which was formerly a bad breeding ground for mosquitoes, is now quite healthy. The inhabitants of certain villages in the southern area were strongly infected with malaria and, as an additional precaution, the villagers were moved to fresh sites over two miles further westward. All likely breeding places are oiled once or twice a week, and the harbour area is kept as free of mosquitoes as the lack of activity on the part of neighbouring authorities will permit. Copies of statistics and particulars furnished to the Malaria Committee of the League of Nations at the time of their recent visit are attached. There is a certain amount of loss of time each year owing to outbreaks of malaria, but until local bodies co-operate in anti-malaria measures this has to be faced.

With regard to other diseases an abstract will be found in Annexure IV of the statistics of the harbour dispensary. The staff there engaged consists of one medical officer, one assistant medical officer, one compounder, one ward boy, one peon, one chowkidar and waterman, and one sweeper. They are under the control of Major Anderson, I.M.S., in charge of the King George Hospital, Vizagapatam, who is the chief medical officer of the harbour.

Free medical attention and medicine is given to all harbour employees reporting sick.

A crèche, for small children of coolies coming from a distance, was erected at a cost of Rs. 1,000, and a contribution of Rs. 250 per annum paid to the local welfare committee towards the cost of running.

Very little use was made of this, particularly during the last year, and it has now been closed down.

Departmental employees are eligible as a privilege for certain railway passes. Passes are also given to all recruits from a distance, and they are also issued, subject to certain conditions, on completion of service.

Coolie labour, both departmental and contract, is recruited largely on the family system, and employment at suitable rates is given to the wives and children as well as the husbands.

There is in Vizagapatam a considerable colony of Anglo-Indians, but by no means all the posts for which they would generally be eligible have been filled from local sources. On the other hand a large percentage of posts of this nature, as well as those referred to below under "Control," are occupied by men from the locality.

There appears to be no widespread discontent with rates of pay. Wherever there are local sources to tap there is no difficulty in recruiting from these sources, though the conditions limit the supply for reasons to some of which reference has been made. When complaints are made they are at once investigated by the officer-in-charge of the division. The engineer-in-chief is invariably informed and investigates personally if necessary. In most cases the grievances have been found to relate to minor matters. No trade unions are known to exist among the labour.

## II.—Dredging Division—(a) *Workmen.*

*Seafaring Hands.*—The deck and fire crew of the suction dredge "Vizagapatam" are recruited from Calcutta, being mostly drawn from the Chittagong district. Their rates of pay (Annexure I) are based on those obtaining for the same class of men in ocean-going ships. They are recruited through the Serangs and no difficulty has been experienced in getting all the labour required.

They live on board the dredger. They draw a ration allowance of Rs. 10 per month in addition to their pay, and are further included in the dredging bonus scheme, the amount to be distributed among them depending on the dredger's output. The average increment of pay on account of bonus works out at 10 per cent.

When not laid up for overhaul, the dredger works 18 hours a day in two equal watches. The lascars, greasers, firemen and trimmers, however, work for four hours at a stretch, with eight hours' intervals. There is also a shift from 12 midnight to 6 a.m. When the dredger is not working, running repairs and maintenance are carried out.

The shifts on the dredger are so arranged that each man in turn changes from first to second shift and then on to the maintenance shift.

The minimum number possible are employed on Sundays. Boiler cleaning has to be done each Sunday, and when this is completed and no other urgent repairs are required the men go off duty except for the small standby section which must be kept on the dredger. The amenities available to the crew on the dredger are free sleeping accommodation, cooking utensils, coal, and unlimited water supply. The men apparently prefer sleeping on board, as the conditions are better than they are used to ashore.

The pipe line Khalasies during dredging periods, from the nature of the work, have to put in on the average 12 hours per day. Consequently they receive during these dredging periods an extra allowance of approximately 50 per cent. of their pay, in addition to participation in the bonus scheme.

*Other Floating Staff.*—Certain of these have been recruited locally among the boatmen and fishermen. They include the crews of tug, launch, barge, dipper dredger, boatmen and hands engaged on the floating pipes of the suction dredger. Such of them as are employed on jobs in connection with the work of the dredger "Vizagapatam" are eligible for bonus.

*Workshops.*—The skilled staff employed on the maintenance and repair of dredging and other machinery are generally recruited locally, but occasionally men from other places have been brought in. They work normally from 7.0 a.m. to 5.0 p.m., but a skeleton shift also works from 5 p.m. to 2.30 a.m. Overtime is worked on Sundays and weekdays, when occasion demands, in accordance with the Indian Factory Act; 1½ hours are allowed on each shift for meals.

*Miscellaneous.*—There are also employed about 700 tradesmen, khalasies and coolie labour on shore, mostly in connection with reclamation work. Their rates of pay are shown in Annexure I. Their hours of work are from 7.30 a.m. to 5.0 p.m., with 1½ hours off for meal hours. They also work from 7.30 a.m. to noon on Sundays.

#### (b) *Outside Supervision.*

The mechanical and dredging staffs are respectively responsible to the mechanical and dredging superintendents.

The engineer-officers on the dredger "Vizagapatam" comprise a chief engineer, two 2nd engineers and three 3rd engineers. The dredging masters are two in number. These grades are filled by Europeans and Anglo-Indians, suitable Indians with the necessary qualifications not having so far been forthcoming. First or second class Board of Trade certificates are held by all except one officer. They work the two normal 9-hour watches, taking first and second watch on alternate weeks. They draw on the average 10 per cent. by way of bonus in addition to the rates of pay shown in Annexure I.

The living accommodation on the "Vizagapatam" being limited and the officers being for the most part married men living with their families, house allowances are given in lieu of quarters, the scales being Rs. 50 for married and Rs. 25 for single men. They appear to find quarters without difficulty in Vizagapatam.

*Dredging Operators.*—These posts are filled by Europeans and Anglo-Indians. The operation of the dragline excavator and the dipper-dredger "Waltair" requires considerable experience, good physique, mechanical knowledge and nerve. The duties comprise the supervision of the staff engaged on the machines as well as the operations of the controls.

No member of this staff occupies quarters referred to in Part I.

### III.—Works Division—(a) *Workmen.*

The works division employ about 450 coolies, khalasies and tradesmen. The rates of pay are given in Annexure I. Their hours of work are from 7.30 a.m. to 5.0 p.m., with a 1½-hour break at noon. They also work from 7.30 a.m. to noon on Sundays. They are recruited locally either in the town or neighbouring villages.

A large amount of work is done on the petty contract system, and at present about 1,500 workmen are employed under contractors in this manner. Most of this is coolie labour from the surrounding villages.

#### (b) *Outside Supervision.*

The outside supervision is carried on by three inspectors of works, overseers and sub-overseers on monthly pay. They are for the most part Indians of the upper subordinate type with a few Anglo-Indians. Their rates of pay are shown in

Annexure I. A number of them belong to Vizagapatam, but others have been recruited from a distance. They are classed as temporary subordinates and are entitled to leave shown for this class in Annexure II. Of this staff, four occupy quarters referred to in Part I.

#### • IV.—Control.

The engineer-in-chief is assisted by a deputy engineer-in-chief, two executive engineers, and three assistant engineers. Of the last, two are Indian officers and one European, and the remaining posts are held by Europeans. The post of chief draughtsman and office superintendent are held by Europeans.

The design and clerical staffs in the engineer-in-chief's office comprise 39 members, of whom 6 are Anglo-Indians and 33 Indians. The audit officer and his staff do not come under the engineer-in-chief.

The numbers of the staff, not comprised in the dredging and works divisions, occupying the quarters and houses referred to in Part I are:—European officers, 2; Indian officers, 2; Indian subordinates, 8.

(Annexure I. containing scales of incremental pay of a large number of grades employed on harbour works is not printed).

#### *Annexure II.—Leave Rules in Force.*

1. *Leave admissible to Temporary Subordinates.*—Navigation Officers, Dredging Masters, Operators, Engineers of dredgers "Vizagapatam," "Waltair" and "Mudlark."

Foreman, Sub-Assistant Surgeons, Accountant and Office Clerks, Storekeepers and Sub-Storekeepers, Store Clerks, Surveyors, Draftsmen, Tracers, Overseers and Sub-Overseers, Time Keepers, Inspector, Watch and Ward, Compounder, Crane Drivers, Store Sircars, Chargemen.

Leave is granted to the above noted subordinate employees, holding a purely temporary post, provided that the grant of the leave involves no expense to the Government. On this condition, such employees are granted:—(a) leave on leave-salary equivalent to full pay up to one-eleventh of the period spent on duty, subject to a maximum of 4 months at a time, or (b) on medical certificate, leave on leave-salary equivalent to half pay for three months at any one time, or (c) extraordinary leave without pay for 3 months at any one time. (S.R.285.)

2. *Workmen and Labourers.*—A labourer or workman when temporarily absent from work owing to injuries received while on duty is granted leave on full wages to such extent as may be considered necessary. Compensation, as provided for in the Workmen's Compensation Act is also paid to such workmen as are entitled to the same. For the purpose of this rule the following are classed as workmen, on this construction:—firemen, khallasis, tide readers, boatmen, maistries, carpenters, blacksmiths, labourers.

3. *Menials.*—The following are classed as menial employees of this construction:—duftries, jamadar—watch and ward, peons, chowkidars, hospital attendants.

The above on completion of 2 years, approved service, under special circumstances are granted certain of the privileges given to the temporary subordinates as detailed above, at the discretion of the Engineer-in-Chief.

4. *Casual Leave.*—(i) Casual leave is granted to the following subordinate employees up to a limit of 15 days in a calendar year:—(a) All subordinates—permanent lent to the construction. (b) All subordinates—temporary (other than workmen). (c) Serangs and Tindals only.

(ii) Casual leave not exceeding 10 days in a calendar year is granted to the following:—(a) Peons; (b) Duftry; (c) Record Searcher; (d) Jamadar, watch and ward; (e) Hospital attendants; and (f) Chowkidars.

*Leave Rules proposed.*—(i) As the proviso under S.R.285 quoted above puts the Superior Dredging Staff to a considerable loss, it has been proposed to the Railway Board to waive the same in their case only. Sanction is awaited.

(ii) The marine ratings who are not at present eligible for any leave have been recommended to the same privileges as other works subordinates.

(iii) The Junior Marine Ratings have been recommended to be granted leave as follows:—(a) leave on leave-salary equivalent to full pay up to 1/22nd of the period spent on duty subject to a maximum of 42 days at any one time, or (b) on medical certificate on half pay for one month at a time.

## VIZAGAPATAM HARBOUR CONSTRUCTION.

Average monthly cost of temporary anti-malarial measures in the Harbour Area.

These figures do not include the cost of any prophylactic measures but only anti-mosquito control.

Particulars.	Plots 1 to 5 under reclamation. Eastern Reclamation.	Manganese Depot Site Areas.	South side areas up to Old Malakapuram.	Kanchari-palem and Karasa Areas.	Lova Gardens.	Waltair, East Point, Vutagedda and Harbour Park.	Anti-malaria drainage pipeline works.	Total.
	R. a p.	R. a p.	R. a p.	R. a p.	R. a p.	R. a p.	R. a p.	R. a p.
Supervising .. .. .	33 5 9	33 5 9	26 11 0	17 12 8	8 14 3	8 14 3	4 7 5	133 7 1
Labour—Oiling .. .. .	28 11 9	28 11 9	23 10 6	13 8 3	6 12 3	6 12 3	3 4 9	111 7 6
Labour—General .. .. .	29 14 3	29 14 3	26 5 0	17 8 8	8 12 4	8 12 4	10 4 10	131 7 8
Oils—Crude, Kerosine, Castor .. .. .	6 4 3	6 4 3	10 0 7	5 0 3	3 12 2	4 0 2	1 8 8	36 14 4
Other Consumables.. .. .	2 0 9	2 0 9	2 7 0	2 9 0	1 14 0	1 10 6	0 4 6	12 14 6
Tools and Plant .. .. .	2 4 0	2 4 0	2 4 0	2 2 1	2 4 0	2 4 0	1 10 6	15 0 7
Miscellaneous .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	0 7 6	0 7 6
	102 8 9	102 8 9	91 6 1	58 8 11	32 5 0	32 5 6	22 0 2	441 11 2 or ₹33 per month.

Part I(b)—Total cost to date from January, 1927, of Temporary Measures—Rs. 9,942, or £746.

Part II—Total cost of permanent works carried out to date :—Cut-off drain on south side (completed)—Rs. 45,879, or £3,440.



## Annexure IV.

	1926. (Aug.- Dec.)	1927.	1928.	1929.
I. Endemic Diseases (Malaria, Beri-beri, Dysentery). <i>Malaria</i> —1926-214 1927-769 1928-559 1929-347	293	921	750	512
II. Epidemic and Infectious Diseases:— (Cholera, Small-pox, Influenza, Dengue, Measles, Mumps, Typhoid).	13	52	69	167
III. Accidents:—				
A.—Major .. .. .	10	71	78	64
B.—Minor .. .. .	380	1,463	1,707	2,055
IV. Acute Surgical conditions:—Acute Abdomen and acute inflammations and abscesses, etc.	38	182	196	185
V. Diseases of Women and Labour and Puerperium. . . . .	14	15	24	24
VI. Other Diseases including respiratory system, nervous system, skin, eye, ear, etc., not included in the above.	944	4,100	4,926	5,597
VII. Total number of new admissions ..	1,692	6,804	7,748	8,604
VIII. Average daily attendance .. .. .	36	56	60	65
IX. Average daily labour .. .. .	1,720	2,078	2,038	1,902
X. Number of treatments administered—				
Males .. .. .	1,544	6,152	7,024	7,973
Females .. .. .	148	752	724	631
<i>Preventive inoculations, etc.:—</i>				
Cholera .. .. .	—	—	488	—
Small-pox .. .. .	—	—	—	354

✓ THE TUTICORIN LABOUR UNION.

The Madura Mills Co., Ltd., Tuticorin, under the management of Messrs. A. and F. Harvey, is the only leading concern in Tuticorin, where a large number of workers are employed, and as such the conditions of those labourers are very highly unsatisfactory and disappointing.

*Wages.*—Wages prevalent in the mill at Tuticorin are extremely low. These wages are hardly sufficient for the workers for bare living on chiefly rice without nourishing food. Although almost all of the workers are meat eaters, meat is occasionally taken by them, say about once in a fortnight, and that in a small quantity as a great luxury, and fish. It is, therefore, very essential that the wages should be generally increased by at least 75 per cent.

The following are the rates of wages now paid to male and female workers, so far as we know in the labour union:—

	Males.		Females.	
	Rs.	a. p.	Rs.	a. p.
Mixing .. .. .	15	12 0	8	0 0
Blow room .. .. .	15	12 0	8	0 0
Card room .. .. .	18	0 0	12	0 0
	and			
	15	12 0		
Drawing .. .. .	15	12 0	12	8 0
Slubbing .. .. .	13	12 0	12	8 0
Inter .. .. .	13	12 0	12	8 0
Inter back .. .. .	13	12 0	—	—
Rowing .. .. .	15	12 0	—	—
Doffers .. .. .	10	12 0	8	12 0
Spinning .. .. .	10	12 0	8	12 0
" (half-timers) .. .. .	4	6 0	4	6 0 (Doffers)
Reeling .. .. .	1½ pies and 2 pies per chittam.			
Bobbin .. .. .	11	4 0	—	—

*Supervision of Workers by Maistries.*—The relations between the workers and the maistries who control them are never cordial, but there is always keen tension between them. The chief reason for this is that the maistries are given absolute and unfettered power and control over the workers, both male and female, and these maistries exercise and utilize these control and powers even outside the mill compound to their own advantage. Further, it is a very regrettable fact that these maistries are set as spies to closely watch the movements of the workers outside the mills. The chief object of such spying is to prevent the workers from forming a labour union or even attending any labour meeting. It is on account of such scandalous spying that no small difficulty was found in forming the present labour union. Even now most of the members of the union wish that their membership should remain confidential and not known to the maistries or employers, and are afraid to attend open public labour meetings. It is, therefore, required that the maistries should not be given unfettered control over workers; their powers must be restricted, and they should not be set as spies to watch the workers' movements outside the mills.

*Women Workers.*—More than half the numbers of the workers are women. It should be noted that, even for work in the rowing card-room, slubbing, inter, spinning, reeling departments, work in carding and rowing is very hard, but wages are lower for them than for the men. This system of employing women workers in the card-room is nowhere else in existence, and should be strongly condemned and put an end to. Further, the scandalous system of men and women working jointly on the same machine especially in the card-room, should also be strictly prohibited. There is no reason why the women workers should not be employed solely for the spinning and reeling processes. Whatever may be the function of the women workers, it is essential that the system of control of women workers by male jobbers or maistries is to be condemned, and those jobbers or maistries should be substituted by females.

The manager of the Tuticorin Mills has strictly prohibited the bringing in of a single baby within the mill compound or even outside the gate to be fed by the mother. The women who are mothers are, therefore, obliged to leave their babies in their huts in the company of an old woman after making the baby take a good draught of solution of palmyra sugar in water. It is on account of these babies not being cared for by their mothers during the whole day from 5 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. that child mortality is very high in the workers' circles. It is, therefore, indispensable that a creche is erected near the mill for the benefit of women workers with babies.

*Housing.*—About half the workers are dwelling in the town of Tuticorin and the rest live in the neighbouring villages two or three miles away, and in a few cases even more; work begins in the mills at 6.30 a.m., and hence all the workers, especially those from the villages, should never fail to wake up not later than 5 a.m., when the long whistle of the mills is sounded. A deplorable sight it is to see these folk actually running in the streets so early as 6 a.m. All these discomforts are on account of lack of housing for the workers near the mill. The low wages prevailing have been already alluded to, and out of such wages the workers have also to pay rents, ranging from Rs. 2½ to Rs. 5 per mensem, and even paying these rents disproportionate to their income, they are obliged to live only in highly insanitary houses. Several families are found in a small dwelling, each dwelling consisting of only a single room used both as kitchen, bedroom, etc., with or without a small verandah. Considering the low wages paid in the mill at Tuticorin, the high house rents prevailing and the want of houses in proximity to the mill and sanitary arrangements, it is required that good sanitary houses with at least two sufficient rooms and a verandah are constructed near the mill for the use of the workers at a low rent.

*Leave.*—Whatever long service any worker might have put in no leave either for sickness or as privilege leave is granted with full pay or even on half pay. Leave to workers is always granted without pay, and that, too, when absolutely necessary say on account of sickness which prevents enabling a worker from attending to his usual work. We know recently of a case when a workman was granted leave without pay on account of his sickness, the expenses of the medical treatment were met by the manager and are now being recovered from that workman's wages in instalments. Under these circumstances it is required that sick leave to the extent of 20 days per annum is granted to the workers on full pay and also with an allowance for treatment of sickness. The said allowance will not be pressed for, if free medical aid is provided for the sick workers. Apart from sick leave, the privilege leave of 15 days per annum with full wages should be granted to all workers with two years' service and over. Women workers while not only being granted the above leave, should also be granted three months' leave on full wages when in conditions of maternity. The grant of the above maternity leave is particularly needed for the mills at Tuticorin, as unlike in other places more than half the workers here are women.

*Working Hours.*—Now the mill is worked for 10 hours a day, from 6.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., with an interval of only one hour in the noon, from 11.30 to 12.30. This greatly affects the health of the workers. The reduction of the working time to eight hours a day is necessary for the workers.

*Lack of Tiffin Room.*—It has been pointed out before that about half of the workers proceed to the mills from the neighbouring villages and the others live in the metropolis. Even for the latter, one hour's interval in the noon is hardly sufficient to go to their houses to take the noon meals and return to their work in the mill in time. Hence all the workers, male, female and children, are obliged to take their noon meals anywhere outside the mills, and it is a pitiable sight to see these unfortunate folk sitting at noon on the open bench and the adjoining streets amidst dust and in the intense heat of the sun. Only recently, when strong public feeling was roused on account of this, the managers have now prohibited the workers from taking tiffin in the streets outside the mill, and they (the workers) are being compelled to take tiffin anywhere within the mill compound itself. There being no fit place within the compound, the workers are now taking food in groups near the coal heaps and even near the latrine. To put an end to all the above difficulties it is absolutely necessary that the erection of a fit tiffin hall is undertaken by the mill-owners for the use of their workpeople.

*Educational Facilities for Half-timers.*—Most of the workers are illiterate. Night and day schools may, therefore, be opened and educational facilities for half-time workers are imperatively necessary.

*Bonus and Provident Fund.*—There is no system of bonus or provident fund for the workers. It is, therefore, necessary that a scheme of provident fund is adopted for the benefit of the workers.

*Conclusion.*—It is to redress such grievances as are mentioned in this memorandum that the present labour union, Tuticorin is struggling. The manager of the mill tried his best to prevent the formation of this union by prohibiting the workers from attending any meeting held for the purpose, by setting spies to watch and report if any of the mill workers attended that meeting. As such it cannot be expected that the millowner will recognize the present union in any way of their own accord. It is, therefore, requested that they should be made by legislation to recognize such a union as ours.

While the wages of the workers are required to be increased by 75 per cent., it is also necessary that a co-operative credit system is organized among the workers themselves, as at present they are usually borrowing money at 25 per cent. per month, and occasionally some are borrowing for their urgent needs at 3 annas per rupee per mensem.

In conclusion, for the betterment of the state of affairs of the workers, we recommend the grant of adult franchise and the right to trade unions to elect their own representatives to the various legislatures in adequate numbers. There should also be reservation of seats for labour in all the legislatures and local bodies.

✓ Mr. S. R. VARADARAJULU NAIDU.

*The conditions of Labourers in the Textile Mills in Madras.*

*Recruitment.*—The labour is mainly from villages, and the majority of them have settled in towns, near the mills, taking houses. The recruitment is done through the maistries and jobbers who have to be paid bribes from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30. Even for promotions, they have to pay some such amounts. It can be safely said that none can get employment in the mills unless he pays some bribe. The establishment of a public employment agency is very essential.

*Wages:*—The wages are lower than what is paid in Madras mills. They are as follows:—

Mixing	Rs. 15-7-0	
Blow room	16-5-0	
Card room	17-5-0	
Roving	16-0-0	with commission from 2as. to 2½ as per day.
Intermediate	17-0-0	
Slubbing	17-0-0	
Spinning	11-2-0	with commission Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 a month.
„ doffers	6-0-0	for morning workers and Rs. 5-8-0 for evening workers.

Roving doffers were getting only Rs. 10-5-0 for full time work, but from December last, it has been raised to Rs. 12. Some workers in bundling and carding departments were getting Rs. 10-7-0, are now paid Rs. 12.

Paste picking and reeling workers, who are all women, work on piece work. The former earn per month Rs. 7 to Rs. 9, and the latter earn Rs. 11 to Rs. 13, which is considerably less than the earnings of Madras workers, where the rates per unit of work is higher.

*Sick leave and privilege leave.*—There is no arrangement made for sick leave or for privilege leave. Not even a full time doctor is employed in any of the mills, but in Madura mill, there is a compounder. The D.M.O., I am told is the consulting doctor, but he only attends to the European assistants when they are ill.

*Tiffin sheds.*—There is no place for the workers to take their midday meal. They take it sitting on the road in the hot sun. Every gust of wind deposits the street dust in their food.

*Maternity benefit.*—No maternity benefit is given. Women are sent away on the 7th month of pregnancy, and are reinstated after confinement by the maistry's discretion, mostly after the usual payment of bribe.

*Creche.*—It is a pitiable sight to see hundreds of women sitting on the high road in very insanitary condition feeding their babies between 9 and 9.30 a.m. for want of a creche. I may add there are nearly 2,000 women including girls employed in the Madura Mills Company alone.

*Education.*—These being spinning mills, employ a considerable of half timers, both boys and girls, but no attempt has been made to open schools, suited to them, either by the employer or by the municipality. The majority of labourers know either to read or write. The percentage of illiteracy is greater than among the labourers in the Madras city.

*Hours of work.*—There has been universal complaint against 10 hours of work, as that is felt as a heavy strain on workers. They suggest 8 hours a day.

*Housing.*—Only the Madura Mills Company have built about 176 houses for its workers, over 7000, and charge them a rent of Re. 1. Other labourers live in private houses paying a rent of Rs. 2-8 annas to Rs. 4-8 annas, for a room 8 ft. by 10 ft., with a verandah, in front. Some live in huts built at their cost, paying a ground rent of 12 annas to Re. 1 a month.

*Indebtedness.*—The indebtedness of the work people in these parts is appalling. It is mainly due to the low wages they are paid. They even pay 150 per cent. interest on short loans, and 20 to 30 per cent. on long term loans. It is very essential that something should be done in this direction, to assist them to borrow money at low interest. The ruin of many a family of labourers can be traced to the exorbitant interest they have to pay. I have come across cases when even  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their earnings is being paid as interest, and the principal remaining the same even after years.

*Compensation.*—Even after exhaustive enquiries, I have not come across so far, any case where compensation has been paid. But I have come across many cases where no compensation has been paid after the Act came into force, who are still working inside the mills. They have been paid for the period they were in hospital half wages, and some even full wages, and were reinstated and given some light work. The labourers were not even aware of the Act till November last.

*General.*—There is a practice of working beyond 5-30 p.m. whenever there is stoppage of work during working hours to make up for the cessation of work. This imposes a hardship on workers. All festival holidays have to be compensated by working on the following Sunday. I am further informed that the engine is not stopped immediately the whistle is blown. In Meenakshi mill, the engine is never stopped and people are let off for food by batches. In practice, they were not having one full hour for midday meal. After my representation, it is regulated after December last. The system of women working under the supervision and control of maistries has been productive of all the evils that can be expected. It is the same in even a typical village mill as in Ambasamudrum. It is absolutely essential that women alone should be employed as maistries in departments where women work.

*Labour union.*—The Union was formed in November last and we have applied for registration. We have been asked to remit Rs. 5 as fee. The attitude of the employers of the Madura Mills Company has unfortunately been hostile. One important officer of the mill has been carrying on an intense propaganda against the Union. He has been summoning a couple of workers from each department to his office and persuading them from joining any union or attending its meetings. Some have even been threatened that if the Union is firmly established they would be dismissed. A regular number of spies mostly maistries and clerks are set to watch and find out the prominent members of the Union. These regularly come to our meetings to note and report against those who attend the meetings and answer any questions

put to them. I may add that the maistries are all well paid. The head maistries are paid from Rs. 35 to Rs. 60 a month, with Rs. 2 to Rs. 5 as commission, per day. As a result of the system of the daily commission, the maistries take very good care to extract work from labourers, and especially from the spinning boys. Occasional beatings have been reported to me. The wages for these maistries are even higher than what is paid in Madras in those departments. I strongly urge incorporation of a statute in the Trade Unions Act, making it obligatory on all employers to recognize registered unions. Otherwise the difficulties of organizing labour unions is indeed inseparable, as the workers are victimised.

*Factory Act.*—Instances have been brought to my notice where there has been a breach of the Act. It is rather hard to prove, as the employees would not come forward to give evidence, specially in out of the way places. I was told they even work before the time and close after the prescribed hour. Reports as to overtime work not being properly remunerated reach now and then. It would have a salutary and deterrent effect on the employer if the Act is so amended as to include imprisonment as one of the punishments.

*Thanks.*—Our thanks are due to the employer of the Meenakshi mill who readily expressed his willingness to recognise our Union.

*Provision for Old Age.*—The system of Provident Fund is being suggested by workers to enable them to be provided for in old age. It is not an uncommon sight to see labourers in destitute condition some even begging after years of service in a mill or a factory. The State should also aid in this direction for establishment of such a fund.

#### *Papanasam Mill.*

This is a typical village mill. There are about 2,500 people in the mill. The wages here are lower than what are even paid in the Madura mills. They are as follows :—

	Rs.	a.	p.
Mixing .. .. .	15	0	0
Blow room .. .. .	15	0	0
Card room .. .. .	15	0	0
Roving .. .. .	15	12	0
„ doffer .. .. .	9	8	0 (full time.)
Intermediate .. .. .	15	12	0
Slubbing .. .. .	15	12	0
Drawing .. .. .	15	0	0
Spinning .. .. .	8	6	0
„ half timers .. .. .	4	6	0

Reeling and waste picking departments are on piece work. The former earn Rs. 6 to Rs. 7-8, and the latter Rs. 8 to Rs. 11. The conditions of work and treatment here are deplorable. It is an unwritten law, to call the manager as big master by one and all, including clerks and maistries. It is a common thing for the labourers to remove their upper cloth and put a full namascaram by raising their hands above their head with an adequate bending of the body. I am told this came into vogue when the manager saw a Zemindar being given such a salutation, and satisfied himself that his claim for similar respect was not unworthy of him. It is a rare thing for workers to approach anywhere near the manager to make representation of their grievances. The clerks and maistries never allow anyone to approach him by discouraging and even threatening them. Applications have to pass only through the time-keepers and they seldom reach the manager. They are the judges of what to pass. It is a common thing for labourers to work in the houses of these maistries and time-keepers after the mill hours, and do all kinds of domestic work, including massaging and giving them oil baths. In harvest season they have to work in the fields of these maistries during the nights. Even women have to do domestic work such as pounding rice and assisting in cooking in the houses of these people. It is only by this kind of work and pleasing the maistries that they can hope to remain in their jobs. Even leave can be obtained only after the maistry signs the slip. Appointments, promotions, and dismissals are all done on the representation of the maistries and clerks only. It was complained to me by quite a large number of workers that the production of their outturn was not being accurately recorded by the clerks. If leave is asked for a day, I am told they are given three to four days leave, and hence the labourers seldom ask for leave. The fines are all made by the maistries and clerks which at times even amounts to Rs. 2. Some of the clerks told me in confidence that some of them have even been fined Rs. 5 for very slight mistakes. I have said these openly in the meetings, and thousands cried out their approval. The plight of women workers is more pitiable. They are fined in an indirect way. For any fault their hanked yarn might be taken away and thus they

may lose their day's earning. This is a very reprehensible way of punishment by the maistries. They have to leave their children in the department itself, between the reels which is full with cotton dust. It is a common thing for maistries to beat the spinners, and even a month ago, the spinners struck work for alleged beating by maistries, and with much persuasion they were made to resume work after a day. It is a surprise that the employer should pay so low a wage having many material advantages over other employers in Madras and elsewhere. The engine here is propelled by the water of Thambarabarani which is stored in a tank for this purpose. He has the cotton market at his door. The ground charges and running expenses are insignificant. He saves coal and other incidental expenses which form a considerable part of working expenses in a textile mill. His yarn is mostly consumed by the local weavers and merchants. His market in China and in the East is in no way a negligible factor. It can be truly said of his yarn that it is of Indian cotton, Indian labour, and Indian weavers and merchants. But from the point of wages, it is miserable and even men with long periods of service extending over 30 years get surprisingly low wages. There is neither any system of provident fund, sick leave, privilege leave, maternity benefit, not even a doctor. There is neither any tiffin shed, nor a stall where workers can buy some eatables in the morning. No welfare work of any kind is done. The nearest hospital is six miles away. The workers live near about in villages in huts of their own, paying a ground rent of eight to twelve annas. I may add that the rent here is 20 per cent. less than in Madura. The same amount of indebtedness prevails among the workers. The food taken by the workers here as well as in Madura is hardly enough to nourish their bodies. It consists of cold rice twice a day and hot rice and a kolambu with or without vegetable in the nights. Once in a week, they buy a little meat or fish to give them the advantage of its smell rather than its quantity. Very serious allegations were made that the engine is started 10 to 20 minutes earlier than the prescribed time. The cleaning and oiling take place only after the whistle is given, and thus it is over ten hours work. The spinners are made to clean during midday interval, and as such, do not have full one hour midday interval.

One peculiar feature of this mill is it has a clerk posted at the lavatory, whose duty is to hurry away people coming there. I was told that lavatory is very bad. It is properly cleaned and disinfected only during the time of the factory inspector's visit. There is no provision made for the education of half timers. It is surprising very much to be told that the work people are discouraged and even threatened with dismissal if they read newspapers. I was told how a reading room started by private individual had to be closed down owing to the pressure of the manager, as many clerks and a few labourers were frequenting it.

The other conditions are the same that I have stated with regard to Madura. This being a village, they are enforced with more rigour. The labourers being village folk submit to them meekly in their ignorance.

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Mr. P. J. THOMAS, M.A., B.Litt., Ph.D., PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS,  
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS.

I do not propose to present a detailed memorandum in reply to the published questionnaire; my object is to indicate briefly what in my view the pressing labour problem in Madras is, and how the University Department of Economics (of which I am the head) is endeavouring to broadcast sound ideas on the subject of labour. I am myself an employer of labour, being a rubber planter, but I shall not for the present dilate on it, as I learn that planting organizations here have already sent in elaborate memoranda.

I am here concerned, not so much with the well-known organized trades as with the little-known, small, unorganized trades, in which considerable sweating is going on in this city and in other towns of the Presidency. Such trades are, for example: beedi-making, embroidery, tailoring, building, tanning and furniture making. The workers are mostly boys and young men, generally immigrants from the mufussil; many are the riff-raff of the community. Often they work the whole day and part of the night, earn low wages, are ill-nourished and eke out a miserable living. Some of these trades are also practised by women who work in their own homes (e.g., embroidery, beedi-making). They get the raw material from the middleman employer, take advances of money from him, and hand over the finished products to him, making thereby small sums to supplement their husbands' wages. In some houses, children are made to work the whole day, and the boys who are employed in the beedi-making and other trades are said to continue their work till 10 o'clock at night.

There is no doubt that legislation is needed to regulate the conditions of these unorganized workers, and it may very well be on the lines of the sweating legislation existing elsewhere, with, of course, the necessary modifications to suit the peculiar conditions of South India.

I am at present engaged in carrying out a survey of the conditions of labour in these unorganized trades, and in this I am helped by the graduate students who receive instruction in the Department for the new University Diploma in Rural and Social Economics.

This diploma is intended for those who seek a post-graduate course of training to fit themselves for engaging in rural and social reconstruction; and the various subjects taught, e.g., Social Economics, Labour Problems, Rural Economics, and Co-operation, are such as to give the students a grounding in the theoretical principles behind social amelioration work of all kinds. Not only have they to take a written examination on the subjects prescribed, but are also expected to present a thesis embodying the results of original investigation in some subject of limited scope connected with the rural or urban problems of the Presidency. The central idea of the whole course is the study of poverty, in all its myriad forms and phases, and the means by which it could be relieved and cured.

Such a course would seem to be a suitable training for those looking forward to enter Government departments like Co-operation, Agriculture and Labour, or those entering the service of municipalities and local boards. It is therefore hoped that the men so trained will later become useful members of the community, whether as social workers on their own account or as salaried employees of provincial or local authorities or of voluntary bodies engaged in social service.

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Mr. ABDUL MAJEED, B.A., GENERAL SECRETARY, THE '29 MADRAS YOUTH LEAGUE, MADRAS.

#### BEDDY FACTORIES.

*Appointment of our Committee and Terms of Reference.*—We were appointed at a meeting of the general body of the League, held on the 15th August, 1929, our terms of reference being :—(1) To report upon the conditions prevailing in the numerous beedy factories in the city, with particular reference to the sanitary conditions prevailing in those factories, and its effect upon the general health of the workmen therein; and (2) to report upon the steps to be taken to prevent the employment in those factories of boys of tender age.

*Preliminary Arrangements.*—We assembled for the first time on the 1st September and drafted our plan of work. It was decided to make surprise visits of some of the big factories in the city on certain specific dates, and finally to draw up the report.

*Our Inspections.*—We visited as many as 93 factories in the different parts of the city, mostly in Washermanpet, Mannady (George Town) and Triplicane. At each of these factories we, in an informal way, discussed with the management of these factories and ascertained from them the number employed in their respective factories and the rate of wages paid. These have been in many cases verified by talks with the actual workmen.

*Difficulties surmounted.*—The facts stated in our report are what we observed in almost all the factories that we visited. However, we should like to make it plain at the very outset that it is possible that there may be some factories which we had not the opportunity or the requisite time to inspect (in fact, there are a good number) that may be free from the defects noted and, therefore, ideally managed and situated. It is also possible that the impressions we formed of the factories that we actually visited may not be entirely correct. For it must be admitted on all hands that, constituted as we were by an unofficial body, we had not the power or the means of making as exhaustive an inquiry as we ourselves would have desired, or a committee constituted by the Government can. We, however, wish to emphasize the fact that though there may be certain omissions and commissions, we have endeavoured our best to lay down facts as we observed them and understood them to the best of our knowledge without any taint or bias; for prejudices we had none.

### THE REPORT.

#### Section I.

Beedy is an indigenous smoke manufactured of powdered tobacco, rolled in a kind of leaf which is imported from parts of the Bombay Presidency. A very large section of the lower middle and the poorer classes indulge in it pretty freely. Because of its cheapness even boys of tender age indulge in it. Though it cannot be asserted

that any one community is responsible for the demand for beedies, it can, however, be stated with a certain amount of confidence that its use is more frequent and common amongst the Muslims than in any other community.

Though there is no means of ascertaining the total number of beedies consumed in the city or the value thereof, we were able to gather from various sources, like the budgets of poor typical families, that an average adult smokes about 25 beedies a day, the money value thereof being 1 anna. From the same sources we have also gathered that the demand for beedies, from those that indulge in it, is rather inelastic. Another important fact that we gathered was that the demand for beedies manufactured in this city is large and wide. They find a market not only in the interior parts of the Presidency, but also outside the Presidency, viz., Burma and the Federated Malay States.

Therefore, it is fairly certain that the manufacture of beedies is no longer a small scale industry. It has on the other hand come to stay, and its production is now carried on a large scale.

At the very outset we are desirous of making it plain that the manufacture of beedies is not restricted to males only, and that some women as well—particularly Muslim women—are adepts in the art. It has been brought to our notice that a large number of poor and destitute Muslim women, though strictly observing *gosha*, are able to make a decent and honest living by the manufacture of beedies within doors. Such manufactures do not come under the purview of this report. Nor are we concerned with the manufacture of beedies by individuals of the stronger sex in their respective homes. What we are concerned about—and the terms of reference make it explicit—was its manufacture under one roof by a large number of people under the direction and supervision of a common master for either a specific stipulated wage or for a wage based on their respective turnout.

#### Section II.

The Indian Factories Act defines a factory as follows :—“ Any premises wherein, or within the precincts of which, on any one day in the year not less than twenty persons are simultaneously employed . . . ”

We addressed ourselves to the task of inquiring into the conditions prevailing in only such of the places of manufacture as conform to the definition of a factory given above. Therefore, we may at once say that our remarks and proposals have in view only such class of the factories as conform to the definition in the Indian Factories Act. The factories that we visited fall under two distinct categories.

The first is a distinct place which is used exclusively for purposes of manufacture and not for habitation. These factories are housed in places which resemble mostly the *go-downs* of big business houses on the first line Beach. Certain other factories of the same class are housed in thatched or zinc-roofed sheds with but only one doorway. Thus they are invariably dingy and dark places with scarcely any sunlight or fresh air. The first thing that we noticed in and about these factories was the heaps of the refuse of the leaves used for rolling. It was also obvious that these factories were cleaned, and the refuse removed only once in a way, on ceremonial occasions like Ramzan, Bara-Fat and the like, and certainly not oftener than once in a month. On an average the number of people employed in each of these factories is about 60. But in certain phenomenal cases the number was as high as 200.

The second type of factory is a regular house of the type used by the lower classes. Part of this house is used by the manager or proprietor, as the case may be, of the factory as a habitation for himself and his family. The remaining portion of the house constitutes the factory. The conditions prevailing in and about this type of factory is quite the same as noted in the previous paragraph, except for the fact that the average of the number of persons employed in this type is about 30. The highest number noted in this type of factory was 52.

There is yet another cross division of these factories, i.e., into those run by individual *entrepreneurs* and those run by *del credere* agents for, and on behalf of, large capitalists. To this division we did not address ourselves. For whether it is one or the other, the conditions are the same. The difference between the two exists only in the degree of proprietorship, and in nothing else.

#### Section III.

About the sanitary conditions of the factories we have hinted at in the last section. As has been pointed out in the aforesaid section, the heaps of refuse in and about are in themselves most insanitary. The flooring in most cases is very shabby and damp. The harmful nature of the flooring can be realized only when it is understood that the workmen have got to squat on the floor, and that no special



arrangement is made for purposes of sitting. There is yet another insanitary feature of these beedy factories which we noted. In almost none of these factories we visited was there any portion set apart for the workmen to answer calls of nature. There is not even anything like a urinal, not to speak of a latrine. Owing to the lack of such arrangements the workmen generally urinate in the public streets. The nuisance caused by this is not a thing to be passed over or neglected. The whole street in which the factory is situated is rendered most insanitary, and we have no doubt whatsoever that it is bound to have a deleterious effect on the health not only of the workmen in the factory, but also of the neighbouring householders. It is highly regrettable that the Corporation authorities who are supposed to be very vigilant in these matters should not be cognizant of this alarming state of affairs.

The second great anomaly in these factories is that there is no regular hours of work. The factories are kept open practically throughout day and night, and are never closed. One can find the workmen working in any part of the day and night. This is, of course, not always due to the compulsion of the managers or the proprietors of the factory, but due to the greed of the workmen themselves. For the adult workmen are being paid on the basis of their respective turnout (*vide* Appendix II). Thus in their eagerness to earn more these workmen overwork themselves, and as a consequence they are considerably broken down in health. We feel strongly that this state of affairs should not be allowed to continue. The gravity of this can be realized when it is understood that a very large number of boys of tender age are also employed in these factories and that they are also put to the same strain. In the case of boys, because they are paid a weekly wage (*vide* Appendix), the proprietor or the manager of the factory seldom allows them to go to their respective homes earlier than midnight. In this connection we should like to emphasize the fact that this is not an uncommon feature with any one factory in the city.

The third and the most serious anomaly in these factories is the employment of boys of tender age. In the course of our visits to the various factories we have noted the presence of small boys in age ranging from 5 to 15 years. The number of such boys is considerable (*vide* Appendix I), and in some factories constitutes more than 50 per cent. of the total strength of the employees in the factory. The labour of boys being cheap, the factory owners prefer to employ boys who could be paid a small weekly wage irrespective of the turnout (for the grade of wages refer Appendix II) rather than grown-up men who perforce will have to be paid according to the number of beedies manufactured. Thus the factory managers try to extract as much work from these boys as they possibly can, and this is done by compelling them to work from the early hours of the morning till late in the night, with little or no interval. And in case any of these boys show a tendency to revolt against the treatment meted out to them, they are subjected to great hardships. The parents or the guardians of these boys do not take serious notice of the treatment meted out to their children because they have in most cases taken small advances from the factory proprietors at times of great need and stress, which they will perforce be compelled to repay if they grumble against the treatment meted out to their children.

In short, the condition of the boys in these factories is nothing short of slavery of the worst type. In the course of our surprise visits, not infrequently did we meet with the horrid sight of boys with their feet chained to logs of wood. On inquiries we found that this practice was quite common and was intended to keep the boys at work and not skulk away earlier than the master was inclined to let them go. And in some of the factories we actually saw the boys being subjected to corporeal punishments of the most severe type, even for such ordinary acts of negligence as late coming or absence from work for a day or two. In one factory in Triplicane, which we happened to visit quite often owing to its proximity to the office of our League, with tears in our eyes, times out of number we stood aghast and wondered within ourselves whether nothing could be done to save these boys from the clutches of that inhuman and brutal task-master. In the factory we are referring to, the manager just in the hottest part of the day takes up a cane and goes on indiscriminately thrashing every boy in the factory. For what fault of the boys? For no fault. Simply because the manager of the factory apprehends that the boys may be inclined to feel drowsy and therefore his work is likely to suffer if they are not whipped up to activity with the help of the cane. This is a daily occurrence. We ask whether a similar treatment of children of school-going age can be found in any civilized country? What has the Government been doing? What is the Labour Department for? Is it not the duty of the Government to save these children from the perdition in which they are now placed?

#### Section IV.

*Our Recommendations and Proposals.*—We are convinced that no non-official agency can in any manner help to remove the anomalies noted in the foregoing paragraphs. We have in an informal manner endeavoured to bring home to the

factory owners the necessity of managing their factories on up-to-date and hygienic methods, and to avoid the employment of child labour. It was all of no avail. Therefore, we feel that it is the imperative duty of the Government to take immediate steps to either mend or end these factories. We would, however, not suggest that these factories should be put an end to. But we would urge that the proposals made hereunder be given immediate effect to by the Government:—(1) The Indian Factories Act of 1911 should be amended so as to bring these factories under its operation; (2) pending such an amendment, the local Government should, by the power vested in them by Clause 3 (b) of Section 2, Chapter I of Act XII, of 1911, by notification in the local Gazette declare by name individually all the "premises" where beedies are manufactured, to come under the category of a regularly constituted "factory"; (3) a committee consisting entirely of non-officials with wide experience in the working of these factories should at once be constituted (a) to draw up a list of all the premises which could be so "declared" and (b) to detect cases of cruelty and prosecute the offending proprietors or managers, as the case may be, of these factories before a magistrate.

#### APPENDIX I.

The committee found it impossible to find out the exact number of people (men, women and children) engaged in the manufacture of beedies in the city of Madras. The experts (men who were engaged in the beedi trade) who were examined by the committee estimated it differently. Whereas one witness estimated the number to be as high as 50,000, another witness estimated it at 20,000. But the committee feels that the exact figure will lie somewhere between the two and they estimate it at about 35,000. This 35,000 can roughly be divided as follows: Men, 20,000; women, 1,000; children, 14,000. Total 35,000.

#### APPENDIX II.

*Rates of Wages for Adults.*—Adults are in all cases paid on the basis of the number of beedies manufactured, and that is at the rate of 12 annas per 1,000. An average adult working by himself for about 15 hours is able to manufacture about 1,500 beedies a day.

*Rates of Wages for Children.*—Boys are in most cases paid on a weekly wage basis, which depends upon the age and the smartness of the boy. The following table of wages may be taken as typical of a boy of average smartness, though some of the boys who are over smart are paid a little more:—

Age.	Weekly wage.	Working hours a day.
5 years, about	2 annas .. .. .	12 to 15
6 .. .. .	3 .. .. .	.. .. .
7 .. .. .	3 .. .. .	.. .. .
8 .. .. .	4 .. .. .	.. .. .
9 .. .. .	4 .. .. .	.. .. .
10 .. .. .	8 .. .. .	.. .. .
11 .. .. .	12 .. .. .	.. .. .
12 .. .. .	Re. 1 .. .. .	.. .. .
13 .. .. .	Re. 1-8 annas .. .. .	.. .. .
14 .. .. .	Rs. 2 .. .. .	.. .. .
15 .. .. .	Rs. 3 .. .. .	.. .. .

#### ✓ THE MADRAS PANEL OF LAWYERS.

##### Workmen's Compensation.

The panel of lawyers is an institution which has been in existence, under the auspices of the Social Service League, for nearly three years. The idea of undertaking workmen's compensation cases free of cost to the victims of accidents originated in the discovery, made through the Madras Labour Union, that a large number of those whom the Act was intended to benefit were ignorant of the provisions of the Act, and even of its existence. Accordingly, a beginning was made in 1926, with Mr. K. V. Sesha Iyengar and a few other advocates practising in the High Court of Madras, who consented to take up compensation cases on behalf of injured workmen without the payment of any fee. A certain amount of propaganda also was undertaken by the Madras Labour Union, not only in the city of Madras, but also in some of the

important industrial centres in the Presidency, with a view to popularise the Workmen's Compensation Act. The result was that the number of cases before the Commissioner of Workmen's Compensation showed a marked tendency to increase, as is evident from the following figures:—

Year.	No. of accidents.	Amount of compensation paid.			No. of cases filed in the Court of the Commissioner.
		Rs.	a.	p.	
1924 .. .. .	334	4,191	7	0	3
1925 .. .. .	372	9,299	3	6	31
1926 .. .. .	503	18,907	6	10	96
1927 .. .. .	569	31,899	5	8	175
1928 .. .. .	632	27,395	14	5	237

During the year 1927-28, the number of cases conducted through the panel was 25, and the amount of compensation claimed was Rs. 16,103, of which Rs. 7,357 6 annas were awarded by the Commissioner. The cases were from the Buckingham and the Carnatic Mills, the Choolai Mill, the Asiatic Petroleum Company, the Madras Corporation, Messrs. Spencer & Co., Holmes & Co., the Saraswati Foundry, the P.W.D. Workshop, and the Madras Aluminium Factory and other firms.

It is interesting to observe that at first employers took advantage of some of the loopholes afforded to them in the Act, under Section 8 (2) by depositing even small amounts of compensation payable with the Commissioner instead of paying them direct. In the Commissioner's report for 1926, occurs the following remark: "A leading employer, who was hitherto paying to his workmen full or half wages for the whole period of temporary disablement, has now begun strictly to adhere to Section 8 (2) of the Act, with the result that the workmen obtained no wages for the days of their disablement and thereafter obtained only half-pay, although prior to the adherence to the strict rule of law, these workmen obtained in some cases full wages. This is causing great dissatisfaction to the workmen, but nothing can be done for them."

The members of the panel advised the workmen in the cases which came to their notice to approach the employers, in the first instance, and settle their cases out of court if possible; and only when the proper amount due was not paid, or there was delay in payment, was a case instituted before the Commissioner. In the year (1928-29), the number of cases undertaken by the panel was 12. The total of compensation claimed was a little more than Rs. 4,000, of which about Rs. 2,000 were granted by the Commissioner. Altogether, since the institution of the panel, nearly Rs. 10,000 have been secured through its services for victims of accidents, the total number of cases dealt with being 57. It is a tribute to the work of the panel that employers in many cases now deposit the amount of compensation with the Commissioner voluntarily. During the year Mr. Sessa Iyengar, the chairman of the panel, spoke to select groups in Tinnevely and Madras explaining the work of the panel and succeeded, to a certain extent, in enlisting the sympathy of the local lawyers. A similar panel was also established at Coimbatore. The circular of the Government of India, dated 30th November, 1928, regarding the proposed amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act, was discussed at length. Various amendments were proposed by the members of the panel in the light of experience of the actual working of the Act.

#### Proposed Amendments to the Act.

The following memorandum has been prepared by the Madras Panel of Lawyers for Workmen's Compensation cases with reference to the circular letter of Government of India, Department of Industries and Labour, on the proposed amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act:—

*Definition of "Workman."*—The panel is of opinion that a definite forward step must be taken in enlarging the definition of "workman" in the Act so as to bring it into reasonable approximation with the definition in the English Act. Section 3 (1) of the English Workmen's Compensation Act (1925) defines "workman" as any person "who has entered into, or works under, a contract of service or apprenticeship with an employer, whether by way of manual labour, clerical work, or otherwise." There are some exceptions and qualifications not relevant to our present purpose. Under the present conditions in India, the adoption of this general and comprehensive definition may be attended with difficulties, administrative and otherwise. The imperfect organization of Indian industries, the ignorance in some instances, of employers, and in nearly all cases of the employed and the absence of a general system of insurance, are only some of the obstacles in that direction. Nevertheless,

an advance can be made on the very limited scope of the present definition of "workman" in Section 2 (n) of the Indian Act. The panel thinks that it is possible to bring within the Act a number of industries now excluded from its operation. The planting industry is an obvious instance, as has been noticed in the circular letter itself. It may be worth while to consider whether malaria can be included as an occupational disease under Section 3 (2) and Schedule III of the Indian Act. There can also be no objection to the inclusion of hazardous industries, organized and unorganized.

With respect to other industries, it is suggested that their inclusion in the Workmen's Compensation Act by referring to the definition of "factories" in Section 3 of the Indian Factories Act (XII of 1911) with some alteration, will minimise many of the difficulties contemplated to arise from an indiscriminate extension of the scope of the Act. In places where conditions are suitable, the Government by issuing the necessary note can make the Factories' Act applicable to an industry where 10 or more men are employed. It has also to be pointed out that Clause 5 of Schedule II of the Act needs redrafting so as to make it clear that it includes all transport workers in wharf, quay, dock, warehouse, lighter, etc., employed "in connection with" loading or unloading operations. This amendment has become urgent by reason of a decision of a full bench of the Madras High Court that a workman handling at a warehouse in port premises goods taken out and loaded in a ship waiting in harbour is not employed *for the purpose of loading* and is not entitled to compensation under the Act. [Ralli Brothers, Madras v. Perumal, 30 LW 121 FB].

*The Scale of Compensation.*—It is the opinion of the panel that the scales of compensation in Section 4 of the Act admit of enhancement. Since such need is recognized in the circular itself, the question reduces itself to one of settling the exact lines on which such enhancement can be made. The scales mentioned in the recommendations of the Seventh International Labour Conference as the minima, appear to the panel to be appropriate and suited to the conditions in India in cases where the wages are less than Rs. 50 a month. The compensation payable in case of death ought also to be enhanced to the equivalent of at least three and a-half years' wages in the case of death of adult workmen.

*Distribution of Compensation—Lump sums versus recurring grants.*—In spite of the administrative difficulties that are likely to attend periodical payments, it appears to the panel to be advisable to adopt that method at least in part in cases where the compensation is Rs. 500 or more. A scheme like the following may perhaps find acceptance: Where the compensation is less than Rs. 500 it may be left to the option of the workman or dependant to take it in a lump sum or in instalments. In cases where it is Rs. 500 or more, half the amount may, at the option of the workman or dependant, be given either in lump sum or instalments, but the other half shall be paid only in the shape of pensions.

*The Waiting Period.*—Section III (i) (a) of the Act enacts that no compensation is payable "in respect of any injury which does not result in total or partial disablement of the workman for a period exceeding 10 days." Section IV (i) (a) excludes the 10 days from the calculation of the compensation in cases of temporary disablement to the workman. Both these provisions cause hardship to the workman.

(i) The minimum number of days of disability necessary to prove a right to compensation is excessive, and must be reduced from 10 to 3 or to 5. The apprehensions as to the increase in the number of cases entitled to compensation ought not to affect the issue. But it may be pointed out that such increase is not likely to have serious financial implications. They will merely result in the workmen getting 5 or 7 more days added in the calculation of the period of compensation where the disability extends over 10 days and in securing compensation for 5 or 7 days in cases where the disability is for 10 days or less.

It is difficult to understand the suggestion made against the workman that a reduction in the waiting period is likely to lead to malingering on the part of the workman. The workman can malingere whether the period is 10 days or 3. The temptation is there in both cases.

(ii) The other aspect of this question, viz., the claim of the workman who is disabled beyond the waiting period to compensation for the whole period of his disability, inclusive of the waiting period, does not admit of much debate. The whole period must be the basis and not a fraction thereof. The workman is entitled to be compensated for the loss of wages for every day he is forced to be out of employment.

*Dependants.*—The panel is of opinion that to the existing description of dependants entitled to share in the compensation in cases of fatal accidents there must be added the following:—Widowed daughter, widowed sister, widowed daughter-in-law, permanently kept concubine, illegitimate children.

The panel is of opinion that a relative who can claim compensation should ordinarily be called upon to furnish proof of dependence, and the compensation payable should not vary with the extent of his dependence upon the deceased workman.

*Sub-contractors.*—There can be no objection to the amendment of the Act so as to enable the principal or sub-contractor who has been made to pay compensation, to recover such compensation from the sub-contractor or principal as the case may be, if so entitled in law, without prejudice to the right of the workman to proceed against any party he may be advised to do.

*Returns.*—In view of the slackness of employers in furnishing the statutory returns under Section 16 of the Act; in view of the extended operation that is proposed to be given to the Act; and in view of the importance which statutory returns possess in enabling the Commissioner to satisfy himself as to the proper working of the Act, it is essential that the sanction for enforcing compliance with provision as to returns must be revised by including in the Act itself a section providing for the imposition of a fine up to a maximum of Rs. 500 for default in sending in proper returns. The section may be so drafted as to necessitate proof by the prosecution that the default in the particular case amounts to an evasion of the Act. In this connection the panel desires to point out that cases have occurred in which the happening of an accident is not traceable in any document kept by the employer. It would be advisable to consider the expediency of inserting a provision obliging employers to maintain a register of accidents occurring within their premises. The panel would also suggest that it may be made a statutory obligation that notice of such accident should be sent to the Commissioner for workmen's compensation within 24 hours of the occurrence. These changes can be introduced by appropriate amendments to Section 16 of the existing Act. There cannot be much hardship or difficulty in demanding or enforcing such a provision. It need not in any way prejudice the employer, as it will not involve any sort of admission that the accident was one arising out of employment. A similar provision exists in Section 34 of the Indian Factories' Act (XII of 1911). Such a register and notification will obviate the great difficulty that now exists in securing contemporaneous evidence of the accident, and also in enabling the Commissioner, if so empowered, to initiate proceedings under the Act in appropriate cases. With respect to accidents occurring outside the employer's premises it would not be right to insist on such a provision.

*Fatal Accidents.*—The panel recognizes that there is need for an amendment of Section 22 of the Act so as to enable the dependants of a deceased workman to apply to the Commissioner directly without first approaching the employer. With respect to the suggestions contained in paragraph 14 of the circular letter of the Government of India, relating to the initiation of proceedings in cases of fatal accidents, the panel would like to suggest that the power to initiate proceedings in all cases and not merely in cases of death, for some years be modelled on lines similar to Section 190 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Thus, it may be provided that the Commissioner may enquire into a case for compensation:—(1) Upon the application of the workman concerned, or of the dependent of a deceased workman. (2) Upon the application of a registered trade union. (3) On his own motion based upon information that an accident for which compensation is payable has occurred.

The ignorance and apathy of the average Indian workman and the lack of adequate trade union organization are some among the reasons that would justify such a course. The amendment already suggested with respect to the furnishing of returns will enable the Commissioner to take action under Clause 3 if he sees reason to do so.

*Difficulty in the Ascertainment of Dependents.*—This is a real difficulty under Indian conditions and has to be provided for in the manner suggested in the circular by causing the names and addresses of the nearest relatives to be entered in the register at the time of entertainment of the workman. There may be difficulties in the case of some employers in carrying out such a scheme, but wherever practicable it should be enforced. The objection to this proposal on the score of the unwillingness of the workman to give his wife's name may not apply to many parts of India.

*Supplementary Deposit.*—No objection can exist to empowering the Commissioner to call for additional payment where the deposit originally made is inadequate in cases of fatal accidents.

*Suspension of Payment Pending Appeal.*—In cases where an employer is aggrieved by an order awarding compensation, he can appeal to the High Court under Section 30 of the Act. Pending the appeal he can always ask for stay of the execution of the order appealed against, or ask for reasonable security to safeguard his rights to restitution in case of his success in appeal. Once the matter comes to the High Court, the provisions of Order 41, Rule 5 of the Civil Procedure Code relating to stay will be attracted under the ruling of the Privy Council in *Chelikani Rama Rao's case*. (I.L.R. 39 Madras 617.) There appears to be no need, therefore, for the provision suggested.

*Other Points.*—The panel has also observed the advantage that would be derived in compensation cases from enquiries by an independent and impartial medical examination of the injury immediately after the occurrence of an accident. It would be useful to consider the desirability of introducing a clause providing, wherever practicable, for compulsory medical examination of the injured workmen by a registered medical practitioner as soon as possible after the accident. The fees for such examination may be made a matter of adjustment between the employer, the workman and the State.

It may also not be inappropriate to consider the desirability of introducing a provision throwing some sort of obligation on employers to afford reasonable facilities in bona fide cases to the legal advisers of injured workmen to acquaint themselves with the working of the machinery under the circumstances in which an accident is alleged to have happened by the workmen. Such an opportunity would help in the simplification of the enquiry and the elimination of unsustainable applications for compensation. Schedule I of the Act, which gives a list of injuries deemed to result in partial permanent disablement with the corresponding percentage of loss of earning capacity, does not provide for the loss of a palm. It would be advisable to include such a case and estimate the loss of 50 per cent. of earning capacity.

*Partial Permanent Disablement.*—Section 2 (g) of the Act defines "partial permanent disablement" as such disablement (other than the scheduled disablement) as reduces the earning capacity in "every employment which he was capable of undertaking" at the time of the accident. This is not a satisfactory definition. It is unreasonable to oblige the court to enter in every case of partial permanent disablement into an investigation into the number of employments which the workman was capable of undertaking at the time of the accident and determination of the bearing of the disability on his earning capacity in each one of these employments. Such investigation is bound to be obscure. It is unjust to the workman to be told that there is some employment skilled or unskilled which he can follow in spite of his disability and that, therefore, he is not to get compensation. A more satisfactory definition will be "such disablement as reduces his earning capacity in any employment which he was capable of undertaking (or in any employment which he would have ordinarily pursued) at the time of the accident. The fact that total disablement may be proved by the total loss of sight of both the eyes, or from a combination of scheduled injuries where the aggregate percentage of the loss of earning capacity is 100 per cent. also shows that it was not intended that partial permanent disablement must affect the earning capacity of the workman in all work which he was capable of undertaking. References may be made to the definition of "partial temporary disablement" which requires only a reduction of earning capacity in any employment in which the workman was engaged at the time of accident.

It is the opinion of the panel that the benefits conferred by the Act upon the workmen have not been understood by them and availed of to the full extent. Cases have arisen in which workmen have allowed their remedy to lapse in ignorance of their rights and in ignorance of their duty to apply within the six months' time provided under Section 10 of the Act. The panel would suggest that, wherever practicable, it may be insisted that the provisions of the Act be prominently displayed both in the vernacular language of the workmen and in the shape of pictures, so that the workmen may be apprised of their rights and remedies. Such experience as the panel has had of the working of the Act has revealed the great need for educating the workmen in a clear knowledge of their rights and duties under the Act. Such education would ordinarily form part of the functions of trade unions. In their absence the duty for sometime will, it is believed, have to be discharged by the Labour Department as the State custodian of the welfare of labour.

### ✓ MADRAS REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL, MADRAS.

#### *Statement on Condition of Labour in Madras and Relative Subjects.*

The report of the Conference on Industrial Problems held at Poona, January 14th to 15th, 1929, under the auspices of the National Christian Council at which the Madras Committee was represented, expresses our own considered opinions on the matter.

[The substance of the recommendations will be found in the memorandum of the National Christian Council of India, Poona.]

*Note 1.*—We would add to the subjects under "Legislative Action" that there should be a Work-shop Act in view of the unusually unhealthy labour conditions in certain workshops, especially in those where cheap cigars are manufactured. To quote from one of our reports:—

Labour conditions in beedi shops are unusually severe, where many young boys are employed in crowded conditions for long hours. There are two beedi shops in

Jani Jahn Khan Road, Triplicane, where ten to twelve . . . persons are employed; two shops in Ellis Road employing about ten persons each; and also quite a few scattered in Mannady and Washermanpet. In a small room, 25 ft. long and 7 ft. broad, we find two rows of people sitting with their legs stretched out for almost the whole day. The places are damp and the workmen get cramps and rheumatism by sitting in this posture for the whole day. The wages are in proportion to the output, and not the number of hours. A skilled workman gets a maximum of twelve annas per thousand beedies, and it takes him ten hours to earn this wage. There are also boys who get only three annas and odd for working the whole day. The wages vary from three to twelve annas per thousand according to the quality of the output. The shops are found to be working as late as 9 o'clock in the night. The wages are poor and the workmen get no rest. They get bronchial trouble because they are forced to sit in the same position for hours with their legs stretched out holding a basket across the knees. The conditions are thus far from satisfactory.

These shops do not come under the Factory Act because they do not use power. Such conditions exist not only in this industry but in many others as well where groups of people by tens and scores work under one master.

*Note 2.*—With regard to the paragraph on minimum wage legislation we should say that there is at least one industry in Madras where this law, if it were passed, could be used with beneficial results. We refer to the extremely low wages of the coolies who deal with groundnuts in the Madras harbour. Industries which manufacture cheap cigars are another case to which this law might be applied with happy results.

In this connection we would add that the ideal of standard wages should be based upon the ability of the industry to pay rather than on the local agricultural rates which often border on the starvation line. We know that employers in industry cannot get enough hands unless they pay them at least somewhat higher than the local agricultural wages, but we would adhere to the ideal expressed above. It is only fair that the worker should get a due return for his work according to the ability of the industry to pay.

*Note 3.*—It has become clear to us through our investigations that it would lead to very useful and happy results if it could be enacted that every labourer working in industries using power where the work is of a hazardous nature, should wear a uniform during working hours (the uniform to be cut bearing in mind the nature of the particular industries in question) and that the employing body should bear the cost of the same.

*Note 4.*—Under the head of welfare or labour supervisors, we would add also, that some of the employing bodies have done and are doing splendid and praiseworthy welfare work. Others have not even begun to do such work for their labourers. Welfare work which helps the labourer to combat the drink habit, to escape indebtedness and to avoid overcrowding and insanitary conditions, is a strength to industry. Such work proves that the employer takes an interest in his employees as individual personalities dependent on him for the amenities of life as well as the means of living and not as so many machines to run the actual machines of iron and steel. If the Commission can do anything to induce employers, who have not yet done so, to begin such work, its visit to Madras will not have been in vain.

One of the outstanding needs of this city is the provision of cheap sanitary houses for work people. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Company, which has taken the lead in welfare work is steadily increasing the number of houses provided at a modest rental for its work people. But the need of such dwellings in this city is still enormous. The conditions obtaining, for instance, in Kurusadicheri on the Perambur Barracks Road until it was recently destroyed by fire, were nothing less than appalling especially in monsoon weather.

*Note 5.*—Since the presence of a large industrial population creates difficult problems of city life that must be solved, we are of opinion that the civic authorities, the employing bodies and the Government should work together wherever possible, in making life more worthwhile for the labourer by giving him facilities for cleaner habits, healthier dwellings, etc., and thus help him to develop a better personality and thereby become a better citizen.

*Note 6.*—Under the heading of a training scheme for welfare work supervisors we would emphasise the need for such training being given by the economics departments of the local Universities as there is an increasingly substantial labour and industrial population in the country.

*Madras City Life and Labour.*—In the city of Madras there were 526,911 people in 1921. Out of this number 39 in a thousand were supported by agriculture, 370 by industry, 196 by commerce, 124 professions and 271 by other miscellaneous occupations. At that time there were 147 factories in the city using 11,641 h.p.

units of steam ; 700 h.p. of oil ; 776 h.p. of gas ; 182 workshops using motor power of 1,522 h.p. ; also 2,804 kilowats of electric power. Since then these powers seem to have increased by at least 50 per cent. There has been a steady growth.

Over 79 per cent. of the total population of Madras City were born in the city itself. The bulk of the remaining population are from the adjacent districts of Chingelpet and North Arcot. Labour is more stable in Madras than in any of the other major cities. Neither are there so many industries competing for labour. Very few women are employed in cotton spinning and in weaving mills. Of the total industrial population of about 12,000 in the large Madras mills about 5 per cent. are women ; 14 per cent. children, chiefly boys ; and 81 per cent. men. The percentage of children and women employed in cotton and spinning mills in the Presidency outside of Madras City is higher, being 14 per cent. women, 21 per cent. children and 65 per cent. men. The above facts indicate that there is very little fluctuation of population in Madras City proper ; and when there is any it is chiefly among coolies.

*Causes for the Migration of Labour.*—Among the causes which impel workers to leave home and seek employment elsewhere are, agricultural depression, the prevailing joint-family system and the hereditary equal partition of estates at the death of the father, thus breaking them up into small and ever smaller holdings. There is also the landless labourer who is free to move, and likewise an increasing percentage of artisans whose wares do not find sale in the local market and who are not able to compete with the comparatively cheap machine made goods.

Among the landless labourers are included a large number of the Adi-dravidas for whom life in a city is more attractive because of its freedom from caste and group control. Again at its best agriculture can provide work for only seven months in a year and then there is not always the certainty of work on all days. So they migrate to the cities and return to the village only on occasions of wedding or death or when an epidemic breaks out in the city and that only for a time.

The lot of the weavers is hard in the villages. They have no capital to buy yarn with and so they take yarn from a money lender and this has to be returned as cloth within a certain number of days. In the meanwhile for their daily bread they have to borrow from the same money lender and thereby their labour is pledged for many days ahead. This class of people prefer to give up the work in their villages and come and settle down as labourers in the mills for a fixed monthly pay.

*Proposal for a Public Employment Agency.*—In the Madras City there are quite a large number of people who come seeking work. At present there are no public employment agencies as such. It would be very helpful if we could have one or possibly two establishments one for skilled and another for unskilled labour. People requiring labour *might* apply to these bodies which would select from the people on their rolls a suitable candidate or candidates. While it would be necessary to have a paid secretary for such an establishment, the governing body might consist of a board of responsible public spirited men and women some chosen by the Government and others elected by the various philanthropic and other bodies. Minority communities might have a private board each for its own community and represent their grievances or requirements, if any, to the central board of management. In this way we think that it would be possible to guard against difficulties which might otherwise arise. Having such a board for each district or group of districts would also solve the problems in their respective areas and would be a way of removing some of the abuses alleged to be prevalent in recruitment for the plantations. Having such a board would also give greater chances for the engagement of labour through such a disinterested board and not through people to whom the applicant has often to give a lump sum bribe or a proportion of his salary after employment for a certain number of months.

*Madras Government Labour Department.*—While we are thankful for the services which the labour department is rendering to the depressed classes and labour in general we feel that it ought to do a great deal more than it is doing at present. We venture to offer a few suggestions for developing the work which rightly falls within its own sphere.

It should officially collect statistics on labour and middle class family budgets and living for important industrial centres and make them available to the public, as the Bombay office has done for the city of Bombay.

It should also have an information bureau where we could get up-to-date information regarding labour, its problems, strikes, lock-outs, living conditions, conditions of employment in particular industries and establishments, etc.

There is need for a special officer, preferably an Indian, under the Commissioner of labour for this who would be in charge of this department under the guidance of the Commissioner. He might be either an assistant labour Commissioner or a second personal assistant to the Commissioner of labour.



*Family Budgets.*—We append a few family budgets which were collected in the year 1926 and which have already appeared in one of our reports.

*Case A.*—Family of five : man (mill hand), wife, and three children. Income Rs. 35.

Rations .. ..	Rs. 22	Daily expense ..	Rs. 5
House rent .. ..	Rs. 4	Towards debt ..	Rs. 5

According to this a debt of a rupee a month was incurred.

Total debt, Rs. 360.

*Case B.*—Family of three : man, wife, and son. Income, Rs.25.

House rent .. ..	Rs. 4	Stores .. ..	Rs. 3
Rice .. ..	Rs. 6	Daily expense ..	Rs. 5

Saving shown, Rs. 7 a month.

*Case C.*—Family of six : man, wife, two children (2 and 10) and two brothers. Income : man, Rs. 20 ; woman, Rs. 4.

Rent .. ..	Rs. 3	Tobacco .. ..	5 As.
Rice .. ..	Rs. 13	Betal .. ..	3 As.
Daily expenses ..	Rs. 3-12 annas	Arrack .. ..	Re. 1

A balance of Rs. 2-7 annas a month is left which is generally spent on clothes or in settling small debts.

*Case D.*—Family of five : Income : Rs. 30.

Rice .. ..	Rs. 12	Tobacco .. ..	10 As.
Rent .. ..	Rs. 5	Arrack .. ..	Rs. 3
Stores and daily expenses .. ..	Rs. 11-12 annas		

In debt, of course.

*Case E.*—Family of six : man, wife, two grown up daughters and two sons. Income : Rs. 30.

Rent .. ..	Rs. 5	Stores .. ..	Rs. 6-9-9 pies
Rice .. ..	Rs. 12	Tobacco .. ..	8 As.
Fuel .. ..	Rs. 2-8 annas	Scavenger .. ..	8As.
Daily expenses ..	Rs. 7-8 annas	Soap .. ..	4 As. 6 pies

In debt.

*Case F.*—A family of thirteen members. They live in a house containing two rooms and kitchen. The family's total income is Rs. 83, i.e., wages of two mill hands, Rs. 62 and Rs. 21 from renting three rickshaws. They were once a prosperous family of workers ; but now are always in debt, *the chief cause being drink.*

*Comments.*—Most of these people live in the one roomed houses chiefly concrete structures. Here and there a thatched house is found. These are one roomed houses which have a kitchen and a lavatory. Sometimes three or four families share a house and divide the rent. One such group pays a house rent of Rs. 25. The usual rent for a one roomed house is Rs. 4.

So far as income is concerned most of the labourers are well off. They have a higher standard of living than their predecessors of a generation ago. But improvidence is common. The chief causes of indebtedness are social customs and certain vices. A good deal of money is expended on funerals and weddings and other ceremonies. These are the times when they approach the Sowcar or the Marwari for a loan ; who, with his vicious system of loaning on easy or no security but exorbitant interest, cripples the economic life of these workers. The usual rate of interest of a Marwari is 150 per cent. and most of these labourers take years and years to clear debt. Drink is common. We are reliably informed that at least 60 per cent. of these workmen drink, but in the course of investigation very few labourers owned that they drank. Betting and gambling also are becoming increasingly common in the city where there are so many bucket-shops. These are a serious menace to the economic welfare of the labourers. But more than all is the drain caused by improvident social habits.

### ✓ THE MADRAS ELECTRIC TRAMWAY AND ELECTRIC SUPPLY CORPORATION EMPLOYEES' UNION.

*History.*—This union was first started in the year 1917 and was registered in 1928 under the Trade Union Act of 1926, and was recognized by the company in the year 1929. The total number of members on its rolls is 1,800.

*Our Creed.*—The labour movement is not an anti-capitalist movement in the sense that it is out to destroy capital. It does not believe in the mere negative propaganda; it believes in the positive gospel of reconstruction. It believes in elevating the labourers who are deprived of their primary privileges and rights and on whose unremitting and unrewarded labour society lives. It is a movement inspired by the sentiments of love and justice for men and women who have to work hard with their hands without being properly cared for and recompensed.

Capital is as necessary as labour. But capital without labour is as barren and unproductive as a store of electricity which without a machine cannot display its marvellous power. Similarly, labour without capital is as useless as a well-built machine without electric current in it. Capital and labour must go together. We believe in a labour-capital movement. Every labourer must be looked upon as a capitalist and every capitalist as a labourer. Our union believes in the idea of service and not in the idea of profit. Where the latter idea prevails and Mammon sits on the throne, there authority, coercion and cruel conceptions of discipline are invoked to break the will of the labourers. Where the idea of profit is the dominant idea there the creative worker is transformed into a submissive automaton and a tool of the boss, but where the idea of service is the main motive power, there kindness, understanding, co-operation and mutual good-will are called forth, and lazy, dull careless and irresponsible workmen are converted into willing, diligent and original contributors to the wealth and happiness of this world.

We do not believe that economic justice will alone solve all the ills and evils of humanity. It is something more fundamental and much deeper than the principle of economic justice. Economic justice would be meted out only when the employers and employees are governed and controlled by higher and nobler conceptions of life. The whole problem is one of inward attitude towards our fellow-beings, purified, sublimated and humanised by higher moral and spiritual principles of life.

*Education.*—We believe that so long as the employers do not take interest in educating their employees there will be misunderstanding and injustice and suspicion will prevail in their minds. One of the very important things which the labourers and the capitalists must try to accomplish is the right kind of education for the labourers and their children. In my travels in western countries I rarely came across labourers who are not able to read and write. As eyes are to man, so education must be to a labourer. Labourers must know the facts of the situation before they enter into any dispute. They must be well-informed before they venture to demand. Practical knowledge, right thinking, and sound judgment will help the labourers and the employers to keep themselves away from much sorrow and suffering.

Our hearts must be guided by the inspiring teachings of the gospel of love; our minds must be chastened by clearness, lucidity and accuracy furnished to us by the goddess of knowledge. Where there is no knowledge there will be no accuracy; where there is inaccuracy there will be misjudgment. It is for this reason that we demand education for the labourers and their children as the first demand in our memorandum. In this connection we beg to inform the Commission that the union intends opening a reading room and an adult night school for the labourers of the company at an early date.

*Joint Council of Employees and Employers.*—This Joint Council of Employees and Employers more than any other thing will secure the largest possible measure of joint action between the employers and employees. Such a council will try to settle disputes between the employees and employers in an amicable way and produce in its dealings a good deal of confidence, considerateness and frankness on both sides.

We do not believe in the exclusive prerogatives of either the noisy, blustering and one-sided extreme labour workers nor in the threats of coercion of some of the conservative and narrow-minded pro-capitalist—propagandists. Both employers and employees are human beings. As human beings it is but natural to err. Sinlessness and infallibility are not the monopoly of either class of people. Neither a council exclusively composed of capitalists alone can understand the difficulties of the labourers, nor a council exclusively composed of the labourers can understand the financial or otherwise difficult problems of the capitalists. It is the tie of friendship, fellow-feeling and goodwill prevailing in the deliberations of a joint council of both the employers and employees that will enable us to achieve better results than mere harsh and angry words or autocratic and dogmatic assertions. So a joint council of employers and employees is absolutely necessary to arrive at proper and just conclusions.

*Hours.*—The baneful effects of long hours on the physical, mental and spiritual life of men are innumerable to narrate here. Long hours ruin the physical frame of labourers and rob concentration, attention, retentive memory and introduce into their mental life morbidity, irritability, melancholia, mental indolence, anarchist

temperament and pessimistic attitude towards life. Morally and physically exhausted labourers develop an irresponsible, intemperant and indifferent attitude towards their wives and children. Spiritually they become materialistic and irreligious.

Man is not only an animal endowed with tastes and desires for creature comforts, but is made in the image of God and is a moral and spiritual being. Enough facilities must be given to him to develop a keen interest and cultivate a proper taste not only for his daily bread and good habitation but also for beauty, art, literature and sublimity. Is it possible to expect him to behave any better than an animal when no chances are given to him, and no time is allotted to him to make himself a fuller man and a better social being. Man does not grow in a vacuum; he needs a good environment for his growth and development. An artistic atmosphere with books, etc., must also be placed at his disposal so that life may not become a mere drudgery. One great remedy that can help us to eradicate most of the dreadful evils which are eating into the vitals of the working-class people is a shorter working day and a shorter working week. Therefore we propose not less than 48 and not more than 50 hours per week of six days. Duty schedules shall be posted on which the rest days shall be shown, and not less than six days' notice shall be given of variations of such a schedule to meet special occasions. Hours of labour should be counted from the moment the worker leaves his home. It is unjust to exclude the hours which a labourer spends going to and returning from his place of work.

*Overtime.*—We believe that no labourer should be allowed to work more than 10 hours a day including his overtime, for giving too much overtime to a few people and making them earn a little more than others brings in the problem of unemployment for many and immature physical exhaustion and intellectual, moral and spiritual degeneracy to all labourers:—(a) If at all a labourer is asked to work for more than eight hours—the time allotted to him—the labourer working in excess of his scheduled duty on the rota of service shall be paid at the rate of time and a-quarter for the first two hours and time and a-half after. (b) In the event of an employee working voluntarily at the request of the management on his "rest day" he shall be paid a rate prevailing on that day, but such time worked shall not count for weekly overtime.

*Leave.*—"All work and no play" will make anybody dull, stunted and an unproductive dwarf. We grant that work is one of the most essential and chief virtues which cultivates and develops an individual. It also helps him to make himself the master of any difficult situation in which he is placed. It transforms the barbarian into a civilised man, and without work, intelligence is not possible. Work gives man strength and confidence in himself. It enables one to march into the unknown regions of God's inexhaustible kingdom with untiring enthusiasm and fearless enterprise. Where there is passion for work, there spring up creative and original ideas in abundance, but this is just one half of truth.

*Other Half of Truth.*—The other half of truth is that all works are not wholesome and that work alone is not salvation. We work not merely for the sake of working. It is a means to help us to attain to our ideal of perfection. Work is one of the few essential things but *not the only thing*. If a man is forced out of sheer necessity to obtain a few crumbs of bread just to appease the appetite, will he ever emerge from his barbarism and animality? Is it the will of God that great masses of humanity should pay no heed to the finer aspects of life and be lost, and lost for ever in the thought of satisfying their animal wants and nothing more. Is it possible to believe that it is the will of God that a small minority or a considerably big minority—for a matter of that even a big majority—should attain to the very high ideals of physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual life at the cost of even a single human being? But what we daily witness in our country is that millions of men and women are sacrificed for the comforts and elevation of a few people. It is no wonder that men have lost confidence in the so called friends of labour who have bandaged their eyes and are unwilling to see this other half of truth. "Too much work" Mr. M. J. Savage says, "instead of elevating a man out of barbarism crushes him down into it deeper still and makes it impossible for him to arise."

We believe that privilege and casual leaves must be granted to the labourers. We suggest 25 days privilege leave and 15 days casual leave excluding Sundays to the labourers who have to work as conductors, drivers, etc., in the Tramway Industry, all the time standing without any rest whatever to their legs. Gazetted holidays when denied to the employees should be compensated for.

*Women.*—Women workers must be given three months—one and half months' pre-natal and one and half months' post natal—leave with pay.

*Provident Fund.*—Provident Fund should be introduced into our Industry in the interests of our workers. We suggest that labourers are requested to pay to the fund one anna in each rupee of their pay and a similar amount by the company. This

should be given to the labourers at the time of their retirement, dismissal, etc. This Provident Fund amount must on no ground whatever be allowed to be attached by the company for any offence whatever.

*Bonus.*—We also suggest to the Commission that they should bring pressure on different Industrial Companies to institute gratuity, bonus and compensation for loss of limbs, etc. This should be done independent of Provident Fund contribution:

*Housing.*—We believe that nobody has paid any attention to the housing of our labourers. The housing conditions of our labourers are appalling. We earnestly request the Commission to investigate into this matter carefully and see that the housing conditions of the labourers are improved. Again and again I had the misfortune of witnessing a husband, wife, daughter, son and sometimes son's wife—all living in one room. How could we expect fineness, decency, and principles of morality, to be observed under such circumstances? It is a great surprise that our labourers are not worse than what they are.

*Health.*—Health is wealth of the individual. This is an old adage and it must be true in the case of all individuals, be they capitalists or labourers. All are God's children. The diseases which attack the working-class people to-day will attack the capitalists tomorrow. We must look upon diseases from a national and international stand-point. I hope I do not trespass on the limits of truth when I say that even 25 per cent. of our labourers are not normal in their health and what attention have the capitalists or others paid to this fact? It is high time that we should tackle this problem with all the sympathy and humaneness possible.

No proper meal bunks or sheds are found at tramcar termini. It is absolutely necessary that at each tram-car terminus a bunk or shed with water-taps should be erected by the company where conductors, motormen, etc., can have their morning, midday, and evening meals. A big earthen pot filled with boiled water must also be supplied to these meal bunks or sheds.

It is also requested that latrines and urinals may be constructed at various tram termini, as the tramway employees feel very great difficulty owing to want of this very necessary convenience. A separate latrine for women labourers may also be maintained.

A regular ambulance corps to carry the wounded labourers also may be maintained.

*Wages.*—We believe that the question of wages must be considered not only from the stand-point of supply and demand but also from the stand-point of humanitarian principles of a highly cultured society of an enlightened age. We cannot afford to be conservative when the question of wages comes. We must be progressive in our ideas of distributing wealth among those who produce wealth. Wages must be not only *living minimum-wages* for a family composed of a husband, wife and three children but must be *standard-living wages*. We must not compare the wages of the labourers who lived in the last century to the wages of the labourers of to-day. For ideas of life, standards of living, and conception of the value, importance and dignity of man: all have undergone a change. What must guide the idea of distributing wages to the wage-earners is the principle of standard-living. We insist on standardising the wages because this will solve many an unpleasant problem caused by those who under-sell themselves out of poverty and thereby create misunderstandings and divisions among the labourers themselves.

In our opinion the starting wages of any labourer in India must not be below Rs. 50. We have arrived at this definite conclusion after a long and continued study of thousands of working-class families in this country.

At present there is no graded system in the company. They were making appointments not according to any particular system but as business grew. We desire that a graded system be introduced, and the salaries and promotion arranged according to that system. Wages may be enhanced and promotions may be made periodically by the Joint Council of Employers and Employees. It is also the desire of the Union that an elaborate and exhaustive manual of rules to guide the affairs of the labourers may be printed and circulated among the labourers.

*Stabilization of Wages.*—We do not believe in lowering wages again under the pretext of financial depression, financial loss, etc. Working class house-wives should be able to budget a head. This is not possible when there is no proper understanding between the working class house-wife and her husband's employer about his wages.

*Punishments.*—Punishments must be corrective and reformatory but never spiteful, vindictive, coercive or crushing. No fine beyond 2 per cent. of the prescribed salary or wages should be imposed on labourers. Employees of two or more years' service are not to be treated as temporary and subject them to various disabilities in regard to service privileges in general.

*Recruitments.*—Employees must be so trained and educated by the company as to manage the affairs of the company without seeking help from outside recruits, and when temporary or permanent vacancies occur preference must be given to the children or relatives of the company's employees.

## ✓ THE SOUTHERN INDIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, MADRAS.

One important feature of labour conditions in India that the Commission would require to take notice of is the signal backwardness of industrial conditions and industrial labour in this country, when they are compared with those obtaining in western countries. A due appreciation of this difficulty would require the Commission to devote very special attention to the remedying of industrial depression as the root cause and the fundamental handicap to higher standards of life of the labouring classes. The dangers of standards of life outrunning industrial development are only too painfully visible in western countries where labour refuses to accept lower wages to help the industries over a slump. My committee have, therefore, no hesitation in suggesting that the Commission should give due weight in their recommendations to the non-applicability of any and every recommendation and convention of the International Labour Conference to Indian conditions, as well as to the condition precedent to Labour's prosperity of industrial stability to be established in this country by means of the tariff, transport facilities, government patronage, cheap loans, guarantees, subsidies, and so on.

Another factor to which the Commission should give special attention is the woeful lack of education, lack of thrift and lack of organization among Indian labourers. A sound scheme of compulsory primary education and adult education at least in industrial areas is a bad necessity. They should receive regular lessons in hygiene, domestic economy, and practical citizenship. The spread of co-operative societies and mutual benefit funds should be encouraged; employers should be induced to institute provident funds and gratuity funds to which contribution should be made compulsory; periodical enquiries into indebtedness of the workmen should be made so as to check it by threats of suspension or dismissal; and the Government should pursue an active policy of gradual prohibition in the industrial areas. In this way the labour population would be enabled to organize themselves and keep the management of their unions in their own hands, which latter feature has become an urgent necessity. It would also serve to bring home a certain measure of responsibility which would be an effective deterrent to hasty strikes and widespread unemployment.

With increasing contact with western standards of labour, Indian labour has been perceptibly drifting away from capital at the cost of the industry on which both depend for their well-being. Trade unions are ill-organized and ill-controlled, and the result is that collective bargaining which is one of the fundamental objects of trade unions is never achieved, while considerable loss is caused on either side. Sometimes even the formulation of grievances does not take place before the strike, and there is no attempt at all to settle the difference before the workmen go on strike. It is therefore very necessary under present circumstances that an enquiry by a permanent tribunal for conciliation and, if possible, arbitration should precede every declaration of strike or lock-out. It is also necessary that Government should interfere at a very early stage in all trade disputes, because every strike or lock-out means a considerable economic loss to the country in general, and to its own revenues which it is difficult to make good even by a long period of active and uninterrupted productivity. The Government should further make regular collection of statistics in order to keep its finger on the pulse of the labour population so as to know the cost of living, the trend of prices, the conditions of particular industries, and so on.

Before proceeding to give the replies to the questionnaire my committee would desire to refer briefly to the seriousness of unemployment in the agricultural labour force. Provision of work for longer periods is absolutely necessary in order to maintain this population on the soil. It can be done by extension of irrigation, by improvement of veterinary facilities, by promotion of agricultural and cottage industries, and by a very substantial increase in the number of non-credit co-operative societies for the purchase of raw materials and sale of finished products of cottage industries.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) Industrial labour required is derived mostly from the same localities or neighbouring villages, except in the case of highly skilled workmen; seasonal factories, e.g., rice milling, ground-nut decorticating, jaggery, cotton ginning and pressing, etc., depend to some extent on migrating labour. Long distance migration also takes place to mining centres in Mysore, Behar and Orissa, Bengal, Hyderabad, etc. Plantations in Malabar, Nilgiris, and Anamalais depend in some measure on labour from Trichinopoly, Tinnevely, etc.

(ii) Lack of continuous employment throughout the year among the agricultural labourers, and want of regular and remunerative employment among others. Unfavourable seasonal conditions drive many people either to starve or to migrate; pressure of agriculture as population increases is too great.

2. (i) When villages are near, the workmen return to their homes at every available opportunity—festivals, ceremonies, strikes, lock-outs, etc. When their homes are a few districts away they go at least once in a year and stay away for four or five weeks each time. Workmen return home from other presidencies or Malay States or Ceylon only once in two or three years and then stay some months.

(ii) The labour force employed in this presidency in plantations is about 50,000, and in other non-agricultural occupations is about 250,000.

3. (i) No systematic recruitment except for plantations or for oversea emigration.

(ii) A practical means of improvement would be for the Labour Commissioner or other agency to disseminate information through village officers as to avenues for employment and conditions of service.

(iii) Employers would prefer their own agencies; but agency for skilled workmen will be practicable and may be useful.

4. Migrating labourers leave behind members of their family and it necessitates frequent return. The earning members are frequently separated for long periods which leads to extravagance, unnecessary expenditure, and hard to mouth life; away from the families depending on them, the incentive to strikes is infinitely greater; extravagant and vicious life leads to clamour for higher wages and lack of interest either in the work or in local environment.

5. Practically no recruitment of seamen takes place in this presidency.

7. Unemployment, if any, among skilled workmen is only temporary and employment agencies would be a help to them; among the unskilled there is real unemployment; want of steady employment puts up labour cost and decreases efficiency of labour; information circulated as to available sources of employment from time to time would help them as also adult general education, and technical lessons in off-hours.

(v) International conventions cannot be immediately applied to Indian conditions in their entirety. Industrial life is yet in its infancy in India, and the application of labour standards of foreign countries would seriously raise the cost of production and increase unemployment so that the remedy would be worse than the disease. Moreover the handicap to Indian industries caused by the competition of other countries like Japan not adopting the same standards and conventions is stupendous. Unless India adopts a protective tariff all round, labour conditions cannot receive much special attention.

9. The Apprentices Act, 1850 is particularly intended for orphans from military orphanages and charitable institutions and for seamen, and so it is not quite useful in this presidency. The committee on industrial and technical education, 1922, and a special committee in 1924 recommended its extension to other trades also. The recommendations of the latter committee to regulate the employment of apprentices may be brought into force.

## II.—Staff Organization.

12. *Training of Subordinate Staff.*—The Government Engineering College, Madras, Trades School, Chengalvaroya Naicker's Institute, Government Textile Institute, the Industrial Institute, Madras Railway Workshops and the 60 odd industrial schools in the Presidency supply the staff. The increasing use of complicated machinery and precision tools necessitates educated and technically trained men. More industrial schools and workshops are required. All railway workshops take a minimum number of apprentices. Adult education in technical lines in evening classes should also be given in the industrial schools.

## III.—Housing.

16. Some houses have been built for the poor workmen in Madras City and in a few of the larger towns like Madura, Tuticorin, Trichinopoly, Mangalore and Vizagapatam, by manufacturers, industrial firms, railway companies, port trusts, house building societies, etc. There are still many without a roof over their heads. In the city the workmen who spend their nights on footpaths, verandahs of godowns, and even in streets, with infants in arms and all their belongings spread about them, may be not less than 2,000.

Only about 15 per cent. of factories house a certain percentage of their workmen. Plantations in Nilgiris, Malabar, and Coimbatore provide lines for their coolies. Reliance should more and more be placed on general economic improvement and on housing co-operative societies than on employers' capital at the present stage of industrial development of the country.

The present Town Planning Bill intends to create a Town Planning Fund for financing the provision of sites and construction of houses. The District Municipalities Act and City Municipal Act provide for improvement of slums, but a large majority of the municipalities have not devoted much attention to this matter.

**IV.—Health.**

23. The awful lack of statistics regarding sickness and death of industrial population prevents correct knowledge in this matter.

(iv) *Dietary*.—A progressive policy of prohibition would better the health, social life, and the economic potentialities of the labour force.

24. Few factories can be expected to maintain their own hospitals. Most of them cannot afford it; a few others maintain first-aid appliances and some others keep part-time medical men. Rural dispensaries scheme has much lee-way to make, and more lady doctors should be available to meet the needs of the female labourers.

16. Latrines are necessary to all factories under the Act, but present sanitary conditions leave much room for improvement.

30. Sickness insurance might be tried in selected industrial establishments which can bear the extra burden. Indian industries, under present tariff conditions, are rather living hand to mouth. Further wages in the country are too low to permit a contribution in most cases by the labourers, so the Government would have to bear a lion's share. Nevertheless in industries which are dangerous to health some such scheme is an urgent necessity though at some extra cost to public revenues.

31. (iii) Prospects of legislation for maternity benefit are not bright in this province, as female labour is seasonal and casual; moreover, it would discourage employment of women or at least lower their wages, whereas under present conditions their earnings are indispensable to the family budget. The results of the new enactment for the gradual elimination of female labour in underground workings should be examined before any more forward steps are taken in that direction.

**VII.—Safety.**

44–46. Accidents are common. The unreported might also be a considerable figure. Accidents in unregistered factories are similarly numerous. They are due to ignorance and negligence of workers. Posters all over the factory regarding dangerous parts of the machinery and methods of handling should be put up. Literature on the same should be circulated and workmen should be tested by factory inspectors as to their knowledge thus imparted. Joint investigations by employers' and employees' representatives will improve matters. Particularly in casualties the co-operation of workmen's and employers' representatives in investigation would be useful.

**VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.**

51. (i) The provisions of the Act are still not widely known among workmen. The Commissioner may be entrusted with statutory powers for enforcing returns and detecting unreported cases. A universal scheme of compulsory insurance would be premature. Employers in hazardous trades may reasonably be compelled to cover their liability by insurance. Vital statistics with reference to industries and enterprises should be taken for the purpose of determining the lines of extension of the Act. It would appear that the case of extending the Act to plantation labourers is worth examining.

53. (i) The scales may be liberalised for the lower paid workmen.

**IX.—Hours.****A.—Factories.**

55. Majority of factories work 60 hours per week and 10 hours a day. Others work 8 and 9 hours, 48 and 54 hours respectively per week.

59. No reduction of hours is necessary now, nor even practicable under present industrial conditions.

60 and 61. No alteration is advisable at present regarding weekly rest or interval.

**D.—Other Establishments.**

77. (a) Hours of work in plantations should be restricted to 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week because of the hard life on the hills.

**X.—Women, Young Adults and Children.**

83. For women 8 hours' day and 48 hours' week is unobjectionable. Their exclusion from certain dangerous sections of factory work may also be legislated upon—blow rooms, and spinning rooms in textile mills, etc.

84. Employment of children in textile mills may be prohibited, if not in others also. Children under 12 are reported to be employed in coffee-curing which should not be allowed; though working in open sheds, and though helping their mothers, it is prejudicial to their education and health. It is reported that the Act is being evaded by erecting a wall between the factory and the garbling sheds.

#### XII.—Wages.

103. Schemes for standardization and fixing of minimum wages are premature in India; cost of living varies from place to place; welfare work and other amenities also vary.

106. Fines are small and rare and are often utilised for the general benefit of the employees. It is a necessary means of punishment.

107. In larger industries wages are paid by the month; in smaller by fortnight, and in seasonal, by week; piece work is paid by day generally. Punctuality of payment is generally kept up; otherwise the workmen revolt.

108. The serious indebtedness of workers is an urgent problem. It is reported that a substantial portion of the wages goes to money-lenders on pay days in industrial areas; the lot of agricultural labour is worse.

109. There are no profit-sharing or co-partnership schemes in operation.

110. Leave is granted for varying periods not exceeding one month per year. Some give 15 days on half pay. Unauthorised leave is also too common.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

121. (iii) *Amendments.*—Half the executive of a trade union is now permitted to be persons not employed in the industry. This is mischievous though it gives the advantage of knowledge and experience. It is useful to reduce this proportion considerably. Often they prevent goodwill and mutual understanding between employer and employee.

124. Joint standing committees would be useful.

125. Trade Disputes Act, passed recently, came into force on 8th May last. As it was a hasty piece of legislation amendments might be required in the light of experience.

#### XVIII.—Intelligence.

143. Statistics are at present collected for the following:—*Factory labour*—(a) daily average rate of wages by different classes; (b) number of factories by districts, and industries; (c) accidents to workers in factories in different industries; (d) average daily number of persons employed in different industries according to districts; (e) average daily number of persons employed in different industries according to adults and children; (f) particulars of intervals, holidays, and hours of work of employees.

A quinquennial wages census is also taken. It was begun in 1908. The last one was in 1926. This only relates to rural and urban wages and not to industrial wages. The information is collected through the revenue department which is already overburdened with other duties. The compilation is done by the Commissioner of Labour. Besides the above statistics there are the trade union returns which are rarely submitted in time and then only imperfectly.

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#### I.—Recruitment.

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its support and resorts to his rural surroundings off and on. The monotonous factory life tires out his energies, and he seeks an occasional relief from it by taking to agricultural work on the open fields.

The labourers' services are secured either through co-workers, mistris, contractors, or directly. In upper India they are usually secured direct through information supplied by co-workers. In Bombay and Ahmedabad the foreman is entrusted with this task. In the Bengal Presidency the overseer is the "Sirdar," who provides jobs to other workers at a price and supervizes their activities during factory hours.

The average wage-earner tries to make use of opportunities if circumstances and conditions allow. The pressure of population on the soil has led to the migration of the agricultural classes to industrial areas in different parts of India. The labourers from the United Provinces go to the Punjab, Bengal, Assam, Bombay, etc. The competition of machine-made cloth has dealt a heavy blow to the hand-loom industry and forced the hereditary weavers to shift to the cotton mills. The "Pardeshi Bhaiyi," often heard of in Bombay, is a Hindu from the United Provinces. The Punjab sends out skilled craftsmen and the North-Western Frontier Province the ubiquitous Pathan money-lender. A large number of labourers from Allahabad and the adjoining districts proceed as far as Calcutta and the Central Provinces. There is a great potential supply of labour in India. The reorganization of agriculture and trade, resulting in the elimination of waste, will be an important source of labour supply for our growing industries. There is an ever-increasing unemployment amongst the educated classes and they could easily be absorbed in the ranks of industry if the factory conditions were to improve. The beggars, mullahs, sadhus, and others could also be turned into a serviceable force in the country. It is no doubt true that the illiteracy of the masses, their poverty and want of organization, their abysmal ignorance of external affairs, their family affection and love of home have rendered their position very precarious and prevented them from making a full use of their opportunities. But, allowing for these drawbacks, we find a great mobility from one place to another. This information is based on figures collected by me in the course of my enquiries, and a statistical account of them appears in my recent books. I would further add that it is fallacious to maintain that caste has been an effective barrier in the way of the mobility of labour.

Our workers are not trained from their early life to one particular task as a means of livelihood. They lack permanence, mainly because the factory conditions present a dreary outlook. They do not generally enjoy the benefit of a provident fund or a pension scheme. They live from hand to mouth and, when they die, their dependents carry on a wretched existence. For a very large number of workers employment is uncertain. Its continuity may extend from one day to a few years. The permanence of labour is more or less dependant on the area of recruitment and the conditions of work. The turnover of labour will be very small if the factory is situated in a rural area and if its environments are sanitary and attractive. In a factory at Sujanpore (Punjab) the average absence of an operative every month was half a day in 1925-26. It was higher in May—the harvesting season—when it rose to one day per labourer per month. It gradually went down in June and July. In August and September—malarial months—it rose as high as 1.6 days per labourer per month. In another mill, labour is mainly recruited from rural areas nearby. The average absence per operative comes up to only one-third of a day per month. It rises, though very little, in the harvesting and malarial seasons.

The average period of absence increases when the mill becomes dependent partly on local and partly on outside labour and when its conditions of work are unwholesome. It is at its maximum in cotton textile mills in the Punjab, which recruits labourers mainly from the United Provinces. In a cotton mill at Amritsar, about 10 per cent. of the workers are absent every day. The average period of service of a labourer in a Sujanpore factory is about seven years. The majority of workers in a factory in the Lahore district have been there for many years. In another factory near Rawalpindi the average period of service is about four years. But turnover rates are high—very high—in urban areas. In a mill at Amritsar the average period of service is as low as a year and a-half, and it is less than ten months in another mill situated close by.

These instances are taken from factories which I have personally visited. But it is too early to generalize for the whole of India. The migratory character of labour may be accounted for by one or more of the following reasons:—

- (1) Bad and unhealthy housing environments.
- (2) Shifting of labourers during the harvesting season.
- (3) Indiscriminate hiring and summary dismissals.
- (4) Long working hours and distasteful factory conditions.
- (5) Unwholesome habits of labourers.

At present there is no system in vogue in India whereby surplus labour in one part may be shifted to areas of greater demand. In consequence there may be

dearth in some parts and plethora in others at one and the same time. Therefore, industrial labour bureaus should be started by the Government in every division linked up in their turn into an industrial labour department for every province.

But an industrial labour bureau may be a source of danger. It may be instrumental in supplying cheap labour to favoured employers. It may also help in breaking a strike by importing the services of outside labourers. Hence, strong trade unionism seems to be a necessary adjunct of a labour bureau. This does not mean that initial steps should not be taken towards the creation of labour bureaus and federated labour departments for the provinces. Trade unionism will grow slowly and steadily and their select officials, as also the representatives of the employers, may easily be co-opted on the bureaus. A labour bureau cannot succeed if its duties are relegated to a clerk who sits down and prepares a list of the unemployed. Competent persons should be appointed to study the wants of each division and arouse trust and confidence in all concerned. The provincial labour departments in their own turn should be federated into a national employment service controlled by the Government of India. The provincial departments should aim at the following objects :—(1) They should collect information regarding the real economic and social condition of workers. (2) They should record the movements of food prices. (3) They should encourage and promote goodwill between the employers and the employees. (4) They should maintain a record of industrial disputes with special reference to wages; and (5) they should play an important role in the settlement of industrial disputes.

The uncertain conditions of work in India breed disloyalty in the worker. Everything is regulated from the cash nexus point of view and the interests of workers are often trampled under foot. Under these circumstances it is reasonable to expect that the Government should legislate for unemployment insurance and make a beginning with industrial workers.

## II.—Staff Organization.

The factory manager puts each man in his place. It is expected that he should be an expert organizer. It is also desirable that he should have been "through the mill." It is only in well-organized industries that the managers are greatly qualified. In small factories, the manager is sometimes no better than the labourers themselves, except for influence.

The selection of the managing staff presents several difficulties in India. It is with much difficulty that the Indians can work their way up in several large-scale concerns. Wherever the factories are manned by Europeans, there is a limit up to which, only Indians can rise. This racial discrimination is seen at its worst in railway workshops where it was expected that the workers—Indian or European—will be on an equal footing. To take only one instance. The European apprentices in one railway workshop get 14 annas to Re. 1.8 annas as wages per day. The Indian apprentices, working as their colleagues, get 8 annas to Re. 1.2 annas as daily wages. This preferential treatment creates ill-will and it is mainly for this reason that the educated Indian youth does not consider it consistent with his sense of self-respect to work under such unfair and inequitable conditions.

In some factories, Indian apprentices are seldom taken. The racial discrimination must vanish away and Government orders in future should never be placed with firms which perpetuate such distinctions.

The relations between the superior staff and the rank and file are *apparently* cordial, though complaints of mal-treatment often come within one's hearing. The staff generally suffers from the malady of "Superiority Complex" and some strikes could be easily traced to it. The conditions cannot improve, unless and until the staff make up their minds to treat workers as partners in industry.

The system of employing jobbers is defective. The jobbers sell labour at a price and receive regular monthly perquisites from the illiterate workers. The system could be easily replaced by industrial labour bureaus which I have recommended above.

There is a great scope for works committees in India and an experiment in this direction is well worth the attention of factory owners.

The attendance registers in small mills are not regularly kept. The wages are generally paid by one of the clerical staff and the system results in bribery and corruption. It is only in very small establishments that the wages are paid by the manager.

The contractors act as intermediaries in some mills, e.g., carpet factories. The system results in sweating of children and unorganized workmen.

### III.—Housing.

The extent to which housing is provided by employers, by public agencies and private landlords varies from place to place. The workers sometimes live in villages adjoining their factories and, in such cases, possess their own houses. The workers are sometimes encouraged to build houses of their own by loans from the factory on cheap terms. But such cases are few and far between. Generally, the nature of accommodation provided is not in proportion to workers' demands and it is often seen that workers sub-let their tenements to acquaintances and friends. Overcrowding results, thereby affecting the health of all.

The workers have a special complaint against the landlordism of their employers. I know the case of a strike in which whole families were turned out bag and baggage and thrown upon the mercy of the public at large. Such instances of oppression by employers are not rare.

The workers' quarters are generally very unsatisfactory because of the following :—

(1) Bad ventilation or the entire absence of it. Vitiating atmosphere lowers the vitality and thereby increases the susceptibility to disease. It decreases both physical and mental capacity for work.

(2) The rooms are small in dimensions and are generally overcrowded. The workers are herded together in them like sheep.

(3) Insanitary habits of labourers, due mainly to their illiteracy and poverty.

(4) The streets in which the workers' quarters are located in cities are filthy. Cows and buffaloes are tied in them at night.

(5) There are no enclosures to these houses. No privacy is possible.

(6) The workers' dwellings have generally uneven and uncemented floors. City slums are never whitewashed.

(7) No separate baths and urinals are generally provided. Sometimes, latrines are conspicuous by their absence. But, wherever they exist, they are small in number. Lighting arrangements are bad. Pure water is not readily accessible in all cases. Wells, wherever used, are kept in an insanitary condition. Last but not the least, the local boards pay very little attention to the requirements of workers.

(8) Bad moral influence due to congestion and overcrowding.

An improvement in houses can be brought about in one of the following ways :—

(1) The Local Governments may float loans and build quarters handing them over to the workmen at a reasonable rent.

(2) The Government may finance the factory owners and local boards at a reasonable rate of interest and encourage them to provide sanitary accommodation for workers. It can render further assistance by giving land free as is often done in the case of private individuals.

Educated labourers are opposed to the creation of landlord employers. They are justified to some extent in their attitude and I propose that the factory owners should be legally prohibited from expelling workers from their quarters in the course of a strike.

### IV.—Health.

Wherever insanitary conditions prevail, a high death-rate is found among persons of all ages. In this connection, I would invite the attention of the Commissioners to the resolution of the All-India Conference of Medical Research Workers (1926) as quoted in the Linlithgow Commission Report.

The birth-rates and death-rates are both high, though it is not possible to quote exact figures in relation to factory labourers. These are mainly influenced by bad dietry, physique and houses. The housing environments are extremely dismal and gloomy and their effects are accentuated by bad working conditions. The factories, from within, present the following ugly aspects :—

(1) Bad sanitation—annual whitewashing is half-heartedly taken up by small employers. Rubbish and debris accumulate in the premises. The drains are not regularly flushed. The latrine accommodation is not always sufficient. There is a lack of sufficient supply of good drinking water.

(2) Defective ventilation, especially in the ginning factories.

(3) Artificial humidification in cotton mills is not properly controlled.

(4) The hours of work are long and industrial efficiency naturally suffers.

Medical facilities are provided by some employers. The workers benefit thereby, though it is a fact that they prefer to be treated by a hakim who may be well versed in the Unani or Ayurvedic system of medicine. I suggest that factories should be enjoined to keep whole-time or part-time hakims, or doctors trained in the Western system of medicine if the workers so desire, to treat them free. Every factory employing 50 persons or more should keep a whole-time physician. Factories employing less than 50 labourers should be called upon to keep a part-time physician who may treat the patients and devote at least two hours daily to them. There should be one physician for every 200 labourers. The local boards can also help the employers by allowing a recurring grant for the purpose.

There are probably no medical facilities provided exclusively for the factory workers by the Government. It is, however, certain that the employers, the Government and the local boards can render invaluable service in this direction. The provision for women doctors is not satisfactory, and, wherever they are appointed, the labouring women benefit the least. Much useful work has no doubt been done by the Countess of Dufferin's Fund, the Lady Cheimsford League and the Indian Red Cross Society; but they have so far touched only the fringe of the problem which so greatly affects the masses in the country.

The physical welfare of expectant mothers and born babies should be one of our foremost concerns. The indigenous midwives are unclean and unhygienic in their habits, and their proper training appears essential. The task can be undertaken with success by Local Governments and voluntary agencies. It should proceed on the following lines:—

- (1) There should be a sufficient supply of maternity homes for the normal confinement of women workers.
- (2) There should be a provision for home nursing, for ailments connected with pregnancy and for the diseases of infants.
- (3) Expectant mothers, if penniless, must be treated and nourished free.
- (4) Maternity and child welfare programmes should be greatly encouraged.

The number of latrines attached to working class houses is not always sufficient. Sometimes, no latrines are built and the workers have to go far into the fields to ease themselves. The arrangements for drinking water are not always satisfactory. There are extremely few facilities for bathing and washing.

Cholera, malaria, influenza, plague and consumption take a heavy toll of the lives of the workers. Hookworm is mostly prevalent in Southern India.

Sickness insurance should be made compulsory for workers in organized industries. The International Labour Conference, held in 1927, stipulated that the funds for the purpose should be obtained by compulsory contributions from the insured persons and their employers and that a contribution by the State should be optional. My personal opinion is that a beginning should be made with registered factories and that the difficulties arising from non-acceptability of Western medicine could be easily countenanced by the assistance of Unani and Ayurvedic hakims. I do not believe that there is at present a paucity of medical men. On the other hand, unemployment amongst medical graduates is so great that many of them are seen working on a miserable pittance, and some others have emigrated to such distant places as East Africa, Straits Settlements, etc. Labour is migratory no doubt; but this cannot stand in our way. The three parties to contribute towards the Insurance Fund are the State, the employer and the workers. The first two are not surely migratory and can regularly pay their own quota. The labourer wants to benefit by the fund, and can pay his contribution regularly.

The question of provision of maternity benefits dates back to the year 1919 when the first International Conference met at Washington. A convention was then passed that the employment of women within six weeks after confinement should be legally prohibited, and that they should be at liberty to leave their jobs six weeks before confinement without fear of dismissal. The Convention also provided for maternity benefits. In September, 1924, Mr. N. M. Joshi introduced a Bill in the Legislative Assembly to prevent employers from dismissing women six weeks before confinement and to provide for maternity benefits. After a heated debate, the Bill was thrown out by the House. Some enlightened employers have no doubt introduced benefit schemes in their factories, but these are neither compulsory nor systematic. The Bombay Government has taken the lead in introducing an Act to regulate the employment of women in factories some time before and some time after confinement and to provide for the payment of maternity benefits to them. Other provinces in India should as well proceed with legislation on the subject at an early date.

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

Welfare work of an extremely elementary nature has no doubt been started in several factories. But, even there, it is looked upon not as a duty but as a benevolent measure. There are very few factories which try to promote the educative and recreative tendencies of workers. Medicines are freely distributed in some mills. But besides, there is the creation of harmony and the co-operation of management and workers in industry. This appears through the works-committee where representatives of employers and employees meet together for the discussion of common aims and objects.

A welfare worker is a necessary adjunct of a wise and successful industrial organism. A large factory can procure his services all for itself. Smaller factories, situated in a particular area, may combine together for the purpose. Welfare work should proceed on the following lines :—

(a) Canteens. Food should be supplied at cost price. Messrooms should be started and they should be kept as comfortable as possible.

(b) Cleanliness in factories and workers' quarters. Lessons in health, diet and sanitation should be occasionally given by cinema shows, lantern lectures, etc.

(c) Medical examination of workers. Physicians and dentists should be provided for compulsorily in factories. First-aid and hygiene classes should be started.

(d) Judicious recruitment of workers.

Welfare work can also be extended in the direction of the establishment of night schools, Sunday schools, schools for the half-timers and for the children of employers.

The progress of co-operation in India has been only one-sided. Our activities in the field of co-operation are mainly confined to the credit branch almost to the exclusion of several other branches, equally useful, if not more. Co-operative stores and co-operative credit institutions should be started amongst the factory workers by the Provincial Co-operative Departments.

### VI.—Education.

The expenditure of workers on education is exceedingly small. My enquiries in the Punjab show that the workers' percentage of expenses on education comes to about .02. The expenses increase as the family income increases. Education is an asset without which no community can make any progress. Initiative, self-reliance, judgment, character—these are among its chief ends.

Our educational system is defective and requires much overhauling. As far as possible, elementary education must become preparatory education. It should initiate the student in the three R's, and create a practical industrial bias in him. Free compulsory primary education should be introduced both for boys and girls. Domestic environments are still far from satisfactory and, unless the surroundings of childhood and youth are improved, no permanent good can be attained. It is the influence of the mother that is all-pervading in the early days of one's life. The condition of future generations can therefore be immensely improved by women's education, which would necessarily include training in hygiene and sanitation. Compulsory primary education is a duty of the State and cannot be enjoined on the factory owners as such. The latter can, however, give voluntary financial aid to night-schools, Sunday schools and schools for half-timers and children.

An attempt should be made at combining industrial-school and apprenticeship ; thereby enabling the boys to spend half the time in workshops and the other half in schools acquiring ordinary academic education. The factory owners, on their part, should seriously take up the training of promising labourers in higher work. There is usually no provision for apprenticeship in our factories. Every avenue should be explored to improve, not only the skill, but also the prospects of workmen.

Education of the right type is sure to raise the standard of living of workers and add to their efficiency.

### VII.—Safety.

Accidents occur in several ways. The main causes are the following :— (1) Lead poisoning. In industries liable to it, a periodical medical examination should be made compulsory. (2) Unguarded state of machinery. Belts and pulleys are still largely unfenced in some of the small factories. Sometimes, the fencing that is in use is imperfect and obstructive. (3) Untrained hands are on some occasions employed to replace regular workers and an increase in accidents invariably results thereby. (4) Carelessness on the part of the employees. Many of the accidents reported from

the different factories would certainly have been prevented with the exercise of proper supervision\*. The carelessness may be due to ignorance on the part of the worker, or it may be due to his predilection for loose clothing.

Safety-first devices are thus absolutely essential in factories. But, before they are launched, three main things are necessary :—(1) The demand for Safety-first must come from the factory owners. (2) Safety-first rules should be enforced with the co-operation and consent of workers. (3) Wherever possible, Safety-first inspectors should be appointed by the different factories.

The duties of the Safety-first Inspector should be three-fold.

(a) He should impress upon the workers the utility of the Safety-first movement by lectures and lantern-shows. First-aid and hygiene lectures may also be given with advantage. Rescue demonstrations should be held from time to time. Notices in easy readable vernaculars and in the form of pictures should be put up at every conspicuous place in the factory as well as at the place of danger, and the workers thereby warned against danger.

(b) A record of accidents should be kept. This would assist the inspectors of factories in laying down fresh rules for the guidance of the workers in the light of new experiences.

The prevention of accidents is a business proposition by itself. It is also altruistic in character. Some of the accidents are due to blood-poisoning and it appears essential that the provision of First-aid should be made compulsory in every factory.

The Factory Act is not properly enforced and I have laid stress on this point in my recent book on "Factory Labour in India." I am certain, the stringency of inspection and the rigorous enforcement of regulations will lead to a reduction in accidents. The shortening of working hours and the improvement of general working conditions are also sure to cut down the number of accidents.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

The success of the Workmen's Compensation Act mainly depends on the liberality and breadth of view with which its provisions are worked by the Commissioners who have been awarded immense powers. This is an important point and reports on the working of the Workmen's Compensation Act show that, but for the personal inspection of Commissioners, many things would never have seen the light of day. It is a pity, however, that some Local Governments hold that "the commissioner's intervention comes in only when there is a dispute between the employer and the employed" (Annual report on the working of the Workmen's Compensation Act in the Madras presidency for the year 1926—Page 1). The employees are poor and ignorant and are sometimes deceived by the employers. Under such conditions, the commissioners appointed under the Workmen's Compensation Act should look round and see that its provisions are justly enforced. The Commissioner plays a double role. He is a judicial officer and passes his judgment on different matters according to their merit. He is also a friend and adviser of the parties and is expected not only to settle disputes but also to prevent them.

During the year 1925, the Commissioner for Bombay found that his order for compensation in two cases was of no avail as the employers took steps to file their schedule in insolvency. This instance brings out the necessity of a new provision in the Act, whereby the Commissioner may be empowered to attach the property of the employer through his District Officer for the recovery of the claim.

Compensation is often denied on trifling excuses, and, when it is paid at all, it is seldom quite adequate to meet the situation. This applies largely to the case of small employers.

The Compensation Act is not well known to the skilled workers, and the unskilled workers have got a very faint idea of it. The annual reports of the different provinces refer particularly to this difficulty and it appears essential that steps should be taken to advertise the benefits of the Act. This could be done by social agencies through popular lectures on the subject for the ignorant masses and through the distribution of leaflets in easy readable vernaculars for the skilled workers and the employers. The Government could as well help in this propaganda.

The administration of the Act shows that the cases, in which no surviving relation of the dead employee has been found, are after all not rare. This fact very naturally suggests the desirability of compulsorily registering the names and addresses of the nearest relatives of factory workers. It is an established fact that labour in India is migratory. Much of it is employed in seasonal factories and disperses after a short interval. The employers benefit if the dependents of dead workmen are not traced

\* For further information on the subject please refer to my book on "Factory Labour in India."



and the Commissioners appointed under the Compensation Act have not been given the necessary means to carry out a searching enquiry into every case. Thus, it is essential that an amendment should be made in the Act enforcing compulsory registration of the names of dependents.

The waiting period in cases of temporary disablement extends to ten days. The illiterate workmen, who, of course, form the bulk of the factory population, resort to the clumsy methods of extending the waiting period to a fortnight, or even more if possible, for the purpose of claiming some compensation. It is, in my opinion, advisable to curtail the period of ten days to a week. The workmen may thus be induced to follow the instructions of the employers, as also of the medical practitioners, more vigilantly and carefully. And again, they must get compensation also for the waiting period.

Under Section 24 of the Act, the parties may be represented either by a lawyer or by a person authorized for the purpose in writing by the parties concerned. The employers have got associations of their own and are well-represented everywhere. The workmen, on the other hand, have got very few effective unions to further their claims. The Act is new and the process is so long-drawn-out that the poor labourer is always glad to accept a small monetary compensation from the master rather than bother to sue him.

The factory labourer is sunk deep in poverty and it is difficult for him to pay for the services of lawyers in anticipation of the realization of compensation money. Not only that. It is difficult for him to prove his case by direct evidence. His colleagues, who may otherwise have helped him, are afraid of losing their jobs and desert him at the hour of need in dread of the employer.

The Compensation Act cannot be of much avail unless a radical amendment is made in one direction. I propose that the cases of factory labourers should be taken up free of charge by Government Pleaders. This will greatly facilitate the task of workers and enable them to get the best they can out of the Act.

The Indian Workmen's Compensation Act has, so far as my knowledge goes, been favourably received by the employees. It is too early to say whether it has in any way helped in steadying the conditions of labour and in removing its migratory nature. It is, however, certain that the Act, when liberally amended, will make industrial life more attractive. The labourers, secure in their position, will become more efficient, thereby adding immensely to the sum total of wealth in the country. The employer will also benefit as there will be a steady and continuous source of supply for his factory.

It was believed that the Act will compel the mill-owners to insure their factories against risks under the Workmen's Compensation Act. A large number of factories have, for example, insured in the Punjab. But, since cases of insolvency have been brought to our notice, I suggest that the Act should be amended to include compulsory insurance against accidents on the part of all mill-owners.

Under Section 3 (b) of the Factories Act, the Local Governments have powers to extend the operation of the Act to any factory wherein not less than ten persons are at work, whether mechanical power is used or not. So far as my knowledge goes, the workers in such factories are not entitled to the privileges of the Compensation Act. Again, the workman, as far as the Act goes, must be either a manual labourer or employed on wages. Thus, students undergoing training as apprentices without wages are not eligible for any compensation. The scope of the Compensation Act must be widened so as to enable it to cover all factories employing ten persons or more, or all persons whether working on wages or not.

The scales of compensation are certainly very inadequate at present. I think that they should be liberally enhanced.

It is true no doubt that the employers are slack in furnishing the statutory returns. The fines in cases of slackness ought to be greatly increased and the factory owners should be enjoined to keep a register in their office showing the names of the persons injured, the causes of the accidents, their nature, the time at which these occurred and so on. Any negligence in this direction should be adequately punished.

### IX.—Hours.

The excessive tasking of women and children is found more or less in small factories. Well-organized factories try to remain within the pale of the law. The seasonal factories show little respect for it and violate the rule of working hours and employment of children as best as they can. The labourers are generally overworked in small factories and the notice of working hours is not generally affixed.

The cotton-ginning factories are the worst offenders in this respect, due mostly to the pooling system in force amongst them. According to this system, each working factory pays into a pool a fixed sum per maund for every maund of cotton ginned

The money thus accumulated is distributed among the constituent factories in proportion to the number of gins in each factory. The pooling system is in force in several parts of India and its uncontrolled nature is the main cause of the regrettable sweating of women and children. The law should stop pooling forthwith.

Several factories work on Sundays and other holidays in defiance of the Act, mainly because the fine imposed in such cases is not high enough. Exemptions from Sunday holidays are allowed in some cases by Local governments for work which necessitates continuous production for technical reasons. But the worker should be secured a six-day week, although the factory works for seven days.

Shorter working hours do not necessarily bring down the output per man. They may result in an increase of output. The shortening of the working day will, under proper supervision, put an end to much idling and loitering on the part of workers. The Government happens to be a great employer of labour and experiments in the reduction of hours could easily be tried by them. I suggest that, for the time being, the weekly maximum of working hours should be brought down to fifty-four.

#### X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

No child under 12 years of age can be employed in a factory. But, if he exceeds the age of 12, he cannot work unless and until he carries a valid certificate or a token thereof of age and fitness on his body. These rules are in conformity with the Factories Act but they are not scrupulously observed by mill-owners. Children above 12 years of age seldom carry a certificate in smaller mills and the illegal employment of younger children still continues. The double employment of children has not come to an end.

Physical fitness and age are the two essential conditions for the granting of certificates to mill-children. But in some instances, physical unfitness is the direct outcome of poverty and cannot be overcome unless the child is provided with the proper means. Under these conditions, it may be advisable to grade the different employments and issue certificates for definite occupations in different factories, provided the age-limit has been reached. This principle should be incorporated in the Factories Act.

Women and children are greatly sweated in unregistered factories and I have elsewhere suggested that the scope of the Indian Factories Act should be extended.

#### XII.—Wages.

The factory labourers are paid in money. In addition, a considerable amount of payment in kind exists in several factories. Quarters are sometimes provided free or at less than their economic rent. Sometimes, grain is given in the factory at prices cheaper than those prevailing elsewhere.

In several factories workers are employed overtime, whenever necessary. Overtime wages are generally reckoned at the ordinary rate. In a large number of factories, overtime work is not paid. In one factory in the Gurdaspur district (Punjab), overtime workers are allowed the privilege of leaving the factory earlier next day in proportion to the extra time put in by them. Personally I hold that overtime work should never become the rule, as it at present is in small factories. And when the labourer works overtime, he should in no case get an overtime wage at less than one and a half of his ordinary wage.

Some workers, e.g., children working in several factories, are greatly underpaid. Trade Boards should be set up in such industries.

Fines are imposed for faults, real or fictitious. The faults may be :—(1) absence without notice ; (2) late attendance in the factory ; (3) insubordination, etc., etc.

No enquiry is generally held and fines in several cases are treated as part of revenues. I suggest that, ordinarily, fines should be utilised on workers. As a matter of fact fines should be imposed only in rare cases, and it should be enacted by law that they will in no case exceed a day's wage in one month.

Wages may be paid daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly. More usually they are paid monthly with 7 to 15 days' wages always in arrears. In my opinion, weekly payments must be made for workers earning Rs. 50 or less per month. Again, unclaimed wages should never accrue to revenues. They may be utilised on the social and educational activities of workers. At present, workers are rarely given privilege leave on full pay after some period of approved service. I think that one month's leave on half-pay or 15 days' leave on full pay should be granted to workers after every year of approved service.

Many of the small industries are sweated in India and a fair-wages clause should certainly be introduced in public contracts.

The mill-hands are largely in debt. My enquiries in the Punjab showed that 62 per cent. of them were indebted. In two mills at Amritsar, the percentage was as high as 79. The Sholapur enquiry stated that no less than 63 per cent. of the families reported interest on debt. The interest charged is exorbitant. In several cases, it is one anna per rupee per week. A regulation of the rate of interest by the Government will be welcome at this stage.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

It is difficult to describe the precise influence which factory conditions exert on the operatives. Indirect inferences may however be drawn. I took the weights and heights of 238 labourers in some of the Punjab mills in 1927. Of these, about 149 had been in service for more than five years and about 200 had been working in the same factory for not less than three years. I also took the weights and heights of 495 prisoners in a few of the Punjab jails. The average weight of labourers, taken all in all, comes up to about 115·3 lb. whereas the average weight of prisoners has been estimated at 126·3 lb. This evidently proves that, man for man, an average prisoner is surely better off in health than an average factory labourer.

The unhealthy factory conditions have affected the efficiency of our workers and an improvement is possible if the working hours are reasonably reduced, the housing conditions made sanitary and attractive and social and educational environments changed for the better.

Alcohol and drugs have their share in bringing down the efficiency of workers but these can be removed with proper education and care.

### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

The employers are generally much more organized than the workers and that is perhaps only natural. Sometimes, factory-owners are in league with one another and make the world hard for the labourers to live in. During my visit to a mill at Amritsar in 1927, the manager confessed that he never took in a labourer who had been dismissed by another similar factory situated at a distance of about 40 miles. These two factories are the only ones that produce the same commodity in the Punjab. It is therefore difficult for a dismissed worker to make both ends meet; unless, of course, he decides to take to a different calling altogether at a greatly reduced wage.

Trade Unionism will surely strengthen the position of workers. For the time being, we know that several employers look askance at them and tease the trade unionists in several ways. It is a pity that this prejudice should prevail in State industrial concerns; but all the same, it is a fact.

The Trade Union Act needs amendment in the following directions:—(1) According to the Act, as it stands, not less than one half of the total officers of a registered trade union shall be persons "actually engaged or employed in an industry with which the trade union is concerned. . . ." I suggest that "one-half" should be changed to "one-third." I make this suggestion in view of the present illiteracy of workers. (2) The political clause should be based on the principle of "contracting out" rather than of "contracting in."

### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

The causes of strikes are both economic and non-economic, and the workers have gained in some and lost in others. There are very few opportunities afforded to workpeople of making representations in small factories, though the larger ones are now-a-days more accessible.

The Trade Disputes Act suffers from some serious drawbacks. The workers in public-utility services are differently treated and no special privileges are held out to them. The Act also puts an end to sympathetic strikes and it will be no wonder if it proves mischievous in the long run.

### XVI.—The Law of Master and Servant.

In the carpet-factories, the master weavers are generally allowed advances to the extent of a couple of hundred rupees. They bring their own workers, usually small children, and pay them in any manner they please. The lump sums, thus advanced, make the master weavers recklessly extravagant with the result that they cannot easily extricate themselves from it. The exploitation of their labour thus continues from year to year. The system of advances by a mortgage of one's labour should come to an end.

In one factory in the Lahore district, the skilled hands serve on individual contracts drawn up beforehand. They are usually bound down for a period of five years before which they cannot leave. The employer, on the other hand, can bid them goodbye by serving a notice of three months. Very curious indeed ! Lest the worker should deceive his master, he is called upon to deposit a guarantee fund which is either paid down or collected by a regular monthly deduction from wages during the course of a year. The guarantee fund amounts to three months' wages. I do not know how far such a contract is legally binding, but I certainly think that the Law should take no cognisance of such cases.

#### XVII.—Administration.

It must not be supposed that factory legislation, as it stands, is quite perfect. There are several factories which employ a large number of workmen without using any mechanical power. Carpet factories in the Punjab are an instance in point. It is estimated that, in the Punjab alone, about 2 225 workers are dependent upon them, and of these, at least 15 per cent. are children between 6 and 12 years of age. The general condition of these factories can better be imagined than described. The defective sanitation, the unclean *kutchas* floors, and the insanitary yards all tell on the health and physique of workers. The workmen and apprentices are also excessively worked, with sometimes no weekly day of rest. These evils were noticed by the Punjab Government as early as 1920, but it is surprising that, in spite of this knowledge, the carpet factories were not brought under the Act. Similarly bad conditions prevail in several carpet factories in other provinces and also in some unregistered tanneries. The premises of the latter are dirty and insanitary. Ventilation is extremely defective and the working rooms are sometimes frightfully dark. The hours of work know no bounds ; the workmen are the slaves of their masters, and they can be called to work at any time of the day or night. Sports works at Sialkot present the same ugly aspect as regards working hours and the employment of children. It is thus desirable that the Factory Act should be extended to all premises wherein ten or more than ten persons are at work.

The average factory owner wants to have his own way and is prepared to shift from British territory to the Indian States where no labour law prevails. Cases of actual migration have come to our notice and it is essential that labour laws should be the same all over India.

Very few of the illiterate workers know all about the labour laws. Mere translation of the Factory Act in the vernaculars of the workmen and putting the same on the notice board are not enough. Some effective means are necessary to instil the provisions of the Factory Acts into the minds of labourers.

The hours of employment and rest intervals, the observance of holidays, the enforcement of sanitary conditions and the fencing and guarding of machinery, all rest on a proper administration of factory laws. The amount of protection given to the labourers is determined not by the number of labour statutes but by the extent to which their provisions are enforced. Judged by this standard, I must plainly admit that the administration of the Factory Act is not quite satisfactory. The number of inspections is small and the staff is not adequate to meet the situation. Moreover, some of the mill owners are too shrewd for the inspectors. I suggest that the Factory Inspecting Staff should be completely Indianised and their emoluments made liberal. The Factory Act should be rigorously enforced and there should be a uniformity of administration in the different Indian provinces. There should be an All-India Inspector of Factories with the Government of India, whose duty it should be to bring about uniformity of administration in the different provinces.

#### XVIII.—Intelligence.

I have already made suggestions in this respect in the course of my statement. A wage census and cost of living inquiries appear very essential. The investigations carried out so far by the Bombay Labour Office have yielded fruitful results and the other provinces should follow suit.

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*General Remarks.*—Kurnool, Nandyal, Guntur and Bezwada are growing industrial towns with a rapid increase of ground-nut, gin, oil and rice factories within the municipal areas. . Owing to the immediate dependance of these factories on agricultural products the nature of the work is seasonal. In spite of the millowners'

efforts to keep the factories open throughout the year by combination of ground-nut shelling with cotton ginning or oil pressing the employees are compelled during the slack seasons to work as coolies in building or road repairing for private and municipal bodies. The rice factories afford the most permanent employment. The employees are chiefly the poor among the caste people, and the majority of the women workers are widows. On account of the seasonal nature of the work in all these factories there is no distinctly industrial population. Therefore statistics for industrial workers do not exist, and investigation on the part of interested outsiders is made difficult by the suspicions of the millowners and the fear of the employees. There is ruinous competition in setting up mills and in raising the most paying crop. For example, with the growth of ground-nut factories farmers raised ground-nut to the detriment of cotton and grain crops, with the result the price of ground-nut came down and the cost of food grains went up. The competition in putting up mills regardless of the yield of crops in a given area probably accounts for the failure of making them paying concerns.

### I.—Recruitment.

People from the uplands flock to the delta areas during their slack season in search of work. When the rainfall fails even the landed classes make an exodus to supplement their income by work in the towns. Reddys, Thelagas, Kurruvas, Pancharus, Mohammedans and outcastes are found among the emigrants. People from H.E.H. the Nizam's dominions are often found among the emigrants in Kurnool and Nandyal, and the new railway is bound to facilitate emigration, though as a rule the people make their journeys on foot by easy stages.

2. People come daily from neighbouring villages within the radius of two to four miles. Since they find fairly regular employment in the town factories, labour for transplanting and harvesting has to be recruited from villages further away. These people throng the road sides and every available space in the towns *en route* to the fields.

### II.—Staff Organization.

14. A clerk is in charge of the registers in the mills and is responsible for supplying the labour needed. He is the paymaster and takes a commission of 3 pies on every rupee from the labourer.

15. (i) Work outside the mills (e.g., carrying about bags and similar jobs) is generally done by contract.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) The engineer, clerk and watchman belonging to the regular staff are given free quarters, but apart from them there is usually no housing provided for the mill hands. They are allowed to use the verandahs and sheds in a factory and to put up temporary huts in the mills' precincts. Tanneries provide very poor insanitary quarters with low mud walls and thatched roofs. No effort is made to make them comfortable and decent. In a line of houses in Bezvada the mud partition walls that should have afforded privacy were no higher than 2½ ft. The jute mill in Guntur provides two decent well-built lines of huts and charges 8 annas a block, irrespective of the earnings of the family.

(ii) Each of these towns has at least one chowtry open to all classes, but this accommodation is very inadequate. The Labour department in Guntur has given free lands along the trunk road, with the result that emigrants squat themselves on No-man's land between these and the road boundary. No arrangements for sanitation, light or water are made, and the people are bound to pollute the thoroughfare.

(iii) Private landlords allow the emigrants to settle on their land. In Guntur where this has happened, the huts are put up in any way; stagnant water stands right round, and the municipal lights on the roads on either side of the settlement are the only lighting, and the whole place is a heap of rubbish and dirt.

(iv) Workers themselves put up sheds in most cases. When they are once allowed to squat on any available space it is very hard to evict them. The municipalities are trying to improve matters. Since the land does not belong to the emigrants and they fondly look forward to the day of their return to their own village, even after settling down for ten or twelve years, they do not want to put up decent dwellings, and are content to live in miserable huts.

18. (iii) No provision is made for lighting, conservancy and water supply under any of the above conditions.

22. Morality is very low. No improvements are tried or suggested, though where there are Christians attempts are made to supervise the spiritual welfare of the people.

## IV.—Health.

23. (ii) The figures of infant mortality in the municipal areas for 1928-29 are :—

Guntur .. ..	218·5	per 1,000 births.
Bezwada.. ..	212·15	" "
Nandyal .. ..	198	" "

24. (i) No medical facility is provided by employers.

(ii) These places each have a Government hospital. The labour ward, with four beds in the Nandyal dispensary, had no lady doctor or midwife attached to it for the whole of last year. The Guntur hospital is very well equipped.

(iii) Mission and private hospitals in these places are very popular and attract patients even from outside the districts.

25. An able physician or surgeon draws cases, and the fear of hospitals is gradually disappearing.

26. (i), (ii) and (iii) Sanitary arrangements at the work places are provided for according to factory laws and are kept clean by the constant supervision of the health officers.

*At home.*—No sanitary arrangements at all. Sanitary arrangements in all the towns are very poor.

*In Nandyal* there are only a few houses with private latrines. "The town is dirty and insanitary" is the remark on the annual administrative report.

*In Guntur* the Sanitary Inspector's report says "Drainage not satisfactory." There are open drains running into the streets and running along the public chowtries where migrated labour camps throughout the year.

*In Bezwada* 13 per cent. of the houses are without latrines. A drainage scheme has just been passed but at present according to the Municipal report, "The amount of waste water that gets into the streets is enormous." The drainage of the town is let into the Bandar and Ellore canals. In this connection it may be of interest to note that one of the reasons assigned for the spread of cholera in Guntur district is the use of infected waters of the rivers and canals.

27. Each of these towns has a Health Officer. Child welfare centres are being opened now but these are all in the experimental stage.

29. (i) No research done to find out industrial diseases.

(ii) Malaria is prevalent in all these places and the highest figures of mortality are put down under "fever." Small-pox and cholera are estimated in Guntur district to come in a virulent form once in seven years and when cholera is at its highest small-pox is at its lowest. This can be said to be true of the other places too. Beriberi claims quite a number of victims each year in Guntur and Kistna districts. It is noted in Guntur that it is more prevalent after the introduction of rice mills. Legislation about over-polishing rice is suggested.

## V.—Welfare.

32. (i) Nothing is done by the employers.

(ii) No refreshments, shelters or creches are provided for by any other agency. It may be of interest to note here that a quarter of an anna is collected on every bag brought into the factory for charity from the middleman merchant who in his turn takes it from the ryot who raises the raw product. This sum is expended in charitable feeding during festivals and on grants to temples, whereas nothing is done for the ryot, the real donor, when he comes into the town in search of employment. About Rs. 4,000—Rs. 5,000 are collected annually this way. In Kurnool an infirmary for cattle is to be founded with this sum. In Guntur it is given to the temples, and in Nandyal it goes to feed the sacred cattle in Mahanandi temple. For some time past the milk from these cattle has been given free to the Child Welfare Centre and free of cost to the poor in times of epidemic.

## VI.—Education.

40. No schools exist for children from industrial centres. No facility is made to enable the grown-up children to attend schools when their parents leave them in charge of the houses and the babies. In spite of municipal and private schools provision has yet to be made for children of school-going age in these areas as follows—

	Boys.	Girls.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
In Bezwada .. ..	nil	35
In Guntur .. ..	23	63·88
In Nandyal .. ..	38	71

• Adult education is not taken up seriously. Children in day schools attend a night school in Nandyal.

**XII.—Wages.**

96. (i) The rate in the factories is the same as that in the surrounding agricultural areas, but at harvest time 1 anna more than the field rate is given to keep the labour.

(ii) 8 annas to 10 annas for men ; 5 annas to 8 annas for women.

106. (i) No fines are levied on the daily labourers.

(ii) Paid weekly on Sundays or once in ten days.

(iv) Wages not claimed are credited to the charity funds at the end of the financial year.

108. (i) In the villages the field labourers take loans at exorbitant rate of interest for agricultural or social requirements, and in their inability to repay these loans they pledge their service and that of their children to their masters and thus become virtually slaves.

(ii) Some of the labourers take refuge in the industrial towns from their creditors and never return to their native places. In the tanneries advances are given to the labourer without interest as a surety to bind him to the work.

**XVII.—Administration.**

139. Factory inspectors are scarce and their visits are few and far between ; in several cases being only once a year.

The Health Officer who visits oftener has no executive power and his position is that of an adviser only and therefore no prompt action can be taken in any case of breach of the law.

*Conclusions.*—It can be seen from the above facts that the conditions in these industrial towns are very bad and the situation needs some effective action.

1. Public chowtries or sheds erected either by public or private funds may minimise the wholesale squatting on the road sides and on any available space. It would help to ease matters if a certain percentage of the money collected in the mills for charitable purposes could be utilized for erecting sheds for the mill-hands.

2. The sanitary, educational and medical facilities should be adequately provided for in these towns, having in mind the industrial situation also.

3. Neither the employers nor the Municipalities nor the Government are taking any responsibility for the people who flock to the already crowded areas and for those permanent industrial labourers who live outside the municipal limits in their own villages.

4. The rise of mills creates a new labour situation outside the factories. The towns become centres of trade and the rich as well as the poor are attracted to them.

(a) The presence of the rich who put up new houses creates the demand for coolies and the growing municipalities employ many for road mending and other municipal works. But for all such people no proper provision for housing or sanitation is made.

(b) Coolies who carry loads to and from the factories form quite a permanent labour population. In Guntur about a thousand are estimated to make their living by this work. Their lot is no better than the other coolies.

(c) Child labour in the homes becomes a problem. When parents leave a girl between 9 and 12 in a home in charge of it and of the baby of the house, the work involved in carrying water and fuel and doing other domestic duties is heavier and takes longer hours than the work in a factory. In an industrial centre near Nagpur a child weighing 45 lbs. was found carrying a water pot of 38 lbs. This can be said to be true in the areas under survey.

These situations should be taken into consideration when legislating for factories.

5. An expert to study the yield of the crops in a given area and to advise the capitalists as to the best locality to open a new factory may help to put it on a business-like footing and prevent further fluctuation of labour by insolvency of mill-owners.

6. Legislation with regard to over polishing of rice may help to decrease the spread of beri-beri in those areas where it is at present noticeably on the increase.

✓ **MADRAS Kerosine Oil Workers' Union.**

This union was first started in the year 1919 with the object of instilling in the minds of its members a spirit of comradeship and to better their conditions—educational, social and economic. The union worked with some success until the strike in 1920. This dispute between the employers and the union was finally settled by the intervention of a board of enquiry in the year 1920 and the labourers were

comforted by the conclusions reached by that board of enquiry. This struggle resulted in the depletion of the funds of the union and of its members. At the desire of the labourers themselves this union was revived and it has now been registered under the Trades Union Act of 1926.

There are about 2,000 workers in the various oil companies carrying on business in the city of Madras. The prominent amongst those dealing in kerosine and petrol in the city of Madras are the newly amalgamated Burma Shell Distributing Company and the Standard Oil Company of America. The figure of 2,000 excludes the clerical staff employed by these companies, and out of this total number of workers about 1,400 have enrolled themselves as members of the union. It is expected that the other 600 will also join the union shortly.

The objects of the union are embodied in Rule 2 governing its constitution and it has the same objects as other unions working for the amelioration of the condition of the labour class in this country.

*The Objects of the Union shall be* :—(a) To render all possible help to the members by constitutional methods ; (b) to secure to them fair conditions of life and work ; (c) to endeavour to redress their grievances ; (d) to render help to provide against sickness, unemployment, old age and death ; (e) to endeavour to settle disputes between employers and employees amicably ; (f) to secure compensation for members in cases of accidents under the Workmen's Compensation Act ; (g) to provide legal assistance to members in respect of all matters arising out of, or incidental to, their employment ; (h) to endeavour to render aid to members during any lock-out or strike brought about with the sanction of the union ; (i) to collect information regarding the kerosine oil industry in India and outside ; (j) to co-operate and federate with the organization of labour, particularly kerosine oil workers, having similar objects, in India and outside ; (k) and generally to take such steps as may be necessary to ameliorate the social, educational, economic, civic and political conditions of the members.

To start with, the organizers of the union have great initial obstacles to surmount. Trade unionism in India is of recent growth and workers have not yet fully come to appreciate either the benefits or the necessity of trade union. Another great obstacle in the way of proper organization is the illiteracy prevalent especially in the labouring classes. We may state that these two defects have been fully exploited by the employers as is borne out from their disinclination to recognize trade unions and in their reluctance to accede to the demand of a minimum wages to the workmen.

We would, therefore, suggest that in order that amicable relationship may prevail between the employers and the workers, it would be of paramount necessity for the employers to recognize all unions of workmen properly registered under the Trade Unions Act. The present practice prevalent among some of the firms of instituting rival bodies to the existing trade unions, for example, starting bodies like staff committees, etc., in opposition to unions must be put an end to.

While dealing with the Kerosene Oil Workers' Union it must also be borne in mind that the work has to be done generally by the workers from 8 to 10 hours in gaseous vapours emanating from kerosine, petrol and acids, and this has a detrimental influence upon the health of the workers.

It is needless to say that the prime object of any trade union is to develop good relations between the employers and the workers and to protect and secure to the workers fair conditions of life and work. We are of opinion that the following suggestions if carried out in the spirit of good will by both parties may result in the harmonious working of the enterprise :—

1. In order to develop good relations it is necessary that there should be frequent exchange of views between the employers and the members of the union.
2. Any general or individual grievances of the members of the staff if brought to the notice of the employer through the union must be attended to and in this connection it is necessary that in order to weed out the irrelevant grievances the union's work should be facilitated by giving it access to official records pertaining to the matter. The union should also be supplied with copies of all rules affecting the staff issued by the various departments of the companies from time to time.
3. All service conditions of employers ought to be framed only in consultation with the union and should be consistent with the principles followed in drafting the International Conventions of Geneva.
4. The service rules should be uniformly enforced among all the workers employed in the various oil companies in India.
5. *Punishment and Security of Tenure*.—Employees of two or more years of service are not to be treated as temporary and subject to various disabilities in regard to service privileges in general.



6. Employees are not to be engaged irregularly on jobs and denied the privileges enjoyed by the regular or permanent worker.

7. Incorrect age records should be open for correction at any time and in cases of disputes regarding age the employee should be sent for independent medical examination if so desired.

8. Outside recruiting should not be authorized when qualified apprentices trained in the companies are available for employment.

9. Periodical medical examinations to enable the company to discharge employees should be minimised by allowing the employees the right of appeal to independent competent medical opinion.

10. Compulsory retirement should be confined only to cases of criminal misconduct, wilful disobedience, medical unfitness, superannuation age and proved inefficiency.

11. Punishments should not be inflicted without proper charges being framed and allowing the workman a chance to represent his case through chosen representatives of the union.

12. Punishments imposed should not be merely communicated but such communications should also contain a full statement of the facts and reasons for such punishment.

13. No fine beyond 2 per cent. of the prescribed salary or wage should be inflicted.

14. A right of appeal to at least two higher authorities should be allowed to the employee.

15. *Wages.*—All wages or salaries should be paid on a fixed date every month.

16. Workmen should be paid a minimum living wage consistent with the nature of the work and the risk they are exposed to.

17. Workmen should be put on a graded system and if the maximum of the grade has been reached within three years of that period a personal increment at least ought to be given if there is no higher grade.

18. There should be a periodical revision of the existing scale of pay if necessary by a joint committee of the employers and the union.

19. *Piecework System.*—The piecework system adopted by the employers is defective, as the remuneration for such work is fixed without any practical basis applicable to conditions in India. With regard to piecework system there should be no compulsion to accept the system, but if the system is to be followed the following conditions must be observed: (a) The test should be the estimated out-turn of an average workman trained to do the job for an actual period of eight hours; (b) there should be a guarantee for continuous employment on piecework jobs.

20. *Allowances.*—There should be a new set of rules governing allowances for workers in the various oil companies in India, and the present conditions of the country must be taken into consideration in fixing such allowances.

21. *Provident Fund and Gratuity Rules.*—All staff, whether on the daily rate system or on the temporary system or above 40 years of age at the time of appointment should be made eligible for provident fund and gratuity. (2) The provident fund bonus should be declared from the beginning of service and not forfeited except in case of misappropriation. (3) The gratuity should be declared at the end of every year and is should under no conditions be forfeited.

22. The rate of provident fund and gratuity should be increased on the basis of commutation of pension rules of Government wherever they are more favourable.

23. In case of retrenchment while in service, additional gratuity should be sanctioned equal to the total amount of the subsistence grant required for a period within which re-employment may be expected.

24. *Leaves and Holidays.*—Leave rules should be based on the practice prevalent in other trades in India.

25. Leave reserve of 25 per cent. for ordinary service and a greater percentage for the staff required to perform shift duty should be provided.

26. Gazetted holidays when denied to the staff should be compensated for.

27. *Hours of Work.*—A joint committee of the representatives of the employers and of the union should be constituted to deal with the complaints of abnormal hours of work.

28. All staff, whether working continuously or intermittently, should be given the benefit of two days' weekly rest.

29. All staff working continuously or intermittently should have the benefit of two hours' uninterrupted rest in the day.

30. Clerical staff should not be asked to work more than six hours a day.
31. No staff should be given continuous night shift duties and provision should be made to give change in the shifts every week.
32. The pauses, whether they be one-break or two-breaks, should be fixed in accordance with the daily work and should be fixed in consultation with the Union.
33. Overtime work should carry twice the remuneration fixed for ordinary work.
34. If a worker is employed during the night overtime work he should have a day's leave for rest within two days following such work.
35. *Medical Facilities and Examinations.*—In view of the dangerous character of the work, it is necessary to have a dispensary fitted to treat emergency cases of accidents, etc., at every tank shed.
36. Defective vision or any ailment of occupational character should be compensated for as accident caused while on duty. The amount of compensation for injury while on duty should be brought into line with the provisions of the Geneva Convention, i.e., should not be less than two-thirds of the loss estimated according to the Workmen's Compensation Act.
37. Compulsory counter signature by company's doctors should not be insisted upon in the case of certificates issued by registered medical practitioners.
38. Right of reference to independent medical opinion should be recognized for any aggrieved employee.
39. The employers should in order to prevent accidents and to educate the workers conduct a safety-first campaign among the staff.
40. *Workmen's Compensation Act.*—The amount of compensation payable to a workman for injury while on duty should be increased. Any ailment which is incidental to the nature of the work must be brought within the purview of the Act, and claims for compensation should not be disallowed for being technically time barred under the Act.
41. In view of the illiteracy of the workmen both the employers and the union should educate the workmen as regards the benefits of the Act.
42. *Welfare Work.*—Employers should have no difficulty so far as the city of Madras is concerned, where extensive open spaces are available to provide suitable quarters for the employees.
43. A reasonable rent, not exceeding 5 per cent. of the salary of the workmen may be charged as rent in respect of quarters so provided.
44. Such of those employees who draw Rs. 30 per mensem or below may be provided with free quarters.
45. Employees not provided with quarters should be paid the actual rents paid by them, less the deduction that the company is entitled to.
46. The company must also start a common benefit or welfare fund for the staff, which may be used in consultation with the union to run the welfare institutions, such as common reading room, night schools for adult illiterate workmen and their children, co-operative stores, sanitation committees, sports, cinema shows, co-operative societies, etc.
47. Employers should also give facilities to help such co-operative and welfare institutions to recover any dues from the workmen by deductions made from their salary bills, pay sheet, etc.
48. Employers should also provide and encourage the starting of maternity homes, child welfare centres, recreation grounds for the benefit of the families of the workmen employed under them.
49. The union should be taken into confidence in any new scheme adumbrated by the company for its improvement and also while considering the annual working of the company, so that the workmen may have the feeling that they are also being treated fairly by the employers, and if possible to create interest in the welfare of the company and in its success or welfare.

The Union begs to place these suggestions before the Royal Commission on Labour in the spirit of improving the conditions of labour, in particular of the kerosine oil industry in this country. Grievances there are many, such as low wages, improper medical facilities to treat accidents, wholesale and unwarranted dismissals on the plea of retrenchment, corruption in recruitment, the helpless condition of the workers, and their indebtedness, the unsympathetic attitude of the employers; but these are matters where if certain general principles are laid down by the Royal Commission, the practical application of such principles ought not to be a matter of great difficulty if they are approached in the proper spirit by the employers and the union. It must be conceded that the day has come when for the real peace

and harmonious relationship between the employers and the employed, the spirit of partnership must replace the spirit of suspicion and distrust which is now rampant, and it is in this spirit and hope that this union approaches the problem when it is placing this memorandum before the Royal Commission.

### THE MADRAS PORT TRUST AND HARBOUR WORKERS.

In the Madras Port Trust and Harbour, there are workmen by thousands employed in the various departments, chief among which are:—(a) Engineering Department (b) Traffic Department (c) Hydraulic Crane Drivers' Department (d) Barge Workers' Department (e) Port Trust Railway Department, etc.

*Common Grievances.*—The following grievances are common to all the workers in all the departments and the measures to rectify our disabilities are also suggested:—

Wages are not paid for Sundays and holidays. There has been no general increase for several years, and there is no grade system in regard to wages. We would, therefore, suggest the following measures:—

1. Payment of wages for holidays, so that we get at least 26 day's wages per month. A general increase of wages by 25 per cent. for all grades. The introduction of grades in wages. (Note:—There are coolies getting 11 annas per day for 10 and even 15 years). We cannot live on less than one rupee a day. It should, therefore be made the minimum wage. We must be paid overtime allowances at double the rates, particularly on Sundays and holidays.

2. We have no system of leave at all. We should, therefore, get privilege leave for 15 days per year with wages.

3. A free railway pass must be given to all workers in the Port Trust and Harbour.

4. There is need for a full-time doctor in consideration of the large number of workers employed.

5. We must be granted sick leave with wages on production of a medical certificate.

6. Workers are put to great hardship by dismissals. Therefore, men with 3 years' service and more should get a bonus of a month's wages for every year of service rendered.

7. Our tiffin shed is much too small to accommodate the large number of workers. There should be adequate extension of it.

8. There is not sufficient lavatory accommodation for all the workers.

9. Workers coming late by a few minutes are not admitted at all for the whole day. The system should be introduced whereby workers who come late by 10 minutes may be fined a small amount, say, an hour's wage. They should also be permitted to work for half a day, if for any reason they are absent for half a day.

10. There is considerable delay in paying the gratuity to members of deceased workers. Payment should be expedited within 15 days, and not be postponed as it is now done for 2, 3 and even 4 months.

11. A convention should be established that relatives of workers should be given preference in recruiting fresh labour.

12. Workers who have put in long years of service should be granted an adequate pension when they retire.

13. There should be a fixed day for the payment of wages. We would suggest the first Friday of every month, and work should be stopped an hour before closing time on the payment day.

14. The rule that workers who are absent on Fridays cannot work also on Saturdays should be abolished.

15. It would add considerably to our convenience if work commences at 7.30 a.m. instead of at 7 as at present.

II. *Tally Clerks.*—Tally clerks and other menials have to work for 12 hours, both by day and by night. During the day, they at least get an hour's respite for food. But at night they get no interval at all, and are not allowed even a few minutes' respite to answer calls of nature. They have to work without any sleep from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. There are instances also of men being made to work the following day after a full night's work.

III. *Engineering Section.*—In the engineering department, workers are on daily wages. There are men with 5, 6 and even more years of service, but who do not get even a single holiday with wages in the year.

2. When a worker meets with an accident in the course of his work, he has to take leave without pay. When he is disabled by an accident, no compensation is paid. As an instance, it may be mentioned that a maistry named Abbu, who was

employed for supervising mexpalting of the roads for more than 10 years lost both his eyes when on work as a result of fumes coming out of the boiler. He was given only Rs. 100 as compensation, although his daily wages were Rs. 1-2 annas. In another instance a painter boy employed in the General Stores fell from the scaffolding about 20 feet high, as a result of which he ultimately died. The boy's father, who is a watchman in the Port Trust, was given no compensation whatsoever.

3. Some of the workers who have been in service for 3 years and more are sent away without notice on the ground that there is no work.

4. There is no definite increment, nor are there any rules for the same. Some people with 4 years' service are not given any increment, while those who have been only recently recruited are given one or even two increments in the course of the year.

5. The institution of a Provident Fund would be of great benefit to the workers in the Engineering Department.

*IV. Traffic Section.*—Traffic coolies numbering over 200 have 11 hours' duty per day, from 6 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. There are 4 sections among them. The fourth section which numbers about 30, gets Rs. 0-14 annas 3 pies a day for the same work as is done in other sections, where, however, the wages are Rs. 0-13 annas for day duty and Rs. 1-2 annas for night duty. They have no holidays at all.

2. Workers with 20, 25 and even 30 years service are temporary coolies. A daily wage of a rupee was promised some years ago, but has not yet been granted.

3. Most of the work is done by contractors, who charge the Port Trust at the rate of Rs. 1-4 annas per ton of goods handled. But these contractors pay only 4 annas as wages to the coolies and pocket the difference of one rupee per ton. The abolition of the contract system is the most urgent need of the workers.

4. Hardly any consideration is given to long years of service. To mention one instance, a worker with 30 years of service was given a sum of Rs. 365-10 annas, which is much too small in view of the long period of service.

*V. Hydraulic Crane Drivers.*—There are 60 of these drivers who do 11 hours of duty per day, 6 to 12 noon and 1 to 6 p.m. Sometimes they also perform night duty from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.; but no overtime allowance is given them. The wages per month are from Rs. 22 to Rs. 25, and there has been no increase for the last 7 or 8 years. They demand a minimum of one rupee a day on duty for only 8 hours per day, and overtime rates for work beyond 8 hours. They also ask for the introduction of a system of holidays.

*VI. Barge Workers.*—There are over 300 barge workers. Work begins at 6 a.m. There is no interval for food, and no time limit for stopping work. The maistry gets Rs. 30 per month, while the ordinary worker receives Rs. 24. They demand a minimum wage of Rs. 30 for the workers and Rs. 35 for maistries. They also want privilege leave for 15 days and 15 days' sick leave with wages. Some of them live inside the harbour, where they have built their huts. Others come from Royapuram and Kasimodu.

*VII. Port Trust Railway Men.*—Pointsmen and gatekeepers get 12 annas a day. They work for 12 hours a day. There is no privilege leave, no sick leave, no wages for festivals and holidays. They demand a minimum wage of a rupee per day and the same rights as demanded by the workers in the other sections.

2. Definite steps have to be immediately taken to stop the disgraceful system of bribery rampant in this department in the matter of recruitment.

### ✓ THE WORKERS IN MESSRS. RICHARDSON, CRUDDAS AND CO.

No wages are paid for Sundays and other holidays. Workers must be assured of a 26 days' wages in a month. When a worker is injured inside the workshop, a full day's wages should be given for absence due to such injury, and not half a day's wages as at present, and that only on production of a medical certificate.

There must be a tiffin shed.

Lavatory accommodation is inadequate. The latrine has only place for five at a time, while the workshop has 300 workers. There have been cases of workers fainting inside the lavatory owing to the bad smell.

If a worker is late by 10 minutes in the morning, he is fined 2 hours' wages; and if a person is absent in the forenoon, he is not allowed to work in the afternoon. The first rule should be modified to a fine of half an hour's wages, and the latter

should be abolished. If a worker wants leave for an hour in the afternoon, half a day's wages are cut down. This is wrong. Absence for a day without previous permission is penalised with loss of wages for two days, according to a recent order of the foreman.

There is no system of leave at present. We must be given 15 days' casual leave per year, and one month's privilege leave, both with wages.

There has been no general increase in wages except in a few stray cases according to the will of the foreman.

Wages range from 6 annas a day to Rs. 1-10 annas a day. There must be a minimum wage of a rupee a day and the introduction of a system of graded wages with regular increments. The working hours daily are from 8 or 8-30 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 5-30 p.m. These should be reduced to 8 hours.

We have no system of Provident Fund. Such a fund should be introduced for the benefit of all workers.

There is only one tap open at tiffin time, which is utterly inadequate.

There are cases of workers being suspended for a week for a single day's absence. This is obviously too severe a punishment and should be done away with.

#### ✓ THE WORKERS OF MESSRS. BINNY AND CO., WORKSHOP DEPT.

In Messrs. Binny and Co's workshop, wages range from 13 annas to Rs. 1-8 annas. There has been no increase for the last two years. Workers must have a 25 per cent. increase.

At present they get 10 days' privilege leave. They must have 15 days' privilege leave in the year with full wages. No wages are paid for festival holidays. The same rule should be introduced as is in force in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. Similarly, with regard to sick leave, there must be the same system in force.

It is very inconvenient to be present for work at 7 a.m. Work should commence, say at 7-30 a.m.

There is no Provident Fund. There must be a Provident Fund introduced.

#### ✓ THE WORKERS OF THE WESTERN INDIA MATCH FACTORY.

There are nearly 1,000 workers in the Western India Match Factory at Ernavoor on the northern outskirts of Madras, about two miles to the north of the toll gate. The factory has been at work for a year. There are a number of women workers in the factory; but the majority are men. Several representations have been made to the manager about the great hardships of the workers. But so far no redress has been forthcoming. There was a strike three months ago which lasted for three days, as a protest against low wages, extended hours of work and other difficulties. The strike fizzled out however, partly because of lack of organization and partly because of the undue pressure put upon them by the local police. In fact, the police have been asking them not to join a union, and their influence is always exercised on behalf of and in the interests of the employer.

Wages are not paid on any fixed day of the month, but are disbursed between the 8th and the 15th. Women get 8 annas a day, and men from 10 to 14 annas. A few maistries get over a rupee. Recruitment is direct and not through maistries. They have no bribes to pay and no complaints to make in this matter.

Their wages are paid only for the actual number of days on which they work. They have no holidays with wages. Workers are not admitted into the factory if they go late.

Workers have no tiffin-shed; and though they are permitted to take their mid-day meal inside the factory, a very inconvenient arrangement, they are necessitated to take their food under trees outside the factory compound, and they are put to great inconvenience in this particular during the rains. Heavy fines are levied on those who are found taking their meals in the verandah.

For absence without leave the workmen are very heavily fined. For a day's absence they are fined half a rupee, in addition to the loss of wages; and instances are not wanting of their having sustained a fine of Re. 1 on this account. Many workmen have been fined Re. 1 for absenting themselves on the Kannu Pongal Festival day which came off on the 16th January last, though they had asked the manager to leave them free on that day.

It is almost impossible for the workmen to obtain leave from their immediate superiors.

In the lavatory there is no provision made for water supply.

96 houses have been built and a rent of Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 is demanded for each house. As such, only the decently paid clerks can afford to avail themselves of this convenience; and the ordinary workmen find it beyond their reach to live in such highly-rented houses. It may also be noted that many workmen live in Madras City and in villages from which they have to walk 4 to 6 miles a day to reach the factory.

The piece-work system, prevailing at present, throws away many workmen from work for many days in the month and deprives them of a large share of their monthly income.

*Grievances of the women workers.*—No provision for separate entrance has been made for women workers to enter or leave the factory without mixing with the men workers, which indecent practice is enforced on them by the opening of only one passage that exists at present.

2. There is no lady doctor to examine and report when women workers are taken into service, in spite of the fact that they have to undergo a thorough medical examination; and the women workers find it extremely delicate to undergo this at the hands of the only male doctor of the factory. It is also very difficult for them to obtain permission to answer calls of nature. No provision is at present made for maternity benefits.

*Measures suggested for the removal of the grievances.*—The second Saturday of every month might be fixed for the payment of wages to workmen; and the working hours on that day might be reduced by an hour without any loss of wage to workmen so as to enable them to draw their wages.

2. There is no system of leave at present. They must be given 15 days' casual leave per year, and one month's privilege leave, both with wages.

3. Every workman should get at least 26 days' wages every month, irrespective of the number of general holidays that might happen to come during the month.

4. Workmen should be permitted to enter the factory till 7.10 a.m. without any penalty, after which time the system of deducting half-an-hour's wages might be introduced.

5. Workmen should be allowed to work for half a day if they are absent for the other half a day.

6. A tiffin shed should be erected immediately.

7. The system of exorbitant fines should be considerably modified.

8. The system of monthly wages in preference to the piece-work system should be introduced and Re. 1 per day should be made the minimum wage.

9. Permanent lavatories have to be constructed with ample water supply, and until they are constructed proper provision for sufficient water supply should be made in the existing temporary lavatories.

10. Special houses for workmen, on smaller dimensions and lower rent, might with advantage be constructed.

11. Provident Fund should be instituted for all workmen which would help them greatly at the time of retirement.

12. A separate entrance for women should be constructed.

13. A lady doctor should be appointed for their medical examination.

14. Maternity benefits should be afforded them.

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Mr. A. M. AROKIASAMI PILLAI, HON. SECRETARY, THE CHINGLEPUT  
DISTRICT LABOUR GUILD, KODAMBAKAM.

## II.—Staff Organization.

10. There is a proprietor and his assistants, sometimes the assistants are related to the proprietors. Most of the tanneries are owned by Muhammadans.

11. Managing staff consists of Muhammadans, who are usually relatives of the proprietors.

12. We wish to reiterate the fact that supervising work is in the hands of the relatives of the proprietor of a tannery. They are trained from childhood. Sometimes some ignorant man will be appointed as a supervisor who will learn the work in the course of time. (ii) Workmen are not given supervising work.

13. Relations between staff and rank and file. (i) Neither cordial nor inimical. (iii) Labour is unorganized.

14. Time-keeping. (i) No time-keepers. Time for allowing the workmen to go home depends upon the will and pleasure of the proprietors. (ii) Wages are paid by proprietors or Kumasthas.

### III.—Housing.

- (i) In some tanneries the proprietors have built houses for coolies, but not in all.
- (ii) No housing has been provided by the Government or other public agency.
- (iv) The workmen usually live in huts.
- 17. Facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses.—Nil.
- 18. Nature of accommodation. In order to know this the Commissioners should visit the rooms given to coolies. In every respect the rooms are unsuitable. No provision for lighting, conservancy, etc.
- 20. In some tanneries the rooms are given free. In some rent is collected.
- 21. The rooms are so small there is no question of sub-letting. The rooms are intended for labourers in the tannery alone. Evicted at any time by the proprietor.

### IV. Health.

24. Except in Chamber & Co. there is no medical facility either by proprietors or Government. The Commissioners should see the means of providing the labourers with medical facilities.

#### 26. Sanitary Arrangements.

##### At Work.

- (i) Latrines—Nil.
- (ii) Drinking water—Well water.
- (iii) Bathing and Washing—No arrangement.

##### At Home.

- (i) Nil.
- (ii) Well water.
- (iii) No arrangement.

Chamber & Co. has provided the coolies with a bath-room.

- 29. (i) Prevalence of industrial diseases—Itch and fever.
- 31. No maternity benefits. The Government should provide.

### V.—Welfare.

At present no welfare activities, either by employers or by private agencies. No time for recreation.

36. The employers have not provided the labourers or their children with educational institution.

37. No pension, no compensation for accident.

### IX. Hours.

55. Ten hours a day in Chamber & Co.; twelve hours in other tanneries. Sometimes the coolies work till 8 p.m., but no compensation is given for it.

60. (iv) Ramzan, Bakrid, Pongal, Ayudha Puja are considered as holidays. (Four days in a year).

(i) No fixed meal times. The duration is not fixed.

### X. Children and Women.

82. Children from the age of 8 work in it. The wage of children is between 2 annas to 4 annas. Women form a small percentage in tanneries (except in Chamber & Co.). Their work is grinding Kattuka. Their wage is from 3 annas to 3 annas 6 pies.

## ✓ MESSRS. BINNY & CO. (MADRAS), LTD.

The following report relates to the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras, where over 9,000 workpeople are employed.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. Our labour is all obtained locally and is now practically on a hereditary basis. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills have been in existence for over 50 years, and lately there has been an increasing tendency for succeeding generations of the same family to work in the same factory.

(i) The labour in our Madras mills is now very settled and there is practically no migration.

(ii) and (iii) Migration among our workpeople has declined steadily, particularly during the past seven or eight years, and has now practically ceased. Up to about ten years ago the hands, judged by numbers only, changed completely once a year, although to some extent the same hands were always coming and going, but at present the proportion leaving annually is only about 16 per cent. The following figures for one mill show the steady improvement.

	Total No. of hands.	No. of hands who left during the year.
1908 ..	4,501	5,633
1918 ..	5,249	3,884
1928 ..	4,704	768

The position to-day, as indicated in the above figures, must not be taken to mean that there is a complete change over of workpeople every six or seven years. The figure of 16 per cent. given, represents the more casual element among our workpeople, and it would probably be more correct to say that 80 to 90 per cent. of the workpeople now are practically permanent.

2. (i) We believe those workpeople who still keep in contact with their villages utilize their annual leave for visits to them, but periodical stays of any length are infrequent.

(ii) Practically all our labour can now be considered permanent.

3. (i) We have sufficient applications from sons of workpeople always on the lists to fill normal vacancies. These are usually taken on as half-timers and trained up into the various departments.

(ii) As we get all the labour we require, our existing methods can be considered satisfactory.

(iii) We do not think that the establishment of employment exchanges is necessary in this part of the country. As employers we have never any difficulty in finding labour to fill vacancies, and, from the workers' point of view, we doubt whether such an institution would be successful. When a man becomes out of work here, he usually retires to his village and does casual work, so that it would be difficult for an agency to keep in touch with the unemployed or get hold of them when required.

4. Family life is not affected by our present methods of recruitment, as in practically all cases workers are living with their families.

7. (i) We do not think that unemployment is a feature here of the industrial system in particular, but that there is extensive unemployment in Madras seems to be evident from the large numbers who come to the mills looking for work, if it is thought that any extra hands are being taken on. Although coolie labour can be readily obtained, there does not appear to be actual distress in this community, and we doubt whether the unemployment question here can be regarded in quite the same light as in western countries. The lower grades of labourers, not being so specialized or technically skilled as the western workman, are, we think, more easily able to move from one form of work to another as opportunity occurs.

(ii) *Extent to which caused by*—(a) *retrenchment or dismissals*: (b) *voluntary retirement*: (c) *other causes*. These causes apply only in a very small degree so far as our mills are concerned.

(iii) Distress in Madras does not appear to prevail as a result of unemployment.

(iv) We consider that in the present state of development of Indian labour a scheme of unemployment insurance as adopted in western countries would be premature and present great difficulty in execution. Any such scheme would mean that a contribution would be levied from both employer and worker and any attempt to deduct amounts from workpeople's pay for this purpose would, we think, be strongly opposed.

(v) International conventions are usually based on the conditions ruling in countries more highly developed than India, and consequently there is, generally, difficulty in applying the conventions in this country.

8. (i) We would put the average duration of employment in our mills at present at eight to ten years, but the general position now, as indicated under Question I (iii), seems likely to improve the average very considerably each year. Many of our workpeople have been with us for twenty-five to thirty years.

(ii) We employ casual labour to a very small extent, chiefly in connection with building operations.



(iii) Absenteeism has greatly improved in recent years. See figures for one of the mills below, which may be taken as applicable to both the Buckingham and Carnatic mills.

		Total absentees.	Absentees with leave.	Absentees without leave.
1908	..	12.40 per cent.	4.54 per cent.	7.86 per cent.
1913	..	12.86 "	6.08 "	6.78 "
1918	..	12.21 "	6.44 "	5.77 "
1923	..	7.60 "	5.54 "	2.06 "
1928	..	6.25 "	5.18 "	1.07 "

It will be seen that the percentage of absentees without leave has dropped in the last ten years from 7.86 per cent. to 1.07 per cent. The percentage is fairly constant throughout the year. The time lost is indicated by the above percentages of absentees. The amount of wages lost is, comparatively, smaller, as a large proportion of the leave is "privilege" leave for which full wages are paid, and medical leave for which an allowance is paid. Fifteen days' privilege leave per annum is allowed to all workmen after completing five years' service.

9. The Apprentices Act, 1850, is not of much practical value to us. We think that the average Indian boy has not yet developed sufficient sense of responsibility to be bound by the provisions of an Act such as might be applied to western methods, and his appreciation of the liabilities attaching to a contract is often too vague for any formal agreement to have any binding effect.

## II.—Staff Organization.

10. Administration of the mills is controlled by the managing agents. Each mill is in charge of a manager and under him are trained experts who supervise the various departments, such as carding, spinning, weaving, etc. The dyeing department is in charge of a chief chemist, and a number of assistant chemists are also employed. A chief engineer controls the engineering department, and he has several assistants to supervise the various sections. A large staff of maistries, jobbers, and other subordinate supervisors are also employed throughout the mills.

11. The managing staff is appointed by the managing agents and selected from men fully trained in their respective occupations.

12. (i) The supervising staff is recruited from the workpeople, and promotion from a half-time boy through any department to the post of factory assistant is possible and encouraged to the fullest extent.

(ii) Facilities for training school boys are provided in the mills school in manual crafts and technical subjects. A practical weaving class giving rather advanced weaving training is also in existence, and this is now in process of being extended to embrace other sections of the mill.

Children of workpeople taken into the mills school as infants have the opportunity for training and subsequent employment and promotion in the mills until they reach the age for retirement.

13. (i) The relations between the staff and the rank and file are generally quite friendly. Any alleged grievance on the part of a workman usually in the first place goes before the member of the staff in charge of the department, but, if the workman is not satisfied with the decision, he can appeal to the manager, and also beyond him to the managing agents. The Workpeople's Welfare Committee has proved very useful in maintaining good relations between the staff and the workpeople. Any workman who considers he has been unjustly treated can report the matter to the Welfare Committee member of his department, who then makes representations to the management on the workman's behalf. Individual cases of a serious nature, such as dismissals, can also be brought before the Welfare Committee, if the workman is dissatisfied and further enquiry or consideration seems to be required.

The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union also contribute to the maintenance of good relations between the employees and ourselves by bringing to our notice matters requiring consideration or adjustment.

We have usually found that the various channels provided for keeping personal touch between our workpeople and ourselves meet all requirements and are appreciated by our employees. At times of general political and industrial unrest deliberate misrepresentation is brought to bear on our workpeople by outside agencies with a view to depreciate the effects of our organizations, but these attacks have generally little effect on the more responsible section of our employees, although they are not always without mischievous results among the less literate members of our staff.

(ii) We do not employ jobbers in the sense in which they are employed in other parts of the country, that is as recruiters for labour.

(iii) and (iv) A works committee was formed for the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in January 1922, under the name of "The Workpeople's Welfare Committee." It was started by the managing agents with the object of bringing the management and workpeople into closer contact, and for the discussion and settlement of matters affecting the interests of the workpeople.

The Committee, which has for its president the senior director of Binny & Co. (Madras), Ltd., and the two mill managers as vice-presidents, meets fortnightly, or oftener, if matters arise necessitating special action. The meetings are presided over by the president and one of the vice-presidents alternately.

The constitution of the Committee is kept as elastic as possible, and is subject to enlargement as circumstances seem to indicate. In addition to the president and vice-presidents, it is now composed of twenty-six representatives of the workpeople and ten representatives of the management including the following: carding master, spinning master, weaving master, chief engineer and chief chemist and one of the joint principals of the mills school. Of the 26 representatives of the workpeople 22 represent the following departments of each mill, and they are elected by the workers in their own department: mahager's office, 1; warehouse, 1; dyehouse, 1; mechanics' shop, 1; engine and building, 1; carding, 1; spinning, 1; sizing, 1; weaving, 3. The weaving department, having a large number of employees, necessitates a system of communal voting for three candidates, who represent the Hindus, Mohammedans and Adi-Dravidas of the department.

In addition to the departmental representatives there are four general representatives for the whole of the mills, two from each mill, who are elected at the same time as the other 22, but by the whole of the workpeople, irrespective of department.

The labour representatives are elected annually by the workpeople of the different departments by secret ballot on a basis of communal representation, and the different castes and creeds employed in the mills are all represented on the Committee. Every workman drawing not less than ten annas a day and having not less than one year's service is eligible to vote, and any workman with not less than three years' service is eligible for election as a member of the Committee. Representatives of the Sub-Committees responsible for the various welfare activities outside the mills, such as Athletic Association, Dramatic Society, Workmen's Stores and Village Committees, attend the meetings of the Committee once a month and give a report of their activities. Thus the Committee has assumed the character of a general control body in which all welfare activities inside and outside the mills are concentrated.

In addition to the elected representatives of the workpeople, four representatives of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union (two from each mill), nominated by the Union, also attend the meetings of the Committee, in order that the Union may keep in touch with the activities of the Committee, but it is understood that matters which primarily concern the Union are the subject of direct representation between the Union and the Management, and are not dealt with by the Welfare Committee.

The Welfare Superintendent is ex-Officio Secretary of the Committee and two of the labour representatives are elected to serve as Assistant Secretaries for their respective mills.

In addition to the fortnightly meetings of the Welfare Committee, the labour representatives form a Sub-Committee which meets alternate fortnights to consider any representations made by the workpeople and to bring any urgent matters to the notice of the management, and also to prepare the relative agenda for presentation at the meetings of the full Committee.

The proceedings of the Committee are printed in Tamil and circulated to the workpeople, who are thus kept informed of what transpires.

The activities of the Committee have developed and extended very rapidly in the past few years, and we think there can be no doubt that the Committee is now genuinely appreciated by the workpeople and that it forms a valuable link between them and ourselves. It has enabled the management and the workpeople to get into closer touch, resulting in a better understanding of each other's point of view, so that misrepresentation leading to strained relation is, we think, less likely to occur.

14. (i) Timekeeping and attendance registers are maintained by the Office Staff and Departmental Staffs separately.

The Office registers are written up from the workpeople's tickets deposited in receptacles at the mill gates when they enter the mill. The departmental records are made up by personal checking. The workpeople's tickets are distributed in the departments, and finally the Office and Department registers are checked with the tickets issued.

(ii) Wages are paid in cash to each individual workman personally by the Senior Officer in charge of his department. The workpeople receive wages slips the day previous to pay-day, and this interval allows time to adjust any mistakes that may arise.

15. Contractors as intermediaries are not employed by us.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) For the Buckingham & Carnatic Mills employees we have so far built three villages containing altogether 459 houses, and another village is in course of construction, which will contain, when finished, about 200 houses. Other portions of land have been acquired for housing purposes and fresh villages will in due course be constructed, but the difficulty of obtaining suitable sites and the high cost both of land and buildings, make the provision of adequate housing on a large scale a slow and expensive undertaking.

(ii) Government have done very little in the way of providing houses for workpeople. We understand that a certain number of houses have been built by Government to house labourers in Madras, but not specially for textile workers. No other public agency has built houses to our knowledge.

(iii) A large majority of the workpeople live in the houses of private landlords or in huts in "paracheries."

(iv) Only a very small number of workpeople build houses for themselves. Some of the workpeople erect huts for themselves in "paracheries."

17. So far as we know, no facilities exist for the acquisition of land for workers' houses.

18. (a) The houses we provide consist of a verandah, living room, kitchen, washing place and yard for each workman. (b) We have no details of the houses built by Government. (c) As a rule a number of tenants live in each house and generally each family has one room only.

(i) (a) We think that the type of house we provide generally meets the requirements of the workpeople; (b) and (c) We have insufficient knowledge to offer an opinion.

(ii) (a) We consider that our houses are a good type from a health point of view. They are weather, fire, and vermin proof. The lay-out of our villages is made as spacious as possible to afford ample open area. Our aim in constructing our villages is to prevent as far as practicable future congestion or the possible development of potential "slum" areas. (b) and (c) We can offer no opinion on these.

(iii) (a) All the roads of our villages are lighted by electricity, but the lighting of individual houses is not provided. Conservancy is undertaken by the Company. Water-supply is from the Corporation mains and sufficient stand-pipes with taps are provided. All charges for lighting, conservancy, and water are paid by the Company. (b) and (c) We have no information in this connection.

19. A few years ago the houses provided by the Company became unpopular; this was at a time of considerable outside agitation, but the demand has now grown and is greater than the supply.

20. (a) We charge a nominal rent of Rs. 1-8 annas per month per house. This of course is uneconomical from the Company's point of view. (b) We have no information. (c) Rents for houses privately owned vary considerably according to the accommodation provided and the locality. The majority of our workpeople occupy portions of houses, generally one room, and pay a rent of Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 a month.

Our writers, jobbers, maistries, etc., usually occupy houses at a rent of round about Rs. 10 per month.

21. Sub-letting is not allowed in the Company's houses.

Occupation of the Company's houses by tenants in other employ is not allowed. We are able to keep a check on this practice, and on sub-letting portions of houses, and have very little trouble in these respects.

The only occasions when eviction of individual tenants seem likely to be called for are on account of rowdyism, misconduct, etc., when, in the interests of the community of the village, it is occasionally necessary to remove undesirable characters.

22. We consider that the improved housing conditions and the opportunities for healthy recreation provided in the Company's villages have a good moral effect on the workpeople who live there, and who become, we believe, more healthy, settled, and contented.

## IV.—Health.

23. (i) The average annual death rate among the actual workpeople for the past five years has been 0·8 per 1,000. We have no figures relating to the workers' families.

(ii) We have no information.

(iii) (a) We consider that the working conditions in our mills are maintained as satisfactorily from a health point of view as it is possible for us to make them. (b) We cannot speak from personal knowledge except as regards the Company's villages: conditions there are, we think, satisfactory and generally better than in other places.

(iv) We are unable to give detailed particulars.

(v) We think the physique of our workpeople is probably a little better than that of the average workman in Madras.

(vi) We have no information.

(vii) The better class of house and more spacious layout of the mill villages have, we think, an influence in reducing mortality, although we can give no figures. Over-crowding is not allowed and the number of cases of infectious diseases recorded in these villages, as compared with surrounding districts, proves that life in the villages is much more healthy than in the "paracheries." Sanitary arrangements are well looked after in the mill villages, while in the "paracheries" they are practically non-existent.

24. (i) There is a full time qualified Medical Officer and a Dispensary at each mill and all workers and their families are given free medical attention and medicine. There is also a Dispensary at the School, with two trained Indian nurses in attendance, where minor ailments of the children are attended to daily. Additional Dispensaries are located in each of the mill villages, and a trained nurse attends twice a day to dispense medicine and give advice to women. The Mills' Medical Officers pay periodical visits to the schools and mill villages for purposes of inspection and consultation.

(ii) We believe that no special provision for workpeople is made by Government, but very complete hospitals are maintained in the city where they can obtain treatment.

(iii) Baby Welfare Centres and Dispensaries are provided by the Madras Corporation.

(iv) Except for the trained nurses in the School and Village Dispensaries, the mills make no such provision.

No women are employed inside the mills and only a very few, about 140, mostly dependants of deceased workmen, are employed on outside work.

25. (i) The medical facilities provided by the Company are utilized to the fullest extent by all classes of workers. Medical leave is granted whenever necessary and an allowance of approximately half pay is paid for such leave.

(ii) Women take advantage of the facilities provided, and, in addition to ordinary medical leave with half pay, they are given a period of three months' leave with allowances during pregnancy. (See also 24 (iv).)

26 (i) (a) Adequate latrine accommodation is provided in the mills. (b) In the company's villages septic tank latrines are provided, and in the new village now building, we are installing up-to-date flush-out latrines for each house. Generally, in other places where the workpeople live, the sanitary arrangements are very primitive.

(ii) and (iii) Corporation water is laid on throughout the mills, chutrams and villages for these purposes, and, except in times of general water shortage, there is an ample and continuous supply. In the mills and chutrams there is a total of 127 taps for drinking and bathing. The taps intended for bathing and washing are generally situated in or near to latrines, and special tanks, each with six taps, are installed in the mill compounds, which are intended to provide drinking water.

In the mill's villages, taps for drinking and washing water are provided for groups of houses and generally there is one tap for 15 houses. In the new village which is now under construction, each house is to have its own water tap.

28 (i) We know of no existing rules intended to control the temperature in factories. We have given the question of controlling the temperature in our mills considerable attention, and find it a most difficult matter to solve satisfactorily and economically. The plants on the market for controlling temperatures are not fully effective in the type of building we have, which has been found most suitable to the Madras climate.

We think that legislation to control the temperature of factories to any given figure would be most difficult to apply, taking into consideration the climatic variation and the different types of building these necessitate. We have attempted to control the high temperature in the mills in the hot weather by introducing a system of roof water spraying, and while this system has been to a certain extent successful, we find the upkeep costs of the roof, due to corrosion, to be excessive.

(ii) The existing rules regarding the control of humidification are suitable. Humidification records are kept and are subject to inspection by the factory inspector.

29 (i) There is no disease which can be classed as an industrial disease, directly attributable to working in any department of a cotton mill. We are not aware of any industrial disease in Madras.

(ii) Cholera is a seasonal epidemic in Madras, occurring usually in times of water shortage in the hot weather, and at such times there are occasional cases amongst our workpeople. It is entirely absent at other times of the year. Malaria is prevalent amongst our employees, particularly during the wet months of the year. All our workpeople were treated for hookworm some years ago and only stray cases are now reported.

We take strict precautions against the spread of cholera, small-pox, etc., during epidemics, by insisting on immediate treatment of all suspected cases, and arrangements are also made at such times for the inoculation of the whole staff.

Each year a Health Week is organized by the Welfare Committee. Exhibitions are held in the village halls and leaflets and posters, etc., on health subjects are displayed. Lectures are given by the Health officer of the corporation and others. To encourage the workpeople to take an interest in these matters, prizes are given for the best kept houses in the mill villages, for essays on health subjects, etc.

30. (i) We do not consider that the International Labour Convention regarding sickness insurance can be successfully applied in India. The scheme is based on western conditions and it would, we think, present great difficulty in execution. It is a question, however, for serious consideration, as some such system is desirable.

The scheme demands that contributions to provide relief shall be paid by both employee and employer, and the most serious difficulties confronting the scheme would be, we think, in overcoming the workmen's prejudices, and the attitude which would be taken up by the workpeople if any attempt were made to deduct money from their wages for such purposes which might present them with no immediately obvious return.

There is a large percentage of workers to whom the western idea of medicine is unknown or distrusted, and dissatisfaction would result if contributions were levied from them whilst they declined the European medicines and treatment and had to pay for their own indigenous medicines.

The Convention provides that sickness insurance shall be administered by self-governing institutions, but we do not consider that labour as a whole is at present sufficiently well organized in India to be capable of carrying out its own insurance.

(iii) We consider that the difficulty arising from the non-acceptance of western medicine can only be met by the progress of education and gradual enlightenment as to its benefits. Our workers avail themselves of the medicine provided, but this may possibly be due to its being dispensed free.

The migration of labour in many concerns would be a very serious obstacle to any sickness insurance scheme, and so would also the question of finance, and we have no suggestions to make to meet these difficulties.

31 (i) We employ women on building work only; none are employed inside the mills. Three months' leave is given for childbirth and an allowance is paid equal to about half pay for this period.

(iii) In all establishments where female labour is employed we consider that legislation should be adopted to ensure adequate leave and allowances during pregnancy.

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

32 (i) We give below some details of our welfare organization :—

*Education.*—Schools for the children of workpeople were started in 1904. For further particulars, see answer to 36.

**Chutrams.**—Immediately adjacent to the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills are two chutrams which are used primarily for workpeople taking their midday meals and as a resting place during the midday break. Separate accommodation is provided for different religions and castes. A total of 21 taps are provided in the chutrams for bathing and washing facilities and there are 11 taps for cold drinking water and 7 taps for hot water, and a kitchen in each chutram provides tea and coffee and certain articles of food.

**Workpeople's Institute.**—The Workpeople's Institute is situated near the mills and was started in 1912. It contains a library and reading room, recreation and rest rooms for workpeople and also the welfare office. There are also facilities provided for playing outdoor games.

A portion of the building is also set apart as a lecture room for courses of technical instruction in spinning and weaving. The institute is now used by a large number of workpeople.

**Workmen's Stores.**—The Workmen's Stores were established in 1922 with the object of providing all the necessaries of life for our workpeople at a low cost. The stores are not run on a co-operative principle, as no dividend is paid, but purchases and sales are so regulated that only a nominal profit sufficient to meet the establishment charges is made. The capital charges and overhead expenses are borne by the company. The stores are managed by a committee consisting of the manager and accountant of each mill representing the management and four representatives of the workpeople (two from each mill), elected annually by the workpeople, of whom two representatives of the workpeople are appointed for the selection of commodities suitable for the workpeople.

About 90 per cent. of our workpeople now make use of the stores, and sales average about Rs. 1,25,000 monthly.

**Athletic Association.**—This was formed in 1922 and its activities are controlled by a committee of workpeople and the managing staff. Membership of the association is entirely free, but only employees of the company are permitted to be members. The company provides all the necessary equipment. There are spacious playing fields and also badminton courts and a tennis court. Games such as football, cricket and hockey are organized and annual tournaments take place for trophies. In addition, an annual Sports Day is held, when prizes are presented to winners in various field sports. The Athletic Association is very popular amongst the workpeople, and the playing fields are in use on all possible occasions. An annual inter-departmental football league was organized in 1928 in which keen interest is shown, and in the last tournament twenty teams of workpeople competed.

**Dramatic Society—Theatre.**—The Workpeople's Dramatic Society was organized in 1923 and a committee consisting of representatives of the workpeople was formed to manage its affairs. At the beginning the society was financed by the company, who provided also the necessary properties, furniture, etc. It has been a very successful venture and its performances are appreciated by the workpeople. Small fees are charged for admission tickets for workpeople and their families only, which are obtained on application to members of the committee at the mill. The public are not admitted. About seventy performances of Indian plays have been given to an average audience of about 1,500 since the inception of the society, which now, is practically self-supporting.

**Village Committees.**—In 1923 village committees or "Panchayats" were formed with the object of administering the needs of the villages, settling disputes, etc., and generally accepting responsibility for the peace of the village. The aim was to get workpeople to take more responsibility for the internal management of their villages, and the results have been successful. The village halls are used for the meetings of the committees.

**Literary and Debating Society.**—This was formed with the support of the management in 1926 with a view to broadening the interests and ideas of the workpeople. Its affairs are managed by a committee of workpeople, and debates in both English and the vernacular have been held on a variety of interesting subjects. This society is run entirely by the workers, the Institute, or one of the village halls, being used for their meetings.

**Ambulance Corps.**—Ambulance classes were started some years ago, and an Ambulance Corps of workpeople was formed in 1926 and affiliated to the St. John's Ambulance Corps in 1927, to enable workmen to obtain some knowledge of First Aid in cases of sickness or accidents. Its members are placed in charge of Ambulance boxes in departments of the mills in order to render first aid in serious cases and when the doctor is absent. On Sports Days, etc., its members are on duty, and they periodically organize demonstrations of ambulance and first aid work.

**Co-operative Society.**—This was formed in 1928 with the object of enabling workpeople to obtain loans of money without getting into the hands of money-lenders.

It was registered in 1928 with a board of directors consisting of a president, two vice-presidents, a secretary and four directors. A director of Messrs. Binny and Co. (Madras), Ltd., was elected as president, the managers of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills are vice-presidents and the directors are elected from the workpeople. The Society started work with 304 members and has now 911 members, and its capital has been increased from 4,000 shares of Rs. 5 each to 6,000 shares of Rs. 5 each.

*Workpeople's Club.*—Recently a club for workpeople has been established with facilities for indoor and outdoor games and recreation. The club is to be managed entirely by the workpeople, through an elected committee, and is an experimental measure, the development of which should be of considerable interest. Membership of the club is open to any workman without distinction. A club house with reading rooms is provided and a full-sized football ground and also badminton courts are in course of construction.

(ii) We have no record of Welfare work carried out among industrial labour in Madras by other agencies.

We may perhaps mention that our own efforts have from time to time met with considerable hostility from the leaders of the Madras Labour Union, who have publicly characterised our welfare work as worthless and as "nothing but a trap set with flowers," and have denounced it accordingly to our workpeople, urging them, with, however, little effect, not to participate in our organizations.

33. We employ a full time Welfare department staff consisting of a secretary, an assistant secretary, a games superintendent, and clerks and typists.

34. A refreshment stall under the control of a contractor and supervised by the workpeople is allowed inside each mill, where suitable cooked provisions can be bought. These are mostly used by workpeople who for any reason have been unable to get their morning meal before coming to the mill, or have not made other arrangements for their mid-day meal.

In the mill school certain refreshments are supplied free to half-time school children. (See (36) (ii).)

Shelters are provided by chutrams with special arrangements for workpeople to take their mid-day meal. (See (32) (i).)

We do not provide creches as the small number of women we employ make these unnecessary.

35. Full advantage is now taken of our welfare organization by the workpeople, and we consider that a definite improvement in the workpeople's self-respect and in the relations between the staff and the workers throughout the mills is evident as a result.

36. (i) Provision is made by us for the education of adult workers. Evening classes are held at the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills school between the hours of 6.20 and 7.50 p.m. and a youth may continue his studies at this school when he becomes a full-timer and his day school course comes to an end. The classes range from I to VIII Standard and are recognized by Government. Boys who are successful in obtaining an VIII Standard (III Form) Government Leaving Certificate improve their chances of promotion in the mills.

The courses of study are as follows:—Reading and writing in the vernaculars (Tamil, Telugu and Urdu), arithmetic, English and hygiene (hygiene up to III Form).

Special subjects taught in the commercial class are:—English composition, workshop and commercial arithmetic, shorthand, typewriting, machine drawing (special class). A lending library and reading room is also attached to the school for the use of adults. Adult students are allowed to attend debates of the literary and debating society, health lectures, etc., as part of their curriculum.

A further branch of adult education which we have undertaken are classes in technical instruction for weavers. These classes, which commenced last year, are entirely practical, and a loom has been erected in a separate building in the institute compound for demonstration purposes. Two of the European mill officers conduct the classes, which this year have had an average attendance of sixty-six men. The classes are much appreciated and are now being extended to comprise practical instruction in spinning.

(ii) and (iii) The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills school was primarily intended for the education of workpeople's children employed as half-timers in the mills. The school was started in 1904 in one of the mills. In 1908 it was moved to a small bungalow outside the mill compound. It continued to grow, and in 1912 a joint school for both mills, consisting of 10 class-rooms and an administrative block was built on the present site. The present school which consists of forty well-lit and

ventilated class-rooms (with a total class-room area of 23,000 sq. ft.), office and technical school, is situated in a compound of 18 acres, which also contains the Workpeople's Institute and playing fields. Children of the workpeople are admitted into the school at the age of about five, when they go into a nursery class; this is followed by a kindergarten class, and from there they continue through a regular curriculum of studies up to the fifth standard. On attaining the age of twelve a boy is qualified to be admitted as a half-timer to the mills, provided he passes the certifying surgeon, and he then continues his attendance at the school for half the day for a further period of three years until he is fifteen years old, when he becomes a full-time worker. The school working hours are 7 to 10.0 a.m., 1.35 to 3.45 p.m.

The general curriculum for day school children is as follows:—Reading and writing in the vernacular (Tamil, Telugu, Urdu), arithmetic, English, moral lessons, stories and drama, hygiene, garden work, hand work (clay modelling, duster weaving, grass mat weaving, handloom weaving, turning, fitting, blacksmith work, tinker's work, carpentry and tailoring). The boys are allowed to buy the articles they make at cost prices. Drill and physical exercise classes are held with the assistance and supervision of the games superintendent.

In the technical school all boys over twelve years old are taught hand work for certain hours during the week. When they have passed the fifth Standard they may work full time in any department of the technical school; each boy is allowed to choose his own subject, and in that way the boy's natural aptitude is discovered.

A special mechanical apprentices' class is held in the day school for apprentices from the mills; a special class-room is provided for this purpose, and a special instructor. The hours are from 7 to 9 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. The apprentices are given leave from the mill to attend these classes, which really form part of their training. The general educational qualifications are from eighth standard to secondary leaving class. The course of study is as follows:—

*Elementary Grade.*—Elementary mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, practical geometry, elementary mensuration, workshop mechanics and machine drawing.

*Intermediate Grade.*—Mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, logarithms, elementary trigonometry, elementary applied mechanics, machine drawing.

*Advanced Grade.*—Higher mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, logarithms, mechanics of solids, strength of materials, geometrical drawing, machine drawing.

A kitchen is provided where refreshments can be obtained; conjee is given free to babies and sickly boys, bread and tea are sold at a nominal rate of 6 pies for five days, and a good meal of curry and rice is given free at mid-day to half-time boys whose homes are more than  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles from the mills. A separate building in the school compound houses a dispensary where minor ailments are attended to daily, and where boys who are sick or feverish may be kept under observation. The dispensary is staffed by two full-time nurses and an ayah, and the mills medical officer attends twice a week to see the sick children and to inspect the school. Mill leave is given to half-timers reported sick from the school on the recommendation of the medical officer. A dispensary is also maintained in each of the mill villages and a trained nurse goes out twice a day with medicines which are dispensed free, and advice is given to the village women. A Dhoby Khana is provided in the compound where children are allowed to wash their clothes. The young children are taught washing in class as a practical hygiene lesson. The school is recognised by Government who contribute a nominal annual grant towards its upkeep. The staff of the mill school, which is under the supervision of two covenanted European lady principals and two covenanted European lady assistants, is as follows:—

*Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Day School Staff.*

English Assistant—Secondary Grade T.T.C.	..	..	..	..	..	1
Elementary Higher T.T.C.	..	..	..	..	..	26
Elementary Higher Grade P.T.C.	..	..	..	..	..	5
Elementary Higher Grade T.S.L.C. failed	..	..	..	..	..	1
Elementary Lower Grade T.T.C.	..	..	..	..	..	2
Primary Grade—Military Certificate	..	..	..	..	..	1
Student Teachers (untrained)	..	..	..	..	..	2
Gymnastic Instructor (First Class Certificate)	..	..	..	..	..	1
Sports Master (First Class Certificate in Gymnastics Military, and Passed Physical Director Course)	..	..	..	..	..	1
Ayah for Nursery Class	..	..	..	..	..	1



<i>Technical School.</i>			
Engineering Apprentice Class	Instructor, A.I. Struct. E.	.. ..	1
Weaving Instructor	.. ..	.. ..	1
Carpentry Instructor	.. ..	.. ..	1
Blacksmith	.. ..	.. ..	1
Tinsmith	.. ..	.. ..	1
Turner	.. ..	.. ..	1
Tailor	.. ..	.. ..	1
<i>Dispensary.</i>			
Qualified full-time Nurses	.. ..	.. ..	2
Ayah for Village Dispensary (for washing younger children)	.. ..	.. ..	1
<i>Kitchen.</i>			
Bakers (Cooks)	.. ..	.. ..	2
<i>Village Schools.</i>			
Elementary Higher Grade T.T.C. (women teachers)	.. ..	.. ..	4
Student Teachers (untrained)	.. ..	.. ..	2
<i>Night School.</i>			
Secondary Grade T.T.C.	.. ..	.. ..	3
Elementary Higher T.T.C.	.. ..	.. ..	8
Elementary Higher P.T.C.	.. ..	.. ..	1
Elementary Higher T.S.L.C. failed	.. ..	.. ..	1
Primary Grade—Military Certificate	.. ..	.. ..	1
Commercial Instructor	.. ..	.. ..	1
Machine Drawing Class Instructors	.. ..	.. ..	2
Librarian	.. ..	.. ..	1

In addition to the facilities provided by the mill schools a village school is held in each mill village for the girls and babies living in the village. The boys attend the mill school. These village schools, which were instituted in 1928, have a staff of women teachers. There are special Montessori and Kindergarten classes for the babies, and lessons in sewing, handwork and drill in addition to vernacular lessons for the bigger girls. The health of the pupils is looked after by the school nurse, and through the children the mothers in the village are also encouraged to interest themselves in the work of the schools and to attend the dispensaries. It is hoped that through the medium of these schools the standard of domestic life in the mill villages will gradually improve.

(iv) *Extent to which used.*—The mill school is used to its fullest possible extent by our workpeople, and there is always a long list of applicants waiting for vacancies for their children. We give below the present strength of the school:—

<i>Day.</i>			
Half-timers—Morning	.. ..	428	
Evening	.. ..	420	
			848
Children not employed—5 years old	.. ..	25	
Over 5	.. ..	677	
			702
Mechanical apprentices' classes	.. ..		34
Village schools	.. ..		116
			1,700
<i>Night.</i>			
Adult workers	.. ..		261
Youths	.. ..		116
Special classes	.. ..		57
			434

The average attendance in each village school is about 50.

37. We consider it desirable for large employers of labour to provide for the old age and premature retirement of their workers. With this in view the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills started a gratuity fund for the benefit of their employees in 1904. The workpeople make no contribution to the fund and all workpeople whose wages are less than Rs. 100 per month come under this scheme. The company's contributions are as follows:—

*First Fund.*—A sum equal to 5 per cent. of the total wages earned by each employee is credited to his account in the fund at the end of each half-year and the accumulated amount is payable at the end of ten years' continuous service, or to the employee's nominee at death if this occurs previously.

*Second Fund.*—A sum equal to 7½ per cent. of the total wages is credited to the workman and the accumulated amount is payable at the end of seven years' service following the completion of the first fund period.

*Third Fund.*—A sum equal to 10 per cent. of the total wages is credited to the workman and the accumulated amount is payable at the end of 5 years' service, following the completion of the second fund period.

*Fourth Fund.*—10 per cent. of the wages as in the case of the third fund for a further period of 5 years.

If conditions have been satisfactory during the half-year, the company doubles the amount of the contributions. This special contribution has in practice invariably been made, so the company actually subscribes to the fund at the following rates:—

1st Period	..	10 years	..	10 per cent. of pay.
2nd ..	..	7 ..	..	15 .. "
3rd ..	..	5 ..	..	20 .. "
4th ..	..	5 ..	..	20 .. "

For workpeople on salaries of Rs. 100 per month and over there is a provident fund the contribution to which is 5 per cent. of pay by the worker and 5 per cent. by the company. The accumulated amount is payable only when the employee leaves the company's service. No workman can be a member of the gratuity fund and provident fund at the same time. Apart from the gratuity and provident funds, the provision of a definite old age pension scheme presents so many practical difficulties that we have not yet been able to devise any means to surmount them.

At the same time we are not insensible to the needs of individual workpeople retiring after a record of long and satisfactory service, and in practice we do grant certain pensions in deserving cases. It has, however, to be remembered that in very many instances when a workman retires on account of old age, he has not only received the amount to his credit in the gratuity or provident funds, but on his retirement work has also been found in the mills for his son or other dependent who is thus enabled to contribute to his support.

#### VI.—Education.

40. (i) There are a fair number of corporation and mission schools, which appear to be able to cope with the demand for education in this area.

(ii) So far as we know, no special facilities exist in Madras except at the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills School (described in answer to (36)), and at a Government Trades School which caters for the technical education of industrial workers.

(iii) We have no knowledge of any educational facilities which exist for adults, except in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills School.

41. The Government Trades School and the Textile Institute provide facilities for industrial and vocational training.

42. We are of opinion that the standard of living is improved, especially when such subjects as Health and Hygiene are taught to children. The industrial efficiency of workers is improved as they acquire a keener sense of responsibility.

#### VII.—Safety.

43. The existing regulations that affect us are those laid down in the Indian Factories Act and are, we consider, adequate.

44. The following statement shows the number of accidents which have occurred in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills during the past four years.

Year	Average number of employees	Temporary disablement		Permanent disablement		Death	Total
		Minor accidents requiring leave below 10 days	Requiring leave over 10 days	Partial	Total		
1926	9,553	138	54	5	..	..	197
1927	9,453	76	43	6	..	1	126
1928	9,291	97	63	6	..	..	166
1929	9,178	119	72	1	..	1	193

45. The majority of accidents are caused by carelessness and neglect and a disregard of safety rules and precautions.

46. The Factory Act embodies measures for the prevention of accidents, such as rules regarding the fencing of machinery and display of notices. We carry out the orders and requirements of the factory inspector to the fullest extent. We display large notices in several places in all departments regarding accidents and their prevention in English and Tamil, and new hands have their attention drawn to these by responsible employees when they commence work.

48. We employ a full-time doctor and maintain a fully staffed and equipped dispensary in each mill. First-aid boxes are also kept in all departments of the mill. We maintain a motor ambulance for the removal of cases to hospital. Ambulance corps classes are held from time to time at the workpeople's institute to give the workpeople instruction in first aid. (See Reply to (32)).

49. (i) The inspector of factories carries out his inspections at regular intervals when all notices, forms, records, charts, etc., are examined. The mill is also inspected on these occasions and recommendations often made for improvements, etc. The regulations are rigidly enforced.

50. The regulations regarding hours, health and light have led to improved working conditions with, we think, a consequent improvement in the safety of the workers from accidents and sickness.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (i) We believe that among large employers of labour the Workmen's Compensation Act is used to its fullest extent.

(iii) It has had no effect on the industry so far as we are concerned, as prior to the introduction of the Act we had our own provision for compensation, which in some respects was on a more liberal basis than that allowed for in the Act. Consequently, the introduction of this legislation has made little difference so far as our works are concerned.

(v) As regards large employers of labour we do not consider that compulsory insurance is necessary, but with regard to small employers this may be desirable when they cannot show reserves or funds from which to pay compensation. As applied to factories or other industrial concerns, it is difficult to visualise a position in which an employer would be actually unable to pay any compensation that might be due, because it seems to us that an employer in such a position must also be in possession of a certain amount of assets or credit which could be drawn on for purposes of payment.

52. We think that all organized labour should be brought within the benefits of the Act.

53. (i) We consider the scales of compensation to be adequate, but would approve of the minimum scale in Schedule IV being raised to Rs. 12.

(ii) We consider the existing conditions are suitable for present purposes.

(iii) We are unable to offer an opinion, as in our mills we have had no cases of industrial disease peculiar to the industry.

(iv) The machinery of administration appears to be satisfactory.

#### IX.—Hours.

##### Factories.

55. (i) The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills work 58½ hours per week, 10 hours per day from 6.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., with an interval of one hour from 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., but on Saturday work stops at 4 p.m.

(ii) Overtime is not worked in the manufacturing processes.

(iii) We do not employ any system by which the worker is on call.

56. Six days per week. Sunday is invariably a holiday.

57. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills have been working 60 hours per week and less for the past ten years (the present hours being 58½) but conditions generally have changed so much during this time both in regard to efficiency of the workpeople, improved machinery and the types of cloth produced, that, although we consider there has been a definite improvement in results, we are unable to say to what degree this can be actually attributed to shorter working hours.

59. A reduction of the maxima might be possible, but we do not see any necessity for it and we think the probable consequent loss in production would be a very serious obstacle.

60. (i) (a) Working hours are from 6.30 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 5.30, the midday interval of one hour therefore splits the working period into two periods of 5 hours each. (b) We believe the interval to be at a satisfactory time for the workers' meals.

(ii) We consider the law in this respect to be satisfactory.

(iii) Our present hours are the most suitable for our class of work and local conditions.

(iv) Sunday is in all cases a holiday and on an average 10 days' holidays with pay for certain festivals are given each year.

See also (110).

61. (i) Sunday is a day of rest for all employees. It is often necessary, however, for mechanics, etc., to work on a Sunday to do urgent work and repairs which cannot be executed while the mill is working. When this occurs, they are given a substitute holiday according to the provision of the Factory Act.

(ii) The law regarding the day of rest we consider to be satisfactory.

62. We make use of the exempting provisions only as regards Sections 27 and 28 of the Factory Act for men in the Mechanics' Shop, etc., and men engaged in urgent work examining and repairing machinery. Exemptions are obtained to cover five to six hundred employees, but this of course does not mean that the full number is always employed.

#### X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults and Children. (Factories.)

81. The 1922 Act has had no effect so far as our mills are concerned.

82. We do not allow infants inside the mills.

83. We do not employ women inside the mills or in manufacturing departments. We consider that the existing regulations regarding the employment of women are satisfactory.

84. *Suitability of Regulations Affecting Children.*—The regulations affecting children we consider are satisfactory.

85. Double employment of children is prohibited by us and does not occur in our mills to our knowledge.

86. Boys are taken from the mills school at the age of 12 to work as half-timers. They eventually become full-time workers and are promoted into other departments, where it is possible for them to work themselves up into responsible positions. No definite system of training is laid down and promotion depends on individual merit.

We have an apprenticeship scheme in operation, whereby we take each year 24 youths between the ages of 15 and 18 as apprentices in the textile and mechanical departments for a five years course of instruction. The scale of pay is a uniform one of As. 10 rising to As. 14 per day for all classes of apprentices. The educational qualification required is that a candidate shall have passed the fifth standard. Textile apprentices are trained through all textile departments of the mills.

Mechanical apprentices are trained as fitters, turners, carpenters, moulders, etc., and as electricians, and, in addition to the technical classes held in the mills school, they are allowed one day's leave with pay per week to attend the Government Trades School.

We are co-operating with Government in the training of apprentices and we accept each year 12 youths recommended by the Commissioner of Labour and the Director of Industries for training. The remaining twelve are recruited from selected boys from the mills school and elsewhere.

We provide a fund for apprentices, as they are not permitted to join the gratuity fund. The fund provides for the equivalent of  $\frac{1}{10}$  of their total earnings to be paid to them when they complete their apprenticeship. No deduction is made from their pay.

87. Blind alley employment does not exist in our mills. A workman can, if he wishes, put his child into the mills school at the age of five and in due course, when old enough to work as a half-timer, he is drafted into the mills as vacancies arise; he then continues school classes until he is a full-timer, when he may participate in all fund benefits and is eligible for promotion on merit to any position until he retires at the age of 55, or 60 in special cases.

88. The daylight hours are the normal and natural times for working, and we consider that workers cannot be as efficient or as healthy when working on double shifts which involve night work.

## XII.—Wages.

96. (i) We give below some representative rates of wages paid in the various departments of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. Time workers start on the minimum rate for their grade and are gradually advanced by annual increments to the maximum allowed. As our labour is becoming more and more permanent and only a small percentage leave annually, the average wage in each case is nearer the maximum than the minimum.

				<i>Time Workers.</i>	
				<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
				<i>Rs. a. p.</i>	<i>Rs. a. p.</i>
Coolies in all departments	..	..	..	0 12 6	to 0 14 0 per day.
<i>Mixing and carding.—</i>					
Assistant maistries	..	..	..	1 3 0	.. 1 8 0 ..
Machine tenters	..	..	..	0 12 9	.. 0 15 0 ..
Strippers and grinders	..	..	..	0 13 9	.. 1 1 0 ..
Drawing tenters	..	..	..	0 13 9	.. 1 1 0 ..
Roller coverers	..	..	..	0 15 6	.. 1 3 0 ..
<i>Spinning.—</i>					
Chucklers	..	..	..	0 13 9	.. 1 1 0 ..
Bobbin carriers	..	..	..	0 12 6	.. 0 14 0 ..
Doffers (boys)—full time	..	..	..	0 7 6	.. 0 9 6 ..
.. half time	..	..	..	0 3 9	.. 0 4 9 ..
<i>Sizing.—</i>					
Head maistry	..	..	..	2 3 0	.. 2 11 0 ..
Asst. maistry	..	..	..	1 8 0	.. 2 0 0 ..
Sizing tenters—1st class	..	..	..	1 5 3	.. 1 10 0 ..
.. 2nd class	..	..	..	0 15 0	.. 1 3 0 ..
<i>Warehouses.—</i>					
Machine tenters	..	..	..	0 13 0	.. 0 15 6 ..
Cloth examiners	..	..	..	0 14 3	.. 1 3 0 ..
Stampers	..	..	..	0 14 3	.. 1 1 0 ..
<i>Dyeing and finishing.—</i>					
Bleachers	..	..	..	0 13 0	.. 1 1 0 ..
Machine tenters—1st class	..	..	..	1 2 0	.. 1 8 0 ..
.. 2nd class	..	..	..	0 13 9	.. 1 1 0 ..
<i>Engine and boilers.—</i>					
Engine drivers—head	..	..	..	1 14 0	.. 3 6 0 ..
.. assistant	..	..	..	1 4 0	.. 1 12 0 ..
Boiler maistry	..	..	..	1 4 0	.. 1 12 0 ..
Fireman—head	..	..	..	1 9 0	.. 1 13 0 ..
.. assistant	..	..	..	1 4 0	.. 1 8 0 ..
Fireman	..	..	..	0 15 0	.. 1 3 0 ..
Boiler coolies	..	..	..	0 13 0	.. 0 14 6 ..
<i>Mechanic shop.—</i>					
Maistries—head	..	..	..	2 8 0	.. 3 0 0 ..
.. assistant	..	..	..	1 14 0	.. 2 6 0 ..
Fitters—1st class	..	..	..	2 5 0	.. 2 11 0 ..
.. 2nd class	..	..	..	1 4 0	.. 2 2 0 ..
.. 3rd class	..	..	..	0 15 6	.. 1 3 0 ..
Machinemen	..	..	..	0 15 6	.. 1 3 0 ..
Moulders—1st class	..	..	..	2 5 0	.. 2 11 0 ..
.. 2nd class	..	..	..	1 4 0	.. 2 2 0 ..
.. 3rd class	..	..	..	0 15 6	.. 1 3 0 ..

The average wage of all the men on time work is about Rs. 26 per month, excluding indirect payments such as bonus, etc. (See Section iii).

*Piecoworkers.*

We give below the approximate earnings of some of the grades of piece workers per month.

*Carding.—*

Head jobbers .. .. .	Rs. 83 per month.
Frame jobbers .. .. .	55 "
Card jobbers .. .. .	50 "
Slubbing tenters .. .. .	35 "
Intermediate tenters .. .. .	29 "
Roving tenters .. .. .	24 "

*Spinning.—*

Side jobbers .. .. .	Rs. 58 "
Frame jobbers .. .. .	38 "
Doffing jobbers (Doffing boys on time work) .. .. .	30 "

*Twisting and drawing.—*

Drawers .. .. .	Rs. 45	which provides
Reachers .. .. .	45	for their wages to be sufficient

*Warpers .. .. .*

<i>Weavers—Northrop looms.. .. .</i>	Rs. 45	(i) Our Section 37) is
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The average earnings of all employees on piece-work is about Rs. 32 per month, excluding indirect payments such as bonus, etc. (See Section iii).

(ii) We understand that wages for agricultural labour are from As. 6 to As. 8 per day.

(iii) In addition to actual wages paid, our employees receive a half-yearly bonus equal to 10 per cent. of their wages, when a dividend of 10 per cent. is paid to the shareholders, a gratuity equal to 10 per cent. or more of their total wages after a stipulated period of service, perfect attendance bonuses, etc. They also enjoy the benefit of the purchase of provisions at cheap rates from the workmen's stores, free medical attention for themselves and their families, the advantage of very low rents compared to ordinary rented dwellings when living in the company's houses, full pay for all mill holidays, privilege leave with full pay after five years' service, and education for their children.

During the past ten years there has been a gradual increase in wages in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills.

The rates of wages were revised and increased, and further increases in 1922. The statement given below for one of our mills shows how the average wage has increased, the gradual annual increase being due to our system of having minimum and maximum rates for each grade of time workers, combined with the fact that in the past few years our labour has become very settled. (See Section I (1) (iii)).

Year.	Average wage. Rs.	Increase on 1914. Percentage.	Increase on 1919. Percentage.	Increase on previous year. Percentage.
1914 .. .. .	10.6	—	—	—
1919 .. .. .	15.0	41.5	—	—
1920 .. .. .	22.9	116.0	52.6	52.6
1922 .. .. .	25.1	136.7	67.3	9.6
1923 .. .. .	25.7	142.3	71.3	2.3
1924 .. .. .	26.3	148.1	75.3	2.3
1925 .. .. .	27.0	155.1	80.2	2.8
1926 .. .. .	27.6	160.3	84.0	2.1
1927 .. .. .	28.4	167.9	89.3	2.9
1928 .. .. .	29.3	176.4	95.3	3.1
1929 .. .. .	29.7	180.1	98.0	1.3

(iii) We estimate that the cost of living, which, in 1919 was 75 per cent. above that of 1914, has declined to 55 per cent. in 1929. Since 1919, wages in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills have increased approximately 98 per cent. We have based our calculations of the present day cost of living on the price of commodities sold at the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Workmen's Stores.

The average monthly wage in 1914 was Rs. 10.6 annas, and the present average is Rs. 29.7 annas, showing an increase of 180 per cent. against an increase in the cost of living of 55 per cent. This does not include bonuses, gratuities, etc., amounting from 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. extra, as detailed against 98 (iii).

(iv) The total amount paid to workpeople on account of wages, bonus, gratuity fund and compassionate allowance by the Buckingham and Carnatic Co., Ltd. (excluding salary, etc., of managing staff), compared with the net profit earned by the company for the past seven years, is given below :—

	Total wages, bonus, gratuity fund, etc., paid to workpeople.	Net profit. Rs.	Dividend.
1922 .. ..	31,66,330	31,80,648	20 per cent.
1923 .. ..	35,20,475	27,70,885	20 "
1924 .. ..	39,30,377	27,65,680	20 "
1925 .. ..	39,07,261	20,32,195	15 "
1926 .. ..	38,53,808	18,12,452	10 "
1927 .. ..	38,81,067	15,27,258	10 "
1928 .. ..	40,04,841	18,61,081	10 "

In addition to the ordinary dividend paid to shareholders from the above profits, Coolies also been paid on the 7½ per cent. preference shares in the above a total of Rs. 8,60,000 has been allocated to the various benevolent *Mising and yeas.*

Assistant Machining wages are not fixed by any system of negotiated agreement, although susceptible to representations that may be made to us from time to time.

(ii) We fix wages according to the class of work required and according to our own opinion of economic remuneration for services.

102. The Factory Act states that time and a quarter shall be paid to all workpeople for all hours worked above 60 in any one week. We, however, pay all overtime week days at time and a half and all Sunday work at time and a quarter.

103. Standardization of wages does not exist in the textile industry in Madras.

104. The comparatively high rates of wages we pay has, we think, been a contributing factor in making our employees more settled.

105. Local conditions vary so much in different parts of the country that we think it would be very difficult to establish a minimum wage in all classes of industry, that would be fair to everybody. Legislation would, therefore, seem inappropriate and better results would be obtained, we think, if employers and employees fixed the rates of wages by negotiation amongst themselves.

106. (i) Fines are imposed for absence without leave, bad work and misconduct. In recent years we have made efforts to minimize fines as much as possible. During the past year fines imposed amount to an average of 0.14 per cent. of the wages paid. The total amount of fines for the past five years is 0.19 per cent. of the total wages paid.

(ii) No other punitive deductions are made in addition to those noted in (i) above.

(iii) The amount of all fines is credited monthly to the workpeople's gratuity fund account.

(iv) So far as we are concerned, we consider that legislation is unnecessary, but we have no knowledge of fining in other industries in Madras. In any case we do not consider that legislation should be adopted to reduce or regulate fining, but rather that negotiation between employees and employer should be resorted to where necessary.

107. (i) All our employees are paid wages once a month.

(ii) Pay day for our workpeople is the nearest Saturday to the 14th of the succeeding month, excepting when the 14th falls on a Wednesday, when pay day is the previous Saturday. The maximum period elapsing before payment is, therefore, 16 days and the minimum 10 days.

(iii) (a) and (b) Legislation is probably desirable to accomplish both objects. It would, however, be very difficult to lay down any definite rules which would apply equally well to large and small employers of labour. Saturday, for many reasons, is the most suitable day for the payment of wages, and the day preferred by the workpeople, but the first Saturday in the month cannot be fixed, because in the case of large employers of labour such as ourselves, there would not be sufficient time in which to work out the wages, etc. In our case there are something like 10,000 individual calculations to be worked out, absences to be checked, questions of sick leave, privilege leave, compassionate allowance, etc., to be taken into consideration, accounts with the stores and the co-operative society to be settled and about 10,000 separate sums of money to be counted out and checked before payment is made.

It seems desirable that there should be some elasticity allowed to suit different conditions, and in different factories and we would suggest that payment should be made whenever possible by the second Saturday of the month, and in no case should it be later than the third Saturday, or, if a specified day is preferred, the 16th day of the month.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are kept in the mills for a period of three months and are then returned to the managing agents and credited to the wages account. If subsequently a claim is established, the wages are duly paid.

108. (i) We have no record of this, but believe indebtedness is very prevalent.

(ii) The habit of borrowing money seems to be ingrained in the labouring classes in India. We believe that a large proportion of our workpeople are in debt, but not more so than in any other similar grade of life. Debts are usually contracted to defray the heavy cost of marriage ceremonies, etc., which Indian social customs demand.

109. (i) We have in operation at the present time a bonus scheme which provides for the payment of a cash bonus half-yearly, equal to 10 per cent. of their wages to all employees, when the results of the working of the company is sufficiently satisfactory to declare a 10 per cent. dividend to the shareholder.

The special contribution to the workpeople's gratuity fund (see Section 37) is also a profit sharing scheme, as this money is allocated from profits when the working of the company is sufficiently satisfactory to permit of such allocation being made.

(ii) The basis of these schemes is profits.

110. All workers are allowed a reasonable number of days leave per year. One day's holiday with full pay is given to every workman on the occasion of certain festivals, which average 10 days in the year. In addition to these holidays, privilege leave of 15 days per year on full pay is given to every workman who has completed five years' service. This is exclusive of sick leave that may be taken on medical certificate, for which a special sick allowance equal to approximately half pay is made.

The following statement shows the total holidays and leave given for six months ending 30th June, 1929, for one of the mills :—

Hands employed.	Leave granted—days.			Holidays for festivals. Days.	Total leave granted. Days.	Average leave per employee. Days.	Absence without leave. Days.	Absence per employee. Days.
	Privilege leave.	Ordinary leave.	Medical leave.					
4,194	21,871	7,368	9,850	25,164	64,253	15.3 or 30.6 per annum.	2,919	.69 or 1.38 per annum.

In addition to the above, all Sundays are holidays.

(i) Leave is taken to the fullest possible extent.

(ii) We encourage the workers to ask for leave for ceremonies, etc., rather than be absent without leave.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. We consider that there has been a slight general increase in the efficiency of the Indian worker in our mills in recent years, the increase being more marked among the skilled workers than among the unskilled, although with the stabilizing of labour, which has occurred in recent years, all workers continuing on routine work naturally become more efficient.

113. Indian workers are not as efficient as European workers, and in drawing comparisons we would quote the Rt. Hon. Tom Shaw, M.P., in his "Report of Investigations into the Conditions of Indian Textile Workers," May, 1927, wherein he states :— "We found as many as five times as many people working in the cardroom as are to be found working on the same machinery in a Lancashire mill—we found four workers employed in Madras on work that would be done by one worker in Lancashire."



Our looms are practically all the Northrop Automatic and a weaver looks after six looms, each weaver having an assistant for magazine filling, oiling, etc., which is in effect three looms per worker; while in Lancashire a woman weaver runs from 12 to 20 automatic looms according to the cloth woven. The makers of the automatic looms estimate that 24 looms to a weaver is a reasonable standard.

114. (i) In our own case at the present time, migration of workers does not affect the comparison as our labour is more or less permanent.

(ii) The question of machinery does not affect the comparison, as identical machinery is used in the textile industry in all countries.

(iii) In our case, comparative efficiency of plant does not affect the comparison, as our machinery is equal in efficiency to the average in the factories in Europe.

(iv) We consider that the managing staffs of the mills we control are as efficient generally as the management of the mills in Europe. In mills where an inefficient managing staff is employed, the general efficiency of the worker is bound to be adversely affected.

(v) We consider that generally the Indian textile worker has not the stamina or powers of endurance and resistance to disease that the European worker has, and this must adversely affect his efficiency.

(vi) The Indian textile worker's health is, generally speaking, very inferior to the European worker's, and this undoubtedly is a contributory factor in the matter of his comparatively poor efficiency, and in this respect infectious diseases, tropical fevers, etc., play no small part.

(vii) Education is an important factor in the comparison. The European worker is usually more educated than the Indian of the same grade. Early education is probably the most important factor, as it is only when young that prospective workers can be taught to use their hands and eyes in conjunction with a trained brain. It is our experience that the better educated workers are the more efficient. We find that young men from twenty to twenty-five years of age who have passed through our mills school are superior as workers to young men of the same age doing similar work who are illiterate.

(viii) The low standard of living of the majority of Indian workers compared with that of the European worker affects their relative efficiency to a large extent. The principle effect is on the health of the workers, which suffers due to inadequate housing, the entire lack of sanitary provision and the primitive washing and bathing facilities and provision of drinking water in the "paracheries" where they live, coupled with the fact that their diet is not as nourishing and sustaining as the Europeans.

(ix) Climate has a great effect on the comparison, as it is not possible to do the same amount of work in a hot climate as in a cool one. The worker's capacity to resist fatigue is lowered, and continuous application to routine work in a hot climate tends to slackness and inattention.

115. (i) We have no actual record of the effect on production of changes in working hours, but consider that a reduction in production would almost certainly result from a reduction in working hours. The reduction would possibly not be in direct proportion to the decrease in hours worked, as some increase in efficiency might be expected.

(ii) Provision of better working conditions, i.e., better lighting, sanitary arrangements and well-ventilated workrooms all tend to make conditions more favourable for increased production.

(iii) Consideration for the health of workers is very necessary and expenditure incurred on health and sanitation enabling workers to keep themselves healthy and fit to do their work should make for improved production.

(iv) Good housing conditions are an essential factor in making workers contented and, in consequence, more efficient.

(v) The only method we can think of to increase production by altering methods of remuneration is by instituting piece-work rates of pay in all producing departments.

(vi) Movements in wage levels leading to an improved standard of living are, we think, reflected in improved efficiency of the worker, resulting in better production. We have, however, noticed that, among the less responsible type of workman, there is a tendency to regard increases in wages not necessarily as an incentive to improved production, but frequently as a reason for doing less work and taking more leave.

(viii) The ordinary Indian diet is so entirely different from that of workers in other countries that it is difficult to say what effect it has on production.

(ix) In our experience we do not find that there is excessive use of alcohol or drugs among the workpeople as a whole, though of course, as in all large communities, there are cases of intemperance.

(x) We have not carried out any detailed survey or analysis of the exact relation of industrial fatigue to production in our mills. We think that the wide difference in temperament between the Indian and Western workers would make it difficult to obtain reliable statistics based on the scientific methods that have been applied to the examination of this feature in western countries. Fatigue results in a reduction in production as the worker becomes inattentive.

116. The education of children and young people who are prospective workers, the provision of clean, sanitary dwelling places and a general regard for the health of the worker, combined with some simple bonus or profit-sharing scheme, might be expected to make workpeople settle down in the district where they are employed and increase their interest in their work, with a consequent improvement in efficiency.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) There is an association in Madras called the "Employers' Federation of Southern India." We are the only members in Madras City representing cotton mills.

(ii) There are two unions in Madras representing workers in cotton mills, namely, the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union and the Madras Labour Union.

118. (i) If well organized and run on correct lines we consider a trade union of workpeople should have no adverse effect on the industry, in fact most employers, we think, would welcome such a union of their workpeople, but unions organized by outside politicians and professional men with no practical knowledge of actual labour conditions inside the mills and no experience of the economic problems of the industries they profess to represent are, we consider, definitely harmful. In many cases strikes in Madras directed by such leaders, having for their basis no genuine industrial dispute, have resulted in serious losses both to the employers and the employees.

(ii) So far as our mills are concerned the continued improvement of the conditions of the workpeople has not been due to trade unions, which are of very recent growth in India, but to our own workpeople's welfare organization, though we find that in practice a properly constituted union conducted on orthodox principles can usefully supplement such activities.

119. (i) So far as we are aware trade unions in Madras have not yet developed to that stage when their funds will permit of any schemes for the benefit of members being put into general operation on any large scale. A few cases of financial aid being granted to members have been reported, but generally speaking such instances seem to be rare.

(ii) From time to time the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union makes representations to us with respect to alleged grievances of the workpeople, individual and collective, and such representations are always carefully considered.

120. (i) An organization calling itself the Madras Labour Union and apparently embracing all sorts and conditions of labour came into existence in 1918, at a time of considerable political disturbance in Madras. It was about this time, when trade union activities were first engaging the attention of the public, that we issued a declaration to our workpeople and to the local press, stating that we would cordially meet more than half-way a properly constituted union of our workpeople, but that we considered a union, such as had been called into existence by outside influences, controlled by representatives who had no practical knowledge or experience of labour conditions in Madras or over the rest of India, and whose primary object was politics, could serve no useful purpose as regards either employee or employer, and we have since seen no reason to alter those views. We are in no way concerned with the personal politics of those who may control the Madras Labour Union, but we are not prepared to concede that the leaders of any particular school of political thought have the right to appropriate trade union organizations for the exploitation of their own purposes. The Madras Labour Union was organized by the leaders of a certain political group in Madras which was identified with the "Home Rule for India" campaign then being carried on by them in Southern India, and formed a subsidiary organization of the main body. One of the leaders of this party, whose political activities the Government of Madras had in the previous year found it necessary to restrict, assumed the presidentship of the Union.

The workpeople under these influences very soon became indisciplined. In July 1918, under legal advice we were compelled to obtain from the President of the union a public apology for certain defamatory statements about us, made by him when addressing public meetings of workpeople, and before the end of the year there were two strikes at the mills. In 1920 there were two further strikes; the second of these started in October and continued until the end of January, 1921, and was accompanied by serious disturbances. While this strike was in progress, owing to

the continued inflammatory propaganda of the President of the Madras Labour Union, and the dangerous consequences that appeared likely to arise as a result of his teaching, the company was obliged to apply to the High Court, Madras, for protection, and obtained an interim injunction restraining him from carrying on further propaganda among the workpeople. Shortly after this the strike ended and we withdrew the case against the President of the Union. The President then severed his connection with the union and left India. Labour, however, continued in a very disturbed condition, and shortly afterwards, in May, 1921, there was another very serious strike accompanied by rioting, incendiarism and the use of bombs and firearms, resulting in grave loss of life and damage to property. This strike continued for about five months, until October, 1921, when it collapsed, and the Madras Labour Union then practically ceased to exist and nothing more was heard of it for about five years.

In 1926, with the revival of political activity in India, a fresh campaign among the labourers of Madras was started by the politicians of the same school as the former leaders of the old union the office of President of the Union being again assumed by one of the political leaders of this party. They were only partially successful, and it was then that a section of our workpeople approached us, explaining their dissatisfaction with the constitution and methods of the Madras Labour Union and their reluctance to be identified with it in its revived activities, and asked us whether, in view of the trade union legislation then pending in India, we should be prepared to recognize a trade union of our workpeople, constituted in accordance with the provisions of the proposed Act and officered and controlled by themselves. We then reaffirmed our declaration of 1918 and readily consented to recognize a trade union formed on the lines our workpeople proposed, in which the management of its affairs and funds should be under the direct control of the workpeople themselves, and on the formation of a union on this basis, called the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, our recognition was formally given to it at a public meeting of the workpeople held in the Mills Theatre on March 8th, 1926. This at once incurred the hostility of the leaders of the Madras Labour Union, and an organized campaign of intimidation was carried on against the members. At the same time the employers and the welfare activities conducted by the mills were subject to constant misrepresentation and abuse by the leaders of the Madras Labour Union in their public speeches and in the newspaper of the political party to which they belonged.

The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union was duly registered on June 20th, 1927, under the Trades Union Act, 1926. From that date it has been the recognized channel of communication between ourselves and our workpeople in all matters affecting them which come within the scope of trades union activities, and in co-operation with our Workpeople's Welfare Committee, which was established in 1922 and on whose board the union is now officially represented, it enables constant, direct and close touch to be maintained between the workpeople and ourselves in all matters affecting our mutual interests in the industry with which we are concerned.

The union is officered and controlled solely by the workpeople through a representative executive committee of workpeople with, we understand, the assistance when required of an advisory board of gentlemen from outside who are interested in industrial conditions, and its president and vice-president, with such deputations of workpeople as they may wish to introduce, have been given the right of direct personal access to the directors of the company at any time that they wish to make any representations to us on behalf of the workpeople.

During the four years that the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union has been in active existence it has demonstrated that such a union, when conducted in a constitutional manner, can prove a useful channel for the promotion of mutual confidence and understanding between the management and their employees, the improvement of their industrial welfare and the adjustment of practical difficulties as they arise.

That the union has successfully survived the attacks made upon it at the time of its formation, and repeated during the four years of its existence, is sufficient proof of its stability and the confidence it commands among the more responsible sections of our workpeople, and we think it desirable to take this opportunity of repeating here what has already been published in the press, namely, that the allegations that have been publicly made by the President of the Madras Labour Union and the newspaper *New India*, of which he is the assistant editor, that the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union is a "bogus union," controlled by or subordinate to the management of the mills are entirely untrue.

Our aim in all our relations with our workpeople in the various welfare and other activities with which we are concerned is to encourage them to develop a sense of responsibility and self-reliance, and to this end we endeavour whenever possible to place the conduct of such activities in the hands of a committee of workpeople. We

have found that with experience the workpeople are very soon able to make a useful contribution towards the conduct of these activities, and we see no reason why they should not meet with similar success in the management of the affairs of their trade union. We consider it is an ill service to the workpeople and to the industry they represent, and to the principles of pure trade unionism that any outside organization in the name of trade unionism should attempt to deny to them the capacity to control and develop their own union in their own way, in the interests of their own industrial welfare, and, so long as these developments are carried out on constitutional lines we see no reason to interfere with such aspirations of our workpeople by acquiescing in external demands to divert to other channels their rights of free intercourse with us.

(ii) The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union is officered and controlled solely by our own workpeople, but we believe that the labourers have very little voice in the affairs of the Madras Labour Union, which, so far as we know, is managed and controlled entirely by outsiders, and is in no way representative of any responsible section of our workpeople.

(iii) Our relations with the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union are cordial and every facility is given the Union officials to make representations to us.

121. *Trade Unions Act, 1926.*—(i) As soon as the Bill was introduced our workpeople asked us if we would recognise a Union organized and controlled by themselves and constituted in accordance with the proposed Bill. We assented to the proposal in February, 1926, and when the Act was passed the union was registered in June, 1927, as the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union.

(ii) The Act has not been in existence long enough to judge fully of its effects. The trade union movement seems to have been the subject of considerable misconception on its introduction into India, but we consider that bringing trade unions under legislative control must in the end be of benefit both to the workers and the industries concerned.

(iii) The Act as a whole appears to us to be satisfactory so far as opportunities for its application have afforded experience of its working.

There are, however, two points which have given rise to considerable difference of opinion and, although these have already been the subject of representations to Government by various bodies, we think it desirable to record our own views.

A suggestion has recently been made that the privileges and protection afforded to registered trade unions under the Act shall be extended to unregistered unions.

We are unable to appreciate the necessity for any such amendment to the Act to cover unregistered unions, as it would appear that registration is the only formality necessary to obtain the protection of the Act as it stands, and the extension of the Act to include unregistered unions would only mean that organizations which might possibly find themselves unable to meet the conditions necessary for registration would obtain all the privileges conferred by the Trade Union Act, while accepting none of its liabilities.

Such a situation would, we think, make the adjustment of trades disputes still more difficult than they are at present, as there would be no recognised authoritative body to negotiate with. For this reason we are not in favour of any extension of the provisions of the Act to unregistered unions.

The other question which we regard as being of very grave importance is that of picketing.

In our experience one of the bitterest features of all our labour disturbances has been the hostility engendered between workman and workman by the system of espionage, intimidation and assault, to which respectable workpeople are subjected under the guise of "peaceful picketing," not only when endeavouring to carry on their daily work but, what is worse, in the comparative isolation of their homes.

We have found that in nearly all the strikes that have been organized in Madras among our workpeople systematic intimidation has been practised by means of pickets, in many cases armed with lathis, and further pressure has been brought to bear by intimidation and abuse of a workman's family at his house should he go to work and leave his family unprotected.

It has been suggested that the remedy for such activities is obtainable through the ordinary criminal law, but under such circumstances this procedure is a course which presents great difficulty to the ordinary workman and is one which, for obvious reasons, he is extremely reluctant to take.

We consider that a condition which subjects workpeople to such victimisation, generally at the hands of organized gangs of bad characters, who have little if any industrial interest at stake in the dispute for which their services are engaged, is one that requires further investigation, and that some means should be devised by which protection can be afforded to respectable workpeople who are not prepared to accept the dictation of the strike leaders.

If such means of protection from molestation cannot be devised then we consider that picketing, whether peaceful or otherwise, should be made illegal.

122. (i) The officials of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union make their representations either to the management at the mills or direct to the managing agents. The president and other officers of the union have the right of direct personal access to the managing agents at any time they wish to introduce deputations of workpeople or make representations on trade union matters.

(ii) From general experience we consider that where a union is intelligently conducted by individuals having practical experience of the industry they represent, such co-operation proves advantageous.

#### XV. Industrial Disputes.

123. There have been no strikes or lockouts at the Buckingham and Carnatic mills since 1921, except a minor sectional strike of boys early in 1927. There were strikes in 1918, 1919, 1920 and 1921. Prior to 1918 there had been no strikes or lockouts in the mills for over fifteen years.

The causes of our strikes in the past have usually been due to prolonged and uncontrolled external agitation and very rarely to real grievances, which we are of opinion can almost always be adjusted through one or other of the recognised channels of communication between ourselves and our workpeople.

124. As a general rule we have always found our relations with our workpeople are susceptible of adjustment without the intervention of special conciliation and arbitration machinery other than exists in our own organizations.

(iv) Joint standing machinery for regulation of relations between employers and workpeople. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Workpeople's Welfare Committee. See (13) (iv).

(v) A workman usually in the first place makes his personal representations to the officer in charge of his department, but if not satisfied with the decision he can appeal in person or by letter to the mill manager, or if he wishes, by writing direct to the managing agents. He can also make representations through the Workpeople's Welfare Committee and through the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union.

(vi) Applicability to Indian conditions of industrial court, trade boards, joint industrial council. From experience of our own industrial councils we see no reason why these should not be applied to Indian conditions, provided they are properly organized and conducted.

125. We have had no experience of the working of the Trade Disputes Act, but think that when a situation arises necessitating its application it should be of value in enabling a settlement of disputes to be arrived at.

126. Our workpeople are kept fully informed of factory rules and regulations by means of notices displayed in prominent positions throughout the mill. New legislation affecting workpeople is placed before the welfare committee and the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union.

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#### THE UNITED PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN INDIA.

1. *General.*—The United Planters' Association of Southern India was founded as the result of a Conference between the different Planters' Associations held at Bangalore in 1893. Its chief object is to promote and protect, in all parts of the world, the interest of the various planting industries in Southern India. Membership consists of Planters' Associations (of which there are now thirteen in South India) and companies, firms and persons connected with and interested in planting.

2. The activities of the Association include a Labour Department with six Divisional Offices under European superintendents, and Indian agencies throughout Southern India; a scientific department which at present employs four experts and maintains experimental stations for tea, rubber and coffee respectively at Nellakota, Mundakayam and Sidapur; a benevolent fund which assists and relieves distress among members of the planting community; a buying agency which obtains by co-operation special terms in return for prompt payment; and a weekly paper called the *Planters' Chronicle* (founded in 1906) which is distributed free to all planters, members of District Associations affiliated to the Association, and to many scientific bodies throughout the world.

3. The Association is represented on the Madras Legislative Council, the Cochin Legislative Council, the Mysore Legislative Council, the Mysore Representative Assembly, and the Travancore Council, by one member each; the Coorg Legislative Council, by two members; and the Travancore Sri Mulam Assembly, by four members.

4. The following are the figures (1928) showing the total area under cultivation of the chief planting products :—

	Tea	Rubber	Coffee	Total
Madras .. ..	57,287	14,025	37,811	109,123
Coorg .. ..	—	2,913	35,213	30,126
British India ..	57,287	16,938	73,024	147,249
Indian States ..	57,338	53,788	82,815	193,938
Total .. ..	114,625	70,726	155,839	341,187

5. Of the above :—

European proprietors hold 240,157 acres or 74 per cent.  
 Indian .. .. 101,020 .. or 26 per cent.

Of the 240,167 acres cultivated by Europeans, 215,573 acres or 89.22 per cent. support the Association. The area cultivated by Indian proprietors includes a very large proportion of small gardens, the areas of which vary between a few cents and an acre or two.

### L. Recruitment.

1. Most of the labour employed on estates in the Presidency is drawn from the Province of Madras. Of the total labour force attached to estates in the U.P.A.S.I., 77 per cent. is recruited in British India, and 23 per cent. in Indian States; while the estates in British India alone recruit 85 per cent. of their labour in British India and 15 per cent. in Indian States. The map attached to this memorandum in appendix A,\* shows clearly the main planting areas and the districts from which labour is recruited, while the schedule in appendix B\* gives a general idea of labour migration in Southern India. It should be noted that the figures are based on the census of labourers actually working on estates on September 15, 1928. Many more are employed at some time or other during the year, as there are seasonal fluctuations, and it is estimated that the total number employed during the year is probably from 15 to 20 per cent. greater than the census figures.

There have been many changes in regard to the availability of labour in recent years, but it is generally agreed that, in spite of the demand for labour on tea and rubber estates in Ceylon and on rubber plantations in the Straits Settlements, the supply in Southern India is easier than it was twenty years ago. This is due to various reasons, among which may be mentioned, (a) the opening up of new tea districts and the increase in wages, (b) the cultivation of groundnuts, which takes the place of the cultivation of cholam and ragi, and the consequent rise in the price of rice, (c) the drying up of wells in certain areas and the resulting economic distress, and (d) the natural growth of population.

2. Practically all estate labour returns to its villages once a year for a period of one to three months, (in a majority of cases, two months). On the West Coast, labour returns three times a year, and in Coorg twice a year. There is, however, a slow but steady increase in the number of labourers who remain on the estates and do not return to their villages so frequently. There is also a pronounced tendency on the part of labourers to return year after year to the same estate. It is impossible to give actual figures of those who do so, but 60 per cent. to 90 per cent. of coolies paid off at the end of any season, return to the same estate again for the next season's work.

3 (i) Labour is recruited in almost all cases through labour suppliers called "Kanganis" in the South, and "Maistries" in the North. These suppliers receive advances free of interest from which they in turn supply advances to individual labourers and families of labourers who wish to work on the estates. These advances are debited to the labourer's account, and are recovered during his period of work. Most labourers liquidate their accounts and are able to return to their villages after their first season, with a balance of pay to their credit. This balance is generally augmented by a fresh advance received from the supplier for a new season's work. The amount of the advance varies considerably according to the availability of labour, but may be estimated at an average of Rs. 15 per labourer.

\* Not printed.

On a few estates where labour is locally available, there is no advance system, and wages are paid weekly.

In 1894 the Government of Madras drafted a Bill for licensing labour suppliers, but it was abandoned. In 1896 the Government of India appointed the Planters' Enquiry Committee to enquire *inter alia* into the system of advances to labourers and suppliers, and the Committee recommended the registration of suppliers for both inland and emigrant labour. The final outcome of the enquiry was the Madras Planters' Act No. 1 of 1903, which has since been repealed.

In 1914 a Labour Department was organized under the auspices of the U.P.A.S.I. Its aims were to minimise the risk of loss in making advances to suppliers, to assist in recruiting generally, to persuade defaulters to return to the estates or to refund their dues, to assist the authorities in tracing warrantees in breach of contract cases, to introduce new labour suppliers to estates, to assist in the settlement of inter-estate labour disputes, and to examine the prospect of new recruiting areas. A register of suppliers was opened and has been made as accurate as possible. The administration of the Labour Department is under a director and seven superintendents in charge of six territorial divisions, maintaining 98 agencies, scattered from South Anantapur to Cape Comorin. The work of the department is different from the work of the Tea Districts Labour Association and the Ceylon Labour Commission which are merely recruiting and forwarding organizations. The U.P.A.S.I. Labour Department deals with the same labour every year, and is therefore in much closer touch with it during the whole period of its plantation life. It is increasingly made use of for settling disputes between the supplier and the labourer, and in this way helps to protect the labourer from unscrupulous suppliers.

(iii) There are no such public employment agencies in Madras.

4. The bulk of labour goes to estates in families, and there is consequently little disturbance of family life.

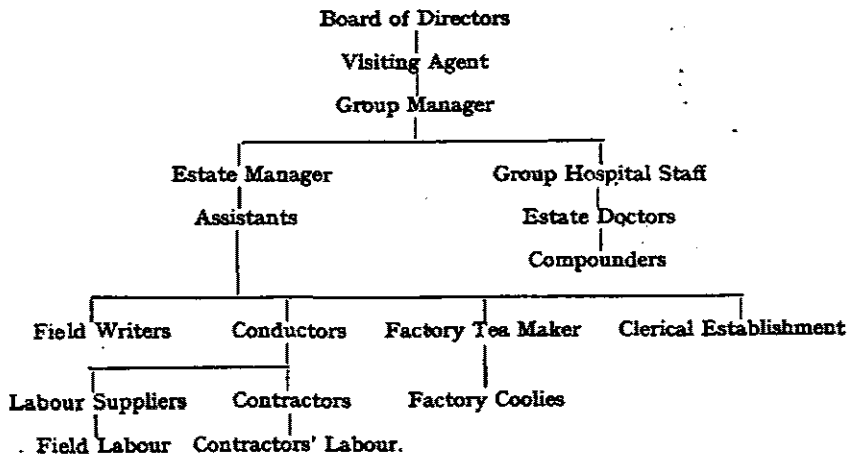
8. The average duration of employment is ten months on tea and rubber estates, and six to ten months on coffee estates. In a majority of cases, as has already been explained, labour is re-engaged. There is casual employment only in the case of local labour and contract labour.

There is a certain amount of absenteeism, but it is difficult to quote accurate figures, as they vary so much according to districts.

Absenteeism is generally caused by ill-health, over indulgence in arrack, laziness, marriage and other festivals, and the groundnut season in the plains when many labourers return. The general increase of wages in recent years has tended to increase the amount of absenteeism as most labourers do not feel any need to work if they have earned sufficient for their immediate physical needs. It should moreover be remembered that it has been the habit of the agriculturist in Southern India for generations only to work spasmodically during crop seasons, and to live in idleness during the intervening periods. Hence it takes him a long time to get accustomed to regular work.

## II.—Staff Organisation.

10. The following chart gives an indication of the general organization of a company-owned group of estates. In case of proprietary or private estates, the chart would of course begin with the Manager :—



11. Most of the managing staff are recruited from Britain, although a certain number of "Country" Europeans are employed.

12. In the case of the managing staff, the assistant goes "through the mill" in the ordinary way, learning as soon as possible the essentials of the language.

In the case of writers or clerks, the supply is always greater than the demand. They are occasionally promoted from the lower ranks, but not often.

In many cases the supplier is recruited through families, the job passing from father to son.

Good coolies are frequently promoted to be sub-suppliers by a Maistry or Kangani. Subsequently they become head suppliers. Managers often select coolies as suppliers of a few labourers, and the best of these are gradually entrusted with larger advances to increase their gangs and become head suppliers.

13. On all estates the staff has direct contact with the rank and file. It is of the utmost importance that the manager or his assistant should deal direct with his labour, and this is insisted upon.

14. The assistant is responsible for the check-roll of the field labour, and the headman in the factory (known as the tea-maker in tea factories), under the supervision of the manager, is responsible for the register of factory coolies. Weekly or monthly advances for food are paid direct to the labourer either by the assistant or by the maistry to his particular gang. In a majority of cases each labourer has a passbook in which a monthly account is made out, and he is given facilities for checking this account any time he wishes. The balance of wages at the end of the contract is invariably paid by the manager or assistant manager of the estate to the cooly concerned in the presence of his kangani or maistri, and his account is then carefully checked and explained.

15. Contractors are used for felling, clearing, earthwork, weeding, roads and other constructional works. Sub-contracting is not recognized, and is generally discouraged. It does exist in the case of certain small estates and in large constructional works. The contractor usually is lent labour from the estate for unskilled work, but engages outsiders at special rates for skilled work.

### III.—Housing.

In every case housing is provided for labour by the employer on the estate. Accommodation usually consists of lines built of laterite or brick or stone with tiled or corrugated roofing. The lines are in some cases scattered and in other cases in definite groups. The actual extent of accommodation varies, but on the larger estates, it usually consists of a room 12 ft. by 10 ft. or 12 ft. by 12 ft. with a verandah about 12 ft. by 6 ft. and a kitchen. This accommodation is used by a family or by 3 or 4 individual coolies. Great difficulty is experienced in preventing overcrowding, owing to the natural tendency of labour to herd together. It is also the general experience that labour prefers lines in definite groups rather than in scattered lines.

A good water supply is generally available. Firewood and in many cases latrines are provided. Careful arrangements are usually insisted upon in regard to conservancy for reasons of public health.

### IV.—Health.

23. It is almost impossible to give accurate figures regarding the death and birth rates, owing to the fact that in a majority of cases, births and deaths among the labourers take place in their own villages, to which they go for the purpose.

Methods of maintaining statistics also vary. In a few cases they are kept by the estate, but in most cases they are supplied by the estate to the taluk offices through the village officers.

It is the general experience that the number of births taking place on estates tends to increase owing to the medical facilities offered, and the practice of giving a cash bonus to every mother who is confined on an estate.

The general physique of labour has also greatly improved in the recent years, with good food and steady work.

24. On every estate medical facilities are available. It is estimated that over 8 lakhs are spent by U.P.A.S.I. estates annually on medical facilities and free food for sick labourers. In the case of the Nilgiris, the Shevaroy's, and Coorg, provision is made by the Government towards which estates make large contributions. In all other cases facilities are provided by the estates themselves.



Most of the large companies maintain and equip central hospitals under European medical officers with hospitals and dispensaries on each estate under assistant surgeons and apothecaries. Increasing provision is being made for women doctors and trained midwives.

25. There is a decreasing reluctance on the part of labour to go to hospital, except in the case of Canarese labour which is very conservative. The medical facilities provided are being used by women to an increasing extent.

26. Latrines are being increasingly provided for in cooly lines, though labourers are not inclined to use them. In many cases a supply of drinking water is provided. This, however, is not generally necessary, as the streams which flow through estates supply all the water that is necessary for drinking, bathing, and washing.

27. There was at one time in the Madras Presidency an Assistant Health Officer for planting areas, but his appointment has now been changed to that of Rural Health Officer. He has assistants who supervise some of the planting districts. Otherwise there is no official supervision.

29. There is practically no cholera in planting areas. Hookworm and malaria are widespread, but are decreasing owing to the efforts made by estates to minimise their effects. Prophylactic treatment is widespread and malarial areas are treated by drainage, etc. On some estates a malaria register is kept. There is also a certain amount of dysentery and relapsing fever.

30. The International Labour Convention regarding Sickness Insurance is considered to be unworkable in these rural communities.

31. In every case where women live on estates, a certain amount of leave is granted during pregnancy and after confinement, the time varying in different districts. In most cases a bonus is given for the birth of a child, the amount of which varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 2. Generally free food or allowance for food is given to the mother during the period she is on sick leave, and in every case free medical facilities are afforded.

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

On some estates there are estate schools, provided and maintained at the expense of the estate. Children attending these schools are given an extra meal of milk and rice. All estates contribute to the local education cess, and in many cases the children of labourers attend the Local Fund schools when they are within easy reach of the estate. Proposals are now before U.P.A.S.I. to institute a scheme for a certain number of scholarships for the sons of labourers to enable them to pursue their studies beyond the ordinary primary standard.

34. Non-working children are given a midday meal on many estates at estate expense. In some cases there are provisions for shelters and crèches, but these are not generally liked by labour. In most cases, therefore, a cooly woman on the estate roll is detailed to look after the children who are left behind in the lines when their parents go to work.

Children of labourers mostly find their own recreation and amusement. In some cases drill is provided at the schools, and there are occasionally arranged sports days, cinema entertainments, etc., etc.

36. There is no general provision for educational facilities for adult workers, although there is increasing provision for night schools.

37. The dependants of the labourers usually live on the estate, and many of them are paid by the estate although they do practically no work. In some cases they are found light, and in many cases, unnecessary work.

38. The efforts to start co-operative societies have not met with success. In the case of three which were started by one company, two ceased to function and the third is moribund. The main reason is the reluctance of labour to join these societies.

#### IX.—Hours.

The number of hours worked per week is largely conditioned by the weather and seasonal activities. Usually the hours are from 7.30 a.m. to 4 and 4.30 p.m., with time off for the mid-day meal. Where work is done on contract or by task, it is generally

finished earlier. Factories are not allowed by the Factory Act to work more than 60 hours in the week. The actual period of work depends to some extent on the demands of the season. Six days are worked in the week, Sunday being the usual holiday in the case of field work, and Monday in the case of factory work. The actual average number of days worked per week in connection with field work, works out at about 5.

57. The 60 hours' restriction in the case of factory labour is unpopular with the workers. Factory work is considered to be the easiest kind of work on an estate, and a reduction in the hours of work and overtime has brought protests from the labourers. A further reduction would increase discontent.

## XII.—Wages.

96. The prevailing rates of wages are, men 7 annas a day, women 5 annas a day, children 3 to 4 annas a day.

Plucking work for women is paid at the rate of 3 pies a lb. A woman can easily pluck an average of 22 to 24 lbs. a day throughout the whole year. This would bring her wages to 5 to 6 annas a day. It is difficult to say what the ordinary rates of agricultural wages are in the surrounding agricultural areas, owing to the fact that employment is seasonal. The Labour Department estimates, however, the average wage for the year at 2 to 3 annas a day.

It is impossible to estimate accurately the difference between money wages and the money value of all earnings. It is necessary to add to the actual cash wages received, items such as (a) cheap rice supplied by estates, (b) free fuel, (c) free housing, (d) free blankets, (e) in some cases free education, (f) free medical facilities, (g) various maternity bonuses, (h) cash presents at holiday times, (i) bonuses for regular work and gifts to the best tea pluckers, etc.

97. It is estimated that wages have increased by 75 to 100 per cent. in the last 20 years, and by 15 to 20 per cent. in the last 10 years. It should be remembered, however, that this comparison does not include the extra benefits which labour now receives, and which have sprung up in the last 20 years. The main reasons for the increase in wages have been (a) competition for labour from overseas, (b) general increase in the standard of living. It is very difficult to estimate the difference in cost of living pre-war and post-war. An indication may be gained from the fact that the weekly food advance has increased from 14 annas in 1913 to Rs. 1-4 annas to-day: This would presume an increase in cost of living of about 44 per cent., but it should however be borne in mind that the issue of staple rice by many estates to labour minimises this general increase in the cost of living.

The increase in wages bears no relation to profits. It is due to economic considerations which have been mentioned above, and not to the price which the particular product commands in the market. For example, the great slump in tea in 1920 had no effect on wages. Any movement in recent years has been in the direction of an increase.

98. It is impossible to estimate the amount sent by labourers to their villages, as the balance at the end of contract is always taken personally and not sent through the post office.

101. Wages are generally fixed by district agreements and the amount is dictated by economic considerations and by the supply of labour at the time when it is required.

102. Overtime and Sunday work is paid for at the usual rates, but is usually paid in cash.

103. Wages are usually standardized according to districts.

105. A statutory establishment of a minimum wage is not considered advisable or necessary. Wages are determined very largely by local conditions. Moreover, very few labourers work a full number of days in the week.

106. The amount of deduction due to fines is negligible, and legislation there is not considered necessary. As has been explained already, wages are usually paid at the end of the contract although, in some cases where local labour is available, they are paid weekly or monthly.

The system is this: When the cooly arrives on the estate, he starts with a debit which varies according to the advance he has taken. His wages are then credited to his account. The estate gives him each week an advance for food and clothes. This advance is also debited to his account. The accounts are made up monthly

and any labourer can see his pay book at any time. When he is due to return to his village, the account is settled, and he is given the total amount which is standing to his credit in his account. There is no delay. Payment is made immediately on completion of the contract. Legislation on the subject is therefore not considered necessary.

108. Indebtedness is practically universal in the villages, and it is largely on this account that it is impossible to recruit labour without paying some advance to the labourer in order to help him to settle his debts. The general experience of estates is that advances are cleared off at the end of the contract in practically every case.

109. There are various bonuses which are given to labour. In Coorg and the Nilgiris, 4 annas bonus is given for 6 days' work; in the Nilgiri-Wynaad a bonus is given for work in the hot weather. On two estates in the Anamalais a bonus is given on out-turn. In the Shevaroys a bonus of 6 pies a day is given to unadvanced labour, and on rubber estates 10 per cent. commission on their weekly wages is given for tapping for 7 days' work.

110. As already explained, labourers go back to their homes at the end of the contract in the natural course of events. Generally speaking, the travelling expenses from the estates to the village are paid by the estate one way. In South Canara, where the estates are close to the source of labour supply, expenses are paid both ways. In the Anamalais expenses are paid one way in the case of labour living close to the estates, and both ways in the case of labour living at a distance.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

The employers are organized in the U.P.A.S.I., but there is at present no organization of labour. The effect of the work of the U.P.A.S.I. has been increased efficiency in the industry and improved conditions for labour—not only on the estate, but, through their increased earnings and welfare, in their own villages.

#### XVI.—Law of Master and Servant.

127. The general effect of the repeal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act has on the whole been beneficent.

128. Attached are to be found types of contract commonly in use (Appendices D, E, F, and G).

129. The criminal law is not available, now that the Planters' Labour Act has been repealed, except in Coorg, where the Coorg Labour Act is still in force. In 1931, however, this Act expires. The civil law is increasingly used for enforcement now that the criminal law is inoperative.

130. The Madras Planters' Labour Act, 1903, was only operative in the Nilgiris, the Nilgiri-Wynaad, and Wynaad. It was repealed on January 1st, 1929. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to estimate the actual results of this repeal, but the general impression is that it will be on the whole satisfactory.

131. The Coorg Labour Act is to be repealed in 1931.

132. The Employers' and Workmen's Disputes Act is not used.

#### XVII.—Administration.

136. The work of the Labour Department of the Madras Government has been of no value to labour in planting areas.

142. Estates are subject to inspection by Medical and Factory Officers.

Appendix C.

Summary of Census on U.P.A.S.I Estates taken on December 15th, 1928.

Planting Districts.	Anantapur.	Arcot N. and S., Chingleput, Chittoor and Tanjore.	Coimbatore.	Ganjam and Guntur.	Kanara South.	Madura.	Malabar.	Nilgiris.	Ramnad.	Salem.	Tinnevely.	Trichinopoly.	Coorg.	Total re- cruited in British India.	Cochin.	Mysore.	Travancore.	Grand Total.
Anamallais ..	—	604	14,430	194	134	4,653	1,712	88	269	4,253	1,440	4,559	—	32,336	772	17	157	33,282
Billigirirangans	—	—	81	—	—	—	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	86	—	394	—	480
Nelliampathies	—	—	351	—	—	—	350	—	—	309	—	—	—	1,010	53	—	—	1,063
Nilgiris ..	—	—	3,698	—	—	—	850	5,395	—	1,848	—	—	—	11,791	—	1,697	—	13,488
Nilgiri-Wynaad	42	52	3,904	103	60	150	6,140	1,108	—	1,668	—	2	—	13,229	446	5,836	2	19,513
Shevaroyes ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,095	—	—	—	4,095	—	—	—	4,095
West Coast ..	—	—	—	—	135	—	1,907	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,042	578	—	—	2,620
Wynaad ..	2	59	3,149	113	3,673	67	5,735	4	—	308	19	226	66	13,421	114	1,426	33	14,994
Total Madras Presidency	44	715	25,613	410	4,002	4,870	16,696	6,598	269	12,481	1,459	4,787	66	78,010	1,963	9,370	192	89,535
Coorg ..	444	10	176	2	4,428	2	1,315	11	—	202	—	187	2,421	9,198	21	3,914	—	13,133
Coorg W.C.P.A.	—	—	—	—	113	—	818	—	—	—	—	—	—	982	—	—	—	982
Total British India	488	725	25,789	412	8,543	4,872	18,829	6,609	269	12,683	1,459	4,974	66	98,190	1,984	13,284	192	103,650

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*Appendix D.***Contract with Labour Supplier.**

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT entered into this.....day of.....192.. Between the Superintendent of..... Estate situated in the ..... District, Planter (hereinafter called the Employer) of the one part, and..... (hereinafter called the Contractor and more particularly described in the schedule hereunder) of the other part.

WITNESSETH that in consideration of the sum of Rupees..... (Rs.....) on the date of these present advanced by the Employer to the Contractor (the receipt of which sum of Rs..... the Contractor hereby acknowledges to have received from the Employer) and of such further sum or sums as may be advanced by the Employer to the Contractor on account of the work to be performed by the Contractor, the Contractor hereby AGREES AND CONTRACTS with the Employer that he, the Contractor, will dig, plant, weed, prune, manure and look for the Employer under the orders of the Employer or his Agent or he..... Estate situate in the..... Taluk of the tract in..... District six days in each week for and during the period from the..... to the..... by himself and with..... where the..... female labourers to be procured by the Contractor from the ways..... Villages to towing..... Taluk..... and to be of the following castes..... and not to be indebted in respect of any labour contract for work on any other Estate subscribing to the United Planters' Association of Southern India.

AND IT IS HEREBY ALSO WITNESSED that the Employer may in his discretion make further advances to the Contractor hereunder either weekly or monthly but that he shall not be bound to do so, and that, if he make any such further advances, they shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement.

AND THAT, in consideration of the foregoing promises of the Contractor, the Employer hereby AGREES AND CONTRACTS with the Contractor that, the Contractor shall duly and faithfully perform and get performed the work herein mentioned on the part of the Contractor and his labourers to be performed by the Employer, subject to the said advance and further advances (if any), will pay the Contractor for such work at the rates of payment, that is to say :-

For the Contractor..... annas per day of work. For every man labourer..... annas per day of work. For every woman labourer..... annas per day of work. For every child labourer between the ages of ten and fourteen from..... annas to..... annas according to age and ability per day of work.

For the Contractor a sum equal to..... per centum of the total wages earned in respect of his labourers aforesaid.

AND THAT all such payments shall be made not later than..... days from the expiration of the month in which they shall have been earned save that as regards the last month of work hereunder all payments in respect thereof shall be made within one week from the completion of such month's work.

PROVIDED ALWAYS, that from each month's total wages earned hereunder, the Employer may deduct an equal..... part of the said advance and further advances (if any), and if in any one month there be not sufficient wages earned to enable him to make such deduction, he shall be at liberty to make such deduction from the total wages earned in any following month either with or without the deduction in respect of that particular month.

As witness the hands of the parties the day and year first before written.

*Appendix E.***Labour Contract.**

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT entered into this..... day of..... 192.. between..... Maistry, son of..... the..... Village..... Taluk..... District, (hereinafter called the Employer) of the one part and..... Labourer (hereinafter called the Contractor, and more particularly described in the schedule hereunder) of the other part.

*Witnesseth* that, in consideration of the sum of Rupees ..... (Rs.....) on the date of these presents advanced by the Employer to the Contractor and of such further sum or sums as may be advanced by the Employer to the Contractor on account of the work to be performed by the Contractor hereunder (the receipt of which sum of Rs.....the Contractor hereby acknowledges) the Contractor hereby *Agrees and Contracts* with the Employer that he/she the Contractor will dig, plant, weed, prune, manure and otherwise work for the Employer under the orders and directions of the Employer or his Agent or Agents on the ..... Estate the property of.....and situated in the ..... Taluk of the.....District being .....miles from the Contractor's home six days in each week for and during the period from the.....day of.....192.....to the..... day of.....192.....

*And it is hereby also witnessed* that the Employer may in his discretion make further advances to the Contractor hereunder, either weekly or monthly, but that he shall not be bound to do so, and that, if he shall make any such further advances, they shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement.

*And that*, in consideration of the foregoing promises of the Contractor, the Employer hereby *Agrees and Contracts* with the Contractor that, if the Contractor shall duly and faithfully perform the work hereinbefore mentioned and on the ..... advances (if any), will pay the Contractor.....annas for every day of work.....

*And that* all such payments shall be made not later than.....days from the expiration of the month in which they shall have been earned, save that as regards the last month of labour hereunder, all payments in respect thereof shall be made within one week from the completion of such month's labour.

*Provided always* that from each month's total wages earned hereunder the Employer may deduct an equal.....part of the said advance and further deductions (if any) and if in any month there be not sufficient wages earned to enable him to make such deductions, he shall be at liberty to make such deduction from the total wages earned in any following month, either with or without deduction in respect of that particular month.

*As witness* the hands of the parties the day and year first before written.

APPENDIX F.

UNITED PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN INDIA  
(INCORPORATED)

Labour Department.

PROMISSORY NOTE

Between ESTATE and MAISTRY or COOLIE

.....ESTATE  
.....19.....  
ON DEMAND I.....son of.....  
of the.....hamlet of the.....village  
.....house.....amsom  
of the .....Taluk of the.....District  
promise to pay to the Manager of.....Estate in the  
.....District the sum of Rupees.....  
for value received, with interest at.....per centum per annum.  
Rs.....

PROMISSORY NOTE

Between MAISTRY and COOLIE

.....Place  
.....Date  
ON DEMAND OR ORDER, I.....  
son of.....of.....Village,  
of.....Taluk, of.....District,  
do hereby promise to pay.....(Maistry), son of.....  
of.....Village, of.....Taluk, of the  
.....District, the sum of Rupees.....  
only for value received, with interest at.....per cent. per annum.  
Rs.....

## APPENDIX G.

## COORG LABOUR CONTRACT (under Coorg Labour Act I of 1926)

Memorandum of agreement entered into this ..... day of ..... 192..  
between ..... of ..... Estates, Coorg, hereinafter called  
the Employer, and ..... <sup>son</sup> of ..... of ..... village  
..... <sup>wife</sup> .....  
..... Hobli ..... Taluk ..... District and  
..... Magnue .....  
of ..... caste and of ..... years of age and having for descriptive marks  
..... hereinafter  
called the workman, .....

Witnesseth that, in consideration of the sum of Rupees ..... this day  
advanced to the workman by the Employer, the receipt of which the workman doth  
hereby acknowledge, the workman doth hereby contract with the Employer to work  
..... Estate in Coorg at such work as planting, digging, pruning, handling,  
ching, renovating, harvesting, ploughing, manuring and such other manual  
as is usually done in the said Estate from ..... day of ..... 192..  
..... day of ..... 192.. subject to such leave as may be  
anted to the workman by the employer. The workman doth hereby agree to  
ceive as wages ..... annas for every day of work. The workman doth  
further agree that the advance abovementioned and any further weekly or other  
advances shall be recovered by the Employer at the end of the term of contract out  
of the total wages earned by the workman.

The workman doth hereby declare that he is not under advance to any other  
person, and doth further agree not to take advance from any other person or to  
hire <sup>his</sup> services for wage to any other person until the end of the period of this contract.  
<sub>her</sub>

Signature of or left thumb impression of  
Employer  
Agent

Signature of or left thumb impres-  
sion of workman.

Signature of magistrate or other person authorized under the Act.

✓ THE MADRAS LABOUR UNION.

## I.—Recruitment.

So far as the textile industry in Madras is concerned, we are not in a position to supply statistics; but it may, however, be observed that many of the workers come from the adjoining districts of Chingleput, South and North Arcot.

Only a small number of our workmen go home once a year for a few days extending to a fortnight, either to visit their relations or on business. They also feel the need for a change. But those who get permanent work in the mills gradually tend to lose their contact with the villages.

Recruitment is through head jobbers and jobbers. There are many more workmen in search of employment than there are vacancies. There is, therefore, no difficulty experienced in filling vacancies. There is a regrettable amount of bribery prevalent in regard to recruitment. Bribes have also to be given for promotions. There is almost a scheduled rate of bribes for first admission into the mill, definite recruitment, promotion, etc. It ranges from about Rs. 10 for a new man who seeks admission into a mill for learning work to Rs. 50 or even Rs. 100 for promotion, such as the position of a jobber. This is one of the main causes of the indebtedness of the workers. The institution of public employment agencies will certainly effect a great improvement in the present methods of recruitment. Arrangements should also be made to train apprentices in the mills, and for this purpose, men with a certain educational qualification should be taken. There should also be a number of industrial and technical schools, so that there may grow up a class of jobbers, head jobbers and foremen of a better type than at present. A beginning may be made with public employment agencies in the main centres like Madras, Coimbatore and Madura.

A number of men come from the villages alone in the beginning ; but they bring their families later after securing a permanent post. But overcrowding in the houses constitutes a serious disturbance of family life. There is no privacy, and as house rents are very high in Madras, workers are compelled to take small portions of houses for themselves and their families ; three, four or even five families are crowded into a small house.

It is not possible for us to give precise information based on statistics in regard to unemployment. We can only observe from the large numbers of men who collect near the mill gates every morning that there is a considerable amount of unemployment. Much of it is, no doubt, due to agricultural distress. There is also a certain amount of retrenchment. One of the main causes for dissatisfaction among work-people is that no reasons are stated for dismissals. Often the workman is told, "your services are no longer required." In the Choolai Mill, at any rate, officials of the union are allowed to interview the management and ascertain the causes of dismissal. But in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, we have no such facilities. Dismissals take place for various reasons. Some of our workers suspect that the system of paying gratuity, which is in force in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills at the end of 10 years of service, is partly responsible for the dismissal of men who approach the completion of the period. There is also a tendency on the part of some of the jobbers and head jobbers to dismiss men, because by doing so, they get opportunities for making new appointments and making an extra amount in the shape of bribes from the new men. Voluntary retirement takes place in cases of workmen who find city life unhealthy or unattractive. The strain of industrial occupation is very heavy ; indeed, so great is the strain, that in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills some of the weavers actually suggested a lower wage for themselves if they could be given less work than looking after six looms. Another consideration in this connection is that jobbers and head jobbers find it an advantage to extract the maximum amount of work from those under them, because they reap in the main the benefits of increased production. Some also run away in order to evade their creditors who have lent money at high rates of interest, 36 to 75 per cent. and even 150 per cent. The introduction of unemployment benefits will certainly be a great help to the workers. A beginning may be made with workers who have been in the industry for two years and more. But no scheme will work if the workers themselves have to make any contributions, on account of their low wages. The responsibility will have to be shared by the State and the employers. The causes of unemployment, however, lie much deeper. Improvements in agriculture will help indirectly but powerfully in reducing the number of those who gravitate towards cities in search of work. The problem of unemployment, as, indeed, many other problems connected with industry, cannot be satisfactorily solved without reference to agriculture.

There is a certain amount of absenteeism, particularly after wages day and holidays. The reason is that the workers are in need of rest. They have, also, to buy provisions for their families.

## II.—Staff Organization.

The selection of the managing staff is entirely in the hands of the managing agents. Racial considerations often play an important part in the selection. In the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, they are all Europeans, who cannot frequently appreciate the difficulties of the workers. The standards which they apply also are beyond the normal capacity of a large number of the workers.

The entire system of factory management is such that the employer's almost only consideration is to get the maximum amount of production with the least possible trouble to himself. The exercise of practically unfettered control over the workers by the jobbers and head jobbers has created a great gulf between him and the vast majority of the workers. These intermediaries are paid comparatively high wages, ranging from Rs. 70 or 80 to Rs. 110 and even more. In return for these high wages, which they cannot secure elsewhere, they undertake to keep the mills at work without disturbance, recruit labour whenever required and, generally, safeguard the interests of the employer. Some of them do espionage work at trade union meetings, willingly or otherwise, and thus dissuade the workers from joining unions. The general complaint of the workers in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills is their too rigid discipline. In the Choolai Mill also, racial considerations prevail. The managing staff has practically entirely been brought from Bombay where the Head Office of the Mill is located ; but a change is perceptible and some of the recent appointments are of local men. The recruitment of the supervising staff is in the hands of the managers and departmental heads. There is hardly any provision for the training of the supervising staff. If facilities were given, both by the employers and the State, many of our present difficulties of the workers would disappear.



Lack of opportunity to rise to higher positions of trust and responsibility acts as a great handicap. The relations between the staff and the rank and file cannot be regarded as friendly or cordial. In the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, there is no doubt a Welfare Committee through which, it is alleged, representations may be made of any difficulties of the rank and file. But the workers regard it as a rival to their trade union; and moreover, they are afraid to speak out their minds in the presence of their superiors. In the Choolai Mill, there is greater facility for representation; but, on the other hand, the workers have no faith in the staff. There is so much corruption that cordial relations are practically impossible. Numerous cases have been brought to light in this mill of miscalculation of wages. From one section alone of the weaving department in the January wages this year, no less than twelve cases were brought to the notice of the management, in which the workers would have had to lose, from their wages, amounts ranging from a few annas to nine rupees.

Original wage				Wages as revised by the Management			
Rs.	a.	p.		Rs.	a.	p.	
36	6	0	.. .. .	39	1	3	
27	12	6	.. .. .	35	8	6	
19	14	0	.. .. .	22	12	0	
10	1	11	.. .. .	20	5	1	
21	10	0	.. .. .	35	8	6	
40	15	7	.. .. .	42	0	7	
36	13	0	.. .. .	41	12	5	
20	2	0	.. .. .	20	12	0	
32	3	0	.. .. .	32	15	8	
30	8	0	.. .. .	32	8	0	
11	4	9	.. .. .	14	1	9	
14	8	0	.. .. .	19	15	5½	and
				24	15	3¾	after revision a second time.

In each instance, the figure was enhanced on a representation being made to the management. Cases of this kind had been brought to the notice of the Union for several months; and in November, 1929, we protested against this systematic miscalculation. The management gave us an assurance that steps were being taken to put it down, but it was admitted that there was inefficiency in the mill. The mistakes in January were attributed to the negligence of a temporary clerk. But about 25 cases have been brought to our notice again in February of mistakes which were rectified, however, before the final preparation of the wage receipts. The cases for February are mentioned below:—

Original wage				Wage as revised			
Rs.	a.	p.		Rs.	a.	p.	
29	12	4	.. .. .	33	12	4	
38	5	0	.. .. .	43	2	7	
45	9	3	.. .. .	47	6	9	
48	6	2	.. .. .	49	3	5	
20	2	2	.. .. .	22	5	7	
2	0	9	.. .. .	9	10	11	
46	14	1	.. .. .	47	3	8	
45	0	0	.. .. .	46	0	9	
25	10	0	.. .. .	29	15	3	
40	2	4	.. .. .	47	15	0	
46	11	6	.. .. .	47	12	10	
42	14	10	.. .. .	43	13	3	
41	14	0	.. .. .	42	6	0	
31	6	0	.. .. .	32	2	6	
28	2	0	.. .. .	30	0	0	
42	10	0	.. .. .	42	14	0	
43	10	9	.. .. .	44	7	9	
45	12	11	.. .. .	46	11	0	
48	0	9	.. .. .	48	10	0	
43	12	0	.. .. .	45	12	0	
52	4	0	.. .. .	53	11	0	
38	0	0	.. .. .	41	10	9	
49	3	0	.. .. .	51	15	0	
23	6	1	.. .. .	24	4	0	
22	10	3	.. .. .	25	8	3	

In the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, although the workers have other causes for dissatisfaction, they have never had reason to suspect that the employer was resorting to such means of cutting down wages. In the Choolai Mill, alterations in the rates for piece work are made without the knowledge of the workers.

One main difficulty is that of language. All notices are published in English, and no real effort is made to acquaint the workpeople with their contents. A good deal of ambiguity is introduced in the drafts of agreements between the Union and the Authorities of the Choolai Mill, which has led to considerable friction. To mention some instances :

(1) From January, 1929, privilege leave was offered for 15 days in the year on half wages to those with 5 years' service and over. Subsequently, it was maintained by the Head Office that this would apply only from 1934. For this and other reasons, the workpeople went on strike in April last year. After the strike had been in progress for 14 days, a settlement was effected. But the terms of the settlement were not clear to the office-bearers of the Union ; they, therefore, asked the authorities of the mill for a precise interpretation. They were told that neither the manager nor the agent was in a position to explain the draft agreement on which the workers were supposed to resume work the next day. The officials of the Union were referred by them to the legal adviser of the mill, who was responsible for the draft, and who alone, it was said, could explain its meaning. Later in the year, a new meaning was introduced into the agreement regarding privilege leave. It was maintained that the workpeople could avail themselves of the leave only in one continuous and unbroken period. Negotiations went on for several months, and ultimately in the presence of the Labour Commissioner in November, 1929, it was agreed, as a compromise, that the workers could take the leave in certain broken periods. The point, however, regarding half wages is still unsettled, the management contending that the calculation would be on the basis of the average wage for the preceding 12 months, which is considerably less than in all cases than half wages for the month during which leave is actually taken. The relations between the management and the workers are strained because of the workers' strong feeling that no honest and genuine attempt is made to solve their difficulties. The experiment was tried of bringing the workers into direct relations with the employer in the Choolai Mill. But the results are not encouraging. The workers' representatives felt that they are put off every time by evasive replies.

The formation of Works Councils, is, we think, desirable in the interests of maintaining cordial relations between the workers and the employers. But the machinery provided should be simple. We do not think that the workers have enough organization and education to be able to take part in District and National Councils. In their present condition, they will not generally be able to understand the conditions of the industry as a whole without the assistance of experts. But, within the limits of a single concern, representatives of the workers can do a great deal to ensure fair and just conditions of work for themselves\*. Employers should consult such Councils in regard to internal administration and work in conjunction with them. Rules should be drawn up with their approval and consent. All cases of disciplinary action should be referred to them. Much can be done by a conscientious employer to secure the confidence and good-will of the workpeople by consulting them on all possible occasions. These Councils, however, should not be regarded in any way as supplanting trade unions, and steps should be taken to prevent employers from dominating them, particularly in areas where trade unionism has not spread or is weak.

### III.—Housing.

Messrs. Binny & Co. provide a certain number of houses only for a small proportion of their workers. The Madras Corporation has just made a beginning in this direction with the assistance of a grant of Rs. 2½ lakhs from the Government. There is terrible overcrowding in the houses round the mills, 3, 4 and 5 families often living in one small house. In one instance, we found 13 families in a single house. Even under such conditions, workers have to pay rents which are disproportionately heavy in comparison with their wages. The practice of sub-letting is widely prevalent, with the result that the poorer workers have to bear the heaviest burden. The rents paid by the workers range from 12 annas for the ground to Rs. 2-8 annas or Rs. 3 to Rs. 5, and in a number of cases even more. A big housing scheme is an imperative need in Madras.

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\*What we mean to suggest is that a beginning should be made with Works Councils and the results watched. If within a year it be found that these Councils should prove satisfactory there should be an extension of the experiment to District Councils, and later National Councils.

There is a strong sentiment in India among workers in favour of house property. The possibility of owning a house would act as a great moral and economic incentive to him to improve his standard of living. A serious objection to workpeople living in houses belonging to the employer is the feeling of constant subordination.

Whether he is at work in the mill or at home after working hours, there is ever present in his mind the feeling that he is dependent upon the employer. The occupants of houses belonging to Messrs. Binny & Co. are afraid to join the union openly, as dismissal would mean not only loss of employment, but eviction at 24 hours' notice from the house. On the other hand, if a housing scheme were put into operation, which would make a worker the owner of his house after some years, the hope of bettering his status would react upon him greatly for the good. An urgent resolution was adopted by the Corporation of Madras nearly two years ago that about 400 grounds of military land in Perambur Barracks should be acquired by the Corporation. But it was sold almost immediately after the resolution was passed to Messrs. Binny & Co.

A considerable proportion of the mill workers live in the neighbourhood of the mills. The problem of housing is a most acute one. The workers are compelled either to crowd into small houses with their families, or lease a small plot of ground in one of the *cherries*; failing either of these two courses, they have to live far away from their places of work. The insanitary condition of the *cherries* is responsible, according to the Health Department of the Madras Corporation, for the high mortality rate prevalent in certain parts of the city. The *cherries* belong to private landlords, who feel no responsibility for maintaining them in proper condition. The Corporation, likewise, does not feel responsibility for what is private property. Compulsory acquisition is the only remedy. But with the existing revenues of the Corporation, it would be impossible to undertake housing schemes on any appreciable scale. It is not at all surprising that, with such overcrowding and lack of sanitation and proper conservancy, the health of the workers is extremely unsatisfactory.

The latest Report of the Health Officer for Madras discloses a scandalous state of affairs. The birthrate for 1928 fell from 46·8 to 44·9 per mille, while the death rate increased from 42·3 to 50·5 per mille. The death rate was in fact the highest since 1905, excepting the abnormal influenza years of 1918 and 1919. Infantile mortality for the year increased from 237·6 to 286·8. The increase in the number of deaths was mainly under respiratory diseases, dysentery and diarrhoea. Cholera also was responsible, to a certain extent, the worst affected area being Choolai, the mill area.

The Health Officer observed "over one-fourth of the population of the city of Madras is living amongst surroundings, without the fundamental requirements of a sanitary existence, namely pure air, wholesome water, suitable nourishment, decent housing." This remark is made year after year in his annual reports. The water supply of the City is defective, both chemically and bacteriologically. There is not an adequate quantity of water for every consumer. The drainage system is very unsatisfactory in many parts of the City.

With regard to housing, a systematic campaign was conducted to improve the condition of the slums in the City. Notices were served and prosecutions conducted, but nothing substantial was achieved. According to the Health Officer, it seems almost impossible to make the owners of these areas realize their responsibility. Housing accommodation is seriously defective and there is overcrowding. Huts are springing up everywhere. More and more slums are created every day. Tuberculosis is spreading. The Health Officer observed that, unless the housing problem is satisfactorily solved, it is not possible to expect the mortality rate to go down.

Attention may be drawn to the fact that the recommendations of the City High Mortality Committee have been practically shelved.

The following is a summary of the observations taken from the Report of the Committee. It was presided over by Colonel Russell, then Director of Public Health (1927).

The total death rate in Madras is very much higher than that of Calcutta and Bombay, although Madras compares favourably with the other two cities as regards housing and overcrowding. The intestinal disease rate is more than twice as high as that of Calcutta and Bombay. The respiratory disease death rate in Madras is similar to that recorded in Calcutta and Bombay. The infantile death rate in certain parts of Madras is over 500 per 1,000 births. Malaria is an additional factor responsible for the high death rate in some of the northern divisions of the City. Everything points to the fact that the conditions producing infant and child mortality in the City of Madras are gradually becoming worse. Diarrhoea and dysentery are responsible for a large number of infantile diseases, and there is an urgent call for the raising of the standard of sanitation throughout the City. It is also noted that the highest rates are to be found in those areas lying all around the outskirts of the City, on account of the fact that in those areas piped water supply is supplemented from filthy tanks and wells. It may also be partly due to the poorer housing accommodation and also the lower economic

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 City. There seems, therefore, to be a close connection between overcro  
 respiratory affections.

How little attention is paid to the needs of the poor workers is apparent to anyone paying a visit to the mill area. 400 grounds of military land were available for a housing scheme. But it was sold to Messrs. Binny & Co. Across the road was an open piece of land which was used for many years by the young men of the area as a play-ground. But the Government has recently built Police lines over nearly half the land.

To live far away from the mill area involves a daily walk of several miles to and from the place of work. The problem can be solved by the State undertaking housing schemes in the suburbs. In fact, there should be large sums of money set apart by the Government for housing schemes for all industrial centres. The needs of each industrial area should be ascertained and a comprehensive housing programme undertaken and spread over a period of years, if sufficient funds cannot be diverted for the purpose in a single year. The railways can help by issuing specially cheap season tickets. A special contribution may be levied from the employers by the Corporation for providing workers with houses.

#### IV.—Health.

Detailed statistics regarding general health conditions of workers are not easily available, as no special efforts seem to have been made either by the Corporation or the Labour Department to collect them. But the general conditions are extremely unsatisfactory. The diet of the workers certainly calls for great improvement. Rice, particularly mill polished rice, a little dal and vegetables, diluted buttermilk—on these one cannot build strong bodies. Some workers occasionally buy a little fish and meat. Drink also is a somewhat heavy item. Large numbers of instances have been brought to our notice of workers who spend as much as 30 to 40 per cent. of their earnings on drink. Toddy shops are open day and night, and the workers have no difficulty in getting their drink at any hour of the day or night. In a number of cases they get drunk before they enter their mills early in the morning.

There should be working men's clubs to serve as centres of amusement and instruction in the evenings. Schemes for adult education, temperance and food reform may be introduced through such institutions. We made an experiment in 1927 with a coffee shop on the premises of the union for providing the workers with coffee and some food at practically cost price. It had to be abandoned after a few months, as we could not afford the monthly loss; and also it did not seem to us to have any appreciable effect on the drinking habits of the workers. All liquor and drug shops should be removed from the neighbourhood of the mills and areas in which the workers live.

Regarding medical facilities, the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills have full-time doctors, while in the Choolai Mill a doctor comes at stated hours. There are hospitals, but at a considerable distance, to which the workers go when they are ill and need medical attention. The complaint of the men in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills is that doctors are not free to make their own recommendations in regard to leave, and that the managers sometimes interfere with the discretion of the doctors in sanctioning leave. It is not all employers who can afford to keep full-time doctors. At the same time employers must regard it as part of their own obligation to render free medical aid to their workers. We would suggest the institution of an independent provincial medical service under the Surgeon-General. Each employer should make a certain contribution to the State, which would establish dispensaries and hospitals in the neighbourhood of the places of work. This would render the medical men in charge of such dispensaries and hospitals independent of the employers. At the same time, even small employers who cannot afford to keep full-time medical men, will be able to provide medical relief for their workpeople. As the indigenous systems

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When and... as about two miles away, which gets a considerable proportion of its grant... and in Perambur... was sold... the minister for Public Health. But the Surgeon-General refused to even an interview for discussing the proposal. It had therefore to be abandoned, and Messrs. Binny and Co. acquired the site we had in mind for the maternity home.

The union worked a baby welcome centre for about a year in 1928, but had to abandon it for lack of funds. Since one of our secretaries became a municipal councillor in 1927, the needs of the division have been brought to the notice of the Corporation prominently, with the result that there have been established a child welfare centre in the mill locality. But there is urgent need for a maternity home in the area.

We have reason to believe that the health of the workers suffers greatly as a result of their occupation. Workers should be medically certified, in our opinion, before they are first admitted into a mill or factory. There should also be periodical inspections by health inspectors, so that the effect of the occupation on the workers may be recorded from time to time.

Latrine accommodation is seriously insufficient in the residential areas. There are *cherries*, where the insufficiency amounts to a serious scandal. Public latrines are so constructed as almost to facilitate the spread of disease. Moreover, owing to the inadequacy of latrine accommodation, promiscuous use is made of streets and public places, as the workers have to be in the mills by 6.30 a.m.

With regard to drinking water, there are *cherries* round the mill area which have only one or two taps for a hundred families, and women have to wait a long time before they can fill their pots.

There should be boards of health to study the incidence of various diseases, particularly malaria, hookworm, tuberculosis and venereal diseases, which affect the health and the efficiency of the working classes. There should also be free access given to officers of the Factories' and Health Departments into factories as well as plantations. Legislation on the lines of the recommendation of the International Labour Conference regarding sickness insurance is essential. But it would not be practical to introduce any scheme which involves a contribution from the workers.\* We do not think there are any difficulties in regard to the non-acceptability of western medicine. But Provincial Governments are themselves encouraging indigenous systems of medicine, and Indian workers have much greater faith in these systems. It is wrong, in our opinion, to insist that a workman, in order to obtain sick leave, should be certified by the mill doctor. Any certificate by a registered medical practitioner should be acceptable.

Maternity benefits are allowed in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills to the extent of three months' leave with half wages. But there are few women workers in these mills. In the Choolai Mill, maternity benefits have recently been introduced. Formerly, women were dismissed in the 6th or 7th month of pregnancy and were taken back to work a few days after childbirth as new recruits. This meant not only loss of wages, but payment of a fresh bribe at the time of recruitment. In 1928, there was considerable agitation on account of the introduction of the two-loom system in the Choolai Mill. The men demanded 75 per cent. on the second loom, while the management was not willing to give more than 50 per cent. Ultimately a committee was appointed by the Labour Commissioner which recommended

\* We would like to make it clear that while under existing rates of wages it would be very difficult for workpeople to make contributions to any sickness insurance scheme, if the choice be between the introduction of a sickness insurance scheme on a contributory basis and no scheme at all it would be better, in our opinion, to have a contribution from the workers. We are forced to this conclusion because we know that workers get into debt during periods of sickness and lose far more money in this way than they would by contributing to any scheme of sickness insurance

80 per cent. on the second loom. The management refused to accept the award, but was willing to pay the 75 per cent. as originally demanded by the workers. A compromise was effected, the weavers agreeing to 75 per cent. on the second loom in return for various concessions such as privilege leave, etc., one of them being maternity benefits for women workers. The management agreed to give three months' leave with one-third wages. But as the scheme is worked, the amount is not paid until one month after the woman returns to work, and in the cases which have come to our notice, the amounts range between Rs. 3 and 4. Maternity benefits are not given we are told by employers in the mufassil, particularly where trade unions have not come into existence. We think, therefore, that legislation is very necessary. Women workers should be given three months' leave with full wages and free medical attendance. The incidental expenses in connection with childbirth should also be borne out of public funds, and an allowance to the mother for feeding the child should be given. There should also be creches in the neighbourhood of mills and factories.

#### V.—Welfare.

Messrs. Binny & Co. have undertaken welfare work on a large scale. There is scope for welfare work, provided welfare societies are not started as rivals to trade unions and the workpeople are not coerced into joining such societies. This is the main cause for friction between the workers and Messrs. Binny & Co.

It may be of interest to note that in 1926, soon after the union took up workmen's compensation cases, the Welfare Committee also followed its example. There are instances in which representatives of the Welfare Committee went to the hospitals to secure from victims of accidents their signatures for applications to the Commissioner for workmen's compensation, so as to prevent the union from getting the credit. We have also had instances of such men asking us for our advice whether they should file their claims through the union or through the Welfare Committee, as the latter involved no risk of victimization by the employer.

Another point which deserves to be mentioned is that the Superintendent of their Welfare Committee was formerly a sub-inspector of the C.I.D., who took a prominent part in bringing about the breakdown of the strike in the mills in 1920.

In regard to welfare societies, stores and schemes for the relief of indebtedness, the co-operative principle should be regarded as vital. So long as the employer controls welfare work and shows hostility to trade unionism his motive is bound to be suspected.

Welfare work, in our opinion, should be undertaken by philanthropic bodies such as social service organizations absolutely independent of the employers. We attempted in 1920 to start a small lending society for advancing loans to our members. But it did not succeed, as the amount was too small at our disposal, and also because of the difficulty of recovering loans. The experiment cost the union roughly about Rs. 2,000.

The workers have expressed a strong desire to have provision for old age and premature retirement. They would very gladly see gratuity funds and bonus schemes replaced by a provident fund scheme, to which they would contribute something and the employer would also contribute something.

#### VI.—Education.

Facilities for general education in industrial areas are utterly inadequate. The vast majority of the workers cannot even read and write, and this makes work amongst them extremely difficult. It is also difficult to arouse in them a desire for improving their standards of living. Funerals, marriages, ceremonies are responsible to some extent for the indebtedness of the workers. Bribery also within the factories is a great factor in this connection. If the workers were educated, they could be trusted to resist these temptations towards extravagance and corruption.

Moreover, owing to their lack of education, they are liable to deceit in every transaction. They cannot keep accounts and therefore are charged exorbitant interest. In the monthly calculation of their wages only a few are able to challenge the figures given by the employer and have them revised. Adult education and education, both ordinary and vocational, are very necessary. Magic lantern shows are extremely popular with our workers. Instruction, both of a general kind, and of a propagandist description such as in sanitation, hygiene, temperance, etc., may be given by magic lantern and cinema shows.

#### VII.—Safety.

The number of accidents owing to failure to carry out the provisions of the Factory Act under the heading Safety could be minimized with greater care on the part of the employers. The punishments imposed on employers violating the provisions of

the Factories Act are much too light to have any deterrent effect. Accidents in non-regulated establishments could also be prevented to a certain extent if, wherever they are established, local Officers of the Public Health Department could be empowered to exercise supervising authority. The factories establishment is much too small to carry out efficient inspection. There should be a considerable increase in the number of Inspectors of Factories.\* The extension of the definition of the term "factory" is very desirable, if workers in small establishments are to be given protection. Factory Inspectors should have authority to inspect any industrial establishment however run, whether by steam, electricity or in any other way; only then will there be a considerable improvement effected in the conditions of factory labour. We are against the retention of a minimum number of workers for a factory to come under the provisions of the Act and against the limitation to power-driven industrial establishments. There should be propaganda campaigns in safety to instruct workmen how to protect themselves against accidents.

### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

The use of the Workmen's Compensation Act has been more frequent within the last few years, as the statistics will show. But even now, many workers are either ignorant of the provisions of the Act, or are afraid to take advantage of them for fear of dismissal. In one case, a man who was entitled to compensation came to us for advice as to whether he should file an application for full payment (which would have been Rs. 78) or accept Rs. 6 which were offered to him. We declined to take the responsibility of finding a new job if he were discharged from the place in which he was working and left it to him to decide. We offered, of course, to fight the case out before the Compensation Commissioner, if he so desired. But he did not seek our assistance. In another case, the employer, after asking a man who was entitled to compensation under the Act to wait, finally opposed his application before the Commissioner on the ground that the six months' time limit had expired. On examination, the Commissioner found that the actual time was only six months and nine days, and used his discretionary power in favour of the workman. A panel of lawyers has been at work in Madras for a few years undertaking cases arising out of the Act and generally on industrial matters, free of cost to the workmen. This has considerably increased the number of such cases. It would help, apart from amendments to the Act which have been proposed by the panel, to have publicity work carried on by the Labour Department. All notices of accidents should be sent not only to the Factories' Department, but also to the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation, who should provide the workmen with legal assistance free of cost. Non-payment of compensation should be made punishable under the Act. In our opinion, plantations also should be brought within the scope of the Act.

### IX.—Hours of Work in Factories.

The number of hours worked is ten per day; the mills close on Saturdays at 4 o'clock, giving a total of 58 hours per week. There must be a distinction drawn between day work and night work, as the latter imposes a greater strain upon the health of the workers. Six hours of night work should be regarded as equivalent to a full working day. Given satisfactory housing conditions, better food and more attention paid to the health of the workers and sanitation, it should be possible to reduce the hours of work from ten to eight per day without any appreciable loss of production. The midday interval also should be longer than an hour. The eight hours' arrangement will give the workers more time for recreation and rest, and they would therefore be able to give better production. An hour's interval is too short, in our opinion, having regard to climatic conditions. We would suggest therefore a midday interval of an hour and a half, and also 15 minutes in the afternoon. We would suggest, for instance, 7 to 11; 12.30 to 2.30; 2.45 to 4.45. For a considerable time to come, workers will not be able to live near the place of work. In a large number of cases, they have to walk to and from their place of work many miles. In practice, now therefore, they are absent from their homes for 13 to 14 hours a day. It is, therefore, not surprising that they are not able to give a greater return of work. In all the three mills there is a system of privilege leave. But such leave is not easily

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\* We think it would be helpful to appoint a preventive staff of educated men who would conform to a certain standard. We are encouraged to make this suggestion by the existence of a preventive staff in the Excise department. The unreserved extension of the term factory to all establishments may not, we realize, be practicable for some time to come. What we really have in mind is that unorganized industries may be brought under the scope of the Factories Act and the number may be limited for the present to about 15.

obtainable, particularly in the Choolai mill, although negotiations have been going on for over a year. At least 15 days' privilege leave in the year with full wages and 20 days' sick leave on the production of medical certificate, also with full wages and free medical attendance, are necessary for all workers, irrespective of their years of service.

*Women in Factories.*—The conditions of the women workers are far more unsatisfactory than those of the men. Owing to the necessity to do domestic work, they are unable to attend meetings of the Union, and their hardships are greater than those of the men. Their wages are lower, and the absence of a woman jobber leads to many complications. The law must insist upon women jobbers being in charge of departments where the workers are women. There must also be Women Factory Inspectors. It need not be insisted in their cases that they should have technical qualifications. Medical women, in our opinion, would be of greater use to women workers.

There must also be provision for the education of children in factories. They must be provided with a midday meal in addition to education. Steps must also be taken to see that half-timers are not compelled by their parents to work in other places after their work in the mills is over.

## XII.—Wages.

No precise statistics are available to us for comparison between the rates of wages. It may be said, however, in general that wages have gone up in industrial areas within the last ten years. From enquiries made of several hundred members of the Madras Labour Union, no money seems to be sent to the villages. Wages are paid directly. Standardization of wages is absolutely necessary, and a start may be made in industries like the textile industry. There is considerable difference, for instance, in the wages paid in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills on the one side, and the Choolai Mill on the other within the same city—in fact within a radius of half a mile. There is also a difference in the rates paid in Madras and in Coimbatore, Madura, Tuticorin, Koilpatti and Ambasamudram. Generally speaking, wages are higher where trade unions are in existence. Almost an unailing item in the demands put up by the workers when they first organize a union is an increase in wages. In fact, unions have succeeded in obtaining a general increase in wages.

The details supplied with regard to the cost of living lead us to the conclusion that it would be impossible for a worker to live on less than Rs. 35 a month. There is payment in kind of a sort in the Buckingham and Carnatic mills, as the workers are permitted to purchase their requirements from the stores run by the mills, up to a certain proportion of their monthly wages.

We feel convinced that, unless there is standardization of wages, labour is bound to suffer in the long run. The workers in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills earn as a rule much more than those in the Choolai Mills. But according to information supplied to us from Coimbatore and further south, workers earn considerably less than in the Choolai Mill.

We think it is not only possible and advisable but imperative to pass legislation fixing a minimum wage and also to standardize rates. Legislation on the subject of a minimum wage would prove of great benefit not only to the workers, but ultimately to the industry also. It will attract a better type of workman and tend to stabilize labour. The effect will also be noticeable in increased production.

*Deductions.*—There are direct as well as indirect methods of fining. There must be legislation to regulate the levying of fines and their utilization. There was a circular issued by the Government of India two or three years ago, but no action seems to have been taken on it. Reference was made to it at meetings of the Union. It was pointed out by the workers, however, that the complete abolition of the system of fines might have an undesirable effect of increasing the number of dismissals. Jobbers of the spinning department in the Carnatic Mill brought to the notice of the Union heavy deductions from their wages soon after the circular had been explained at our meetings. If production went down below a certain figure, an extra man was put on the same work, with the consequence that a jobber earning Rs. 80 to 90 per month would have his wages cut down to about one-third of that figure. Representations were made through the Labour Commissioner, and although the charge was denied, some alteration was made in the system. There were cases brought to our notice of jobbers who lost as much as Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a month for periods ranging from one week to two months, and in a few cases even longer. After some agitation, the deductions were less heavy, ranging from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30. At present, so far as our information goes, the practice is being gradually abandoned.



Legislation regarding the levy of fines should be adopted as early as possible. If fines cannot altogether be abolished, at least they must be regulated and controlled. The amount of fine levied should not exceed a certain proportion of the total wage. The fines should be utilized for the welfare of the workers. The power to fine should be vested only in the managers and heads of departments. There should be a complete and detailed rules of all fines. All offences for which fines could be inflicted should be clearly defined and made known to the workmen. The withholding of wages as a form of punishment should be legally prohibited. The system of compelling workers to take spoiled cloth should be abolished. Workers would co-operate much more than they do in the maintenance of discipline and in giving better outturn of work, if they were entrusted with responsibility therefore.

*in Period of Wage Payment.*—The monthly system of paying wages is responsible, to a considerable extent, for the indebtedness of the workers. If wages are paid by the week instead of by the month, this evil could be minimized. Some of our workers would prefer fortnightly payment of wages. There is, however, unanimity with regard to the treatment of unclaimed wages. In practice, wages for the preceding month are not paid until about the 10th of the following month. We know of instance in which the employer has confiscated the wages for the preceding month (in the Choolai Mill), if the workers have been absent for more than a certain period in the following month. If for any reason a worker is unable to be present on pay day, he has to wait for one week in the Choolai Mill. There should be no delay in the payment of wages after they are due. The practice of retaining the wages for a certain number of days should be discontinued. Also, employers should have no right to keep back the wages of a worker who is discharged from service.

\* *Indebtedness.*—We made enquiries from about 400 workers a few months ago and found that without exception they were all in debt. The amounts ranged from Rs. 10 to Rs. 400. Where property is mortgaged the rate of interest was from 18 to 36 per cent.; but in the large majority of cases, it was much higher and reached even 150 per cent. The workers being ignorant cannot reckon the rate; the usual method is to calculate it on a monthly basis per rupee. A big effort should be made by the Government and the employers to solve the problem of indebtedness by the co-operative method. Trades Unions would most gladly help, but they cannot undertake the task on their own resources.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

It is not possible for us to give any precise information regarding the points under this head. But, with adequate housing, better food, a shorter day, the spread of education among workers and the institution of a living wage, we have no doubt that the industrial efficiency of the worker will show a remarkable increase.

### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

Trade unionism is extremely popular among the workers in southern India. There is keen enthusiasm among the workers and eagerness to enroll themselves in unions. Employers in general, are beginning to realise that trade unionism is an inevitable development; but there is still hostility on the part of some who regard it as an evil. Among the workers, there is also a widespread fear that membership of a trade union would mean loss of employment or some mark of disfavour from the employer. If employers would recognize at least trade unions registered under the Act, it would make a considerable difference. Our union has discouraged the idea of resorting to strikes, except as a last resort; it has prevented many strikes from materializing, and the workers have shown a remarkable sense of discipline, both in refraining from going on strike and in carrying out the decisions of the executive committee, when a strike has become inevitable. Trade unionists may generally be trusted to keep within the law, even when they are on strike. Unions are not yet in a position to start schemes for mutual aid and benefit, unemployment or sickness for lack of funds. We give death benefit in our union of Rs. 20 to the families of those who have been regular members. We make representations on behalf of the workers to the employers as well as the Government and assist them generally in ways which do not involve much expense. When witnesses in cases are dismissed, we compensate them for loss of employment.

The Madras Labour Union is the oldest union in India, having been in existence since April, 1918. Except in the very early beginning, it has been a union consisting exclusively of the workers in the three textile mills in Madras, namely the Buckingham, the Carnatic and the Choolai Mills. It owes its origin to the fact that the workers began to feel the pressure of the high prices during the latter part of the war and the frequency with which assaults took place inside the mills. The union was in a vigorous condition for two or three years, but a prolonged big strike and lockout in the

Buckingham and the Carnatic Mills in the years 1920 and 1921 practically killed it. The union was actively revived in 1923. At first the men were afraid to join it and would not come to meetings until it was dark. But membership grew at a remarkable pace. The attitude of Messrs. Binny & Co. has been consistently unfriendly. The president interviewed the employers several times with a view to establish friendly relations. Their objection to the union was that, in the first place, there was no need for it, since the Welfare Committee was doing all that the union was expected to do; and secondly, they could not recognize an institution on which there were outsiders. Another union called "the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union" came into existence in the year 1926, and the firm conviction of the workers has throughout been that it is a union started by the employers as a rival to the Madras Labour Union. Its meetings are still held inside the mill premises, and its existence has been used as a reason for withholding recognition from the Madras Labour Union. We have been told by some of the office-bearers of the other union that, although they do not like the existence of two unions, they have to maintain the other one out of fear of the employer. Both unions are registered under the Trades Union Act. An effort was made in 1926, soon after the starting of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, to bring about an amalgamation of the two. The conditions we then suggested were: (1) The election of office-bearers of the union to take place at a meeting exclusively of workers, but at a place outside the mill premises. The question whether the workers of the Choolai Mill also could be members of the same union to be decided at that meeting. (2) The union to be registered under the Trades Union Act. (3) All industrial disputes to be referred in the first instance by the office-bearers of the union to the manager of the mill concerned, and no public reference to be made to such disputes so long as negotiations were in progress.

But the effort at amalgamation failed. These conditions have been repeatedly stated at public meetings of the union. An effort was made by the late Labour Commissioner in 1928 to bring about a friendly understanding. He suggested that if the present office-bearers of the union would resign, it might be possible to get the union recognized. The matter was placed before the union, which decided that it could accept no dictation from the employer, so long as its constitution was such that it was permissible under the Trades Union Act. From our experience of the Madras Labour Union, we would suggest that the Act should be amended in two ways: (a) it should be made obligatory on an employer to recognize a registered union; (b) the Registrar of Trade Unions should, in doubtful cases, satisfy himself that a union applying for registration is a *bona fide* one.

The Choolai Mill has latterly been on friendly terms with the Madras Labour Union. The office-bearers of the union are at liberty to enter the mill premises and discuss questions with the management. This has had a good effect and recognition of the union has been responsible for preventing many strikes.

Many of the workers of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills are now hesitating to associate themselves openly with the Madras Labour Union, because they will shortly be entitled to gratuity for ten years of service. They express a fear that membership of the union may involve loss of the gratuity. One practical difficulty which arises from the institution of a bonus scheme twice a year and the gratuity fund, the first of which becomes payable after ten years of approved service, is that they operate as a guarantee against strikes. After the prolonged disputes of 1920 and 1921, such of the men as were taken into the service started with no recognition of their previous service but as absolutely new men. A strike would automatically deprive them of any claim to gratuity. If there have been no strikes in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills since 1921, this fact must in part at any rate be attributed to the fear of the workers of losing their bonus and gratuity. It is wrong in principle that there should be an inducement of this kind against the right of the workers to go on strike, if they are dissatisfied with their conditions of work.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

There were two big disputes in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in 1920 and 1921, each of several months' duration. The latter ended with loss of employment to a very considerable number of the workers in the two mills. Inadequate wages, ill-treatment inside the mills were the main causes of the strikes. Since then, so far as the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills are concerned, there have not been any strikes, on an appreciable scale. Reference, however, must be made to the wholesale dismissal of over 250 women in 1926. The union made an investigation into the economic conditions of several hundred of its members, both men and women. It was found, as a result of these investigations, that practically all the women who came forward to give evidence were heavily in debt, the rate of interest in a majority of the cases being 75 to 150 per cent. It may also be added that of the women who

came forward to give evidence the majority were from the Choolai Mill, and comparatively few from the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. The president of the union drew attention in a public meeting to the hardships of the women workers, laying stress on the fact that their lot was in every way worse than that of the men, since they had two masters to serve, the employers as well as their husbands at home. He expressed the view that, in many instances, the husbands were harsher than the employers. Messrs. Binny & Co., acting presumably on a distorted version of the speech, dismissed all their women workers. When an agitation was commenced for their reinstatement, the employers shifted their ground and justified their action on the plea that they were taking action upon an old decision of several years' standing. After considerable pressure was put upon them, they withdrew their notices of dismissal. In the Choolai Mill, there have been several strikes within the last year. The influence of the union has always been exercised in the direction of preventing a strike, if there was any hope of a settlement by negotiations and conciliation. The practice of the union is to approach the employer in the first instance; then, if necessary, to seek the intervention of the Labour Commissioner. In the case of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, it is not possible to approach the employers through the union (because, although it is registered under the Act, it is not recognized); nor can the Labour Commissioner intervene, because such intervention is, apparently possible only with the consent of both the parties. It was hoped that the difficulty would be solved under the Trades Disputes Act, but so far no action has been possible.

In the Choolai Mill, on several occasions, the union has prevented strikes even when there was provocation. As an instance, it may be mentioned that in 1926, the manager dismissed 26 men on a frivolous pretext. The men were prepared to go on strike the next morning. But acting on the advice of the president, they refrained from taking that step, when the manager agreed to reinstate 10 men immediately and consider the cases of the other 16 a few days later. The promise, however, was never kept. The experience of the union in the Choolai Mill has been for the last several years that, when representations are made to the local authorities, we are told that only the head office in Bombay can deal with the matter; when, however, the head office is approached, we are told that the men on the spot must decide.

The introduction of the two loom system in 1928 was preceded by a great deal of discontent among the men, who feared that there would be retrenchment on a large scale in consequence of this system. The weavers also protested against the offer of the management of a fifty per cent. wage on the second loom and the bad materials supplied. A committee was appointed by the Labour Commissioner, but not until the men had downed tools after patiently waiting for several months. It is significant that, while the men had demanded 75 per cent. on the second loom, the committee appointed by the Labour Commissioner, after careful investigation, came to the conclusion that the men should be paid 80 per cent. on the second loom or, 5 per cent. more than the original demand of the men. The Committee admitted that the complaint of the weavers was justifiable on account of "the low tensile strength of the warp material, bad sizing, inferior stores supplied to the loom, frequent stoppages of the loom for repairs, breakages, badly prepared weft and a large number of missing threads in the weavers' beams". The recommendations of the Committee were, besides the 80 per cent. on the second loom; (a) better quality of warp yarns; (b) greater attention to be paid to the winding, warping and sizing processes; (c) rewound weft to be supplied to the weavers; (d) the stoppage of the looms to be reduced to a minimum by providing for an adequate supply of weft, and the supplying of a better quality of loom stores and securing prompt attention of jobbers; (e) the re-arrangement of the looms.

The concluding paragraph of the report of the Committee may also be quoted: "The Committee are constrained to observe that the management declined to furnish the information called for in the questionnaire which would have greatly assisted them in ascertaining the cost of production in the mill under the two loom system and the extent the mill gain thereby. The Committee have, however, made a close observation of the several factors in order to make their recommendations."

The recommendations of this committee have not yet been carried out in full, although it is eighteen months since they were made. With regard to the payment of wages on the second loom, the management refused to accept the recommendation of 80 per cent., but agreed to the original demand of the men for 75 per cent. in return for certain concessions, such as the grant of 15 days' privilege leave to all workers with five years' service and more, maternity benefits to women workers and the payment of an allowance whenever there was stoppage of work owing to the breakdown of the engine or any other cause beyond their control.

We regret to state, however, that the management has sought various pretexts for putting off the grant of many of these concessions.

*The Trades Disputes Act.*—The Trades Disputes Act was rushed through the Delhi session of the Legislative Assembly last year in spite of strenuous opposition. The Government of India made it appear that, unless the measure was immediately placed on the Statute Book, there would be serious consequences to the country. Nine months have elapsed since the measure was passed; but when the union applied to the Madras Government in January this year for the appointment of a Court of Enquiry under the Act, a reply was sent after a delay of four weeks (and that too, after a reminder from the union) that as the rules were not ready, the application might be renewed at a later date. This is in contrast to the promptness with which the Bombay Government drafted the rules immediately after the Act came into operation and appointed a Court of Enquiry in May, 1929, to deal with the dispute in the textile industry in Bombay. Once again, the union is forced to the conclusion that the only incentive to prompt action in dealing with labour which is effective with the Government seems to be a strike.

*The Attitude of the Government.*—The attitude of the local government cannot be described as sympathetic. No doubt, a special officer has been appointed, known as the Labour Commissioner. The appointment was made when there was serious industrial discontent in the Presidency. But no real effort has been made by the Government to expand the department to meet the needs of the industrial workers. A perusal of the list of Labour Commissioners will convince the Commission how lightly the Government has regarded the duties of that officer. There have been Labour Commissioners appointed for a few days or weeks. In 1926, we led a deputation to the member in charge of labour to suggest the collection of information relating to labour through the Labour Commissioner's department, but the request has gone unheeded. The Labour Commissioner is not in direct touch with labour. He gets his reports of meetings from the police. He has consistently refused invitations from trade unions to attend their meetings, although, apparently he has no objection to attend meetings of employers and Planters' Associations. There is little disposition on the part of the Government to take any action until an industrial dispute has culminated in a strike. The conclusion is forced upon the union that until a late stage is reached, the Government is not willing to recognize the existence of a dispute. So far as the city police are concerned, the union also feels bound to acknowledge the fairness with which the police have acted in recent years in all industrial disputes in which the union has been engaged. There has been no interference with meetings and no efforts to coerce the men to resume work during strikes.

Representations have been made by the union in the past to the Government that they should invest the Labour Commissioner with greater powers than he possesses, and expand his department for the purpose of collecting data and statistics regarding industrial labour. No action has been taken on these lines by the Government. One of the difficulties in this Presidency is that industrial labour is absolutely unrepresented in the Legislative Council. This is perhaps the only legislature in India (barring the U.P. Council) where industrial labour is so unrepresented. The consequence is that labour problems do not receive anything more than scant attention from the Government. The Government was approached to nominate one or two members to the council after the general elections of 1926, but no notice was taken of the request.

With the adoption of machinery for enquiry and conciliation, in the first part of the Trades Disputes Act, the union feels that the necessity has disappeared for a Labour Commissioner. He can intervene in a dispute only when he is approached by both parties, and his intervention is necessarily limited by the consideration of bringing about as early a settlement as possible on the basis of such data as are readily available or which both parties may be willing to place before him. Courts of Enquiry and Boards of Conciliation will wield, on the other hand, greater authority than the Labour Commissioner possesses and are likely to deal with industrial disputes more from the standpoint of a just than a prompt settlement. The combination of the functions of Labour Commissioner, protector of the depressed classes, registrar of trade unions and commissioner for workmen's compensation in a single officer is not desirable. There should be a separate officer to deal with the problems of the depressed classes. Likewise, the collection of statistics and all information relating to labour should be the work of a separate department in charge of an Indian with knowledge and experience of research work. It should also be one of the duties of the department to do publicity work, translating the various labour measures into the different vernaculars of the province, and to conduct a labour bulletin in English and the vernaculars. Without meaning to cast any reflection upon the present holder of these miscellaneous posts, we think that the problems of labour would be more satisfactorily handled by an Indian officer than a European. We must draw the attention of the Commission to the fact that since the post of Labour Commissioner was created it has never been held by an Indian.

It need scarcely be added that the department of labour should be in charge of a minister responsible to the Legislature, both in the provinces and in the Government of India.

Although labour problems have been given prominence in the Legislative Council whenever there has been interference by the police, much attention has not been paid to purely industrial disputes. Generally speaking, there is not sustained interest displayed in the welfare of labour except by one or two members of the Legislative Council. We think that only by a wide extension of the franchise can there be any satisfactory improvement in the present state of affairs. At present hardly any of the workers have a vote for the legislatures. Even in regard to municipal matters, only an extremely small number of workers have the vote. In 1927, the Madras Labour Union decided for the first time to set up a candidate of its own for the 16th Division of the Corporation. We made efforts to induce the Congress candidate to withdraw in favour of our own and to contest the seat in the neighbouring division. But as the Congress Party refused to accept our suggestion, we had a strenuous fight. Our candidate polled 319 votes as against 220 for the Congress candidate. The enthusiasm with which the members of the Madras Labour Union worked during the election campaign is proof of the interest they feel in civic affairs. In 1928 we contested the seat from the 13th Division; but our candidate was defeated, this time by a member of the Justice Party. There is a small group at present working in the Madras Corporation on behalf of labour. But it is too small yet to have any appreciable influence. Nevertheless, our representative succeeded in getting a resolution passed recommending special representation to labour in the Madras Corporation. A scheme was drafted for giving labour such representation; but it has been shelved. Workers, especially in urban areas, have a sufficient understanding of the reactions of legislative and civic activities upon their lives and conditions of work to appreciate the value of the vote. Trade unions, in our opinion, should be given the right to elect their own representatives to the various legislatures (including both Houses of the Central Legislature) in adequate numbers. There should be reservation of seats for labour in all the legislatures and municipal and local bodies.

#### ✓ SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORANDUM OF THE MADRAS LABOUR UNION.

The Madras Labour Union is the oldest organized trade union in India. It is also one of the first unions in India to be recognized under the Trades Union Act. Its first meeting was held on April 13th, 1918, under the auspices of the Sri Venkatesa Gunamrita Varshani Sabha (a religious association) with Mr. B. P. Wadia as chairman of the meeting. Three factors were responsible for the suggestion of such an organization:—(a) The extremely short recess for the mid-day meal of 30 minutes (the recess was extended to 40 minutes immediately after the suggestion of a trade union); (b) the frequency of assaults on the workers by the European assistants in the Buckingham Mill; (c) inadequate wages in the face of rapidly rising prices.

On 27th April, 1918, the Madras Labour Union was formally inaugurated. Mr. Wadia spoke to the workers of the dignity of labour and the necessity for cultivating a sense of self-respect and self-reliance. The Government of Madras began to take notice of these meetings attended by several thousands of workers from all the three mills. On the 18th of May, Lord Pentland (then Governor of Madras), sent for Mr. Wadia and expressed disapproval of his line of work. Mr. Wadia said that he could not discontinue it, unless the suggestion came from the labourers themselves. He was then requested to see Mr. A. P. Symonds, of Messrs. Binny & Co., which he did on the following day. On the 24th of May Mr. Wadia wrote a letter to the Private Secretary to the Governor, in the course of which he observed that Mr. Symonds was a little surprised at the view His Excellency took. In the course of that letter Mr. Wadia observed:—"I am grateful to His Excellency for thus bringing about a friendly relationship between Mr. Symonds and myself, for I am sure it will greatly facilitate my work among the labourers, which I believe to be of great value to the country and the Government." Mr. Wadia went round the mills with Mr. Symonds. It is significant that, after seeing the Buckingham and Carnatic mills, Mr. Wadia wrote: *As to the general excellent condition of your mills, sanitary and otherwise, I have nothing but praise. I have not inspected many mills, but of all those I have, there is no doubt in my mind that yours afford facilities and comfort to the labourers that others do not.*

He then made certain concrete suggestions to Sir Clement Simpson, the head of Messrs. Binny & Co.:—(a) The mid-day recess of 40 minutes should be extended to an hour. (b) An increase of wages by 25 per cent., as in Ahmedabad. (c) Better treatment of the labourers by the European officers, and removal of racial feelings. (Notes.—It may be noted that there were several cases of assault in the mills by the

European managers and assistants, some of which ended in conviction in the police-courts. In one case a European assistant was convicted for branding a worker with a red hot iron bar and fined Rs. 35.) (d) Regulations for the dismissal of workers. Mr. Wadia said: "At present petty officials dismiss men, while the manager only should possess the power to dismiss." (e) Payment of wages on the 7th of each month, instead of on the 22nd. (Pay for May was given to the workers on June 22nd.) (f) Payment of wages when the machinery gets out of order.

Mr. Wadia concluded that he was prepared to discontinue the meetings of the Madras Labour Union while Mr. Symonds and Sir Clement Simpson were considering his suggestions and, in fact, did so. "Labourers will not approve of this, I fear," he said, "but I am eager to do all I can to meet your wishes." On 28th June Mr. Wadia wrote to the Private Secretary to the Governor:—"One full month has elapsed, and my promise has been kept, for during the period I have not addressed a single meeting of the labourers at Perambur. As advised by His Excellency, I have tried my best to co-operate with Mr. Symonds, but I regret I have not been helped any way." Mr. Wadia's complaint was that his letter of May 30th was neither replied to, nor even acknowledged by Mr. Symonds. On 30th June the Private Secretary wrote a brief reply, expressing pleasure at hearing that meetings had been suspended even temporarily. But there was no answer from Messrs. Binny & Co. A largely signed petition from the workers suggesting a strike was received by Mr. Wadia; at a meeting on July 3rd he observed:—"If by going on strike you were affecting the pockets of Messrs. Binny & Co. I would not mind, for they are making plenty of money; but by such a step you will injure the cause of the Allies: our soldiers, who have to be clothed, will be put to inconvenience, and we have no right to trouble those who are fighting our King's battles, because a few Europeans connected with these mills and this Government, are acting in a bad manner. Therefore, we must have no strikes."

*The First Lock-out.*—In October, 1918, there was the first lock-out in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills on account of the objection of the men to obey the rule of being present at the mills at 6 a.m. It is enough to quote the following passage from Mr. Wadia's speech during the lock-out on October 29th, 1918:—"Taking into consideration all the aspects of the case, I give you, as a sincere friend of yours, the advice to promptly and implicitly obey the order of the mill manager and the employers. I understand that yesterday the order was that you should go there at 6 o'clock in the morning. My answer to-day is that if you want to be true to your principles and ideals of the Labour Union, be present there to-morrow morning at 6 o'clock. *If to-morrow Sir Clement Simpson or his assistants give you an order that you shall be present at 5.30 in the morning, please see that the day after to-morrow you go at 5.30 a.m.*"

At the same time, he said "we have had no strike; a lock-out is forced upon us for no fault of yours. For this lock-out the employers of the mills and they alone are wholly responsible." In concluding the speech he said:—"Let us suffer, let us be strong, and prove to the Government that in war-time we have looked loyally to its requirements, and that if there is any one to be found out for a charge of disloyalty—they must look elsewhere, in other directions than in the direction of the Labour Union. That is my advice to you, and I hope that you will follow it the first thing to-morrow morning."

Following Mr. Wadia's advice the workmen were at the gates at 6 a.m. The union had by this time been definitely established, and an office was opened in the Perambur Barracks for registering complaints. A store for the supply of cheap rice was also opened. On 31st October, commenting on the lock-out and the manner of its ending, *New India* wrote editorially as follows:—"We elsewhere publish a report of the occurrences at the gates of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. Though the men were ready at the gate prior to 6 a.m., many of them had to come from long distances drenched in the rain—they could not all get in because of the narrowness of the entrance, and those who remained behind were kept out. Whose fault is it that the gate is too narrow for the men to enter in time? The trouble will be more serious at noon, because the people who could not enter this morning have to go out, take their food, and enter again within the same period. Is that feat humanly possible?"

On 9th November the Union passed a resolution appealing to the Government to conserve the stock or foodstuffs by an immediate prohibition of all exports and take more effective measures to secure its proper distribution in the country.

Celebrating the Armistice in November, 1918, Mr. Wadia advised the men to realize what labour was doing in Germany, in Russia, and in Turkey, how the masses of the people had worked up to a point where they gained freedom for themselves. "Study," he said, "the conditions of your country and of yourselves and like men stand up for your own opinions, your own ideas, your own rights, and your own liberty."

*The Second Lock-out.*—On the morning of the 27th November, 1918, a second lock-out was declared by Messrs. Binny and Co. *New India*, in its issue of November, 1918, wrote on the causes of the lock-out :—“ The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills have ordered a lock-out on the ground that the manager and the accountant of the first and the weaving master of the second mill were assaulted yesterday and Monday last, respectively. The identity of the person who took part in the mischief could not be made out in spite of the best effort of the jobbers and the maistries. We understand that a number of suspected persons were produced before the assaulted, but without result. The assault took place, according to our information, at obscure places, and seems to have been the work of a few individuals. The bulk of the workmen are disgusted with such acts and several of them are actively trying to trace the culprits. Needless to say, the Labour Union takes the same view of the mischief. At almost every meeting Mr. Wadia has been strongly impressing upon them that under no circumstances should force be used, or the least sign of indiscipline shown, and every effort is now being made by him to find out whether any member of the union was even remotely connected with the assault.”

Proceeding, *New India* asked whether it was fair to penalise the vast majority of innocent workmen for the guilt of a few. On 28th November, at a meeting of the workers, 5,000 people being present, Mr. Wadia said :—“ I am very sorry to note that the advice of mine has not been followed in this particular instance. *So far as that action goes, you may not perhaps like my saying so, my sympathy goes entirely with the mill authorities. No factory, no concern employing hundreds or thousands of labourers can afford to put up with indiscipline of that kind or of that description.* And, therefore, because of our duty as members of the Labour Union, with definite principles, we must help the mill authorities as well as the police authorities to trace the culprits and treat them according to the law of the land.”

The following resolutions were passed :—(1) That this meeting of the Madras Labour Union records with extreme regret the reported assaults on the European officers of the two mills and appeals to all its members to put the principles of the union into force by helping the police to trace the culprits. (2) That this meeting of the Madras Labour Union regrets the action of the mill authorities in ordering a lock-out of the two mills, thereby causing intense suffering to labourers in these hard times of economic distress, and hereby urges the mill authorities to resume work.”

The Union opened a relief fund on 4th December. On the 5th a notice was put up by the authorities of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills that the mills, with the exception of the weaving department, would run. But the weaving shed would continue to remain closed, except to those who were willing to express regret for recent misconduct. On the 6th December the union passed the following resolution :—“ This meeting of Madras Labour Union views with great regret the notice issued by the managers of Buckingham and Carnatic Mills to-day, as the plan suggested to the labourers therein will tend to divide their unity. This meeting reaffirms its regret at the action of some who committed the assault and are sorry the culprits have not been caught, and hereby appoints 18 men as a special committee to negotiate with the authorities and bring about an amicable settlement.”

On the 7th, 18 representatives went to see the authorities of the mills and put forward three requests :—(a) Pay for the days of the lock-out. (b) The restoration of the gratuity fund to the weavers. (c) The re-instatement of men who were suspected of complicity in the assault.

The authorities, however, refused to accept these conditions. Mr. C. F. Andrews arrived in Madras, on the suggestion of Gandhiji, to effect a settlement. The meeting passed a resolution appointing 18 members to meet the authorities of the mills with Mr. C. F. Andrews to lead them, on the following terms :—(1) An expression of regret for the recent assault on Europeans and a promise to do their utmost that this shall not happen again. (2) A promise on the part of the manager that he would do his utmost to promote good feeling and deal strictly and impartially with any cases of ill-treatment or harshness that might be brought before him and proved to be true. (3) That, subject to the behaviour of the labourers being found satisfactory, the manager would restore the quarter-share of gratuity fund declared forfeited for 12 months from the day of workmen returning to work. (4) That the mills would, if possible, resume work at 24 hours' notice being given of acceptance of the terms by this deputation. (5) That the managers undertake that there would be no victimization.

The Union also agreed not to claim pay for the days of the lock-out and the reinstatement of the dismissed men, and requested Mr. Andrews to intercede on their behalf after the opening of the mills.

Sir Clement Simpson would not accept the arbitration, but gave hope of favourable consideration regarding wages to the men for the days of the lock-out, at any

rate, for 7 days, as a matter of concession, and a part of the gratuity fund being paid at the end of the year conditional upon good conduct. Mr. Andrews was also given permission to interview Sir Clement Simpson at any time.

[Although a slight digression, it would be of interest to note in connection with the early phase of the Trades Union movement in India to make a reference to the establishment of the Madras Tramwaymen's Union on December 5th, 1918, Mr. Wadia being also responsible for the union.]

In a statement in the *Madras Mail* on 10th December Messrs. Binny & Co. narrated at length the circumstances under which the Madras Labour Union was started. The following passage occurs in the statement:—"Messrs. Binny & Co. quite appreciate the fact that labour unions have come to stay and would cordially meet more than half way a properly constituted union of their workpeople, but a union, such as the present one, with representatives who know absolutely nothing of labour conditions in Madras or over the rest of India, and whose primary object is politics, can serve no useful purpose as regards either employees or employers, and, as has been proved already, is causing untold mischief, misunderstanding, and needless suffering."

They also observed:—"To illustrate the fact that wages are sufficient it is pointed out that the supply of labour is ample and that the mills have hitherto been able to engage all they require at the gates without special recruitment."

Mr. Wadia replied to Messrs. Binny & Co. in a long statement in which he observed:—"Why should Messrs. Binny & Co. object to a politician taking up this question? Are not labour leaders politicians in Great Britain? Home Rulers are blamed by Anglo-Indians, officials and non-officials, for being regardless of the masses; when a Home Ruler endeavours to work for a portion of the masses he is objected to, for his primary object is politics."

He also asked:—"Messrs. Binny & Co. would cordially meet more than half-way a properly constituted union; but who is to decide the propriety of the constitution? Imagine Mr. Lloyd George telling Mr. Henderson 'I will cordially meet a properly constituted union not headed by politicians.' It is for the labourers to say who should be their leaders, and what shall be the constitution of their union; it is not for Messrs. Binny & Co. to dictate."

Mr. Wadia received at this time a largely signed petition from the workers in the following terms:—"The European officers of the above mills ill-treat us in every possible way. Whenever we ask them for oil and other necessary things for work, they say: 'Go to Wadia, he will give you oil and all other things you want.' In the rainy season we go there completely wet and used to dry the wet clothes inside the mills. Now the officers as soon as they see the clothes hanging, tear them to pieces."

Referring to the gratuity fund, he said that, while he had no doubt about the *bona fides* of Messrs. Binny & Co, he asked: "Do they look upon this fund in the light of an insurance against strikes?" He also asked:—"What is the use of recreation grounds and night schools and museums when men's self-respect is killed and they are desired not to show it? What is the good of educative and pleasure-giving institutions when the very soul of the labourer is crushed, when he has no time from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Labourers do not want attractive tops when their stomachs are empty, their limbs are weary, their spirits are crushed."

An effort was made at this time to establish, under the auspices of the Labour Union, an employment bureau for finding employment for those who had been turned out of employment for joining trade unions in the city. As the lock-out was still continuing, a public meeting was held in Gokhale Hall on December 15th, with Mrs. Annie Besant presiding. Mr. Wadia said in the course of his speech:—"Because they want to disband the Labour Union they have tried various methods into the details of which I do not want to go as the matter is under discussion. But step by step we have proceeded, and we have now come to a position where men, yesterday afternoon, after consultation with me and among themselves, have come to the resolution that they will not go to the mills unless Messrs. Binny & Co. accept arbitration."

Relief measures included the sale of cheap rice at 3½ measure per rupee and the opening of a bank for the benefit of members who would get loans at a rate of interest not exceeding 2 pies in the rupee.

After the lock-out was over Mr. Wadia concentrated his attention on the stores and the bank. A committee of nine men was formed to give relief to the men who had suffered in the lock-out.

On 14th April, 1919, the Madras Labour Union celebrated its first anniversary. Mr. Wadia spoke of the great progress that Labour had made during the year and impressed upon the men the necessity for cultivating self-reliance.

*The Tramway Strike.*—About this time, or to be more accurate, in March, 1919, there was a strike of the tramway men. At a public meeting on 23rd March, with



Mrs. Besant in the chair, the following resolution was adopted :—“ This public meeting of the citizens of Madras, in view of the frequent industrial troubles now occurring, requests the Government of Madras to devise immediate measures to prevent them by the creation of Arbitration Boards for the settlement of all outstanding differences.”

In moving the resolution Mr. Wadia said :—“ In this fight between Capital and Labour there must be taken into account the factor that labourers are human beings. The labourer has begun to stand up ; he knows the strength of his feet, and he will no more go down on the ground and merely entreat. If you do not organize them, the expression of the spirit of the mob would be more of a danger to the country, and such an expression none of us wants to see in India. Those who deride these organizations, as mischievous or political in character, talk in a manner which only betrays their ignorance. The danger to the country, to industries, to the trades, would lie in a disorganized mob full of the new spirit. I think that Government intervention is necessary at the present stage. Capital and Labour have at present no connecting link between them. The capitalists, Indian as well as European, have their own interests, and those interests naturally clash with the interests of the labourers. It is necessary that some organization with a certain amount of authority should step in and give a helping hand in the creation of machinery which is going to produce harmonious relationships between Capital and Labour.”

Later in the course of his speech, Mr. Wadia also said :—“ Any party which objects to an arbitration board admits that the wrong is on its side. If the employer objects to an arbitration board, it is clear that the employer is in the wrong and is afraid to go to arbitration, which is impartial and unjust. If the labourer does not want an arbitration board, the case of the labourer must necessarily be weak.”

Towards the end of April, Mr. Wadia left for Europe to appear before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Government of India Bill on behalf of Indian labour and also to attend the International Labour Conference at Washington. Speaking to the Madras Tramwaymen's Union—by this time the strike had been settled—Mr. Wadia said :—“ To me the victory that we have won by the help of the Tramwaymen's Union lies in the fact that, *for the first time in the struggle between employers and employees, the very sane course of coming to a decision by an arbitration board appointed by both parties is of very great value and importance.*”

By this time the M.S.M.R. Workshop Union had also been organized by Mr. Arundale. The Railway Workshop Union had given about Rs. 8,000 for the relief of the men during the lock-out. Mr. Wadia advised the Workshop Union to extend its organization and have branches of the union all along the line :—“ You are going to raise a magnificent building ; but take some time and make your foundations very strong, and I would, therefore, advise you to put all your thought and energy into that work.”

*Memorandum to T. U. Congress in Glasgow.*—Two other unions which had come into existence on a definite basis during the year were the Printers' Union and the Rickshawallas' Union. Mr. Wadia presented a memorandum on behalf of labour in Madras to a session of the British Trade Union Congress held at Glasgow in September, 1919. He concluded that statement in the following terms :—“ The Government of India is an autocracy. The Indian Reforms under discussion in Parliament plainly indicate that the present machinery of autocracy will be maintained. The ears of autocracy are always deaf to the groans of the sufferer. The voice of the poor factory labourer will not even reach those ears, for it will be drowned amid the droning of the machinery of the rich capitalist, and the latter is the friend of the Government. There is a serious attempt to establish a living brotherhood of the labourers of the world, and the Indian labourers fondly look to organized labour in the United Kingdom to champion their cause. As their spokesman, on their behalf, I am putting forward this condensed statement. I appeal to those who hold the cause of labour and trade unionism sacred, to stretch their hands of fellowship to their comrades in India. Remember that the cause of labour is one.”

Mr. Wadia submitted a statement to the Joint Parliamentary Committee in August, 1919. He made a reference to the 12 hours' day in factories, the low wages, labour being a reserved subject in the provinces. Referring to the last, he said :—“ This is actually to sow the seed of future discord, and I think it my duty to strike a note of warning. Trade unionism is bound to grow fast in India ; the settlement of labour disputes will be claimed as one of their rights by trade unions on behalf of the labourer, and if it is in the hands of Government, it will bring the unions into conflict with Government and will inevitably lead the labourers to regard Government as on the side of the employers. The Government should limit its work to the creation of permanent boards of arbitration, to which labour disputes can be referred, on lines similar to a Labour Board suggested by some of us last October for Madras.”

He demanded legislation for the recognition of trade unions and the transfer of labour to ministerial control. In support of this he quoted Mr. Montagu, who, in speaking so far back as 1911, on the Indian Budget in the House of Commons, said :—“ The leaders of Indian opinion must set their faces against the degradation of labour, and they need to be specially vigilant because India's working classes, besides being themselves unorganized, are not directly represented on the Legislative Councils, whose Indian members come almost exclusively from the landlord and capitalistic classes.”

*Franchise for Labour.*—With regard to the franchise and the creation of special electorates for the capitalist classes, he said :—“ In the Bill before us I find no attempt made to introduce any measure of reform which will give the labourer any voice in safeguarding his own interests ; in no way can he better his own conditions ; he will have to rely, as in the past, on the goodwill of others, be they foreigners or be they his own countrymen ; he has been exploited in the past, and will continue to be so exploited. But what is worse, the people who exploit him are coming into greater power. Take Madras—the Franchise Committee recommended a provincial legislature of 120, of which 13 are unalloyed capitalistic seats. A factory manager, a shop-owner, a planter, can not only vote, but get elected from his chamber of commerce, his trades association, his planters' association. Capitalists will form a powerful element in the provincial council ; and under the system of franchise recommended by the Southborough Committee, the labouring classes will not be able to influence the elections.

“ I am speaking specially with reference to the factory labourer, and Bombay affords a better example ; the Millowners' Association returns a member, but no labourers' association exists. Commerce and industry have eight seats—excluding landholders' seats—and not a single seat is made available for a representative of labour. I will grant at once that labour organizations do not exist to any great extent ; but is that sufficient reason for allowing the exploitation of Indian labour ? Is there no way to bring the Indian labourer into power ? I maintain that the Indian labourer's interest must be safeguarded, and the process of safeguarding them must be put into his own hands and into no one else's. I beg to submit that the masses in India—and among them are the factory labourers—have a culture of their own. Their power of understanding political and economic issues and suggesting proper remedies in a practical manner is well known to those who have worked for and with them. Their political instincts are clear and strong. The factor to be borne in mind is that the Indian labourer loathes the idea of slavery in any shape or form. The Indian labourers want to have schools for their children, houses for themselves, better wages and shorter hours—all as a matter of right and justice. The efforts on the part of the employers or the Government to patronize the labourers are seen as fetters of slavery, albeit golden fetters instead of iron ones. This new spirit is in evidence among Indian labourers, and it is well to recognize that even the golden fetters are resented and the Indian labourer feels that he is not only a ' hand,' but also that he has a head and a heart, and aspires to come to his own.

“ Now, how is this to be done ? What weapon can the Joint Committee put into the hands of the labourer to defend himself ? The only adequate means that I can suggest is the vote. Enable the Indian labourer to send his own representatives to the provincial councils ; let all matters relating to his welfare and betterment be in the hands of responsible, elected representatives who have the confidence of the labourer. If my suggestion made above that all industrial matters, including the welfare of labour, be transferred to the popular half of the future provincial administration, is given effect to, we shall be on the right way to a solution and we immediately have to consider the enfranchisement of Indian labour.”

He suggested the following for the purpose of the vote :—(1) All those who pay income tax or profession tax ; (2) graduates of all Indian and foreign universities recognized by their respective Governments ; (3) any person paying land revenue directly ; (4) occupants of houses and premises of the annual rental value of Rs. 48 in municipal areas and Rs. 24 in non-municipal areas ; (5) tenants of Zamindari and Raiyatwari holdings paying Rs. 10 rental.

He also demanded that all labourers working in factories with a wage of Rs. 15 and over should have the vote. In Bombay and Calcutta the figure will be higher.

In the course of his memorandum, he said that, so far as labour is concerned, Hindus of all castes, members of other communities, such as Moslems and Christians, can and do work harmoniously together for their common welfare without the least difficulty.

*Settlement by Arbitration.*—Soon after Mr. Wadia's departure for Europe and America, Mr. Arundale became president of the union, and for the rest of the year 1919 there were comparatively speaking quiet organization. In February, 1920, the union drew up a list of grievances and sent it to Messrs. Binny & Co. There might have been a strike but for Mr. Arundale's persuasion. After discussions between Messrs. Binny & Co., and the representatives of the Union, the following

concessions were granted on 12th February :—(1) (a) Increase of 10 per cent. to those who drew Re. 1 and above per day, (b) 15 per cent. to those who drew between 9 annas and Re. 1 per day, (c) 20 per cent. to those who drew less than 9 annas ; (2) 2 annas per rupee as rice allowance to those who drew between Rs. 25 and Rs. 75 per month, and 3 annas for those who were drawing up to Rs. 25 ; (3) houses to be built for the workers ; (4) gazetted holidays and 15 days' privilege leave with wages ; (5) increase in the bonus to 10 per cent.

The union was dissatisfied with these and there was again talk of a strike. But Mr. Arundale made an appeal to the Labour Commissioner for a Court of Enquiry, which gave the following award :—(1) 4 annas rice allowance per rupee ; (2) increase of 20, 25, and 30 per cent. in wages ; (3) full pay for gazetted holidays ; (4) a minimum wage of not less than 9 annas and 7 pies a day ; (5) a fortnight's privilege after five years' service ; (6) the establishment of a provident fund instead of the gratuity fund.

There was some difference of opinion as to the interpretation of the award and consequently there was a strike on 23rd March. Mr. Arundale advised the men to resume work, and Lord Willingdon, who was then the Governor of Madras, promised a sympathetic consideration of the case. Ultimately, the men accepted the interpretation of the award by the Labour Commissioner. Mr. Wadia returned in August, 1920, and resumed charge of the union. In October, serious difficulties arose over the neglect by Messrs. Binney & Co., of the claims of some leading members of the Executive Committee of the Union, for promotion.

(1) Natesa Mudaliar, who was a weaver with excellent qualifications ; on 30th April, 1919, Mr. F. Southworth, weaving master, certified : " Natesa Mudaliar was entertained at the mill in January, 1911. His knowledge of theory is unexceptional, and I think he will make a good jobber." On 1st August, 1919, the weaving lecturer certified : " Natesa Mudaliar was attending the weaving classes in the joint school of the mill for the last two years. He is very regular in attendance. His knowledge in theory is good, and he is fit for the first year's course of the City and Guilds London examination. He is an intelligent and persevering young man." On 5th September, Mr. F. Howard, the weaving master, certified : " Natesa Mudaliar has attended the evening classes for cotton weaving for many years with very good results. He is fairly good with his English, but wishes to improve, and will be a good reliable student under any teacher."

Mr. Natesa Mudaliar's claims for promotion to a side jobber's place were overlooked, because, as Mr. Bentley told him, he was one of the ring-leaders who sent a petition against the brother of the manager, and that he put up notices of the Labour Union.

(2) Another active member of the committee, Varadarajulu Naicker, who was a head jobber and in the service of the mill for 35 years, was dismissed. He also held excellent certificates from various weaving masters.

(3) Vedanatha Mudaliar, another member of the Executive Committee, who had been in the service of the mill for 29 years and had risen to the position of head jobber, was reduced to the position of a side jobber.

*Victimisation.*—Victimisation of the leading members of the Executive Committee of the Union led to the outbreak of trouble. The men denied at the time that they assaulted the weaving master. A certain amount of passive resistance was, no doubt, resorted to. Mr. Wadia, the president, disapproved of these tactics, and admitted that the men were in the wrong in his evidence in the proceedings against him instituted by Messrs. Binney & Co., in the High Court. It is, however, on record that Mr. Bentley was in possession of a revolver for which he had no licence. It belonged to a deceased European employee of the mill and was loaded at the time it was snatched away from him by the workers. He admitted in his evidence in the High Court that he had it with him for four hours that day. Mr. A. P. Symonds, who appeared on behalf of Messrs. Binney & Co., in the High Court, admitted in the course of his examination that all the weavers, 1,400 in number, were locked out of the Buckingham mill for the alleged assault committed, it was admitted in court, by not more than a 100. Mr. Symonds also admitted that he had not read all of Mr. Wadia's speeches and was unaware of the fact that Mr. Wadia had severed his connection with *New India* newspaper more than a year before the proceedings were instituted, and that he was ignorant of the resolution of the Madras Labour Union, moved by Mr. Wadia, condemning the assault on the manager of the Buckingham mill the previous year. It is significant that Mr. Symonds also said that the representations of the Madras Labour Union to Messrs. Binney & Co., regarding the grievances of the men were helpful. The judgment of the High Court was in favour of Messrs. Binney & Co. On 2nd December an order was issued against Mr. Wadia and the Lock-out Committee, prohibiting them from holding meetings of the workmen of the mills. The lock-out, however, continued, and on 9th December there was collision between the police and the workers, with several casualties. The Government issued a communiqué, which departed in several important respects from the

reports of the disturbances which appeared both in *New India* and the *Hindu*. The same night the military secretary to the Governor wrote to Mr. Wadia that His Excellency would like clearly to inform Mr. Wadia that, if any unfortunate incident should arise owing to collision between the police in the performance of their duty, and the rioters, then a large share of the responsibility for such incidents must rest upon Mr. Wadia, and those who with him claimed to control and represent the interests of the workers in the city of Madras. Mr. Wadia promptly replied, drawing His Excellency's attention to the indiscriminate firing and other high-handed methods employed by the police, and said that he must express his surprise and regret that His Excellency chose to say that the responsibility for such incidents as happened the previous day must rest upon him and those who with him claimed to control and represent the interests of the workers in the city of Madras, and that His Excellency must be well aware that his (Mr. Wadia's) colleagues and himself, who had been interesting themselves in their humble way in ameliorating the lot of the work-people in the city of Madras, had been obliged not to approach the work-people of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills (reference being to the injunction of the High Court).

After a prolonged dispute, it ended upon the mediation of Mrs. Besant and Mr. (now Sir) Purshottamdas Thakurdas.

No one regrets more than the union does the deplorable incidents of incendiarism and other manifestations of disorder which marked the later stages of these disputes. But it is the conviction of the Union that, if Messrs. Binny & Co. had adopted a friendly and sympathetic attitude, instead of making efforts to break the union, there would never have been cause for strikes and lock-outs.

*Outbreaks of Violence.*—The later developments after the injunction against Mr. Wadia and the Lock-out Committee were of a serious character, resulting in several casualties. There was incendiarism and other manifestations of lawlessness. We have no desire from this distance of time to apportion the blame for those outbreaks of violence. It is enough to point out that a perusal of the proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council on the firing on the crowds at Pulianthope would be sufficient to prove that at last there were two sides to the case presented by the Government and the employers. We may, however, be permitted to express our conviction that, if there had not been a heavy and continuous strain on the men, who were driven to starvation by the prolonged lock-out and the removal of the restraining influence of Mr. Wadia and his co-workers in the Lock-out Committee, these outbreaks of violence would not have occurred.

*Struggle for Recognition.*—The next phase of the struggle of the Madras Labour Union to obtain recognition from Messrs. Binny & Co., commenced in 1926 with the active revival of the Union. It is significant that, although as early as 1918, Messrs Binny & Co., had expressed their willingness to meet more than half way a properly constituted Union, no organization came into existence until after the passage of the Trades Union Act. We shall offer no comment on the fact that the Buckingham and Carnatic Mill Employees' Union, although it came later into the field, was able to obtain registration before the Madras Labour Union. We cannot however, help pointing out that, as soon as the Madras Labour Union undertook to file compensation cases free of cost to victims of accidents, the welfare committee followed our example in the newly started union. Pressure was put upon such victims to apply for compensation through the welfare committee rather than through the Madras Labour Union. In some cases, even while submitting their applications through the welfare committee, they took the precaution of consulting us to ascertain and make sure that the amount suggested by the welfare committee was the full amount payable under the Act. When the welfare committee found that some of our members persisted in applying through the union, the authorities resorted to the device of depositing even small amounts with the Commissioner. In the annual report on the working of the Act for that year, the Commissioner (Sir George Paddison) observed :—"A leading employer, who was hitherto paying to his workmen full or half wages for the whole period of temporary disablement, has now begun strictly to adhere to Section 8 (2) of the Act, with the result that workmen obtained no wages for the days of their disablement and thereafter obtained only half-pay although prior to the adherence to the strict rule of law, those workmen obtained in some cases full wages. This is causing great dissatisfaction to the workmen, but nothing can be done for them."

We would observe that, soon after the publication of this report, the welfare committee abandoned the practice of filing compensation cases. Moreover, it may generally be stated that the welfare committee has taken several hints from the Madras Labour Union in regard to its activities. In 1922, a store was opened, soon after the Madras Labour Union has opened a cheap grain stores. Compensation cases, as already pointed out, were taken up in 1926 following the example of the union. In 1927, the Madras Labour Union made a strong attempt to have a well-equipped hospital established in the mill area. The president of the union interviewed

both Lord Goschen, then Governor of Madras, and the Minister of Public Health. They expressed their sympathy with the proposal. He was asked to apply for an interview with the Surgeon-General and place the scheme before him. The interview was, however, refused, and Mr. Shiva Rao was informed later by Mr. G. W. Chambers of Messrs. Binny & Co., that he had spoken to the Surgeon-General about it. It is interesting to observe that at this very moment the welfare committee, which had also begun to agitate for the establishment of a hospital in the mill area, apparently abandoned the scheme as soon as the Surgeon-General refused to take any action in the matter.

*Move for Amalgamation.*—That our efforts have throughout been to maintain friendly relations with the employer and to avoid a split with however small a fraction of our workers must be obvious from the efforts made to bring about an amalgamation of the two unions. The efforts failed, not because of any difficulties of our creation. When the International Textile Delegation visited Madras in December, 1926, Mr. Tom Shaw, its leader, suggested that, without going into the controversy of the past, it would be desirable to make one more effort to bring about an amalgamation. He wrote a letter embodying this suggestion to the president of the Madras Labour Union, and also, we believe to the president of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union. Mr. Shiva Rao, on his return from the executive committee meeting of the All-India Trade Union Congress in Calcutta in December, 1926, immediately wrote to the president of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills employees' Union conveying Mr. Tom Shaw's suggestion and proposed amalgamation on the conditions of which Mr. Shaw had approved. These conditions are set forth in our main memorandum, and need not be repeated. It is sufficient to say that there was absolutely no response from the other side to that letter.

In giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Labour, we desire to state, on behalf of the Madras Labour Union for Textile Workers, that we have had to encounter serious difficulties in preparing our memorandum. Soon after the questionnaire of the Commission was issued, we translated the main points into Tamil and issued about 4,000 copies to members of our union. Although we repeatedly pointed out the necessity for precise and complete information in regard to the several points mentioned in the questionnaire, we did not receive more than 400 replies; most of them were written with the assistance of our office clerks.

It is not possible for a union, circumstanced as ours is, to make any detailed statements with regard to the conditions of our workers. The hostility of Messrs. Binny & Co., to the Madras Labour Union, since its early beginnings in 1918, has been such that members of the union drawn from the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills show the utmost unwillingness to come forward with statements, lest their publication involve them in trouble. The union made an attempt to study the economic conditions of both the men and the women workers of the union drawn from all three mills in May, 1926. Several hundred budgets were prepared with the assistance of some outsiders. Particular mention must be made of the work of some members of the Women's Indian Association who took charge of the enquiry so far as the women from the three mills were concerned. It was found with regard to the men, that over 95 per cent. were in debt, paying an interest from 12 per cent. to 150 per cent. It was significant also that milk and its bye-products (excluding diluted buttermilk) did not figure in more than one per cent. of the budgets as an item of food. With regard to the women, 195 came forward to give evidence, of whom 172 were from the Choolai Mill and 23 from the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. Commenting on the position of the women in a public speech on the 8th June, 1926, Mr. Shiva Rao made the following observation:—"In his absence from Madras during the last two weeks, an elaborate enquiry had been conducted into the grievances of the women workers in the three mills. He was shocked, he said, to see that they had terrible difficulties. The men, at any rate, had only the employers to deal with; but the women had to serve both the employers and their own husbands. In some cases he feared the latter were even more unsympathetic than the employers. He wanted the men to realize that, unless the women were well treated at home, they (the men) should not expect better treatment from the employers. If the Trade union movement was to grow strong and healthy, there should be in it women in much larger numbers than at present."

These observations came towards the end of a speech the greater part of which was devoted to the condition of the workers in the plantations and the necessity for the repeal of the Madras Planter's Labour Act. On the 11th June, that is, two days after the report of the speech appeared in the Madras papers, Mr. Kay, the Managing Director of Messrs. Binny & Co., wrote two letters to Mr. Shiva Rao, one in regard to several compensation cases which had been referred to him and the other dealing with complaints from various departments in the mills. There was absolutely no reference at all made to the speech of 8th June and, of course, no resentment

expressed. Again, on the 15th and 16th of June, there were two short letters from Mr. Kay. But neither of them contained any suggestion that the speech of 8th June was offensive to the authorities of the mills. There were indications of trouble for the first time on 24th June, when in a speech at the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, Mr. T. V. Subramaniam Pillai, Deputy Vice-President of the Union said :—" It was true that compulsion had been used in order to get members for the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union. His justification was that, except for Mr. Kay, everyone else, including the managers of the mills, was a labourer, and, therefore, there was no harm in one labourer asking another labourer to join the union." He also said that, "Being in touch with the employer he was in a position to state that all the women workers in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills (about 250 in number) would be dismissed with effect from 1st July, for 'their folly in joining the Madras Labour Union.'" He asked whether these women workers would be found employment by Mr. Shiva Rao. Continuing, he asked if the men were also prepared for the same fate by being members of the Madras Labour Union. Immediately after, Mr. Shiva Rao wrote to Mr. Kay asking him if the women were going to be dismissed and for the reason that he had (as it was supposed) made certain allegations against Messrs. Binny & Co., in a speech on 8th June. Mr. Kay replied on the 29th that the statement was not in accordance with facts, without answering the question, however, whether the women were being dismissed or not. On the 29th, *New India* wrote as follows :—" We trust, for the good name of Messrs. Binny & Co., that the report of their women workers in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills being dismissed from 1st July is untrue. Several of them have been in the service of the company for more than 15 years, and dismissal 'for the folly of joining the Madras Labour Union' as the Deputy Vice-President of the rival union stated, would be an unjust and vindictive step on the part of the employers."

On the 1st July all the women were served with a month's notice.

No doubt, a belated denial was sent to the papers by Mr. Subramaniam Pillai that he had made the statements attributed to him on the 24th June. But Messrs. V. S. Rathnasabapathy, V. A. Manickam and M. Krishnamurti Rao, who were present at his speech, confirmed the report in a letter to the press. Particular attention should be drawn to the concluding paragraph of that letter. Mr. O. C. Srinivasan, who presided at Mr. Subramaniam Pillai's meeting (and who made certain uncomplimentary references to the Madras Labour Union), *confirmed this version and authorized its publication.* At the request of the women who had been served with notices of dismissal, Mr. Shiva Rao wrote to Mr. Kay on the 4th July, in reply to which, for the first time he made a reference to the speech of 8th June.

On the following day, however, in an interview to the *Hindu* which protested in an editorial paragraph against these wholesale dismissals, Mr. Kay said that the action of Messrs. Binny & Co., was not because of the women's membership of the Madras Labour Union but was based on a decision of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills not to engage women workers. That decision, it appeared from the same interview, was taken in 1911 and put into operation in 1926. A public meeting was organized under the auspices of the Women's Indian Association in Gokhale Hall to protest against Messrs. Binny & Co.'s action. But a few minutes before the meeting was to commence, however, an announcement was made that on the intervention of the welfare committee of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, the notices of dismissal had been cancelled. *New India* wrote in its issue of 9th July, congratulating Messrs. Binny & Co., on having shown a sense of fairness.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the intention of the management was clearly to intimidate the members of the Madras Labour Union by making an example of the women workers for daring to give evidence before a committee set up by the union. Since then, the women workers of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills have severed their connection with the union. The effect of this episode has been so great that even now the men are most unwilling to come forward to give evidence.

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#### MR. B. SHIVA RAO, PRESIDENT, MADRAS LABOUR UNION.

[I have already expressed my views on several points raised in the questionnaire in the memorandum submitted by the Madras Labour Union. I have also taken part in the discussions which preceded the preparation of the memorandum of the panel of lawyers on the Workmen's Compensation Act. In this note, I wish to put forward certain considerations which seem to me to have a vital bearing on the problem of industrial and plantation labour in India.]

### Health.

There are certain outstanding points which must be borne in mind in dealing with the problems before the Royal Commission on Labour. Although the importance of health has been stressed over and over again by Commissions and Committees, it has, so far received very little serious attention. The Indian Factory Labour Commission appointed in 1908 made certain recommendations, some of which were carried out in the amendment of the Factories' Act in 1911. But Dr. Nair had pointed out the health aspect of the problem in his minute appended to the Report. He quoted Major Street's evidence based on his experience at the J. J. Hospital in Bombay :—" I am sure that tubercular glands of the neck are particularly common in young operatives, and have frequently pointed out to my students that they (the operatives), and firemen on board ship produce the large majority of the cases we see." According to Major Gordon Tucker, Physician in the same Hospital, " phthisis is very common among them (the mill operatives). Speaking broadly, the ordinary case of tuberculosis seen in hospital would be a mill-hand, while the ordinary case of malaria would be a coolie. Contrasting the physique of these two classes, the mill-hand came out badly."

*The Industrial Commission's view.*—During the Great War, there was appointed the Indian Industrial Commission in 1916. Although the problems relating to labour were not specifically included in the terms of reference of the Commission, it devoted a certain amount of consideration to the human aspect of India's industrial development. In coming to the conclusion that Indian labour in organized industries is much less efficient than in western countries, and not always as cheap, in spite of the considerably lower wages, the Commission observed :—" It is true that inferior physique and tropical conditions contribute to this state of affairs. But there is grave reason to believe that the former is to some extent the result of preventable disease, whilst other causes which are even more remediable are factors that unnecessarily increase the difficulties of our labour problem."

Another reason urged by the Commission was the contentment of Indian labour with a very low standard of comfort.

*Remedies Proposed.*—The views of the Commission on the remedies to be applied to make labour more efficient are contained in paragraph 236 of its Report :—" There is substantial agreement between the best-informed witnesses that the remedies for this state of affairs are a rise in the standard of comfort and an improvement in public health. These ends can be attained only by education, improved housing and a general policy of betterment, in which an organization for the care of public health must play a prominent part. If the children of workers are provided with education under tolerable conditions of life, a new generation of workers will grow up, who will learn to regard mill work as their fixed occupation. Better housing is a most urgent necessity, especially in the large congested industrial cities. Facilities for health, amusement, shorter hours of work (though a reduction of these may for a time decrease output), and other measures for economic betterment, such as cheap shops for the sale of articles required by the mill-hands, and co-operative societies, are almost equally important. The conditions under which industrial operatives live and work in this country ought, if efficiency be aimed at, to approximate, as nearly as circumstances permit, to those of temperate climates. Continuous factory work in the tropics is, at certain seasons of the year, far more trying than similar work in northern countries. The needs of domestic sanitation in large towns are most pressing. The problem, not only on moral grounds, but also for economic reasons, must be solved with the least possible delay, if the existing and future industries of India are to hold their own against the ever-growing competition, which will be still fiercer after the war. No industrial edifice can be permanent, which is built on such unsound foundations as those afforded by Indian labour under its present conditions."

More than eleven years have elapsed since the report was written, and many changes have occurred in India during the period. But so far as the diagnosis of, and the remedies for, the maladies of Indian labour are concerned, the view enunciated by the Industrial Commission still remains substantially true.

*Industrial Hygiene Neglected.*—In an admirable note on " Industrial Development and Public Health " which was published as an Appendix to the Report of the Industrial Commission, Major Norman White (then Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of India), laid stress on the fundamental importance of public health in industrial development. He said :—" In India, where labour is less organized than in the more advanced countries of the west, where the prevalence of parasitic infections and serious epidemic disease is excessive, and where climatic conditions and environment are generally unfavourable, the neglect of public health brings an immediate and striking punishment. In spite of this, the subject of industrial hygiene has received remarkably little attention in India until quite

recent times, and to-day its importance is not fully recognized in any part of the country. The main cause of this neglect of so important a matter would appear to be due to the fact that labour in India has been in the past both plentiful and cheap.

Comparing the health of agricultural with that of industrial labour, he said:— "Living an outdoor life, engaged in agricultural pursuits, the raiyat is able to put up with the considerable degree of parasitic infestation so commonly seen; malaria and hook-worm infection, for example, is not incompatible with a fair output of agricultural work in such circumstances. Transference to large industrial centres, however, involves a change of environment which, apart from other considerations, connotes increased liability to disease. A more confined atmosphere, crowded insanitary dwellings, lack of out-door recreation are certain to exercise a baneful influence and render the factory employee more liable to fresh infections and to upset the compromise that his body has been able to effect with the parasites that it harbours."

He expressed his firm conviction that an improvement in the general health conditions was a necessary preliminary to industrial as well as to all other forms of development. In his opinion, "the inefficiency of Indian labour is almost entirely a health problem."

*Causes of Inefficiency.*—He gave prominence to three diseases: malaria, hook-worm and tuberculosis, the first two being almost certainly the two most potent causes of inefficiency. "Both are almost universally prevalent in India; both exercise their malign influence from earliest childhood and seriously interfere with bodily and mental growth and development; both, by undermining the constitution render the body more prone to infection with other diseases. Directly and indirectly, they are responsible for an enormous mortality bill. Tuberculosis has been included because of the special risks, with regard to spread of infection, entailed by large aggregations of labour in any but the best hygienic surroundings. In India a low degree of prevalence of these three diseases indicates a satisfactory environment and a high level of personal hygiene. The three diseases together can in fact be used as a reliable gauge of the sanitary and health conditions of any Indian community."

In the Madras Presidency, at the time at which the note was written, little short of 100 per cent. of the rural population was infected with hook-worm. Instances are not wanting to show that remedial measures for the eradication of hook-worm have produced appreciable increase in the efficiency of labour. How much an intensive campaign can achieve, he showed by citing American experience in a jail in Manila, where the death rate was brought down by the introduction of all the ordinary sanitary improvements from 234 to 75 per mille. The administration of thymol further brought down the rate of mortality to 13·5. Similar instances can be quoted with regard to the remarkably good results of anti-hook-worm campaign in India.

*Health Campaign Remunerative.*—It would be of interest to refer to the observations of Dr. Neil Leitch, medical officer of the Assam Company Limited, contained in a paper which he read before the Seventh Congress of the Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine held in Calcutta in 1927. These observations are based upon an examination of 7,000 men, women and children, and the results are of the utmost interest. For 972 children alive, there were 931 dead, "a ghastly legacy of ignorance or indifference," he observed. The height, weight, chest and girth measurements were considerably below western standards, due, as he thought, "to adverse economic conditions and a poor state of health."

What is particularly of value are the suggestions obtained from Sanitary Commissioners and carried out in the plantations. Some houses were rebuilt on an improved plan. The water supply was looked after, and a better system of conservancy introduced. Sanitary gangs were started to work and maintain earth-drains and clear away the rubbish. Other preventive measures included emergency medical boxes and surgical apparatus installed at convenient parts all over the gardens and replenished every month. Every fortnight the workers were examined and put under treatment. Their education in matters of health was not neglected; by means of placards and posters and frequent demonstrations, they were made to appreciate the advantages of preventive work. Expectant mothers were given at least four months' leave with extra food, milk, cod liver oil, malt and a tonic mixture three times a day. Babies were brought to the hospital daily for two or three months. A central hospital was constructed on up-to-date lines.

Now, we may turn to the results of this work. The most significant fact was the increase in the number of workers who turned out to work daily. While before the introduction of these improvements, during the most busy season, 76 per cent. of the total labour force turned out for work, in places where these changes were in full action, the number was raised to 83 per cent., and was still on the increase. In time, the proportion is expected to reach 90 per cent.



As regards diseases, small-pox had become almost unknown; malaria had been reduced by 50 per cent.; spleen index was below 10 per cent., whereas three years ago it was over 20 per cent. There was only one case of cholera in 1927, although it was widespread in the district. Dysentery had been reduced by 40 per cent. Hookworm was rapidly disappearing. There had been a big rise in the birth-rate and a fall in the death-rate.

Among the conclusions he drew from this experiment were:—(i) A good water supply and conservancy system. (ii) Adequate housing and sanitation. (iii) A first class hospital and full equipment.

As he remarked, "the cost of disease is enormous, necessitating, as it does, the recruiting of new labour to replace wastage, outgoings in sick pay and attendance and lack of labour just when much health is needed to assure a large crop." He estimated the cost of disease at Rs. 3 per head per month, while the cost of prevention did not amount to more than Re. 1 per head per month.

*The Effect of Influenza.*—Nothing could have constituted a greater proof of the accuracy of Major Norman White's analysis than the terrific ravages of the influenza epidemic within a few months of the publication of the report of the Industrial Commission. Official estimates themselves agree that a death roll of 12 to 13 million within less than a year as the result of the epidemic is "a conservative estimate." How devastating the epidemic was is borne out by the figures of the census report for 1921. While the total increase in population during the decade 1901-11 was 7.1 per cent., between 1911-21 the increase was only 1.2 per cent. In certain parts of India there was actually a decrease in population during the decade as a result of the epidemic.

*Malaria.*—Malaria still remains a formidable problem. As Major Norman White remarked with perfect justice:—"When a military force, however small, takes the field, the necessity of a sanitary organization and precautions to safeguard the health are never overlooked. It is realized that their neglect is certain to lead to disaster. Quite as elaborate precautions are called for in many of our large constructional works; but, with few exceptions, the measures taken in the past have been most inadequate, or altogether wanting, a neglect that has involved both waste and sometimes disaster. Large projects of the nature alluded to are rarely referred to a health expert at any stage of their inception; their probable "financial" cost is estimated to a rupee; their probable cost in human life receives no consideration whatsoever. The Panama Canal was a triumph for the engineer; it was a still greater triumph for preventive medicine which made the engineer's work possible; for once the health official was not subordinated, but given plenary powers; and he made good. Is it not an irony that the most important research of which the results were applied with such profit in Panama was research work done in India, work which has done so little for India as yet?"

Without burdening this note with further quotations from Major Norman White's thesis, I would observe that there has been no more graphic or accurate analysis of this important factor in the labour problem in India. And even at that comparatively early stage of India's industrial development, he saw the danger of the great disturbance in the sex ratio in large industrial centres, and the likelihood of the spread of venereal disease.

*Morbidity of Malaria.*—Regarding the devastating incidence of malaria, the Public Health Commissioner of the Government of India wrote that in 1923 nearly 3½ million deaths were recorded as being due to fevers. Colonel Graham, the Public Health Commissioner, remarked on this fact:—"The application of an arbitrary correction figure of ¼ for fever mortality figures still shows over a million deaths for malaria, the morbidity of which is very great. As we have a record of nearly eight million people being treated for it at our dispensaries and hospitals, we can surmise how appalling is the maiming due to it. Further, its relation to agriculture is very close through methods of cultivation and canal irrigation which may lead to final depopulation. It is of primary importance in opening up jungle tracts to tea, coffee and rubber, whilst its connection with rice cultivation is a very complex one and occupied the attention of the recent International Malarial Conference at Rome.

Colonel Christophers,\* in estimating the morbidity said that, for one million deaths in adult males between 15-50 years of age, there should be at least two million constantly sick, and the equivalent of fifty million admissions to hospitals.

In 1926, we find the Royal Commission on Agriculture establishing a close relationship between agriculture and public health:—"Malaria slays its thousands and lowers the economic efficiency of hundreds of thousands; plague and cholera sweep the country from time to time; hook-worm disease, kala-azar and diseases

\* Presidential Address, Eleventh Indian Science Congress, Medical Research Section.

arising from diet deficiency insidiously reduce the labour power of the cultivating classes. Any enquiry, therefore, into the general condition of agriculture and the position of the cultivator must take account of the public health aspect of his life; of the suitability of his diet; of the sanitary conditions under which he lives and of his general rural environment."

These remarks apply with equal force to industrial development.

*A Non-Official View.*—Not less important from the point of view of the general health of the Indian population, is the resolution of the All-India Conference of Medical research workers passed in 1924 and again in 1926. It affirmed:—"that the average number of deaths resulting every year from preventable disease is about five to six million; that the average number of days lost to labour by each person in India, from preventable disease, is not less than a fortnight to three weeks in each year; that the percentage loss of efficiency of the average person in India from preventable malnutrition and disease is not less than twenty per cent.; and that the percentage of infants born in India who reach a wage-earning age is about 50, whereas it is quite possible to raise this percentage to 80 to 90. The Conference believes that these estimates are under-estimates rather than exaggerations, but allowing for the greatest possible margin of error, it is absolutely certain that the wastage of life and efficiency which result from preventable disease costs India several hundred crores of rupees each year. Added to this is the great suffering which affects many millions of people every year.

"This Conference believes that it is possible to prevent a great proportion of this waste at a cost which is small in comparison with the expenditure.

"The recent census shows that the position in India is one of grave emergency. The Conference recognizes that the problem is very complicated and involves not merely medical research, but also questions of public health, medical relief, medical education, propaganda, and social and economic considerations.

"The Conference believes that the greatest cause of poverty and financial stringency in India is loss of efficiency resulting from preventable disease, and, therefore, considers that lack of funds, far from being a reason for postponing the enquiry, is a strong reason for immediate investigation of the question."

*Provincial Budgets and Public Health.*—Yet, what are the amounts spent by Provincial Governments on medical relief and public health? I have taken the figures for the budgets of the various Provinces for 1926-27.

	Total Revenue (in lakhs of rupees)	Expenditure on Medical Relief	Public Health
Madras .. .. .	1,634	70	41
Bombay .. .. .	1,629	49	25
Bengal .. .. .	1,093	61	38
U. P. .. .. .	1,494	32	23
Panjab .. .. .	473	47	31
Bihar and Orissa .. .. .	590	36	19
C. P. .. .. .	661	16	5
Assam .. .. .	256	11	10

These figures have not altered appreciably since that year. According to the Government of India's official publication, "India in 1927-28," out of every Rs. 100 of revenue, 27 are spent on the Army, 15 on general administration, 5 on education and only 1 on medical relief and public health. In Madras, where the organization of the Public Health Department is believed to be more extensive than in almost any other Province, in the revised estimates for 1928-29 and the budget estimate for 1929-30, we find the following figures:—Out of a total revenue of 1807.49 lakhs and 1807.09 lakhs respectively, the expenditure on medical relief and public health is 85.97 lakhs and 37.74 lakhs for 1928-29; and 96.20 lakhs and 47.62 lakhs for 1929-30.

It is noteworthy that the expenditure on public health in 1928-29 was reduced by 10 lakhs, the budget estimate for the year having been 47.83 lakhs.

It was a natural conclusion that the recommendations of the Indian Industrial Commission regarding labour, and particularly the views of the Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of India, reinforced as they were by the disastrous experience of the influenza epidemic, would have induced the authorities in this country to regard the labour problem in its right perspective. One would have expected that one of the first things to which the new Government, under the Reforms, would turn its attention was the problem of public health. Instead, a Fiscal Commission was appointed in 1921 to consider the question of affording protection to Indian industries leaving out of account the labour aspect of industry.

*A Ministry of Health.*—I believe that the only remedy for the existing indifference to the problems of health is to create a separate Ministry of Health, both in the

Central and Provincial Governments under Ministers responsible to the Legislatures. The creation of this special portfolio alone will give this subject the importance that is due to it. Otherwise, I fear that the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour will receive little attention. The Minister of Health in a Province should have in his charge the departments of public health and medical relief. The question of diet is an important one, and it should be the aim of the Ministry to develop and encourage research work on human nutrition, with a Central Institute on an All-India basis, as recommended by the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

*Drink.*—Closely related to the problem of health is that of drink. One estimate of the drink bill of the working classes alone in the Madras Presidency is about Rs. 13 crores (*Prohibition*, January, 1930) per year. Propaganda against intemperance, or even in favour of total abstinence, can produce no satisfactory results so long as toddy shops are in the vicinity of the residential areas of the working classes. It is a scandal that in Madras, the revenue from excise in the Budget estimate for 1929-30 is Rs. 55·38 crores out of a total revenue of Rs. 180·71 crores; in fact, next to land revenue, it is the highest source of revenue to the Provincial Government. The Indian Taxation Committee reckoned in 1925 that the average annual burden of taxation on the urban wage-earner through drink had risen from Rs. 1-4-10 in 1911-14 to Rs. 1-14 annas in 1922-25. The total burden had risen during the period from Rs. 4-10 annas to Rs. 8-7-7. How much more heavily he is taxed in comparison with the landless agricultural labourer is apparent from the figures in the same Report. His average had risen from Rs. 0-13-5 per annum to Rs. 1-10-11. The figures for drink alone were Rs. 0-6-10 and Rs. 0-9-9 for the two periods. In other words, the urban wage-earner spends on his drink more than three times the amount spent by the agricultural labourer. The institution of working men's clubs by Municipalities with subsidies from the Government, if necessary, is an imperative need. These clubs will not only provide amusements of a healthy kind for the workers after factory hours, but may be used as centres for adult education, for food reform and temperance propaganda.

*A Provincial Medical Service.*—Under the Minister for Health in the Provinces, I would also suggest a separate Provincial Medical Service for the use of industrial labour. For obvious reasons, it is desirable that doctors connected with industrial establishments should be independent of the employers. The institution of such a service will not only remove the influence of the employer over the doctors, but also enable smaller employers (who are more numerous as a class and who cannot afford to provide medical facilities for their employees) to do so by means of contributions. The expenditure incurred in this connection should be borne by the employers.

*Medical Inspection of Factories.*—There should be, on the lines of the medical inspection of schools, also medical inspection of factories. Officers of the Public Health Department should be deputed to make a special study of industrial and occupational diseases.

*Population.*—The problem of population also must be considered as part of the general problem of health.

According to the Royal Commission on Agriculture:—"in a belt stretching from the Madras Presidency to Bengal, Bihar and the United Provinces, the problem is definitely one of superfluity of agricultural labour. The Famine Commission of 1880 observed that the numbers who have no other employment than agriculture are greatly in excess of what is really required for the thorough cultivation of the land. Since that date, population has increased considerably, especially in Madras and Bengal and to an appreciable extent also in Bihar and Orissa. From the agricultural point of view, the labour problem is to lessen the pressure on land, more especially the extreme pressure which at present exists in Bihar and in the deltaic areas of Bengal and Madras and in certain parts of the U.P.

*Emigration.*—The Commission also considered the possibilities of relieving the pressure of population on land by emigration abroad. There are at present over 2 million Indians resident outside India, but within the bounds of the British Empire. They are distributed approximately as follows:—

Ceylon .. .. .	820,000
British Malaya .. .. .	660,000
Mauritius .. .. .	274,000
South Africa .. .. .	161,000
Trinidad .. .. .	126,000
British Guiana .. .. .	125,000
Fiji Island .. .. .	61,000
East Africa .. .. .	55,000

There is, however, a limit to the possibilities of emigration. There are economic difficulties as well as political ones. India is growing increasingly sensitive about the political disabilities of Indians resident abroad; there will be less inducement, in

consequence, for Indian labour to migrate. In fact, there has already been commenced a policy of repatriation; and though the number of repatriated Indians is still small, there will be a gradual increase in the years to come. On the economic side, taking Ceylon and British Malaya together, to which territories emigration is practically entirely from the Madras Presidency, the annual amount of emigration is, at present, roughly over 100,000. As regards Ceylon, it seems to be the opinion of the Agent of the Government of India that Ceylon has already reached "saturation point" in absorbing Indian labour on the estates. Moreover, it is clear that in Ceylon and British Malaya the question of political disabilities also is coming into prominence. Burma, which has been another outlet for superfluous labour from the Madras Presidency, is contemplating the possibility of separation from the Indian Empire. Improvements in agriculture and the fostering of rural and cottage industries may offer a certain amount of relief. Outbreaks of epidemics like influenza and famines may also mitigate, if in a drastic and tragic form, by a little, the pressure of over-population. It is in a sense unfortunate that the enquiry of the Royal Commission on Labour precedes a new census. The census report of 1921 was drawn up under abnormal conditions. The country had not recovered from the effects of the influenza epidemic of 1918-19; and at the time of the census, there was a widespread movement for non-co-operation which did not exclude work in connection with the census from the sphere of its operation. The next census in 1931 will reveal how far the statistics for 1911-21 were a deviation from the normal. But the problem of over-population does exist even to-day, in spite of the heavy mortality among adults and the still heavier mortality among children.

*Birth Control Clinics.*—With the more extensive organization of public health and medical relief, the spread of education, the creation of a sanitary conscience and the elaborate attention devoted to maternity and child welfare, India must be prepared for a still more rapid growth of population than she has witnessed in the past. The only remedy, in my opinion, for this is the establishment of birth control clinics. In March, 1925, the Sixth International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference placed on record that:—"The penalties of unlimited human reproduction are most severely visited upon the toiling masses. Population pressure produces war with its resultant world-wide economic instability. Children of exploited workers are forced into fields, factories, mines and workshops. These same children, later, as adults continue as competitors for jobs in an already glutted labour market. The very folk whose unhappy living conditions render small families imperative are the ones who because of restrictive birth control laws, are unable to become familiar with the principal means of alleviating their lot as individual human beings, and as members of the working class."

There must be undertaken extensive propaganda among all classes of the people and particularly among the working classes in regard to the methods of birth control, and clinics must be established at certain centres as a beginning.

In India, such work of propaganda should, in my opinion, be undertaken by the State. I attach great importance to the problem of over-population; for while legislation on the fixing of a minimum living wage and the standardization of wages is necessary in India and should be adopted as early as possible, legal enactments by themselves cannot solve the wages problem. If the supply of labour be heavily in excess of the demand, the economic law of supply and demand will overcome the effects of human laws; particularly will this happen in a country like India, with trade unionism still in its infancy and the mass of the workers illiterate, involved hopelessly in debt and unable, therefore, to demand their rights.

*The Problem of Housing.*—The problem of housing has not been generally recognized in practice as having a vital connection with the health, welfare and efficiency of labour. It is not necessary to establish the close relation that subsists between disease and unsatisfactory housing conditions. I do not think that Municipalities can undertake housing schemes for many years to come, without financial aid. I am not sure that even Provincial Governments can do so, on their present resources. It should, in my opinion, be the main concern of the Minister of Labour in the Government of India to set aside large sums of money for housing schemes in the industrial centres of India. It may be mentioned that British estimates for 1927-28 contained provision for over £9 million in respect of housing subsidy. There should be a National housing scheme in India, and Provincial Governments, Municipalities and employers should also make contributions.

*Education.*—With regard to education, which I place next in order to health, but as of equal importance, I am of the opinion that it is not enough to put forward schemes for the spread of primary education. The removal of illiteracy, which is at present the greatest handicap of the Indian working classes, will, no doubt, prove a great boon. At the same time, it is necessary, in the interests of India's industrial development on healthy lines, that there should be a well-conceived scheme for technical education. As the Report on Trade and Technical Education in France and

Germany observes, "Germany has aimed definitely at the building up of a great industrial nation by the systematic training of all grades from leaders to workmen. The State and the Municipality, the employed and the employer, have all come to believe in education of all types, including compulsory continuation education. The State and the parents have both adopted the long view, the former in looking forward to the ultimate value of the work of the schools, and the latter in foregoing immediate wage returns of their children for future prospects." In Ireland also, steps have recently been taken for securing a sound and uniform foundation for a system of technical education commencing from the primary schools. There is a movement for the introduction of continuation schools and classes, attendance at which, whole-time or part-time, according to circumstances, will be compulsory up to the age of 16.

The expenditure on education in India has increased remarkably during the last ten years, as the Auxiliary Committee on Education to the Indian Statutory Commission has pointed out recently in its report. The total expenditure, direct and indirect, on recognized institutions by the Provinces rose from Rs. 11.29 crores in 1917 to Rs. 24.58 crores in 1927. There is no doubt that this expenditure will increase still further, if there is to be a well-organized scheme for technical education. But such a scheme will, in the long run, prove remunerative. It will, also, attract towards industry many of those who belong to the middle classes, and thus gradually solve the problem of unemployment among the middle classes in this country. It will, generally speaking, introduce a better type of workman to industrial occupations. The Hartog Committee has shown clearly that "the main educational problem at the secondary stage in India is to provide varied forms of training for life and employment. All sections of the community with their different occupations, traditions and outlook and with their different ambitions and aptitudes have little, if any, choice of the type of school to which they will send their children. There is nothing corresponding to the exodus to the English secondary schools into every practical life or into vocational institutions." In the latest *Review of the Progress of Education in India*, it is stated that there are 68 institutions for instruction in manual work in Madras, 22 in Bengal, 11 in Bihar and Orissa, 17 in the Central Provinces, 3 in Assam, and 9 in the United Provinces. These figures are sufficient to prove the utter inadequacy of the provision for technical education in the country.

The following table will prove the truth of the assertion of the Hartog Committee that "it is not yet realized in India that the industrial and the ordinary schools are complementary to each other in a properly co-ordinated educational system."

The figures for 1926-27 summarized in the following table are illuminating, and show the inadequacy of the numbers that receive a technical or vocational education.

Kind of Institution.	Number of Pupils.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Art Schools .. .. .	1,964	—	1,964
Medical Schools .. .. .	5,438	315	5,753
Engineering and Surveying Schools .. .. .	1,635	—	1,635
Technical and Industrial Schools	20,784	3,753	24,537
Commercial Schools .. .. .	6,381	324	6,705
Agricultural Schools .. .. .	498	—	498
Medical Colleges .. .. .	3,787	67	3,854
Engineering Colleges .. .. .	2,009	—	2,009
Agricultural Colleges .. .. .	798	—	798
Commerce Colleges .. .. .	1,516	—	1,516
Forest Colleges .. .. .	129	—	129
Veterinary Science Colleges ..	330	—	330
<b>Total .. .. .</b>	<b>45,269</b>	<b>4,459</b>	<b>49,728</b>

On the other hand, the number of those that were qualifying themselves for the two professions of Law and Teaching were 35,772.

The figures for Germany are interesting as affording a contrast to the conditions of education in India. There are (according to the *Europa Year Book*), 1,743 continuation schools teaching 329,000 pupils and 2,167 secondary schools teaching 751,000 pupils. As regards higher education, there are 10 technical schools with 20,000 pupils, 47 higher training colleges with 14,000 pupils and 23 universities with 72,000 pupils.

The Hartog Committee also drew attention to the fact that the universities and colleges in India are at present turning out a large number of graduates who cannot find employment.

Mr. N. S. Subba Rao, the head of the Education Department in Mysore, put forward the following proposals in a recent address on economic change and educational adjustment in India :—

" (1) Vocational education and its financial requirements should in no manner be allowed to come into conflict with the imperative need for expansion and improvement of primary education. It will probably be necessary to organize a self-contained course of primary education of six years' duration.

" (2) Till the primary course can be extended and consequent changes made, the middle stage of the Anglo-Vernacular course should precede any scheme of differentiation in studies. The examination at the end of this course should be the graded school junction and clearing house by which means boys would be drafted into a line of study for which each appears to be most suited.\*

" (3) The high school is the pivot of the situation, and the much needed differentiation in curricula should take place at this stage. Not only should the general course provide for instruction in subjects like handicrafts and domestic science, but there should be also alternative courses of a less academical type, such as Engineering or Commerce, in which, while the vocational bias is strong, general education is not neglected. It is also desirable that, as far as possible, the alternatives should be available in the same institution, partly to get over the prejudice that clings to the realistic courses as intended for boys of lower capacity, and partly to permit transfers from one to the other.

" (4) Technical schools which give instruction in the principles underlying the practice of any particular trade, and trade schools which prepare more directly for a given branch of industry, should be an integral part of the educational system. The Indian Industrial Commission expressed itself against the control of technical and industrial education by the Department of Public Instruction, but the difficulties it laid stress on are not insurmountable, while the benefits of a unified control are many.

" (5) In order that the proposed realistic courses may fulfil their purpose, educational administration should be in close touch with representatives of industry and trade as well as of labour.

" (6) Technological education of the university standard will be wanted only to a small extent till our agriculture and industries develop considerably, and the immediate need is for such education of the secondary school and diploma level.

" (7) As a great part of agriculture and several branches of industry will continue to be on a small scale and will require recruits who have not merely to produce but also to sell, the training given in the vocational institutions should envisage not only the needs of the worker divorced from management, but also of the artisan or the small proprietor who is a seller.

" (8) Agriculture will continue to remain the most important single occupation, and the village the home of the great majority. Agricultural education will, therefore, claim prominence, and a rural bias should be given to instruction in the general schools in rural areas."

#### *The Political Problem.*

Certain political considerations are necessarily of relevance at the present juncture, when the future of India's political progress is under consideration. The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour will come up for action before the new legislatures which will be created as a result of the political changes now in contemplation. Unless labour is assured of adequate representation in every legislative body, and particularly in the Central Legislature, which will deal with the subject of labour legislation, the investigations of the Royal Commission will bear little or no fruit. These points cannot obviously escape the attentions of the Commissioners.

Singularly little attention has been paid in the past to the need for adequate representation of the interests of labour in the Provincial as well as the Central Legislatures. Representations were made in 1919 on the subject before the Joint Select Committee of the two Houses of Parliament which considered the Government of India Bill, but with very little result. The franchise was so devised as virtually to ignore the claims of the labouring classes. The size of the constituencies was so unwieldy that representatives of labour could hardly expect to be returned to the various legislatures. As though these handicaps were not sufficient, landlords and employers' organizations such as the Millowners' Associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc., were provided with special electorates for returning their representatives. But

\* *Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in the Panjab*, quoted by the Auxiliary Committee on Education to the Indian Statutory Commission.

the claims of industrial labour were treated with the scantiest of consideration. In the Central Legislature, there is but one nominated member on behalf of labour in the Assembly, while in the Council of State there is absolutely no representation. In the provincial sphere, the maximum number of nominated members in any Council is three, while Madras enjoys the unique distinction (with the possible exception of the United Provinces), of never having had a representative for industrial labour throughout the period of the existing Reforms.

*The Reforms Enquiry Committee, 1924.*—An attempt was made by a labour deputation before the Reforms Enquiry Committee in 1924 (presided over by Sir Alexander Muddiman, then Home Member of the Government of India) to secure better representation for labour in the legislatures. Both the majority and the minority reports sympathized with the demand, and the latter recommended the introduction of the elective principle for labour. Nevertheless, there was no appreciable change made in the position of labour as a result of these proposals.

*The Central Committee's Proposals.*—A reference to the proposals of the Indian Central Committee presided over by Sir Sankaran Nair is of interest in the consideration of this problem. With regard to labour in the Provincial Councils, the Committee observes :—“ We have devoted considerable attention to the question of the adequate representation of labour in the legislatures. We recognize that unorganized labour, which term includes the vast majority of the labouring classes in India, must remain unrepresented until the franchise has been lowered to a sufficient degree to enable them to win representation in the general constituencies. We believe, however, that India is on the threshold of a great industrial development, and we regard it as of the highest importance that means should be provided by which organized labour may be enabled to make its wants known in the legislatures through representatives of its own. The best means of attaining this object will, we consider, be by establishing separate electorates for labour wherever possible.”

The proposed strength of the various provincial legislatures is as follows :—

	Total.	Labour.
Madras .. .. .	150	1
Bombay (excluding Sind) .. .. .	114	4
Bengal .. .. .	200	3
U.P. .. .. .	182	2
Panjab .. .. .	150	1
Behar and Orissa .. .. .	150	2
C.P. .. .. .	125	2
Assam .. .. .	75	3
Burma .. .. .	120	0

To take Madras alone, the Committee suggests the reservation of one seat for industrial labour and none at all for agricultural labour, in a House of 150 ! But landlords in Madras are to have 7 seats, planters 1, representatives of trade and commerce 6, Europeans (who invariably vote with the employers) 2. In the Central Legislature, of a total strength of 273, labour is to have only 5 seats, while landlords, Indian Commerce and the Associated Chambers of Commerce are to have 10, 8 and 3 seats respectively. These proposals constitute, in my opinion, a serious warning that the interests of labour, both agricultural and industrial, may receive now no better treatment than they did at the time of the inauguration of the Montagu Scheme of Reforms.

*Attitude of the Government.*—I do not deny that the Government of India has placed a number of labour measures on the statute-book during the past decade. But without lessening the credit that is due to the Government for its efforts, it may, however, be pointed out that in the early period of the reforms, there was considerable industrial and political unrest. The Government was anxious to prove, in the face of a movement for the boycott of the legislatures, the value of the new reforms. It was also a period of many strikes in various parts of the country. Again, labour legislation in India was considerably behind that in other countries which were members of the League of Nations. Internal pressure, political as well as economic, and external pressure from Geneva, were largely responsible for the attitude of the Government of India, and to a certain extent of the Provincial Governments as well. In Madras, Bengal and Bombay, Departments of Labour were created and committees appointed to investigate the causes of industrial unrest. So far as Madras is concerned, political considerations, unfortunately, prevented labour organizations from co-operating, and the local Government withdrew its offer of an enquiry. Nevertheless, a Labour Commissioner was appointed, whose functions were to be enlarged, according to a promise made in the Legislative Council by Sir K. Srinivasa Iyengar, when he was in charge of the subject. The committees in Bombay and Bengal carried out their investigations and made reports. In 1922, the Government

of Bombay actually introduced a bill in the Legislative Council to carry out the recommendations of the committee. But the Government of India prevented the local Government from going further with the measure on the ground that it was an All-India matter, and a Bill was actually published by the Government of India in 1924, though no further progress was made until 1929, when it was revived in a very different form in the Trades Disputes Act.

When one reviews the actions of the Government of India and of the local Governments during the last ten years, one conclusion seems to emerge clearly. The interest of the authorities in labour has synchronized with periods of industrial unrest. The administration, whether Central or Provincial, has shown little inclination to act, unless compelled to do so by a series of strikes. To take only the most recent instance, the Trades Disputes Bill became law in April, 1929. Soon after, there was an industrial dispute of a serious nature in the City of Bombay. In consequence, the rules under the Act were drafted with remarkable promptness by the Bombay Government and a Court of Enquiry was appointed under the Act. But in Madras, the case was different. When the Madras Labour Union approached the Labour Commissioner in December, 1929, for a copy of the rules under the Act, we were informed that the rules were not ready, but that the draft rules of the Government of India might be utilized. An application was made in accordance with the suggestion of the Labour Commissioner on the 1st of January, 1930, to the Madras Government. A reminder had to be sent three weeks later, and at last on the 28th of January, an answer was received that the rules were not ready—nine months after the passage of the Act—and that the application for a Court of Enquiry would have to be renewed at a later date.

One cannot help noting the enormous lapse of time between an assurance of action and its fulfilment by the Government of India. Reference has been made to the Trades Disputes Act, seven years intervening between the introduction of a measure by the Bombay Government and its passage (in a highly contentious form) by the Government of India. To take another instance, Sir Thomas Holland promised action in 1921, on behalf of the Government of India, for the registration of Trades Unions. But the Act did not come into force until 1926. Possibly, in the field of labour legislation, as in many other spheres, the intervention of the India Office has been responsible for the slow pace of reform. But the circumlocutory method of consulting local Governments is equally responsible, in my opinion, for the long delays and has afforded the Government of India convenient excuses for postponing action. Local Governments, as a rule, have not been friendly or sympathetic to labour interests; labour is a reserved subject in charge of a member of the Executive Council who, as at present in Madras, is also Home Member in charge of law and order. The official conception of the obligations towards labour is often limited to the maintenance of law and order.

We have, in Madras, an officer who is styled "Labour Commissioner" and whose duties are, presumably, to acquaint himself with the conditions of labour. But so far as I am aware, he has refused to come into direct relations with trade unions and contented himself with reports of meetings by the C.I.D. He has no objection, however, to be present at meetings of employers' associations such as the United Planters' Association of Southern India!

Indeed, it seems a legitimate inference from the course of events under the reforms that the political implications of labour problems have loomed more prominently than the economic. This observation applies as much to the non-official elements in the legislatures as to the Government. Debates were often enough initiated on the floor of the legislatures on the conduct of the police or the military in the settlement of industrial disputes. But there was not, I must observe on a general survey of the work of the legislatures, the same evidence of interest displayed in the purely economic side of such disputes.

Realizing, as I do, that far-reaching changes in the Constitution are impending, I hold that it is even more important to see that labour is assured of conditions which will not handicap its development than to suggest specific lines of legislation. Political freedom has not absolved industrial workers in other countries from the necessity of organizing themselves for the protection of their interests. I have no reason to believe that India is going to be an exception in this respect. During the period of the reforms, there has been organization on both sides, workers as well as employers. But the latter, possessing the advantages of greater resources, have built up powerful bodies, such as the Associated Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce. It is significant that while members of the Government of India have been present at the annual meetings of these bodies, even taking part in their discussions, and the Viceroy himself has, on more than one occasion, opened their sessions, no such importance has been attached to the meetings of the All-India Trade Union Congress or to its decisions; in fact, the only representatives of the Government have been a large number of policemen in uniform and in plain clothes.



With the introduction of political changes in the near future I foresee a radical regrouping of political forces : labour, both industrial and agricultural, on the one side and the capitalist and landlord on the other. The natural line for the European employer, when he perceives the weakening (possibly the extinction) of the authority on which he has so long been dependent, will be to make common cause with his Indian colleague.

*Extension of the Suffrage.*—While I recognize that universal adult suffrage is impracticable, in the present conditions of India, as the next immediate step, the extension of the franchise, so as to include a considerable number of the working classes is, in my opinion, of essential importance. This will place some political power in the hands of the masses, and compel candidates for the various legislatures to pay more attention to the needs of labour than they have been accustomed to do in the past. Politicians will necessarily shape their programmes and policies in accordance with the wishes of their masters, the electorates.

*Reservation of Seats.*—It is manifestly unfair that the propertied classes, which are well able to look after themselves, should be given special protection, while those whose needs are obviously greater because of their economic and educational backwardness and of their political disability, should be denied such protection.

The demand comes most inappropriately from those whose principle in the economic sphere is protection for struggling industries. The reservation of seats, if at all it be decided upon, should be only for industrial and agricultural labour through special electorates consisting of trade unions and tenants' and raiyats' associations.

*Ministry of Labour.*—In order to give prominence to the problems relating to labour, I strongly urge the creation of a separate Ministry of Labour, both in the Government of India and in the Provinces. The department should include, in my opinion, labour, factories, industries and agriculture.

*Statistical Bureau.*—Under the Ministry of Labour, I would advocate the formation of a Central Statistical Bureau under the Government of India and Provincial Bureaus under the various Provincial Governments. As the Indian Economic Enquiry Committee pointed out in 1925, statistics is already a central subject in British India, and a Central Statistical Office has been in existence for several years, although it has now been reduced in status and strength and placed under the Director-General of Commercial Intelligence. There is also no distinctive connecting link and no real co-ordination between the Central and Provincial Governments ; and, therefore, it is not possible to obtain an accurate indication of the true economic trend of the people or of the status of British India as an economic unity. The aim should be, as the Committee observes, "to provide a common purpose and a central thinking office on the subject of statistics and to bring the statistics of all the departments both of the Central and of the Provincial Governments under the supervision of one central authority, who should be the adviser of the Government in statistical matters." In paragraph 84 of its Report, the Committee assigned the following duties to the Central Statistical Bureau :—(1) to arrange for, supervise and control the taking of periodical censuses, such as those of population and large industrial establishments, and industrial wages ; (2) to collect annually, or at shorter intervals, statistics relating to the economic condition of the people such as production, income, expenditure, wealth, prices, etc., either through Provincial Bureaus, or direct from the departments concerned ; (3) to collate, scrutinize, tabulate and summarize the information collected and to publish it in a presentable form ; (4) to compile and publish a Year Book on the lines of the Dominion Year Books ; (5) to supply statistical information to Government and the public, when requested to do so ; and (6) to undertake special statistical enquiries for Government when necessary.

*Advisory Boards.*—I think that the recommendation of the Committee for the formation of Advisory Boards consisting of non-officials to be associated with the officers charged with the work of economic survey deserves favourable consideration.

*Labour in the Indian States.*—There is one other point which cannot be left out of consideration in the changing circumstances of India. The constitutional position of the Indian States has recently been discussed by the Butler Committee. The question of labour legislation in the States has also been given prominence, notably by reason of its frequent mention in the debates at the twelfth session of the International Labour Conference at Geneva in 1929. But as early as 1908, the Indian Factory Labour Commission had its attention drawn to it. Paragraph 119 of the Report is as follows :—"Although we consider that the effect of our proposals will ultimately be to improve materially the position of industries in India, yet we are conscious that there will be a transition period during which the disadvantages of the limitations we propose will be felt, while their advantages will not then have become apparent. During this period factories in British India may possibly suffer to some extent from the competition of adjacent factories situated in the Native

States, and not subject to the restrictions which we desire to impose. This is more especially the case as regards cotton ginning, spinning and weaving factories. The question is one of considerable practical importance; and we would suggest that the Government of India should consider the advisability of making arrangements under which the conditions in these territories would be assimilated as far as possible in this respect to those obtaining in British India."

The Indian States have not so far ratified any of the Conventions of the International Labour Conference. There is, in consequence, a growing disparity in the conditions of labour in British India and in the Indian States. A warning has already been conveyed through one of the members of the Indian Employers' delegation at Geneva that unless the Indian States introduce the same legislation as is now in force in British India, the Indian Legislature may not hereafter support legislation on the subject of labour. Questions of constitutional propriety do not affect economic considerations. The existence within India of large territories where labour is exploited without any safeguards constitutes a menace to the legitimate interests of labour in British India. The problem must engage the attention of the Round Table Conference in London at which the Indian States will be represented.

#### *Plantation Labour.*

With regard to the plantations, I have received the following account from a worker who has had nearly 15 years' of actual experience of various plantations in Southern India.

"For more than one decade, I have worked in some part or other of Southern India on plantations under European companies. Very few people have a clear idea of what a plantation is. Generally speaking, it is an area of forest land in a hilly tract cleared and cultivated mostly by European planters, who form joint stock companies. Tea forms now-a-days the chief crop; coffee, pepper, rubber, cinchona come next in order. There are now many Indian-owned estates also, but my experience is confined only to European plantations."

*Means of Communication.*—Until a decade ago, communications were very difficult. Pack animals, carts drawn by animals or sedan chairs were then the luxury of the well-to-do. But now, owing to the gradually improving conditions of roads and the advent of the motor omnibus, lorry and car, this difficulty is tending to diminish.

*The Food Problem.*—As plantations are in many cases removed from the towns, the employees, that is, estate labourers, maistries, the subordinate Indian staff such as clerks, conductors, dressers, etc., have to rely on the nearest markets or shandies, which in many instances are a few miles away, for the necessaries of life. At these shandies, the meagre requirements of the common labourer can be obtained at considerably high rates, as the dealers exact double and treble the prices current in the nearest town. But on some estates, where the Managers take some interest, a bazaar man will be given the contract, though this does not go a great way towards helping the employees.

*Labour Conditions and the System of Recruiting.*—The Madras Planters' Labour Act was indeed a wicked piece of legislation. Not a little was the tyranny, the oppression and the cruelty inflicted on the poor cooly by the hard-hearted middleman, the *hangani*, and the unscrupulous planter. The method of recruitment was perfectly dishonest. In the majority of instances ignorant and inexperienced men, women and children were on some pretext or other, decoyed to the estates from their villages by the presentation of a very fascinating picture of estate life. The lack of proper cultivation, cottage industry or any other occupation in the villages naturally added to the ease with which such deception could be practised. The oppression of the low castes by the high castes in some areas was also another factor which helped easy recruitment. Now that the Madras Labour Act has been abolished, there is some hope for the future. But the condition of recruitment is not any the better for the abolition of the Act, because the labourers are illiterate. For the matter of that, partly literate persons are helpless when they are decoyed by fair promises to foreign places by an artful and treacherous maistry or *hangani*. I would here mention my personal experience of a plantation in the Mysore Province. Here a few coolies were recruited by a maistry and subjected to inhuman treatment. They were literate people (petty schoolmasters) who were forced to do hard manual labour such as digging, though they were promised clerical posts at the time of recruitment. Deprived of their village and home comforts these poor victims, at the time I saw them, were undergoing the worst difficulties. Many of them were reduced to skin and bone, stricken down with malaria, scabies, anaemia and dropsy. The heartless maistry would not allow them to communicate with their villages. Constant watch and ward was put over them to prevent their escape; and if they represented their grievances to anyone, woe unto them. Girls and young women thus decoyed meet with their terrible fate. The attention of responsible authorities

to this state of affairs is the first and the most essential thing needed. During my fifteen years' experience I have never seen or known a single instance of a Government official or a responsible public man visiting the estates and enquiring very closely into the conditions of workers on the plantations. There is, of course, the health officer or factory inspector on his routine rounds of inspections. But much cannot be expected from these men alone. Have you come across any account of prosecutions of estate managers under the Factories Act, though many breaches of the Act are likely to occur often on these estates? The visits of the health officer have no constructive value.

*Wages.*—The average daily rate of ordinary labour is 7 annas for men and 5 annas for women. In some districts the rate is lower still, the men getting 6 annas and the women 4 annas per day. It goes without saying that in these days when living is costly and the wants of even the poorest labourer are increasing, a cooly cannot make both ends meet on this pittance of 6 or 7 annas a day in a locality far removed from town or city, where the everyday necessities of the cooly have to be paid for at twice or three times the rates. Many estates are in malarial tracts, and the physical conditions of the cooly deteriorate, as he usually becomes subject to frequent attacks of malaria. This should mean more food and a better quality of food. On tea estates women and children get alternative wages at three pies on a pound of leaf plucked. This, on an average basis, works at a loss to the woman, as more wages would require nimble fingers and a high degree of health. Weak, devitalized, unskilled women cannot make up their daily wages at the pound rate. It is high time that wages were increased all round. It should be possible for the planter to increase wages when he makes enormous profits. There is also a certain amount of fraud in recording the amount of leaf plucked, the discrepancy being justified on the ground that dry leaf weighs much less than wet leaf. There is no settled principle on which the entries are made, it being left to the person concerned to decide upon the proportion of deduction.

*Estate Concessions to Labour.*—These vary with the different estates. A decade ago, housing conditions were very miserable. Labour was provided with low, dingy, dark and damp houses or 'lines' with low roofs and ill-ventilated rooms. The conditions have improved a little now; but further improvement is still desirable.

*Water Supply.*—Considerable attention has to be paid to water supply. At present most estate labour has to depend upon running streams or shallow pits for drinking water supply. The risks and dangers of contamination are great. Few estates provide pipe water for all their labour, which is of the utmost importance, as labour is illiterate, with hardly any sanitary ideas. The planter complains that he has not the necessary funds for this purpose, though he can find funds for electrifying his billiard room or club house and for paving his tennis court with fine flooring tiles and spending large sums of money on other comforts and luxuries for himself.

*Medical Aid.*—This is met by the appointment of compounders and dispensers on the spot with a central hospital for a group of estates under a European doctor. The dispenser, of course, is a very useful person on the spot, as in the early stages of a disease, such medical aid as lies in his power is of help. Moreover, he looks after the sanitary conditions of the cooly lines and attempts to create in the cooly a sanitary conscience. But this should not free the planter from his responsibility for providing more qualified medical aid.

*Sanitation and Conservancy.*—Most of the labourers are ignorant and superstitious, indifferent to medical treatment till the eleventh hour. The majority have a prejudice against the western system of medicine, and these illiterate folk have very quaint notions of health and disease. It is a very difficult task to instil into them ideas of sanitation and clean living. When I first began to work on an estate a lavatory for the cooly lines was an unknown thing. I can say without any hesitation that on every estate I worked I had to suggest to the planter the construction of lavatories for cooly lines. I am confident that they will learn to appreciate the use of lavatories if persistent efforts are made to educate them.

*Welfare Work.*—Owing to the poverty, illiteracy and ignorance of mothers as to the proper care and feeding of their children and to the fact that the cooly mothers are obliged to work from morning till evening in the fields, they cannot give their children the necessary supervision. Moreover, their vitality is often low on account of malaria. Infant mortality, therefore, reaches a very high percentage on the estates.

*Education.*—As far as I can see no steps have been taken by many planters—there are exceptions—for giving primary education to the children of labourers; nor are the parents, being illiterate themselves, interested in the education of their children.

*Malaria.*—Some estates are carrying out an anti-malarial campaign. But if it is to be of any practical benefit, it should be done systematically and steadily. Here, again, the planter is confronted with the bugbear of expenditure.

*Settlement of Wages.*—The wages of labourers are settled weekly. A food advance of Re. 1·8 annas for men and Re. 1·4 annas for women is paid to such of the coolies as have worked six days a week, the balance being credited to their check roll; less wages, of course, for a smaller number of days in the week. Sunday is supposed to be a weekly holiday; but, on tea estates, the coolies are indirectly induced to do Sunday work on ready cash pay system. This is compulsion in disguise in most estates. If the cooly is not willing to turn out on Sunday he cannot escape the vigilance of the maistry. At the end of 10 or 12 months there is a general settlement, when the accounts are gone through and the balance is paid to the cooly, together with any present, such as the cost of a blanket if the cooly has regularly worked for the above period and a small railway charge to return to his village and enjoy his holiday. On some estates the settlement is made monthly. The difficulty of the cooly here is that the European planter pays his wages not necessarily to him directly, but through his maistry. If the maistry is a cheat (as most of them are), the cooly has to suffer in silence. He has no means of complaining, nor will anyone listen to his complaints. The planter has no responsibility as long as he pays the wages to the maistry. In many instances the coolies go without any balance being paid to them, if they happen to be absent from work owing to disease. The maistry scrutinizes his account very minutely, taking great care not to leave out even the cost of a pot of toddy, a dram of arrack or a copper thrown to him to buy his tobacco at the time of recruiting. The settlement of accounts is often a protracted affair. Although the coolies may have worked out their full term, the settlement is not effected if the season is a busy one, or the amount of labour inadequate. A common practice is for the maistry to be away from the estate on a pretended campaign of recruiting or the illness of his grandfather. Should the cooly have the courage to approach the planter, great sympathy is expressed, but the answer is, 'I am very sorry. What can I do? Your maistry is away. I shall wire to him to come up soon.'

*Treatment of Labour.*—The planter is not directly responsible for any cruel treatment of the cooly. It is the *kangani* who is solely responsible. But the planter exhibits a studied ignorance of the methods of the *kangani*. Among the methods of ill-treatment may be mentioned striking off the names, cutting down the pounds of leaf plucked, withholding payment in full of the weekly advance, beating and kicking. In the case of young women, indecent overtures when not complied with will be meted out with severe and secret punishments.

My opinion is that the middleman between the planter and the cooly should be wiped out entirely. The rate of wages should be enhanced. Transport facilities and marketing conditions should be very considerably increased. Water supply, sanitation, medical aid and anti-malarial measures should be undertaken, and a better class of subordinates should be entertained in all the estates.

*The Subordinate Staff.*—There is yet another class of employees, the Indian monthly paid subordinate staff, the estate office clerks, field writers, doctors, apothecaries, dispensers, tea and rubber makers, fitters, mechanics, electricians, etc. Their position is, speaking generally, much better. But their tenure is unsettled, and at any moment they may be sent out of the estates, irrespective of their length of service. Their general educational standards vary. Improvement in their conditions can be effected.

The average planter does not like the educated subordinate, for he cannot curse and swear at him without receiving an answer. He expects undue respect from all subordinates. The head clerk has to address him as 'master,' just as he is addressed by his maistry. Being accustomed to deal with poor and illiterate coolies, he is unable to associate on free terms with the better class of Indians. There are a few good planters, but unfortunately very few.

*Remedies Suggested.*—I have been informed that the above statement is substantially correct that conditions in the Anamalais are said to be even less satisfactory. There should be, in my opinion, a thorough enquiry into the conditions of plantation labour by a separate committee, but judging on such data as are available it seems to me that the recruitment of labour for the plantations should be the work of special labour boards or co-operative agencies in the districts from which such labour is now recruited. A register should be kept in each village for purpose of record. Officers of the Health and Factories' Departments should have free access to all estates for purpose of inspection. There should also be in suitable places in the estates protectors of plantation labour with functions somewhat similar to those of protectors of emigrants. In addition, I would advocate the appointment of non-official visitors who should be empowered to visit plantations and ascertain the actual conditions of labour. As in regard to factories, so in the plantations, I would suggest the establishment of dispensaries and hospitals by the State out of contributions from the estates and the creation of an independent medical service,

### Trade Unions in Southern India.

I have been connected with trade unions in Southern India for the last eleven years. I was on the Executive Committee of the Madras Labour Union in 1919. I helped in the formation of the M.S.M.R. Workshop Union at Perambur in the same year. In 1920 I went to Arkonam at the request of the men in the workshop who had gone out on strike. In the same year I formed the union of the workmen in the Reliance Foundry and took part in the formation of the Electric Supply Corporation Workers' Union (now amalgamated with the Tramway Men's Union). I was away from Madras for a few years. When I returned I resumed my work in 1926 by accepting the Presidentship of the Madras Labour Union, a position which I still hold. In July, 1927, I went to Coimbatore at the invitation of the textile workers' union to negotiate with the employers for the settlement of a big strike. In 1927 I intervened in the strike in the P.W.D. Workshop, and also Messrs. Massey and Co.'s workers who had made attempts to start a union. Early in 1928 I went to Ranipet, where the workers of Messrs. Parry and Co.'s pottery, sugar and chemical works were on strike. I advised the men to resume work on a promise from the employer of consideration of their demands, to form a union and have it registered under the Act. In March, 1929, I was invited to Nellikuppam, where the workers of Messrs. Parry and Co.'s sugar works wanted to form a union. In January, 1930, I visited Madura, Tuticorin and Koilpatti, all textile centres, and advised the workers to form unions of their own. A union has already been formed among the workers at Madura, and I expect there will also be unions at Tuticorin and Koilpatti. Within the last few weeks new unions have sprung up, or old ones have been revived—among the kerosene oil workers, the match factory workers at Ernavoor on the northern outskirts of Madras, the Port Trust and Harbour workers, and the workshop employees of Messrs. Binny and Co. and Messrs. Richardson and Cruddas.

At Ranipet and Nellikuppam I found that the employer (Messrs. Parry and Co.) was in no way unfriendly to the formation of unions. The men were informed that a registered union would be recognized and representations received on behalf of the workers through the union. The men are convinced that representations properly made receive serious consideration. But I cannot say the same of many other employers, who are suspicious of trade unions, and even hostile to them. Some are uncompromising in their attitude, and go so far as to foster a rival union among their workpeople.

The general causes of strikes in Southern India are low wages, harsh treatment, heavy fines, the lack of provision for medical relief and privilege and sick leave. In very many cases there have been strikes as a protest against the dismissal of men who have taken a leading part in the formation of trade unions. I do not believe in the plea usually put forward by employers that men go on lightning strikes without any previous notice or a proper formulation of their demands. The fact almost invariably is that the complaints of the men are either brought to the notice of the employer through anonymous letters where no unions exist, or through the office-bearers of unions, usually outsiders, and are therefore rejected; or the intermediaries, such as jobbers and maistries, prevent representations from being made. There is a sense of discipline among the workers in Southern India, which is far above what one would expect from men who are uneducated and unaccustomed to membership of organizations. I am bound also to state that in mufassil towns the police play too prominent a part in industrial disputes. At Ranipet, for instance, in 1928, I found that oral instructions had been issued by the police to the strikers that they were not to hold any meetings. The impression is created among the workers that the police look upon the formation of a trade union as an undesirable thing. They approach the men when a union is about to be formed and dissuade them from joining it or attending its meetings. When there is a strike I have been informed by the workers that the police exercise their influence upon shopkeepers to stop the supply of foodstuffs on credit, and the more zealous among them put undue pressure on the workers by threats to resume work. Sometimes employers are in the habit of rewarding the police for services at the end of a strike. I feel compelled to come to the conclusion that the activities of the police are not confined only to the preservation of order, but are inimical to the growth of trade unionism.

*Conclusion.*—In this Note I have raised only some of the main points which should engage the attention of the Commission. India is essentially an agricultural country; 74 per cent. of her population depend upon agriculture and only 10 per cent. on industries. The instincts of the people, even of a majority of those who have taken to industrial pursuits, are still agricultural. Indian labour is developing on its own lines, and it will be very many years before we have in this country a large number of exclusively industrial workers. In the whole of British India only about 1½ million workers are employed in factories which come under the definition of the term in the Factories Act. This is only a very small fraction of the total number of even the industrial workers in the country. Generally speaking, it may be laid down

that the smaller the establishment, the worse are the conditions of labour therein. The provisions of the Factories' Act and of labour legislation practically make no difference to the overwhelming majority of the industrial workers in the country. But even assuming that the recommendations of the Commission will improve the status of all the industrial workers, it seems to me that the problem in India is essentially one of developing agriculture and the fostering of cottage industries. However much India's industrial development may take place, agriculture will continue to be her most important occupation. Some of the evils of indiscriminate industrialization are already apparent in the ghastly social problems of Bombay, Calcutta, and other industrial centres. The habits of the Indian people are such that life in a crowded city creates problems which are not to be found in the rural areas. It is, therefore, essential that when industrial development is still in its initial stages, an effort should be made to take a comprehensive view of the problems of industrial labour.

The danger to-day is that industrial development is regarded as an un-mixed blessing, and hardly any notice is taken of the social, economic, and health problems which have come in its wake. Fresh burdens are being placed on the shoulders of the consuming classes through the operations of the Tariff Board. The present policy is, in fact, to view industrial development as though it was the concern only of the capitalist.

The neglect of the interests of labour has been serious enough in the past, but its effect will be more serious in the future as a result of the spread of industry from the urban to rural centres. There is a definite tendency noticeable in India towards such migration. Coimbatore, Madura, Tuticorin, Ambasamudram, Koilpatti in Southern India, are all growing centres of the textile industry. Wages are considerably lower than in the industrial cities; the problem of unemployment is so acute that the workers are content with astonishingly low wages. The consequences will, I fear be the spread of the poison which at present is corroding the life of the people who are condemned to earn their livelihood in the industrial cities to the country-side.

A new orientation must be given to India's economic life. Special efforts must be made to carry out the recommendations of the Industrial Commission for the encouragement of cottage industries. The fact that the hand loom industry in Southern India, on which about three million people depend, shows signs of vitality to-day in spite of depressed trade conditions and severe competition, is full of significance and hope for its future. As the Royal Commission on Agriculture has truly remarked, the village is the centre of Indian life. It is on the development of the village that the greatest stress should be laid. The adoption of universal and compulsory education, the fostering of cottage industries, the development of agriculture, the relief of rural indebtedness which, according to the Economic Enquiry Committee, amounts to about 600 crores, and other measures will, to a large extent, lay the proper foundations for the solution of those problems with which the Royal Commission on Labour is dealing. Legislation will, no doubt, effect some improvement in the conditions of the industrial workers. But unless such legislation is supported by efforts on the lines I have suggested, it would be futile to look for sound and enduring progress.

## ✓ THE EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION OF SOUTHERN INDIA.

### FORWORD.

The Employers' Federation of Southern India was founded in the year 1920 by several large employers of labour in Southern India. The aims and objects of the Federation are to encourage and promote a better feeling between employers and employees, to encourage the payment of fair rates of wages, to obtain the removal of grievances and to arbitrate on matters in dispute, to encourage and secure united action amongst employers, to communicate with public authorities or kindred associations, and generally to promote and protect the mutual interests of employers and employees, and specially to safeguard the interests of employers against misguided and unfair action by employees. At present thirty-six of the leading firms in Southern India are members of the Federation, and they employ between thirty-five and forty thousand employees.

Included amongst the members of the Federation are certain large companies engaged in the textile industry. As conditions generally in that industry are in a great measure different to those found in the works and establishments of other members of the Federation, we have deemed it advisable to confine our answers

to the questionnaire to conditions prevalent in establishments not engaged in the textile industry, particularly in view of the fact that the companies concerned have submitted a separate memorandum.

Although the Employers' Federation amongst its members companies not situated in Madras City and its neighbourhood, we have, except where expressly mentioned, confined our replies to the questionnaire to conditions existing in Madras City only, as we understand that the Commission will be visiting the principal industrial centres in the Presidency, where they will obtain information at first hand regarding conditions.

Although membership of the Employers' Federation of Southern India is open to all reputable employers of upwards of one hundred employees, it is apparent from the fact that at present all members are European employers, that, generally speaking, the large Indian employers of labour are either not in sympathy with the aims and objects of the Federation or unwilling to incur the financial expenditure necessary.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. Labour employed in Madras, being engaged locally and from villages near the city, is not, to an appreciable extent, migratory. As far as industrial concerns in other parts of Southern India are concerned, the factories and mills are scattered in more or less rural surroundings, although as in Madras, Coimbatore, and Mangalore, in the suburbs of fairly large towns, such concerns are able to obtain their labour requirements from the adjoining population.

There is no evidence of migration on a large scale from rural to urban areas, though there is considerable emigration to Burma, the Straits Settlements, and Ceylon due to economic causes, higher rates of wages being the attraction. There is also a constant stream of migration to the planting districts of Southern India from rural areas. The emigration abroad and movement of rural labour to planting districts has increased of recent years, owing to the larger requirements of increasing tracts of country being opened up for cultivation, and the spread of knowledge by returned labour of the advantages to be gained by the labourer who is prepared to leave his village.

2. (i) As explained above, the greater part of labour is employed near its home and contact with the village is never broken. As regards labour recruited for the planting districts, it returns for two to three months each year to its village.

(ii) The permanent force in industrial concerns of Madras numbers about 95 per cent. of the whole.

3. (i) Skilled labour is engaged after a practical test supervised by a responsible assistant. Unskilled labour is engaged on the basis of appearance, general intelligence and physique. Special labour, such as watchmen, door-keepers, etc., is at times recruited from army pensioners through the pension paymaster.

(ii) The present system appears to work quite satisfactorily and the federation can suggest no improvement.

(iii) (a) The employer has no difficulty in securing unskilled labour and comparatively little in obtaining skilled workmen, there is therefore no need on his part for employment agencies. Owing to the large employable population of India, such an agency would find it impossible to obtain work for even a small percentage of those who would appear on its books.

(b) Any scheme for public employment agencies would have to be undertaken by the Government, who would have to form a separate department with an extensive organization, spread over the whole country and not merely confined to towns.

A commencement might be made in respect to skilled and clerical labour, but we are of opinion that results would never justify the expense and effort.

4. Extent and effects of disturbance of family life. Practically none.

7. (i) There is without doubt considerable unemployment among the labouring classes in the sense that without being in actual want there are a great number who would accept work if it could be found. Of recent years there has been continual unemployment in respect to the partially educated student class which has been produced in greater quantity than there is demand for its services.

(ii) (c) Unemployment among the labouring class is due to the present depression in trade which has been prevalent during the last few months and to the small number of factories at present working in and around Madras.

Unemployment among men with a fair education is of a more permanent nature. The supply of such men is greater than the demand for their services and the majority are unwilling to take up any form of manual work, nor are they prepared to go through any modified form of apprenticeship.

(iii) As regards the manual worker, the chief hope of alleviating and remedying unemployment lies in the development of agriculture, which is the main industry of the country, so that the number of labourers fully employed on the land may be greatly increased.

The alleviation of unemployment among the semi-educated classes is largely in the hands of the workers themselves. If young men of good birth and education can be induced not to consider manual labour derogatory, more work could be obtained of a skilled nature. A certain amount of progress in this direction has been made in recent years, and it is not, now, uncommon to find high caste men working as skilled motor mechanics.

(iv) In this Presidency there is little if any complete destitution among the working classes, either manual, clerical, or skilled. It is the custom of centuries that when a man is out of employment and has no money, he goes to live with some other member of the family, even to the extent of distant cousins if he has no nearer relative. Under present conditions the workman feels no necessity for unemployment insurance, and would be unwilling to make any contribution to that end. From the employers' point of view the machinery necessary to carry out any system of unemployment insurance would be so complicated as to make it uneconomical.

Under the present conditions existing in India, there does not appear any urgent necessity for such unemployment insurance.

8. (i) The Employers' Federation has no figures available from which it is possible to calculate the average duration of employment, but one large employer gives the average as approximately twelve years.

(ii) The average employment of casual labour is about 5 per cent. of the number permanently employed.

(iii) (a) The general experience in the Presidency is that, as wages have risen, absenteeism has increased, bearing out the assumption that Indian labour prefers less work to increased prosperity, with the result that the percentage of absenteeism is very high, averaging as much as 15 per cent. per diem in certain cases.

The principal causes are festivals, marriages, domestic occurrences, and ill health, attendance being most unsatisfactory throughout the year. It is at times so bad as to cause dislocation in factories and works. The number of religious feast days during the year, of which Government recognize forty exclusive of Sundays, and the many others observed by the worker but not sanctioned by Government, make it almost impossible to give regular holidays as is done in Western countries.

(b) In Madras absenteeism is particularly marked immediately after pay-days and to a certain extent during any period of inclement weather, but there are no very marked seasonal differences.

## II.—Staff Organization.

11. The managing staff of industries supporting the Federation is almost entirely European and imported. As qualified Indians become available, they are to a certain extent replacing staff imported from other countries. An obstacle to the more rapid Indianization of the higher staff in industries is the objection so often found amongst educated Indians to augment their theoretical knowledge by a thorough grounding of practical experience in the lower ranks of the industry they aspire to manage.

12. There are hardly any industrial concerns in Southern India which provide facilities for training of workmen, and in few cases would the standard of education of the labourer provide an adequate foundation for training him for the higher administrative and managing staff. On the other hand employees with very little educational equipment have risen to, and have efficiently performed the duties of superior foremen and supervisors.

13. The experience of the Federation is that the relations between staff and rank and file is both satisfactory and cordial. Any manager or assistant who failed to maintain cordial relations with his workmen would be dismissed.

14. The general system followed is for attendance to be checked by means of tokens or time-checks given at the main entrance of factories and works, and for a further check to be made by the foremen of different departments.

Wages are paid in cash either by the manager or a cashier.



### III.—Housing.

16. Although the housing problem for workers in Madras City is a distinctly serious one in that there is a great deal of profiteering by landlords, and workmen generally have to pay relatively far too high rents for very indifferent accommodation, it is impossible in most trades for firms to provide housing accommodation for employees. The only possibility of providing housing for workers would be in the cases of large factories situated in the suburbs or outside the city.

Government provide housing accommodation for its superior staff and for the police force. It is from the private landlord that the worker, in general, resident in the city obtains his living accommodation. In villages the worker often owns his own house.

17. No facilities exist for the acquisition by employers, other than Government, of land for the purpose of erecting houses for labourers.

18. *Nature of accommodation provided in each class.*—(i) *In relation to workers' demands.*—(ii) *In relation to best type from health point of view.*

Neither of these points receive consideration, the worker must get whatever accommodation he can, as near as possible to his place of work. The landlord is not interested in the health of his tenants as long as he can let his premises.

(iii) *Provision made for lighting, conservancy, and water-supply.*—In no case is it usual to provide lighting, with the possible exception of the new Corporation buildings, the supply of which must be provided by the tenant. In the City of Madras conservancy and water-supply are provided by the Corporation, but in the surrounding villages no arrangements are made as regards these.

19. There is not as a general rule any difficulty made by labour in utilizing accommodation provided, although in rural areas comparatively new buildings are not infrequently abandoned on the plea of being haunted.

21. Sub-letting and accommodation of relatives, in no way connected with the employers' business, are the most frequent causes of overcrowding.

22. Difficulties are always experienced at first to enforce proper use being made of conservancy arrangements and in the economical use of water. Undoubtedly, where decent conditions of living are insisted upon, the moral effect upon the labourer must be advantageous.

### IV.—Health.

24. (i) Free medical attendance is provided by practically all European employers of labour both in the city and mofussil districts, many of them maintaining special dispensaries for the use of their workmen.

(ii) Government maintain a large number of hospitals and dispensaries both in the City of Madras and in the rural districts of the Presidency. At these both "in" and "out" patients are treated.

(iii) Several hospitals and dispensaries are maintained in the rural districts by medical missions. The South Indian Railway and the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway have hospitals at Trichinopoly and Perambur, and dispensaries at other centres. Planters maintain hospitals and dispensaries on all large groups of estates for their labour.

(iv) The Federation while knowing that the number of women doctors and trained midwives is steadily increasing has no definite information on the subject.

25. Where medical facilities are provided by the employer, they are usually fully utilized both by men and women.

26. Sanitary arrangements and water-supply are now controlled and supervised by Government Inspectors under the Factories Act and are fully utilized by labour where the supervision is adequate. In the usual workers' home, particularly in villages, they are either non-existent or of a most primitive type. Rural labour in particular, and urban labour to almost as great an extent, have no sanitary sense, and education on this vitally important subject is one of the most crying needs of Southern India to-day.

27. All plantations in the Presidency are open to inspection by a special Health Officer appointed by Government for the purpose.

30. Sickness insurance would be very expensive and most difficult to work. Indian labour is not sufficiently educated to appreciate having part of his wage deducted to

form a fund possibly to alleviate future trouble of his own, but from which possibly he might never benefit. The institution of any scheme must be regarded as premature in the present general state of labour in this part of India.

(iii) It is not the general experience of employers in Southern India that Western medicine is not acceptable to the labourer.

31. (i) Some firms grant maternity leave on full-pay for varying periods before and after childbirth, but this naturally depends upon the financial ability of the employer to do so.

(iii) We do not think that legislation to enforce this is desirable.

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

32. (i) It is extremely difficult to carry out any efficient means of welfare work among employees, especially amongst Indian employees, owing to their houses being scattered in different districts in Madras. With large works situated in a village or outside the city, where most of the employees live close by, it would be easier. There are however several firms and companies which maintain recreation and athletic clubs for their workmen.

34. There are several firms and companies which maintain recreation and athletic clubs for their workmen.

36. There are decided possibilities for the provision of technical schools in the engineering and automobile trade. One of the difficulties in this connection is that, after considerable expenditure on training a man, he may leave immediately afterwards. There are one or two quite good schools for motor mechanics in Madras, under the supervision of Government, and it is understood that the results obtained have been satisfactory; this system might possibly be extended.

37. The provision of pensions or gratuities to employees who have to retire owing to old age or sickness must obviously be governed by the financial ability of the company or firm. Many companies and firms have pension or gratuity funds; but old age pensions, as a State affair, as in most western countries, seem to be impracticable at present in India, for the reason that the workman, who, all his life, has been used to support the incapacitated members of his family, will object to contributing to any such fund, relying on the immemorial custom of the country for support in his old age by younger relatives.

The case is completely different as regards the clerical staff, for whom some firms and companies run provident funds contributed to by both employer and employed, and which are greatly appreciated by the class for whom they are maintained. This gives hope that in time the workman will learn to appreciate making provision for old age, but that will take many years to bring about.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. The Indian Workmen's Compensation Act at present extends to persons employed on tramways, to workmen as defined in the Indian Factories and Mines Acts, seamen, workmen loading and unloading ships, building and demolishing buildings, including bridges, workmen employed on telegraph and telephone lines and overhead electric cables, work in sewers and on fire brigades.

The effect on industry has so far been negligible. The Act was brought into force in respect of those industries which, before it was passed, already made a practice of paying compensation to their workmen in case of all accidents. It is doubtful whether the Workmen's Compensation Act has been of as much value to workmen as the framers of the Act hoped it would be. Lump sum payments, now made to dependents of deceased workmen, are almost invariably squandered in the course of a very short time.

The Act being the first of its kind, insurance companies, in order to safeguard themselves, fixed rates at a level in excess of what experience proves to be necessary. It is not economically sound for any large concern to insure its risk at present rates, but it is desirable that small concerns should insure if rates are reduced to a fair level.

52. The Act might be extended to all hazardous employment even though the number of employees is less than 20. A recent case in Madras, where there was a fatal explosion at a fireworks factory, and the employer was not liable for compensation, suggests that the Act does require some amendment. At the same time it must be taken into consideration that probably no insurance company would accept such a risk.

**IX.—Hours.****A.—Factories.**

55. All factories and large works come within the provisions of the Factory Act, which restricts the usual working hours to 10 per diem and 60 per week. But the Federation has no knowledge of any institution in Madras where the full hours allowed are worked.

56. *Days Worked per Week.*—Six, although in most cases work is so arranged that the workman has a half holiday on Saturdays. The enforcement of the provision of the Factory Act that Sunday, or a day three days before or three days after, must be observed as a full day's holiday is not appreciated by workmen, who coming to work on a Sunday, in order to earn extra money, are forced to take a holiday that they do not want. In this connection consideration should be given to the remarks made regarding holidays in reply to Question 8 (iii) (a).

57. The 60 hours' restriction has had no material effect, as in the industries which go to make up this Federation, it was not usual before the Act came into force for that number of hours to be worked.

58. The remarks made in the last paragraph equally apply to the effect of the daily limit.

59. If the restriction in number of hours worked is ever to be made applicable to the smaller industries, in which the need of control is so much greater, it is not advisable to reduce the maxima, until experience has been gained in respect to those industries.

60. *Intervals.*—(i) Existing practice—(a) In relation to fatigue. This appears to be quite satisfactory. (b) In relation to workers' meal times. The usual interval allowed is one hour between 1 and 2 p.m. on five days of the week, and on Saturdays, when work ceases by 2.30 p.m., half an hour between 12 noon and 12.30 p.m.

(ii) The intervals as provided for under the Indian Factories Act are found suitable in practice.

(iii) Time of work and the definite time for intervals laid down under the Factories Act have been adjusted in all businesses and work satisfactorily.

(iv) Although leave on full-pay is granted in some cases, usually for public holidays due to festivals, the workman takes so many holidays for the same purpose that no fixed annual holiday is generally given.

61. (i) One and a half days per week, usually Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

(ii) The law is quite suitable from western standards but is not appreciated by the Indian labourer, who likes to take holidays when he thinks fit.

62. In the opinion of the Federation, no Act can completely cover seasonal or peculiar conditions to be met with in various industries, and it is absolutely essential that exemptions should not be curtailed in any way.

**X.—Women, Young Adults, and Children.****A.—Factories, and C.—Other Establishments.**

The question of the employment of children is amply covered, in the case of factories, by the Factories Act, and the Federation does not consider there is any necessity for further alteration or amendment.

There is a great deal of undesirable employment of children in workshops, that do not come under the Factory Act, and if the interests of India as a whole are to be considered by the Royal Commission, this is a point which might be given serious consideration.

**XII.—Wages.****96. (i) In Industry—Madras—Labourers—**

Unskilled young adults (men) ..	Rs. 13 to Rs. 14 per mensem.
"    adults (men) .. ..	"    18    "    20    "
Semi-skilled adults (men) .. ..	"    23    "    25    "
Skilled adults (men) .. ..	"    35    "    60    "
Piece-workers (men) .. ..	"    30    "    40    "
Unskilled workers (women) .. ..	"    14    "    18    "

**(ii) In Agricultural areas in Industry—**

Unskilled adults (men) .. ..	Rs. 10 to Rs. 18 per mensem.
"    "    (women) .. ..	"    8    "    15    "

(iii) The Federation has no figures relating to cost of bonuses, medical attendance, etc., which would enable it to work out the difference between money wages and the value of all earnings.

97. (i) The wages of all classes of labour have since 1914 increased by 50 per cent. to 75 per cent.

(ii) The increased cost of living due to the rise in cost of food-stuffs and grain and a slowly growing wish for luxuries by the labourer.

(iii) Immediately preceding the war, wages and the cost of living balanced. Post-war wages have since increased by 50 per cent. to 75 per cent., and the cost of living by 45 per cent. to 50 per cent.

(iv) Actual wages have not fluctuated with profits, but many firms have, when profits justified their doing so, paid bonuses.

99. No employers connected with the Federation pay in kind any part of the labourer's wage, but it is not uncommon for employers to allow their own work-people to purchase goods produced by them at cost price.

100. It is not the practice in Madras for factories and large works to pay wages otherwise than direct to the worker. The members of the Federation therefore have no experience as to what the effect of such a system would be.

101. Wages are fixed in accordance with the prevailing rate paid in the neighbourhood. Ability and length of service are also taken into consideration.

103. Overtime and work outside the normal hours of work is paid in accordance with the provisions of the Factory Act.

104. There has been little if any effect on the supply of labour, as there is ample unskilled labour available; an unsatisfactory feature of the increased wages now being paid is increased absenteeism. At times there is some difficulty in obtaining all the skilled labour required.

105. The statutory establishment of a minimum wage is, in the opinion of the Federation, very inadvisable. Wages must depend greatly on the worker's power of production, and, if a minimum wage were fixed by legislative enactment, employers would in self-defence be obliged to replace all slow working men by others more efficient.

106. (i) An enquiry, made at the time the Government of India called for particulars on this matter, showed that the incidence of fining did not exceed 0.6 per cent. of the wages paid. The practice is used very sparingly and only in cases of gross negligence and late arrival at work.

(ii) Other deductions may take the form of rent for houses belonging to the employer, repayment of advances made against wages.

(iii) Fines are usually credited to a special account and used for the benefit of the workers.

(iv) In the opinion of the Federation legislation is uncalled for. Fining for late attendance is often in the interest of the employees as much as the employer. Late attendance of one man may throw a whole gang out of work until his arrival, with consequent loss of wages to all engaged on piece-work. The alternative is dismissal which is not in the interests of the labourer.

107. (i) Wages are paid on a daily basis but are distributed monthly by agreement.

(ii) The period varies between 7 and 14 days, according to the time taken to compile the wage sheets, write out the wage chits and make up wage envelopes.

(iii) (a) Legislation would appear to be unnecessary. Attempts made to introduce more frequent payments have had to be abandoned at the request of the employees.

(b) There is no evidence of unnecessary delay in the payment of wages by the class of employer which this Federation represents.

(iv) There is no established common practice in regard to unclaimed wages among employers in Madras. In some cases the amount unclaimed is credited to the same special account as fines and eventually spent for the benefit of the labourer, and in other cases, after being held for a period, which covers legal liability, it reverts to the employer.

108. Madras is in no way different to other parts of India in that practically the whole labouring population is heavily in debt, partly due to debts being handed down from generation to generation and to the inherent want of control which makes the Indian unable to resist the temptation of borrowing and spending unduly large sums on marriages and funerals.

110. The question of leave has been answered in the earlier parts of this memorandum (*vide* No. 8). Workmen with or without the consent of the employer take frequent casual leave, without pay, to attend festivals and their domestic affairs. Although some employers grant an annual holiday on full pay, it is not usual to do so.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. Among unskilled workers no marked increase of efficiency has occurred during recent years, but there is greater general knowledge of machinery and engineering among the skilled labour.

113. The efficiency of Indian labour is definitely lower than that of most civilized foreign countries. This is borne out by the fact that, notwithstanding low wages, many industries in India could not exist if it were not for protective tariffs.

### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (i) The Employers' Federation of Southern India, to which most of the leading industrial concerns belong, has of recent years given considerable time and study to labour legislation. No necessity has arisen for it to take part in any industrial dispute, but it is prepared in certain circumstances to do so. The United Planters' Association of Southern India confines its interests to matters affecting that industry.

(ii) The trade union movement is in its infancy in Southern India, and at present is, amongst the uneducated classes from which industrial labour is drawn, chiefly regarded as an organization for the purpose of conducting a strike. Such unions are apt to be dissolved immediately a strike is over. There cannot yet be said to be any general trade union movement in South India to the extent that any large class of labour engaged in the same trade, but under various employers, have united to form a union. The unions at present in existence are formed of the employees of one employer and very often, where one employer controls various factories in different parts of the Presidency, there are separate unions for each factory even when the factories are engaged in the same industry.

118. (i) The effect so far in the south of India has been generally detrimental.

(ii) No real advantage has yet accrued to the workers as a result of attempts to establish trade unions. The average intelligence of the skilled or unskilled Indian is such that he does not appreciate or understand the sounder reasons for trade unions. The chief factor against the successful working of trade unions in the Madras Presidency is that the average workman is not sufficiently well educated, or of the requisite intelligence, to make a capable executive officer of a union. The result is that the actual management of most trade unions is in the hands of lawyers and others unconnected with the industry, which the union is intended to represent. The class of individual who has never done manual work frequently is unable to realize labour problems from the worker's point of view and has no appreciation of the problems of the employer. The result of their interposition has so far been to foment strikes, and when started to prolong them and hinder a settlement between employer and employee.

119. *Nature of Trade Union Activities*—(i) *Mutual aid benefit schemes*.—The Federation knows of no case in the Presidency in which any trade union has made any advance in this direction.

(ii) *Other Activities*.—Political propaganda forms the bulk of the activities of the existing labour organizations.

120. (iii) Employers are loath to recognize any trade union which is not composed of and managed by the actual workmen they employ, but trade unions complying with those conditions are recognized and receive every consideration from employers. Employers, however, generally do not object to a few outsiders on the committee of a union, provided they are not well-known political agitators.

121. (i) Since the Trade Unions Act was passed in 1926, ten unions have been registered under it and of these one is already defunct. Between the 5th February and the 25th October, 1929, no further applications for registration were made.

(ii) From the report of the Commissioner of Labour on the working of the Act, it seems probable that the control exercised as regards accounts may have the effect of reducing the number of outsiders exercising influence on the activities of registered trade unions. The commissioner notes that, although the influence of outsiders still predominates, there is a growing tendency on the part of workers, at least in the smaller unions, to rely more on themselves.

122. (i) In the present state of the trade union movement in the Presidency, the employed almost invariably wish to conduct negotiations with their employers through the medium of a third party, usually an outsider who had interested himself in, or organized, their trade union. Some of these outsiders appear to be acting from genuine altruistic motives. Others, either working to obtain notoriety or in the pursuance of the spread of communist or perhaps extreme nationalist political views,

have been very detrimental factors in the settlement of disputes. An excitable and easily misled body of labourers with real or imaginary grievances is often influenced in the most dangerous directions by the glib tongue of the professional agitator.

(ii) Attempts at co-operation between employers and employed have been made in regard to welfare conditions, but little, if anything, has been done to co-operate to increase efficiency of production, beyond probably a fairly general use of some form of bonus given by employers on quantity, or quality, or both, of manufactured articles produced.

## THE BUCKINGHAM AND CARNATIC MILLS EMPLOYEES UNION, MADRAS.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) (ii) and (iii) As far as our workpeople are concerned there is practically no migration. A large percentage of workpeople have come from other parts of the Presidency but when once they came they settled down here permanently.

2. (i) About 25 per cent. of the workpeople go to their villages once a year.

(ii) Practically the entire workpeople.

3. (i) and (ii) Children of workpeople who receive their education in the mill school are recruited as half-timers when they are 12 years' old and are promoted as full-timers when they complete their 15th year. Adult workers are recruited on a small scale, i.e., about 5 per cent. of the strength of the mills. They are taken on by the mill managers or other members of the managing staff. Preference is sometimes given to relatives of deceased or invalidated workmen. A medical examination is held before taking on a new man. There is no proper system of recruitment, and no attention is paid to the previous character of the recruit. It would be better if recruitment was done in a more systematic manner. We suggest that recruitment should be entrusted to an employment department, whose duty it would be to register applications, go into their merits and the previous characters of the applicants, give necessary tests to the applicants, etc.

(iii) (a) and (b) We do not think that public employment agencies are desirable at present.

4. Since the vast majority of workpeople have settled down permanently there is very little disturbance of family life.

7. (i) and (ii) (a) We cannot say exactly how many of our workpeople are unemployed. In 1921 there was a prolonged strike, when about 2,000 men were thrown out of work. Of these many have found work both locally and outside. About 8 per cent. of the workpeople get out of the mills, either through dismissals or voluntarily. Some people have also gone out on account of retrenchment and introduction of improved machinery, as Northrop looms during recent years. We cannot say how many of such men are actually unemployed.

(ii) (c), (iii) (iv) and (v) We are of opinion that a scheme of unemployment insurance on a compulsory basis should be started. In view of the insecurity of tenure and the consequent high percentage of labour turnover in many factories and the hardships caused to workpeople by reduction of staff due to retrenchment and introduction of improved machinery, a national unemployment insurance scheme is quite necessary in the interests of the working-class population.

8. (i) Twenty to twenty-five years—provided no serious industrial troubles happen.

(ii) Very rarely. When construction work takes place casual labour is employed.

(iii) Absenteeism in the mills works out at about 9 per cent. on an average, of which 8 per cent. is absence with leave, and 1 per cent. without leave. The average attendance of workpeople had been showing steady improvement in recent years.

*Causes.*—(1) The social life of the Hindus, who form about 90 per cent. of the workers, is responsible for a very large percentage of leave taken. Their joint family system and the social conventions which force them to attend quite a large number of ceremonies in connection with marriages and deaths and the large number of feasts and festivals which they generally attend, account for the major portion of leave taken. (2) The poor health of the workers account for about 3.5 per cent. of medical leave. Sickness in workers' families is another factor which contributes to absenteeism. (3) Unforeseen family difficulties and workers coming from a distance turning up late at the mills also account for a small percentage of absenteeism. (4) It has also to be admitted that a small percentage of absenteeism is due to the indolence and laziness of the less responsible section of workers who generally absent themselves after pay-days.

## II.—Staff Organization.

10. The administration of each mill is carried on by a manager, who is assisted by an accountant, storekeeper, etc. The mill is divided for administration purposes into three main parts : (1) textile, (2) engineering, (3) dyeing.

(1) Under " Textile " there are five departments : Carding, spinning, sizing and winding, weaving, and warehouse.

(2) Engineering, under a chief engineer, with assistant engineers in charge of mechanic ; engine and boiler ; electric and building.

(3) Dyeing, under a chief chemist, with about half-a-dozen assistants.

All the above noted members of the managing staff are Europeans. In each department there are one or two Indian or Anglo-Indian assistants under the European member. In each department in the textile branch there are about 30 jobbers, except in weaving, where there are about 60 jobbers, each in charge of a side of 24 looms. Engineering and dyeing departments have about 20 maistries in each.

11. The managing agents select them.

12. (i) Until a few years back, members of the Indian superior supervising staff (assistants) were recruited from men who had passed out of the Victoria Technical Institute, Bombay. But now the company have adopted the policy of promoting men from the rank and file to such jobs. This is a move in the right direction and we would like to see that educated responsible workers are given further chances of promotion.

(ii) In the mills school there is a technical section, in which carpentry, blacksmith's work, tinker's work, turning, fitting, and hand-loom weaving, etc., are taught. There is also a class for machine drawing, etc. A small number of apprentices attend the Government trades school. Recently a weaving class, for training up jobbers, has been started in the mills. At one time there used to be classes in the mill school for training up maistries and jobbers in other textile sections also. We would suggest the re-opening of these classes, and also that increased facilities be given to responsible young workers to improve their prospects by sending them to institutions such as the textile institute for picking up higher technical knowledge.

13. (i) Relations between the staff and rank and file are somewhat more satisfactory than before ; but we wish to see members of the staff respecting the feelings of the workpeople still more. Individual workers make complaints to the staff re leave, transfer, promotion, and general treatment, either directly or through their departmental welfare committee members. In serious cases, such as dismissals, one month's notice, leave for emergency purposes, etc., the welfare superintendent also intervenes on behalf of the workers. The executive committee of this union have also taken up several such serious cases with the management. We suggest that the employers should see that every member of the staff gives full opportunity to workers and their representatives to make complaints, and when such complaints are made that they are properly investigated and justice meted out.

(ii) We have no such system ; it is an undesirable system which leads to corruption, indiscipline, etc.

(iii) In our mills there is a works committee called the B. & C. Mills Welfare Committee, with the chief director of Messrs. Binny & Co. as president, two other directors as patrons, mill managers as vice-presidents, nine members of the managing staff, including one of the joint principals of the mills school, and 26 representatives of the workpeople as members, and the welfare superintendent as ex-officio secretary. The labour representatives are elected every year by ballot. Meetings of the committee are held once every fortnight and the labour representatives meet a few days before every meeting to frame the agenda. In order to be in touch with the doings of the welfare committee, our union sends four representatives to attend its meetings, but we reserve to ourselves the right to dissociate ourselves from any resolution that the committee may pass, which our executive committee does not approve.

The committee discusses all questions concerning conditions of service, except wages and hours of work and also questions relating to social welfare of the employees. The committee's representations have resulted in some holidays being granted with pay, and arranging earlier payment of wages. Questions of leave, dismissals, medical treatment, workmen's compensation, promotions, transfers, etc., have been discussed and some improvements effected. All social welfare activities are organized by its branch committees and reports of their activities are read once every month. The committee is constituted on the labour side, on the principle of communal representation. We should like to see communal representation abolished, since the object of the committee is to discuss matters concerning the welfare of all employees without distinction of caste or creed. We would also like to see that the welfare committee has a set of rules to guide its procedure, in order that its members may do their work as representatives of the workpeople more efficiently.

We consider it necessary that in the first instance, a works committee such as we have in the mills, should be established in all factories. Where conditions permit, larger councils also should be established.

(iv) There are no works councils or industrial councils here. We consider it necessary to establish such councils wherever possible in order to thrash out questions which arise from time to time between employees and employers.

14. (i) These are kept by the clerical staff of the mills and checked by members of the managing staff. We have no complaints to make about the system.

(ii) By the managing staff directly. Pay-slips are issued one day previous to the pay-day in order that discrepancies, if any, may be attended to.

### III.—Housing.

16. (i) About 450 houses, and other in course of construction.

(ii) Nil.

(iii) About 90 per cent. of the workpeople are living in houses of private landlords. Of these, a considerable number are living in mud-wall huts in "cheries." In most cases the land belongs to the landlord and the huts are put up by the tenants.

(iv) Only 1 per cent. of the workers have built houses for themselves.

17. No facilities exist for workpeople to acquire land for constructing their own houses. There are plots of land lying vacant in Vyasarpadi, Perambur, Sembian, Ottary, Tawker's Chowdry, Kosapet, etc., which Government can acquire and sell out to the workpeople. We suggest that Government should take steps to start building co-operative societies especially for labourers, in order to enable them to purchase plots of land and construct houses. We prefer this scheme to Government or Corporation constructing "Chawls" or "bustis" or "villages."

18. (i) *Employers' Houses*.—One room, one kitchen, one verandah, and a backyard. Workpeople think that the accommodation is insufficient.

*Private Landlords*.—Ordinarily, half-a-dozen tenants live in one house. One family has generally one room only. Accommodation is very unsatisfactory. In the "Cheri" huts there is generally only one room and accommodation is scanty.

Workers' houses—accommodation sufficient, about 4 rooms one koodam, and verandah.

(ii) Employers' houses—fairly good; landlords' houses—very unsatisfactory; workers' houses—satisfactory.

(iii) Employers' housing—provides street lighting but no house lighting. Common latrine, separate for men and women. Street taps.

Landlords' houses—no light; one small latrine for all tenants, very inconvenient, and water taps.

In "Cheri" huts, no light; conservancy very unsatisfactory; common taps.

Workers' houses—water and conservancy arrangements satisfactory.

19. All available accommodation is utilized.

20. Employers' houses—Rs. 1-8 annas per month.

Landlords' houses—between Rs. 3 and Rs. 10 for "Cheri" huts; a few annas as quit rent.

21. Sub-letting. Employers' houses—no; landlords' houses—yes, except "cheri" huts; workers' houses—yes.

Occupation of employers' houses by workers in other employ—no, except when a father occupies an employer's house and his son works under another employer.

Eviction: Employers' houses—one month's notice; landlords' houses—one month's notice, except in "Cheri" houses.

22. The moral effect on worker of industrial housing conditions is, generally speaking, very depressing. But there is an improvement when the worker shifts from ordinary dwellings into employers' houses. The internal administration of the "village" is vested in a Panchayat, elected by and from among the residents themselves. In the village halls there is a reading room, classes for young children, and a small dispensary. Lectures and magic-lantern shows are sometimes given in the halls. Special lectures for women on maternity and child welfare and on health subjects to the residents generally are also given. The committee's work and contact with better class of people have tended to improve the moral life of the workers living in the village.

### IV.—Health.

23. (i) Less than 1 per cent. of workers die every year. But figures of mortality of workers' families are not known.



(iii) (a) Though generally satisfactory, conditions in carding and spinning departments are not conducive to good health and call for improvement; (b) not very satisfactory except in employers' houses.

(iv) In the morning the low-paid workers take cold rice or ragi "kanji," while superior workmen take coffee and bread. At mid-day rice, pepper water, dholl, chutney or curry. At night, rice and fish or vegetable curry.

(v) Generally weak.

(vi) Mortality figures in houses of private landlords are much higher than in employers' houses and workers' own houses.

24. (i) There is a dispensary attached to each mill in the charge of a full-time doctor. Medicine is given free, not only to workers but to members of their families also. There is also a small dispensary in the mills school, and in each of the villages, in charge of trained midwives who attend to ordinary ailments.

(ii) The Madras Corporation has two or three dispensaries in the mill area, and families of workpeople get treated in these dispensaries also. Serious cases are treated in the Government hospital, Royapuram hospital, ophthalmic hospital, tuberculosis hospital, Gosha hospital, and hospital of Indian school of medicine.

(iii) There is one Ayurvedic dispensary run by the Chengalvaraya Naicker's Charities, where families of workers are treated in large numbers.

(iv) There is none but the corporation staff. Midwives for delivery cases in workpeople's families are available from the child welfare centres of the corporation.

25. (i) and (ii) Available medical facilities are fully utilized by workers and their families; but owing to the difficulties poor workpeople and their families meet with in the Government hospitals, it is desirable to construct a special in-patient hospital, with a lying-in hospital attached to it, in the mill area.

(26) *At workplaces.*

(i) Satisfactory.

(ii) Satisfactory.

(iii) There are some facilities, but not quite satisfactory.

*At home.*

No; though in employers' houses they are more satisfactory.

Satisfactory.

Not convenient.

27. No boards of health.

The mill doctor, factory inspector, and factory surgeon inspect the sanitary arrangements inside the mills from time to time. The sanitary arrangements outside the mills are supervised by the Corporation staff. Sanitary arrangements in the industrial area call for improvement and there should be stricter supervision.

28. Steps are taken to control temperature and humidification in the mills as laid down in the rules under the Factory Act, but temperature in some departments in hot weather is felt to be too high. The effect of heat is increased by the zinc sheet roofing. Temperature should be further controlled.

29. (i) There is no industrial disease prevalent in the mills, but in the carding and spinning departments a few people are found suffering from tuberculosis, which requires investigation.

(ii) Cholera and small-pox break out almost once every year. Malaria affects about 10 per cent. Hookworm also affects about 1 per cent. of the people.

30. (i) (ii) and (iii) We think that the time is ripe for instituting a scheme of sickness insurance in the country. The Legislative Assembly turned down the proposal to ratify the Convention of the International Labour Conference, since they were of opinion that the introduction of any comprehensive scheme on a national scale was not a practical proposition in existing conditions. After a deep consideration of the difficulties in the way of introducing a national scheme, we think that the Assembly were not wrong in the view they took. We think that a scheme on a compulsory basis, applicable to workers in organized industries, should be immediately started. Legislation should be Central and Local Governments should be empowered to declare the region and industries to which the scheme shall apply. At the present stage of trade union growth in the country, and in view of the very low level of wages prevailing in most industries, workers will not be able and willing to contribute any substantial amount towards the cost of the scheme and their contribution should for the time being be fixed so as not to exceed 25 per cent. of the contribution of either the State or the employers.

As for the difficulties mentioned: (1) Workers' objection to taking western medicine is disappearing in the country. It may also be seen whether some recognized practitioners of indigenous systems—which are being systematized—cannot be included in the panels. (2) Paucity of medical men will not arise to any very great extent if the scheme operates only in important centres and industries. (3) Migration of labour is decreasing—in our Presidency it is not a factor to be reckoned with at all.

In any case the difficulty is not one which cannot be overcome by suitable provisions being made in the scheme for the purpose. (4) We consider that the employers and the State have a duty by law in the matter of looking after their health and giving them necessary help during times of sickness, and so the necessary finance to work out the scheme should be found by contributions from the employers and the State, with, of course, a small contribution from the workers, as stated above.

31. (i) There are only about 150 women workers in the Mills. Three months' leave with allowances at a fixed scale ranging between 4 and 6 annas is paid as maternity benefit.

(ii) and (iii) The provincial Legislature has not made any attempt at legislation. The fate of Mr. Joshi's very desirable private Bill in the Assembly is too well known to need repetition.

Legislation enforcing payment of at least 3 months' wages, six weeks before and six weeks after child-birth, is necessary.

#### V.—Welfare.

32. (i) Welfare work is carried on in an organized manner in the Mills. Educational work began as early as 1904. Subsequently an Institute with a Reading Room and Library attached to it was built. Cinema shows were given at one time in the Institute. The chutrams were also built for workpeople to take their food. A Welfare Committee was started in 1922 and a Superintendent of Welfare Work was appointed towards the end of the year. A Workmen's Store for supplying food-stuffs to workpeople was also opened the same year. Organizations for social welfare activities were subsequently started, e.g., Athletic Association, Dramatic Society, The Literary and Debating Society, Village Committee, Co-operative Society, etc. In 1904 a Gratuity Fund was instituted. Compensation allowances are given to those who take leave. A Savings Bank has been in existence for the past few years though very few join it. Perfect attendance bonus and privilege leave are also given. Half-yearly bonus on a basis of 10 per cent. of the wages has been given during the past few years.

33. There is a separate department to look after welfare work under a Welfare Superintendent who has an Assistant and a Games Supervisor under him besides a staff. The educational work is under the special charge of two Lady Principals who are assisted by two Lady Superintendents and a staff of teachers.

34. (i) (a) Refreshments are supplied in two stalls inside the two mills. These are run by contractors; the arrangement is capable of improvement and in spite of difficulties arising from caste distinction, a canteen may be successfully organized under the supervision of workers' representatives.

There are two chutrams in front of the two mills for taking midday meal which may accommodate about 1,000 men in each. Accommodation is insufficient as is evidenced by the fact that many workpeople go to neighbouring compounds to take their food.

There are no regular creches. As women-labour is employed only on a very small scale, the question is not of importance.

(ii) The Athletic Association is in charge of all athletic activities. Provision is made for football, hockey, cricket, badminton, volley ball and other group games, ping-pong and other indoor games. There are playing fields for these games besides a gymnasium. A Games Supervisor is present on all evenings in the grounds to help in organizing group games. An Inter-Mill Athletic Sports Competition is held every year and prizes awarded to winners.

There is an institute with a Library and Reading Room where workpeople can go and spend their evenings. There is a Dramatic Society which gives monthly performances—all actors being writers and other workers. The performances of the society are very popularly attended. The theatre is situated in a portion of the C.M. chutram and is not a pucca theatre. Seating arrangement needs improvement. Admission is regulated by tickets on payment of small charges.

(iii) The workmen's store where provisions are sold to workpeople is patronized by the bulk of the workers, the monthly turn-over being over one lakh of rupees. Rice, the staple food of the workers, and other necessities are sold, generally speaking comparatively cheaply. Sales are on credit system, the value of goods supplied being deducted from the wages of the month.

Cloth is sold to workpeople in the Mills at 4 lbs. per half-year at damaged cloth rate.

A Health week and a Welfare Excursion are organized every year.

There is a Literary and Debating Society. Some of the literate section of workers take part in the debates.

35. The welfare activities in the Mills have produced very good results. In the first place, all social welfare activities are managed by Committees on which the workers and management are represented. This has resulted in creating a sense of responsibility in the workers and given the activities the character of a co-operative endeavour of the employees and employers. The athletic activities have resulted in our young workers paying greater attention to physical culture. The dramatic entertainments have served the useful purpose of occasionally relieving the monotony of industrial life with its attendant cares and anxieties. The Literary and Debating Society has catered to the intellectual development of the literate section of workers. The workmen's stores and co-operative society have helped the workers economically. Since the purchases in the stores are on credit system the average worker does not refuse to give the house-wife an indent for the necessary food stuffs for the month. The average workman is very reluctant to part with hard cash and would also spend a part of his earnings on personal luxuries. At present he gets very little to spend on such luxuries, but a regular supply of necessary food-stuffs for the family is ensured. When the welfare movement of the mills is considered as a whole we have no doubt that it has benefitted the workpeople to a considerable extent, physically, morally, intellectually, and materially.

36. (i) There is a night school section in the mills where adult workers are taught the Vernaculars, English, Arithmetic, Hygiene, etc. About 500 persons attend this section, of whom some are boys who have passed through the day school and wish to continue their studies after becoming full-timers.

(ii) The mills school which was started in 1904 was primarily intended for half-timers. Almost cent. per cent. of half-timers attend the school. Vernacular reading and writing, English, arithmetic, drawing, hygiene, etc., are taught. Boys coming from a distance are given food during midday. Attention is paid to physical exercise and also some medical aid is given when they fall ill. There are about 850 half-timers in the school.

(iii) In the day school one section is set apart for workers' children. About 650 boys are studying in this section. Subjects are the same as those for half-timers, also technical classes.

(iv) Educational facilities are fully used by workers. In fact many children of work-people have been waiting for admission for a long time.

37. We consider it very necessary that employers should institute a Pension Fund by which workpeople of approved service of, say at least 25 years, should be paid at least 25 per cent. of the monthly wages as pension, if they are declared unfit by the Doctor. Such men as have to retire prematurely should also be in a position to receive at least a small amount by way of pension. Fines and penalties may be credited to this fund.

38. A Co-operative Society was started in the Mills in 1927. It is registered under the Co-operative Societies Act. It has now on its rolls about 1,000 members who have taken up about 4,000 shares of Rs. 5 each. Loans have been disbursed to the extent of Rs. 28,000, the interest charged being only 12½ per cent. per annum as against the 60 and 70 per cent. of the moneylenders outside. The Society is now growing in popularity with the work-people.

The Workmen's Store above referred to is not run on Co-operative lines; it was originally announced that it would be run as a Co-operative Store. Work-people desire that the Store should be organised on a Co-operative basis.

## VI.—Education.

40. (i) Besides half-timers, about 650 of such boys are taught in the mills school as stated above. There are about half-a-dozen elementary schools for boys and girls opened under the compulsory Education Scheme of the Madras Corporation. There a few mission schools also.

(ii) Mill school only.

(iii) Night school is conducted by the mills where about 500 men are being taught. Voluntary organisations conduct a few night schools in the mill area.

41. No facilities exist for industrial or vocational training, except for a few in the mills school. We suggest that an industrial school in the mill area is quite necessary in the interests of the labouring population.

42. Standard of living and industrial efficiency have improved as the result of the education imparted in the mills school during the past two decades or more.

## VII.—Safety.

43. All provisions of the Factory Act regarding safety are given effect to.

44. About 200 cases of accidents falling within the Compensation Act every year.

45. (i) Owing to exhaustion on account of long hours of work and poor diet. (ii) Owing to carelessness on the part of the men. (iii) Unexpected happenings.

46. Notices are posted warning workpeople against interfering with guards and also cleaning machinery whilst in motion. When new workpeople are employed the rules are explained and their signature is taken to attest to the same. Safety-guards are provided for the machines wherever possible.

48. First-aid appliances are provided in each department and St. John's Ambulance certificate holders are put in charge of them. The medical officer attends to injuries. There is an ambulance car to take serious cases to hospitals.

49. (i) Regular inspection is held and regulations are strictly enforced.

50. Long hours and poor health affect safety adversely. Light and working conditions do not affect it in our mills.

### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. (i) As far as our workers are concerned, the Act is fully used.

(v) We consider that all employers of Factories under the Factory Act should be compelled to insure their workers to an extent sufficient to meet all contingencies which may arise from claims under the Compensation Act.

52. The scope of the Act should be extended so as to include workers in small industrial establishments, Tea, Coffee, etc., plantations and workers under contractors.

53. (i) We do not think that the provisions relating to compensation in the Act are suitable. We suggest the following scales for compensation :—(1) Where death results from the injury Rs. 2,500 and in the case of a minor Rs. 1,250. (2) Where permanent total disablement results from the injury (a) in the case of an adult Rs. 3,500, (b) in the case of a minor also Rs. 3,500. (3) Where permanent partial disablement results from the injury, schedule rates of above amounts. (4) Where a temporary disablement takes place, half-monthly payments from the date of disablement (a) in the case of an adult of a sum equal to half his monthly wages. (b) in the case of a minor also a sum equal to half his monthly wages. The waiting period of ten days should be done away with. In our mills, full wages were paid as compensation from the date of disablement before the Act came into force and such payments are still in vogue.

(ii) In the case of exceptions mentioned in Sec. 3 (b) (ii) and (iii) half of the compensation laid down for the particular class of injury should be given.

(iv) (v) Under Sec. 19 of the Act, the Commissioner can consider cases only in default of agreement by the parties and under Sec. 22 no application for the settlement of any matter by a Commissioner shall be made unless and until some question has arisen between the parties in connection therewith which they have been unable to settle by agreement. These provisions are defective in view of the illiteracy and ignorance of the Indian workers and the absence of strong trade unions to enforce the worker's rights. The Commissioner should in our opinion be empowered to initiate proceedings on his own motion, and the employers should send to the Commissioner copies of accident reports which they are obliged to send by law to the Factory Inspector.

Sec. 8 requires employers to deposit compensations with the Commissioner in all cases of fatal accidents. From the report of the working of the Act in this Presidency, we find that some employers disregard this provision. Again according to Sec. 16 all employers have to submit returns to the Commissioner specifying the number of injuries in respect of which compensation was paid by the employers, during the previous year, and the amount of such compensation together with other particulars *re* the compensation. Quite a large number of employers in this Presidency do not care to send in their returns. We are of opinion that penal provisions are quite necessary in connection with Sec. 8 and 16, and unless penal provisions are incorporated employers will not be wanting who will not comply with the above provisions.

### IX.—Hours.

#### A.—Factories.

55. Fifty-eight hours per week, 10 hours a day, except on Saturday, 8½ hours.

(ii) There is a very little difference between normal and actual hours.

(iii) Since our industry is one of continuous production, the hours are all hours worked. There are no hours when the worker is on call.

56. Six days.

57. (i) In addition to fatigue and its attendant evils (*vide* 58), there is no leisure time to attend to family affairs or take to measures for self-improvement.

58. Ten hours work imposes too great a strain on the workers and causes excessive fatigue. It also curtails rest and sleep time. To get rid of fatigue, workers resort to drinking. It also increases accidents and rate of production diminishes.

59. We think it possible to reduce the maxima to 50 hours per week and 9 hours per day, Saturday 5 hours.

60. (i) (a) One hour between 11-30 and 12-30. Not very satisfactory. (b) Satisfactory.

(ii) We have no comments to make since the workers prefer the present arrangement.

(iii) Suitable, as the law stands at present.

(iv) All Sundays, 10 general holidays and 3 special holidays for Mahomedans and 1 special holiday for Christians.

61. (i) Sunday is a holiday. Any workman who works on a Sunday is given a holiday on one of the three days immediately preceding or succeeding the Sunday.

62. We are inclined to think that in many small factories exemptions have been abused. The working of exemptions must be carefully scrutinized.

### X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

#### A.—Factories.

81. No effect, as far as our mills are concerned.

83. Yes, suitable.

84. (i) In our mills, children work for 5 hours in the day. We suggest that the law should fix 5 hours as the maximum. The provision about interval may continue as before.

(ii) No alteration is required at present.

85. We know of no such cases in our mills. The provision made in the Amended Act of 1926 to prevent this abuse is a wholesome addition to the law.

86. Facilities are given for training for apprenticeship mostly in the Engineering branch. Greater facilities should be given especially to workers' children, in textile branches.

89. (i) and (ii) Women and children work in such factories for long hours, say 12 and even 16 hours. Local Governments should make increased use of Sec. 2 (3) (b).

### XII.—Wages.

96. (i) We give below a statement of particulars of wages of some of the most important classes of workers in the mills—both as they were in 1914 and as they are at present. The figures given represent the minimum wages in each class. It must be stated that the bulk of the men having more than 7 years' service are at present receiving more than the minimum wages.

	1924.	1929.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Females .. .. .	7 13 0	11 11 6
Half-time boys .. .. .	2 5 6	5 13 9
Full-time boys .. .. .	5 9 6	11 11 6
Coolies .. .. .	8 9 6	19 9 0
Machine tenters .. .. .	10 2 6	19 14 9
Carding : various class of workers .. .. .	9 6 0	24 9 0
Spinning boys .. .. .	5 7 6	11 11 6
Spinning piece works .. .. .	Nil.	16 0 0
Winding .. .. .	8 9 6	19 9 0
<i>Piece Workers.</i>		
Roving .. .. .	9 6 0	22 0 0
Intermediate .. .. .	10 4 0	24 12 0
Slabbing .. .. .	13 2 0	33 6 0
Winding .. .. .	9 6 0	22 14 0
Weaving (Ordinary) .. .. .	13 0 4	31 2 0
Weaving (Northrop) .. .. .	—	40 13 3
<i>Engineering.</i>		
Coolies .. .. .	8 9 6	19 9 0
Blacksmiths	12 8 0	24 3 6
Carpenters		
Fitters		
Painters		
Turners		
<i>Writers.</i>		
Writers .. .. .	14 1 0	31 4 0

(ii) Six to eight annas per head per day for men and four to six annas per head per day for women.

(iii) Money value of all earnings is about 25 to 30 per cent. more than the money wages.

97. (i) and (ii) Movements in the level of wages during recent years have all been in the direction of increases. During and immediately after the war, wages were increased to some extent owing to the abnormal increase in the prices of necessities of life. There was agitation from the Labour Union side in 1920 *re* wages and as a result of the award of a Court of Enquiry appointed for the purpose wages were increased at 20 per cent. for those who drew Re. 1 and above per day and 25 per cent. for those who drew between As. 9 and Rs. 1, and 30 per cent. for those who drew less than As. 9. Besides, a rice allowance of 25 per cent. of the wages was also given and the same was consolidated with the wages in 1923 by the management. Annual increase in the wages of all workers who have not reached their maximum are given every year—though these are not to be taken as a movement in the level of wages. Occasionally a general increase is given to all including those who have reached their maximum. Such an increase of 2½ per cent. was given in January, 1928. Piece workers' rates are also increased on such occasions. We are not in a position to say with any degree of accuracy to what extent wages have increased from their 1914 level. From a comparative study of the minimum wages of different classes of workers in 1914 and 1929, we find that increases in wages have ranged between 50 per cent. and 150 per cent. The annual increases above referred to were given during the last few years on the following scale:—

1929.	<i>Writers.</i>	Rs. a. p.
Pay.—Rs. 50 and under, calculated on 26 days ; increase		0 1 0
"    over Rs. 50 to 60	"	0 1 3
"          60 to 75	"	0 1 6
"          75	"	0 2 0
	<i>Workpeople</i>	
As. 10 and under, calculated on 26 days ; increase		.. 0 0 3
Over As. 10 to Rs. 1·4 annas	"	.. 0 0 6
"    Rs. 1·4 annas to Rs. 2	"	.. 0 0 9
"    Rs. 2	"	.. 0 1 0

(iii) From particulars we have been able to gather, we find that the average cost of living for a family consisting of a husband, wife and three children in 1914, was Rs. 12·8 annas and to-day it is nothing less than Rs. 30. We have not been able to find out accurately what the average wage of workers in 1914 were. As far as enquiries go, it was between Rs. 9 and Rs. 10 and at present is between Rs. 22 and Rs. 25.

98. About 2½ per cent. of the wages.

99. Payment only in cash.

101. By employers.

102. One and a quarter day's wages for Sunday work (7 hours) ; for overtime on working days 1¼ hour's wages for every one hour.

103. No real "standardisation" of wages. Employers have fixed some standard rates but workers have had nothing to do with it.

104. Increase of wages has resulted in a supply of labour much above the demand.

105. We think it advisable and possible to establish Trade Boards to make detailed enquiries into the wages and conditions of workers in at least a few industries in which very low wages are paid and to introduce a Minimum Wage Bill for such industries.

106. (i) Fining has been considerably reduced in the mills. Average amount per month is ·02 per cent. of the wages.

(ii) Penalty is levied for absence. Every man who absents himself from work without leave has not only to forfeit his wages for the day but to pay a penalty at a fixed rate, i.e., at the same rate at which allowance is paid for medical leave.

(iii) Fines are said to be credited to the gratuity fund.

(iv) As fining exists to a great extent in many factories, legislation should be made, limiting the amount of fines permissible for any offence or group of offences within a given period of time, and preventing the use of fines for any other purpose except for the benefit of the workers.

107. (i) Wages are paid once every month. The bulk of the men are paid for daily work. There are some men who are paid on monthly rates.

(ii) Ten to sixteen days after the period.

(iii) (a) As far as our mills are concerned we cannot say for certain whether the workpeople would prefer any system to the monthly payment system. The evils of the monthly payment system are not felt owing to the existence of a workmen's store from which workpeople purchase their food-stuffs for the month. But the evil effects of monthly payment on labour in general are such that legislation would be desirable for fixing payments on a fortnightly basis.

(b) Legislation is quite necessary for this purpose. The system of keeping the wages in the employer's hands for 2 or 3 weeks after the period gives an undue advantage to the employers and puts the workmen to great losses.

(iv). We cannot conceive of any circumstances in which workmen would willingly forego their wages. Wages should be paid to workers even though claimed after the lapse of a long period. Such wages, if any, as are not claimed should be utilized for the benefit of the workers.

108. At least 75 per cent. of the people are indebted. On an average, indebtedness is to the extent of 200 per cent. of the monthly wages.

109. (i) A gratuity fund was started in the mills in 1904 on a non-contributory basis. At the end of the 1st ten years' continuous service a sum equal to 5 per cent. of the total wages of each employee is paid to him; at the end of seven years after completion of the 1st fund period a sum of equal to 7½ per cent. of the total wages of the period is paid as the 2nd fund. On the completion of five years' service after the receipt of the 2nd fund a sum equal to 10 per cent. of the total wages of the period is paid as the 3rd fund. On the completion of another five years' period the 4th fund is paid also at 10 per cent. of the wages. If conditions of work are satisfactory the management doubles the amount paid every half year.

In cases of death occurring after two years' service the amount standing to the credit of the employee in his fund is paid to his nominee. In cases of medical unfitness, a proportionate amount is paid, but only after five years' service.

Half-yearly bonus is paid at 10 per cent. of the wages of every six months at the discretion of the employers. This has been paid regularly during the past several half-years. It serves the purpose of clearing debts so far contracted in whole or in part.

(ii) There is a bonus on production in weaving departments, but not more than a dozen men get it. We would suggest the institution of profit sharing schemes wherever possible.

110. (i) Fifteen days' privilege leave with pay after five years' service, 20 days' doctor leave with compassionate allowance, all Sundays, 10 days holidays. Holidays and privilege leave are almost fully taken but about 25 per cent. take doctor leave.

(ii) Generally speaking employers do not stand in the way of workers' taking such leave.

(iii) We know of no instance of back-lying-wages being lost by workers since workers take only about a month's leave.

111. We consider it very desirable to include the Fair Wages Clause in public contracts making the scope of the same wide enough to cover not only all public works involving expenditure of public funds but also all Government contracts and orders for the manufacture of supplies to Government.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. Efficiency has increased at least 1½ times during the last ten years.

113. We have no experience of foreign workers but from reports of their efficiency we conclude that theirs is higher than our efficiency.

114. (i) Migration plays no part at all as regards efficiency as far as our mill workers are concerned, since there is practically no migration.

(ii) This may, to some extent, affect efficiency.

(iii) Ditto.

(iv) This may also affect efficiency though we cannot say for certain.

(v) The poor physique of Indian workers is one of the most important reasons for their comparatively low efficiency. The average Indian worker is a weakling due to lack of proper food and long working hours and his efficiency must naturally be lower than that of the foreign worker who takes better food, rest, etc.

(vi) The poor health of the average worker due to the prevalence of tropical diseases and want of facilities for best medical treatment affects efficiency to a considerable extent.

(vii) As education has been spreading amongst our workers, efficiency has been increasing. The illiteracy of the large number of workers is a factor affecting efficiency.

(viii) Low standards of living also affects efficiency.

(ix) The hot and enervating climate of India is not helpful to efficiency and this is one of the important reasons for our comparative inefficiency.

115. (i) Reduction in working hours in the past has not materially affected production. We are of opinion that if working hours are reduced, production will still be kept up. Due to fatigue, workers do not work intensively during the concluding hours of the day.

(ii) Improvements in other working conditions will result in increased production.

(iii) and (iv) We have no doubt that money spent on improving the health of the workers will be repaid to the employers in the form of increased production. Dirty dwellings and life in insanitary surroundings affect the working life to a great extent and employers can do nothing better to increase efficiency than to provide decent houses, facilities for medical treatment, etc.

(vi) If wages are increased production will increase and if decreased, production will go down. Wages produce a great moral effect on the worker.

(vii) Factory laws promoting the health and comforts of the workers increase production.

(viii) The present dietary of our workers is not helpful to sustained work. An improved dietary will certainly increase production.

(ix) Use of alcohol and drugs affects production adversely.

(x) In the case of our workers, fatigue plays a very important part in production. If methods for reducing fatigue could be devised, production is sure to increase.

116. (i) Employers should get into closer touch with workers and make special efforts to understand and remove the causes of discontent. By freely discussing matters with them and ensuring fair treatment in the matter of wages and other conditions of service and by convincing the workers that unless their efficiency is increased, industry cannot be sustained, they can induce workers to put forth increased efforts.

Organizations for the peaceful settlement of differences would also conduce to increase efficiency.

(ii) A fair piece-rate wage bonus on production and other profit-sharing schemes will be helpful in increasing production.

(iii) Better housing and sanitary arrangements which would improve the health of the workers would also tend to increase production.

(iv) Intensive welfare work in which every worker feels that personal interest is taken in his welfare will go a great way to increase production.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (ii) Two unions as far as these mills are concerned.

118. (ii) Generally speaking, workers have benefited by organizations. But it must be admitted that workers have also suffered unnecessarily as a result of uncalled-for strikes.

119. (i) This union has made provision for benefits such as unemployment, death and legal assistance.

(ii) Representations are made to the employers re: grievances of workpeople as to the conditions of service, etc. In cases of dismissals, etc., employers have been approached and dismissed men re-instated or notices cancelled.

120. (i) (Vide special note on page 223).

(ii) This union was as stated above started with the purpose of establishing the right of the workers to control their own organizations. Since it was the first time that such an idea was propagated among the workers, outsiders who have been controlling worker's organizations led a crusade against this union and poisoned the minds of illiterate workers by saying that this union was brought into existence by the employers. A section of our workpeople are still carried away by such pernicious propaganda but we have about 2,000 members who have appreciated the work of this union and its activities. The union stands for the principle that workers should control their own organizations and we have an executive committee composed of elected representatives of the workers. We do not discard the advice of outsiders and in fact with a view to receiving their help and co-operation have formed an advisory committee.



(iii) The employers have recognized this union and every facility is given to the committee to make representations direct to the managing agents or the management. We have made several such representations on behalf of individuals and groups of workers and the employers have met such representations on many occasions.

121. (i) The Act has been only partially utilized. The number of unions registered under the Act is still few.

(ii) Trade unions have got a status and position in the eyes of the Government and the public and they are in a position to deal on equal terms with employers. The funds of the union are safe from inroads of interested parties.

(iii) Mutual aid benefit funds should not be liable to be attached for the tortious acts of the union officers. Only general funds should be liable.

122. (i) By direct representation to the employers; also by representation of the union on the welfare committee.

(ii) No attempts have to our knowledge been made in this direction. We consider it quite necessary that employers and employed should make attempts at co-operation in order to increase efficiency of production.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. (Vide statement on page 224.)

124. (i) No conciliation and arbitration machinery has operated before. We consider it desirable to establish conciliation board and arbitration committee.

(ii) Labour commissioner has helped to settle disputes.

(iv) Only the welfare committee as far as the mills are concerned.

(v) Opportunity is given to workpeople to make representations through the welfare committee and this union's executive committee.

(vi) Trade boards and joint industrial councils can and must be established in the country in order to avert strikes and lock-outs.

125. The second part of the Act which contains penal provision for striking work in public utility concerns without one month's notice is of a one-sided character. Workers are penalised but employers are not touched; and there are no special privileges given to such workers. Moreover no provision is made for the establishment of a machinery for negotiation.

The third part of the Act relating to illegal strikes and lock-outs is also harmful to the interests of the labour movement in the country.

126. (ii) The Government are anxious to end industrial troubles when they break out. Their action in the interest of public peace is often taken by labour as helping employers.

#### XVII.—Administration.

133. The Provincial Legislature does not tackle labour problems at all. The central legislature has generally been sympathetic, though in a few cases like Maternity Bill, Weekly Payment Bill, etc., their attitude was not quite sympathetic.

136. In the Madras Government, there is a special officer called the Labour Commissioner who tries to settle differences between employers and employees. But he is saddled with so much of other work that he is not able to devote his whole attention and time to the labour question.

138. Very few workers are conversant with factory legislation.

139. (i), (ii) and (iii) From the number of factories that are not inspected, every year, we are led to think that the staff is inadequate.

The factory inspection staff should have men with medical qualifications also. The present arrangement of Public Health Department inspecting the "Health" side is not satisfactory. Women inspectors also should be appointed to supervise conditions of women labour.

(iv) Prosecutions do not produce the desired effect since the magistrates take a lenient view more often than otherwise. Unless maximum penalty is imposed at this stage, the desired effect would not be produced.

#### XVIII.—Intelligence.

143. (i), (ii) and (iii)  
144. } No reliable statistics are available,  
145. (i) and (ii) }  
as far as this Presidency is concerned. It is desirable that a *Labour Gazette* like the one issued by the Bombay Government be issued by every local government in which accurate details of cost of living and working conditions, etc., are detailed from time to time.

*Trade Combinations.*

120. It was in 1918, that the first trade union was started in Madras. It was a union primarily intended for the benefit of the employees of the textile mills. Under the leadership of Mr. B. P. Wadia, "The Madras Labour Union" was responsible for the improvement of the conditions of the workers to some extent.

In 1920, Messrs. Binny & Co., instituted a Civil Case against Mr. Wadia and nine others who formed themselves into a lock-out committee; Mr. Wadia at the conclusion of the lock-out left India and since then the affairs of the union were not managed in a satisfactory manner.

In 1921, as a result of a series of departmental strikes by boys in the spinning and carding departments a great industrial trouble occurred in these mills. The workers were out for a period of more than five months and suffered untold hardships. Murder, incendiarism and other acts of violence were resorted to and what was an industrial trouble in the beginning grew subsequently into a communal fight. There were complaints that the funds of the union were mis-spent, no proper relief was given to the men on strike and no proper accounts of the funds of the union were rendered. The troubles ended in October, 1921, the workers resuming work unconditionally.

After the mills were reopened the management set up a welfare committee in the mills. The union was defunct. The welfare committee was the only place for workpeople to ventilate their grievances.

In about 1925, the same set of outsiders who practically managed the affairs of the union before the strike, resumed their activities. The response from the workpeople was very meagre, since they apprehended that disastrous results would ensue by their joining the union. Some of the responsible employees of the mills thought it their duty to help in organizing the union on proper lines and therefore went to the meetings of the union but no proper opportunity was given to them to express their views. When they subsequently convened a meeting to acquaint the workpeople with their views, they were assaulted. Finding all their attempts at reforming the old union unsuccessful they set up a fresh organization. Agitation was immediately started and the minds of the workpeople were poisoned against this union. Unfounded allegations such as that the union was brought into existence by the employers were made against it and intimidation and threats and even assaults were freely resorted to in order to frustrate our activities. The union was formally started on the 19th March, 1926, in a meeting held under the presidency of the Honourable Mr. Ratnaswami, then president of the Madras Legislative Council. The purpose for which this union was started are as follows:—

(1) Since it was detrimental to the interests of workpeople in these mills, as they were then situated, to boycott as the Madras Labour Union wanted, the welfare activities of the management in the mills, it was considered necessary to co-operate and enjoy their benefits as far as possible.

(2) The workers should organize themselves and improve their conditions without having recourse to strikes since they had had enough of strikes for good, bad and indifferent reasons and enough of starvation in the past. It was feared that the activities of the Madras Labour Union would again result in uncalled-for strikes.

(3) The workers did not want to be exploited by any political party. The Madras Labour Union was then allied to one political party whose views they propagated from the union platform.

(4) The affairs of the union should as far as possible be looked after by the workers themselves who would no doubt receive the co-operation and help of responsible leaders from outside and its funds should be controlled by the workers. This could not be done in the Madras Labour Union as then constituted. Despite abuses, vilification and even assaults on our members and workers no less than 3 or 4 thousand members joined the union. Realizing that a division in the ranks of labour was detrimental to our interests, attempts were made by us to bring about a rapprochement with the Madras Labour Union, but Mr. Shiva Rao, the president of the Madras Labour Union, was resolved that he should be the leader and since we were not convinced that it was to the interests of the workers in these mills that he should be the leader there was no possibility of any reconciliation being effected. The union was recognized by the employers and was registered under the Trade Union Act as No. 1 Union in the Madras Presidency. It has a membership of about 2,000 and its funds have come to Rs. 1,500. Owing to the initial disadvantages we had to overcome in working up an institution on the principle that workers should control their own organization, we have not been able to turn out as substantial work as we would have otherwise done. We are convinced that the formation of this union has not only exerted a beneficent influence on the conduct and organization of the Madras Labour Union, but it has also opened the eyes of the vast majority of our workpeople to the necessity and advantages of workers controlling their own organizations.

**STRIKE STATEMENT.**

	Causes.	Duration and character.	Nature and method of settlement.	Loss to industry and labourers.
I. Trouble. (Lock-out)	Weavers refusing to turn out to work at 6.15 a.m., according to the notice of the management at 6.15 a.m.	28-10-18 to 30-10-18. Men were quiet.	On 31-10-18 the men resumed work and turned out at 6.15 a.m.	30,000 working days. About Rs. 15,000.
II. Trouble. (Lock-out)	Assault on mill officers and the management's insistence on the names of assailants being given, which the workers did not do.	27-11-18 to 16-12-18.	On 17-12-18 men resumed work on the advice of Mr. C. F. Andrews. Seven days' pay was granted as an act of grace. The management refused to take back dismissed men.	160,000 working days lost. About Rs. 80,000 wages.
III. Trouble. (Lock-out)	Grievances re wages, bonus, privilege leave, holidays, etc.	23-3-20 to 26-3-20.	Through the intervention of Labour Commissioner. Increases, rice allowance, holidays, privilege leave, etc., granted as a result of the "award" given by the Court of Enquiry.	40,000 working days. Rs. 20,000.
IV. Trouble. Lock-out in B.M. and sympathetic strike in C.M. (24th January, 1921, to 26th January, 1921.)	Owing to an acting jobber not being given a side jobber's place, which the workers thought was due to his connection with the union and management said was due to there being seniors.	20th October, 1920, to 26th January, 1921. Assaults, shooting, etc., The company filed civil suit against the lock-out committee and injunction order was issued.	Evidently by mediation. Thirteen men finally dismissed, civil case withdrawn on Mr. Wadia agreeing to leave the union.	390,000 days. Rs. 3,95,000.
V. Trouble. Lock-out in C.M. Buckingham Mill sympathetic strike 20th June.	Departmental strikes of carding and spinning boys due to a spirit of indiscipline.	25-5-21 to middle of October, 1921. Sympathetic strike in June. Murders, incendiarism, assaults, etc. The trouble assumed the character of a communal fight. The peace of the city was considerably disturbed.	Unconditional surrender.	1,100,000 days. About Rs. 10 lakhs.

MEMORANDUM ON THE RELATION OF FOOD TO THE PHYSICAL EFFICIENCY OF INDIAN WORKERS, BY BREVET-COLONEL R. McCARRISON, C.I.E., K.H.P., M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.C.P., I.M.S., DIRECTOR, NUTRITIONAL RESEARCH, I.R.F.A., PASTEUR INSTITUTE, COONOR, SOUTH INDIA.

#### IV. Health.

23. *General Health of Workers.*—(iv) *Dietary* and (v) *Physique*.—The level of physical efficiency of Indian workers is, above all else, a matter of food. No other single factor—race, climate, etc.—has so profound an influence on their capacity to sustain arduous labour and prolonged muscular exertion. Nowhere in the world is this outstanding influence of food more conspicuously illustrated than in India. As we pass from “the north-west regions of the Punjab down the Gangetic Plain to the coast of Bengal, there is a gradual fall in stature, body-weight, stamina and efficiency of the people. In accordance with this decline in many characteristics it is of the utmost significance that there is an accompanying gradual fall in the nutritive value of the dietaries, and more especially in the average level of protein metabolism attained by the people of the Punjab, United Provinces, Behar and Bengal.” Lt.-Col. D. McCay of the Indian Medical Service reached these conclusions some 20 years ago as a result of his nutritional researches; my own investigations have served to confirm their accuracy. This decline in physical efficiency extends also to inhabitants of the southern and western parts of the Indian Peninsula. It depends almost entirely on the gradually diminishing value of the food with respect to:—(a) The amount and quality of its proteins, (b) the quality of the cereal grains forming the staple article of the diet, (c) the content and the quality of the fats in the food (d) the vitamin and mineral content of the food.

In addition to these questions of quality there is the further one of quantity. In regard to the latter little need be said since it is obvious that if a worker is not getting enough to eat he cannot be physically efficient. Unfortunately, the numbers who do not get enough to eat may be counted by the thousand.

(a) *The amount and quality of proteins.*—While there is some difference of opinion as to the amount of protein needed by man under varying climatic conditions it is generally agreed that for one doing moderately hard work the protein fraction of the food should not be less than 100 grams per day. For those doing very hard work it should be considerably more; it invariably is more when the individual doing the work can secure it. It is principally on protein that the organism depends for muscular development, muscular and nervous energy and efficiency. The protein most suitable for these purposes is that derived from animal sources—flesh foods, milk, cheese, fish, game, poultry. But these sources of protein are expensive and it is not needful that all the protein in the diet should be derived from them. It suffices that one-third of the total protein be derived from animal sources, the remaining two-thirds being made up from vegetable sources. It is a canon of Nutritional Science—so far, that is to say, as the study of this Science has progressed—that vegetable proteins *per se* cannot fully satisfy the physiological needs of the body; the requisite proportion of animal protein “leaveneth the whole lump”. There is, perhaps, one exception to this rule: the protein contained in *soya-bean* is of relatively high “biological value,” it is also rich in fats, and as a source of these two essentials it appears to be unsurpassed by any other vegetable food. For these reasons it is largely used in Japan and China. Its production on a large scale in this country, its supply to the workers at a cheap rate, and the popularizing of its use, are matters which should engage the serious attention of the authorities concerned; for any efficient substitute for animal protein is a matter of great importance to the Indian worker. In this connection it is necessary also to emphasize the importance of increasing the production of milk and milk-products throughout India; for there is no source of protein (not to mention other essential food substances contained in milk) which is so admirably suited to the needs of the Indian people. Fish-culture is another very important means of increasing the protein supply of a country in which the use of meat is looked upon with such disfavour by so many of the inhabitants.

(b) *The nutritive value of cereal grains.*—The nutritive value of the cereal grains used in India varies considerably. The basis of the diet of every worker in India is a cereal grain of one kind or another. No cereal is in itself a complete food; and without adequate supplementation by other food-materials it cannot support man in physical well-being. All cereals are deficient in certain food-essentials (suitable proteins, calcium, iron, sodium, phosphorus and some of the vitamins). Some are more deficient in these substances than others; and according as the supplementary articles of diet serve or do not serve to make good the defects of the staple cereal so will the diet as a whole be “complete” or “incomplete”. (A “complete diet”

is one containing everything needful for physiological processes). The cereal grains of higher nutritive quality are wheat and certain millets (*ragi, cambu*); those of lower nutritive quality are maize and rice. Apart from differences in their chemical constitution the food-value of these cereals varies also with the manner of their preparation for human consumption: thus in the manufacture of white flour from whole wheat the final product loses much of the nutritive value of the original grain. Unfortunately, the use of white flour is rapidly increasing in India: ready made loaves are easy to procure and they save the trouble of grinding the whole wheat into *atta* and making *chapattis* therefrom; but the increasing use of white flour means that the users of it start to build up their dietaries with a staple of much lower nutritive quality than *atta*. If their health and physical fitness are not to suffer they must spend more money on supplementary articles of diet, in order to make good the deficiencies of white flour, than if they had started with the more nutritious whole wheat flour (*atta*). Fortunately, certain others of the cereals (the millets) cannot be made into refined flours and must be used whole or after grinding into a coarse flour. They thus preserve the nutritive qualities with which nature endowed them. Whole wheat is too heating for use as the sole cereal in the southern and hotter parts of India, though ideal for the northern areas and an excellent addition to the rice-eater's diet. One reason why wheat is of higher nutritive value than certain other cereals—such, for example, as rice—is that the "biological value" of its proteins is higher, and these proteins are absorbed from the intestinal tract in greater proportion.

Whole rice—when properly supplemented—is an excellent food, well suited to the use of dwellers in those parts of India where it is grown. It is the staple article of diet of about one-quarter of India's inhabitants. But it is subjected to a number of processes before use by the consumer, all of which reduce—some to a dangerous degree—its already sparse supply of certain essential nutriments. It is parboiled, milled or polished; often all three: and white polished rice like white, refined flour is thus deprived of much of its protein, and nearly all of its vitamins and essential salts. Home-pounded, unpolished rice is the most nutritious; polished rice the least nutritious; while parboiled rice occupies an intermediate position between these two extremes. The quality of rice-proteins is low; their quantity is small; and owing to the large amount of rice which must be eaten to provide a satisfying meal, absorption of food-essentials at the intestinal threshold is greatly interfered with and fermentation processes, harmful to the individual, are thus set up in the intestine. But used in moderate quantity and adequately supplemented with other food-materials it is a very useful constituent of the diet. All too frequently it is not adequately supplemented with other foods.

*Cereals used in various parts of India.*—The chief agricultural staples of northern India are wheat and barley. They occupy nearly 60 per cent. of the whole food-producing area in the United Provinces. In the Punjab wheat is a still more important crop. It is also extensively grown in parts of Central India, northern Deccan and Bombay, and in these places as well as in northern India it forms the chief article of diet of the inhabitants. Wheat is extensively used by the more well-to-do classes in those areas, barley by the poorer classes; while certain races use both rice and wheat. In lower Bengal, parts of Madras and Bombay, in Burma and in districts where the conditions of soil and climate are suitable to its abundant production, rice forms the ordinary food of the people. Throughout the rest of India the staple cereals are the millets, some of which, especially *cambu*, are very nutritious grains. Broadly speaking the physical efficiency of Indian races is greatest in wheat-eaters, least in rice-eaters, and intermediate in those whose staple article of diet is one of the millets. The varying nutritive quality of the several cereals thus plays a considerable, though not a predominant, part in bringing about this result.

(c) *The quality of the fats in the food.*—The content and the quality of the fats in the food is a matter of great importance; not so much from the point of view of their fuel value—for in this respect vegetable fat is as good as animal fat—but because animal fats contain two very important vitamins (A and D), the insufficiency of which in the food leads to very serious consequences (*vide infra*). It is principally to avoid these consequences that the quantity of animal fats must be maintained at a certain level. The proportion of animal to vegetable fats should be about 1 to 1. The great sources of animal fats available for non-meat-eaters are milk, butter and ghee. Meat-eaters derive them from the fatty parts of animals. In general the quantity of animal fats in the dietaries of the Indian people diminishes steadily from the north to the south of India; and this diminution is an important contributory cause of diminished physical efficiency.

(d) *The vitamin-content of the food.*—In addition to those food essentials (proteins and mineral salts) whose function it is to build and repair the body-tissues and to

assist in the provision of muscular energy, there are other substances called *vitamins* which add little or nothing to the weight of these essentials, since they are present in such minute amounts, but without which the normal chemical processes of the body are impossible. They are, so to say, the "spark" that ignites the fire of nutrition. Of these there are known to be five: Vitamin A, which is abundant in milk, butter and ghee (or ought to be if the cows are properly fed); Vitamin B (lately divided into B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>) which exists abundantly in yeast and in whole cereal grains, but not in the refined products of these grains (such as white flour and polished rice); Vitamin C, which is present in all green leafy vegetables and in fruit; Vitamin D, which exists in certain animal fats; and Vitamin E, which exists in meat and cereal grains. Of these five vitamins the really important ones for India are A, B and C; for besides being present in certain animal fats Vitamin D is generated by the action of sunlight on the skin and there is no lack of sunshine in India. It is only under Purdah conditions, where sunlight is excluded, that the insufficient supply of this vitamin becomes of importance to the women and children. The risks of vitamin D deficiency in India are, therefore, trifling to castes not observing the Purdah system. Insufficiency of vitamin E—that vitamin which is responsible for the efficiency of the reproductive functions—is not a matter of any concern to India. Clearly the workers get enough of it. There is in general a gradual reduction in the total vitamin-content of the food of the people as we pass from the north to the south of India; this reduction plays a conspicuous part in lowering their physical efficiency and brings into active operation the factor of "deficiency disease" vide (29) *Disease*;

*Physical efficiency of different Indian races relative to their food.*—With this preliminary survey of the main factors in food responsible for physical efficiency let us see how certain races in India fare with respect to the content of these factors in their national diets:—

The Sikh, the Pathan, the Rajput and other races of northern India are all wheat-eaters, and some of them great milk-drinkers; while vegetables and fruit enter largely into their dietaries. Their food thus contains, when they can get the food they want, abundance of those things that matter from the point of view of energy and physical endurance. In conformity with the constitution of their dietaries they are amongst the finest races not only of India but of mankind. But it is only in so far as members of these races adhere to their complete national dietaries that they retain these characters. Once the Sikh or Punjabi agriculturalist fails to consume the quantities of milk and milk-products to which his forefathers were accustomed, he rapidly deteriorates in health and physical efficiency. As we pass from the north to the west, east and south, rice begins gradually to replace wheat, and so long as milk and milk-products are consumed in sufficient amounts or a sufficiency of animal proteins and fats from other sources are ingested, together with fresh vegetable foods, there is no dietetic reason for physical deterioration. But when we reach Bengal and Madras we find that the protein ingestion, especially that of animal protein, is in general reduced below the level at which optimum physical efficiency is possible. The consumption, too, of animal fats is reduced to a low level while the vitamin-content of the food has fallen to a dangerous degree. In conformity with these changes in dietetic habits—some of them imposed upon the people by their circumstances of life—a marked fall in the level of physical efficiency is at once apparent. In short it may be said that *according as the animal protein, the animal fat and the vitamin-content of the food diminish so do the physical efficiency and health of the Indian worker diminish*. This truth will probably be best appreciated by reference to an experiment carried out in my laboratory some years ago, with the object of determining the relative value of certain national diets of India: albino rats, as is customary in nutritional work, were employed in this test; and lest it be objected that results observed in rats are not applicable to mankind, it is necessary to say that this is not so: rats resemble men in being omnivorous and in the chemical nature of their nutritional processes; their cycle of development takes place about 30 times as quickly as in man, so that the experiment about to be described, which lasted 140 days, corresponds to the observation of human beings, under the same experimental conditions, for a period of nearly 12 years. Groups of 20 young rats of precisely the same age, sex distribution and body-weight were caged in large, roomy cages under precisely similar conditions of life. To one group the diet, as prepared and cooked by the Sikhs, was given; to another that of the Pathans; to a third that of the Maharattas; and so on through Goorkhas, Bengalese and Kanarese to Madrassis. The results, on the eightieth day of the experiment, are shown in the accompanying chart\* ; from which it will be seen that the various groups, starting so to say from scratch, ranged themselves in the following order of growth. First came the Sikhs, Pathans and Maharattas, one after the other but in a close bunch, followed at a considerable interval by the Goorkhas; then came the Kanarese and the Bengalis, followed at a distance by the Madrassis. At the end

\* Not printed.

of 140 days the animals in each group were weighed and an average taken of their aggregate weight. The rat which conformed most closely to the average for its particular group was photographed side by side with the average rats from the other groups. The accompanying photograph is the result.\*

*Composition of standard diet.*—For a man doing a good day's work the composition of the diet should be as follows:—

Proteins : 100 grams, of which not less than 33 should be animal protein.

Fats : 80 grams, of which not less than 40 should be animal fats.

Carbohydrates : 500 grams.

The whole yielding 3,200 calories.

Recent observations in the Congo have fixed somewhat similar figures for *hard work* : 120 grams of protein, 90 grams of fats, 550 grams of carbohydrates, yielding 3,500 calories.

During the hot weather, and in the hotter parts of India throughout the year, the fats may be reduced to 50 or 60 grams, provided the major part of them be derived from animal sources ; the carbohydrates being increased proportionately in accordance with the amount of work to be done. While in general the average protein-content of the food should be 100 grams, it will often have to be considerably increased according to the nature of the work and the climate. Thus, in the northern parts of India more proteins are needed ; while in the south of India a fair grade of physical efficiency can be ensured on diets containing approximately 75 grams of protein, 50 grams of fats and 450 grams of carbohydrates.

*Examples of well-balanced diets.*—Examples of well-balanced diets, constructed on these estimations, are appended. The diets of Indian workers are rarely so well-balanced as these.

(a) Non-vegetarian rice-eater's diet (Madraasi).

	Quantity in ozs.	In grams.		
		Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Unpolished rice .. .. .	20	46.00	1.70	446.00
Dhal .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	3.25	0.50	8.10
Fish .. .. .	1	5.50	1.15	—
Mutton .. .. .	$1\frac{1}{2}$	8.96	2.97	—
Ghee .. .. .	1	—	23.10	—
Milk .. .. .	6	5.64	6.12	8.16
Buttermilk .. .. .	10	8.50	1.40	13.60
Vegetable oil .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	7.00	—
Vegetables .. .. .	4	2.80	0.16	32.60
Cocoanut .. .. .	1	1.61	14.31	7.90
Fruits .. .. .	2	0.90	0.06	4.52
Jaggery (raw sugar) .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	—	12.50
Total .. .. .	—	83.16	58.47	533.38
Animal origin .. .. .	—	28.60	34.74	—
Less 10 per cent. for waste	—	8.31	5.84	53.33
Balance .. .. .	—	74.85	52.63	480.05
Calories .. .. .	—	306.885	489.459	1,968.205
Total calories, round numbers	—	—	—	2,765

\* Not printed.

## (b) Lacto-vegetarian rice-eater's diet (Madraasi).

	Quantity in ozs.	In grams.		
		Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Unpolished rice .. .. .	20	46.00	1.70	446.00
Dhal .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	3.25	0.50	8.10
Ghee .. .. .	1	—	23.10	—
Milk .. .. .	12	11.28	12.24	16.32
Buttermilk .. .. .	20	17.00	2.80	27.20
Vegetable oil .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	7.00	—
Vegetables .. .. .	4	2.80	0.16	32.60
Cocoanut .. .. .	1	1.61	14.31	7.90
Fruits .. .. .	2	0.90	0.06	4.52
Jaggery .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	0.04	—	12.50
Total .. .. .	—	82.88	61.87	555.14
Animal origin .. .. .	—	28.28	38.14	—
Less 10 per cent. for waste ..	—	8.28	6.18	55.51
Balance .. .. .	—	74.60	55.69	499.63
Calories .. .. .	—	305.86	517.917	2,048.483
Total calories, round numbers	—	—	—	2,872

## (c) Non-vegetarian ragi-eater's diet (Kanarese).

	Quantity in ozs.	In grams.		
		Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Ragi (Millet) .. .. .	20	55.60	9.20	467.00
Mutton .. .. .	2	11.94	3.96	—
Ghee .. .. .	1	—	23.10	—
Milk .. .. .	6	5.64	6.12	8.16
Buttermilk .. .. .	10	8.50	1.40	13.60
Fish .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	2.75	0.08	—
Vegetable oil .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	14.00	—
Vegetables .. .. .	4	2.80	0.16	32.60
Dhal .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	1.62	0.25	4.05
Fruits .. .. .	2	0.90	0.06	4.52
Jaggery .. .. .	$\frac{1}{2}$	0.04	—	12.50
Total .. .. .	—	89.79	58.33	542.43
Animal origin .. .. .	—	28.83	34.66	—
Less 10 per cent. for waste ..	—	8.97	5.83	54.24
Balance .. .. .	—	80.82	52.50	488.19
Calories .. .. .	—	331.4	488.3	2,001.6
Total calories, round numbers	—	—	—	2,821



## (d) Wheat-eater's diet (Punjabi agriculturist).

	Quantity in ozs.	In grams.		
		Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Atta (whole wheat flour) .. ..	20	78.00	10.80	407.00
Dhal .. ..	1	6.50	0.99	16.20
Vegetables .. ..	10	3.10	0.60	5.40
Sugar .. ..	2	0.16	—	50.00
Curds .. ..	4	5.60	4.00	3.20
Butter .. ..	2½	—	51.70	—
Milk .. ..	20	18.80	20.40	27.20
Buttermilk .. ..	40	34.00	5.60	54.40
Total .. ..	—	146.16	100.09	563.40
Animal origin .. ..	—	58.40	87.70	—
Less 10 per cent. waste .. ..	—	14.61	10.00	56.34
Balance .. ..	—	131.55	90.09	506.06
Calories .. ..	—	539.4	837.8	2,074.8
Total calories, round numbers	—	—	—	3,452

## (e) Maharatta diet (Mixed grains, etc.).

	Quantity in ozs.	In grams.		
		Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Rice .. ..	10	23.00	0.85	223.00
Wheat .. ..	6	23.40	3.24	122.10
Dhal .. ..	2	13.00	1.98	32.40
Cambu .. ..	4	14.56	5.52	77.60
Vegetables .. ..	6	4.20	0.24	48.90
Sugar .. ..	1	—	—	26.89
Vegetable oil .. ..	1	—	28.00	—
Mutton .. ..	2	11.94	3.96	—
Curds .. ..	4	5.60	4.00	3.20
Buttermilk .. ..	20	17.00	2.80	27.20
Milk .. ..	6	5.64	8.12	8.16
Ghee .. ..	1	—	23.10	—
Total .. ..	—	118.34	79.81	569.45
Animal origin .. ..	—	40.18	39.98	—
Less 10 per cent. for waste .. ..	—	11.83	7.98	56.94
Balance .. ..	—	106.51	71.83	512.51
Calories .. ..	—	436.7	668.0	2,101
Total calories, round numbers	—	—	—	3,206

## (f) Bengali diet.

	Quantity in ozs.	In grams.		
		Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Polished rice .. .. .	10	17.90	1.30	260.90
Atta .. .. .	6	23.40	3.24	122.10
Dhal .. .. .	4	3.25	0.50	8.10
Vegetables .. .. .	4	2.80	0.16	32.60
Vegetable oil .. .. .	1	—	28.00	—
Sugar .. .. .	1	—	—	28.30
Fish .. .. .	4	22.00	4.60	—
Meat .. .. .	2	14.40	1.50	—
Eggs .. .. .	2	7.58	5.94	—
Milk .. .. .	16	15.04	16.32	21.76
Butter or ghee .. .. .	1	—	23.10	—
Total .. .. .	—	106.37	84.66	473.76
Animal origin .. .. .	—	59.02	51.46	—
Less 10 per cent. for waste ..	—	10.63	8.46	47.37
Balance .. .. .	—	95.74	76.20	426.39
Calories .. .. .	—	393	709	1,748
Total calories, round numbers	—	—	—	2,850

29.-Disease—(i) *Malnutrition as a cause of disease.*—Malnutrition is the most potent of all disease-producing agencies in India; the most potent of all agencies impairing the physical efficiency of Indian workers. It has been said, in evidence before this Commission, that malaria holds pride of place as India's greatest foe, and so far as figures are concerned they are impressive enough, both as regards its incidence and power to kill. But I venture to think that *one major* reason why malaria has gained such a strangle-hold on this country is because of the malnourished condition of the multitudes it afflicts. A census of the malaria-stricken with respect to their standard of living would, I feel sure, provide much instructive information; such records, in this regard, as do exist point to the important influence of malnutrition in fostering malaria. And if we consider another endemic disease, kala-azar, which is so prevalent in certain parts of India, do we not also find that it reaches its greatest pitch of prevalence after periods of famine or following in the wake of some debilitating pandemic? Leprosy, also, is found to increase in prevalence from the north to the south of India in a manner very suggestive of a relationship to the increasing incidence of malnutrition. A precise study of the relationship of malnutrition to endemic disease in this country is much needed.

There are two aspects of malnutrition:—(a) The insufficient consumption of food, and (b) the effects of consuming food which though sufficient in quantity is lacking in quality. It is with regard to the second that I am chiefly concerned. The effects of malnutrition may be considered under two headings: general effects and specific effects.

(ii) *General effects of malnutrition.*—The general effects include poverty of the blood; it is low in nitrogenous constituents and total solids, deficient in haemoglobin, and is in consequence a poor supplier to the tissues of those nutriments—including oxygen—on which health and strength depend. Pulmonary function is diminished; the heart's action lacks vigour; the circulation is poor, and the blood-pressure low. The body-weight is reduced and the musculature poorly developed. The body is indifferently built, always in need of repair, and wears out rapidly. The malnourished individual has a low capacity for sustained muscular effort and his vitality is low. His expectation of life is short and he falls a ready victim to disease. Maladies of the acute inflammatory kind, such as diseases of the lungs, intestines and meninges of the brain cause great havoc amongst the malnourished. Thus in the Presidency Hospital, Calcutta, Major (now Sir Leonard) Rogers found the ratio of deaths from acute

inflammatory diseases of the lungs amongst Hindus, Mohammedans and Europeans to be as 74.6 : 19.4 : 3.4 ; that from acute meningitis to be as 75 : 17.5 : 5. Non-meat eating Hindus in Bengal suffer more from kidney disease, from gall-stones and from cirrhosis of the liver than the better nourished Mohammedan or European.

It is not only in physical but in mental attributes that ill-nourished individuals compare so unfavourably with the well-fed. Perhaps thriftlessness and inertia distinguish them most. Their attitude to life is that of the ancient Hindu proverb : " It is better to sit than stand, to lie than sit, and to sleep than lie ; but death is best of all." But here it must be added that provided they are not too far advanced in years and their malnourished state has not induced disease beyond repair their response to good food is rapid. How to provide nutritious food for India's malnourished millions is without doubt the paramount problem in India to-day.

(iii) *Specific effects of malnutrition.*—Research during the past twenty years has brought to light a new cause of disease : deficiency in the food of certain substances on which normal metabolic processes have been found to depend. Of these substances the most conspicuous, because they have so far been most studied, are the vitamins ; but it is to be emphasized that they are by no means the only substances whose deficiency causes diseases of specific kinds. Deficiency of mineral salts may also do so. If, therefore, I choose vitamin-deficiency in illustration of the production of " deficiency diseases " it is not to say that an equally impressive tale could not be told were I to choose deficiency of mineral elements for illustrative purposes. Food deficiencies cause disease in one or other of two ways :—(a) By reason of the effects of specific deficiencies on various organs and tissues of the body, and (b) by admitting of the operation of some pathogenic agent, bacterial or protozoal.

(iv) *Deficiency diseases.*—A " deficiency disease " is one due to the insufficient supply in the food of some essential ingredient or ingredients. In India deficiency diseases of almost every kind abound : keratomalacia, night-blindness, scurvy, beri-beri, gastro-intestinal diseases, lung diseases, anaemia, stone in the bladder, osteomalacia, rickets, and many other forms of ill-health to which it is difficult to attach a diagnostic label. Thus eye diseases, due to deficiency of vitamin A, cause a vast amount of suffering, often culminating in blindness. Let me explain how this is brought about. The conjunctiva and the nearby glands of the eye produce secretions—tears, mucous—having an anti-bacterial influence : an influence exercised by virtue of their mechanical action (as of the tears) and of certain inherent qualities unfavourable to bacterial growth. Now if there be not enough vitamin A in the food these secretions are not adequately produced, the tears, for example, dry up and the mucous secretions of the conjunctiva fail. This is due to the cells which produce these protective secretions becoming horny or keratinized and thus losing their power of secretion. The eye is thereby robbed of the protection afforded by the secretions bathing it. Then comes the microbe-laden dust of India, from which the seed of disease is implanted in the non-resistant tissues of the orbit. Softening of the cornea occurs, inflammation is set up and the eye may be wholly or partially destroyed. All of this tragic sequence of events results from the deficiency in the food of a factor present in butter, ghee, fish oil and other animal fats, but not present, at least in sufficient quantity, in vegetable fats.

The effects of deficiency of this vitamin are not limited to the eye ; they occur in all mucous membranes throughout the body—those lining the respiratory, the gastro-intestinal and the urinary tracts. Disease of these tracts is produced in much the same way as in the eye ; the kind of disease depending on the pathogenic micro-organism that happens to be present in them. Bronchitis, pneumonia, broncho-pneumonia and tuberculosis may arise, or their course be favoured, in this way ; thus may acute inflammatory conditions develop in the intestines, and stone in the urinary tract. Given such an unprotected state of the gastro-intestinal tract pathogenic agents find the soil made ready for their unrestricted growth. In my own laboratory dysentery has been produced experimentally in this way in monkeys who happened to harbour the causal agent of this disease.

The blood is another tissue which suffers in a similar way with the resultant production of severe anaemias. In brief, the mechanism of disease production as a result of vitamin A deficiency is a combination of deteriorative changes in the tissues and the unrestrained action of pathogenic micro-organisms.

(v) *Disease due to deficiency of vitamin B.*—Disease of another order is caused by deficiency of vitamin B in the food. Of this vitamin there are two fractions, B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>. One function of the first is to maintain the efficiency of nerve and muscle throughout the body. Its insufficient supply leads to impairment of nerve function ; to this there is added, in certain parts of India, the action of poisons produced either in the body itself or in deteriorated rice ; the result is a disease called *beri-beri*

which is very prevalent in the east coast of this Presidency. But when there is a sufficient supply of this vitamin in the food the nerves remain healthy and resistant to poisons causing beri-beri-like maladies.

The consequences of an insufficient supply of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> on the neuro-muscular mechanism of the bowel are evidenced in a lowered capacity of this viscus to empty itself properly, and constipation, with all its attendant evils, results.

Deficiency of the other fraction of vitamin B—vitamin B<sub>2</sub>, as it is called—is evidenced chiefly in the unhealthiness of the skin, causing a disease called *Pellagra*. This malady occurs in India though not so commonly as in certain other parts of the world. I do not doubt that many of the very prevalent skin diseases to be seen in India are favoured in their development by deficiency of this vitamin either alone or in combination with deficiency of other vitamins; for it is rare that only one of these factors is lacking in the diet. More often two or more of them are in default.

(vi) *Disease due to deficiency of vitamin C.*—Deficiency of vitamin C causes *scurvy*; a condition very common throughout India amongst those who do not include enough green vegetables in their food. The wage-earner in India, who is not himself a cultivator, finds it very difficult to secure, at a reasonable cost, a sufficiency of fresh vegetable food; consequently if he does not actually suffer from acute scurvy he very often suffers from a sub-acute form of it.

(vii) *Disease due to deficiency of vitamin D.*—Deficiency of vitamin D is not a serious menace to the Indian worker whose body is exposed daily to the sun's rays. But, as previously mentioned, it may be a very serious menace to his wife and children if the Purdah system is observed in his family. Lack of this factor causes *rickets* in children and *osteomalacia*, or softening of the bones, in the more mature. The latter is a source of an immense amount of suffering amongst Purdah women during child-birth, and is one of the chief reasons why a system possessing so little to commend it should be abandoned by an enlightened India. Vitamin D occurs in milk, butter, ghee and especially in cod-liver oil.

(viii) *Vitamin E deficiency.*—Deficiency of vitamin E needs no further comment.

In addition to the named diseases which are caused by food deficiencies there is an infinite variety of states of impaired health, owing their origin to the same cause, but to which no diagnostic label can be attached. These, no less than the named diseases, are responsible for a vast amount of discomfort and physical inefficiency. I do not doubt that if malnutrition were effectively combated amongst the Indian people the general health would be improved by at least 80 per cent., and the death-rate reduced enormously, which much-to-be desired result would make still more apparent the need for eugenic regulation of the population—a matter which is, however, outside the scope of the present memorandum.

(ix) *Need for extension of research on Nutrition.*—Before leaving this subject it is necessary to emphasize anew, as I did in my evidence before the Royal Commission on Agriculture, the urgent need for the extension of research on nutrition, not only on the part of the Central Government but of every Provincial Government. The problems involved in this study are of enormous economic, agricultural and hygienic importance; and at the present time India is ill-equipped to deal with them. Every Province has its own particular problems determined by climatic, racial, agricultural and other considerations; and every Province should have its own Institute for Nutrition to deal with them. Such problems are: the survey of food resources and the means of improving them; the culture of the most nutritious foods compatible with climate, soil and irrigation conditions; the chemical composition of available foods; the food-value of materials as determined by biological assay; the fixation of food-standards suited to residents in the province and to various classes of labour; the discovery of vegetable foods which may in some measure act as substitutes for the expensive protein and fat-bearing foods of animal origin; the more extensive study of malnutritional diseases; the education of the medical profession and the public; and the training of young Indian scientists for research on nutrition. These and much else demand the exercise of urgent effort, an effort which will yield a rich reward in the increased well-being of the population and in the increased output by them of agricultural and other produce.

At the present time, both in this and other countries, there is a tendency to regard the science of nutrition as merely the handmaid of medicine. In a limited sense it is. But it is much more. Life is a chemical function and nutrition ensures its proper exercise. The function of medicine is to maintain mankind in healthful existence. Nutrition must, therefore, be regarded as the very foundation of medical science, and the science of nutrition be accorded its deserved place as an instrument of the highest value to humanity: "The future social organization will be the product of the land, the population, the development of the arts and sciences and the standard of living" (Alonza Taylor).

*Food actually eaten by certain workers.*—The following are examples of dietaries actually eaten by various classes of workers:—

1. A Jat Sikh family—Punjabi agriculturist.

Family consists of father, mother and 4 children—3 boys aged between 5 and 10, and one girl aged 3½ years.

Daily food consumption by family :

Whole wheat flour ( <i>atta</i> ) .. .. .	112	ounces
Pulses (Dhal) .. .. .	15	"
Jaggery (unrefined sugar) .. .. .	6.7	"
Pumpkin .. .. .	16	"
Curds .. .. .	16	"
Ghee and butter .. .. .	12	"
Milk .. .. .	48	"
Salt .. .. .	1.2	"
Condiments .. .. .	4	"
Pickles .. .. .	1	"

This diet yields for the adult male: 120 grams of protein, 70 grams of fat and 560 grams of carbohydrate; giving a fuel value of 3,440 calories. The amount of animal proteins forms, however, only about one-seventh of the total protein ingested and in this respect the diet is faulty, otherwise it is excellent.

2. A Jat Sikh family—Punjabi agriculturist.

Family consists of 4 men and boys over 14, 2 women, 2 boys aged between 6 and 12, and one baby girl of 2 years old.

Daily food consumed by family:—

Whole wheat flour ( <i>atta</i> ) .. .. .	200	ounces
Pulses (Dhal) .. .. .	16	"
Jaggery (unrefined sugar) .. .. .	9.9	"
Pumpkin .. .. .	16	"
Curdled milk .. .. .	18.7	"
Butter and ghee .. .. .	16	"
Milk .. .. .	64	"
Salt .. .. .	1.3	"
Condiments .. .. .	0.6	"

This diet is of much the same value as the preceding one; and except that the animal protein is disproportionately low it is otherwise well-balanced and provides a sufficiency of calories for the hardworked adults.

3. An Arain family—market gardeners, mostly occupancy tenants and cultivate small plots.

Family consists of 4 men and boys over 12, 3 women and 2 girls over 12.

Daily food consumption by family :

Whole wheat flour ( <i>atta</i> ) .. .. .	197.3	ounces
Pulses (Dhal) .. .. .	10.6	"
Green gram .. .. .	5.3	"
Curdled milk .. .. .	4.6	"
Ghee and butter .. .. .	8.0	"
Milk .. .. .	48.0	"
Salt .. .. .	1.3	"
Condiments .. .. .	0.1	"
Pickles .. .. .	1.3	"

This diet is low in animal protein but is otherwise well-balanced and of good calorie-value.

4. Family of Julahas (Weavers)—Punjab.

Family consists of one man, one woman, one son of 11, two daughters of 4 and 6, and one baby.

Daily food consumption by family :

Whole wheat flour ( <i>atta</i> ) .. .. .	128.0	ounces
Pulses (Dhal) .. .. .	9.1	"
Radishes .. .. .	11.5	"
Gram .. .. .	5.1	"
Potatoes .. .. .	9.1	"
Green vegetables .. .. .	2.3	"
Ghee .. .. .	6.8	"
Salt, condiments, etc. .. .. .	2.5	"

This diet is wholly lacking in animal protein otherwise it is well-balanced and of fair calorie-value.

## 5. Farmhand (Madras).

## Daily food consumption :—

	Quantity in ozs.	Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Home-pounded rice .. .. .	24	55.2	2.04	535.2
Dhal .. .. .	1.10	0.65	0.1	1.6
Fish .. .. .	1.4	1.38	0.3	—
Mutton .. .. .	1.8	0.75	0.25	—
Buttermilk .. .. .	2.5	0.34	0.06	—

Calorie-value = 2,222.

This diet is low in protein of which the major part is rice-protein ; it is very low in fats and disproportionately rich in carbohydrates. It is deficient in vitamins A, B and C. The man suffered from *beri-beri*.

## 6. Policeman (Madras).

## Daily food consumption :—

	Quantity in ozs.	Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Polished rice .. .. .	28	50.1	3.6	730.5
Dhal .. .. .	2.7	1.9	0.3	4.6
Vegetables .. .. .	4.7	0.4	—	4.7
Fish .. .. .	2.7	1.6	0.3	—
Mutton .. .. .	2.7	1.7	0.6	—

Calorie-value = 2,975.

This diet is low in protein of which the major part is rice protein ; it is very low in fats and disproportionately rich in carbohydrates. It is deficient in vitamins A, B and C. The man suffered from *beri-beri*.

## 7. Coolie (Madras).

## Daily food consumption :—

	Quantity in ozs.	Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Polished rice .. .. .	30	53.7	3.9	782.7
Dhal .. .. .	1.5	1.3	0.2	3.2
Vegetables .. .. .	2.5	0.3	—	3.3
Fish .. .. .	2	11.0	2.3	—
Mutton .. .. .	2.5	2.4	0.8	—

Calorie-value = 3,226.

This diet is low in protein of which about one-fifth is of animal origin, it is very low in fats ; and it is deficient in vitamins A, B and C. The man suffered from *beri-beri*.

## 8. Carpenter (Indian Christian).

Daily food consumption :—

	Quantity in ozs.	Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Unpolished rice .. .. .	18	33.1	3.9	470
Dhal .. .. .	1	6.5	1.0	15.2
Vegetable oil .. .. .	1	—	28.0	—
Vegetables .. .. .	2	1.4	0.1	16.3
Cocconut .. .. .	1	1.6	14.3	7.9
Jaggery (sugar) .. .. .	2.5	0.2	—	52.5
Milk .. .. .	3	2.8	3.1	4.1
Fish .. .. .	1	5.5	1.2	—
Mutton .. .. .	2	11.9	3.9	—
Ghee .. .. .	½	—	11.6	—

Calorie-value = 2,923.

The total proteins in this diet is on the low side, but is well proportioned, one-third being from animal sources; the total fats is sufficient, but the amount of animal fats is on the low side; in other respects it is well-balanced and contains a sufficiency of all vitamins. The man is of medium stature, does a hard day's work and is in good health, though not a perfect specimen of manhood.

## 9. Tea-coolie (Nilgiris).

Daily food consumption :—

	Quantity in ozs.	Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Polished rice .. .. .	8	14.3	1.0	208.7
Ragi (millet) .. .. .	12	33.4	5.5	280.2
Dhal .. .. .	1	6.5	1.0	16.2
Onions .. .. .	½	0.2	—	1.5
Vegetables .. .. .	1	0.7	—	8.2
Vegetables oil .. .. .	½	—	14.0	—
Mutton .. .. .	½	3.0	1.0	—

Calorie-value = 2,303.

This diet is low in protein of which animal protein forms but a small proportion. It is low in fats. Its calorie-value is low for a coolie doing a hard day's work. It is deficient in vitamin A and C. The man is of poor physique.

## 10. Mechanic (Nilgiris).

Daily food consumption :—

	Quantity in ozs.	Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Unpolished rice .. .. .	14.5	33.4	1.2	323.4
Polished rice .. .. .	1.5	2.7	0.2	39.1
Dhal .. .. .	2.0	13.0	2.0	32.4
Gram .. .. .	1.0	5.7	1.3	15.3
Vegetable oil .. .. .	1.5	—	42.0	—
Vegetables .. .. .	6.0	4.2	0.2	48.9
Jaggery (sugar) .. .. .	2.5	—	—	67.2
Cocconut .. .. .	1.0	1.6	14.3	7.9
Ghee .. .. .	0.5	—	11.6	—
Mutton .. .. .	3.0	5.9	5.9	—
Eggs .. .. .	0.5	1.9	1.5	—
Milk .. .. .	6.0	11.6	6.1	8.2

Calorie-value = 3,060.

The total proteins in the diet are sufficient; one-fourth are of animal origin which is on the low side; the fats are sufficient but the animal fats are on the low side; otherwise the diet is well-balanced, rich in vitamins and gives a sufficient yield of calories for a moderately hard day's work. The man is of small stature, active and hard-working.

## 11. Kanarese Coolie (Nilgiris).

Daily food consumption :—

	Quantity in ozs.	Proteins.	Fats.	Carbo- hydrates.
Ragi (millet) .. .. .	17.0	47.3	7.8	396
Unpolished rice .. .. .	11.0	25.3	0.9	245
Vegetable oil .. .. .	0.25	—	7.0	—
Vegetables .. .. .	2.5	1.8	1.0	20
Jaggery (sugar) .. .. .	0.5	—	—	12
Onions .. .. .	3.0	1.1	—	9
Mutton .. .. .	1.5	8.9	3.0	—
Calorie-value = 3,000.				

The total protein in this diet is sufficient, but the proportion of animal to vegetable protein is too low; the total fats is much too low, the animal fats being very low. The calorie-value is sufficient for a moderate day's work. It is deficient in vitamin A.

## V.—Welfare.

34. *Nature of Welfare Activities.*—(i) *Provision of refreshments.*—It is doubtful whether the average Indian worker, if he possessed the means to provide himself with a diet which would satisfy his physiological needs, would actually spend his money on suitable food. The suggestion is, therefore, put forward that where possible workers should be provided daily—as part of their earnings—with a properly constituted meal or that they receive part payment in kind in the form of food-materials.

I venture to think that the trouble involved in so doing would be amply repaid in increased output of work.

## XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

## 115. Effect on production of—

(viii) *Dictary.*—It has been shown that the physical efficiency of the Indian worker is above all else a matter of the constitution of his food. Output of work is in direct relation to physical efficiency. This is well exemplified by different Indian races whose efficiency, as has been shown, varies with their dietaries. The Thibetan Bhutia, for instance, whose dietary often yields 6,000 calories and has a protein content of from 150 to 200 grams per day, is capable of almost tireless, hard labour. His, or her, feats in the carrying of heavy loads in mountainous country are common knowledge: it is said that a young Bhutia woman of 18 years of age can carry, for long distances and up hilly tracts, a load of 200 lbs. Other Hill Bhutias exhibit a similar capacity for endurance and hard work depending largely, as McCay has so clearly demonstrated, on the level of protein metabolism to which their food enables them to attain. The Punjabi agriculturist who consumes, on the average, about 130 to 150 grams of protein a day is, at his best, another striking example of capacity for untiring labour. A twelve-hour-day is, I am assured, no unusual thing for him. These are sufficient examples of Indian races who have attained, by virtue of their food and racial characters, to a high level of physical efficiency.

But the capacity of the ill-fed Indian for hard work is very low. The following Table—taken from Colonel McCay's book and modified from the Report on Factory Labour in India—brings out clearly the relative productive capacity of the better-fed English worker and the poorly-fed Indian worker:—

	England.	India.
Operatives per 1,000 spindles.. ..	4.2	28
Operatives per 1,000 looms .. ..	43	125
Annual outturn of yarn per operative	7,736 lbs.	4,000 lbs.
Weekly outturn of cloth per operative	767 yds.	240 yds.
Working hours per week .. ..	55½	80
Working hours per year .. ..	2,775	4,120

“Indian labour is lacking in continuous application, punctuality, energy and regularity. Men have to be employed in India for work that women will do in England. The Indian workers have little skill or education, and consequently make much waste;



their sense of discipline is imperfect; their attendance irregular; and they take long intervals for rest, smoking, etc." (commercial Supplement of the Times) (from McCay's book). This statement, in so far as it is true, would seem to be applicable only to ill-nourished and not to well-nourished labour.

"The coal mines of Europe and Bengal are perhaps the best comparative test of the capabilities of the two classes of workers (Europeans and Bengalis). The conditions are all in favour of the Bengali; he cuts coal from thick seams; the mines are at no great depth, and a large proportion are worked with inclines, no shafts being necessary. The following figures give some idea of the output per man (well-fed European and ill-fed Bengali) yearly:—

America .. .. .	589 tons (simple mining).
England .. .. .	300 tons
Germany .. .. .	243 tons
Bengal .. .. .	80 tons

The physical conditions are all in favour of the Bengali, and the result is an outturn barely 27 per cent. that of the European " (McCay).

These examples will serve to indicate that the output of work by the human machine is closely related to the quality of the food with which it is provided.

"Apart from any question of humanity the proper care of the working classes would, in the long run, be a paying proposition" (Speech by H.E. the Governor of Bombay, 13th December, 1926). In this "proper care" no single factor is of such importance as good nutritious food.

✓  
MESSRS. T. STANES & CO., LTD., COIMBATORE.

We are members of the Bombay Mill-owners Association and since last writing to you we have received a copy of their memorandum submitted to your Commission (Bombay witness, No. 41) and with the exception of details applicable to local conditions, we are in agreement with the general statements embodied in that memorandum, as they apply to all cotton mills in India.

We have already submitted to you a brief statement\* of local conditions of labour and take this further opportunity of referring to the subject of absenteeism, which we consider to be a point on which great improvement can be effected by the education of labour along right lines.

Under the subject of recruitment enquiry is made regarding labour turnover, with the subject of absenteeism, its extent, character, and causes, and the time and wages lost; these points have recently received our special attention and we find that the percentage of absentees during the months May to September, 1929, represent 9.28 per cent. of the total strength of the mill, while the average amount of wages lost by the workpeople in consequence of this absenteeism represents 10.2 per cent. of the wages earned during the period.

It is difficult to state exactly the causes for this absenteeism but we attribute it to principally three causes:—(1) General slackness; (2) Festivals; (3) Family Claims.

(1) *Slackness*.—Frequently the largest number of absentees takes place after pay day, and we presume, after receiving their wages, many coolies do not see urgent necessity for work; it is possible they absent themselves also through intemperance.

(2) *Festivals*.—Very frequently absenteeism is due to local and general festivals; it is the custom to allow holidays for well-known public festivals, but frequent absence from work is due to local festivals.

(3) *Family claims*.—Absentees under this heading are principally noticed during the marriage season, when the monthly percentage is high.

The figures we have given above emphasize the loss to labour through absenteeism, but it also results in loss in production in the mills and in consequence handicaps local producers. According to a very careful estimate, the loss in production in this company's mills during the five months in question is 185,850 lbs. of yarn representing value of Rs. 132,418-2 annas.

We bring forward these points to emphasize the necessity of educating Indian labour to realize that the remedy for their own betterment is principally in their own hands.

We believe it is generally agreed that the comparative efficiency of Indian and Lancashire workers is about "three to one," but we believe that there is a slight improvement in the efficiency of Indian workers noticeable during recent years, and

\* Not printed.

if this were continued with a diminution of absenteeism, the Indian workers would greatly increase their wage earning capacity and at the same time put Indian mills in a better position to compete with foreign trade.

With reference to the subject of trade combinations we have to state that no organized trade union is at present in existence in this place ; there was a trade union in existence some years ago, which however came to an end owing to the unsatisfactory mishandling by outsiders who had no real interest in the welfare of the workpeople. Proposals have recently been made for the resuscitation of the trade union which we have agreed to recognize provided it is representative of the workpeople.

### THE LABOUR UNION, COIMBATORE.

This Royal Commission does not come in a day earlier than needful. The terms are fairly wide and presided over by an experienced labourite like Mr. Whitley and supported by persons of long experience with labour conditions in India and Britain, it is hoped that real good will result both to employers and employees.

The problem of labour in this country is mainly economic and political. Labour is a neglected field amongst Indian politicians. Labour problems are occasionally taken up for the purpose of securing support for non-labour activities and taken for other considerations than that of the improvement of labour itself. British rule is itself highly capitalistic, and being a foreign one has allied itself with capitalists—Indian and foreign, and with the landlord classes. Whenever instalments of reform are given there has been special representation in local and legislative bodies for the landed gentry, the Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations, Plantations, etc., and though claims have been made for special and direct representation of labour they have always been overlooked.

In fixing of the franchise, payment of income tax, profession tax and land revenue have been the basis. The great mass of agricultural labourers, who form the bulk of the population in this country, go absolutely unrepresented. The industrial workers who mainly contribute to the production and distribution of wealth have no voice in the municipal, local or provincial bodies. Their comfort, their health, their conditions of work, housing, education and other important needs of theirs, are never seriously dealt with. Petty grievances of capitalist and landlord classes loom large ; while the vital needs of large masses of labour people are neglected.

The neglect of labour is patent even in the Report of the Central Committee presided over by Sir Sankaran Nair. Compare the representation suggested for trade, commerce, landlords and other interests and that provided for labour, both in number and method of selection. About 80 per cent. of population in towns and 90 per cent. in the urban areas, are left uncared for.

The cry of elementary education is raised not so much for the improvement really of the labouring classes but for securing popular support for political agitation. Unless adult franchise is introduced, right from village panchayats, up to the Imperial Assemblies, no progress, or even security of the minimum conditions of a citizen's life is possible in this country. Some will say that the labouring classes are ignorant and that they should not be entrusted with the vote. They may be illiterate, but as a class they are intelligent, honest, God-fearing and possess natural capacity for good citizenship. They have a better sense of public welfare, and are less selfish in their outlook, and if only entrusted with political power, they will be able to solve their problems, and those of the country more quickly and effectively than when political power rests mainly, in the hands of the monied and landlord classes. The future of India, is not in the communities, classes or interests—religion, or property, but in the hands of Indian labour which knows no distinction based on religion, caste, creed, colour, opinion or other grounds.

As regards the economic condition—the labourers in this country occupy a low position. Though legal slavery has been abolished there is real slavery amongst the lower ranks of labourers.

The agricultural labourers are always indebted to the landlords of the village. Their houses which are poor huts mainly are usually not theirs and half-hearted attempts for securing house sites in the Presidency in districts like Tanjore, Malabar etc., touch only the fringe of the problem—this is done by the Labour Department whose objectives and methods of work leave much to be desired. In the plantation areas like the Anamallais and Nilgiris the whole outlook is the estate itself. They have no local interests, no houses, no property and they are in a state of semi-slavery.

The agricultural labourers do not get any medical attention. The sanitation of the segregated quarters in which many of them live is deplorable—sickness, old-age are

not provided for. For birth of their children, for marriage, and other necessary ceremonies, they borrow from their landlords at extortionate rates of interest. They work for the repayment of the debts all through their life. They die indebted and lose both this world and next (for the Indian idea is that a debtor never goes to heaven). If monthly paid—their wages are paid in kind—the stuff is poor—there is both false measurement, and loss in weight. The quality of grain they get is nearer the chaff. The village shopman adds to the exploiting of the labourers. He charges dearer than he does for the landlord or money lender, and on rough calculations the labourer gets only 60 per cent. of what he ought to get from shopmen. All this is not limited to agricultural labourers, but extends to urban labourers also. The urban labourers are always indebted. The rate of interest runs from 75 to 100 per cent. in towns. Where labour is working in factories, either their maistries or kabulies or other usurers swarm round and suck up a goodly portion of the wages, a five rupees borrowed is six times paid over in the course of the year and yet the principal remains unpaid.

The labourers are subjected to another prey—that is the tavern keeper. The Indian labourer in the past, except a minority belonging to the lowest castes, always abstained from intoxicating liquor, but thanks to the excise policies of the State, the activities of the landlord and the advertisement of the owner of beer and arrack factories, to enlarge their scope and profits actively supported by a Government which is increasing its expenditure, raising the salaries of their officials, and depending for more than 40 per cent. of their revenues on the proceeds of drink. This problem is assuming grave proportions. The drink revenue is mainly contributed by labouring classes. In the Madras Presidency the drink revenue is next not only to the land revenue, the main basis of taxes in this province.

So before the lot of the labourer is improved, in the minor details of recruitment-organization, welfare, housing, hours of work, etc., these three problems:—(1) the enslavement by the usurers; (2) the exploitation by the petty shopkeeper, and (3) the plunder by the drink revenue, must be faced honestly. For the first and second the remedy lies in a sincere policy to create a large number of co-operative banks and stores, so that the indebtedness and the exploitation by the shopkeeper may cease. Nine per cent. interest and 10 per cent. profit on goods will not be grudged—the reform in this line should not merely be on paper but in practice. The Government is afraid of facing this, and co-operative banks and stores even on application by labourers does not help them.

As regards the drink, and the toll by it upon labour, its health, its domestic life, its efficiency, prohibition must be resorted to, and though it cannot be carried out in a day there must be quick, gradual diminution and final extinction of this source of drain.

Unless the Government takes the lead and works out these three remedies, of co-operative banking, co-operative stores, and prohibition, any amount of legislation regarding conditions will be of no avail. (If I am examined orally—we are prepared to substantiate the above so as to convince the Commission).

Now going to the terms of reference, it is unfortunate that only conditions of labourers in industrial undertakings, and plantations in British India, should be enquired into. The conditions of agricultural labour which is greater in volume, worse in its position, less cared for, by Government or politicians, should have been included, and in writing the memorandum, we have as a background the large mass of agricultural labourers.

Taking up the subjects as per printed form, our views are as follows: we also adopt the memorandum submitted by the Madras Labour Union and by the Bombay Textile Union in general points:—

#### I.—Recruitment.

1. Industrial labour usually migrates from villages to the town. Bad agricultural seasons, desire to escape the money lender, social ex-communication, oppression by the landlord classes, contribute to the migration except in old cities like Pondicherry, Madras and Madura, where you have a permanent working population.

2. As in this Presidency, the main volume of urban labour flows from their villages, there is constant contact by means of visit of relatives or going back to the villages for marriages, ceremonies or other festivities. These visits are the only check upon the undermining of the health of the urban labourers and offer their only recreation. In spite of all difficulties, the labourers in the country parts live under sunshine and air, are less supervised in the work—there is less monotony in their occupation, and attachment to mother earth, ensures certain amount of good

health, denied to the labourers working in factories under closed doors, exacting supervision, and engaged in monotonous work practically the whole of the day and sometimes at night.

3. There is no scientific method of recruitment, failure of seasons brings a rush from villages. They get through the maistry or job-clerks—usually paying them a bribe—they are taken in haphazard, and they are discharged when their services are not required. There is a system known as the compulsory leave system in many factories like the cordite factory, Aruvangadu, the extinct engineering shops of the Southern Indian railway, Trichinopoly, where there is a large mass of trained labour kept waiting and the needs of the factory determine the employment. When the factory needs a certain supply is utilised. The others are expected to wait on the offchance of getting work, they get wages only for the days they work and enjoy what is known as compulsory leave.

The position of the domestic labourers, garden servants, cooks, butlers and others who work in houses of families, is much better with regard to wages, leisure, treatment, healthy surroundings, leave, pay, residence and clothing.

8. (iii) As regards absenteeism in factory (there is a certain amount of avoidable absenteeism) it is due to the labourer visiting his relations for all sorts of reasons—his excessive hours of work—the effect of the employment upon his health—the worse than jail-like conditions under which he works and long hours of work compel him to take more holidays than one would wish, and they desire to relieve themselves from the oppressing condition of work by being absent.

*Suggestion re recruitment.*—It is easy to devise some recognised employment bureaus with headquarters in the district with subordinate agencies in each Taluk to look after the recruitment. Prevention of bribe by job masters and maistries, contact between these bureaus and the factories is essential could easily be established.

## II.—Staff Organisation.

Industrial undertakings are either under Indian or European or mixed management—in many cases there are managing agents who get a commission on the turn-out irrespective of profits. The touch between the bosses and the labourers is slender. They are thrown to the tender mercies of the clerks, overseers, maistries or underforemen. The so-called jobbers, what we call in this part of the country, maistries are as a class quite a bad lot. There must be in every factory, some organization by which the labourers and the supervising staff and directorate are kept in touch. There are few contractors of labourers utilized in industrial undertakings. A good labour union utilized by the employers is a necessity.

## III.—Housing.

This problem is a neglected one. In Coimbatore where there are a number of spinning and weaving mills there is no provision in any of these to accommodate the worker. The clerks and managers, who are well able to look after themselves, are given dwelling quarters.

Slum life in cities like Coimbatore, Madura, Madras, are mainly contributed by the labourers. This hits hard and affects the health of the labourers who live away from their villages. Legislation must be introduced for purposes of co-operative housing, both employers and Government must contribute.

## IV.—Health.

23-25. Except labourers living in the suburbs, and attending their factories, the health of the others leaves much to be desired. Medical attention exists in some factories and it is only nominal both in personnel and in stocking of dispensaries; there is much need for improvement. Compare hospitals for policemen at headquarters with these so-called dispensaries. The women workers are not given any leave for pregnancy, or their monthly course; this affects their health very severely, and the mortality of their children is very high, babes are left uncared for or doped. There is midwifery for them unless the worker suffers from an accident under the Indian Factory Act; the employer does not very much care to provide medical facilities. Government servants are somewhat in better position, the facilities offered for the lower classes of government servants are not offered to the manual labourers in the factories. In railways, in the important stations there is fairly good medical attention provided for. Labourers are prepared to avail themselves of medical facilities, and there is no unwillingness about it.

26. As regards sanitary arrangement in work places, there must be provision for inspection by local authorities assisted by the labour council elected by the labourers. They must be authorised to report to the inspector of factories, and legal and penal

provision, made to ensure attention to the defects. In the cotton mills the temperature, sanitation, prevention of cotton dust and dirt flying about, ventilation, latrine arrangements, drinking water—all these must be subject to supervision of the local authority and the labour council. There is hardly any provision for bathing or washing. Legislation must be introduced in the factory Act for the purpose of bathing and washing arrangements.

29. Lung disease, diseases of the stomach and other diseases caused by work inside factories prevail.

The disease problem may be well met by proper medical arrangements and sanitation of the factories.

30. Sickness insurance must be provided for. Legislative enactments on the model of insurances in Europe regarding sickness, insurance against accidents must be introduced into this country.

31. There is no maternity benefit at present. Six weeks before and after childbirth, women must be given leave and paid for by the employer. Provision must be made for midwifery and nurseries.

#### V.—Welfare.

32. Except in Buckingham Mills at Madras there is little interest taken by the employers in welfare work. Civic associations engaged in welfare work are very few, they have neither funds nor the training. There are not even meeting places for labourers. They take their midday meals under trees and as for physical culture, recreation and amusement there is none. The hours of work are so long (they start work in factories at 7 a.m. and continue till 6 p.m.) so that they have not the time for any welfare, recreation, amusements, general meetings, etc. Unless the hours of work are reduced to 8 hours, efforts in this direction will be futile.

36. We do not believe in education facilities by employers. The education must be entirely under the Government subject to advice by labour councils. There must be a separate Government Inspectorate to look after the education of the labourers. The subjects of study, the methods of teaching, provision of housing, schools, choice of teachers, hours of work must necessarily differ in the schools for labourers and their children from that of the leisured classes.

37. The provision for the old-age and premature retirement is closely associated with the problem of insurance to the worker. The provision must be made by the employer and the State by a general scheme of insurance.

38. The co-operative department, as it is worked, is practically useless to the labourers. There is no sympathy to the labouring classes. Most of the ills of the labourer could be cured by a sympathetic and broad minded work of co-operative activities. The problem of house building, the problem of lending and saving, the problem of the buying of the necessaries of living for a fair price and of good quality, medical attention, all this should be solved by means of co-operative societies. The labourer will respond to this actively and full-heartedly.

#### VI.—Education.

Methods of labour schools in England, America and other countries should be studied and with necessary changes introduced in this country. The schools must be so conducted, subjects and teaching so attended to, that there must be provision for training labourers for particular professions, and being a useful citizen.

#### VII.—Safety.

During recent years there is much improvement on this head. Over and above the factory inspectorate there must be provision for the labour council to have their say in the matter. Their recommendations, if approved by the inspector, should be enforced by penalty.

#### VIII.—Workman's Compensation.

51. The provisions of the Act are far from being liberal. The scale of compensation as embodied in the Act must be increased by 50 per cent. and the occasions for compensation must be enlarged. We adopt the memorandum supplied by the panel of lawyers at Madras. A copy of the accident report should be directed to be sent up to the Government pleader of each district and the application of labour council on behalf of the injured man should be legalised. The claims must be adjudged by sub-courts in a summary manner, not by the Labour Commissioner, as the same is costly and causes delay in disposal.

There is absolutely no insurance for labourers. Compulsory insurance of workmen by payment of one third of the premium by the labourer, one third by the employer should be arranged for. Government must contribute on equal quota. Insurance

must be compulsory after three years of work in the factory. If any person changes his occupation altogether from factory work his premium may be returned with some reasonable interest, unless he enters another factory in which case the insurance may be continued. Labourers must be insured for age 50, or death earlier. The insurance scheme on a comprehensive scale to all workers may be arranged with the help of the co-operative departments.

### IX.—Hours of Work.

Ten hours a day is too much. To start with 54 hours a week, or 9 hours a day, may be provided for and in the course of two years it should be reduced to 48 hours a week. As it is, the worker has to get up early in morning at 5 a.m. and return to his house only at 7 p.m. This gives him little chance of looking after his children or his family. He is so fatigued that he is unable to improve himself or his people; he has no time for any activities.

Night work must be abolished. Working under electric lights affects the eyes, and the health of the operative is seriously injured. If night work is to be permitted five hours at night must be made equal to ten hours a day.

60. The number of holidays must be the same, as in the Negotiable Instrument Act, and these holidays must carry wages. Casual leave of 7 days per year with full pay, and 15 days per year privilege leave on full pay and 15 days on half pay should be provided for by legislative enactment. One day of rest with wages every week must be enforced, and on Saturday evening the labourer must be discharged not later than 4 p.m. There must be no exception with regard to days of rest.

### C.—Railways.

The hours in the workshops are all right. In the traffic and engineering departments, amongst the lower paid and what are termed menial services—coal coolies, porters, shunters, water-tank men, etc.—the 8-hour day should be enforced, and leave on pay as above must be legislated for. The poor condition of the menial staff was one of the main reasons for the Southern Indian railway strike. It is a source of perpetual discontent among railway workers.

### XII.—Wages.

*Textile Industry.*—The wages obtaining in Coimbatore Mills:—

	Rs.	a.
Warping .. .. .	25	0
Blow room .. .. .	12	0 to Rs. 16
Dyeing .. .. .	15	0
Carding .. .. .	12	0
Slubbing .. .. .	22	0
Intermediate .. .. .	21	0
Rolling .. .. .	16	8
Spinning .. .. .	19	0 for 2 sides.
Spinning .. .. .	12	0 for 1 side.
Mixing and other kinds of work .. .. .	12	0

Women on an average draw Rs. 12 per month for spinning, reeling, and widening.

Weavers who were formerly doing single looms attend now to two looms and draw from Rs. 22 to Rs. 26. Fitters, carpenters, and machinemen and others make from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 per month.

(1) In the agricultural area near Coimbatore, an adult manual labourer, if a man, gets 8–10 annas a day for about seven hours work, a woman 5–6 annas, and boys and girls 4–6 annas.

(2) Skilled labourers, like carpenters and blacksmiths, get from Rs. 14 annas to Rs. 28 annas a day, while well-diggers and earth-workers get a minimum of Re. 1 per day.

(3) Agricultural labourers employed by the month get at least Rs. 15 a month, either in grain or cash; they get presents for occasions like marriages and funerals, also during harvest they get a free feed for their cattle and help when they build houses. These people usually work 7–8 hours a day.

(4) *Tanneries.*—These must be included as factories, and brought under the Factory Act. The men employed are usually the depressed classes, men get 6 annas, women 4 annas. The conditions of work are very hard,—as bad as in the plantations. The Indian master is always worse than the European master.

The Government, whatever may be its professed policy, allows the executive to thwart labour; the use of Section 144 is always made to refrain labour activities. Workers are imprisoned, military help is called for, and shooting is permitted.

97. There has been a steady increase in all wages except industrial. In the weaving mills a deduction was made of 15 per cent. in 1926-27 and another 5-10 per cent. in 1928-29. There have been two deductions during the last few years and this, though life is as costly and dearer than before. This is said to be due to bad trade and poor profits. The wages have also suffered by one man attending to two looms instead of one as formerly. The rate of wages in spinning mills has been stationary, though the calculation has become stricter.

The wages above stated, if compared with those obtained in Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, will show that there is 25-30 per cent. less wages in Coimbatore. Coimbatore is costlier than Madras, as rice, grain, chillies, tamarind, and other necessaries, including clothing, are dearer than in Madras. Fuel is the only thing cheaper in Coimbatore than in Madras. The mills do not provide any house rent; in spite of reduction in wages in weaving mills and the stationary wages in spinning mills, while all-round manual and skilled labour gets more wages, the mill workers continue to work in the mills because they are too weak for any other kind of labour, and having been longer in the mills they are useless for any other kind. A local committee should enquire and give a report to this Commission.

98. The wages are too low for actual living, no saving is made or is possible. Labourers get into debt even for mere living and so no amount is sent to the villages, in fact those who have contact with villagers draw from their families and relations.

101. The wages are fixed by the employer without any contract with the labourers, and there is no particular standard by which this is fixed; the clerical and the maistry staff play havoc. There must be standardization of wages.

102. Night work must be paid for at twice the ordinary rate for the same number of hours. More than five hours night work (equal to ten hours of day work) should be prohibited. There is no specific provision for Sunday and overtime work.

103. It is desirable to have a regular standardization of wages.

104. The change in the wages does not affect labour supply as the latter is due to agricultural distress and inflow of rural population into towns, which after a time is unable to go back to old occupations.

105. It is desirable to have some statute fixing minimum wages on the basis of fair living. In Coimbatore the average cost of living for a man and wife is as follows:—

	Rs.
House rent .. .. .	2-3
Rice and grain .. .. .	10
Savoury and other necessaries .. .. .	4
Fuel .. .. .	3
Clothing .. .. .	3
Sickness .. .. .	2
Butter, milk, ghee, etc. .. .. .	4
Dhobi .. .. .	1
Other expenses, marriages, funerals, etc.	3
Total .. .. .	Rs. 33

This does not provide for education either for adults or children.

Apart from expenses for children, extra expenses and other things, a man and wife would require at least Rs. 30 per month. The extras would cost them at least Rs. 5 per month. Police constables and policemen, start at least on Rs. 18, get free quarters and some allowances. They pay no rent.

So, for adult manual labour Rs. 30 for males, Rs. 20 for females and Rs. 12 for minors would be the minimum. This must be fixed by legislative provisions.

106. *Extent of Fining.*—Rs. 2 a month out of the salary is called bonus for regular attendance and is lost even for trivial reasons. One or two days' absence for unavoidable reasons or coming late to work entails the loss of these Rs. 2. There is fining for all sorts of faults, quite disproportionate to the same. A fine should never be more than 4 annas. It is desirable to abolish fining altogether and introduce a system of black marks. Fining low-salaried people is morally unjustifiable.

(2) Other deductions are made for breaking articles, defective work and so on. Very often the breakages may be due to no fault of the workman. A fair set of rules must be printed and published, and subject to control by the inspector of factories and the labour council.

(3) The workmen do not know how the fines are utilised. In the railways they are utilised for general purposes. They must be paid to the workmen's union for common benefit.

(4) It is desirable to have some legislation for deductions, fines and using of same. The workmen must have the final control over the spending of the fines for their own public good, except in cases of sabotage when the fine or deduction may be used for compensating the employer.

107. The wages for textile labour were always paid by the month. Formerly they used to be paid by the third week of the next month, sometimes as late as the 26th of the following month. Now they are paid on the second Saturday in the case of those who have been regular and the third Saturday in the case of those who have been irregular. Often times people dismissed in the middle of the month are not paid their wages which are kept back. In the strike of 1927 some of the mills withheld payment for 23 or 24 days of the following month. The employees threatened the agents with civil suits, and only after the strike ended was payment made. There should be no interval between the wages to be paid and the first of the following month or fortnight. In cases of those dispensed with in the middle of the period the wages should be paid within three days. Legislative provision must be made for application without stamp to the local magistrate, and they should be empowered to direct payment within three days failing which penalty should be levied from the employer. The poverty and helplessness of the wage-earner and the obstinacy of the employer necessitate such legislation. It will punish the unjust employer and not inflict any harm upon the just one. It is desirable that wages should be paid at least every fortnight; it will contribute indirectly to reduce the indebtedness of the labourer and his necessity to borrow before the month expires. Fortnightly payments are the rule in railway workshops, and they work very satisfactorily.

108. Indebtedness both in the village and industrial areas is due to marriages, funerals, sickness, low pay, and other inevitable causes like child-birth, and also to the system of buying provisions on credit necessitated by delay in payment of wages.

(i) Indebtedness does not weigh very heavily in the village because the creditor is usually his landlord, and if he wants the labourer for the future he collects less interest, makes concession even in the principal and gradually collects his dues by taking the wage-earner's cattle, products of labour, etc., and by extending time of repayment. If the labourer is disliked in the village he is smashed more summarily than in the factory.

(ii) In industrial areas a debt once incurred never gets fully repaid. Interest ranges from 15 to 75 per cent., and whatever the wage-earner is compelled to pay goes to the interest. The average indebtedness of a labourer is Rs. 100. On occasions the debt is incurred for building, the house itself is usually pledged for the same. Generally the house itself is lost for the principal and interest. A scheme of co-operative saving and lending must be devised by Government with the help of the co-operative department. If such a system is introduced the problem of indebtedness would be solved and wage-earners would have opportunities of making some savings.

109. There is no bonus or profit-sharing scheme. The so-called bonus is only salary withheld. There are divided equalisation funds for the shareholders, but there is no fund for against fall of wages.

In strikes they meet together and act in concert to break the same, and they are successful.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. (ii) *Among Labourers.*—Since 1920 there has been a labour union, but consequent upon the employers threatening the workers and taking all sorts of means to stifle the union the same is working by fits and starts. The main objection stated by the employer is that outsiders are in the executive. The Trade Union Act permits waiting for the day when the labourers themselves will be able, under present conditions of hours, wages, want of education and other disabilities, to manage their unions will be waiting for the millennium.

Long hours of labour with no leisure to attend union meetings, poverty, indebtedness, interference by the maistries, unprepared strikes, have affected the even course of the work of the labour union. There are not enough people among the wage-earners themselves to have the time or capacity to run the union. The work of the union has to be done by outside workers. Shortly after the starting of the union, a labour bank and stores was organized for the benefit of the workers, but, unfortunately, owing to bad management, the non-co-operation movement and faction amongst the labourers there was loss. The failure on the part of the leaders of the



public to take interest in the stores and banks had also its part in the failure. The bank and the stores passed from the hands of the labourers into the hands of country ryots, and they in their turn have wound up the same. Unless there is a class of trained workers, as in England, paid for by the labourers themselves and unless there are improvements in wages, shortening of hours of work and education, the future of trade union activity in this country must be very dismal. The workers are very enthusiastic, but mere enthusiasm is futile. Trained trade union accountants and clerks must take charge of their funds. The hostility of the employer and the machinations of the maistries must cease.

The local union has not been registered under the Trade Union Act. It was partly due to the effect of an extensive strike in 1927, the arrest of the president, a most comprehensive order under Sections 144 and 107 of the Criminal Procedure Code struck terror into the hearts of the labourers, and they have not recovered from the shock. Further, in the Kaleswarar Mills a peculiar form of agreement was forced from the employees. In the Kaleswarar Mills they have got a compulsory union controlled entirely by the clerical staff, each labourer is compelled to pay if he earns Rs. 10 and above, 4 annas; Rs. 15, 6 annas; Rs. 20, 8 annas; Rs. 25, 10 annas. Usually no labourer gets more than Rs. 25; the fund thus realized is lent out at 15 per cent. interest on loans up to Rs. 100, covered by pro-notes from the debtor and two other employees. The loan is repaid by deductions from monthly wages for ten months. In the Kaleswarar Mills they supply rice, deducting from wages at 6½ measures per rupee, the average price in the bazaar for cash is 7¼ to 6½ measures.

The workers are afraid they would be dismissed if they are active in the union. Mere registration would not do. There must be legislative provision for the recognition of the union by the employer and the Government, and some liaison must be created between the trade union, Labour Commissioner and the co-operative department.

122. If the trade union becomes a legalised entity, recognized by the employer and the Government, collective bargaining will become a matter of course. There will then be co-operation between the employers and the employed. Labour placed on equal terms with Capital always contributes to real efficiency and smoother working. Employees in State industrial concerns, like the Cordite Factory, have been forbidden to join the All-India Trade Union. The freedom to affiliate should be restored even to unions attached to Government factories.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

The Trade Disputes Act must be modified so as to provide for compulsory arbitration. The Labour Commissioner must not be merely one in name, but should have legal status in industrial disputes. The local Government is not sympathetic in its use of the Trade Disputes Act. It is mainly due to the fact that workers have not their men in the legislative councils to espouse their cause, or in bringing pressure upon Government. A vacancy in a high office creates more sensation than wide lock-outs or extensive strikes.

123. There have been a number of strikes in various departments during the last ten years. Invariably the labourers have failed because they have no savings to fall back upon nor are the public sympathetic. The politicians take little interest. The gains have been quite disproportionate to the loss caused by the strike.

In 1927 there was a big strike which happened all of a sudden, the immediate cause being petty prosecution of a few labourers. The real causes were long hours of work, want of good sanitary conditions, cut in wages by 15 per cent., in heavy fines, persecution by maistries, and want of sympathetic treatment by the superior staff. The strike went on for 23 days. The activity of the workers was interfered with by the imprisonment of the president, and orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code against any speeches, writing, or other activity. The strike broke, but labour did not gain any of its points. A very large number of labourers alleged to have taken part in the activity of the union were dismissed. The victimization was so general and hard that the workers have not yet recovered from the shock (Section 144 is often misused to prevent legitimate activity, and it is due to this fact that employers have got very great influence with the authorities both locally and in headquarters. The Commission must by this time be aware of the use of Section 144 within the last few weeks in Madura and Coimbatore.)

Nearly 400 to 500 men who were taking very useful part in the union have left Coimbatore for Bombay, Madras, Pondicherry, Colombo, Singapore, and other places.

This has caused such a shock that few labourers now offer even in public meetings to work as committee members or other office-bearers.

*Treatment of Labour by Government Officers.*—A copy of order under Section 144 recently issued by the District Magistrate of Coimbatore to the president is submitted. The courtesy of language, the tone of the whole order and mis-statements regarding the notice (copy of which is also submitted) leave no room for comment. A copy of the order of 1927 will be submitted.

#### XVII.—Administration.

The provincial legislatures constituted as they are at present with franchise based on payment of land tax and income tax are not likely and do not as a matter of fact care to study, or tackle labour problems. The only remedy is to enlarge the franchise and give adult suffrage for all. The power of the vote will secure for labour what it needs and that alone can. This applies to local and legislative bodies.

136. A word about the Labour Commissioner. He is a highly-paid officer of Government, travels from one end of the province to another and draws a heavy *bhatta* and travelling allowance, which on one occasion drew attention even of the legislature. He does no real labour work, except that he is a registrar of Trade Unions and has to do some work under Compensation Act. He does very little when strikes take place. He has got few functions in the Labour movement, though he is called Labour Commissioner. He is always a bureaucrat and does work in the acquisition of land for the depressed classes. Even amongst them on many occasions he has not commanded confidence. One of the Ministers must take full control of the Labour Department, and a special officer, preferably an Indian with training in Europe and experience in trade union work in Europe should be appointed—then only the Labour Commissioner will be one not merely in name but in fact.

139. Factory inspection by Government Inspector is no good unless he is assisted by a small body of Labour representatives to help him, these must have statutory positions and powers. Factory laws in this country must be brought to the level of the English law.

142. *Plantations and other Industrial Establishments.*—A separate note has already been given regarding Anamalais plantations. The conditions in the Nilgiris is somewhat better than in the Anamalais because the estates are not close preserves where the planter has got full sway. The Nilgiri estates are situated in the midst of other lands and are subject to public influence. But the main suggestions for the betterment of labourers apply to the Nilgiris also.

The condition of labour in tanneries, which are numerous in Coimbatore, are deplorable, only the so-called depressed classes serve in the tanneries. A special committee must be appointed to investigate the condition of labour in tanneries. Their hours of work in the tanneries sometimes run to 12 and 14 per day. Their occupation is unhealthy and proper steps must be taken regarding their health.

Their wages also are lower than manual labour in the surrounding areas, the supervision is always harsh and the pity is their low position in society hinders any progress, and few public workers care for them.

*The Handloom Weavers.*—Coimbatore is an ancient and famous weaving centre for country cloth, particularly lace and silk, capitalists advance moneys, silk, yarn lace to weaving families, get the produce giving them wages. The weaver is always poor and in debt, the whole of the weaving of Coimbatore town is in the hands of a number of capitalists, formerly local, and now Marwaris from North India have invaded. The weaver is charged certain value for raw material; if he returns any unused material he is credited only half value, if there is brisk cloth trade he gets a certain rate, if business is dull and finished article is not taken, the weavers are usually addicted to drink and curiously enough are blessed with too many children. A visit to a weaver's house will show their poverty, insanitation, and poor health. There must be a special enquiry regarding their conditions, which are sometimes as harsh as slavery. Attempts for co-operative societies for them, both in Coimbatore and outside, have failed because many of the capitalists are their own caste people, and they are a very clannish class.

#### XVIII.—Intelligence.

143. There are no statistics in this presidency. In Bombay the Labour Department does some useful work in this line. The Labour Commissioner must be directed to do the needful for securing statistics regarding unemployment movement from village to towns and *vice versa*, rise and fall in wages and prices, child-birth, mortality, and disease.

(One point has been omitted in the above, namely, provisions for tiffin shed in factories. The labourers sit on the roadside or open land and take their mid-day meal amidst dust, dirt, sunshine and noise, this means disease and bad health. There must be provision in the Factory Act for good tiffin and dining rooms.)

This memorandum\* has been prepared after issuing a questionnaire, copy of which is herewith supplied. About 1,500 labourers in the textile mills have filled in the form. The memorandum was also placed before a meeting of the labourers and adopted by them.

In the Court of the District Magistrate of Coimbatore.

Present :—E. F. Thomas, Esq., C.I.E., I.C.S., District Magistrate.

Miscellaneous Case No. 2 of 1930.

*Order under Section 144, Criminal Procedure Code.*

To M. R. RY. N.S. RAMASWAMI AYYANGAR, Avl., B.A., B.L., High Court Vakil, Coimbatore.

I have received information from the Sub-Inspector of Police, Valparai Station, Anamalais, that a notice has been broadcasted in the Anamalai planting area by one, N. S. Ramaswami Ayyangar, calling a monster meeting at about 4 p.m. at the Maidan Valparai to better the prospects of male, female and young coolies. The notice further states that the misdeeds generally done by the maistries and clerks will be discussed. The notice states also that from 9 in the morning private interviews can be had with the convener.

The notice is obviously provocative, coming from one who has or does not claim any knowledge of planting conditions, and who has dabbled before; with ill-results to labour, in labour troubles.

Sunday is the shandy day at Valparai, at which a very large number of estate employees, estimated at 2,000 and more, usually purchase their requirements for the week. These labourers are of all castes and creeds, and there has apparently been no local demand on the part of any considerable body of labourers for the agitation of this gentleman which is thrust upon them from outside. The floating population of labourers includes a considerable number of Mappillas, who have had experience and suffered from agitation of the kind in their own country, and the police report indicates a strong probability that this class of labour may actively resent the agitation thus introduced into the planting area, so much so that the security and life of the convener may be difficult to safeguard. The report further represents that a considerable proportion of the employees on the plateau are definitely opposed to agitation of this kind, and in the excitement of the moment may lose control of themselves and precipitate a serious riot.

From the police report, the substance of which is summarised above, I am satisfied that in the interests of preserving the public tranquillity, action for immediate prevention is desirable; therefore I hereby order the above mentioned N. S. Ramaswami Ayyangar not to hold any sort of conference or meeting at Valparai, or within sixteen miles of Valparai. This order will be in force for two months unless rescinded by competent authority. In view of the fact that the notice is for a meeting to be held on Sunday, 23rd February, 1930, and of my absence in camp at Bhavani, sixty-two miles from Coimbatore, where counter-petitioner is resident, this urgent order is passed *ex parte* the counter-petitioner.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this Twenty-first day of February, 1930.

Camp Bhavani.

E. F. Thomas,  
District Magistrate.

To the Inspector of Police, Coimbatore Town, for immediate service and report.

#### NOTICE.

*To the Labourers, Anamalais Estates.*

To ascertain the grievances of men, women and children working in the tea, coffee and other estates on the Anamalais to remedy the same a meeting will be held in the Midan at Valparai on Sunday the 23rd from 12 to 4 p.m. The grievances of maistries and clerks will be discussed and steps taken.

Steps will be taken for ventilating grievances before the Royal Commission and secure redress.

As this is an important occasion for redressing the grievances of the above said coolies, maistries, and clerks everybody is requested to attend, without failure. From morning 9 a.m. the undersigned may be interviewed and spoken to by those who wish to do so.

N. S. Ramaswamy Ayyangar, B.A., B.L.,  
Advocate-Vakil,  
Labour Union President,  
Coimbatore.

\* In Tamil.

Mr. N. S. RAMASWAMY AYYANGAR, PRESIDENT, LABOUR UNION,  
COIMBATORE.

*A Note on Anamalai Plantations.*

All the estates on the Anamalais are entirely owned by European firms and managed by European planters. The total acreage, under cultivation, is 32 to 35 thousand acres of which three to four thousand are coffee, cinchona, and cardamoms, and other minor products.

The Planting Directory, available at Messrs. Higginbothams, gives correct information as to the acreage of tea, coffee, cardamoms, and other products planted, and the names of firms owning the estates.

*Climatic Conditions.*—The climatic condition, on the Anamalais is somewhat extreme during the seasons. There has been decrease of rainfall during recent years said to be due to clearing of jungle. From March to June, a large percentage of residents are ill with malarial fever. From the middle of June to the early part of October, is the south-west monsoon. From the middle of October to the end of November there is good sunshine during the day and showers of rain in the afternoon. This period is somewhat healthy. From the middle of December to the end of February, is the frosty season; during this period the heat of the day is trying, and the cold of the night is unbearable.

*Opening of an Estate.*—An area of 200 to 300 acres of land is felled every year up to the acreage *dharkasted* by any one company. Felling and burning of jungle is usually undertaken by Moplah labourers of Malabar district, and is done in February and March. After felling and burning is over, preparations are made for planting, a fortnight earlier than the south-west monsoon sets in.

The land is obtained from Government by Dharkast, i.e., by grant. The estate begins to pay taxes, usually at the rate of Rs. 2 per acre, after the 5th year; when the estate begins to pay. Usually the Government does not collect tree value. The rules of Dharkast, i.e., grant are in contrast with the rules obtaining in the plains for the ordinary ryots and are very liberal to the planters. The planted area comes into bearing after four or five years. It roughly costs about Rs. 800 to make an acre yielding tea, and the time taken is five years.

The planning of an estate depends upon the taste and temperament of the manager, but generally it is as follows:—

*Manager's bungalow.*—These bungalows are costly, tastefully built, and luxuriously furnished. They are built on hill tops, and fitted with hot water tanks, and cold water pumped by hydraulic rams from the foot of the hill. These bungalows are also fitted with the latest sanitary conveniences.

*Sinna Dorais' bungalow.*—These are European assistants' bungalows. They are almost on the lines of the manager's bungalow only smaller in size. These "Sinna Dorais" are generally unmarried men and are from 18 to 20 years of age.

*Indian Subordinates' quarters.*—These quarters are scattered over the estate. They are located either by the roadside for convenience of work, or near swamps, for convenience of water. This is so, except in a few estates with a pipe system of water supply. Except in a few, the furniture provided is scanty and consists of two chairs, a table, and in some cases, cots. If the subordinate is influential he furnishes himself with extra furniture. Unlike the "Dorais" the Indian subordinates are not supplied with mattresses, pillows, blankets, or household utensils.

*Other buildings.*—On most estates, the factory, rice and tool stores are situated on the factory site. The estate offices are as near as possible to the manager's bungalows, and there are other minor buildings, such as dispensaries, etc., of lesser importance.

#### I.—Recruitment.

The Planters' Association, popularly known as the U.P.A.S.I. (United Planters' Association of Southern India) has its branch in every district, and as a part of their organization, they have their labour department. Agencies of this department are to be found in all labour centres, viz., Coimbatore, Salem, Trichinopoly, Tinnevelly, Pudukottah (a new connection), Madura, Mysore and Malabar. The different districts are divided into divisions. They are all under European management, and are staffed with Indian subordinates.

The labour department recommends a man of influence and property as a recruiter. He is called a maistry or kangany. Should the estate manager consider anyone as a capable maistry he refers him to the labour department. This department enquires about his financial status in his village and gives him such sum as he may require for making advances to the labourers. This person becomes a maistry and is called kangany.

The maistry advances the money either to the labourers individually or to families (the number alters) taking a pro-note in his name for the money he advances. In most cases he pays half the money entered in the pro-note and promises to pay the other half, on arrival at the estate. This is scarcely done. If after arrival at the estate he claims the other half he is summarily dealt with. After paying the advance and taking the pro-note, the maistry arranges with the labour department of the U.P.A.S.I. for the purchase of the necessary railway tickets, for the recruited coolies and the agent sees them off by train. Once the coolies are entrained and until they reach the estate, via Pollachi (the railway terminus); the maistry has full control over them. The coolies are also paid batta by the labour agent according to the distances they have to travel from the railway station.

The rates of advances for coolies from different districts are as follows :—

Districts.	Individuals.	Families of 8 to 10.
Coimbatore .. ..	Rs. 5 to Rs. 10	Rs. 50 to Rs. 100.
Trichinopoly .. ..	Rs. 5 to Rs. 10.	Rs. 50 to Rs. 100.
Tinnevelley* .. ..	Rs. 10 to Rs. 20.	Rs. 150 to Rs. 200.
Malabar† .. ..	Rs. 5 to Rs. 10.	

There are practically no Moplahs as permanent coolies.

On arrival at Pollachi the coolies report themselves either to the estate agent or to the labour agent of the U.P.A.S.I. Some estates provide motor-bus fares for the coolies to reach the estates. Generally the coolies walk the distance of 50 to 60 miles from Pollachi to the estates. They take two or three days and reach the estates in an exhausted condition. On the way they have to shift for their food and shelter. Should their journey be during the monsoon months of June, July and August, as it often happens to be, it is miserable. Since the agitation in 1924, however, there is an inn (chatram) at the 14th mile to afford shelter. For some time there was food given but now it has been stopped—there is a dispensary in the chatram (inn).

Having arrived at the estate the coolies are entered on the estate register. After this, their wages are fixed either by the manager, sinna dorai, or conductor. The rate of wages is 6 or 7 annas per diem in the case of men, 5 annas for women, 4 annas for girls, and 2 or 3 annas for children under 12 years of age. Rations are issued to the coolies at the following rates per week :—

Rice, seven measures per Re.1, and either cash of 8 annas or an order is issued on the estate bazaar, (With this amount of 8 annas the coolie has to provide himself with cooking utensils, chatty pots, etc., vessels which cost more than glassware on the plains) for the first week and 4 annas for the succeeding weeks.

Each coolie is supplied with a blanket (cumbly) which, for a male adult is charged Rs. 3-4 annas, for women Rs. 2-4 annas, and for children Re.1.

The above items are debited to the coolie's account in the check roll. The cumbly is intended to protect him while work in rain and to cover him during the chill nights.

The wages are not usually paid to the coolie but credited to his account. The maistry has to get back his advances and other monies due to him. The accounts of the coolies are settled once in ten months. There is ample scope for the maistries to give wrong accounts. The coolie has no accounts of his own and so he is at the mercy of the maistry.

Coolies reside in rooms built in so-called "lines" which consist of 10, 12 or 16 rooms, formerly with no verandah or with only a small verandah in front. In each room two or three families or 10 to 15 people live. There are no locks to the doors and hence no safety.

The coolie is usually given one day to register himself and get his rice and cumbly issued to him. On the following day, or the day after, he has to commence work. In the case of new coolies it takes them almost a week or more to recover from the exhaustion of the walk from Pollachi to the estates; and it takes them a further month to get settled down. Within that time they usually contract malaria for which they are treated. Medicine, usually quinine, is given free but food supplied to the coolie during illness is debited to his account.

*Causes of Migration to the Plantations.*—The planter advances a maistry or kangany sums from Rs. 100 to Rs. 4,000 for recruiting coolies. The kangany or maistry goes about village fairs (shandies) and festive places and paints a rosy picture of life and wages on the hills. The outcasts, the immoral women, the oppressed

\* This high advance is due to the fact that more women (who are generally good pluckers of leaf) come from this district.

† This small advance is due to the poverty and distress in this district, consequent on bad seasons and the effects of the Moplah rebellion.

coolies of the village, men and women who quarrel with their kith and kin, disappointed people and such sort are easily prevailed upon and they respond to the call of the kanganies. Failure of rain, bad seasons, agricultural distress, and degrading treatment afforded to Audi-Drivadas in the villages contribute to the migration.

Most of the coolies are Audi-Drivadas (depressed classes) belonging to the districts of Coimbatore, Salem, Trichinopoly, Madura, Mysore and Malabar. It is significant that the Vellala Gowndens, Naickens and other caste Hindus who are the bulk of the population of the Coimbatore district in which the Anamalais are situated do not care to serve on the plantations. This shows that proximate and local labour does not respond as the conditions of service are bad and people are better off in their own villages in spite of bad seasons, local oppression and distress. This circumstance alone proves the unenviable conditions of wages, hours of work and other points relating to the coolies dealt with in this memorandum.

*Suggested Improvement in the Method of Recruitment.*—In my considered opinion the employment of middlemen, maistries, kanganies or labour suppliers should be abolished. A special labour board should be appointed in important centres and supervised by local and non-official bodies and worked with the help of the local branch of the U.P.A.S.I. Labourers desirous of going to the plantations should apply to this board for employment. This must be done by the Government with the help of non-officials. During the war there were recruiting committees manned mainly by representative Indians and presided over by the Taluk Tahsildar. They were quite successful, similar bodies must be created for the recruitment of labour.

## II.—Staff Organisation.

For an acreage of over 1,000 acres.

*Manager.*—Salary, Rs. 1,000 per mensem; allowances, Rs. 200 per mensem; bonus, Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 10,000 per annum.

*European Assistants*—For the first three to four years, salary, Rs. 300 to Rs. 400; allowances, Rs. 75 to Rs. 100; bonus, Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,500 per annum, and after that period the rate of increase is Rs. 25 to Rs. 50 a year until they receive Rs. 600. Then they become managers.

### Office Establishment.

*Head Clerk.*—Salary, Rs. 75 to Rs. 120 per mensem. Allowances on few estates at Rs. 15 per mensem.

*Assistant Clerks.*—For an estate of 1,000 acres, one head clerk and one assistant—very rarely two assistants. The rate of salary for these is from Rs. 25 to Rs. 50 in few cases more.

*Conductors.*—Rs. 75 to Rs. 100, a little more in a few cases.

*Assistant Conductors or Kanachapillays.*—Rs. 15 to Rs. 35.

*Tea-makers.*—In a factory which produces 3 to 6 lakhs pounds of tea per annum, Rs. 80 to Rs. 130.

*Tea-makers' Assistants.*—In a factory which produces 3 to 6 lakhs pounds of tea per annum, Rs. 25 to Rs. 70.

*Store-keeper.*—Rs. 30 to Rs. 60.

*Apothecarys—Usually Indian.*—Rs. 50 to Rs. 100.

*Chief Medical Officers and their Establishment.*—Their salaries usually mount up to half of the medical expenditure of the group of estates for which there is a chief medical officer—his salary ranges from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,500. He gets an allowance of roughly Rs. 500 per mensem.

*Visiting Agents.*—At the rate of Re. 1 per acre per mensem for the acreage they visit.

*Group Managers and their Office Establishment.*—These are paid Rs. 12 per acre per annum. These represent Board of Directors of the estate and they get per month Re. 1 per acre.

*Cooly Labour.*—Men, 7 annas; youths, 6 annas; women, 5 annas; girls, 4 annas; children 7 to 12 years of age, 2 to 3 annas.

*Maistries or Labour Suppliers.*—Seven to eight annas wages per day plus 10 to 15 per cent. commission on total earnings of the coolies per mensem. In a few cases these maistries are paid a monthly salary of Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 a month instead of daily wages.

If during the rains or unhealthy seasons the coolies' outturn is poor, the commission is reduced from 10 to 7½ per cent. It will be noted that as the wages for the coolies depend on outturn, he must necessarily protect his own interests, and exact as much work as possible from the coolies.

There is no prospect for any Indian to rise to anything higher than a head clerk. He can never become even an assistant manager.

Suggestion.—The service for Indians be regulated and opportunities for improvements so offered that young men who enter as clerks or conductors and tea-makers should have prospects of rising some day in their life to the position of at least an assistant manager.

### III.—Housing.

Housing of the managers and European assistant is a matter which needs no mention as it is quite satisfactory.

Housing for the Subordinates.—This is also satisfactory in many estates but the scanty furniture supplied to most of them require some attention. For convenience of water and work, many of these quarters are built by side of swamps and roadsides and invariably they are unhealthy. Improvement is possible by draining the swamps.

Quarters for Labourers—Lines.—These lines are scattered all over the estate, and most of them stand by the side of swamps for ensuring water convenience. No bathing or washing arrangements exist. They are merely single rooms built in a line of 10, 12 or 16 rooms. There is neither enough space nor privacy in the rooms. Each room has to be occupied by 10 to 15 persons or 2 or 3 families which usually total 12 to 15 persons. Men, women and children all have to live in these rooms together. Childbirth and other functions have to take place in these crowded rooms.

Suggestion—Improvement.—I would suggest that the lines be on the following plan—each set for a family should consist of:—(1) Kitchen, (2) store-room, (3) dwelling room with front and back verandahs enclosed.

Each line must have a long bathing shed with partition for women and there must be arrangement for supply of hot water, soap or country power so as to ensure a bath every evening after work. At present the coolies men and women go to the swamps or streams and endanger their health by exposure and bathing in cold water during all seasons. Their clothing is scanty, and they have no change after their bath. Better wages will enable the labourers to supply themselves with enough clothing.

Housing and Property.—Almost all the planters secure their lands from the Government on grant on nominal terms. They pay only an average of Rs. 2 per acre and that too after the tea comes into bearing. During the first five years no tree value is collected at all and none of the darkhast rules which apply to the Indians on the plains are applicable to planters. There is no reason why there should not be a system of co-operative effort by which a labourer after 15 to 20 years of service could become the owner of some plot of paddy or other land for many of the swamps and the lower portions of the hills in which tea or coffee could not profitably be grown may be converted into holdings, that can be owned and worked by employees for raising paddy, vegetables, etc. A similar system is alleged to have been in vogue in British Guiana. There must be a method by which coolies after some years own the houses they live in. Government must contribute and the co-operative departments of the Government can easily solve this with the help of the employer.

### IV.—Health.

Even the defective medical records of the estates will show that 50 per cent of the incoming coolies get attacked with malaria and that within a few months of their arrival. As the lines are near the swamps, their liability to malaria is great. Malaria is a wasting disease, and it takes years of careful attention for complete cure which is seldom. Appetite for food is lost and the after-effects are depressing. Next to malaria, pneumonia and influenza make a very heavy toll. During the last 10 years there was only one epidemic of cholera. Dysentery and diarrhoea occasionally occur and it is due to bad and immature rice.

Figures of Mortality.—No reliable figures are available. It is quite easy to devise methods by which each estate may report casualties to the police station at Valparai and to have a register there.

Birth Rate and Infant Mortality.—It is quite an easy matter to arrange for registration of births and death statistics, and the same may be published once a year in the *District Gazette*.

*Remedies.*—All these diseases in the plantations could be prevented. When the European staff enjoy good health there is no reason the coolies should not also do so. The swamps must be cleared, jungle lands made open by removing undergrowth, good protected water supplied, clothing to prevent the effects of cold and chill and enough food provisions of good quality ensured.

*Physique.*—The conditions of life are so poor, the attacks of disease so constant, the climate and living, the food taken, the absence of all recreations, the non-participation in any festivities, all these contribute to lower the physique and reduce average life to 10 to 15 years of stay. To save his life the coolie runs away after 2 or 3 years of service on the hills. If he becomes ill and not useful he is sent away and thrown as a beggar, on the plains. This created a big agitation in 1924.

*Drinking Water.*—Unless good protected water supply is ensured the health of the labourer can never be satisfactory.

*Bathing and Washing.*—As I have already mentioned there is no convenience at all and this must be attended to.

*Special Board of Health.*—Government aid must be given. Inspection of health of the coolies once a year, even as it is done in the case of schools and colleges should be enforced.

*Latrines.*—The latrines in existence on the Anamalais are built of timber, which after one or two years rots into the earth. The coolie goes and commits nuisance all over the place, including banks of streams, contaminating the water he drinks. Pucca latrines with flush arrangements, which is quite possible on the hills, ample and spacious enough, with separate apartments for women should be introduced. They should be cleaned with disinfectants twice a day. The latrines for the workshop people at Golden Rock (Trichy) S.I. Railway may be taken as a model.

*Sex Problem and Morality.*—As regards the European staff, there was a practice of importing girls from Cannanore and Tellicherry for the use of these, but this practice is not now countenanced. ✓

Amongst coolies the proportion of men to the number of women working in the hills is very low. Social out-caste, ex-communication, villagers setting up their face against immoral women, bad treatment by their husbands and near relatives, absence of widow re-marriage, and false promises of the maistries; these alone, are responsible for women leaving their homes and going to the estates. Overcrowding in single rooms, sometimes running to 15, prevents sexual morality.

The number of married women who live with their husbands will only be about 50 per cent. The position of women is miserable and ought to secure public sympathy and pity. This leads naturally to the prevalence of venereal diseases in a large measure. Married men and women often times live outside their rooms at nights preferring the chill, the cold and the dew to living inside crowded rooms, where privacy is impossible.

*Dietary, Rice.*—The rice supplied to the coolies is of inferior type costs Rs.12 to Rs. 13 per bag of 160 lbs. and bought in large quantities of 5 to 10,000 bags. During the monsoon the rice deteriorates and is unfit for human consumption. Though it is said to be seven measures per rupee—the actual quantity after cleaning, comes to 4½ to 5 measures per rupee. Each cooly is expected to live for the six days in good health on the 4½ to 5 measures of unhealthy rice. The coolie therefore gets neither the full value nor quality for his rupee. On the plains good, cleaned Samba rice is available at 7 to 7½ measures per rupee.

*Provisions.*—The weekly cash of 4 annas given to the cooly is very small, particularly as things cost in the hills 50 per cent. more than they do on the plains.

*Suggestions.*—The supply of rice by the estate must stop. The salaries of the coolies must be pitched at a living wage. Co-operative stores must be established and the estate management must take an interest in these stores, capital must be supplied by Government and employers' help taken. The cooly must purchase his own requirements direct from the stores and not in doles as at present.

## V.—Welfare.

*Creche.*—The meals are only worth 3½ pies which is not likely to do much good. Their condition is poor.

## VI.—Education.

There is nothing to be said under this head as there are no schools for adult men and women.

Each estate has what is known as a part-time school for children. They are no good, the staff is poor and untrained. The Government must take up the management of these schools and the public treasury must pay. The estate must be relieved of this



expenditure. If this is done, the necessary improvement will be effected. A proper curricula of studies fit for labourers must be introduced and trained teachers employed.

At present the schools work from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and the children get some kanji (rice-generally) of which the less said the better.

### IX.—Hours.

Hours of work do not vary in estates but are 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is no break during the day for midday meals and very few coolies carry any food.

On some estates women are allowed to nurse their babes during the day—in most cases this is not allowed. The creche as it is at present is poor and insufficient, and Government supervision and contributions are necessary.

There is no concession during monsoon in this season. Even then the cooly is expected to be in the field throughout from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. New coolies are not given any concession but are expected to work as old coolies. It takes them not less than three months to clear off their initial check roll debt, i.e., cost of initial rice and cumby during this period they become ill and very often they run away from estates.

These hours of work apply to the Indian subordinate staff also.

*Suggestion.*—There must be legislative provision for reducing the hours to a maximum of eight per day with one and a half hour interval for midday food.

### XII.—Wages.

The system of daily wages is obnoxious, legislative provisions or some formal agreement with planters is essential—each adult male must receive not less than Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 a month, an adult woman Rs. 15 to Rs. 20, and minors Rs. 12 to Rs. 15. These wages must be paid once a fortnight as in the case of railway workshops—directly to the wage earners, without any reduction whatever and without the intervention of a maistry or clerk.

Supply of rice and cumblies or paying advances through maistries must stop. It will be quite possible to arrange for co-operative societies working two branches, one branch being for supply of necessaries, and another branch working as a bank for the purpose of accumulating the savings of the labourers and for lending money to the labourers for their needs under certain fixed rules. If necessary, the expenses for such improvements ought to be contributed to by the State also, instead of making planters bear the whole.

Special clothing allowance of Rs. 12 per year payable in two instalments should be made and system of supplying cumblies and debiting be abolished. If the clothing allowance should become the rule, the Co-operative Society stores suggested will see to the supply of good blankets and clothing. And the coolies will have the option of even spending something extra according to their requirements. At present the coolie has no option but to accept the blanket given to him like the prisoner in jail—the latter at least receives a better blanket than the coolie.

*Holidays and Leaves.*—When a person becomes sick, as one does very often, owing to the nature of the climate, the heavy rain and the malaria, he is sent out of the estate, and both in his own interest and in the interest of the estate, he has got to give place to a healthy man, who in his turn shares the same fate. There is no leave given, either casual or privilege. Every year the same number of holidays that are given to the subordinate staff in the postal, telegraph, railway and other services should be extended to these coolies, and legislative provision should be made that the employer does not cut away the salaries of these coolies during the period of such leave as may be settled upon. Seven days casual leave and month's privilege leave with full pay should be introduced by legislation.

*Cow Slaughters.*—This is due to the fact that no vegetable are grown for local consumption. Usually very poor and unhealthy cows are brought up by private butchers and the beef is supplied by them. It will be quite possible for the employer to give a portion of land to the labourers in which they can cultivate vegetable and use the same for their consumption, if not for marketing.

Every labourer in the country keeps his own cow or buffalo. This is a source of profit or income for him. His wife or child looks after this and the proceeds of the milk will be an addition to his income and used for the babies. A cow is therefore a boon to his income. It will be desirable that the labourer is encouraged to have his own cow and buffalo. At present a labourer cannot keep any cattle. This ensures milk for the little ones, and extra source of income without any detriment to the planter or to the estate. It is said in America amongst the Negroes, Booker Washington used to preach for each Negro keeping a pig and he calculated that in the course of 20 years the Negroes own four million dollars worth of pigs. At present the labourer in the plantations is a mere slave working for the estate.

### General.

Apart from suggestions made under the various heads, I have to submit the following also :—It is highly desirable that a registered labour union be formed on the Anamalais and Nilgiris, etc., and that the authorities of the labour union be permitted to visit estates as often as possible and be given the powers and privileges accorded to the official visitors of jails. There must be a separate ministry for labour in the province. Labourers must be given direct representation in the local and legislative bodies, like the planters and it must be by election by labourers themselves.

The object of reform must not merely be to improve labour for securing efficiency. Labourers must be made citizens and all the privileges of citizenship must be extended to them. Attention during babyhood and youth, education, acquisition of property, saving, recreation, social amenities, religious facilities and all rights and privileges which we possess should be afforded to them. In the note prepared by Mr. C. V. Venkataramana Iyengar at the instance of the planters this objective is entirely overlooked. His suggestions will only make the labourer a more efficient workman for the planter.

Co-operative stores, saving and lending societies, insurances against death, and disabling diseases, provident funds, provisions against sickness and accidents, prospects of a gradual rise both in salary and in position, all these must be provided for. To start with every labourer should be given a vote for the local bodies and for legislatures.

At present there is not much distinction between the life in jail and life on the estate. The latter is more hard. To start with the worker enters a plantation by receiving an advance from a maistry, which he has got to work off on the estates. Indebtedness is in practice worse than slavery and that has been so throughout the ages. He leaves his village and surroundings. He has no society of his own. His whole object and end in life is to work on the plantations. His conductor, his maistry, and his supervisor all look upon him merely as a working animal. His food is poor, he has to cook for himself when unmarried, and his clothing is scanty. He has no amusements. He has no temples or churches, no festivities for him, no village assemblies and nothing to cheer and improve his life.

In jail a prisoner works only eight hours. He gets three meals and is clean and healthy; the slightest ailment is attended to by competent doctors. His condition is always attended to by agitation in legislatures. He gets good clothing, ample room to live in, excellent latrines, sanitary bathing arrangements and instructions in profitable arts such as weaving, spinning, printing, etc. Now-a-days there is provision also for moral instruction and news is communicated to the prisoner by means of jail magazines and other papers. The recent change in jail rules is significant except that the prisoner cannot enjoy the company of his wife and children, his position is in every respect better than that of a cooly in the plantations. A slight out-break of cholera in any jail will create an uproar, and yet you will find in the plantations every cooly contracting malaria; some dying of it and almost all weakened for life by its effects.

The main body of the population of the hills are the poor Audi Dravadas—the so-called depressed classes, hardly able to fight their rights on the plains and much less on the hills. Is it too much to expect that his condition on the plantations should at least approximate to that of a convict in jail.

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### P. AUDIAH NAIDU, LATE TAHSILDAR OF PARLAKIMEDI.

Savaras, who reside in the Agency tracts attached to Parlakimedi Taluk, form the chief labour recruits for Assam from Ganjam district, and I confine myself to Savaras in dealing with the subjects relating to recruitment, etc.

#### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) Agency tracts of Parlakimedi Taluk and portions of Ramagiri-Udayagiri Taluk.

(ii) (a) The Savaras live generally on slopes and on tops of hills. They are fond of podu cultivation (cultivation of hills) rather than plains, as the former is less costly and more productive. All the hills in the Agency were at their disposal. At the end of 1908, reservation of portions of hills in the Agency tracts of Parlakimedi was commenced by the Special Forest Department under the late Mr. Welchman, and the area has been restricted. Thus the restriction is one of the causes.

(b) The Savaras believe in "Goddess worship," and every Savara village has a worshipper (Poojari) popularly known as "Bhuyya." When a Savara is sick, he attributes his sickness to the wrath of the Goddess and seeks the advice of his Bhuyya, who proposes sacrifices: first a fowl, next a goat, then a pig, and lastly a he-buffalo, to the Goddess until he is cured. In the forts of the Agency tracts there are "Panos" alias "Dombos" who are the Sahucars of the Savaras. The Savara goes to his Pano Sahucar for the articles he requires. The Sahucar supplies the articles at exorbitant rates on condition of repayment of the values in grain at the time of harvest, and in case of default, he charges penal interest not less than 25 per cent. The debt swells as time goes on and cripples the Savara. When the Sahucar presses for repayment, the Savara, out of despair, goes to Assam. This pressure of the Sahucar is another cause.

(c) The Savara in the Agency tracts is very rude and uncivilized, and has only pieces of cloth for his loins and for his head. The Assam returned Savara wears pants, coats, etc. Thus an instinct to get himself civilized arises in him, and this is another cause for migration.

2. (i) Recruitment is extended to all the villages of Savara Agency. Every year Savaras go to the gardens and return to their villages. There is, thus, constant current of labour moving in and out.

3. *Methods of Recruitment.*—(ii) Paid recruiting system is not in use. It is a dangerous one and should be condemned, as it leads to illegal recruitment owing to greed for money. At present, sardar licences are being issued to Agency people, including the Oriyas, who settled in the fort villages. The Oriya settlers are "Patnaiks," "Mahantis," "Paikalis," "Brahmins," "Gowdus." The Oriya settlers are intelligent and mischievous. It is on account of these people that complaints of illegal recruitment are being received. I, therefore, propose to issue sardar licences to Savaras who work in the gardens only and not to other people in the Agency.

(iii) (a) Not necessary, as the Government are supervising the work; (b) Nil.

4. Not affected according to the present scheme, as the labourer can return at any time he likes.

6. *Recruitment for Assam.*—(i) The Government control, as at present, should be retained as the Savaras, who are wholly uneducated and uncivilized, are liable to be deceived while being recruited.

(iii) I learn that the Board consists of a certain number of supervisors and a chairman to supervise and inspect the offices of the various local agents, regarding the conduct of recruitment, by perusing the prescribed coolies' and sardars' registers and the sardars' diaries maintained by the local agents, and that the Board points out and sets right any irregularity in recruiting. I am not aware if the Board has control over the working of the gardens to ascertain the grievances of the workers as well as the employers. If the Board has not this control in the interest of employers as well as workers it is well if the Board is vested with such powers. I presume that the Board has some Indian members; if not, one or two Indian members may be added for this purpose.

(iv) According to the existing system, registration of recruits is entrusted to the local agents, who are the servants of the gardeners and who are naturally interested in their employers. It is not free from doubt if they exercise such scrutiny as was exercised in the past by the sub-divisional magistrates or the district magistrates when they were the registering officers. I, therefore, propose that the registration work may be done by any magistrate instead of by the local agents.

Mr. E. G. POWELL, PRESIDENT, THE CORDITE FACTORY LABOUR UNION, ARUVANKADU, NILGIRIS, SOUTH INDIA.

In response to your invitation dated 4th August, 1929, The Cordite Factory Labour Union desires me to submit the following memorandum for the information of the Commission. All the points and evidence covered by the memorandum have been fully considered by the managing committee of the union at its sittings on 10th and 11th September, and endorsed by the general body at its meetings on 16th September, 1929.

*Cordite Factory.*—This is one of the units of the various ordnance factories in India. It was established in the year 1902. The number of persons employed are 961, including 20 women; the employees are rated as follows:—Staff, about 44; clerks, 43; extra temporary, 667; temporary, 90.

### I.—Recruitment.

#### 3. (i) Direct.

(ii) It is desirable that some machinery should be established for enabling workers with a practical knowledge of their work to qualify theoretically (by classes and examinations) for promotion to higher grades instead of, as at present, recruiting from outside.

### II.—Staff Organisation.

12. (ii) The method of recruiting and training of supervising staff, especially with regard to subordinate staff, has been defective, inasmuch as such recruitment has generally been from outside. The introduction of the apprenticeship system in the year 1920 is an improvement, but it is felt that the choice for promotion to the superior staff in any department should be made from workers in that department who have by years of experience acquired a practical knowledge of the work done in that department, who are by character or other way qualified for higher responsibilities. It is therefore suggested that some kind of machinery should be established for enabling such workers to qualify theoretically by classes and examinations.

13. (i) The relationship between the management and the union (which in our case means practically all the workers) has, we are glad to say, been very cordial and on the whole, satisfactory since the union was formed in the year 1924. Both superintendent and the manager have recognized the union from the outset and have shown it every respect; we are satisfied that the union is capable of meeting the needs of the men in almost every respect. Our great difficulty is that, as we represent only a small fraction of the men in all the ordnance factories in India whose grievances and demands are on many matters identical with ours, there is a tendency on the part of the Army Headquarters at Simla to shelve our demands on the ground presumably that we represented only a fraction of the ordnance factory workers. As an illustration, our union made a demand for the introduction of a gratuity scheme on the lines obtaining on State railways as far back as 1924, and though this (union) request has been favourably received and supported by the management of the factory and by the Master-General of Supplies, and a scheme for starting a provident fund has been approved by the Government, the matter is "still pending." The remedy, of course, is in having a strong union in each of the ordnance factories, in federating the same, and in pressing matters of general import on the Central Authorities by and through the Federation.

### III.—Housing.

17. We suggest that the Government might build workers' houses outside the factory compound, and introduce a scheme (similar to that in operation in connection with some of the textile mills at Nagpur, and managed through the Y.M.C.A.), whereby the workers might acquire their own houses.

18. The accommodation for workers in the lines has hitherto been very defective. In some cases there has only been one room for married people, size 10 ft. by 12 ft. and 8 ft. by 10 ft.; but in response to repeated representations by the union, a scheme for house improvement has been sanctioned and is in progress. We suggest as a minimum of convenience, two rooms, size 10 ft. by 12 ft., with one kitchen, one bath room and one verandah, with a little space for garden.

20. The Government provides a number of quarters for the workers (not all) who are charged rent on the basis of half an anna in the rupee. In this connection some injustice is felt by the better paid worker, who has to pay a higher rent than his lower paid comrade for the same class of quarters. A man drawing Rs. 15 per month, pays, for example, 8 annas rent, while a worker drawing Rs. 80 or Rs. 100 per month has to pay, say, Rs. 3. The higher paid worker is thus paying something out of his wages towards the house rent of the lower paid. This principle might conceivably be acceptable if it applied to the superior staff, but in their case they not only do not pay anything towards the house rent like the workers, but they have their quarters rent free. We are of the opinion that the best remedy would be free quarters for all.

### IV.—Health.

24. The facilities provided by the Government (one dispensary and three doctors) are felt to be somewhat inadequate. We suggest that in order to meet the needs of

the workers and their dependents, six beds should be set aside especially in the factory hospital, and if a woman doctor cannot be appointed in addition to the three assistant surgeons employed by the factory, then one of the assistant surgeons should be a woman, and that provision for a segregation camp be also made.

29. We submit that the acid, gun-cotton, nitro-glycerine and plumber sections of the factory should be brought under legislation that would provide for workers whose health is impaired and whose lives are shortened as the result of inhaling the poisonous fumes.

31. (i) There is no provision for maternity benefit, and legislation on a national scale providing this should be introduced without delay. We have at present only 20 women workers here, but it is expected that this number will increase considerably.

#### V.—Welfare.

36. (iii) There is a night school only for workers' children; what is wanted badly is a day school for these and also a night school for adults.

37. Absolutely no provision is made for old age and premature retirement, and this is felt to be one of the greatest and most urgent need of the workers. In this connection we would call the special attention of the Commission to the fact that those in the factory who are named "Temporary" workers (all the daily paid men, roughly 70 per cent. of the factory) are liable to have their services terminated or to be dismissed at a moment's notice and are regarded merely as "Temporary" hands, though in actual facts they are a permanent and necessary part of the concern. Many of them having as many as 20 and even 25 years' service to their record.

For example, one "Temporary" man in the plumber section has served 27 years. On the ground that he is now less efficient than he was formerly he has been reduced in pay from Rs. 70 to Rs. 50 per mensem. He has a good record and was the first plumber in the factory; at present he has no redress, no provision for old age or retirement and can be dismissed at any time.

Until the union agitated the "Extra Temporary" men were liable to be sent away for three or four days at a stretch without pay, of course, and had to return for duty at the end of that period on pain of dismissal. As Government employers coming under Government rules, the workers naturally feel that they have a right to participate in some gratuity scheme, similar to those operating in other Government concerns in India, which should be *retrospective and realizable* at a certain age or at premature retirement. This should apply to all workers who have put in ten years' service. Nothing, except perhaps a minimum living wage, is felt to be more essential than this.

#### VI.—Education.

41 and 42. In the opinion of the union the introduction of industrial and vocational training would greatly affect the standard of living and raise the industrial efficiency of the workers, and the union would welcome some such institution in connection with the factory.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

53. (i) The union is of opinion that the scales of compensation should be raised.

#### IX.—Hours.

55. (i and ii) Though the custom is eight hours a day, under the Factory Act we have to work sixty hours per week before we can claim overtime pay. The union feels this unjust and requests that the legislation be introduced specially to allow overtime pay after working 48 hours per week.

60. (i) There are men working on shifts and when it comes to meal time no satisfactory provision is made for a meal or rest hour.

#### XII.—Wages.

96. As the cost of living in the hills is greater than in the plains, the union requests that a hill allowance be given as given to the other Government servants, and railways and post officers on the Nilgiris.

105. The union considers that the minimum wage paid in the factory is not sufficient to meet the cost of living in the Nilgiris.

Below is the living cost of a family, husband and wife, in the hills, but the minimum wages, Rs. 13·8 annas, or 9 annas a day, working 24 days in the month (without taking any leave or being absent or from sickness). This figure is only a rough estimate as many other items are omitted (such as milk, etc.) :—

(The pay is Rs. 13·8 annas, or nine annas per day, and the cost of living is Rs. 45, while the pay is as good as in the other firms on the Nilgiris, we consider that the minimum pay is not a living wage).

Quantity.	Description.	Amount.
		Rs. a. p.
60 measures ..	Rice, 2 measures for meals at 6 measures for the rupee .. .. .	10 0 0
	Curry stuff, etc. .. .. .	4 0 0
	Coffee .. .. .	3 0 0
8 ..	Dhall at 4 measures per rupee .. .. .	2 0 0
8 lb. ..	Meat (mutton) twice a week at 7 annas .. .. .	3 8 0
	Vegetables at 6 annas per week .. .. .	1 8 0
	Soap and soap nut (for bathing and washing) .. .. .	1 0 0
4 bottles ..	Kerosine (a bottle per week) .. .. .	0 14 0
1½ measures ..	Gingelly oil (per month) .. .. .	1 7 0
1 measure ..	Lamp oil .. .. .	0 14 0
1 lb. ..	Cocoonut oil .. .. .	0 8 0
1 ..	Ghee .. .. .	1 0 0
	Betelnut at 3 pies per day .. .. .	0 8 0
3 ..	Flour (1 viss) .. .. .	0 8 0
3 ..	Sugar (1 viss) .. .. .	0 9 0
1 ..	Blanket for 1 year at Rs. 3 each .. .. .	0 4 0
2 ..	Mats for 1 year at 12 annas each .. .. .	0 2 0
2 ..	Bed sheets for 1 year at Re. 1 each .. .. .	0 2 8
4 ..	Sarees, for 1 year at Rs. 2·8 annas each and Rs. 4 each for a woman .. .. .	1 1 4
4 ..	Jackets for 1 year at Re. 1 each, for a woman .. .. .	0 5 4
4 ..	Half-arm jackets, 8 annas each, for a woman .. .. .	0 2 8
3 ..	Skirts, Rs. 1·4 annas each, for a woman .. .. .	0 5 0
2 ..	Suits (cotton), Rs. 8·8 annas each for a man .. .. .	1 6 8
2 ..	Dhoties, Re. 1·4 annas each for a man .. .. .	0 3 4
4 ..	Bannians, 10 annas each for a man .. .. .	0 3 4
4 ..	Shirts (cotton), Re. 1·8 annas each for a man .. .. .	0 8 0
2 ..	Turbans, Re. 1·8 annas each for a man .. .. .	0 4 0
	Barber (monthly) .. .. .	1 4 0
	Breakfast in early morning at 1 anna 6 pies per day .. .. .	2 13 0
½ lot ..	Fuel for one month .. .. .	1 8 0
	For amusements .. .. .	2 0 0
1 ..	House rent (size 8 ft. by 10 ft.) .. .. .	1 0 0
	Grand total .. .. .	44 13 4

(Say Rs. 45 as round figures.)

108. Practically every worker is indebted to the co-operative society in connection with the factory and to outside moneylenders.

110. With regard to casual leave, the union feels that the daily paid men should be treated on the same basis as the monthly paid men.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

118. It is the opinion of the management of the factory that the union has been mutually beneficial.

119. (i) The union has a benefit call fund providing against old age and death. It has been approved by the management, the superintendent being the president of the fund; 58 persons being helped by this fund and the amount Rs. 1345.

(ii) The union also has a panchayat court, through and by which personal and other disputes are settled out of court, this has proved very useful to the men.

122. (i) Representations from the union are received by the management when occasion arises and generally speaking this method has acted satisfactorily.

### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

126. (ii) In the opinion of the union the general attitude of the Government in connection with the industrial dispute has not been satisfactory, but it is hoped that the Trade Dispute Act will remedy the defect.

### XVII.—Administration.

133. The union feels the need of adequate representation in the central and provincial legislatures, and it suggests that one M.L.A. might be nominated or elected to represent the Ordnance Factories in India.

134. In order to more adequately reap the benefit of the International Labour Organization at Geneva this union feels the necessity of the unions of Government workers being allowed to affiliate to the All-India Trade Union Congress, which is the only workers' organization in India that sends delegates to the conference at Geneva.

### MR. A. C. WOODHOUSE, COLLECTOR OF NELLORE.

*Preliminary note.*—Nellore district, Madras Presidency, has a population of 1,400,000 and is 7,948 square miles in extent. Mica deposits occur throughout the district but mainly in Rapur, Gudur and Atmakur taluks, Rapur taluk having the highest output in the district and the best quality. The country, round mines, is usually flat, sometimes covered with scrub jungle but more often bare. The land is not very fertile, and if crops are grown, only the lesser millets like cholam (Sorghum vulgare) are cultivated. The country in the neighbourhood of mines is thinly populated. From returns submitted, the daily average number of mine-workers was :—

In 1925	.. ..	1,988 men and 2,657 women in 82 mines.
In 1926	.. ..	3,246 " " 2,136 " " 114 "
In 1927	.. ..	3,498 " " 2,656 " " 116 "
In 1928	.. ..	2,577 " " 1,790 " " 97 "

Roughly to every three men there were two women workers. About seven per cent. of the population of Rapur taluk or less than half per cent. of the population of the district is engaged in mica-mining. If, therefore, mining suddenly ceased, comparatively few people would be affected, and the few thus affected could turn to other occupations, like agriculture, for a livelihood, and would speedily be absorbed in those occupations. Even now, mine-workers sometimes engage in agricultural pursuits as a subsidiary occupation.

### I. Recruitment.

1 and 2. Labour is wholly local and comes daily from villages within four miles of mines. Except a watchman or two, and three or four families of coolies the rest of the labour is non-resident at the mine. The resident labour at the mine is intended to protect property at the mine against theft and to check the spread of fire. The labour force is 70 per cent. Malas and Madigas, 20 per cent. Yanadis and 10 per cent. others, like Muhammadans, Woddars, etc. The Yanadis are nomadic in their habits and move from mine to mine or elsewhere for reasons of their own. The other classes Malas, Madigas, Muhammadans, Woddars, etc., are more reliable. They generally live in villages adjoining the mines. The Yanadis sometimes camp on the mining plot, and sometimes near the local village.

3. There is no recruiting agency. The supply of labour is usually greater than the demand. As the force is local, mere intimation in the village that more labour is needed, is sufficient to attract additional coolies.

4. As the force is local, there is no disturbance of family life. Coolies return to their homes daily. Husbands and wives usually go to work together.

8 (i) Mines keep open throughout the year. The amount of labour required varies with the output and the output is regulated to suit market conditions. The market is very irregular and unsteady.

### II. Staff Organisation.

12 (i) The supervising staff may consist of a supervisor if one owner has three or four mines in the locality, a manager and a maistri or two or three according to the size of the mine. Very few supervisors are employed. Usually, there is only a

manager and one or more maistris. Members of the staff do not undergo any sort of technical training. They are men who have gained experience. The staff is very poorly paid, and cannot be expected to superintend any but the most elementary work. Ordinarily, methods of extraction of mica are crude. Labour is wastefully used and simple labour-saving devices are practically unknown. Some years ago, Europeans were engaged in mining. They employed engineers and trained men. Their successors, the Indians, have copied imperfectly the methods of extraction employed previously by European owners.

(ii) The Indian miner does not seem to be anxious to adopt economic methods of working and there are no signs of his willingness to re-invest even a portion of his profits from mica in actual working.

13 (i) Relations between the members of the staff and the labourer are generally cordial.

15 Mica is not extracted on contract.

### III. Housing.

16 As the labour comes daily from surrounding villages, it is unnecessary for the employers or Government or private landholders to provide houses. The very small resident labour force at mines (resident chiefly for protection against thefts of mining property and fire) erects its own houses close to the work spot. The houses are always of the type that the people are accustomed to live in. The houses are bell-shaped and consist of a single room. They are very insanitary. Except when it rains or when it is slightly chill, people sleep out of doors. The rainy and cold days are very few in the year—perhaps 30 days in all.

22. I understand that when Europeans owned mines they attempted to provide model housing for employees but failed to make such housing popular.

### IV.—Health.

24(i) Under section 18 of Act IV of 1923 owners are required to keep medical outfits and stretchers at mines.

(ii) There are Government dispensaries about seven or nine miles away from the furthest mine. Government has now on special duty a sub-assistant surgeon for hookworm treatment.

25 (i) The Indian rarely takes proper treatment till his illness is too bad to be cured. Till his illness becomes serious he prefers Indian quack-remedies. This aversion to proper treatment is common to the majority of people and not to the mine-worker alone. There is very great difficulty in persuading people to undergo hookworm treatment.

26 (i) Government insists on the provision of proper latrines (of the borehole type), but people prefer to resort to the open fields. Many mines have no latrines at all but steps are being taken to enforce the rules which only recently (February, 1929) came into force.

(ii) Owing to firm action to enforce the rules, mine-owners either have sunk wells where fresh water is obtainable, or have provided drinking water under a special coolie at work spots.

27. The district health officer visits a few mines once a year but health inspectors go round more often.

29 (i) There is no disease peculiar to mine-workers prevalent in the district, to the best of my knowledge.

(ii) Cholera and smallpox are rare and spread to the mines only when there is an outbreak of the disease in the district. Hookworm and malaria are prevalent in the mines and in the district. These diseases are not peculiar to the mining area.

### VII. Safety.

Accidents are few.

48. Though the rules require owners to have people trained in first aid at the mines, such knowledge is very imperfect or nothing. Consequently if accidents occurred, nobody would be able to render any assistance.

49. Mines are frequently inspected by mica inspectors and sub-divisional magistrates and an inspector of mines. Neither mica inspectors nor sub-divisional magistrates have much knowledge of technical details connected with mining. The



inspector of mines comes once a year, usually August–September, and inspects *working* mines, not all mines. I should not be surprised to hear that some mines closed down a month or two before the inspector of mines' visit to avoid inspection. As owners know exactly when the inspector of mines is due, they can close down mines to avoid inspection. Fortunately, most mines work on the open cast system. So, chances of accident are few. There are only 24 mines worked by tunnelling against 205 mines on the open cast system.

#### IX. Hours.

- B. Mines.*—63 (i) Normal hours are 7 to 12 and 2 to 5 for six days in the week.  
 (ii) Overtime is the exception.  
 64. Since the rule came into force on 1st July, 1924, mines work six days a week.  
 66. There is no attempt to overwork the labourer and the present working day is not harder than in other occupations like agriculture. So, special legislation for local mines is unnecessary.  
 69 (iii) Besides the weekly holiday on Sunday, some festival days are holidays.  
 70. Sunday.

#### X. Special Questions relating to Women.

*B. Mines.*—91. Since July, 1929, women are not being employed underground in mines. The prohibition came into force only then. It is too early therefore to express an opinion on the suitability or unsuitability of the regulations, and its probable effect on the industry or workers. In this district among the lower classes, wives are accustomed to accompany their husbands to work—perhaps because the husbands are afraid to trust their wives out of their sight—and a deputation of mine-owners which waited on me on the 5th September, 1929, orally represented that the prohibition would adversely affect the industry and the workers economically. I have found it very difficult to get mine-owners to obey the rules about sanitation, drinking water-supply, etc. (obviously because they have little or no interest in the welfare of their workers), so their representation about the economic effect of the prohibition on the workers seemed somewhat insincere. It was urged too that only women could carry the spoil to the surface. But as I have already stated there is room for improvement in the working of mines in the district and the adoption of suitable labour-saving devices.

#### XII. Wages.

- 96 (i) In mining, men 6 to 8 annas a day, women 4 to 5 annas.  
 (ii) Men 5 to 6 annas, women 3 to 4 annas.  
 97. Wages increased about 1922 with the general increase in the cost of living after the war.  
 106. Deductions not made for disciplinary purposes or short work. A man is made to do his legitimate day's work and usually does it.  
 107. (i) Paid fortnightly as a rule.  
 (iii) Complaints regarding non-payment of wages are rare. There is no statutory provision under which the collector can interfere in such disputes; so disciplinary action was taken. In one case the collector declined to allow a consignment to be passed till the wages dispute was settled and in another the mine-owner was informed that his certificate of approval would be recommended for cancellation. Such action was effective and resulted in a settlement of the wages dispute.  
 I do not know if legislation affording the labourer speedy redress for delay in payment is possible.

✓ MR. A. G. GREEN, SUPERINTENDENT, GOVERNMENT PRESS, MADRAS.

My experience of Indian labour has been solely in connexion with the printing trade and extends over 22 years, the first six with the Times Press, Bombay, employing up to 1,200 hands, and the last sixteen with the Government Press, Madras, employing over 2,000 workers.

Although printing does not occupy as high a position as a skilled industry in India as it does in Western civilized countries, its close connexion with education, business, political and social life, and general culture, makes it evident that it should be sufficiently developed to keep pace with and assist the progress of all these activities. It must necessarily become increasingly important with any advance in education. An extensive increase in literacy alone would bring with it a prospect of very large

expansion, and if to this is added a development of authorship and literary patronage and modern business methods, the status of the industry should very definitely rise from its present low position in extent and quality of production. If well organized, it should be well able to compete with foreign work as regards cost, and still allow more than the average local standard wage for skilled workers, as it does in other countries. The impression now seems to prevail that printing demands a quality of workers rather below that of a minor clerk. It has consequently not been regarded as suitable for a youth with more than the average intelligence and education, and the standard of wages rather reflects this opinion. In the report of the committee on remodelling the Madras Penitentiary the committee state that they are satisfied that printing is a suitable jail industry, and there are about 450 convicts employed in jail presses as printers and binders. More than 50 per cent. of these were agriculturists, coolies, or petty shop-keepers before admission to the jail, and the employment of this considerable number, which is to be increased, cannot fail to have some effect on the labour market.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. As a minimum amount of education is required of most employees, it is natural that the main source of supply should be from centres where primary education is more general—the vicinity of large towns. The greater extent to which English is taught and used in Madras, accounts largely, I believe, for the free supply of compositors in this Presidency, and for the fact that Madrasi compositors will be found in large numbers in the cities of other Indian Provinces, Burma and Ceylon. My experience was that the best workers in Bombay were Madrasis, who leave their native province to obtain the higher wages offered elsewhere. The emigrants are of a higher average standard than those who stay at home.

3. Recruitment will in all cases be found to be by direct application of the worker to the works authority. The only possible improvement would be in the formation of an organization within the trade through which efficient workers could bear some evidence of their ability. Selection is at present a matter of guess-work and trial, and as apprenticeship and training is undeveloped, a large proportion of applicants will be found below the line of ordinary efficiency and are often altogether unsuited for the trade. At the Government Press, registers are kept of likely applicants and they are sent for when required.

7. Unemployment exists, and there is usually no lack of applicants to fill vacancies for compositors and binders. Skilled machine-minders and operators are however scarce, and it may be asserted that no really competent worker of any class need remain long, if ever, out of employment. On my knowledge of the larger establishments I should say that reduction of staff is seldom necessary, but an appreciable number of men are continually dropping out to attend to private affairs, or on account of protracted ill-health for which they desire treatment by a native doctor, etc. Their places in the meanwhile are filled up if workers are needed.

8. In small presses there will be much more casual employment for short periods as the peculiarity of the business in these shops is that there is no possibility of manufacturing for stock, or in anticipation of demand. A few extra workers have to be taken on when work is more abundant or urgent and they are then discharged. Absenteeism prevails particularly in the lower grades of workers. Among the Government Press workers from 7 to 15 per cent. are away from work daily.

9. There is no generally recognized system of apprenticeship or form of indenture in the trade. Some of the larger establishments take learners for more or less definite periods of training. The smaller shops take on boys for the sake of cheap labour, and teach them as little as is necessary to make them profitable. The difficulties experienced in attempting to follow a regular course of training in some sections of the Government Press has been that learners cannot be maintained by their guardians for any length of time and that the best sort of journeyman with whom an apprentice could learn the practical part of his trade is almost non-existent. Piece-workers naturally concentrate on their own earnings, which would be affected by any attempt at teaching. Partly-trained youths who can earn a few rupees here and there will move from one press to another attempting to obtain a slight increase of pay at each change, and no effective means of binding them by an agreement have been found. Machine-men are recruited from the more intelligent labourers, who first become layers-on, and then may show an aptitude for taking charge of a machine. A special form of agreement for the training of linotype-operators in the Government Press has been introduced, which gives the learner, who deposits Rs. 100 as surety, a course of instruction for six months. After this he continues to serve for three years if required on regular piece-work payment.

## II.—Staff Organization.

10 to 12. The head of the works in several of the large presses is a European with technical qualifications, who controls mainly through foremen of sections. The foremen are usually men who have worked their way up in the shop where they are engaged and are well acquainted with the particular class of work which is done there. Working experience is their only form of training. There are grounds for suspicion that foremen abuse the power they possess over their subordinates, by demanding bribes, etc., and on the other hand it is no less likely that they are offered gratifications for favours expected. The extent of the evil is difficult to estimate and is often made the ground of anonymous and possibly false accusation.

I know of no case in which a standing works committee has been organized or even attempted, and from what I know of the men, consider that it would at present be particularly difficult to achieve. The various departments of an Indian printing works contain men of marked difference in natural ability, education and intelligence, and at times show antagonistic tendencies. Co-operation would be doubtful. A works committee excluding all heads of sections would not improve on the present opportunities which the men possess to make departmental representations.

14. Wherever the number of men is sufficient to require it, the work of time-keeping, calculation of earnings, etc., will be done by the clerical staff, and workers would normally be able to check the correctness of their accounts.

## III.—Housing.

16. There are no housing schemes which are special to the industry. Workers mainly live with their families and relatives in sub-divided houses, and there is probably more domestic life in Madras than in Bombay. Workers' homes are distributed among all the most crowded parts of the city, some of them at a considerable distance from their work, and as wages do not generally admit of the regular use of a public conveyance, there is, in this, a cause of fatigue.

## IV.—Health.

23. No vital statistics are available. The sedentary nature of their occupation together with a general disinclination for physical activity in leisure hours, and poor or improper diet, is responsible for a standard of physique and health, which I should judge to be below the average for all workers. Absenteeism is mainly caused by the minor disorders of a poor constitution, and by more serious sickness to which it can offer no resistance.

24. Public medical facilities are fairly extensive in the towns where large presses exist, and workers who are in Government employ and are obviously ill are given requisitions to the District Surgeons and hospitals for treatment.

A health centre has been organized at the Government Press at which the advice of two private practitioners is given free, and a small charge made for medicines and operations. This work has been instituted and is run by honorary workers among the staff.

25. The workers in Government service resort to medical advice mainly because a medical certificate is insisted on before leave with pay on account of sickness is granted for more than two days. A large number prefer the treatment of their native "doctor," which is usually applied for in a request to go to their village and "take oil." The health centre has not been very well supported, possibly because small charges are made while corporation dispensaries are free, and also that medical certificates are not given for extensive periods on a slight pretext. Medical certificates from private medical practitioners are submitted quite frequently, but there is evidence that these can be purchased without treatment when needed.

29. Lead poisoning and tuberculosis are generally regarded as industrial diseases of the printing trade. Of the former, I have known of no definite case, but the latter has been observed in a number of cases which may be due quite as much to living conditions as to occupation. The Government Central Press is situated in the most crowded and unhealthy part of the city and is consequently affected by any epidemic that prevails.

30. I do not consider that any general system of sickness insurance is feasible at present. In the present condition of Indian labour and medical practice it would be extensively made use of by malingerers, and among smaller establishments there would be insuperable difficulty in registration and collection of contributions.

**V.—Welfare.**

32 and 34. No welfare work is undertaken by the Government, and none that I know of by other press employers. The employees of the Government Press have a self-supporting recreation club which provides games, reading room, refreshments and occasional entertainments. It is run by a committee of members of the staff, who are honorary workers, and a small building with grounds is rented from the Government for a nominal sum, about one-fifth of the standard rent. The clerical and supervising staff are its main supporters although membership is open to all. A mutual death benefit fund is making this institution more popular, but speaking generally it has not hitherto been easy to obtain enthusiastic support from the mass of the workers. Educational scholarships are provided from the club funds, and so far two have been granted to children of employees.

37. Government workers are eligible for pension and provident fund benefits, but I do not know of any other private employers making such provision. It is a matter which must be left entirely to employers, who may or may not realize their responsibility and the advantage of making conditions attractive to their workers.

38. A very successful co-operative credit society has been instituted for Government press employees and there are other similar societies to which workers in other presses are admissible.

**VI.—Education.**

40. There are no special facilities provided for general education.

41. There are a few mission schools in the Madras Presidency which have printing presses as part of their industrial work, and the Lee Chengalvaroya Naicker's Technical Institute in Madras City. The work of these is of an elementary standard. The Government Trades School gives courses in printing subjects and they are practically a continuation of the Government Press technical classes which were started in 1893 and continued up to 1919. The school is not well equipped with plant and the theoretical teaching is rather of the stereotyped question and answer type. A pass in the technical examination has been prescribed by Government as a qualification for readers, and men in other sections who have passed the technical examination are given preference for promotion in the Government Press. This probably accounts for the fact that 78 out of 101 printing students at the school are employees of the Government Press.

42. Education, and any development of intelligence, must inevitably raise the standard of efficiency of workers in a trade dealing with literary matter, and in which an appreciation of meticulous accuracy, systematic work among a variety of product, and some sense of form, design and colour, can alone make a good craftsman. In this direction there is very far to go. With the majority of workers also, such general education as has been achieved has not yet led to the adoption of an hygienic standard of living, and prolonged social education will be needed to make an alteration in habits that are unclean and unhealthy.

**VII.—Safety.**

43. The existing regulations and their enforcement are quite adequate in the printing works which come under factory inspection.

44. Accidents are few, and in nearly every case due to the worker's failure, in familiar operations, to realize the imminence of danger to his person. The most serious cases that have happened under my charge have been with guillotine operators allowing their hands to rest under a descending knife, and machine-men attempting to retrieve a sheet of paper which has gone astray on a geared cylinder or among rollers revolving at a high speed. Other damage is done by dropping heavy formes of type on bare feet. For most workers rough and ready first aid is available and hospitals are not far away.

50. The working hours in presses are not excessively long. Physical weakness may contribute to minor accidents in handling weights. Many presses of which I know are deficient in light, but I do not think this can be regarded as having any effect on accidents.

**VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.**

51. Accidents being few, and serious accidents still fewer, the Act is but seldom in operation. Two cases of which I know were loss of fingers. The men were still employable, but received compensation for partial disablement on my submitting

the cases to the Commissioner of Labour. It is quite likely that many employees are unaware of the existence of the Workmen's Compensation Act. If, however, accidents are fully reported and are followed up by the Labour Commissioner it will do more than paper propaganda to make its existence known.

52 to 54. I cannot speak for industries generally, but so far as I can judge the Workmen's Compensation Act is suitable wherever it applies, and its extension to small establishments is the only suggestion I would make until longer experience of its working has been gained.

#### IX.—Hours.

55. The normal working hours of the Government Press are 7½ per day and 43 per week. Large private presses work rather longer hours, and small presses are probably variable to a still higher limit.

Overtime is unavoidable, but occurs only in intermittent rushes. It will often be desirable to overstep the 11-hour daily limit without exceeding the 60-hour week, and so far as the printing trade is concerned I should prefer a weekly limit only. The difficulty is that there is no organization by which additional suitable men can be called in at an hour's notice or less. In the case of their own work, Government can, and do, grant a temporary exemption from the regulations. I cannot say whether other employers feel the need for this.

57 and 58. The restrictions have had no real effect on the workers or industry. They called for no reduction of the pre-existing normal hours in works large enough to be classed as factories, and except for the curtailment of a possible exceptional spell of overtime brought no change.

59. In the present condition of Indian industry I do not think it desirable to reduce the maxima.

60. The practice before the Act of 1920 was either a half-hour or one-hour interval about the middle of the normal day, with a short interval in the evening if overtime was worked. Indian operatives either :—(a) leave the factory to take their meals at home, (b) have their meals brought to the factory, or (c) have no midday meal.

No printing presses have canteen arrangements, and those in classes (b) and (c) above are probably as numerous as class (a). To these one half-hour interval in a day of not more than eight working hours is preferable as they can leave work earlier or start later in the morning. The effect on fatigue is, I think, inconsiderable. Objections were raised by one branch of the Government Press accustomed to a half-hour interval when a one-hour interval was imposed upon them by the Act. I have also had objections from workers to an arrangement of shifts giving them about four hours on and four hours off work. The contention being that they had either to be twelve hours without food or else had to undertake a fatiguing journey to and from their homes at some distance during their period of rest.

Holidays with pay, except for piece-workers, are granted for the principal Indian festivals. The principal presses in Madras give from 14 to 17 days in the year. Casual leave for sickness or private affairs is also given, and Government employees can earn the full leave privileges under the Civil Service Regulations and other rules.

61. Sunday is the general day of rest, and Muhammadans in Government service may take a two-hours' interval for prayers on Fridays. There is no need for any alteration of this arrangement.

#### X.—Special Questions Relating to Women, Young Adults, and Children.

86. The lack of adequate training is at the bottom of most of the difficulties which are experienced in the printing trade. Most if not all of the smaller presses could not possibly train craftsmen in any case, as they are poorly equipped and do not produce anything but cheap and bad work. Other difficulties have been referred to under section I (9). Hitherto, lads with a lamentably low standard of education have provided most of the personnel offered for training. They are not bound by any agreement, but work as volunteers and as soon as they are worth anything to an employer move about in search of higher earnings. At one time when the Lawrence Asylum maintained a large press and had a fairly permanent hold on their lads they maintained a good system of apprenticeship, but from records which I have seen, only about 25 per cent. made good. Those who did were able to secure fairly good posts as overseers and foremen. The records of the Government Press also show that at one time a considerable number of Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans were employed as readers and foremen. These numbers have gone down considerably, owing to the growth of better paid appointments to be obtained with a shorter period of training on railways, telegraphs, etc., while the pay of the appointments held by them in the printing trade has, if anything, decreased, and the number of Indians offering to fill

them has increased. A better type of workman is now being trained for work on type-composing machines, where earnings may be three or four times as high as those of a hand-compositor. The Madras Government, and other Governments, have introduced schemes of training for student apprentices in printing as State Scholarships. Usually the scheme includes a period of training in England, and if these men maintain enthusiasm and energy, without the sole aim of obtaining "soft" jobs at the end of their training, they should be able to do a great deal towards raising the general level of work in the larger presses when they return and take their place in the industry.

The smaller presses cannot have much part in the development of the industry. In England the "small printer" has been spoken and written of as a "dying phenomenon," and in India the improvement of the trade can only be brought about by well-organized and well-staffed industrial establishments, which in their turn will only be able to exist and increase when a higher status of the trade is recognized, and a greater public demand is made for its services.

## XII.—Wages.

96. The present rates of wages in the Government Press for ordinary workers are—Compositors (piece-work)—3 annas per 1,000 ens. Linotype-operators (piece-work)—1½ annas per 1,000 ens. Imposers—3 annas to As. 3-6 per hour. Copyholders—Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 per month. Readers—Rs. 30 to Rs. 150 per month. Machine-minders—Rs. 20 to Rs. 40 per month. Layers-on and labourers—Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 per month. Binders—Rs. 15 to Rs. 40 per month. Type-casters—Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 per month. Assistant and Deputy Foremen—Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 per month. Foremen—Rs. 40 to Rs. 100 per month.

The posts on permanent pay rising to Rs. 60 and over are comparatively few.

These rates are generally higher than those in private presses in Madras but lower than in Calcutta, Bombay or Colombo. A man with rather more than average ability may, however, obtain better wages in a private press than in a press bound by the limitations of a Government establishment.

97. Since 1907, when grain compensation was introduced, the rise in workmen's minimum wages at the Government Press has been about 50 per cent. with incremental scales adding another 50 per cent. At the same time the employment of binding boys and type-foundry stoker boys on from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per month has been abolished. A few juveniles of between 15 and 18 years of age are now employed on Rs. 10 per month, and the rule regarding minimum pay is that no person of the age of 18 years and over should receive less than Rs. 15 per month. The last general revision of pay was in 1920.

No statement can be made of the relation of wages to cost of living. I have noticed that men on low rates of pay seem sometimes to be better off than more highly paid men. Debt and other encumbrances are probably the main reason for this.

The small printer, running his plant on uneconomic and unbusinesslike lines, makes little profit on the work of his men, and lowers the standard of prices for better industrial establishments. It may safely be said that the normal profits of the printing trade are small compared with the amount of capital needed to engage in it.

99. I have heard of payments in kind, bonuses of rice and cloth, etc., in Indian establishments, but I do not think they are sufficiently general to amount to a problem.

101. Wages except on a Government establishment list, are fixed generally on the basis of the individual efficiency of the workman, which varies a great deal, and the rate is governed largely by the demand and supply of the local labour market. Cities and towns which have to depend to any extent on imported labour have to offer higher rates to induce immigrants.

102. At the Government Press overtime rates are paid at 25 per cent. extra for two hours before or after normal hours, 50 per cent. for other hours, and double rates for Sunday or holiday work when compensation leave is not given.

103 and 105. There is no standardization of wages, and in the present unequal state of the workers a minimum wage is not a practical proposition. A rule exists in the Government Press that a piece-work compositor who cannot earn a minimum amount per month shall not be retained. In practice it is not rigidly enforced, as the supply of expert compositors is not equal to the demand.

106. Fines are imposed at the Government Press, usually after previous warnings as a disciplinary measure, and part of the cost of material spoilt by culpable negligence is also recovered from pay. No other deductions are made against the will of the worker, and departmental collections by supervisors for any purpose are discouraged.

107. Wages are paid monthly, and are generally some days in arrears when paid. In Government establishments the requirements of pre-audit, and the submission of pay bills for sanction by the audit office occupies time, and is sometimes delayed by the occurrence of holidays. The permanent establishment on fixed pay is paid within the first few days of the month, temporary and day-extra men about the 8th, and piece-workers, whose accounts involve a good deal of calculation, about the 15th.

The monthly period of payment seems the best suited to Indian conditions. Most of the regular workers appear able to obtain food supplies on monthly bills and rent is payable monthly. I do not think uniformity could be obtained more surely by legislation, or that anything but abnormal delay in payment could be prevented by legal means. Advances of a portion of pay earned are to my knowledge obtainable in some private establishments, but are not permitted by Government.

Unclaimed wages revert to the employer.

108. Indebtedness is common, and serious cases are due to disproportionate expenditure on wedding and funeral ceremonies, the extortion of moneylenders and sometimes to imprudent backing of securities, or prolonged sickness.

109. I know of no scheme in operation for bonus or profit sharing, excepting tentative arrangements to give a bonus for production above an arbitrarily fixed standard, which have not yielded very satisfactory results.

110. Most printing works of any size grant a certain amount of leave with pay to workers and it often not fully availed of. Leave is most often taken for a day or a few days at a time for weddings, funerals, ceremonies, or temporary indisposition. Longer leave is taken for pilgrimages or to fulfil vows, from which the worker usually returns less fit than when he went away.

Leave is not definitely encouraged by employers, and the idea of an annual recuperative holiday does not exist among workers, not do I think that as a rule they would use a vacation more profitably than they do their ordinary leisure.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. During the time that I have been in India I think there has been a section of improvement in printed productions. It is not general, and the bulk is almost as bad as it ever was. It does not arise from the effort of craft pride of the worker but where it has occurred is mainly due to the provision of better equipment and insistence on better work by those who control and are technically qualified to plan and direct operations. These can seldom feel safe in dropping the burden of thinking out all details in any but ordinary routine work. I have come across not a few Indian workmen who can do very good work under guidance and supervision, but it still seems necessary for this guidance to be close and continuous. Foremen are not quick to check and correct faults of which they themselves are quite aware.

113 and 114. The Indian printer has many disadvantages to contend with, compared with the foreign worker. He is not his physical equal; he has not the same average standard of general education; opportunities for special education are few and not easily available even if he had the will to grasp them; he works largely on a language with which he is very imperfectly acquainted; and his social conditions must do much to rob him of any enthusiasm in life. Nevertheless, it is a fairly light occupation, and his deficiency under well-organized conditions is more in quality than in quantity. The average hand-compositor on piece-work can earn Rs. 30 per month. His confrère in Britain would probably not earn more than Rs. 40 at the same rates in the same time, but it would be better done. I expect eventually to maintain an average outturn of 5,000 corrected ens per hour throughout the Linotype section at the Government Press. The best men already produce over 6,000 ens. On straight newspaper work in Bombay the average was 7,000 ens, and there are many linotype installations in England which do not reach these figures.

On machine work I lately took extracts from a statement of hourly outturn from an American trade paper. These are compared below with outturn from the same classes of machines in the Government Press:—

	Fourteen American towns and cities.			Government Press
	Minimum.	Maximum.	Average.	Average.
Platen, small ..	969	1,327	1,140	1,293
.. large ..	721	1,077	918	986
Cylinder, medium ..	989	1,424	1,139	1,162
Miehle, vertical ..	2,127	2,242	2,185	2,152

The Indian worker does not nurse and care for his machine with the jealousy and mechanical instinct of a good operator and has little sense of shame over bad work.

116. Increased efficiency will only be obtained by the recruitment of a higher class of worker for skilled operations, and the gradual development of a much larger nucleus of men who can properly teach and control the sections over which they have charge. The improvement of social conditions will, I think, help, but it is noteworthy that the British workman's reputation for sound workmanship was gained while his social conditions were, perhaps, at their very worst.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. There is practically no organization of either employers or employed.

119. Such organizations of press workers as have from time to time had a brief life have usually had a political impetus behind them, and, being formed in the excitement raised mainly over demands for concessions, have subsided when this is over. There has been no attempt to restrict membership by technical qualifications, and no provisions for any scheme of mutual benefit of any kind.

Attempts at the formation of employers' associations have been abortive and not received with any apparent degree of mutual desire to co-operate.

120. The unions have not aimed at a general membership throughout the whole trade, but have been separately organized for one shop, or a small group of shops. The last Government Press Employees' Union became sufficiently coherent to obtain registration under the Trade Unions Act but was disbanded on the issue of the Government Order prohibiting Government servants from becoming members of a registered trade union.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. Strikes have occurred at the Government Press in 1897, 1904, and twice in 1920.

The first seems to have occurred on the question of hours of employment, which at that time appear to have been indefinite and excessive.

The second arose mainly over an attempt to increase the production of the machine, binding and foundry departments, though the question of working hours and holidays also arose and were connected with the dispute, which lasted from January to November.

The third was principally on the question of an increase of wages. It was general in all departments and lasted a week.

The fourth was apparently because the Government took up some work for the University, whose contractors were at the same time on strike, though this was not stated, and it continued for about three months on the question of reinstatement of a few workers who were dismissed. Only compositors at one branch of the Press were involved on this occasion. Many workers complained that it was intimidation alone that prevented them from working.

Settlement in all cases came about by the return of the workers as a preliminary to consideration of their grievances. There was no organized union with which to negotiate, and it was often difficult to arrange discussions. This was particularly the case at the commencement of the last mentioned strike, when workers returned after their meal hour and sat idle at their posts, and no reason for their action could be extracted from any of them.

The loss in the cases referred to fell entirely on the workers by loss of earnings.

Strikes in other printing concerns have had a detrimental effect on the employer's business. In the case of one firm, employing some hundreds of men, strikes coupled with imperfect management were the entire cause of its ceasing to exist. In another, loss of trade and profits during a strike have been very difficult to recover.

#### XVII.—Administration.

139. I consider that factory inspection should be extended to smaller establishments and in that case an increase of staff would doubtless be needed.

My own experience is that inspection is now fairly thorough and complete.

In general, the care of skilled industry and its organization has only comparatively recently come into contact with civil administration as a matter of every-day concern. Governments in India, are, if anything, in advance of the workers and employers in adaptation to modern ideas of the place of labour in the State, but nothing they can do can entirely displace the effort needed from both employers and employees to work out their own salvation from within.



M. R. RY. DIWAN BAHADUR A. APPADURAI PILLAI AVARGAL, M.A.,  
DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIES, MADRAS.

In accordance with paragraph 3 of your circular letter, I have to confine my attention to the subject-matter which relates mainly to the Department of Industries. Mining industry is one on which reports and statistics are generally furnished to Government by the Industries Department. A statement of the conditions of labour in mines, prepared for the perusal of the Royal Commission on Labour, will be sent by Government separately to the Royal Commission. As this statement deals exhaustively with all the aspects of mining labour in this Presidency, I confine my attention in the accompanying statement to subjects other than mining.

#### I.—Recruitment.

9. The Apprenticeship Act, 1850, has remained a dead letter in this Presidency, chiefly owing to the absence of provision in it for penalizing the enticing away or employment of apprentices. The question was examined at length by the Committee on Technical and Industrial Education in 1922-23. The committee found that apprenticeship system was fairly fully developed in this Presidency, that apprentices are entertained in several large engineering workshops in Madras, in the railway workshops at Perambur, and in the public works department workshops at Washermanpet and Dowlaisheram, and that the students of the various industrial schools scattered throughout the Presidency are also for all practical purposes apprentices under training, but the committee considered it desirable, however, to institute a system of apprenticeship in those trades where no such system exists at present, to regularize haphazard systems where such exist, and to have the Apprenticeship Act remodelled to provide for the binding of apprentices to serve their employers, for the proper training of apprentices by their employers, and for penalties to persons knowingly enticing away a bound apprentice without the consent of the employer. Government accepted the committee's recommendations and appointed a special committee to examine the provisions of apprenticeship law and to submit proposals in the matter.

This committee after reviewing the course of apprentice law in India and abroad submitted a draft Bill recasting the provisions of the Apprenticeship Act of 1850. The committee was of opinion that the Act should be worked on a voluntary basis, no compulsion being used to enforce enlistment either on the part of apprentices or of the management in charge of the concern. It was also inclined to fix 15 years as the minimum age for apprenticeship, though Government were in favour of reducing the age limit to 12. After some consideration, however, the Government held that the time was not yet ripe for the introduction of legislation on the lines recommended.

#### II.—Staff Organisation.

11. In the textile and engineering trades in this Presidency, men of foreman rank are largely recruited from the United Kingdom or elsewhere, and works' managers are appointed by promotion from the ranks, while administrative staff are often recruited from the ranks of European assistants of the firms concerned. The same procedure is followed in Indian-owned concerns. Indians who have had training in textiles and engineering in India or abroad are now being largely employed in such concerns. The State Technical Scholarship Scheme affords ample opportunities for suitable Indians receiving training abroad to fit them after further experience in India for promotion to superior managing posts.

12. (i) A large proportion of the supervising staff is recruited from the United Kingdom but there is a tendency to employ suitable Indians as they become available. The Madras Trades School, the Textile Institute, the Leather Trades Institute, the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Bombay, and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, have provided adequate facilities to enable young Indians to fit them for posts of responsibility and trust in the supervising staff. In the railway workshops, in particular, there is a tendency to utilize the services of Indians and Anglo-Indians, who by regular apprenticeship, coupled with theoretical training at technical schools, have prepared themselves for preferment to such posts.

(ii) The aided industrial schools, the vernacular classes in the Madras Trades School, the Preparatory Trades School, Madras, and the Government Technical Institute at Madura, have contributed to the training of workmen in this Presidency in industrial pursuits. Three new schools at Mangalore, Calicut and Bellary, have since been opened and it is under contemplation to open two more schools of the kind in the Telugu country—one at Rajahmundry and the other at Berhampur—to cater for the needs of the Telugu lads. Although much has been done by such

institutions in training workmen, a great deal remains to be done, and this can be achieved only after education is made compulsory up to 12 years of age. Industry in this country labours at present under very heavy supervision charges. In several cases, salaries of the supervising staff exceed the cost of actual productive labour or wages of the operatives. The number of operatives placed under each of the subordinate supervising staff and the number of subordinate supervisors under the more senior supervising staff can only be increased as the supply of educated labourers and artisans become available to whom orders can be conveyed easily by means of writing, printing and drawings, and from whose ranks promotion to the posts of minor responsibility can be made.

#### VI.—Education.

42. There can be no doubt that an educated workman is better than his uneducated brother, and that as the standard of general education advances, there will be a corresponding increase in the standard of living and the general efficiency of the individual workman, thus enabling the employers to reduce charges of supervision, which at present contributes to the enhanced cost of the finished products in factories, at times out of all proportion to the net cost of the labour and material employed.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. I have had experience of strikes on a small scale among tannery workers in and around Ranipet, and among workmen at the manure and pottery works at Messrs. Parry & Co., Ranipet. During a period of two years there were three strikes of short duration. The strike on each occasion was not based on economic considerations. Enforcement of discipline on the part of the employers with reference to defaulting workmen was the chief cause of the strikes. The workmen at times resent strict enforcement of attendance rules; employers punish the defaulters by the stoppage of pay for the days of absence. This is generally resented by the workmen. On occasions of strike it is usual for the workmen to demand concessions in the matter of absence on leave, provident fund system and the like. So far as is known to me, the strikes have been short-lived and the workmen generally return to labour when their enthusiasm subsides. From what I have been able to see, labourers are fairly well paid and the employers take care not to overwork or underpay them. They realize that it is detrimental to their interests to do so since strikes means loss to both the parties. In case of strikes it is usual for the concerns to make small concessions in the matter of leave with pay or the increase of daily wages. Non-official interference has not been detrimental to the interests of the concerns.

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Rev. A. ANDERSON, GUNUPUR.

The evidence below refers entirely, if not stated otherwise, to conditions in the Gunupur Taluk of the Vizagapatam Agency,

#### L.—Recruitment.

1. Labour is procured locally throughout the taluk, and there is usually no difficulty in getting the necessary workers for agricultural purposes as well as for building work, road and railway construction, etc.

3. Usually people offer their services to cultivators and other employers, but in not a few cases poor people are made servants (not to say serfs) on account of their inability to pay off debts contracted for some purpose or other, e.g., marriage. Naturally this means servitude for many years on account of the accumulation of the original debt by constantly adding interest at a high percentage.

6. Two or three years ago quite a number of people were recruited for work in the tea plantations in Assam. Those who have returned from there and with whom I have had an opportunity to speak about the conditions in the tea districts have expressed their opinion very differently. Here at Gunupur I have heard a man speak very highly of those conditions, while I remember that another (in my former charge at Koraput in the West Jeypore Agency of the same district) expressed a different

opinion. This difference of opinion may be due to different conditions in different gardens, but at least as much is due to the different types of workers recruited. The difficulty arises from the system of recruiting. This system itself may be comparatively good, and I have known Tea District Labour Association Agents at my former place (Koraput) who have done all they could to prevent misuse, but the way sirdars often persuade people to go to Assam, or employ other unauthorized people to help them in their recruiting work for a small consideration in money, does a good deal of harm. I have very often heard people, both in the Gunupur taluk and in the Koraput division, speak of "selling men to Assam." From my work at Koraput I know that family disturbances often occur in connection with this recruiting work. Men leave their wives and children behind penniless, and I remember how a father came to me at Koraput crying bitterly because somebody had persuaded his son to leave without his knowledge. Not a few go to Assam because their position in their old surroundings have become intolerable on account of offences against the law or their own community and its rules, others because they are unwilling to fulfil obligations imposed upon them. Probably the worst is the unauthorized trade in coolies for the tea gardens. As stated above, sirdars sometimes employ others, to assist them, and such helpers after a while start business themselves without the authorization of the T.D.L.A. depots and manage to get the coolies duly accepted through the help of one or other of the clerks in the depots. I have personally had to dismiss a mission worker who had become guilty of such an offence.

7. In this taluk, I am told, there is no real unemployment for people who are willing to work though they may not at all times be able to obtain the usual wages. Unemployment, where it exists, is chiefly due to aversion to work, and such aversion, I am sorry to say, is not uncommon.

8. In agriculture workers are employed for a year or more, especially when they are made servants in order to pay off old debts

Quite a considerable number of workers are casual workers, and among those, e.g., when employed in building work, etc., absenteeism is quite common. Some leave work for a while because they feel that they have earned enough (1) to keep them for a short period, others because they work only on account of hard necessity and welcome any excuse for leaving work for a while. From my experience at Koraput I also know that agricultural workers have disappeared to Assam at the most inconvenient time and caused their employers great difficulty. In any case the loss both to employers and to the workers themselves (perhaps most to the latter) is considerable, but it is impossible to put that loss into figures.

## COCHIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. Entirely local.
3. (i) Existing methods—Coolie contractors supply 95 per cent. of labour.
- (ii) Possible improvement—Appears satisfactory both to employers and labourers.

### II.—Staff Organisation.

15. (i) All coir yarn work.

### VII.—Safety.

No possibility of accident whatsoever in the coir yarn industry.

### IX.—Hours.

#### A.—Factories.

55. Hours worked per week and per day—51 (8½).
56. Six.
60. Intervals—12 to 1.
61. Sunday.

**X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.****A.—Factories.**

82. Most important that women employed in the coir yarn industry as sorters, etc., should be permitted to bring their infants, as otherwise mothers with young children will not be able to obtain work. The children spend the day largely in the open air, in healthy surroundings under the direct supervision of their mothers.

87. No blind alley employment in coir industry.

**XII.—Wages.**

96. (i) Weavers, 10 to 14 annas per day; coolies, 8 to 12 annas per day; youths\* 4 to 7 annas per day; women, 4 to 7 annas per day.

(iv) None. Wages remain unchanged whether profits or losses are registered.

107. (i) Weekly.

(ii) 36 hours.

**XIV.—Trade Combinations.**

117. (i) Employers. (ii) Employed, none.

**Rev. H. STAECKER, JEYPORE, VIZAGAPATAM.**

*General Remarks.*—There is no real industry in the Jeypore Agency. The few saw and rice mills of the Maharajah of Jeypore are too small as to be classified like this. Most of the labourers are employed in constructing roads, bridges, houses, and as servants of cultivators and other persons. The most essential question which concerns the labour problem in this country is the emigration to Assam.

1. (i) Out of the Christian population about 5 per cent. have emigrated to Assam, i.e., 1,000 out of 20,000, according to statistical enquiry. Concerning the whole population I have no information, but assume that the percentage of emigrants may be about the same.

(ii) The cause of emigration is not lack of work. There is plenty of work in the country, and the want of labourers is hampering very seriously all undertakings as road, bridge and house building, etc. Reasons of emigration are :—(a) Desire to earn more money. This desire sometimes may arise out of a clear conception of the amount of labour and payment, the emigrants have to expect in Assam. However often such a desire is raised in the emigrants by false and exaggerated tales of the sardars about labour and wages in Assam. (b) Indebtedness of the emigrants—the debtors see no other way to get rid of their debts than simply to run away to Assam. (c) Family quarrel—a man taking the wife of another, the daughter not wanting to marry the man the father had chosen for her, etc. (d) Crime—the culprit leaving the country in order to avoid punishment.

Reasons (b) and (c) are very often to be found. I think it can be said that very seldom a man who is not pressed by reasons (b), (c) and (d) leaves the country after careful consideration and with a full and correct knowledge of the conditions in Assam.

2. Quite a number of emigrants have settled down in Assam, having their own houses and cultivation. Others are returning as sardars, and in such capacity very often coming back after about nine months. Besides these there is a good number of those in Assam who have been there for more than four years who would like to return, but are hitherto not allowed. Sometimes this policy seems to be followed, that the husband is kept back when the woman and children go on leave, or the woman and children are kept back when the husband returns, thereby trying to compel the party on leave to return.

3. (i) Some recruiting persons, i.e., sardars, may perhaps keep strictly to their rules. In many cases, however, the methods of recruitment employed by sardars are deplorable and causing a good deal of harm to the people. They are persuading them with the help of intoxicating drinks or as sometimes done in case of female emigrants they are proposing a marriage to a woman or girl without keeping the promise afterwards, being satisfied with having succeeded in drawing her away.

(ii) Although the above-mentioned methods are certainly not approved of by the superintendents of emigration depot, a certain improvement may be achieved by a better supervision of the work of the sardars by the superintendent of the respective immigration depot. Besides this I would welcome the rule that every emigrant

has to show at the emigration depot a certificate issued by the local police station showing at least the name and village of the emigrant. Such a measure would make it possible for the emigration depot to enter the correct name of the emigrant in the list, and it would be possible to trace him or her whenever necessary. Now it sometimes happens that the emigrant as well as the sardar give a false name of the emigrant at the emigration depot, thereby causing a great amount of inconvenience and sometimes even harm to those who want to or have to trace the emigrant. Such a rule would do away with all secretly disappearing of emigrants.

4. Whenever a whole family emigrates no disturbance of family life takes place. In many cases, however, the husband emigrates alone and leaves his wife and children behind without supporting them afterwards from Assam, thereby throwing his family in a deplorable state of starvation, besides bringing himself and her in the danger of living together with another woman respectively man, in case the separation extends over a longer period. Not less destructive is the effect on family life whenever a man takes the wife of another or takes a girl without the consent and knowledge of her family and uses the emigration as a way to place himself out of reach of those against whom he has committed an offence. Although from the legal point of view nothing may prevent a woman leaving her husband and going with another man to Assam, it should be the policy of the superintendents of emigration depots to strictly adhere to Section 9 of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, i.e., no woman should be sent against the plain protest of her husband as actually has been done. On the whole it may be said that the emigration is responsible for the destruction of a number of families. More regard towards family life on the part of the recruiting officers would be a blessing to the country.

6. (i) The existing control of recruitment, although the same has not prevented the mentioned sad results of emigration, is better than no control at all, and should be retained.

The control should be more effective in the direction of supervising the work of the sardars, preventing the disturbance of family life and securing the return of those whose contract has terminated.

✓ Mr. G. G. ARMSTRONG, O.B.E., M.C., V.D., M.INST.T., CHAIRMAN, MADRAS PORT TRUST.

#### I.—Recruitment.

3. Labour employed by the Madras Port Trust is obtained from Madras City and the neighbourhood. Vacancies in the Madras Port Trust gangs are practically invariably filled by friends and relations of men already working. There is no necessity particularly to obtain labour from any special source.

Deck hands for the trust's vessels are selected locally from boatmen of the junior grade, whereas engine-room hands unobtainable locally are recruited either from Bombay or Chittagong.

In view of the low horse power of the trust's vessels, more highly skilled men are not required and therefore no improvement is necessary.

5. There is practically no recruiting of seamen at this port.

8. (i) The average duration of employment is 15 to 20 years or even more.

(ii) Casual labour is employed on the annual overhaul of tugs, temporary reliefs for boatmen and on large capital works.

(iii) There is very little absenteeism. It is found in the workshops that about 5 per cent. of the total number of employees are absent daily on account of sickness and during the harvest season about one per cent. absent themselves for two months.

#### II.—Staff Organization.

14. Men are mustered by time-keepers. The permanent labour working in the Port Trust sheds is checked twice a day in attendance registers. Men engaged on engineering works are checked by means of daily sheets and attendance registers are maintained only for those on monthly wages. Time-keeping and checking is all done under the supervision of overseers and superintendents. These registers are checked periodically by officers.

Daily paid men employed by workshops are shown on an attendance register which is periodically inspected by an officer.

Wages are paid by cashiers in the presence of an officer or an upper subordinate.

15. The handling of cargo between ship and shed, and between shed and delivery to consignees is done by contract labour. Departmental labour up to 200 or 300 men is, however, employed in the sheds as well to keep them clean and in order.

Most of the works in the harbour are done departmentally. The following only are done through contractors: (i) Quarrying of stones, (ii) sand filling, (iii) sanitary installations, and (iv) construction of masonry buildings.

There is no sub-contracting.

The trust does not exercise supervision over contractors' labour or their working conditions, but as there is the trust's own labour working in all parts of the harbour, the contract labourers get advantage of the same conditions as others.

Contract labour appears to be contented and on the whole turns out good work.

### III.—Housing.

16. The trust has provided houses for what is called an emergency gang, that is, a gang of a dozen or so men who are required in case of accident on engineering works, such as permanent way. It also houses a few scavengers. The rest of the labour employed in the harbour is not provided with houses by the trust. They live in all parts of the city and suburbs.

18. The accommodation provided is in relation to the worker's demand and consists generally of a room and a veranda. Lighting is not provided but conservancy and water are given free.

### IV.—Health.

23. (iii) The working conditions are favourable to health, the harbour being close by the open sea. I cannot answer for the home conditions of the labourers, but the boatmen employed in the harbour live mostly in huts built by themselves near the seashore and, though attempts are made to keep broad passages open for air between huts and to provide latrines, the conditions are not conducive to the best of health.

24. No medical facilities are provided by the trust, but a free medical service for the trust's employees is under contemplation by the Port Trust Board.

26. Flush-out latrines and fresh drinking water are provided at convenient working centres throughout the harbour. At the taps provided there is also provision for washing.

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

34. Accommodation has been provided by the trust at convenient spots in the harbour for refreshment stalls and food vendors. There is also a large tiffin shed and garden for labourers.

### VII.—Safety.

45. Accidents are almost invariably due to carelessness of workmen. The Madras coolie is remarkably casual in the way in which he handles heavy cargo and deals with moving railway wagons.

46. The trust has done its best to prevent accidents by putting up notices at all places where there is danger from railway traffic and the movement of cargo. Further, all cranes, chains and wire ropes are tested regularly every three months. In the railway yards and on the quays there is constant supervision by upper subordinates, as well as frequent visits by inspecting officers.

48. In the workshops first-aid is given in the case of accidents and if necessary an injured man is sent by wheeled stretcher or motor lorry to the hospital. Ambulances fitted with first-aid cabinets are provided in the harbour under police supervision.

### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

51. The trust has its own practice in compensating its staff for injury, etc. The compensation given to workmen is never less than that allowed under the Workmen's Compensation Act, and in some respects, e.g., in the allowances of pay for short absences due to injury the trust is far more liberal than the Act.

### IX.—Hours.

#### A.—Factories (Workshops).

55. Artisans work 8½ hours a day and 5 hours on Saturday or 47½ hours a week. The actual working hours are the same except that occasionally overtime is worked up to 2 hours. Their work is continuous.

57. It is considered that the 60 hours' restriction is beneficial to the workmen and results in better work.

58. The effect of the daily limit is that a larger number of men are employed than would otherwise be the case.

59. It is considered that no reduction should be made in maxima.

60. One hour's interval is given in a day of 8½ hours work. The working hours are from 7 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m., and the interval from 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. It is considered that the present regulations regarding intervals are equitable. The existing working hours are satisfactory. Holidays are given in accordance with the Negotiable Instruments Act, and it is considered that this number is too large and unnecessarily interferes with work.

61. All Sundays are holidays and if any workman works on a Sunday he is given a substituted holiday.

62. Only in case of urgent repair work we make use of the exemptions made in the Indian Factories Act.

#### C.—*Railway.*

73. Eight hours for 6 days or 48 hours a week. The actual working hours are the same, but there is no overtime. The work is continuous.

75. International labour conventions are observed. The hours of work are only 8 per day and one day's rest is given in a week.

76. There is no interval in this 8-hour day but the men are able to get their meals in their working time.

The engine staff get 15 days leave in a year, the shunting porters are daily paid men and get no leave with pay. The shunting masters are under the Fundamental Leave Rules and get extremely liberal leave allowances.

#### D.—*Other Establishments.*

78. (a) *Traffic-shed and yard coolies.*—Eleven hours a day, that is from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with one hour interval from 12 a.m. to 1 p.m. The actual number of hours worked including overtime is 11 to 16 hours. The work is very intermittent, and actually the men work about 6 to 8 hours a day. Some of the men are called on to continue working at night, and care is taken to see that this overtime work is distributed as evenly as possible.

79. Six days a week.

78. (b) *Cranes staff and coaling coolies.*—Eleven hours a day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with one hour interval from 12 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The actual working hours are the same. These men do not get overtime like the traffic coolies or only very rarely. The work is intermittent.

79. Six days a week.

78. (c) *Artisans outside workshops, and coolies employed on new works, conservancy and stores yard and on general maintenance.*—Eight hours a day and seven hours on Saturday or 47 hours a week. The actual working hours are the same with very occasional overtime. Their work is continuous.

79. Six days a week.

78. (d) *Lascars in tugs and launches.*—Twelve hours a day or 84 hours a week. The actual working hours are the same. Their work is extremely intermittent. Lascars working in the tugs live in them and work as required.

79. Seven days a week.

78. (e) *Lascars of dredger, sounding boats, barges and certain of the launches.*—Eight and a half hours for 5 days and 5½ hours on Saturday or 48 hours a week. Men on the dredger work about 9½ hours a day with overtime, but others do not get overtime. The work is continuous.

79. Six days a week.

78. (f) *Lascars of pilot and mooring boats.*—These men are on duty for long hours, because their work is entirely dependent upon the arrival and sailing of steamers. They have actually to be in the harbour for 15 hours but only do 2 or 3 hours' work. Their pay covers duty between 4 o'clock in the morning and 7 o'clock in the evening. Outside these hours, they get overtime and their overtime averages about 2 hours a day, but it would not be fair to infer from this that they work 15 plus 2, or 17 hours a day for seven days in the week, as this is not the case. In dealing with these men it may be pointed out that they are men whose whole life is spent by or on the sea, and have actually not a great deal of work to do.

79. Seven days a week.

78. (g) *Engine-room ratings*.—These work 12 hours on and 12 hours off for seven days, with practically no overtime. They live on the ships on which they work. Their work is not continuous.

79. They work for seven days a week.

80. Any regulation in this matter is difficult to suggest. There is no doubt that the hours of work of certain categories look almost fanciful on paper, but in the case of the boatmen, we are dealing with men who live on their work and, provided they are well paid, as they are, have nothing to complain about. The only complaints I have seen from them referred to a difficulty in getting their food sent to them at the time they want it and the absence of a convenient place in which to keep their boxes. These complaints were dealt with satisfactorily to the best of my knowledge.

## X.—Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

### A.—Factories.

86. *Work and Training of young adults in the Workshops*.—The number of apprentices is on a percentage basis, which under ordinary circumstances would provide sufficient men to meet our requirements of artisans. There are two classes of apprentices "A" and "B". "A" class apprentices are boys of not more than twenty years of age who have attained the fourth form or its equivalent; "B" class apprentices are boys mainly recruited from sons of Port Trust servants who have attained the first form or its equivalent, and are not over eighteen years of age.

## XII.—Wages.

96 Generally speaking the coolie who works 11 hours a day gets 13 annas, and the coolie who works 8½ hours a day 11 annas, women 8 annas. The pay of artisans varies from Rs. 1-2-0 a day to Rs. 4. It is understood that these wages are not lower than those given in other parts of Madras.

100. Payment is made to coolies direct and not through contractors, sub-contractors or headmen.

102. The traffic coolies are paid overtime on the basis of their daily wage, according to the number of hours they work overtime. The engineering coolies also get the same. The engineering day is 8 hours and the traffic day is 11 hours. In the workshops if a workman works till 6 p.m. during a weekday (normal working hours being 7 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., with an hour's interval) he is paid one-fourth day overtime. If he works on a Sunday the working hours being 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., with half an hour's interval, he is paid one full day overtime. Tindals and boatmen are paid respectively 5 annas and 4 annas for each vessel attended to on holidays and Sundays and during night hours, that is, from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m.

106. (i) Fining is very rare, except in the case of workshop staff who are daily paid.

(ii) *Other deductions*.—Provident fund up to a maximum of 10 per cent. of pay.

(iii) Any fines imposed are credited to works or revenue. The only staff who are fined to any extent are the daily paid men from the workshops. The mechanical and electrical engineer states that the fines imposed by him average in the case of monthly paid men 0.05 per cent. and in the case of daily paid men 0.08 per cent. of the total wages.

107. (i) Wages are paid daily, fortnightly or monthly.

(ii) In the case of labour paid daily the payment is made at the end of each day. With regard to fortnightly and monthly paid men, the traffic employees are paid without any delay at all; the engineering men are paid a week or ten days after the due date; workshop men are paid one week after the due date; boatmen are paid one day after the due date.

110. The traffic labourers get no leave. The engineering labourers are granted leave with pay for the King-Emperor's birthday, provided they are present on the previous and subsequent working days. A certain number of labourers go away for about two months during the harvest season. Boatmen come under the fundamental rules and get very liberal leave allowances with pay.

## XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. There has been only one strike during recent years in the harbour and that was among the scavengers in 1926. The men resumed duty unconditionally in about three weeks. In the meantime the trust had to recruit men from upcountry at some extra cost by paying them railway fare, etc. The strike was due to the dismissal of one of the scavengers whose attendance was very irregular.



124. (v) No special measures are taken in order to afford opportunity to employees of the Trust to make representations. It is not possible to say for certain whether special opportunities are necessary or not. But during the last year representations both in writing and by word of mouth have reached the Chairman from various classes of workpeople engaged in the Trust and from the manner in which these representations were made it did not appear to him that they experienced any great difficulty in approaching the Chairman in person

## THE MADRAS UNITED SPINNING AND WEAVING MILLS CO., LTD.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. India is primarily an agricultural country. There neither was nor has been a skilled or an organized industrial labour class in the strict sense of the word as is usually met with in the Western civilised nations. Since recently farmers and other agricultural labourers went to the towns and cities to seek employment in Power Industries, prominent among them being cotton ginning and pressing factories and other big Textile concerns, and the reason which induced them for so doing was nothing else but earning a steady and regular wage throughout the year. This advantage of a steady wage they could not get in agriculture which, in India, mostly depended on regular and timely rains during the season. And with the exception of few provinces in India most of them carried on one crop agriculture and the labour of those districts and provinces had to while away their time indolently in summer and other seasons.

2. (i) Having no lands of their own, most of the labourers have come from the adjoining districts and villages and settled down in the cities with their families. A negligible percentage go to their native places every year to look after their lands during the sowing and harvesting seasons while only about 20 to 25 per cent. go to their villages during monsoon season with three objects in view, viz.—(i) They get good wages for working in the fields at that time. (ii) To change the monotony of the daily mill-life and (iii) to see their kith and kin, their relatives and acquaintances.

(ii) The labourers in our mills are mostly permanent and 25 per cent. of them have become dependant on our Textile Departments.

3. (i) Raw and sometimes trained labour present themselves at the gates of the mills every day through some one employed in the mills and get themselves introduced to the jobbers. The jobbers place them before the departmental heads who try them and give them suitable jobs. This, we have found, tends to bribery and corruption in spite of our efforts to stop the same. Owing to the large numbers of unemployed labour, we find it very difficult to stop the existing system of bribery and corruption.

(ii) Our management is trying to change the present system of recruitment through the jobbers and in its stead introduce direct recruitment, i.e., when the men present themselves for work at the gat sheet departmental heads with the help of their reliable assistants select men and take a trial, give them jobs temporarily and if found satisfactory, fix them up. We find there is some improvement in this method but the jobbers who had been accustomed to take bribes, find this system rather inconvenient to them and they try generally to find fault with such people and harass them in such a manner as to gradually bring them round.

(iii) No practical and desirable employment agencies can be set till we begin to get a better type of educated labour. At present educated people think it below their dignity to do manual labour. Recently we find a little change in this mentality and we are glad to say that students who leave their schools in the middle of their courses owing to their inability to continue same, have begun to take an active interest in joining the factories. We are preparing a scheme to introduce an apprentice class system for the above.

8. Labour "Turnover." (i) Blow Room, Carding Dept., Drawing, Stubbing, Inter, Roving, Spinning, average 20 to 25 years; Reeling, 15 to 20 years; Winding, Warping, Sizing, Weaving, Calendering, Folding and Packing, Baling, these departments are working from 1923 only; Mechanic Shop, 20 to 25 years.

### II.—Staff Organisation.

10. Our Head Office is situated at Bombay. We have an Agent in charge who is responsible for the administration of the mills and factories in the Madras Presidency and is assisted by the works manager, who is responsible for the executive function of the departments which are managed by their heads, i.e., engineer in charge of engine, boilers, mechanic shop, etc., a spinning master in charge of blow room to spinning departments, a weaving master in charge of winding to baling departments.

11. Managing Staff and the heads of departments are selected by the Secretaries and Treasurers from experienced, trained and practical men available.

12. (i) Intelligent and competent hands are selected from the workers in the mills and given a chance in the subordinate staff.

(ii) Educated and hard-working willing school students are being engaged as apprentices and given promotions just as they become eligible consistent with their capacity.

13. (i) A number of machines and men are under a jobber. Over a group of jobbers there is a head jobber over whom there are assistants. Our departmental heads, though they generally get the work done through their assistants, are in touch with the rank and file who can easily approach the heads of departments to represent their grievances, if any.

(ii) As the jobbers are in charge of a few men only with whom they have to move about in the day, can understand their difficulties and help them better, but if they do not attend to the workers' grievances, either the head jobber or the assistant goes to help them immediately his attention is so drawn. We find the present system is working smoothly provided the heads of the departments are good, competent and thorough disciplinarians.

14. Head time-keeper is responsible for attendance registers and time keeping. He is assisted by ten clerks in his work. Piecework calculations are done by the departmental clerks and sent to the time keeper for checking and recording entries of wages in books and for preparation of pay chits or slips.

(ii) The workers are paid on every second Saturday of the month. The pay-slips or chits are given to them on the previous day to enable them to check same. The wages are paid by the cashiers in the presence of their respective jobbers, assistants and masters of the departments concerned.

15. There are no contractors in any of our departments.

#### IV.—Health.

23. The general condition of health of the labourers is fair. They subsist mostly on rice which is the staple food of Madras. They look to be weak when compared with the labour in other centres of India, especially Bombay Presidency, but their enduring power and stamina are in no way inferior.

24. (i) A dispensary is attached to the mills in charge of a qualified doctor who attends from 7.30 to 10.30 a.m. and 3 to 5 p.m. daily. A compounder is in charge throughout the working hours.

(ii) General hospital is very near to our mills where serious cases of accidents, etc., are being sent.

25. One hundred and ten patients or 5 per cent. of our labour force is the daily average attendance in our dispensary. The women employed in the mills utilise the medical facilities in minor illness.

29. Malarial fever, 20; Malarial dysentery, 6; Diarrhoea due to indigestion, 6; Headache, 10; Anaemia, 10; Dysentery, 6; Rheumatic pains 6. These are the general diseases with their average number of patients per day in our dispensary.

31. (i) Maternity benefits are given to our women workers in the shape of one-third of their wages for three months on their resuming duty after lying-in period is over.

#### V.—Welfare.

34. (i) A shop is allowed to be kept on a nominal rent in the premises, where light refreshments, aerated waters, tea and coffee are sold to the labourers working in the mill.

37. Workmen are paid gratuity when they retire owing to infirmity due to old age according to their period of service and capacity, at the discretion of the secretaries and treasurers.

#### IX.—Hours.

##### A.—Factories.

55. (i) Ten hours per day, i.e., 10 hours on weekdays and 8½ hours on Saturdays. Daily working hours, 6.30 to 11.30 a.m. and 12.30 to 5.30 p.m.

(ii) Same as above. Sometimes the engineering department works on erection work, etc., with the permission of the factory inspector and in accordance with the Factory Act.

56. Fifty-eight and a half hours per week.

59. Any reduction of the working hours will seriously affect the production in the departments and increase its cost.

60. (i) (a) 11.30 to 12.30 ; one hour for meals and rest. (b) meals are taken by operatives during the working hours in spite of our warnings, as they are accustomed to same. This practice, however, we are trying to stop.

(iv) Every Sunday is a stop day. Besides holidays are given on important festivities, such as Dasara, Divali, etc., etc., for which both the monthly salaried and piece-workers are paid on their average earnings.

### XII—Wages.

97. (i) Increases have been given in recent years, as 25 per cent. allowance, and in certain departments 10 per cent. increases have been given in the rates.

(ii) Owing to the cost of living going up.

(iii) The increase in wages are more than increases of the cost of living in post-war times.

101. Wages are fixed by the heads of the departments concerned, in consultation with their assistants, etc.

102. Overtime wages are calculated on the basis of 8 hours for 10 hours, i.e., if an operative works for 2 hours he is paid for 2½ hours' wages.

106. Deductions.—(i) Fines are inflicted for late attendance, negligence, carelessness, wilful damages, etc. In no case are they fined more than 2 per cent. of their monthly income during a month.

107. (i) Monthly Wages.—Time and piece-workers are paid monthly on the second Saturday of the succeeding month. Temporary workers in the engineering department are paid weekly on erection work, etc.

(iv) Unclaimed wages are very rare in our mills as we try to pay them off.

108. (ii) Most of the workers are in debt, owing to their spendthrift habits, especially in drinks, etc. They also incur large expenses during the marriage ceremonies, etc., in their families as well as of their distant relatives and acquaintances.

109. (i) Bonuses in the shape of one month's wages were paid in the boom periods when the mills were making tremendous profits.

(ii) There was no fixed basis. A certain amount was allotted out of total profits and the same was used to be distributed among the workers at the discretion of the secretaries and treasurers.

110. (i) We have recently introduced a scheme of privilege leave for 15 days annually on half-pay for workmen who have been in service continuously and regularly for five years for recoupment of worker's health. Formerly they used to take leave without pay for one or two months in the year for going to their villages during marriage and other festivities.

(ii) Leave is granted liberally by us, although we incur a certain amount of loss in production due to changes.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112. The standard of living in Madras being very low, the efficiency of workers is much lower than in Bombay, Ahmedabad, and other textile centres. We find that the climatic conditions also have a bearing in not allowing the workmen to work continuously for five hours at a stretch and when they get tired they resort to loitering. The tendency of the labour nowadays, we observe, is to try to get the highest wages for the least work. For instance, when we had introduced the system of one-loom per weaver, our production per loom per day was 15 lb. average, but when we introduced the two-loom system our production has gone down to 11 lb. per day. Though the weavers may get more wages individually, mills lose heavily owing to the loss of production, i.e., less efficiency and consequent increase in the cost of production per lb. Generally, we find the tendency at present among the workers is to get most for the least work by any means. For example, our production in the roving department is shown as 18,000 lb. per day and the spinning production hardly 12,000 lb. per day. This difference is due to the stealthy turning of the indicators by some contrivance on the frames by the tenters, to show more than the actual legitimate production as they are paid on production basis. In spite of our repeated warnings they do systematically change the indicators and any steps taken by the management to stop this mischief are considered injustice to them and they go on lightning strikes, and by intimidation stop the other departments also.

114. (i) The yearly migration of workers to their native villages for the festivities and their indulgence in partaking thereof do weaken them and consequently they give less production when they come back to work. The substitutes in their absence also give less production.

(ii) All the modern machinery to increase the efficiency of the workers are being introduced.

(iii) We are replacing the old plant by new modern one in spinning departments and our weaving plant, including the preparatory, is brand new and up-to-date.

(iv) We have changed our management recently with a better qualified and experienced staff, and we await the results in better efficiency.

(v) and (viii) The physique and health have to do a great deal. In spite of the recent increases in the wages we find the workers weaker owing to their dissipating habits. When they get more wages, instead of increasing their standard of living, they spend more in cinemas, theatres, alcohol and drugs, which practically shatter their health. These habits make them more tired especially after the pay-day, the nett result being more absentees and less production after the pay-days and holidays.

(ix) We have dealt with the climatic conditions in paragraph XIII (112).

120. We have in Madras a trade union by name of "The Madras Labour Union," to which some of our workmen have joined as members. It is not yet properly organized. The workmen follow their leaders as long as they get something through them. The moment their leaders try to speak to them about discipline, etc., the workmen disagree with them. The members list increases during strikes and dwindles down in normal times. The true value of trade unionism is not yet well understood by the workmen. They think by becoming members of a union they can do anything and everything in the mills. In spite of their above attitude, our relations with the union are cordial. We always try to co-operate with them and render them all sorts of facilities with a view to educate the labour, organize and increase their efficiency.

122. When there is any dispute or grievance, union officials approach us and we discuss with them in detail in our office and sometimes in the presence of the Labour Commissioner. We both generally come to some understanding in these discussions. When we disagree, an expert committee is appointed by the Labour Commissioner, who go into the matter deeply and though their findings are not supposed to be binding on both parties, we generally agree to their findings and act up accordingly. This creates satisfaction among labourers, though temporary sometimes. The real difficulty in this arrangement is due to the want of technical and practical knowledge of the labour leaders. It will be better for the union and also for our management if the union leaders get themselves acquainted with the working of the different departments in the mills, so that they may be able to realise the difficulties of the management, and also they may not come to us with false representations that are made to them very often. This would also remove a lot of misunderstandings and pave their way in establishing their union on a sound basis.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

123. There had been series of strikes, mostly lightning, due to misunderstandings and rowdy elements.

(ii) The strikes had been from a few hours to a few months, mostly peaceful, due to the prompt and efficient help of the police force and also sometimes to the sound advice of the union president, Mr. B. Shiva Rao. We have found him very reasonable and courteous, and it is a pity that the labour has not yet learnt to follow him implicitly and also some of his co-workers.

(iii) We have dealt at length in paragraph 120 how we deal with the union and settle the disputes through the good offices of the Labour Commissioner and his Expert Committees.

(iv) Both lose very heavily and our present depressed condition of the textile industry is to a certain extent due to the lightning sectional strikes which have become the order of the day. Recently, labour union have promised to help and co-operate with us in removing the causes of these lightning strikes.

126. The attitude of the Government is always neutral in our disputes and the beauty of it is they help us in protecting our property and preserving law and order.

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Mr. H. M. HOOD, I.C.S., REGISTRAR OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES,  
MADRAS.

17. There are now about 650 co-operative societies which have been organized during the past ten years by the Co-operative Department and by co-operative officers working under the Labour Department for purpose of facilitating the

acquisition on behalf of farm labourers of the land covered by their houses. The Government under the Land Acquisition Act acquires land for the purpose of house sites of field labourers. The Government provides the money for the acquisition in the first place and then recovers it in instalments from the co-operative society organized by these labourers as members as though it were a loan from the Government to the society. The society recovers the amount from the individual members in easy instalments at a comparatively low rate of interest. Each labourer owns one house. These societies work under the direct supervision of the Labour Department.

16. An attempt has been made to provide houses for labourers in Madras by the formation of two co-operative societies to construct buildings on loans obtained from the Government, the price being recovered from the members in instalments. On the complete payment of instalments each member becomes the owner of his dwelling. The experiment has not been repeated and cannot be regarded as a success, chiefly because the members occupied the houses and then failed to repay the instalments. It was found impossible to evict them and because more than one family occupied the same house, the congestion became even worse than it was before. The Government is now collecting rent from these quarters. The rent collected is at a rate lower than the previous instalment and there is no prospect of the occupants becoming owners.

A third system has been attempted in one or two villages with reference to the colonies of labourers by granting loans obtained from the Government through co-operative societies to the members to build each his own small house, the stipulation being that it should be constructed in a sufficiently substantial manner to be a security for the loan for the period taken to recover the loan. In this way, a considerable number of houses in the Ellore Municipality were built after a quarter had been destroyed by fire. This system presupposes that the members are not the poorest of the labouring classes and that they can be expected to build small, but substantial houses with tiled roofs, instead of the thatched huts occupied by many of the labouring classes. This method promises to be more successful than the second.

38. There has been practically no welfare work among the labour classes by any co-operative organization.

37. Each of the railway companies have a co-operative credit society with mutual benefit fund to which the labour staff of the railway may subscribe.

There are also a considerable number of co-operative credit societies, about 50, of which the members are labourers of various kinds, e.g., scavengers of municipalities, field labourers, shop employees, clerks in Government service, weavers, artisans of various kinds, etc. These practically provide for accumulating the savings of its members either in the form of savings bank deposits, or recurring deposits, or of share-holding in the societies. The amount of money so deposited, however, can only be regarded as a trivial amount compared with what should be deposited if adequate provisions were to be made in this way for old age or sickness.

14, 15, 117 and 119. There are in this Presidency, 63 labour contract societies including 3,105 members who are actual workers and 676 members who are assisting the societies in various directions. The paid-up share capital is Rs. 22,000 and the reserve fund Rs. 28,000. They have in addition borrowed Rs. 1,15,000. Including the unfinished work left over from the last year, the societies have carried out work to the value of Rs. 2,29,000 during the year while at the end of the year, work for Rs. 1,04,000 remained incomplete. Wages were paid by these societies to the extent of Rs. 51,000 to members and Rs. 43,000 to non-members. During the year, the societies worked on the whole at a loss of Rs. 4,000, some having made profit and some having lost money.

These societies are organized by the co-operative department and consist mainly of unskilled labourers with a certain number of skilled labourers, assisted by honorary presidents and secretaries and by a paid staff of maistries and clerks. They are thus able to tender for various works given on contract. In this way they have erected buildings, dug canals, supplied road metal, undertaken repairs to roads and other works of a like nature.

The majority of the members are unskilled labourers, but they take in as members or as workers various skilled artisans to carry out particular works with reference to the contract upon which they are engaged.

The justification for these societies lies in the supposition that contractors are generally people who make very considerable profits of which a larger share could go to the workman while at the same time providing adequately for the supervision and other charges necessary in carrying such works. This has in fact been confirmed by the actual profits made by these societies in certain cases and in several instances societies have been able to pay material bonus to their members, at the end of the year in proportion to the work done and the wages earned by each member.

The Government have in general encouraged the formation of such societies and the attention of the district boards and others who have control of considerable works has been drawn to the desirability of their employing such societies. A weakness of these societies lies in the fact that they require in addition to the management which they themselves provide and pay for, constant supervision from the co-operative departmental staff. In the event of the local officers ceasing to take interest in these societies and stopping the constant attention and advice given by them they would, in most cases, almost immediately, fall to pieces. While the members themselves have not sufficient education or business knowledge or business training to enable them to hold together and conduct the society properly, while the persons they employ would in many cases betray the interests of the labour societies in pursuit of some immediate gain to themselves. Persons having knowledge and experience of the direction and control of the execution of such works are mostly contractors themselves or men who aspire to be contractors. Their interests are opposed to the interests of these co-operative labour societies and for this reason, any of them employed by the labour societies is constantly tempted to shape his conduct with a view to his becoming the contractor with the members as his workmen.

## ✓ THE MADRAS ALUMINIUM LABOUR UNION.

### I.—Recruitment.

1. The Census Report gives us the extent of migration from the villages to the city. From those villages, where the law of diminishing return has begun to work, where on account of the poverty, lands could not be improved or where the famine has devastated the lands or where the lands have been so far sub-divided as to yield no profitable return, many people flock to Madras if they do not sail away to Penang and other places. From those villages which are in and about Madras people come here as labourers but do not settle down in Madras. They prefer to come from and return to their village homes every day with the greatest imaginable difficulty. In one case a poor labourer preferred to come from Pallavaram, about 10 miles away from Madras, and return to his home there. That is because he cannot afford to pay any rent for inhabiting any house in Madras from the paltry sum of 6 annas paid to him as wages per day. This gives us a vivid picture of the grinding poverty.

2. As far as the aluminium companies are concerned the labour force is almost permanent.

3. The existing method is the most primitive. The unemployed labourer comes and stands at the gate of the firm; the employer admits him in if there is any vacancy and his body is well built. Under such circumstances the iron law of supply and demand works to the great detriment of the helpless employee. The establishment of a public employment agency alone will minimise this difficulty.

4. The family life is not, except to a small extent, disturbed; for, as has already been pointed out, people prefer to return to their village homes daily.

7. The unemployment is almost universal. It is only a few of the available labourers that are now employed. There is a still greater number of those who cannot get their proper employment but who accept, on account of this poverty, some employment or other to keep the wolf from their doors. The labourers who enjoy holidays but for which no wages are paid, are to that extent really unemployed. Not only for these holidays but also for those days on which the company finds no use for these labourers, for example, for the stocktaking days no wages are paid. The unemployment insurance will certainly improve the condition of those who are unable to be thrown out of employment. There cannot be any two opinions about the necessity for applying the international conventions. For preventing the special kind of quasi-unemployment on holidays, etc., mentioned above, the labourers ought to be placed on a secure basis and continuity of service they must be assured of. Like the clerks they must be paid for the holidays as well. The provision for holidays made in the Factory Act will be of real benefit to the labourer only when the payments for their holidays as well are made compulsory by a proper amendment of the said Act.

### III.—Housing.

The employers have not made any arrangements for housing of the employees, nor have the Government taken any step in this direction. The housing schemes of the Madras Corporation have not matured as yet, except to a certain extent. Some of the employees own small houses of their own or superstructures or small pieces of land. On account of their poverty they could not even repair their

houses, most of which are charged with some debt or other. Private landlords therefore provide almost all the houses required for the employees. But these do not provide houses which are sanitary and healthy. They let out their age-long houses after partitioning every room and verandah into as many portions as there are tenants available. Many families of these employees cannot afford to pay for more than a single room of the above description. Therein alone they will have to cook their food and sleep in the night.

It is easy to imagine the effect of such a life of the employee and his family. It is a miracle indeed that most of the labourers, in spite of their living in the den of death should at all have any strength for attending their daily avocations. Therefore it is necessary that some kind of compulsion should be introduced for providing houses for the labourers. The municipality and the employers should be compelled to bear a portion of the cost of this scheme, and the Government should also contribute its own share.

But the kind of barracks which are being built for these poor people by the municipality and by some of the employers has already been tried and condemned in the continental countries. Garden villages, full of cottage houses each surrounded by open space, alone will improve the health and moral conditions of the labourers. In view of the abject poverty and the starvation wages they get, co-operative building societies cannot by themselves rectify the defects.

#### IV.—Health.

A graph\* showing the birth, death and infantile mortality rate from 1908 to 1928, prepared by the Madras Corporation, is herewith sent. The annual reports of the health officer published by the Corporation of Madras will give all necessary information. The births and deaths are compulsorily registerable. In every municipal division there is a medical registrar to register the births and deaths. The working conditions at home, as already pointed out, are not at all satisfactory, nor are the workplaces any better as far as aluminium labourers are concerned. The aluminium factories are situated in antiquated and dilapidated buildings.

The food which the labourers take consists only of rice. The vegetables or mutton they take is almost negligible, because mutton or vegetable is taken by way of chutney and not by way of food. Necessarily the food is deficient in all the necessary requirements. Apart from this, when people start from their houses far away from the factories at about six in the morning they cannot bring any food with them for the day. Consequently, after having had their cold rice in the morning, most of the labourers starve all through the day and have their next meal only at seven or eight in the night when they return to their homes in the night. It may be unprecedented, but under the prevailing conditions here it is necessary that some compulsion should be introduced for making provision for supplying mid-day meals to these labourers. The factories at least should make arrangements for supplying food rich in all the required qualities at cheap rates.

Living in such insanitary dwellings as mentioned above, and on such poor diet as pointed out, the physique of the labourers cannot be expected to do anything less than the average.

There is a direct relation between the crowded ill-ventilated dark and insanitary houses and the high mortality obtaining in the city.

The Madras City High Mortality Committee writes as follows:—"One of the factors at work is undoubtedly the housing conditions in large areas of the city; many of the so-called houses being unworthy of the name. During our inspections we have seen as many as five or six families living in one house, and five to eight persons living in each room. We are convinced that overcrowding exists to an alarming extent, and that the evil conditions arising from overcrowding are largely responsible for much of the sickness and mortality arising from respiratory diseases in general, and tuberculosis in particular, and as we have already stated, for the diseases associated with the consequent lack of sanitation. Enquiry has shown that pneumonia is a very common disease throughout the whole year, and many of the deaths among young children must be due to this and other respiratory affections caused by the lack of fresh air, and the generally insanitary conditions always associated with overcrowding."

The aluminium company employers provide no medical facilities whatsoever. The Government hospitals are far away from the work spot. The municipality has free medical dispensaries in every municipal division. The municipality has made provision for women doctors and trained midwives in the child welfare centres. In view of the accidents that usually happen it is necessary that every factory should

\* Not printed.

have at least a medical officer. Some of the firms and companies in Madras are already having medical officers for attending on their employees. Therefore there cannot be any objection for making this compulsory.

The latrine arrangements are not quite satisfactory. But fortunately the Corporation is insisting on flush-out latrines being constructed. The number of seats provided, however, is not sufficient. The employers should provide first class latrines, so that the employers may realize the good effects of a sanitary life. There is no provision for bathing.

Sickness insurance ought to be introduced.

To meet the difficulty arising from the non-acceptability of western medicine, the Ayurvedic, Unanic, and Siddha dispensaries near the factory may be subsidised.

As for the financial difficulty, if the Government, the municipality and the employers co-operate and co-ordinate their schemes, it may be to a certain extent solved. But under the conditions prevalent in this country the State has to shoulder the responsibility to a much greater extent than in other lands.

31. Of the two aluminium companies in Madras one alone employs women. There is no continuity of service at all. If women become pregnant they are granted no leave, and their services are terminated. The labourers ought to be placed on the basis of the clerks providing for casual and privilege leave, and in the case of women making provisions for allowances to be given before and after childbirth. Unless the State interferes by way of proper legislation the interest of the poor and helpless women cannot be safeguarded.

#### V.—Welfare.

No welfare work is done by the aluminium employers. The Municipal Corporation does it in a way. There is no provision for refreshment, physical culture, recreation, and amusements. The appearance of the factories are not at all inviting. If only these employers inspect the drainage pumping stations of the Madras Corporation they will find out how easy it is to make even a nasty place dealing with sewage water beautiful and healthy.

#### VI.—Education.

There is no provision for education by employers. Primary education in the whole of the city is compulsory. For the adults there are the night schools. For the boys belonging to the so-called backward communities the Government grants half-fee concessions, but to the boys of the other communities who are very poor there are no such facilities. The employers should provide for scholarships available for such boys of the labourers. It cannot be said that facilities for industrial and vocational training are sufficient in the city. If the factories are near the schools, and if the employers allow the children to get some kind of industrial training that may solve this difficult problem to a certain extent.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

The Workmen's Compensation Act does not make provision for minor injuries. Some provision must be introduced for compelling the employers to grant leave with full pay for those who receive such minor injuries. In addition they must be compelled to bear the medical charges, if the employers themselves do not make provision for such medical aid. The Act further does not provide any remedy for those who contract some disease or other on account of the dangerous character of the industry, except in the case of lead and phosphorus industries. The aluminium labourers complain that the metal is injurious to the human system; but this is a question which ought to be decided upon by medical experts. But if such opinion is obtained against the working in such metals, compensation should be provided for in the Act itself, with reference to labourers employed in such metal industries.

#### IX.—Hours.

The normal hours worked per week comes to 48 and 8 per day in both the aluminium companies. But the actual hours of work usually goes up to 60 in one of the companies.

In one company the work begins on all the six days of the week at 8 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. The other company begins on all the first five days at 7.30 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m., and every Saturday the work begins at 7.30 a.m. and ends at 1 p.m. There is an interval every day between 12 and 1 p.m. In one of the companies whenever there happens to be a holiday in the following week almost all the labourers are required to work on the previous Sunday. The 60 hours' restriction is neither to the benefit of the workers nor of the industry. In view of the law of fatigue the



hours of work are to be reduced to 42 hours a week. The intervals must be much longer, and their number should be increased to three or four per day, but should be of short duration, except the one for the meals, which must be slightly longer. If this system is introduced there will be no more complaint about the labourers idling away their time on the plea of answering their calls of nature, etc.

Except for the King's Birthday, and this exception applies to only one of the companies, no wages are paid for holidays. Day of rest is Sunday. Though most of the labourers may prefer Friday as day of rest, Sunday does not work much hardship.

### XII.—Wages.

The prevailing rate of wages is from 1½ annas to boys, 4 and 6 annas to women and men. The maximum paid is Rs. 2 8 annas.

As far as the aluminium labourers are concerned the difference between money wages and money value of all earnings is nil.

In one of the companies the basis of payment for overtime and Sunday work is 150 per cent. of the usual rate. The other company does not pay for the overtime or Sunday work at more than the usual rate. Law must compel the employers to pay for the overtime work at twice the usual rate. In view of the poverty of labourers and the large supply of labour, industry is not affected by any reduction of the wages. That is what is actually happening in these aluminium companies. After the strike of 1922 in one of the companies the rates of the wages were reduced. In the other company the rates differ very much to the very disadvantage of the labourers. Taking prevailing market prices the wages ought not to be below Rs. 20 a month. A resolution for fixing the minimum monthly wage at Rs. 20 has been moved in the Madras Corporation. Unless by some statutory provision the minimum wage is fixed, the labourers themselves cannot safeguard their interests. To them it is a question of life and death and something is better than nothing. But by accepting the low wage they do not realize they are only postponing the evil day. The daily wages are paid once a month. The fines collected ought to be utilized for the welfare work.

Almost all the labourers are involved in debts, ranging from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 20. They are in the clutches of the Marwadies, who lend sums at exorbitant rates of interest. These Marwadies wait at the gate of the factory on payment days and are satisfied if they collect their interest. The aluminium labourers propose to open a co-operative bank; but if the employers themselves can lend at the prevailing bank rate, and deduct in some fixed instalments proportionate to the amount lent from the wages payable monthly, they may go a great way in improving the material condition of these labourers. When the labourers had borrowed from the Marwadies much was not left for buying the necessary articles of food, etc. In turn they begin to buy on credit, and necessarily the rates quoted for credit sale is very high. In this matter also the employers by opening a provision stores for supplying the necessaries, even as it is done by some of the employers like the cotton mills, should help their labourers. The bank and the store will cost the employers nothing, except that they will have to invest certain amount on this account of business. But they will get the ordinary interest at the market rate. The result on the workers and on their out-turn will indeed be a miracle.

Bonuses used to be paid previous to the strike. But now that practice has been discontinued. If the employers could realize that the bonus and profit-sharing knit together the employers and employees into a happy family where there is no division of interest, they will not be slow in introducing them. But unfortunately most of the employers do not see beyond their noses. The employers should also realize that the socialists are objecting to these schemes on the ground that these are so many means of duping the labourer who on account of the schemes forgets his real interest and becomes a mere tool in the hands of the employer to get the latter more profit year after year.

If the labourers are absent without leave for more than a few days they do not get back their jobs. This works a great hardship in the case of the illiterate labourer, who may fall ill and go to his native place for getting medical aid. The employers should take into consideration the illiteracy of the labourers.

In all public contracts the fair wages clause ought to be introduced.

### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

The Aluminium Labour Union was started in the year of 1917. It was one of the trade unions which was admired by many. There was a strike in the year 1922, but the strike was not successful and the state of the labourers became worse. After a long time the union began to wake itself up in the year 1927. And it was registered

under the Trade Union Act. The workers are evincing very great interest and the meetings are all well attended and conducted. They are trying to devote greater attention to practical problems like finance, auditing, etc. Except the president and the vice-president all the other members of the executive committee are all aluminium labourers.

Unfortunately in this country the employers, as far as the aluminium factories are concerned, do not view the union with favour. One employer took objection to this labour union announcing that they are celebrating their twelfth anniversary. He does not like the idea that this union is only a continuation of the other union which existed prior to the strike. The employers further think that these workmen are merely servants and slaves and no more, without any brains of their own. Objection was taken by one employer to the union representing certain grievances with reference to the mode of taking attendance and to the union suggesting certain remedies for his due consideration. The employer tells us in so many words that it is an interference with his administration work and that such letters cannot be replied to. After the revival of the union the labourers are not paid any wages for one hour's leave given at the end of the work day on some festive days. There are not instances wanting of the employers and their subordinates dissuading the workmen from joining the trade union and of attempts to punish important members of the committee. This has been brought to the notice of the employers, but they, of course, loudly protest they are not against the trade union.

The labourers ought to be given sufficient representation in the local bodies and legislatures. The provisions found in the existing enactments are negligible and they only help government wallas and not real labourers.

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RAO SAHIB V. KRISHNA MENON, B.A., SECRETARY, MALABAR DISTRICT  
CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD., CALICUT.

1. From Malabar where I live, there is migration of labour to Ceylon, Strait Settlements, Kolar Gold fields, Mysore, Tea, Coffee, and Rubber estates situated on the western Ghats. There is migration of labour also to towns from the interior, where cotton-mills, saw-mills, oil-mills, etc., exist. Most of these emigrants belong to agricultural classes. I am sorry, I am not able to give any statistics on the subject.

Hindus belonging to Nair and Thiyya castes, Christians and Muhammadans migrate to Ceylon for seeking employment as clerks and coolies. Hindus belonging to Thiyya caste who go to Ceylon take to tapping of coccoanut trees for toddy. Emigrants to Malaya States belong to all classes, some of them seek employment as clerks, others as labourers in estates. Those who go to Kolar Gold Fields are generally more sturdy than other emigrants. Those who go to estates in Western Ghats mostly belong to depressed classes and Muhammadans. This migration is chiefly due to want of suitable employment in their own villages at all times of the year.

When the head of a family contracts debts and he is unable to repay them, and when the means of livelihood of his family are insufficient, one or two of the family migrate with a view to augment the resources of the family. This desire is often intensified by want of suitable agricultural employment in all times of the year. Rack renting and consequent ruin of agricultural families to a great extent is another cause for migration.

General level of agricultural wages is rising in the interior and emigrants as a rule return to their homes after a period of two or three years with their savings. The depressed classes, such as Panchamas, who migrate to the estates often come back with their health shattered by malaria and in a majority of cases, more harm than good has resulted to these poor people.

2. Emigrants always try to return home at the earliest opportunity and many of them emigrate a second or third time after spending sufficiently long periods with their relatives at home.

3. The emigrants often follow persons who have knowledge of the place where they want to go. Sometimes contractors employed by estates enlist the labourers and take them with them to their destination. Thoughtless young men and women are often deluded into the belief that they could get suitable employment after reaching their destination and they follow the contractors without the knowledge of their parents and some hardships to these poor people and anxiety to their parents are generally caused. I suppose these incidents are common wherever emigration takes

place. It would be better, however, if the emigration officer at the port of embarkation insisted upon the production of a certificate from the headman of the village that the party migrates on his or her own account and no compulsion or misrepresentation of any kind was resorted to in his or her case. I have no other suggestions to make for improving the method of recruitment.

4. Disturbance of family life sometimes takes place owing to the migration of a member of the family. But, speaking in a general manner, I think more good than harm has resulted from migration.

7. When agricultural employments, such as sowing, transplanting and harvesting come on, all the agricultural hands in the rural parts are fully employed and I do not think unemployment exists among the agricultural classes during this period. This state, however, does not continue throughout the year. Very often they are thrown out of employment during the slack season and they are compelled to remain at home, satisfied with the insufficient food or go out of the village seeking employments in towns and other places. Panchama women, who are very often attached to the land they cultivate, do not as a rule leave the village. Ignorance and fear of danger from going out of the village and rigorous social customs compel them to remain in their own villages, and their condition during the slack agricultural season is miserable especially when the villages where they live happen to be away from towns.

23. Agricultural labourers in the interior have better health than the labourers working in towns. Agricultural labourers, when they go to work in factories generally lose health, although in towns they are able to take a larger quantity of food and get more comforts. After the introduction of the Factories' Act, sanitary arrangements at work places, such as latrines and drinking water, have improved.

32. Welfare activities for the benefit of the labourers do not exist on a large scale and generally these activities do not reach the workmen. Employers in these parts do not afford facilities for the education of workers and their children. Health lectures, lectures on co-operation and advantages of saving habits and temperance movement will greatly benefit the workers. Children of the labourers are not as a rule able to secure the benefit of education in public schools above the primary standard, as high fees in schools and the low wages of the workmen drive the labourer's children to the necessity of earning their livelihood without being able to get the full benefit of even the primary education.

51. The advantages of the Workmen's Compensation Act are largely being understood by the workers and the fear for payment of compensation is a beneficial factor for inducing owners of factories to provide safety guards and other devices for avoiding accidents.

96 to 107. Prevailing rate of wages in industries is slightly higher than wages in the agricultural districts. Labourers always try to save something out of their wages, but very often ignorance of the rules of health and want of education stand in the way of workmen realising their wish. As far as possible, workmen in towns send their savings to the villages. Except in the case of employment in estates and railway lines, payments are made to labourers directly. I do not think that time has come for fixing minimum wages. Fines and other deductions are not common in the factories with which I am acquainted. Wages are generally paid weekly on appointed days and no grievance exists about delay in payment of wages.

108. Indebtedness exists to a high degree in village and in industrial areas. Some factories give bonus to workmen.

112. I think Indian workers are increasing in efficiency and in punctuality of attendance.

117. Trade combinations of an organized kind do not exist, either among employers or among the employees to any great extent. But the spirit of combination is gradually developing among the workmen.

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✓ Mr. C. BASUDEV, B.A., B.L., PRESIDENT OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT PRESS LABOUR UNION.

I have the honour to state that I am the president of the Madras Government Press Labour Union, vice-president of the Indian Fabian Society, and president of the People's Welfare Association and Madras Domestic Servants' Association, and that I am generally acquainted with conditions of urban labour.

I am submitting this memorandum with special reference to the Madras Government Press and the conditions of employment of labour therein, and I shall generally refer to conditions of labour in the city of Madras.

On 31st March, 1929, the total strength of the establishment at the Central Press and its branches was 1,659, consisting of 840 salaried permanent employees, 71 temporary salaried, 325 permanent and 282 temporary piece-work compositors, 10 temporary piece-work binders, 80 day-extra men, 47 men paid from contingencies, and 4 student apprentices. The expenditure for the establishments is 5½ lakhs of rupees out of a total expenditure of about 11½ lakhs in the Press. The value of plant and machines has been computed at over 20 lakhs of rupees, and comprises among main items, many power printing machines, hand presses, binding machines, linotype machines, electric motors, and type-casting and other machines. In the year 1928-29, leave payments to workmen amounted to Rs. 4,993, whereas those of two officers for leave out of India came up to Rs. 11,960, and the overhead charges are about three times the payments made to workmen.

### I.—Recruitment.

The employees of the Madras Government Press are mostly drawn from the city and may be divided roughly into two kinds—the salaried men and the piece-workers; both are liable to be thrown out of employment either on account of retrenchment or as a result of punishment. The Government Press during the last five years passed through an epidemic of dismissals and removals and nearly 1,000 persons are now out of work in consequence. Retrenchment and punishments are arbitrary and in these days of struggle for existence, the workmen are only too ready to tip to obtain work. Arbitrary removals on the ground of either retrenchment or punishment easily give rise to suspicion of corruption. Arbitration committees would to some extent alleviate distress and remove suspicion. The piece-worker, in addition, has another frequent cause for unemployment. He is paid, not for hours of attendance at the Press, but by the actual work turned out, and he very often waits for hours and now and then days without work being given to him and, therefore, without remuneration. Again, he, the piece-worker, is not allowed leave for even a second with allowance and the holidays on which the Press is closed are days of unemployment to him. For this reason and for other reasons to be mentioned hereafter, the piece-work system should be abolished and all put on a salaried basis with time-scale of pay, or, in the alternative, the piece-worker should be paid by the hour and should be granted leave and holidays with allowance and a minimum wage fixed. Unemployment insurance, if started, would considerably help the employees.

### IX.—Hours.

The Government Press works at four different places and the hours of work per day and per week, the days worked and the time of working, vary. In the Central Press Mint Buildings, 7½ hours, from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. for five days of the week and 5½ hours from 9 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. on Saturdays, with an interval of one hour between 1 and 2 p.m. for lunch, come up to 43 hours and 6 days per week. In the Mount Road Branch Press, 7½ hours, from 8.45 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., with an interval of one hour between 1 and 2 p.m. of the five days of the week and 4½ hours from 8.45 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays, and this comes to 43 hours and 5½ days per week. In the Penitentiary Branch Press, 8 hours, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an interval of one hour between 11 a.m. and 12 noon for six days of the week. In the High Court Branch, 8 hours, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., with an interval of one hour between 1.30 and 2.30 p.m. for five days of the week and three hours, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., on Saturdays. Health and efficiency require uniformity of hours and days of work in all the presses. The number of holidays given is only 17½ days in a year, while the other Government servants enjoy 43 days, and the employees of firms and banks to the extent of 24 days in a year. It is, therefore, necessary that the number of holidays should be increased.

### II.—Staff Organisation.

The staff of the Press consists of the superintendent on a salary of Rs. 800-50-1,200, assisted by three gazetted assistants on Rs. 550-40-710, Rs. 500-20-600 and Rs. 300-20-400, and a publication assistant on Rs. 200-10-250. There is also a linotype operator-mechanic, a gazetted officer, on Rs. 500-30-650, and a host of supervising staff with salaries ranging from Rs. 60 to Rs. 200. The selection of the managing staff is arbitrary and outsiders are often imported to block the chances of the rank and file.

Workmen have been taken into subordinating supervising staff but not to the superior ranks. No special facilities are offered by the Press to train the workmen for higher grades. Only recently the Press has taken in four apprentices with a view to train them here and in England. These apprentices are not drawn from workmen.

Government technical examinations are prescribed for promotions to certain posts, but the claims of workmen who have passed these examinations are overlooked in preference to those who are in the good grace of the authorities.

Relations between the staff and the workmen are bad. Corruption and consequent partiality, as also the determination to suppress the spirit of union among the workmen, result in uneven distribution of work to the piece-workers, and the workmen are generally ill-treated and the language used towards them is far from desirable.

A timekeeper marks the time of attendance of workmen. Token system is adopted to facilitate the marking of time. There is no check on the timekeeper. Not even a single minute is allowed as grace after the appointed hour when the bell is rung. Hitherto, ten minutes were allowed for the workmen to come in both in the morning and in the afternoon, but now they are required to come in ten minutes earlier. Even if a workman is present at the gate at the proper time but prevented by the crowd to get in and drop his token, he is considered as coming late. The worst of it is that if a workman is six times late in a month a warning is recorded against him, that if he is late on next occasion he is punished by fine, reduction or suspension, and if he is late again on the third occasion he will be dismissed.

The cashier of the Press pays the workmen. The actual date of the payment varies. The workmen, who are poor and generally live on credit, pay their whole earnings to the creditors, who charge exorbitant interest if he is a moneylender or if he is a dealer of provisions supplies very inferior quality. Uncertainty as to the date of monthly disbursement causes great loss and inconvenience. The poor classes pay interest as much as 2 annas per month per rupee, and if an early date is fixed once for all, much loss can be obviated. There are four branches of the Press in the city and the cashier who is attached to the Mint Buildings Press makes the payment. On uncertain date he comes up for disbursing to the Mount Road Branch, which employs about 300 men. The man who is either absent or who does not answer to call will have to walk up to Mint Buildings, a distance of four miles, on some other working day to get his money, losing his wage for the period he is thus absent from work. This is a great hardship.

### III.—Housing.

In the matter of the Government Press, the Government are the employers and they have done nothing towards providing houses to the workmen, much less have the Government interfered with any such provision in cases where an employer is a private party: Private landlords are not sufficiently enterprising to construct workmen's quarters, and the workmen are so awfully poor and ill-paid and so chronically in the clutches of the moneylenders, that the great majority of them cannot dream of providing themselves with houses. The workmen are often sub-tenants, mostly in slum areas. The Corporation of Madras provides lighting and water, etc., but they are very inadequate.

### IV.—Health.

The general condition of the workmen in the Government Press is bad. The Corporation of Madras keeps the register of births and deaths. The Government Press suffers for want of proper accommodation; both at the Mint Buildings and at the Mount Road Branch, machinery is crowded to the extent of causing danger to persons passing through, and in the composing departments it is much worse; the frames are kept too close for persons to move about freely and heavy formes are kept one against the other at all odd places, and the atmosphere is heavy and impure. In addition, the roofing and the floor of the places where the employees are working, are tin-sheeted and tarred, which makes them worse.

At home, overcrowding often of a whole family into a single room, insanitary conditions and low wages have undermined the health of the workmen and it is a wonder how he survives them. Rice water twice in the day is prosperity with them. Without food, without good air and housing, and with the anxiety and ill-health, no workmen can boast of any physique. Bad housing with the low wages is responsible to a very great extent for early mortality.

Absolutely nothing by way of medical relief is provided for the workmen in the Press and outside interference is not welcomed by the Press authorities. The question of utilization does not, therefore, arise. There are public hospitals for the general public which are available to the workmen of the Press as much as to the outside public.

At home, sanitary arrangements are supposed to be looked to by the Corporation of Madras. But it is a patent fact that slum areas are not paid the same attention as the neighbourhood of the rich commands, and the sanitation of the locality where these workmen reside is far from satisfactory. Flush-out latrines are rare in the city and the latrines in private houses are very bad and insanitary.

Water in this city is rather scarce and the taps are closed for a good portion of the day. The poor private houses very often cannot boast of a water tap, and even if it has one or two it is not at all sufficient to meet the demands of the great number of persons living in it. Water for drinking and cooking is difficult to obtain in sufficient quantities, and as for bathing it is not possible for the whole family to bathe once in a day.

At the Press, where one expects better conditions with regard to latrines, drinking water and water for washing, the provision is very disappointing. Want of space at the Press is responsible for the undesirable proximity of the latrine to the place of work. No provision is made for the supply of boiled water for drinking purposes. The workmen have to take it from the taps only, which are very limited and from which water is not available at all hours of the day. There is no place for bathing and washing and water is not at all available for these purposes. In the Mount Road Branch the employees have to take water from the taps in the latrine, both for drinking and washing during lunch time.

Lead poisoning is the common disease to which compositors and type-casters often fall victims. Washing soap and good arrangements for washing must be made to lessen the evil. Malaria, hookworm and eye diseases are common and frequent among the workmen. Careful special medical supervision would help them. Sick leave does not carry allowance for the piece-workers, and sickness insurance is highly desirable.

#### V.—Welfare.

The employers who are in this case the Government are indifferent and do not pay any attention to the well-being of their employees. No welfare work is taken on hand and any attempt by outsiders is not encouraged. Work and welfare committees with representatives of both the authorities and the workmen should be constituted to look after the welfare of the workmen.

In the Central Press and its branches no refreshment shelters are provided except a small shed outside the Mint Buildings Press premises to shelter about 50 persons while about 1,000 persons take their midday meal either on the road-side or in the neighbouring compounds. In rainy season the inconvenience is very very great and sometimes workmen have to throw out their food on account of rain and want of shelter.

#### XII.—Wages.

Following are the different sections in each of which different scales of pay are prevailing. At the outset the necessity of standardizing working conditions is paramount in order to remove unjust inequalities existing among employees in different Government presses performing same or similar nature of work and the wages which are paid at present are not based on the principles of living wages.

*Composing Section.*—Foremen and assistant foremen, the supervising staff of the section which is sub-divided into gazette, revenue, public, vernacular, local and municipal, job and book departments, in each of which are employed one foreman and one or two assistant foremen, are graded on Rs. 60–4–100, Rs. 30–2–60 and Rs. 30–2–40, while the compositors numbering about 500 are paid at three annas per thousand ens on piece-work scale. Their earnings therefore vary according to the work given and turned out and they now get on the average less than Rs. 25.

The piece-work system is therefore highly disadvantageous and unprofitable to the compositors and it is prayed that the said system be abolished and the compositors placed on a salaried basis. It may be mentioned that the work of the compositor requires skill and a knowledge of English and vernacular and involve considerable expenditure of energy and therefore fatiguing in its nature. It will not therefore be unreasonable if Rs. 40 is suggested as the starting salary for a compositor rising up to Rs. 80.

It may also be mentioned that the Government in introducing the piece-work system in 1861 assured the compositors that it would mean increased income but that if it was found at any time unprofitable they would revert to the salaried basis. In the beginning the piece-work system was certainly remunerative but as has been stated above the method of calculation and assessment of work and the system of printing have since undergone considerable changes to effect economy but with no corresponding safeguards to the interest of the compositor. The Government are now practically extracting sweated labour in the matter of the piece-workers who are not in any way benefited by their three memorials submitted to the Government in the year 1927.

The rest of the staff in the composing section consists of salaried men as stated above. The starting pay in these cases is very low and it must be made Rs. 35 in the case of assistant foremen (despatchers) now on Rs. 15–1–30 and Rs. 50 in the case of foremen and assistant foremen.

(A detailed statement of pay with suggestions for higher minima is omitted here).

In the year 1919 or so the Government of Madras appointed a committee which is since known as the Knapp Committee to go into the question of salaries, etc. The employees of the Government Press were not given the privilege of placing their case before the said committee and they were ignored in the committee's report.

The Government Press employees were very ill-paid, scales fixed 25 years ago being in vogue. After a great deal of agitation by the workmen between the years 1918-20 in which 24 of the top men had to suffer very heavily, the Government gave them some relief in 1920 and 1921 by raising the piece-work scale from 2 annas to 3 annas and by placing the salaried men on graded scale. As the prices of the main articles of food and the other necessities of life, the house-rent and consequently the cost of living are four or five times higher than the pre-war rates, the present rates of pay especially the minimum are very inadequate and must be raised at least to the extent mentioned above.

The basis of payment for overtime is 25 per cent. extra beyond the ordinary rate up to 8 p.m. and 50 per cent after 8 p.m. and for Sundays and other holidays, double rates are paid to the piece-work compositors and the salaried men are granted compensation leave only, but have no additional remuneration. The overtime allowance is low and should be made one hundred per cent. in case of both working days and holidays.

The ever-increasing supply of labour and decreasing demand consequent upon introduction of labour-saving machine have swelled the ranks of the unemployed and made labour cheap. The employers cannot withstand the temptation to profit by these conditions. Even the Government have fallen a victim to it as is evidenced in the Government Press. The Government are extracting sweated labour and are responsible for a state of affairs with regard to labour that would shock the worst capitalist in the West. Unless the principle of living wage is accepted and minimum wage is fixed, there is no hope for the workmen. Having regard to the prevailing prices of food-stuffs and rents I think Rs. 35 is the barest minimum living wage. It is highly desirable to have statutory establishment of the same.

Fines are inflicted to any extent indiscriminately and on flimsy grounds on the mere report of the supervising staff without any enquiry at all, the number including cases of stoppage of increment being over 2,000 during the last four or five years, and they are credited to the Government. There are also other deductions for cost of re-striking, re-printing, repairing, binding, paper, freight charges, breaking of formes, materials, etc. It is therefore highly desirable that they should be restricted to a definite maximum percentage and the infliction of fines should be further discouraged by introducing the merit and demerit system and the fines collected should be utilized for welfare work.

The wages are paid once in a month, the salaried men being paid between the 1st and 5th and the piece-workers between 15th and 20th. Something must be done to prevent delay in payment and the unclaimed wages now credited to the Government should be utilized for the purposes of the welfare of the employees.

The employees who are on the permanent pensionable establishment are admitted as members of the Government Press Co-operative Society and almost every one of them is indebted to the Society to an extent of six times his monthly wage. The others resort to money-lenders who charge exorbitant rates of interest. In both the cases the employees suffer much, owing to the major portion of their wages going towards the discharge of their loans and interest and again resorting to fresh loans on account of their scanty wages. The rules referring to the indebtedness of the Government servants work great hardship on the ill-paid and neglected employees and therefore should be suspended.

The permanent and salaried employees are eligible to leave with full average pay for one month and with half average pay for two months under the Fundamental rules, besides to an extent of 15 days' casual leave in a year, but the piece-workers, whether permanent or temporary, are not eligible to any kind of leave with pay, nor the temporary salaried employees and men paid from contingencies who will be granted casual leave only at the discretion of the Superintendent. The inequalities should be removed and all workmen should be placed on the same footing. The leave is not availed of or granted to the extent eligible as it is not countenanced by the Superintendent. In cases of ill-health, medical certificates from registered medical practitioners are invariably not accepted and the applicants are directed to appear before the surgeon, thereby causing much inconvenience to them.

In the matter of minimum wage, periodical increments, leave facilities, provisions for old age and security of service, the Madras Government Press is the worst of all the Government Presses in India.

## XIV.—Trade Combinations.

So far as the printing industry is concerned, there was an organization of the workers of the industry in the City of Madras between the years 1918-20 and the workers of the Government Press also formed themselves into a union. To the former, there was a setback about the year 1921 and the organization broke. The latter also shared the same fate as the then Superintendent of the Government Press, Mr. F. L. Gilbert, had always looked upon the assertion of rights by labour as inimical to himself and attempted with all his might to put down men whom he merely suspected of taking the least part in the formation of affairs of the union, and dismissed 24 workmen. It was really a reign of terror that the superintendent had established and he managed to dismiss nearly 1,000 men between the years 1923-28. This necessitated the formation of the Government Press Labour Union in the beginning of the year 1927 which kept up an agitation among other things for increase in rates, and petitions were addressed to the Government. This was resented by the said Superintendent who dismissed three piece-work compositors, because addresses on certain envelopes which contained memorials to Government were in the same handwriting and they were all posted in the same post office. After coming into operation in 1927, of the Indian Trade Unions Act of 1926, the employees of the Government Press started the Madras Government Press Employees' Association on 25th June, 1927, and registered it on 19th November, 1927, under the said Act. The office-bearers of the Association were drawn from the employees themselves who sought to have the Association recognized by the Government. On 23rd December, 1927, the Superintendent under instructions from Government informed the secretary of the association that Rules 2 and 28 of the association should be amended and that the Government do not generally recognize departmental associations of non-gazetted subordinates, unless special reasons are shown which differentiate them from other non-gazetted officers for whom the Central Association exists, viz., The Madras Non-Gazetted Government Officers' Association which has been recognized by the Government. The rules were accordingly amended and the Government were addressed through the superintendent, Government Press, on 8th February, 1928, to the effect that, as the Government Press Employees' Association is purely a labour organization and trade union registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act, it stands entirely on a different footing from that of the Madras Non-Gazetted Officers' Association and the employees of the Press are governed by the Factory Act and Rules and are subject to peculiar conditions with regard to service, pay, pension, leave and other matters. The superintendent began to threaten and coerce the office-bearers individually with a view to break the association, while at the same time continuing his mad campaign against the employees by visiting them with varying degrees of punishment. Deputations to the superintendent and the Government were refused and the superintendent and his publication assistant openly used their official influence against the members. It was at this time that the association felt the necessity for an outsider to lead them and did me the honour of electing me as its President, a procedure consistent with and within the scope of the provisions of the Act and articles of the association. Under my advice weekly meetings were held drawing the attention of the Government to the very unsatisfactory conditions in the Government Press, the large number of punishments and praying for recognition and relief. This evidently infuriated the Superintendent who dismissed from service, the secretary of the association on 5th May, 1928, on the sole ground of convening meetings while on leave and also the treasurer of the association who had put in nearly 30 years of service and on the verge of retirement. The treasurer has since been reinstated by Government on appeal, while the secretary with 14 years of permanent and pensionable service to his credit found no relief from the Government. The Government were most unsympathetic and continued to insist on sweated labour and to support the reactionary policy of the superintendent and issued an order, dated 5th May, 1928, prohibiting Government employees from continuing or becoming members of an association registered or sought to be registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act. The following letter\* sent to the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor of Madras, to arrange for an interview with His Excellency, proved also futile.

Any number of continued interpellations in the Madras Legislative Council and even a resolution passed by the Council on 6th September, 1928, for appointment of a committee to investigate into the large number of dismissals, suspensions, reductions and removals of the employees of the Government Press, the policy adopted by the superintendent in respect of the union of the employees and the conditions of remuneration, leave, etc., of the piece-workers had no effect on the Government who went to the extent of saying that they refused to interfere and that they would not accept the council's resolution. When such is the attitude of

\* Not printed.



the Government towards their own labourers, the varied problems of health and efficiency of the workers, their economic positions, their housing conditions and possibilities of settlement of their disputes by arbitration and conciliation are all out of the question. It was elicited in an answer to an interpellation in the council on 20th October, 1927, that, out of a total of about 1,500 employees, 879 were either dismissed or removed from service during the course of 4½ years. Almost every one of the punishments was made arbitrarily and without enquiry as contemplated by the Government themselves and appeals to the Government against the orders of the superintendent resulted in nothing. These dismissed men appeal to you for protection and welcome you in the fond hope that you will be the instrument of justice being done to them.

The Madras Government Press Employees' Association ceased to function on account of the said Government order and the certificate of registration was cancelled by the Registrar of Trade Unions, Madras, on 4th November, 1929, and the present union, The Madras Government Press Labour Union, has been functioning from 11th December, 1929. The catalogue of grievances is increasing every day and the authorities are responsible for it, as they are unreasonable and deaf to even the ordinary demands of the workmen. When the state of affairs is so chronic and the conditions of service are so very precarious even though appeals to Government against the orders of dismissals, suspensions, reductions and removals passed by the superintendent lay, the Government, from the beginning of the year 1929, have empowered the gazetted assistants of the Government Press with the powers of punishments varying from suspensions to dismissals and appeals lie only to the Superintendent. The position of the poor employees may therefore be better imagined than described, as they are entirely at the mercy of the Superintendent.

#### XV.—Industrial Disputes.

There were in all, three strikes, one in the year 1903 and the other two in the year 1920. The strike of 1903 was of the workmen of the press and machine section only, for exacting work from them till 7 p.m. without overtime payment. It lasted for about 6 months during which convicts from the Penitentiary were brought and work executed, leaving the strikers to their fate. After much suffering and starvation, they returned to work.

In the first strike of 1920, all the employees of the Mint, Mount Road and Penitentiary Presses, struck work and it lasted for one week. The immediate cause was the suspension of a machine-minder who took an active part in the affairs of the union of the Press, for alleged disobedience of an oral order to work on a holiday, the general causes being the indifferent and unsympathetic attitude of the superintendent and the Government over the strong agitation in the press and platform and the memorials of the piece workers in particular with regard to increased remuneration and the hostile attitude of the superintendent towards the memorialists, the union and its members. As all the Presses had to be closed and the intervention of the superintendent to settle the dispute proved futile, the Government found the wisdom and offered to receive a deputation of the employees at the office of the chief secretary to Government of Madras who discussed the several grievances of the employees and promised to redress them in case the employees joined duty forthwith. They accordingly did so and thus the strike ended in success on the part of labour because the strike was not partial.

The second strike of 1920 was of piece-workers only, owing to the Madras University work being put in their hands for composing when the employees of the S.P.C.K. Press where the University work had to be carried out on contract, were on strike. Again the intervention of the superintendent proved unsuccessful. He invited the chief secretary to interfere and settle the dispute. The chief secretary came to the Press, called representatives, discussed the situation, advised the men to resume work, and went away. Meanwhile the superintendent prepared a list of 25 men, passed orders dismissing those men and served the order of dismissal on them. When the dismissed men began to walk out, the others also followed. The strike lasted for about 3 months and much coercion was put on them by refusing to pay their wages earned before they returned to work, by intimidation, by catching hold of some weak elements and by recruitment from Tanjore and other distant places. At last they had no option but to resume work.

Again in the summer of 1928, when the secretary and treasurer of the association were dismissed, excitement and indignation ran high and a strike was imminent but fortunately myself and some of my friends in the Press had still some lingering hopes in the Government and were able to prevent it. We were very soon disabused, and

but for the announcement of the appointment of your Commission, there would have been a very serious recrudescence of the strike mentality. The workmen and the employees of the Press anxiously and fondly hope that your visit would usher in an era of peace, prosperity and contentment for labour.

Mr. C. SUNDARSANA RAJU, Eti Koppaka, Vizagapatam District.

#### I.—Recruitment.

1. (i) Labour is recruited from the district of Vizagapatam, with the conditions of which district I am well acquainted, for the following purposes:—(a) To work in the docks at Rangoon, in the rice and other factories in and around Rangoon and in the Straits Settlements. (b) To work in the tea estates of Assam. (c) To work in the railway workshops at Kharagpur. (d) To work at Jamshedpur. (e) To work in the jute mills of Nellimaria and Chittivalasa (in the district of Vizagapatam). (f) To work in the harbour works at Vizagapatam.

The labourers that are recruited for the purposes mentioned in items (a), (b), (e) and (f) are ordinary coolies (unskilled labour) who are ordinarily agricultural labourers. The labourers recruited for purposes mentioned in items (c) and (d) belong to the class of skilled labourers such as carpenters. The number of persons migrating from the district for the above purposes is increasing year after year, and paucity of agricultural labour is being felt. It is not easy to determine the number of persons that go for the purposes mentioned in items (c), (d), (e) and (f) as they travel by train. It is easy to determine the extent of recruitment for the purposes mentioned in (a) and as the emigrants go by steamer most of them leave Vizagapatam district by the ports at Bimlipatam, Vizagapatam, Cocanada and Calingapatam and in some cases even from the Madras port. The extent of migration and return is given in the statement\* appended. The main reason for migration is the payment of higher wages in industrial centres. Unfavourable seasonal conditions in the district of Vizagapatam, which are very frequent on account of want of satisfactory irrigation works, continue to maintain the high level of flow of labour from this district. The increase of migration of labour to industrial areas results in the payment of higher wages for agricultural labour. The tables† appended herewith, which are prepared from the accounts maintained by me give the agricultural wages for male and female labourers, and the figures for the months of February, March, April, July, August, and September, the busiest agricultural months, show a great tendency to increase. The increase in wages in the case of male labourers is higher than those of female labourers. This increase is to be attributed to migration of male labourers for the purposes mentioned above. On account of increased recruitment for industrial areas the rates of wages in those areas are greatly reduced, and remittances by them are decreasing. This fact is proved by reduced remittances of money by postal money orders. The examination of money order remittances through the post office at Eti Koppaka (Sarvasiddhi Taluk, Vizagapatam district), the village where I reside, will support this statement of mine. Postal remittances received by the Eti Koppaka post office from Rangoon in the year 1927, amount to Rs. 18,160, in 1928 to Rs. 16,994, and in 1929 to Rs. 11,200. Though figures are not available I, from personal knowledge, can safely assert that there is increased migration to Rangoon in those years.

2. (i) The villages are permanently being depleted to a great extent on account of labour recruitment for the purposes mentioned in items (b), (c), (d) and (e). Those that go to Rangoon generally return after a stay varying from six months to one year. But they do not easily take to agricultural labour even after their return, as the wages paid to them in their villages are much lower than those paid to them while at Rangoon. They generally stay in their villages till they spend away their savings and go back to Rangoon. In the case of labour recruited for the purpose mentioned in items (c) and (d), the labourers generally migrate with the members of their families, but in the case of labourers that go to Rangoon members of their families are not taken by them, and their families suffer on account of non-remittance of money or by the remittance of very small amounts, and the family life is greatly disturbed. The labourer that goes to Rangoon easily takes to drink and other vices on account of the absence of the family influences. Female labour is generally required for transplantation of paddy, and this is not much disturbed.

\* Appendix No. I.

† Appendix No. II. (Monthly figures not printed.)

3. The migration of labour to Rangoon and Straits Settlements, to Kharagpur, to Jamshedpur, to Nellimarla and Chittivalsa is voluntary, but in the case of labour recruited for the Assam tea estates the agents go to villages in the Agency tracts and recruit labour by deceptive description of the advantages of migration to the tea estates.

6. Recruitment for Assam tea estates was closed about the year 1901 both in Vizagapatam and Ganjam agency tracts, while in Godavari Agency it was closed in the year 1908, but certain portions of the Ganjam and Vizagapatam were thrown open for Assam recruitment in the year 1916, and the whole area was thrown open in the year 1920. In the case of the Ganjam Agency recruitment is very general, while in the case of the Vizagapatam agency it is confined only to the community known as Doms. The agency portion of the Godavari district was thrown open for recruitment in the year 1923. In the Ganjam agency alone the number of labourers who were recruited in the year 1920-21, is 1,454, in 1921-22, 1,001, and in 1922-23, 716. From the Vizagapatam Agency in the year 1924-25, 2,500 labourers were recruited. When this large recruitment was brought to the notice of the Government examination of the question was promised, but no steps were taken to stop recruitment. Conditions of labour are not well explained to the migrants; very much exaggerated allurements are held out, and the labourers are taken to Assam, and in most cases there is no chance of the labourers returning home on account of remoteness and the general simplicity of the migrant. The Agency tracts are the most thinly populated areas in the Presidency, and there is necessity to retain the population in the area. I am told that the conditions prevailing in the tea estates of Assam are not at all favourable to the Agency labourers. The Assam Labour Board itself exercises control over recruitment, but no effective signs of its control are to be seen in the actual recruitment of labour to Assam from the Agency tracts. The areas under cultivation are decreasing in the agency on account of this recruitment. In my view it is the increasing earnings in areas outside the district by the migrating labourer that really increases the standard of wages in the district, and even from the standpoint of the landholding cultivator of this district this increase of wages is not working a hardship, and the question does not require any examination from his standpoint. The whole question has to be examined from the standpoint of the conditions of the labourer in the place whereto he migrates. The condition of labour in Rangoon is, I am told, not at all satisfactory from the labourer's standpoint. Though I have no personal knowledge in the matter, from my conversation with labourers who returned from Rangoon I gather that labour conditions there are not at all satisfactory, especially in the matter of their dwelling houses, environment and social habits. As far as recruitment of labour for Assam is concerned, in my humble judgment, it is to be stopped from the standpoint of the development of the agency tracts which will be a great asset in the course of time for the coast districts.

#### APPENDIX NO. I.

##### Statement showing the migration and return of labourers.

	1926-27.		1927-28.		1928-29.	
	No. sailed.	No. arrived.	No. sailed.	No. arrived.	No. sailed.	No. arrived.
Gopalpore ..	20,476	18,501	19,120	21,419	17,238½	21,302
Calingapatam ..	8,895	9,801	8,948½	8,004	7,386	8,387
Bimlipatam ..	5,710	3,589	2,477	3,257	2,236	3,300½
Cocanada ..	26,298	25,006	26,632	22,932½	20,854½	28,939½
Vizagapatam ..	27,281	16,625	25,894	22,631½	24,438	20,792
Persons of Vizagapatam district migrating from Madras to Malay States		2,350		4,059		813

#### APPENDIX No. II (Abridged.)

##### Statement showing the average daily wages paid for male and female agricultural labourers in the village of Eti Koppaka, Sarvasiddhi Taluk, Vizagapatam district.

Year.	Male.			Female.		
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
1918-19 ..	0	3	8	0	1	1½
1928-29 ..	0	4	11	0	2	1

Mr. RAJAI AH D. PAUL, M.A., DEPUTY COLLECTOR ON SPECIAL DUTY  
AS FOREST PANCHAYAT OFFICER, MADRAS.\*

L—Recruitment.

1. Labour for industrial undertakings and for plantations in British India (and in certain colonies near it) is drawn almost wholly from the agricultural labouring classes in India. The agricultural labouring classes in South India supply the whole of the unskilled labour required in the factories, small and big, in the towns of South India, in the goldfields of Kolar, in the tea gardens of Assam, in the tea and coffee estates on the Nilgiri and Palni Hills, in the rubber and tea plantations of Ceylon, in the rubber plantations of the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements, and in Burma. There is a steady exodus from the villages of South India to the towns, of labourers who seek and obtain employment in the factories, and an equally steady and more voluminous migration to Ceylon, Burma and Malaya.

According to the census figures, while in 1891, there were for every 1,000 persons in the Madras Presidency, 96 living in "towns" and 904 living in villages, there were in 1921, 124 living in towns, and 876 in villages; and the flow from the village to town has been steadily growing.

	Number per mille residing in	
	Towns.	Villages.
1891 .. .. .	96	904
1901 .. .. .	111	889
1911 .. .. .	118	882
1921 .. .. .	124	876

The following figures show the number of Madrasis who have migrated from the Madras Presidency and who were found at the time of the different censuses, residing in other provinces or in other countries:—

	Number of Madrasis in			
	1891.	1901.	1911.	1921.
Burma .. .. .	129,345	189,806	248,064	270,993
Assam .. .. .	10,654	21,571	34,509	54,536
Mysore .. .. .	160,743	236,775	263,417	269,675
Hyderabad .. .. .	91,190	55,369	67,821	84,158
Ceylon .. .. .	259,516	—	—	447,334
Federated Malay States	—	—	—	238,948
Straits Settlements ..	—	—	—	76,732
Other Malay States ..	—	—	—	50,368

Except perhaps in the case of Hyderabad, the bulk of this very large number represents those who have gone out to these places to eke out a livelihood, and a great majority of them, no doubt, as labourers.

That the bulk of the emigrants are from the agricultural labouring classes is proved by the fact that while in 1901 there were 270 working labourers for every 1,000 supported by other agricultural occupations, in 1911 this proportion had fallen to 245; and in 1921 it was only 212.

(i) (a) *Migration to towns for manning industrial concerns.*—No figures are available except the figure reported in the annual administration report on the working of the Indian Factories Act. This shows that in 1928, there were 136,973 persons; (98,512 men, 32,095 women and the remainder children) working in the "factories" in the various districts of the Presidency. The total figure was 13,407 in 1927; 127,411 in 1926; 121,114 in 1924; 110,193 in 1922 and 102,341 in 1921. A very large majority of these, if not all, must have come at least originally from the villages.

(b) *Migration to estates and plantations within the Presidency.*—No figures are available in any official publication. Perhaps the Planters' Associations can supply the figures.

\* The witness has close personal knowledge of the North Arcot district, where he served for seven years as a revenue officer, and for nearly two years as district labour officer; and of the South Arcot and Tanjore districts where he served as deputy collector. His present duties take him practically throughout the Presidency, but have, of course, no reference to the problems of labour.

(c) *Migration to Ceylon, Straits Settlements, Assam, etc.*—These being controlled, figures are available. The annual flow of unskilled labour from the Madras Presidency to these places has been as follows in recent years :—

	1923.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.
Straits Settlements	35,676	48,188	78,174	159,061	133,007	30,134
Ceylon .. ..	90,290	100,250	76,410	56,722	161,021	133,720
Assam .. ..	—	—	13,684	8,575	11,376	—

We are, therefore, sending from this Presidency every year on an average, 100,000 labourers to Ceylon, 90,000 to the Straits Settlements, and 11,000 to Assam, besides a large number to Burma, and to the estates and plantations in and near the Madras Presidency.

The emigrants to the colonies are practically all drawn from the Tamil agricultural classes. Those for Ceylon come chiefly from the districts of Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Salem and the Pudukkottah State. Nearly a third are Adi-Dravidas. Those to Malay also come chiefly from the Tamil districts; North Arcot always sending the largest number; Chingleput, Trichinopoly and Salem coming next in the scale. The labourers for the tea gardens in Assam are recruited chiefly from Ganjam and Vizagapatam. Therefore the districts that chiefly contribute this labour are the following twelve: Chingleput, South Arcot, North Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Madura, Tinnevely, Ramnad, Malabar and Vizagapatam.

(ii) *Causes of migration.*—It is well known that the rural population of South India is one rooted to the soil; so tenaciously conservative and so averse to movement of any kind, that when we find large numbers of them leaving their homes we have to conclude that they do so only by being compelled by force of circumstances.

*Poverty.*—Poverty, love of adventure and the desire to escape from the arms of the law are the three obvious reasons which induce a man to leave his native place and go elsewhere. Of these the last two operate, but in a minutely small number of cases. When a man leaves his home and goes elsewhere to seek fresh means of livelihood, it is obvious that his previous means of livelihood have not been adequate, and that the pressure of circumstances have become too great for him to remain at home. Poverty, in its relative sense, must therefore be held to be the basis of every kind of migration which is undertaken with a view to increase one's earning capacity.

The classes that make up emigrants both to near-by towns and to far-off plantations and estates are (1) the landless class which depends for its livelihood wholly on the agricultural coolie work that is available in villages and (2) the class which, though classed as landowning, owns land too small in extent or too poor in quality to support the families dependent on them. That this class is by no means small is proved by the fact that the great majority of our agricultural holdings are essentially uneconomic in character. A calculation was made by me, a few years ago, for finding out what constituted an economic holding, in that portion of the Presidency typified by the North Arcot district. The conclusion arrived at was that three acres of medium-class wet land with an assessment of about Rs. 20, or the corresponding extents of wholly dry, or wet and dry mixed land can be taken to be the economic minimum. Any holding which was less in extent or inferior in quality was uneconomic, and insufficient to support a family of average size depending upon it. The method by which this economic holding was calculated is given in Appendix A.\* Judged by this standard, 95 per cent. of the holdings in such a district as North Arcot are essentially uneconomic; and it follows that the families dependent on them must needs look to other means of adding to their income from land, if they want to live. The commonest method of getting this additional income is for some or all of the members of the family to engage themselves either in agricultural coolie work or in occupations other than agricultural in the village itself, or to go away from the village either to a neighbouring town or industrial centre, or to some distant colony where labour is wanted and is paid enough to enable some savings to be made and sent over to augment the family income. Poverty therefore is at the bottom of the migration of our labouring classes from villages to towns and to the colonies. It may, however, be further analysed as follows :—

*First cause of migration—Pressure of population on land.*—In other words the existing quantity of land and the income therefrom is unable to support the number of people dependent upon it. That the population of this part of the country has been increasing faster than the means of subsistence has long been apparent; but the actual extent of this pressure of the population on land may be indicated by a few facts and figures.

\* Not printed

(a) The following figures show the number of persons supported by 1,000 acres of arable land in the 13 districts from which recruits for labour are chiefly drawn and by similar extents of occupied and of actually cultivated land.

District.	Number of persons dependent on 1,000 acres of		
	Arable land.	Occupied land in (fasli 1330).	Actually cultivated land in (fasli 1330).
North Arcot .. ..	1,365	1,591	2,050
South Arcot .. ..	1,236	1,378	1,675
Chingleput .. ..	1,302	1,400	1,850
Salem .. ..	1,179	1,433	1,823
Coimbatore .. ..	818	892	1,165
Trichinopoly .. ..	1,163	1,267	1,584
Tanjore .. ..	1,459	1,534	1,705
Madura .. ..	1,138	1,295	1,591
Ramnad .. ..	962	1,098	1,247
Malabar .. ..	1,281	2,149	2,446
Tinnevelly .. ..	1,490	1,519	2,217
Vizagapatam .. ..	2,056	2,436	3,115
Ganjam .. ..	864	1,073	1,203

In every case, the number of persons dependent in these districts on a 1,000 acres of land is much larger than the Presidency average of 778 persons per 1,000 acres of arable land and 1,293 persons per 1,000 acres of actually cultivated land. In Vizagapatam, Malabar, Tinnevelly and North Arcot, an acre of cultivated land has to support more than two persons; while in Salem, Chingleput and Tanjore the number is very nearly two.

(b) The general increase in land values throughout the Presidency is another clear indication that the pressure of population on land is increasing. The following figures in respect of the districts chiefly affected by labour recruitment show the tremendous increase which took place during the decennium 1910 to 1920 in the sale prices of lands:—

District.	Average sale price of wet lands.				Average sale price of dry lands.			
	1910.		1920.		1910.		1920.	
	From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
North Arcot ..	298	405	288	797	55	262	171	283
South Arcot ..	374	468	828	1,090	142	159	250	354
Chingleput ..	201	—	332	—	56	—	138	—
Salem ..	183	199	300	429	67	—	112	—
Coimbatore ..	574	—	1,372	—	57	—	140	—
Trichinopoly ..	273	689	465	1,255	53	106	142	122
Tanjore ..	206	367	445	747	137	—	468	—
Madura ..	146	286	525	1,163	84	—	213	—
Ramnad ..	215	406	390	688	110	204	129	226
Tinnevelly ..	343	1,129	753	1,582	60	88	99	172
Vizagapatam ..	133	—	370	—	81	—	137	—

These figures show that the price of land has doubled during the decennium 1910-20. The increase has continued during the years 1920-30 also; but no detailed statistics are available. It is also seen that, as is only natural, the better the class of land, the more productive it is, the greater the increase in demand and consequent increase in prices.

(c) The fact that very little arable land is left unoccupied is another indication that the demand for land to live upon is great and that the time is coming when there will be no more land to be newly occupied, and increases in population must

look not to land but to other means for their maintenance. The percentage of occupied land to the available arable land is as follows, in the districts which are chiefly concerned in the present enquiry:—

North Arcot .. ..	87	Tanjore .. ..	95
South Arcot .. ..	93	Madura .. ..	88
Chingleput .. ..	96	Ramnad .. ..	86
Salem .. ..	92	Tinnevelly .. ..	98
Coimbatore .. ..	91	Vizagapatam .. ..	95
Trichinopoly .. ..	92		

Every revenue official who has had anything to do with the assignment of lands knows that the demand for land for fresh occupation is much larger than can be met with the existing quality of unoccupied arable land.

(d) *Increase in the number of wells.*—It is also well known that a large number of wells have been dug in recent years in wet lands to supplement the irrigation sources in seasons of short supply, and in dry lands to enable more lucrative crops being grown on them; and that recourse is being had to intensive cultivation and to the growing of more remunerative crops such as groundnut, in the place of the traditional crops. This is another proof that owing to the pressure on land an attempt is being made to get more from the land than before.

*Second cause of migration—bad seasons.*—This heavy pressure on land is further aggravated by recurring bad seasons. Emigration figures show that the immediate and certain result of a bad agricultural season is a large, sudden and otherwise unexplained increase in the numbers that emigrate, because labour becomes scarce and the income from land fails. Late or insufficient rains in parts of the recruiting area mean at once an increase in the total number of labourers emigrating to other countries.

To give but one or two examples, there was a failure of the north-east monsoon during the year 1923-24 in the chief recruiting districts. This resulted in a large increase of emigration in the cold weather of 1923-24, usually the slack season owing to harvests. As many as 8,250 went over to Ceylon in December, 1923, after the season was pronounced a failure, against only 4,200 in November; and the higher figure was maintained in January and February. The total number of labourers who went over to Ceylon during 1923 was 90,290. The same failure of the monsoon also accounted for the record emigration to Ceylon in 1924 (153,989 labourers), a figure exceeding that of any other previous year. The worst affected district was Salem which contributed 20,603 labourers, over four times its usual quota.

Similarly there was a much diminished rainfall over practically the whole of the recruiting area during 1926; and the result was that the number of emigrants who went to Malaya in 1926 was 159,061, double that of the previous year (78,174), and the high figure was kept up during 1927, also (117,892). The number who emigrated to Ceylon was similarly high; 56,722 in 1926; 102,808 in 1927; the latter being a record figure. The districts that suffered most from this dearth of rain, North Arcot, Salem and Trichinopoly, contributed the largest number of emigrants, and it is curious to see how the number of emigrants is higher than the average just in proportion to the deficiency of the rainfall below the average.

District.	Rainfall.			Emigrants.		
	Average.	1926.	1927.	Average per year.	1926.	1927.
North Arcot ..	37.69	32.90	32.28	13,788	40,326	28,486
Salem ..	32.66	26.62	28.57	15,871	32,050	27,803
Trichinopoly ..	33.77	27.13	25.76	31,236	39,541	43,873

It is therefore obvious that a bad agricultural season, because it lessens the chances of getting agricultural coolie work and reduces the income from land, sends at once a large number of people away from the country.

The same is the reason why during the summer months there is always very much larger emigration than in the other months. This is the period when in our villages there is little agricultural work and employment is scarce. This is also the period when the effects of a bad season in the previous year are most acutely felt. It is found that as many emigrants go out of the country in the four months of April, May, June and July as in all the other eight months put together. (Detailed figures are not given here, as being unnecessary. The emigration reports give the monthly figures for emigration every year.)

*The frequency of bad seasons.*—It is a matter of common knowledge that in recent years the rainfall in the central and southern districts of the Presidency has been not only scanty but also unseasonable, and hence bad seasons have been frequent. An examination of the rainfall statistics confirm this. On tabulating the rainfall figures for the eleven districts chiefly affected by emigration for the years 1911 to 1920, one finds practically in every one of these districts in half the number of years the rainfall was below the average. When we remember that the average rainfall is calculated taking the figures of years of scanty rainfall also into account, it is obvious that any year in which the rainfall is less than the average must be a bad season. And taking the figures for the last four years (for which published figures are available) 1925 to 1928, it is found that most of the districts suffered from insufficient rainfall during these years. The figures are given below :—

District.	Rainfall in the year.				Average rainfall per year.
	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.	
North Arcot .. .. .	38.71	<i>32.90</i>	<i>32.28</i>	37.55	37.69
South Arcot .. .. .	56.05	<i>37.44</i>	<i>34.28</i>	57.79	46.01
Chingleput .. .. .	61.80	<i>32.40</i>	<i>34.83</i>	<i>44.93</i>	46.50
Salem .. .. .	25.44	<i>26.62</i>	<i>28.57</i>	<i>30.67</i>	32.66
Coimbatore .. .. .	29.05	<i>26.24</i>	<i>23.82</i>	27.91	26.56
Trichinopoly .. .. .	<i>30.30</i>	<i>27.13</i>	<i>26.76</i>	<i>31.50</i>	33.77
Tanjore .. .. .	51.02	<i>40.04</i>	<i>27.86</i>	57.49	44.94
Madura .. .. .	38.30	<i>29.27</i>	31.92	<i>30.80</i>	31.37
Ramnad .. .. .	35.77	<i>24.22</i>	32.68	<i>31.39</i>	31.08
Tinnevely .. .. .	44.72	<i>24.64</i>	35.99	29.40	29.04
Vizagapatam .. .. .	47.97	<i>34.52</i>	43.63	52.26	40.02
Ganjam .. .. .	58.60	<i>39.48</i>	50.92	49.59	45.08

(Figures below the average are printed in italics.)

The economic condition of our villages is such that in a good year the people can live on their lands, though they can hardly put by anything; but in a bad year in spite of strenuous attempts to live below their own standard, a large number have to leave the village for getting employment and wages elsewhere. The chances of a good year occurring have become very slender of late years. On examining the rainfall statistics for the 10 years prior to 1920, one finds that in most of the districts what may be called a good year with copious rainfall occurred three times in the ten years, while in the others only two of the ten years may be called so. The life of the people in our villages has become a veritable "gamble in rain." And this, more than anything else, accounts for the very large amount of emigration that has been going on in recent years.

*Third Cause of Migration—Attractiveness of higher wages and continuity of employment.*—The attractiveness of higher wages paid by industrial concerns in towns, and by plantations and estates both in and out of India, and the continuity of employment assured by them, form the third big cause of the migration that is taking place of unskilled labour from agricultural work in the country to industrial occupations in towns and to the special kinds of labour available in plantations and estates.

The following table gives the rates of wages for unskilled labourers in urban and rural areas as found by the Quinquennial Wage Censuses of 1911 and 1916 :—

District.	Urban areas.				Rural areas.			
	1911.		1916.		1911.		1916.	
	From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To
Coimbatore ..	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.	a. p.
Cuddalore ..	3 7	9 2	3 3	8 0	2 0	8 0	2 0	8 0
Madura ..	3 7	5 0	3 0	6 0	1 6	6 9	2 0	7 9
Tanjore ..	..	..	3 6	8 0	2 0	8 0	3 0	8 6
Salem ..	1 4	6 5	6 0	10 0	3 0	8 0	4 0	8 6
Trichinopoly ..	..	..	4 0	7 0	2 0	4 0	2 0	6 0
	3 9	10 2	3 0	12 0	2 0	6 0	2 0	8 0



Wages in urban areas are distinctly higher than those in rural areas and an unskilled labourer can earn in a town very nearly twice as much as he can in his village. Another important fact revealed by these figures is that the wages in rural areas have not increased during the quinquennium 1911 to 1916 as much as wages in urban areas have done. Wages in rural areas do not generally increase adequately in proportion to the increase in the prices of food grains.

A comparison of the wages obtaining in Ceylon and the Straits Settlements similarly reveals a considerable difference (even after allowing for the higher cost of living in those places) which is sufficient to attract labourers, added to which is the prospect of continuous employment.

The average rate of wages in the districts of South India from which labour is recruited is as follows —

	Men.	Women.
	a. p.	a p
Sowers and planters .. .. .	6 9	3 10
Weeders .. .. .	5 5	3 5
Reapers .. .. .	6 1	4 3
Other kinds of agricultural labour .. .. .	6 4	3 9

Wages in Malay States are as below

Estate, store and factory labourers .. .. .	45 to 65 cents.					
Tappers .. .. .	40 to 65 cents.					
Field work .. .. .	<table border="0"> <tr> <td rowspan="2" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">{</td> <td>Men..</td> <td>35 to 40 cents.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>30 to 40 cents.</td> </tr> </table>	{	Men..	35 to 40 cents.	Women	30 to 40 cents.
{	Men..		35 to 40 cents.			
	Women	30 to 40 cents.				

The average rates for a working man, woman and child are, it is reported, 42 cents, 32 cents and 20 cents, equivalent to 10½ annas, 8 annas and 5 annas respectively.

In Ceylon the wages paid are as follows :—

	Men.	Women.	Working child.
	cts.	cts.	cts.
Rubber estates .. .. .	35 to 40 (As. 5-7 to As. 6-5).	30 (As. 4-10)	20 (As. 3-2)
Tea estates .. .. .	40 to 45 (As. 6-5 to As. 7-2).	35 (As. 5-7).	25 to 30 (As. 4 to As. 4-10).

The cost of living in Malaya is higher by 40 per cent. than in South India. In Ceylon also it is slightly higher than in South India. But in Ceylon pluckers of tea leaves and tappers are paid according to the quantity plucked or tapped. This enables labourers in certain seasons of the year to earn considerably more than the actual wages. Where conditions of work are unpleasant the estate sells rice to the labourers at cost price. Most of the estates also offer bonuses or extra pay to induce labourers to work extra time. Work is provided both in Ceylon and in Malaya on all days except Sundays and a few holidays.

It is therefore no wonder that labour in Ceylon and Malaya is attracting our agricultural labourers. The prospects of continuous employment and the higher wages which enable a careful labourer to put by something out of his earnings form a great attraction.

Recently standard rates of wages have been fixed in certain portions of Malaya and in Ceylon. The standard is 50 cents for men (As. 12) and 40 cents for women in the Province of Wellesley, and 58 cents and 46 cents (As. 14 and As. 11) respectively in the inland districts of Pahang. This converted to annas and reduced to equivalent purchasing power represent the following wages in India :—As. 8 and As. 6-8 ; and As. 9-4 and As. 7-4 (in expensive localities). Similarly in Ceylon the standard wages which came into force on 1st January, 1929, are :—

	Men.	Women.	Child.
Low country .. .. .	50 cents (As. 8)	40 cents (As. 6-5)	30 cents (As. 4-10)
Mid country .. .. .	52 cents (As. 8-4)	41 cents (As. 6-7)	31 cents (As. 5)
Up country .. .. .	54 cents (As. 8-8)	43 cents (As. 6-11)	32 cents (As. 5-1)

These form a considerable advance over the rates previously prevalent and are bound to lead to a much larger volume of emigration than before.

The three main causes for the exodus from the rural tracts of South India are—

1. The pressure of population on land.
2. The effect of frequent bad seasons, and
3. The attractiveness of higher wages elsewhere.

2. (i) It is impossible to say definitely, without an actual enquiry in one or more villages from which labourers have emigrated in large numbers, how soon and how often an emigrant returns to his village.

No labourer leaves his village with the idea of permanently settling in Ceylon or Malaya or elsewhere. Even the person who goes away to a neighbouring town or industrial centre in search of work has no idea of living away all the time. Even during the time he is there he keeps in touch with his village, if he is near enough by frequent visits. He leaves his home and remains elsewhere, always in the hope of returning after a period of stay out there. Of course his returning depends on many circumstances. Those who do not find the new climate suitable return soon and once for all. Those who take their family with them do not return as soon or as often as others who do not. The nearness of Ceylon enables a very large number to return and at shorter intervals than those who go to Malaya, the cost of the journey from there prevents their returning soon or on frequent holidays.

No definite conclusions can be drawn on this point, however, from the figures supplied in the annual Emigration Reports.

One of the conditions of emigration to Malaya and Ceylon is that an emigrant who has been assisted to emigrate shall within one year of his arrival, on his satisfying the Agent of the Government of India that his return is desirable on the ground of ill-health, unsuitability of work, or unjust treatment by employer or for any other sufficient reason, be repatriated free of cost to the place of recruitment. The number that is thus repatriated within a year of the recruitment is very small. This shows that generally labourers stay in the colonies in the first instance, for a much longer period than one year.

The following figures show the number of emigrants that return in each of the years 1924 to 1928 from Ceylon, as against those that left :—

	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.
Number returned ..	55,452	52,286	..	89,772	97,031
Number emigrated ..	100,250	76,410	56,722	161,021	133,720

The number of emigrants that return is rather more than a half of the people that leave India. So it may perhaps be calculated that emigrants to Ceylon come back in two years' time or once in two years.

No figures are available for emigrants returning from Malaya, as they pay their own passages and travel as ordinary passengers. About thirty thousand, or a number equal to about a third of the emigrants every year, are estimated to return every year.

The following figures show the number of old emigrants who have returned to India and have re-emigrated, and the percentage of these to fresh emigrants :—

*Ceylon.*

	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.
1. Fresh emigrants ..	95,798	71,457	53,900	90,366	83,858
2. Old emigrants returning again to the Colony.	4,452	4,953	2,822	12,442	12,212
Percentage of 2 to 1 ..	4.7	7	5	13.8	14.6

*Straits Settlements*

	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.	1928.
1. Fresh emigrants ..	50,052	65,878	137,443	112,464	20,530
2. Old emigrants returning again to the Colony.	8,136	12,296	21,618	5,428	3,447
Percentage of 2 to 1 ..	16	19	16	5	2

The number of old emigrants who return to India and then again go back to the Colony has been steadily rising in the case of Ceylon and has been steadily falling in the case of Malaya.

3. (i) For manning the factories in towns, there is no active recruitment. Labour moves from the villages to these localities voluntarily.

For manning the plantations and estates in the Palni and Nilgiri hills there is active recruitment by Planters' Associations. It is not, however, officially controlled.

In the case of the Assam Tea Gardens recruitment is done by garden sirdars, working under duly licensed local agents of the companies in Assam tea districts. Recruitment is practically confined to the Ganjam and Vizagapatam districts.

Emigration to Burma is uncontrolled.

Emigration to Straits Settlements and Ceylon is being controlled since the year 1923, under the Emigration Act VII of 1922, and the rules issued thereunder. The bulk of the labourers for these colonies are recruited by specially licensed kanganis, who must themselves have worked in the concerned estate before they can be licensed to recruit. When the superintendent of an estate proposes to send a kangani or recruiter to India, he fills in the (printed) licence form in duplicate and sends it to the Controller of Indian Immigration Labour, Colombo, or the Deputy Controller of Labour, Penang (as the case may be), who after satisfying himself that the details, specially of wages, are correctly filled up, that the recruiter is not on the black list for previous misconduct, that the estate for which the licence is issued is entitled by contribution to the Immigration Fund and is not noted for maltreating labour, signs it himself and after getting it countersigned by the Agent to the Government of India, returns it to the estate superintendent who hands it over to the proposed recruiter. The licenceholder on reaching India presents the licence for countersignature to the Emigration Commissioner or his representative and then proceeds to the village or locality where he expects to get recruits. The maximum number a kangani can recruit is 20 adults. In the case of Malaya, the Controller and the Agent of the Government of India interview the prospective recruiter before signing the licence. This has been considered unsuitable for introduction in Ceylon.

The recruiters are remunerated by the estate superintendents at the rate of Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 for every recruit newly brought over to Ceylon or Malaya; and the money is paid in India by the Emigration Commissioner on a memorandum of advice from the estate superintendent. The estates are reimbursed from the common fund at the rate of Rs. 10 per head. About one-half of this money is intended to be given to the recruit before he leaves his country to enable him to pay off minor debts and to equip himself for emigration. The amount to be paid to the recruit is, however, left to the discretion of the recruiter, with the result that very often the recruiter appropriates the entire amount to himself. A kangani recruits for a particular estate; but after arrival, a labourer is at liberty to change his employer on a month's notice.

The kangani on securing a recruit is bound to take him to the village munsif of the village, who is expected to see that the family and relations of the would-be emigrant know and approve of his going abroad; and to sign the recruitment papers in token of this. The recruit is then taken to one of the emigration depots or agencies and passed on by the emigration staff to the port of embarkation.

A number of irregularities are committed by the recruiting kanganis and by village munsifs; but these are decreasing in number owing to efficient supervision and punishment of wilful default. The chief irregularities committed by recruiters are:—(a) Getting recruits passed by the munsif of a village other than that of the recruits; (b) not taking the recruits before the munsif at all but forging the signature of the munsif in the licence; (c) working up petty domestic quarrels between son and father, husband and wife, and inducing them to leave their home in the heat of the moment; (d) seducing young men with the promise of getting them married in the colonies; (e) catching recruits at the weekly shandies; (f) matching strangers as brothers or other relatives; (g) taking recruits as passengers or non-emigrants; (h) misrepresenting the nature of the work and the rate of wages on the estates; (i) substituting prior to registration, one person in place of another duly passed by the village munsif.

The chief irregularities noticed in the work of village munsifs are:—(a) Declining to sign the entries in the licence on no ground at all; (b) Refusing to pass the recruit if he happens to be his farm labourer or that of his relative or friend; (c) demanding a fee from the kangani for each recruit; (d) passing a recruit without sending for and enquiring of his parents or relatives; (e) passing a recruit who does not belong to his jurisdiction; (f) signing the licence without seeing the recruit at all.

All these irregularities are, however, on the decrease. The rules are also being suitably amended whenever it is found necessary in the light of experience gained.

Besides this recruitment by kanganis, voluntary emigration of labourers without the intervention of kanganis is also possible and takes place under Rule 30 of the Emigration Rules.

Under this system, intending emigrants appear before the Emigration Commissioner or his assistant at the port of embarkation and declare their intention of emigrating. These officers after satisfying themselves that they are *bona fide* labourers grant them a free passage to Malaya or Ceylon, as the case may be. On arrival at Malaya they are paid at the rate of two dollars an adult or one dollar a working minor for sundary expenses, and are provided with free railway ticket to any estate to which they choose to go. While a recruited labourer has a definite place of employment to go on arrival, the non-recruited labourer has to go about in search of employment.

In 1926, nearly 20 per cent. of the emigration to Malaya was voluntary, under this rule; while in the case of Ceylon only 1.1 per cent. of the labourers were assisted to emigrate under the above rule. In 1928, 13,628 presented themselves for assisted emigration to Malaya under this rule, but as many as 8,080 were rejected by the Emigration Staff or the Protector of Emigrants. Voluntary emigration to Ceylon continues to be very small, in proportion to the recruited, the percentage being about four.

Even this form of emigration is not free from defects. A kangani sometimes manages to pass as non-recruited persons whom he has recruited in excess of the 20 covered by his licence. Youngsters just over 18 years of age leave the country under cover of this rule, without the knowledge of their parents or relatives. As Rule 30 stands at present, voluntary emigrants presenting themselves at port of embarkation escape the very salutary restrictions imposed by the rules on would-be emigrants who are brought to up country depots; e.g., the village examination, the guarantee that their departure is known to their relations and so on. Proposals are said to have been made for rectifying the rules in this respect. It is not known whether they have been so modified, or not.

(ii) *Possible improvement.*—Seeing that emigration to the colonies is so popular among our agricultural labouring classes, it may be questioned whether active recruitment by kanganis or licensed recruiters should be encouraged; and whether emigration cannot be made wholly voluntary—though still controlled. The monetary inducement offered to the recruiters seems to be at the root of all the irregularities committed. It is true that most of the would-be emigrants will not have the wherewithal to proceed to the port of embarkation for the purpose of offering themselves for emigration, but if some system could be devised by which the local revenue officer (say the nearest sub-magistrate) is authorised to interview such volunteers and on his satisfying himself about their *bona fides*, certify to the railway authorities, who will, on the strength of it, allow these persons to travel free to the port of embarkation just as the Emigration Commissioner now authorizes their free transport to the colony, there is bound to be a large increase in this kind of voluntary emigration. Such a system will eliminate the recruiter and the village munsif at the same time—the two individuals who are responsible for all the irregularities committed in recruitment now. And seeing that colonial authorities are willing and eager to encourage voluntary emigration as opposed to recruited emigration, it may be advisable to try to encourage the former by some such means as is suggested above.

If voluntary emigration is to be encouraged by some such method, there must be at the other end, at the colonial port of disembarkation, an agency to meet such emigrants on arrival and to advise them and to arrange for their getting employment as soon after their arrival as possible. A kind of employment bureau possessing up-to-date information about the needs of estates, plantations and factories in respect of unskilled labour, will be absolutely necessary—if these emigrants are not to wait indefinitely before getting employment. This bureau should also be in constant touch with the emigration staff at the Indian ports of embarkation so that in case there is a glut of labourers at the colonial port of entry, there may be no further despatch of labourers from here, till all of them have been provided for, or are about to be provided for.

4. Disturbance of family life is inevitable whenever there is migration, unless a family moves as a whole. This is not always possible, much less so when, under the joint family system, prevalent in South India, families consist of three generations and include co-parceners of even the second degree. Ordinarily, the disturbance caused by the break up of the joint family is not very serious; and is perhaps, to some extent, an advantage, in that the earnings of the wage-earning emigrant are conserved for the needs of his immediate dependents. The only serious disturbance that need be considered is when a husband and father is separated by migration from his wife and children. That this is the case can be inferred if among the total number of emigrants, the number of adult males preponderates and the number of adult females, is unduly low. But the figures furnished in the Emigration Reports do not reveal any such condition of things.

Under Rule 23 of the Emigration Rules, men who are unmarried or are unaccompanied by their wives shall not be assisted to emigrate to any one country

in any one year to a number exceeding one in five of the total number of persons so assisted ; but power is reserved to the Governor-General in Council to exempt any specified country from the operation of this rule, or to modify the ratio. Under this proviso the Governor-General in Council has exempted Ceylon permanently from the operation of this rule and in the case of Malaya the enforcement of the rule is being postponed year by year.

Nor does the rule appear necessary in the case of these two colonies, judging from the conditions revealed by the emigration figures. From these figures it appears that there is one adult female to every four persons (man, woman and child) emigrating to Ceylon ; and one adult female to every five persons emigrating to Malaya and the Straits Settlements. For 1928, the figure for even Malaya and the Straits Settlements, was one in four. The proportion of adult males to the total number is as one is to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in the case of Ceylon, and as 1 is to something less than 2 in the case of Straits Settlements. To put it in other words, for every ten persons emigrating four are adult men, two are adult women, and four are children in the case of Ceylon, while in the case of Malaya, six are men, two are women, and two are children. Or taking only adult males and females into account, for every 65 adult males going to Ceylon, there are 35 adult females going with them ; while for every 77 adult males going to Malaya, there are only 23 adult females going. The proportion between adult males and females is, however, becoming more satisfactory in the case of Malaya as is seen in the figures for 1928.

But these figures do not give the proportion between men and women correctly, because women and children travelling later to join their husbands and fathers are classed as " non-emigrants " and are not included in these figures ; and the number of such women and children is large in the case of Ceylon, though not so in the case of Malaya. Any way the sex-ratio is not so disproportionate actually as these figures would indicate.

The emigrant to Ceylon, though preferring mostly to go alone first, generally gets his family to join him as soon as he finds that conditions over there are not unsuitable. The emigrant to Malaya, however, does not generally take his family along nor does he send for them later. Owing to the greater proximity of Ceylon, during the agriculturally slack months even women and children of labourers cross over for a temporary stay and return with the monsoon. (These are not classed as emigrants.) Hence no very serious disturbance of family life is caused by emigration to Ceylon. But emigration to Malaya does separate a man from his family ; but with no very serious consequence. As pointed out before the emigrant probably returns home in three years' time.

No serious modification of the rules would, therefore, appear to be necessary in respect of regulating the proportion between men and women among emigrants.

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## Miss MULIYIL JANAKI, REPRESENTING THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE, CALICUT.

### I.—Recruitment.

No labourers are recruited for service in factories in this area. Labourers employed in local industrial establishments are mostly from the neighbourhood and surrounding villages. There is thus no question of migration ; nor is there any possibility of labourers returning to homes frequently. No special methods of recruitment are prevailing, as the supply is often more than the demand. There have been no changes in recent years (plantations excluded).

### III.—Housing.

Arrangements have not been made by Government or other public agency or by private landlords in the matter of houses for the use of labourers, except in the case of the Commonwealth Trust, Ltd., which owns some houses that are given on rent to labourers and the staff employed by it. Workers find out houses for themselves according to their means and facilities. As for acquisition of land for workers' houses, no such facilities exist in this area. Whenever accommodation is available, the employees eagerly avail themselves of it. In the case of the firm mentioned above, the rent rates are fixed by it according to the sizes of the houses but not according to the wages earned by the workers. Eviction is not common except in the following cases :—(1) Misdemeanour, such as thefts ; (2) nuisance to neighbours ; and (3) termination of the services in the factory. No industrial housing conditions

prevail in this area. We are of opinion that bad housing increases mortality, due to diseases of the lungs, and that provision of good houses by employers should be made. In the estate coolie lines, there should be separate cottages for families, consisting of at least two rooms.

#### IV.—Health.

General health conditions are far from satisfactory. Many workers are suffering from tuberculosis. Poverty seems to be the reason. As for figures of mortality, no statistics are available. There are no methods of registration with regard to birth rate and infant mortality. Working conditions at workplaces are satisfactory as regards the Commonwealth Trust, Ltd., and other factories in this area, but not so at home. Ordinary diet is thrice a day but diet depends upon wages and the number of inmates in the house. There are isolated cases of sawyers and weavers possessing good physique, but the employees in general are of poor physique. We are of opinion that insanitary conditions in housing help to increase mortality. Extent of medical facilities provided by employers is next to nothing. Employees go of their own accord to hospitals or native medical dispensaries. Government have provided hospitals in important towns. Other agencies are providing medical facilities in rural areas. Provision for women doctors and trained midwives is made in all hospitals. Generally, all resort to hospitals for medical aid. In the case of women, the very poor among them go to hospitals for getting medicines free. Many who are a little better seek the native physicians. Workers are provided with good latrines in all factories, but at home the latrine system, in most cases, is very unsatisfactory. Clean drinking water is provided in all factories. There are no arrangements in factories for bathing and washing purposes. These are performed at home by workers. The health officer visits the factories now and then; so also the factory inspector. Diseases such as tuberculosis, rheumatism and heart disease, which may come under the category of industrial diseases, are prevalent to some extent. Malaria, though not common in the towns, is very prevalent in the plantations, where the mortality due to it is very high. Even when the victims are free from it, the after effects of the malady render them quite unfit for work. Maternity benefits do not exist in all factories, except in the Commonwealth Trust, Ltd., where three months' leave is granted. There is also a sick and endowment fund in this factory, with three grades, in which all the workers can participate by paying subscriptions at the rate of 12 annas, 8 annas and 4 annas per mensem. Members are entitled to get Rs. 10, Rs. 7-8 annas and Rs. 6 respectively during this period of sickness. We are of opinion that the maternity benefits obtaining in this factory will be very beneficial if adopted by other factories. Working conditions for mothers should be improved. Medical facilities should be provided. Women doctors and midwives should be employed, especially in the estates. Leave on full wages should be granted for six weeks before and six weeks after child birth. In addition, free medical attendance and extra amount should be provided for to meet other expenditure. The burden for providing maternity benefits should be shared between the employers and the State.

#### V.—Welfare.

Girls are taken as apprentices in the embroidery department of the factory of the Commonwealth Trust, Ltd. There is a creche in this factory with two women to look after the children. These children are given nourishments such as milk, barley, etc. Nursing mothers are allowed to nurse them. These creches should be in charge of nurses. Little children who cannot be left at home, should also be taken care of whilst mothers are engaged in work. The bigger children in the above factory are provided with toys, etc. There is a sports club consisting of outdoor and indoor games in this factory. There are also books and periodicals kept for all to read. Pension or sick fund bonus is given to employees according to their period of service by this factory alone. We are of opinion that it is highly desirable that some such provision should be made to persons who from boyhood to old age serve factories. First aid and medical relief are provided in some of the factories. The factories are inspected and regulations enforced.

#### IX.—Hours.

##### A.—Factories.

There is work for 60 hours a week in all factories except the Commonwealth Trust, Ltd., where on Saturdays the workers are off at 4 p.m. The hours of work are generally from 7 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. There is no limit to overtime. Whenever there are urgent orders, workmen will have to do overtime work and they are paid for extra work. King's Birthday, Christmas and New Year days are holidays in which usual wages are being paid.

MR. R. SURYANARAYANA, MEMBER, SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY,  
CALICUT.

### I.—Recruitment.

It is a recognised fact that almost all the land in Malabar, including forests and waste lands, is the private property of the landlords. In the census of 1921, only 5.6 per cent. of the total number of workers were returned as landowners, both cultivating and non-cultivating, as against 43 per cent. in the presidency. Even this may not give a correct idea of the concentration of land in the hands of a few. In the book "Some South Indian Villages" edited by Dr. Slater, economic survey carried out in two Malabar villages is given. In Watanamkurassi in Wallavund Taluk, 44 pattadars own 989.53 acres, of which one single pattadar owns as much as 645.04 acres. In Kothacheria in Ponnani Taluk, 19 pattadars own 851.86 acres, of which one pattadar owns as much as 718.80 acres. Moreover, there is not much scope for extension of cultivation as much of the uncultivated land consists of hilly places and jungles. Besides pressure of population on land reaches its maximum in Malabar district. While the number of persons per square mile of the total area in the presidency is 297, it is 535 in Malabar. Taking the area under cultivation alone it is 1498 in Malabar while it is 780 in the presidency. Considering only the agricultural population and the area under cultivation, the density is 901 in Malabar and 558 in the presidency.

The system of land tenures which is peculiar to this part of the presidency gives room for frequent evictions from homesteads and cocoanut plantations. How far the Malabar Tenancy Bill recently passed by the Madras Legislative Council will prove a remedy for arbitrary evictions, it is not possible to say at present. So the insecurity of tenure and existing social conditions which place the tenants at the mercy of the landlords also contribute to migration from this district. Rack-renting, which the Bill hopes to prevent, is also largely prevalent.

The *Maramahhattayam* system of inheritance is also to some extent responsible for migration. As Dr. Gilber Slater says, "Economically the *Maramahhattayam* system of inheritance tends to a high rate of natural increase, and to the multiplication of a class of young men who may be described as very poor gentlemen. The family tends to increase in numbers in excess of the resources of the family property, but the young men are not trained to labour, and if they have to labour they prefer to do so far away from their native villages."

There is another fact that may be stated here. There is seasonal migration to plantations from Malabar and South Kanara. In spite of the copious rainfall, during particular months of the year, people are very poor and have hardly anything to eat. Then the poor in Malabar and South Kanara are easily satisfied by the promises of the ever vigilant recruiter who offers them all kinds of inducements. So they migrate to plantations.

2. A number of labourers who do regular farm work in their villages do not settle down permanently on the plantations. After cultivating the farms soon after the rains they go to the plantations, that is about July or August and return home just in time for the harvest. After the harvest, in the case of farmers with single crop lands, they immediately return to the estates and work again for some months. Altogether they work for 5 or 6 months in the year on the plantations. As regards those who have no lands of their own but are mere agricultural labourers, they migrate to work on the plantations lured by the promises of the active labour recruiters. They too invariably return to their homes. So practically there is no permanent labour force on the plantations. During bad seasons a larger number migrate to the estates.

In the case of certain sections of the populations such as the Adi-dravidas, who are mere labourers and who are subject to all kinds of humiliating social conditions, offer of work on the estates is very attractive and they easily submit to recruitment. They generally spend 8 to 9 months on the estates. In the case of these classes, poverty and indebtedness are the causes for migration. The labour recruiter often offers to pay off their debts. Incidentally they also hope to be rid of the social tyranny of their masters and the higher castes to which they are at present victims. The activities of the Labour Department have not had much effect in improving their economic condition. Co-operative societies have not increased their earning capacity. In fact in many places they have contributed to increased indebtedness. The lands assigned to them by the Government in South Kanara are of so poor a quality that they can hardly be cultivated. If some of the lands are to be rendered fit for cultivation, large amount of capital will be required for the purpose. They are not able to secure it. So they are compelled to migrate with the hope of bettering

their economic condition. Sometimes they migrate with their families and when they return to their homes it is a pitiable sight to see men, women and children poor in their health having become victims of malaria on the estates.

3. Labour is mostly recruited to plantations by the recruiting agents who receive advances from the estates. They receive liberal commission on the earnings of the labour they recruit in addition to their pay. As the remuneration is in proportion to the number of labourers they recruit, they naturally adopt all kinds of means in recruiting labourers. They often promise to pay off the debts of the labourers which would only mean that these labourers will get into the clutches of the recruiting agent. They are also in some cases offered advances. They are told that things on the plantations would be much better and that they could lead happy lives. The recruiting agents are very good propagandists and they stoop to give all kinds of promises which are not meant to be fulfilled. In the interests of the estates as well as the labourers it is high time that this system of recruitment is done away with. The system indirectly encourages unscrupulous recruiting agents. Once the labourers are satisfied by actual experience that the promises given by the recruiting agents are never meant to be fulfilled and that the conditions of living in the estates are not as easy as they are represented to be, recruitment is bound to suffer. It would mean that the planting industry will seriously suffer. If labourers still offer themselves for recruitment, it is out of mere necessity. So it is high time that these middlemen, i.e., the recruiting agents are abolished. Public Employment agencies may be set up which may be permitted to do propaganda for recruitment at which the labourer can offer himself for recruitment of his own free will. Before recruitment the labourer should be told of the correct and authorized statement of conditions on the estate or place of work for which he is recruited and the conditions of employment. If he chooses to go to an estate where the conditions of living are not congenial merely because of the higher wages paid there, he does so with full knowledge. These agencies should be organized by the State and the estates and employers should be asked to contribute towards the expenses. This practically means that a Labour Department for the recruitment and distribution of labour should be created. A department similar to that which exists in Malaya with such modifications as the experience gained there necessitate, may be organized. The State will then be in complete possession of information of the needs of industries in the different parts of the country and also the conditions under which labourers have to work. A scheme best suited to the needs of the industries of the country may be thought of which will adequately protect the interests of the labour population.

4. As already stated a few labourers only take their families to the estates and when they return to their homes they are mostly malaria stricken. When a large labour force is congregated in a few places there can be no question of the existence of immoral practices. Every inducement should be offered to labourers to migrate with their families and conditions of living on the estates and workspots should be improved to promote family life.

6. Migration to provinces and states in India except to Assam is not controlled by any law. Recruitment to the labour districts in Assam is made in accordance with the Assam Labour and Emigration Act VI of 1901, and the rules framed thereunder. Garden sardars are employed to recruit labourers for the Assam tea plantations. They are under the local agents who are representatives of the employers. To these local agents the district magistrates grant licenses under Section 64 of the Act. The garden sardars are persons employed on estates in Assam and deputed by the employers to engage labourers under the supervision and direction of the local agents. They are supposed to explain the conditions of life, wages, etc., before the labourers are recruited. The evils of the recruiting system to which reference has already been made are existing in this system also. Naturally the garden sardars and local agents, who receive a liberal commission and a salary, will be anxious to recruit as many labourers as possible. No qualifications are prescribed for these local agents. The control that is conferred under the Act is more or less illusory. Not only retention of control for the enforcement of labour laws is necessary but also the system of recruitment should be abolished and the Public Employment agencies of the State should be set up. There can be no half-way house between the present recruiting system and the Public Employment agencies.

7. It is difficult to gauge correctly the extent and character of unemployment in general. It is much more difficult to say in what industries unemployment exists in a larger or smaller measure unless a special study of each industry is carried out. It is the unemployment in agriculture that leads to migration and unemployment in industries where there is not sufficient demand for the supply, depends on various causes. The extent of unemployment and in what industries can be correctly estimated if Public Employment agencies are started. Everyone who wishes to work should be provided with work. If unemployment is due to causes such as the unemployed are not fit to do the jobs in which employment is available, it is the duty of the



State to provide necessary facilities. The problem should be tackled from two points of view. One, to decrease the possibilities of unemployment, and two, to provide employment for those already unemployed. While in times of prosperity for any industry the workers do not derive the full benefits to which they are entitled, in times of depression they are the first to suffer. So it is the duty of the State to devise some method to provide for the maintenance of the unemployed when owing to trade depression and other causes over which the workers have no control, unemployment is the result. What is necessary is a statutory unemployment insurance scheme. In view of the existing low wages even in many of the well-organized industries, it is doubtful if the workers will avail themselves of any scheme on a voluntary contribution basis. At any rate the contribution from workers should be nominal while the major portion of the burden should be borne by the State and the employers. It is highly desirable and necessary that to the utmost extent possible the International Conventions relating to unemployment should be given effect to inasmuch as they constitute the greatest common measure of agreement between the various parties constituting the International Labour Conferences.

## II.—Staff Organization.

15. As far as I am aware sub-contracting is a very usual occurrence especially where large works are given on contract to one contractor. I do not think any control is exercised over working conditions in regard to sub-contracts. It will be advantageous if in giving contracts conditions of work on which workmen should be employed are inserted in the contracts and that the contractors are made liable for the fulfilment of those conditions even in regard to sub-contracts given by them.

In the case of plantations all kinds of work are generally given on contract. The estates deal with the contractors direct and payments are made to them. The contractors extract as much work as possible from the coolies but do not pay them liberally, at any rate not even at the rates paid by the estates. The contractors usually withhold some part of the wages in order to prevent the labourers from absconding. Being mostly ignorant and not knowing how to keep their account, they have to trust the contractor who often makes all sorts of deductions at the time of settlement of accounts.

## IV.—Health.

23. The coolies working on the estates are ill-fed and ill-clad. They have not sufficient warm clothing to protect themselves from cold. In addition they fall victims to malaria. They have not sufficient stamina to withstand disease. Recouping power is much less. Most of them suffer from enlarged spleens or liver complaint.

I understand a food advance of Rs. 1-4 annas to Rs. 1-8 annas is paid to each coolie who has worked for six days in the week. If the coolie is absent from work even owing to sickness, his advance is cut off. So in the interests of the family and himself, in spite of illness he is forced to work. What happens when a man is ill during the whole week may be imagined. He has nobody to help him and his family. The recruiting maistrie has always an eye on the money advanced by him and will not be willing to swell the account. The estates should maintain the worker and his family during the period of sickness.

24. The estates have fairly well organized medical relief. There is generally a compounder attached to each estate with a central hospital serving a group of estates. It will be advantageous if a woman doctor also is attached to each hospital and a trained mid-wife to each estate. All maternity cases should be sent to the hospital.

25. While a great deal yet remains to be done by way of propaganda to remove the prejudice against the western system of medicine, I think if the labourers are made to understand that they will be entitled to receive some allowance during sickness in case they take advantage of the medical aid provided, more people will avail themselves of this help. Women, if given maternity benefits, can be induced to take advantage of the provision for medical relief. Of course some propaganda is necessary.

26. Provision of latrines, adequate supply of drinking water through pipes, bathing and washing places are necessary.

27. There is no adequate official supervision. These estates should be constantly supervised if the labourers have to be provided with absolute necessities. A list of estates and the provision made by them in regard to housing, etc., if called for, will

show how far official supervision has been effective. How many estates have been prosecuted for not complying with the requirements of the Factories Act or of any other statute, is a point for the consideration of the Commission.

29. Malaria and hookworm are the common diseases, which claim often a heavy toll.

30. From the account of conditions existing on plantations it is clear that some kind of sick insurance scheme is absolutely necessary. Same arguments apply to other industrial concerns also. It may be argued, as the Government of India did, that the International Labour Conventions on the subject are not suited to the present conditions in the country. While I put in an emphatic demurrer to this position, the Conventions can be applied with such modifications as may be deemed necessary. In fact Mr. N. M. Joshi, M.L.A., offered to accept such a compromise by restricting their application to certain organized industries and plantations. There is no denying the fact that any sick insurance scheme founded on a contributory basis will be the best scheme, the person insured, the employer and the State contributing their share. But it is doubtful if in the present circumstances this will be a practicable scheme. The workers get such low wages that they are hardly enough to maintain themselves and their families, even with minimum comfort. Contribution from the employees can only be possible when the wages are received, leave a surplus, intended to be used for making provision for sickness, etc. So, for the present the scheme should be on a non-contributory basis. At any rate this should be the case at least in regard to workers who receive low wages. The employers' share in regard to them should include the employees' share also. In the alternative the wages should be raised so as to cover the employees' share of the contribution. I prefer the latter course as by contributing their share the employees will feel the existence of a right to receive aid instead of receiving doles. In regard to workers whose wages are above a minimum that may be fixed for this purpose, a graded system of insurance rates may be introduced.

Whatever may be the scheme of sick insurance, the State and the employers should recognize the necessity for providing medical facilities, and for improving the working conditions both at work places and in their homes. By so doing sickness can be minimized to a great extent and this will be in the interests of all industries.

The difficulties arising from non-acceptability of western medicine, paucity of medical men, migration of labour and finance are not insurmountable if the State makes up its mind to introduce the scheme. Workers are slowly realizing the advantages of the western medicine. A judicious combination of the Allopathic, Ayurvedic, and Unani systems of medicine, as is being attempted in the Government School of Indian Medicine, will be a step in the right direction. Insistence on any one system alone is not desirable. As regards the paucity of doctors, I do not think that is keenly felt in this presidency. The fact that the scheme of rural medical relief, in spite of the very inadequate grants given by the Government, has been fairly successful in this presidency, makes us hopeful in regard to the supply of medical men in the future. There are in cities and towns a large number of qualified medical men who will be too glad to offer their services for insurance work if decent remuneration is paid to them. With reference to migration of labour, especially to the plantations, I venture to state that a permanent labour force can be easily secured by each estate if the conditions of living are improved. The same will be the case in regard to other industrial concerns. The most difficult question to solve is one of finance. It is for the State to tackle it. By improving the working conditions, paying living wages to workers, by inaugurating sick insurance schemes, etc., the efficiency of the workers is sure to increase and the industries are bound to prosper. The employers will produce more and derive greater profits. As regards the State's contribution to any scheme of sick insurance, I believe the State will have no difficulty to find necessary funds if judicious economy is observed in the present expenditure on the various departments and by an equitable adjustment of the present system of taxation. With the prosperity of the industries the State is sure to benefit financially also. In the case of plantations I have one definite suggestion to make in regard to taxation. A small duty in addition to the present export duty may be levied on every 100 lb. of tea produced on the estates. I think the amount thus raised will be enough to meet the share of the State in any sick insurance scheme.

31. As far as I am aware there are no industrial concerns which have framed any maternity benefit schemes. If they are in existence in some form or other it can be safely asserted that they are not sufficient. Mere granting of leave for some time before and after childbirth is not enough. Whether full wages are given for the period in addition to other benefits is unknown. At any rate, on the plantations, my information is no kind of benefits are granted. Whatever may be the present position in regard to this all-important matter, it is high time a definite statutory

provision was made by which the women workers not only got leave on full wages six weeks before and six weeks after childbirth, but also got some additional benefits such as free medical aid, extra amounts to meet expenses during confinement, etc.

It is well known that an attempt to get legislation merely accepting the principles of maternity benefits was defeated in the Legislative Assembly. I understand that an Act has been passed by the Bombay Legislative Council. But legislation applicable to all India is an absolute necessity. In such legislation the principle of the State's liability for a share of the burden should be recognized, and that the period of prohibition from work should be six weeks before and six weeks after delivery. In addition to full wages for the period, the mother should receive all medical facilities and some amount towards the extra expenses.

#### V.—Welfare.

35. The results achieved so far in regard to welfare work are not satisfactory at all. This is due mostly to lack of sustained efforts in some cases, while in others for want of real interest in the work on the part of employers, or for want of co-operation between the employers and the agencies doing work. Where the employers themselves have shown real earnestness and have not grudged to spend large amounts on welfare work as in the case of Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, the workers still remain discontented, and their discontent finds expression in various ways. It cannot be said that it is wholly due to agitators who foment discontent. Unless the soil is ripe no seeds of discontent sown can thrive. Somehow the workers look upon the welfare work with suspicion. They feel rightly or wrongly that it is a device designed to tighten the grip of the employers upon the employees. That such a feeling exists among employees all over the world is evident from their attitude towards various forms of welfare work organized by the employers. I know as a matter of fact such a feeling existed among the employees at Jamshedpur when I was there on behalf of our society doing welfare work. Such a feeling exists I am told among the employees of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. It is strengthened when the employers help or recognize rival organizations in preference to those already existing. They see some sinister move on the part of employers. The employers also entertain the mistaken notion that because the workers strike they do not appreciate the efforts of employers in regard to welfare work. I shall not be surprised also if some employers are under the impression that welfare work is a substitute for trade union work, and they feel annoyed and consider the employees ungrateful when they strike to secure redress of their legitimate grievances. The fact of the matter is the employers do not realize that whatever they may do, however sincere their efforts may be, their efforts fail to produce the necessary effect unless and until they recognize the workers as human beings.

37. Provision for old age and premature retirement as a part of the system has not been adopted by any industrial concern. Sometimes gratuity is given, but that depends largely on the sweet will and pleasure of the employers. Provident fund system, wherever it exists, does not confer full benefits on the employees. In case of dismissals they do not get any benefit at all. Moreover, they are paid such low wages as to leave no margin at all to enable the workers to make their contribution. Anyhow, the provident fund system should be made compulsory for all employees, and definite rules should be framed by the Government and enforced. So also the system of paying gratuity should be on a compulsory basis. If a workman after a few years of service is dismissed for the reason that the employers are dissatisfied with him, it is not understood why for the period of his loyal services to the concern he should be deprived of the employer's contribution to the provident fund, as also for the gratuity he would be entitled to according to rules framed for the purpose. Employers are so sensitive nowadays that any attempt on the part of the employees to better their condition is looked upon with suspicion and the result is often dismissal. The employee is deprived of all the benefits on that account. The present position results in killing all feelings of self-respect in the employees.

#### IX.—Hours.

59. The present 60-hour week and the 11-hour day practically lead to working at least for 10 hours a day. The period is too long, resulting in the workers being confined to the workplaces at least for 11 hours a day. The workers have no time at all to attend to anything pertaining to their homes and families. They are forced to leave their homes very early in the mornings and return home late in the nights. This is especially the case where workmen have not been provided with houses near their workplaces and are consequently forced to live at a distance. Except on the weekly holidays they have no time to be with their families, especially children.

If overtime is the rule in some factories and if weekly holidays are not observed, the result is that workmen have no opportunities at all to spend even a few hours in their homes. I have known a workman who lived at some distance from his workplace; he and his wife were both workers. They had to get up very early in the morning, especially the wife, to prepare food and had to leave their home fairly early, before their children got up from bed. They returned home late at night. If the man stayed to work overtime the children were usually in bed before he returned home. So he had hardly any occasion to spend at least a few hours with his children. All these circumstances are not conducive to the happiness of the workers. Reduction in daily hours of work is very necessary. In regard to women workers reduction is more urgent and insistent.

60. The intervals provided at present, considered in relation to fatigue, are not satisfactory. Section 21 lays down that no person shall work continuously for more than five hours. I think five hours is too long a period from the point of view of fatigue. It should be reduced to three or four hours, and the interval in each case should at least be half an hour, and at mid-day at least one hour.

Most of the workers have hardly time to prepare food in the mornings and finish their morning meal. Some time should be provided for their morning meal between the hour of starting the work and the mid-day. Half an hour may be enough. Then at mid-day the interval should be at least one hour for taking mid-day meal, and rest for some time. Again, in the afternoon half an hour should be given for taking tea or some tiffin. All these intervals are necessary. In the case of children the maximum period of continuous work fixed at four hours is very unreasonable and hard. It should be reduced to at least two or three hours. As five hours is the period fixed for men the period fixed for children is very high.

#### D.—Other Establishments.

78. (a) *Plantations.*—Estate labourers are generally required to work for about nine hours a day, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. But in most cases they are given task work which they manage to finish within seven or eight hours, working continuously without enjoying rest during the interval. I understand that in some estates they insist on nine hours' work, and if any labourer manages to finish the task before the allotted time he is given extra work. But insistence on a compulsory rest period of at least one hour per day is necessary even in regard to task work. That is done by Government in the famine works. Famine workers are not allowed to work during the rest period even though it is task work. Just as in the case of famine works, the quantity of work prescribed as task has been arrived at after considerable experience, in the case of task work on the estates it is necessary to arrive at and prescribe such task tables. This is necessary, as the task is generally assigned by the maistry, who may be taking the work on contract from the estates. Tasks should be prescribed for different kinds of work in which the workers are engaged on the estates.

79. Six-day week is the general rule, and Sunday is a weekly holiday. But the maistries who take many works on contract often induce the labourers to work on Sundays on promise of payment of cash for wages. As the labourer is always under the vigilance of the maistry, to whom he is indebted in many ways, he cannot refuse to work on Sundays if he is asked to work.

80. I have already suggested that Section 32 of the Indian Factories Act providing exemption from Sections 21 and 22 of the Act should be repealed and no exceptions should be possible in the case of indigo, tea, and coffee industries. All the provisions of and rules framed under the Indian Factories Act should be applicable to plantations. In view of the very hard nature of the work on the plantations, rest period of one hour, nine hours of work per day, six days' work in the week, and fifty-four hours of work per week, with no provision for overtime should be made compulsory besides the provision of other benefits suggested in other sections with special reference to plantations. Financial considerations do not count at all, since the industry is prosperous, as in 1928 the out-turn of tea was the highest for the last ten years.

## XII.—Wages.

96. The prevailing average rates of wages for various kinds of skilled and unskilled labour are given in the Factories Administration Reports. How far these figures represent correct state of things it is not possible to say. If separate figures represent correct state of things it is not possible to say. If separate figures for each district had been given it is possible to note the variations. In the reports for 1926, 1927, and 1928, every year one district has been taken for purposes of comparison with the average rate of wages in the Presidency. The wages vary considerably in certain

occupations, but compare favourably with those paid outside the factories. It is doubtful if the wages paid outside are as low as those given in the reports. Moreover wages in agricultural areas are not often the same during all seasons of the year, being more when the demand for field labour is great to finish certain operations connected with cultivation in time. Unless a wage census is taken it is not wise to arrive at conclusions.

The wages on the estates are 6 to 7 annas a day for a man and 4 to 5 annas for a woman. Only those engaged in special works get 1 or 2 annas more.

97. A comparative study of the wages given in the Factories Administration Reports shows that the variations noticed were slight in different years. In the districts chosen for comparison with the Presidency rates for certain classes of labour, there have been increases while in others they are either stationary or reduced. If the same district had been taken for a number of years, it would have been possible to study the variations and note the causes for the same. Even taking the figures given in the reports, it is possible to say safely that the wages paid bear no relation to prices and cost of living. While the prices of articles of food are not the same now as those in the pre-war period and the cost of living has also increased, the rise in wages has not been correspondingly large. Moreover, in the case of labourers who work on the farms and fields in their own villages, even if the wages received are less, they can manage somehow. But when they have to migrate to other places for work, wages required for their maintenance should necessarily be more. I think in most industries the wages bear little or no relation to profits. When the industry is prosperous the workers do not get all the advantages they are entitled to by way of increased wages, while the employers are always eager to cut down wages when there is depression in trade or industry.

In the case of plantations there has hardly been any increase in wages. As one observer recently stated in a communication to the press, writing about the wages prevailing in the plantations in the Annamalais, the wages have remained stationary for the last seven or eight years. My information is they have been stationary for a longer period. Evidently they bear no relation either to prices or cost of living. With reference to the relation between the profits and the wages, the less said the better. Practically, profits earned by the plantations have had no bearing at all on the wages. In this connection it may be useful to quote here what Sir L. C. Money wrote to the "Sunday Observer" and reproduced in the "Statesman" of 30th October, 1924:—"The demand for tea at home and abroad is increasing more rapidly than the output. The statistical position is thus all against the consumer and in favour of the tea companies, which are enjoying unbounded prosperity. Not a few tea companies are now earning 50 to 100 per cent. on their capitals and many of them have accumulated magnificent reserves. Tea shares continue to rise, and in some cases are now worth five or six times the quotations of the lean period after the war." What Sir L. C. Money will have to say on the Indian Tea Statistics for 1928, when the out-turn especially was the highest for 10 years, it is not necessary to guess. But during all this period of prosperity the wages have remained stationary.

98. In plantations when the labourer's accounts are settled he finds he has very little left to his credit in the accounts after all the trouble and suffering he has gone through. He returns home a disappointed man, weak in health and with very little money on hand. I believe it is the same case with labourers engaged in other industrial undertakings who have migrated from their homes. If their families are left behind in their homes, they manage to send some remittances, not out of surplus amounts, but out of the moneys necessary for their own living, denying themselves often even the very necessities of life.

99. Payment in kind is generally the custom in very many cases in agricultural occupations. When converted to money value, the wages will appear low. But if wages are paid in money, the return they get for purchases is far less than what it would be if the wages are paid in kind.

There seems to be a system prevailing on the Annamalais to provide a weekly supply of rice and a sum of 4 annas per week for other expenses. I do not know if this system is general in all estates, and if so it is worth while to know the quantity of rice supplied and the price charged for the same. Instead of supplying rice and paying 4 annas for other expenses, it would be better if the labourers are paid their wages every week and are induced to purchase rice in the estate stores, even offering at rates cheaper than those prevailing in neighbouring shops if there are any. At present it is not known who is to decide what kind of rice suits the labourers best. In effect the labourers are compelled to buy any kind of rice supplied to them by the estates. The meagre sum of 4 annas now given for other expenses is a limit prescribed arbitrarily by the estates without reference to the workers' needs. This system of doling rice out and payment of a few annas for other expenses is highly objectionable, as it results in keeping the labourer always at the mercy of the employers.

100. The system of paying wages through the maistry, i.e., the head man, prevails in some of the estates. These maistries are not always reliable men. They will stoop to adopt all possible means to cheat the labourers. They have no means of redress. The employers should deal with the labourers directly.

101. No particular method is adopted in fixing wages in any industrial undertaking. I do not believe there are negotiated agreements in many cases. The labourers have to receive the wages paid to them.

102. Payment for overtime and Sunday work has not been arrived at on any basis. In most cases the labourers are made to work on Sundays less number of hours than usual hours on weekdays and paid weekday wages. In order to prevent frequent working overtime and to give the utmost benefit for overtime working, the wages should be one and a half times the weekday wages instead of one and a quarter times as at present.

105. In view of the prevailing low wages in almost all industries, which is the cause of discontent of workers, it is desirable to provide by Statute for the creation of bodies for fixing minimum wages for various trades and occupations. But as conditions differ in different places it is neither advisable nor possible to lay down the minimum wages applicable to different industries in all parts of the country. Wage fixing bodies should be established in different places which will take into account all the relevant conditions in the trade and fix adequate wages. I think for the present the adoption of the recommendation concerning the application of the minimum wage fixing machinery adopted at the Eleventh Session of the International Labour Conference may be deemed sufficient for the purpose. The recommendation should be adopted *in toto* and no piece-meal legislation should be attempted. The procedure laid down and the various arrangements proposed therein for the enforcement of the decisions of the wage fixing bodies are all necessary. No industry or trade should be exempted from any or all of the provisions enacted for the purpose. Plantations should in no case be exempted. In Malaya, standard wages have been fixed. It is stated that in the estates other than those for which standard wages were legally introduced, the estate employers generally paid wages lower than the standard minimum wages. This points to the danger from either not applying the provisions to all places or making exceptions.

In any machinery created for fixing minimum wages the trade unions should have representation. This is necessary, especially as the workers are ignorant and are not sufficiently organized to represent their point of view.

106. Deductions on account of fines for late attendance, short work and inefficient work must be considerable. Where the workers are ignorant these deductions cause heart-burning and result in discontent. It is desirable in the interests of all concerned to regulate the system of fines in consultation with the workers. It is also necessary that the fines imposed should go to a common fund which shall be used for the benefit of workmen.

107. It is desirable to introduce a system of weekly payment of wages. At present in many industries monthly payment is the rule. Even then payments are made long after the month is over. It should be possible for employers to pay the wages within the shortest period after the elapse of the month. The difficulties are not great and insurmountable if they are required to do so. But I prefer weekly payments as that will keep the workers above want. They are now forced to buy their provisions on credit from the shopkeepers and as soon as the wages are paid they are almost left penniless. I have myself tried the system on a small scale in a carpentry workshop and I find the men appreciate the system. Legislation for the weekly payment of wages for the days worked on every Saturday is desirable. Sundays will then be utilized by the workers to purchase their necessities. Provisions should be introduced penalizing delay in payment of wages, fixing the maximum period beyond which payment should not be delayed. Unclaimed wages should not be written off unless and until every effort has been made by the employers to trace the workers. Reasonable period of notice should be given before payment is refused. Unclaimed wages should always be credited to a common good fund, which along with the fines should be used for the benefit of the workers. This fund should be managed by a committee of workers with the head of the concern or his deputy presiding over its meetings. The decisions of the committee should always be carried out.

108. My knowledge of the conditions prevailing in villages and in industrial areas makes me come to the conclusion that so far as indebtedness is concerned the lot of the worker is no better in industrial areas. Perhaps it is worse in industrial areas as the rates of interest paid are higher in many cases, and as the worker has to borrow from sowcars who are least moved by sympathy and feeling of oneness which are generally present in the village moneylender. It is estimated that nearly 20 to 25 per cent. of the earnings are absorbed in paying debt charges. The worker in

industrial areas has often to pledge jewels, vessels, etc., to get loans. Owing to the existence of communal feeling the villagers do generally get loans on personal security in the villages. Moreover, the needs of workers in industrial areas are greater but the wages are not correspondingly higher. Therefore, I think the indebtedness in industrial areas is generally higher than in villages. The need for co-operative credit societies is more urgent if the worker has to enjoy the full benefits of even the so-called higher wages he is supposed to get in industrial areas.

109. In the two weavers' co-operative societies I am in charge of, bonus is paid on the production basis. But profits also are taken into account and the rate at which bonus is to be paid is decided by the societies taking into consideration the amount of profits available for distribution after paying the dividend and carrying the required amount to the reserved fund. It generally works out at half to one anna per rupee worth of goods produced. If the bonus and profit-sharing schemes are to be adopted in industrial undertakings, the rate of dividend on shares will have to be fixed as also the amount to be carried to reserve fund, etc. The balance of the profits should go to the workers in the form of bonus based on production. I realize such a scheme would involve considerable work to the management. In many cases it may be impracticable to carry it out. But if a workable and reasonable scheme is to be framed, all such trouble is necessary. The workers will then take every interest in the working of the concern and production also will increase.

110. In view of what has already been stated, I feel it is needless to say that no leave of any kind is enjoyed by the workers. Nor do the employers assist or countenance taking of leave by workers. If forced by circumstances the workers absent themselves from work. I understand often they have to lose even wages for days already worked; at any rate, for the days in the month they have worked before receiving wages for the previous month. In fact, the employers delay payment of wages so that the fear of losing wages for the period they have worked in the current month may prevent them from absenting from work. It is desirable that leave rules should be framed and enforced.

111. The desirability of introducing Fair Wages Clause in public contracts needs no special argument. It is not only desirable but necessary in the interests of workers.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. Being few and well-educated, the employers easily combine themselves into an organization, especially when they fear that attempts are being made calculated to affect their interests. Having large financial resources at their disposal they can organize themselves easily. They also wield considerable influence and power in the counsels of Government, mainly owing to the riches at their disposal. For some reason or other the Government also show them great consideration. We hear of the Viceroy and the Members of Government opening sessions of the Chambers of Commerce, receiving addresses from them, attending their sessions and replying to various points raised in their discussions. We have yet to hear of an instance when similar consideration was shown to employees' organizations. However much we may regret, we cannot but take note of the fact that recognition by Government and their officers is useful in starting and conducting organizations. Moreover, the fear of the employers, who always misunderstand any attempt on the part of the workers to organize themselves, prevents the employees, who are mostly ignorant and poor, from joining any organization. In spite of the passing of the Trade Unions Act a feeling still exists that employees' organizations are looked upon with suspicion by the Government. I think there is some justification for it, as the meetings of workmen are attended and watched by the police, and trade union workers are served with notices under the Criminal Procedure Code preventing them from addressing workmen in the event of a strike or lock-out. While the employers possess all the facilities for organization, the employees, on the other hand, suffer from many disadvantages. In these circumstances the extent of organization of employees cannot but be little. The planters are a well-organized body.

118. If the employers understand and appreciate correctly the spirit that actuates workmen in organizing themselves and try to respect their organizations the effect on industry is bound to be healthy. But the motives are always suspected, and the result is strained feelings between the employers and the employees. Consequently the industry cannot prosper under such circumstances. Nor have the organizations of employees been successful in influencing the employers to improve the conditions of workers except by means of threat of strike or declaring strike. The whole situation is somewhat annoying, and this state of things will continue as long as there is no change of heart on the part of employers. But it is a pity that owing to this misunderstanding often the industry suffers, and the workers suffer when a strike is declared.

119. Except providing some help during the period of strike, I am not aware of any trade union that has attempted to start any other schemes. Perhaps a dismissed workman or a workman thrown out of employment for absence from work owing to sickness and other causes is now and then helped with some grants for maintenance. The trade unions have been fairly active in bringing to the notice of the employers all cases of hardship resulting from actions on their part or their subordinates. They have succeeded in obtaining redress in some cases. But often such representations go unheeded, and in some cases workmen have declared strikes on that account. While it is not wise to declare strikes for redress of individual grievances, at present there is no other means for obtaining redress of such grievances.

120. Three years ago I attempted to revive a railway workers' union at Calicut that was in existence. As the head of the locomotive section was against any attempt on the part of the workers to organize into a union, every attempt on my part to revive it proved futile. It was even difficult to get workers to attend meetings to discuss the situation. But as a matter of fact I knew they were anxious to have a union. At any rate, that was the desire of fairly educated workers. If this is the attitude of the employers—I think this is a fairly good instance—naturally the workers feel very sore. The attitude of the employers has never been in favour of trade union activities. Organization on the part of workers is discouraged in all possible ways.

The attitude of the local Government in regard to organization of employees in Government concerns is in no way better. By G.O. No. 417 Mis. public, dated 5th May, 1928, the local Government have prohibited all Government employees from joining or continuing as members of any association which has sought or may seek registration as a trade union under the Trade Unions Act. Any infringement of this order is to be dealt with as a breach of discipline. This order was given effect to in the Government Press. The Government Press employees, who were organizing a union for purposes of registration under the Trade Unions Act, were asked not to do so. If this is the attitude of the Government towards trade union activities, it is no wonder that other employers do feel it a breach of discipline to organize trade unions whatever may be the intention of the legislature in passing the Trade Unions Act. The local Government have set a bad example by their order. The Government Press employees feel very much for their helplessness.

121. In spite of the discouragement by employers and in spite of the ignorance and apathy in general of Indian workmen it is surprising that within a short period after the passing of the Act so many trade unions have been registered. Perhaps this would not have been possible but for the interest evinced by social workers in organizing them. These well-meaning social workers are dubbed as agitators, however fair they may be. To the employer everyone connected with the trade union work is an agitator, whatever may be his position in public life. Even the Government seem to be still under that delusion. The effects of the passing of the Trade Unions Act are not so great as it was once hoped. That is due to reasons I have already indicated. Still, but for the Act there would have been no organized unions complying with all the requirements of the law. Monies collected in the form of subscriptions from workers have to be accounted for and their utilization is subject to the control of the union. In various ways to some extent the interests of the workers are protected both against the employers and of the workers themselves.

122. The fact of the matter is that the employers are not bound to recognize the trade unions unless they feel inclined to do so. Nor do the employers recognize the trade unions for purposes of negotiation. They sometimes indirectly help the organization of rival unions and recognize only those unions which serve their purpose. The trade union officials should be treated as accredited representatives of the workers, and they should be recognized for purposes of negotiation.

As the trade unions are treated more as bodies inimical to the interests of employers, there can be no question of co-operation between employers and employees in regard to any matter. Co-operation and recognition should take the place of distrust and suspicion. I have no doubt efficiency of production can be increased if the employers seek the co-operation of workers and treat them as partners in industry.

I have already given an instance—Government Press employees—where the local Government by an order prevented their employees from joining any trade union. The position of employees in State industrial concerns in relation to general trade union movement is practically one of forced indifference. The employees in State industrial concerns should be free to organize themselves as workers under other employers, and the Government should set an example by recognizing such trade unions, deal with them for purposes of negotiation, and also seek the co-operation of such unions for increasing the efficiency of production.



### XVII.—Administration.

133. The attitude of the Central Legislature on labour questions is not altogether satisfactory. It is not possible to carry through any labour legislation except with the support of Government. All legislative measures initiated by the Government do get through the Central Legislature. Efforts of private members to get some legislation passed or resolutions on labour questions adopted, if there is no backing of Government, have always ended in failure. The Central Legislature consists of members, with a few honourable exceptions, who represent certain interests. A nominated member represents labour in the Legislative Assembly, and there is none at all in the Council of State. His voice is often a cry in the wilderness, unless the Government take it up and echo it. The franchise for the Assembly has been so devised as to ignore practically the claims of labour. In the present circumstances it will not be possible for labour to secure adequate representation through the general constituencies. While the employers are given special representation through various bodies, the labourers have been ignored altogether. In these circumstances it will be no exaggeration to say that the attitude of the Central Legislature towards labour questions is not one of absolute sympathy and all that has been achieved so far is due to the sympathy and support of the Government of India. Even the Government of India is more solicitous of the interests of employers.

As regards the provincial legislature the condition of things is not so bad. But the fact is the local Governments consider themselves merely the agents of the Government of India. When questions relating to emigration and labour are put in the Madras Legislative Council, invariably the answer given is that they are central subjects. Under these circumstances provincial legislatures cannot actively interest themselves in labour questions, except when such questions come under "law and order," as in times of strike or lock-out. The Bombay Council is the only provincial council, if my knowledge is correct, which has attempted some legislation and evinced keen interest in labour matters. Perhaps that may be due to the presence of nominated representatives of labour on the Council. Labour should be adequately represented on all provincial legislatures. In fairness to the provincial councils it must be said that they would have evinced greater interest, some members at least having been elected with the help of labour votes, if this plea of labour being a central subject had not been put forward. Here also the franchise is not sufficiently low to enable greater numbers of labourers exercising the franchise.

134. It is no exaggeration to say that but for the fact that India is a member of the League of Nations, the lot of the workers would have remained the same. As a member of the League of Nations, India has been obliged to consider and take action on the various draft conventions affecting labour adopted at the International Labour Conferences. There is no denying the fact that the Conventions of the International Labour Conferences have considerably influenced and moulded the various legislative measures. The Factories Act and the Mines Act have been designed to meet the Conventions on the subjects. A Convention to safeguard young persons employed at sea has been approved by the Legislature. The Workmen's Compensation Act has been passed. The Trade Unions Act and the Trades Disputes Act have been adopted. The recommendation of the Fifth session of the International Labour Conference regarding the general principles of the organization of factory inspection has received the attention of the Government, and steps have been taken to bring the factory inspection into line with the recommendation. Various other recommendations excepting those relating to maternity benefits and unemployment have received the support of Government and legislation has been passed in cases where it was considered absolutely necessary to resort to law for the enforcement of the recommendations.

From all this narrative it would appear that the attitude of the Government of India on labour questions has been very sympathetic and that a great deal of legislation has been passed within the last ten years. While no one grudges to give the meed of praise due to the Government of India, it must also be said, however unpleasant it may be, that the Government of India have been very slow in dealing with labour questions. To quote one instance, though Sir Thomas Holland promised to take action in regard to registration of Trade Unions in 1921 it was not until 1926 the Trade Unions Act was passed. The plea that the Local Governments should be consulted and the consequent delay in adopting labour measures has often tried the patience of workers. The same tale of inordinate delay in regard to the passing of the Trades Disputes Act can be narrated. The Bill published by the Government of India in 1924 became an Act only in 1929. When some Local Governments like the Government of Bombay attempted legislation in regard to matters such as the Trades Disputes, the Government of India prevented that Government from doing so, saying it was an All-India matter. The measure relating to maternity benefits passed by the

Bombay Legislative Council was adopted at the instance of a private member. It is something that the Government of India did not refuse sanction on the ground that it is an All-India question. The attitude of the Government of India towards questions such as maternity benefits, weekly payment of wages, refusal to ratify the International Convention relating to unemployment are some of the labour questions on which their attitude has been wholly unsympathetic.

135. As I have already stated emigration and labour are treated as Central subjects at least in this Presidency and the Local Governments are simply carrying out the behests of the Government of India but freely exercising the powers conferred on them by the Statutes in favour of the employers. The Madras Government have not shown the least sympathy for labourers. They consider that their obligations towards labour are only to the extent they affect the maintenance of law and order. The Madras Government even take their own time to frame rules which they are expected to draw up under certain enactments. Though the Trade Disputes Act came into effect from April, 1929, I understand as yet the Local Government have not framed the necessary rules. The attitude of the Bombay Government is quite different. Within a few months after the passing of the Act not only the rules were framed but were also given effect to in the case of an industrial dispute. The leisurely manner in which the interests of labour are being looked after by the local Government almost amounts to studied indifference. So effective measures should be devised to compel the local Governments to carry out the duties and responsibilities entrusted to them in an efficient manner. The Local Governments have not also used the power to grant exemptions in a responsible manner. In "India in 1926-27" it is stated "An unsatisfactory feature of the year is the increase over last year in the number of factories in which the majority of operatives are exempted from the various sections of the Act. The largest number of exemptions was granted in Assam. Provincial Governments have been asked to review the existing exemptions with the object of reducing them wherever possible."

136. Bombay maintains a special Labour Office. In Madras there is a Commissioner of Labour who is the Protector of Depressed classes and also looks after the criminal reformation work. The work relating to depressed classes alone takes up much of his time as he is in charge of work throughout the Presidency. He is in charge of all subjects relating to labour and emigration including the administration of the Workmen's Compensation Act. Anyone who reads his annual administration reports on the various subjects under his control cannot but feel that time has come when he should be relieved of the work relating to depressed classes and other subjects to enable him to give his whole-hearted attention to the labour questions. When the office of the Commissioner of Labour was created, it was created more in the interests of the work for depressed classes and to look after the management of the criminal settlements. Since then he has been made responsible for the administration of every act of the central legislature concerning labour questions. Inspection of plantations should be one of his main functions. The idea of creating a Commissioner of Labour in each province to administer all labour Acts may be seriously considered. When the Public Employment Agencies for recruiting labour and solving the question of unemployment are set up, the Commissioner of Labour should be in charge of this department also.

137. Differences in law in Indian States and British India must affect the workers adversely. While the Indian States cannot be compelled to fall in line with British India in regard to labour legislation, I think pressure can be brought to bear upon them to follow in the footsteps of British India. If the Indian States persist in maintaining differences in law, it is just possible there will be unequal competition between industries in Indian States and British India. Some method should be found out so as to make all labour laws applicable to the whole of India. An agreement to ratify them with such modifications as may be deemed necessary, should be arrived at between the Indian States and the Government of India. There are no restrictions at present regarding recruitment to estates in Indian States.

138. It is very necessary that the workpeople should be acquainted with factory legislation. It would be in the interests of employers to educate them. Safety posters in big characters illustrated with pictures should be posted in prominent places, and "safety first" booklets should be freely distributed. Factory laws and regulations should be exhibited and distributed in the same manner. I have had occasion to visit a number of factories. Either the regulations printed in English or the vernacular rendering of it in very small characters is pasted on boards for the use of workpeople. Neither of them is of any use to workmen. Even on a sunny day a torch is required to read the posters. They should all be in very bold characters illustrated with pictures. Near every dangerous part of the machinery there should be directions how to avoid dangers. There is another reason for acquainting the workers with the factory act and rules. It is to avoid fraud being played on the workers by some unscrupulous employers.

139. The Factories Administration Reports indicate that the number of factories is steadily growing. It is true there is a larger increase in the seasonal factories. But it will be admitted they need greater supervision as the likelihood of regulations being violated is greater in their case. In view of the various legislative enactments passed which necessitate frequent, regular and surprise visits for their enforcement, I think the present staff in this Presidency is not sufficient. It must be gratefully acknowledged that even with the limited staff the Commissioner of Labour and the Chief Inspector of Factories have coped with a large amount of work and carried out a large number of inspections. As the number of women workers is increasing steadily the question of employing a Woman Factory Inspector will have to be soon considered. Perhaps the addition of two Inspectors and the creation of two more circles will lead to better and more frequent supervision especially in areas where there is a large number of seasonal factories.

(ii) Application of the Recommendation of the Fifth session of the International Labour Conference will bring about uniformity of administration in different provinces if any differences exist now. I do not think there are many differences at present.

(iii) The more efficient the administration is, the more rigorous it will prove. With the available personnel I think the efficiency has been fairly well maintained. As already stated the staff is not adequate to deal with the steadily growing volume of work. Increasing strictness in the enforcement of the provisions of the Act is also necessary. I shall content myself by quoting an extract from "India in 1926-27": "The prevention of accidents is, to a considerable extent, beyond the powers of employers, but greater attention to safety methods would in all probability have an important effect in reducing accidents. In particular, the placing of unskilled persons in charge of dangerous machinery—a practice to which attention is called in one provincial report—shows either extraordinary ignorance or a callous disregard of the dangers to which operatives are subjected, and the Government of India have asked provincial governments to take stringent measures against employers who neglect to take all reasonable precautions to secure the safety of their employees." What stringent measures have been taken by the provincial governments is not known. How many prosecutions were launched against the employers for violating these instructions of the Government of India, it will be interesting to know. The Chief Inspector of Factories, Bihar and Orissa, reports that the lamentable feature of the year 1927, was "a series of catastrophies due to technical incompetence." I trust steps have been taken to employ only technically competent persons for occupations requiring technical knowledge. The employers should be required to carry out the instructions of the Factories Department. The employers need education that the observance of regulations is in their own interests.

(iv) It is doubtful either increase or decrease in the number of prosecutions can be regarded with satisfaction. While the large increase in the number of prosecutions may be taken as a satisfactory indication of increasing strictness in the enforcement of the provisions of the Act and regulations as the Government of India seem to think, it can also be said that the large reduction in the number of prosecutions is an indication of the fact that the provisions of the Act and regulations are being carefully followed as the Government of Madras seem to appreciate with satisfaction. As the number of prosecutions depends on various considerations, it cannot be considered as a safe test regarding the strict enforcement of the Act and the regulations. Decrease in the number of accidents is a circumstance that may be taken into account. The number of convictions for contravention of the Factories Act is steadily growing. Whatever may be the number of prosecutions ending in convictions, the punishments awarded are not deterrent. I shall only quote a few opinions and leave it to the Commission to judge the issue.

"There are still complaints from several provinces of the inadequacy of the fines imposed in some cases and the High Court at Rangoon found it necessary to issue a circular drawing the attention of magistrates to the question. The Honorable Judges observed that 'magistrates . . . in assessing the penalty should reflect that a light fine gives an unfair advantage to the unscrupulous (who may be saving hundreds of rupees by breaking the Act) as against their more honorable competitors whose costs of production are inevitably raised by their strict adherence to the terms of the Factory Act.'"—*India in 1925-26*.

"Complaints as to inadequacy of fines in some cases are unfortunately repeated in provincial reports although there are signs of improvement in this respect. There are, however, still a few cases in which a merely nominal fine has been imposed for illegal employment of women and children."—*India in 1926-27*.

"Unfortunately there are still complaints in some provinces as to the inadequacy of the fines imposed by magistrates, particularly in cases connected with the illegal employment of women and children."—*India in 1927-28*.

142. Plantations: More frequent and extensive inspection of plantations is necessary. As they are mostly situated in far-off places, fairly distant from the nearest railway station, visits paid by the inspecting staff are less frequent. There should be a separate Inspector for plantations whose main function should be to inspect the plantations frequently and see not only the planters observe laws but also do everything possible to promote the betterment of the condition of labourers on the estates. If the present system of recruitment of labour is abolished and if the application of the Workmen's Compensation Act is extended to plantations, the need for frequent inspection will be greater. At present both the extent and nature of inspection are not satisfactory.

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Having brought a bill to amend the Madras Planters' Labour Act, 1903—so far as its penal provisions were concerned and arrest under a penal code—I had the satisfaction or rather dissatisfaction to see its repeal wholly including its humanitarian provisions so far as the amenities of labourers were concerned. The question is whether we should replace that Act and the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act (previously repealed) by a comprehensive enactment by the local legislature—*firstly* to meet the difficulties created by the repeal of the two enactments in recovering advances not only by planters but by industrialists, and *secondly* to provide compulsorily for amenities of life and comforts to labourers in estates and industries where they are neglected.

#### I.—As to Advances.

It will generally be impossible to replace the advances system of paying labourers, where it has been in force so long, by any system of payments on work done from time to time. At the same time in order to recover advances made, we must have a procedure somewhat of a *special nature*, summary and expeditious, like the one enforced in the case of arrears of land revenue or of negotiable instruments, with a provision to disable the labourer against whom decree is passed to avail himself of the provisions of the insolvency enactments. Arrest and distress before judgment also should be specially provided for in suits for advances. If arrears of advance repayments are to be treated as arrears of revenue, the suit for recovery should be instituted before a Tahsildar of the Taluk or Deputy Tahsildar of a Sub-Taluk. If on the other hand the procedure applicable to negotiable instruments is to be enforced, the suit should be filed before a Civil Court.

No local legislature is likely to pass a bill which will penalise breach of contract by workmen or default in carrying agreements for labour.

#### II.—Amenities of Life in Estates.

In his presidential speech before the United Planters' Association in 1924, Sir W. P. Barton, the then Resident in Mysore State said—"Planting industries, however selfish their policy may be, are now largely organized on a scientific basis and the test of good staff work is the efficiency of labour force. To ensure efficiency, good food and housing, medical relief, special preventive measures against hookworm and malaria, are essentials. *Many estates are worked on these lines. But in many estates there is room for improvement.*" After careful enquiries and personal inspection of several estates in Wynad (Malabar District), I may say that since 1924, many more estates are worked on scientific and humanitarian lines. But there is room for further improvement even in such estates, while there are estates in which some or other ordinary humanitarian measures are neglected. I shall indicate some of the measures required urgently and essentially:—(1) Coolie lines in many of the estates provide accommodation enough with a living room—10 by 12 feet and back room—10 by 4 feet for cooking and a verandah in front—to accommodate about four persons, drains, excellent arrangements for water supply and sanitary latrines. But in many estates old coolie lines—with only one room 10 by 12 feet without any window, floors in some cases below the ground level, with unprotected well too close to the lines, no drains and insanitary surroundings. The pace at which improved lines are erected in some estates is too slow.

2 The provision of clothing especially Kambli is inadequate. One kambli is given in Wynad estates at the cost of the estate which has to serve so many purposes—(a) as an umbrella during a downpour of rain, always heavy on the hills; (b) as a sheet to cover the body shivering from cold as also a bed-sheet. A second kambli is therefore essential for protection from rain and winds *outdoor* and another for use *indoor*. I would also suggest a coat to men and boys, a Sadi (worth about Rs. 3 to 5) to women and a jacket to working children.

3. As to employment of children in the estates, even those below the age of seven have to be sent to work in order to repay the advances and are thus prevented from attending a school. I think that no boy below the age of twelve or girl below the age of ten should be allowed to do any work in the estates, except by way of manual training.

4. There are a few schools established by missionaries attended by a few children, 15 to 30 in number, aided by some of the estates. Education is given in Malayalam generally; in one or two in Tamil; but none in Kanarese to meet the requirements of the large number of Kanarese speaking coolies from South Kanara and Mysore State.

5. No wages are given for days of absence on Sundays and on other days on account of illness. I would urge that Sundays and two days of casual leave on account of illness should be treated as working days—with right to full wages.

6. Wages generally 7 annas in case of men and 5 annas in case of women and 5 to 2 annas in the case of children should be raised by at least one anna. The wages in the plains are as high as 8 annas and more, and I would suggest that wages should be raised by about 10 per cent. In most plantations the coolies in the lines struck me as starving and underfed people. They get too little of wages a week after deductions on account of advances, for sufficient feeding and clothing and necessary stimulants like coffee and tea, all the more necessary on the Ghats than on the plains, whence most of them come.

In conclusion, I venture to propose that there should be legislative measures for rules being made by local Governments as to provision of the necessary amenities and comforts of life to labourers, which planters should be compelled to carry out, defaulters being punishable by loss of the benefits of the special provisions for enforcing contracts.

P.S.—The travelling allowance to labourers does not cover bus-journey. There should be corresponding increase. The question of a compulsory or voluntary provident fund to labourers is an important one and may be dealt with below briefly.

The extra one anna or more proposed above in the daily coolie wages may be set apart for Provident Fund on the labourers' behalf and a corresponding equivalent sum put in by the planter. The surrender may be allowed before the period fixed—which may be five years minimum at a stretch—but a reduced amount ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) so far as the planter's contribution is concerned.

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#### I.—Recruitment.

2 (i) To take the emigrants to Burma, it is largely true to say that many workers live there for more than two years, although every one of them hopes to come back to his native village sooner or later and to set himself up as an independent landowner, or fairly well-to-do tenant or a small business man. Most of the emigrants go to Burma for a season or two and are therefore only temporary workers on the other side of the Bay. Similarly, but for a few thousands of workers, who have made Ceylon their permanent country, the others always look forward to go back with their savings to their villages in Southern India. Most of the workers employed in the Coimbatore and Madura Cotton Mills and those working in the godowns of Cocanada and Vizagapatam ports come from the near-by villages and are therefore living in their own villages. The toddy carriers of Madras go to the City for a stay of three to six months in the year and therefore expect to return to their villages, so soon as the specially busy season is over. But the scavengers in the Presidency capital have more or less permanently settled down in the city and therefore visit their native villages once or twice in every two or three years and that only for a few days. The cart pullers, rickshaw pullers and many of the casual workers of the city of Madras are also drafted from the villages but they always keep on their relations with their villages. On the other hand, most of the Adi-Dravidas and Adi-Andhras who have gone to the city for work, are usually very reluctant to go

back to their villages since they have come to taste freedom in social matters which they are denied in the villages. Therefore the extent and frequency of return of the workers do not affect the efficiency of the enterprises in which these temporary immigrants are employed both in Madras Presidency and outside. There is not much permanent labour force in the tea and coffee plantations on the Nilgiris, although each plantation has a few more or less permanent workers attached to it, who have agreed to work on it for a fixed term of years. The cotton mills of Madras and Coimbatore are mostly dependent upon the workers coming from the neighbouring villages and are therefore unable to work full time and at full speed during times of brisk work in the fields. But just because the workers live in their own houses, situated in their own villages, most of them manage to keep on with the mill work for fairly long periods. We can therefore consider many of them as belonging to the permanent labour force. The Madras Buckingham and Carnatic Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills maintain a small number of permanent workers in their own housing quarters and there is in addition a large number of permanent workers living in their own houses, situated in Choolai, Washermanpet and Perambur. It is therefore largely true to say that the Madras industries are not burdened with the maintenance of a large body of permanent workers.

3. (ii) The only way in which the present movements of labour from one part of the country to another can be improved, in so far as the agricultural industry is concerned, is by the establishment of the Labour Exchanges, maintained by the State itself. Voluntary Exchanges will be of no use. If these Exchanges are to be of any good at all, it must be made compulsory on the part of both the ryots and the workers to make use of them. In fact these Exchanges should form an integral part of the State machinery organized to better the economic conditions of the workers, to create better relations between the workers and employers and to minimise the likelihood for workers to be degraded socially also.

(iii) (b) A national or provincial system of Labour Exchanges in addition to the upland and Delta Central Exchanges for each district must be organized. It shall be the duty of each village exchange to study the nature of the employment available within the village—the months of brisk work, the amount of labour needed from outside, the wages offered by the employers, the months of slack season, the number of workers available for going to other places in search of employment. The information thus derived will be pooled in the two primary District Clearing House Exchanges, which will develop a chart for the demand for and the movements of labour within the upland zone and delta zone of a district. Similarly the Presidency Clearing House Exchange will prepare a chart to show the possible demand in different weeks of the year in different parts of the Presidency. If the work is found too much for the Presidency Clearing House Exchange, the Madras Presidency can be divided on the census lines into four zones, the Northern Circars, the Ceded Districts, the Western and the Central Districts and the Southern Districts. Anyhow the nature of the work to be done by the Central Clearing House Exchange will be the same.

So soon as the first indications come from the exchanges in the Deltas—Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery—that the transplantation or reaping season is about to commence, the necessary steps will be taken to inform the particular exchanges in the uplands about the demand for labour and to ask the uplands clearing house exchanges to decide upon the share that each village exchange should have in supplying the workers needed. The central uplands and Delta exchanges will then come into touch with each other to decide upon the exact movements of labour from one particular upland village exchange to another deltaic village exchange in such manner that there will be no waste of either money or time or labour in effecting the movements of labour. Thus the losses now incurred by large numbers of workers who go to the wrong places and find that there is no work available will be minimised, while the employers can also be enabled to supply themselves with the necessary amount of labour, without having to pay at times famine wages. By similar steps, the movement of labour from the deltas to the uplands in the harvesting seasons for chillies, cotton, castor and groundnut can be regulated systematically.

This system of exchanges will also be extremely useful in regulating the movements of workers to and fro from the various towns in search of employment. The losses sustained at present by many workers in their ineffective trials to find employment in towns or villages, with whose conditions they are but little acquainted can only be imagined, while the employers on their side are unable to get the most suitable workers. If the exchanges are expected to find the nature of the demand springing from the urban employers, it will be possible for them to place the right workers in the right places, without any waste of time and effort.

Moreover, most of the labour needed by the towns is very casual in its nature. Especially is it so with the urban transport industry which is demanding more and more labour. Most of the rural workers who go to the towns are drafted into transport industry and are thrown into employment market at very unexpected and short intervals. The harbour labour, needed in towns like Madras, Cocanada and Vizagapatam is also mostly casual in its nature. If the economic conditions of these workers are to be improved at all, decasualization of labour must be brought about in such markets for labour and it can be more easily established, if a national system of employment exchanges is established. A careful study of the attempts made by me in the London and Liverpool docks reveals the fact that, difficult though it be, this problem of casual labour can certainly be solved if the waiting lists for workers are developed and if it is made obligatory on the part of the employers to employ the same workers for at least a definite period of time, broken or unbroken, provided the workers have nothing to disqualify them seriously. The working of the labour exchanges and the waiting lists is beset with many difficulties but sooner or later such difficulties will have to be faced. Since the problem of industrial labour is increasing in its seriousness and since the employers in this country are trying to exploit the workers in order to increase their profits, without trying to become more efficient employers, it is better that these institutions are established sooner rather than later.

7 (i) It is surprising how wide-spread is this evil of casual demand for labour in various parts of India and how little recognition and study has it evoked from the social workers and economists.

(ii) Most of the urban labour in the various cities and municipalities of the Madras Presidency is general in character and is able to obtain only casual demand. Therefore there is a very great need for establishing some machinery to bring about decasualization of labour. The dockyard labour of Madras, Tuticorin, Vizagapatam and Cocanada, suffers from the absence of any such machinery and the incidence of this casual and occasional demand for labour is intensified by very low wages which generally rule in the market. Even as regards the labour employed in brass manufacturing, furniture making, pottery trades and general transport, there is over too much of labour always on reserve.

It is very difficult to find any employer who has made efforts to keep a certain number of permanent workers in his employment and to bring about decasualization. In fact, many employers find that it is more profitable for them to keep large reserves of labour waiting for employment in their establishment rather than maintaining waiting lists of workers and thus bringing about the decasualization of labour.

(iv) It may not be so easy to establish compulsory unemployment insurance in most of the industrial undertakings in the near future for the mere reason that in none of our industries in the South have there been developed large scale enterprises. But in agriculture, it is not impossible to bring about a certain amount of insurance for labour against risks of unemployment. As far as farm servants and customary labourers are concerned, there is, indeed, what is known as *Chanamulu* system of payment which is the primitive method of insuring the workers against unemployment. According to this, the ryot sets apart one or two acres of his land for each worker and he agrees to cultivate the land with his own cattle and leaves half or three-fourths of the gross produce from such land for the worker. The worker is expected to pay for whatever outside labour is employed. And his share of the produce is kept by the employer and is given to him in small instalments whenever he is found to be unemployed and therefore in need of such grain. Thus the worker is insured against unemployment and also starvation. If some such system is introduced into the agricultural industry to induce ryots to maintain as many customary workers as possible to make for them the necessary provision against unemployment, much of the misery suffered by large sections of agricultural labour can be removed. Similarly an attempt may be made in the textile industry to organize unemployment insurance with the aid and co-operation of the employers and the workers. But as a preliminary to the establishment of unemployment insurance, a serious attempt at bringing about the decasualization of labour must be made in all the trades and employments in the country.

### III.—Housing.

The housing of workers is everywhere most unsatisfactory. The only management which has tried to make some provision for the housing of its workers is Messrs. Binny & Co., of Madras, which manages the Buckingham and Carnatic Spinning and Weaving Mills. But the spinning and weaving mills at Madura, Coimbatore and other towns have not so far made any attempt to house their workers either in their own specially-built quarters or in rented houses. In the city of Madras there are many thousands of people who are entirely homeless and are obliged to live on the streets, to sleep on the pavements. There are many more people who only manage to improvise small huts or tents by the side of other houses in the Second and First

Line Beach Streets of Madras, and also in the maidans of the Fort. There are yet many more people including fishermen, tradesmen, tailors and transport workers and ricksha-wallas who are obliged to pitch small huts—low roofed, narrow and dingy—in very congested localities after paying annas four to one rupee per mensem to the landlord, in addition to paying the usual city municipal taxes. Even the middle-class people are obliged to suffer mainly for lack of proper housing accommodation in different parts of the city and it is not an uncommon experience for one to find in many places more than 6 families huddled in the same small house with not more than six rooms in it. And if anywhere an epidemic of cholera or small-pox breaks out, it spreads with astonishing speed all over that particular part of the city and causes considerable loss of life.

There is considerable difficulty experienced by the workers and the lower middle class as regards drinking water, latrines and baths. The Corporation of Madras takes very little care to provide these people with free and public taps, baths and latrines. And the provision made is so inadequate that it is made almost useless, since the latrines, baths and taps are very soon made unapproachable for people when crowds wish to make use of them. There are not even sufficient public parks and open spaces in the busy and congested parts of the city to relieve the otherwise miserable housing conditions of these people and to enable the children of the poor to play about and get a chance of breathing pure air. Consequently the effects of slum conditions are very much more keenly felt and more disastrous in their incidence in this country than in England, and other Western Countries. It is no exaggeration to say that similar conditions prevail in almost all the important cities of the south. Conditions are specially bad in Madura and Vizagapatam.

If we turn to the rural areas in which factories are being established in very large numbers, it must be admitted that although no attempts are made by the factory owners at housing their workers, the housing congestion is not a serious problem. But it is a fact that factory managers do not make any attempts at enabling their workers to provide themselves with better houses although it is comparatively cheap and easy for them to do so. It is even found that none of the employers has been enthusiastic about the attempts made by the various Officers of the Labour Department of Madras to form Building Co-operative Societies and to enable the untouchables and others to have their own house sites and houses.

#### V.—Welfare Work.

Recreation grounds for the workers and their children to play games and recover health and an amusement hall in which they can hold night classes, lectures or Bhajanas or dramatic parties are significant by their absence. In fact our workers are obliged to lead an entirely un-inspiring and empty social life. If at all they attempt to introduce a certain amount of amusement and excitement into their otherwise monotonous life, it must be by resorting to the toddy shop or by holding caste conferences and marriages and other festivals at a very great cost. It is really unfair to workers if we blame them for wasting so much of their money on drink and upon social ceremonies since their employers are not prepared to enable them to lead a pleasant and interesting life and there are no social agencies to help them to get themselves better educated, better cultured, and better amused.

33. It will indeed be helpful to our workers if the District Labour Officers are provided with a number of welfare officers to assist them in inducing the employers and the public to provide social amenities to workers.

#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

The Workmen's Compensation Act does not apply to the handloom weavers and agricultural workers and to those of many other industries in which there are not many large scale undertakings or factories. It is a great pity that it should be so, because there are very many accidents experienced by workers in such industries, and it is essential that they should be safeguarded and insured against accidents by extending the provisions of the Act.

55. The number of hours worked by agricultural casual labour is coming down at present to only 6 or 7 hours a day. A day of eight hours has become for casual labour almost an exception in the country parts. But the customary labourers and the farm servants are often made to work for more than 12 hours a day with of course overtime payment, or some special inducement like customary manool. But in the rice and groundnut shelling factories, although the number of hours has been fixed by the Indian Factories' Act, a day of 10 to 12 hours is not unknown. And since the strength of the Factory Inspection Staff is not adequate, it has become possible for very many employers to try to exploit their workers, men, women, and children and to get more



hours of labour out of them than they should for the same wages, in spite of the existence of the Factory Act. But the workers get a holiday only on Sunday, without any pay, and no sort or long period of leave on full pay during the year when they may be expected to go away from their villages or towns to another part of the country, in order to relieve the monotony of their lives. It is necessary that such a period of leave on full pay should be granted to every worker who is employed in any factory in addition to paying a minimum wage for Sunday also. If at all, the Indian workers are to be enabled to feel free from the worry of industrial work for at least a day in the week and for a short period in the year, and if they are not to go in search of employment elsewhere on Sundays and other holidays, they must be granted at least this privilege. In fact, what is happening to-day is continuous absenteeism of workers generally to compensate themselves against the long hours of work and the want of a period of leave at sufficient intervals. Indian workers are so very much unaccustomed to continuous stress of industrial work for fairly long periods that they prefer to take leave from time to time even without giving any notice and thereby losing their wages, to continue to work with the hope of obtaining higher wages. There seems to be a tendency in certain quarters to decry this particular habit of Indian workers, but such people do not seem to have realised the necessity and the utility of brief periods of rest for Indian workers who are under-paid and consequently under-nourished and badly housed, and who therefore need as much rest as possible.

#### X.—Women and Children.

Women and children of all ages are employed as casual agricultural labourers, in the transplanting and reaping of paddy crop. Women are employed in the cities to pull and push heavily-loaded carts and to carry from one part of the city to another, different commodities including furniture and in laying out and repairing roads, etc. They are not provided with shoes or special uniform or head-dress and there seems to be no restriction upon the hours of work since they are paid by piece and not by time. The domestic workers in the cities are mostly women and there is no organisation to protect their interests. Women are employed by the municipalities and the Corporation of Madras on monthly or piece-rate basis in constructing and repairing their roads, in cleaning the latrines and in providing water for sprinkling upon roads. These workers are very poorly paid. This treatment from the public corporations tantamounts to unnecessary exploitation of this weak class of labour. As for children, they find casual employment as messengers, carriers of loads, vendors of vegetables and cheap commodities and also as domestic servants. Although their number is not inconsiderable, no public or private agency has thought it fit to try to look after their interests and to provide for them a way out of their blind-alley employments and to educate them in order to fit them for better and nobler and more paying employments. It is really heart-rending to find large numbers of women and children being exploited in a merciless manner by public and private employers in different parts of the presidency.

#### XII.—Wages.

96. Almost all the mill workers in the cotton spinning and weaving mills are paid less than Rs. 25 per mensem per head. Even the workers who are paid on piece-rate basis are able to earn at best only Rs. 25 per mensem. Most of the women who are usually employed as rovers are able to get a monthly wage of Rs. 15 only. It is largely true to say that the wages paid in the Madras mills are at least 50 per cent. lower than those prevailing in Bombay mills. This difference is due not so much to the inefficiency of workers as to their lower bargaining capacity.

If we turn to agriculture, we find that the workers are able to earn on the whole very much less. Although for two short periods of 30 days' duration in all, the male workers are able to earn Rs. 22½ to Rs. 30 per mensem, both men and women workers are able to get a wage of only Rs. 12 to 20 per mensem.

97. The wages paid to agricultural labour have risen by more than 150 per cent. in the last 30 years and by more than 250 per cent. in the last 70 years. The wages of industrial workers have risen but slowly and the rise has not been more than 100 per cent. in the last 20 years.

One favourable thing is of course the fall in general level of prices of food commodities, while the wages paid to labour have remained unaltered, if not improved. This has enabled workers to derive more real satisfaction and value for their wages than is indicated by the money value of their earnings. They therefore stand to lose considerably if the exchange rate is lowered from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 4d.

105. I think the time has come to make an attempt at fixing the minimum wage rates—time and piece work. As a preliminary for establishing legal minimum wage, the proposed Economic Enquiry Boards must carry out detailed enquiries into the

wages paid, method of agreement prevalent between the employers and the employees. If such a minimum wage is fixed, large numbers of workers who are to-day suffering from the weakness of their bargaining capacity will be benefited.

143. Government receives information from the factory managers concerning the number and kind of workers employed, the wages fixed or piece-rate paid to workers, the number of hours put in and the horse power of the engines used. In view of the fact that many of the factory managers are unintelligent and untrained, much of this information is unintelligible while many managers do not send it regularly. The factory inspectors neither have the time nor the inclination to collect and compile such information. Therefore Government is entirely at the mercy of the clerks of the managers for its information.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to attach much importance to the accuracy of the information thus sent up to Government. In addition to their inefficiency and carelessness, there is the anxiety of the managers to give as favourable an account as possible about the wages paid and the hours of work put in.

144. Statistics concerning the power used, machinery installed, different kinds of workers employed, the wages paid, the hours of work extracted, welfare activities of the management, can be best gathered, if a large number of well-trained social workers is entertained and if every factory inspector is made to undergo the necessary training in social work and if the staff is considerably strengthened. Then it would be possible to check the periodical information received from the management and to prepare comparative information on a national scale.

145. Mr. Findlay Shirras, has while Director of Statistics in Bombay, conducted a detailed survey of the budgets of workers in the City of Bombay. But no other attempt has been made on such a scale in any other part of India. I have myself conducted detailed enquiries into the social and economic conditions of the workers in Singareni mines, the Cotton Spinning Mills of Coimbatore and Madura, the slums of Madras, the hand-loom weavers of the South, the agricultural workers of seven districts in the Madras Presidency. But since such enquiries were made in any particular locality only once, it is not possible to develop a study of comparative conditions at different periods. Such an attempt is well worth making, in order to gauge the rise or fall in the cost of living, the wages earned and the incidence of unemployment upon workers.

145. (ii) I have made a special study of cost of living of workers in every centre selected by me. Certain very important results have emerged out of my enquiries.

(1) There has been a great progress in the conditions of labour in the last 40 years.

(2) The wages paid to ordinary agricultural labour have risen by more than 150 per cent. in the same period.

(3) The cost of standard of living has risen by more than 200 per cent. while the standard of comfort can be said to have risen by at least 100 per cent.

(4) The maintenance of agricultural workers of Guntur District costs slightly more than that of the hand-loom weaver on the margin of standard of living.

(5) Both the agricultural workers of the deltas and the hand-loom weavers all over the Presidency are under-fed, although the former are better off than the latter.

(6) The hand-loom weavers and farm workers of the Ceded Districts, i.e., on the Deccan plateau, are very much worse off than those of the deltas.

(7) The workers employed even in such small factories as rice mills are better paid than the field workers, and the mill workers in the cotton ginning and spinning mills are very much better off.

(8) The mill workers of the cities are able to spend more money on luxuries and miscellaneous expenditure than the rural workers of all kinds.

(9) The evil of drink is prevalent among both the rural and urban workers. But whereas the rural workers go in for toddy and arrack only occasionally, the urban workers need it as a daily item. We must however admit that the high-caste Hindu workers of the country side very rarely drink, while many of their urban brethren are not so scrupulous. On the whole, the hand-loom weavers and other semi-urban artisans must be considered to be wedded to drink.

(10) Expenditure upon tobacco, *pansupari* or opium forms a considerable portion of the family expenditure of the working classes of the South.

(11) The expenditure upon clothing has increased by about 100 per cent. in the last 40 years, since the standard of comfort and decency in clothing has risen very appreciably.

(12) The housing conditions of workers have also been improved, although not to the same extent. The standard of housing has certainly risen even amongst the untouchables, although their poverty prevents them from having decent houses. The housing congestion in towns has considerably increased in this period.

(13) The health of the workers has, on the whole, been undermined by housing congestion, under-nourishment and frequent starvation.

(14) There is now a new desire amongst the rank and file of workers to improve their lot. The introduction of Christianity, the activities of the missionaries—Christian and Hindu—the anti-untouchability movement, the Gandhi spirit, all have had their share in awakening the workers.

(15) The general sanitary habits and surroundings of workers have not yet shown any great sign of improvement. The various municipalities in whose areas most of the factory workers and artisans live, have not yet realised their responsibilities. None of the municipal authorities has thought of a housing scheme for workers, special schools—day, night, adult—special lavatories and baths for workers on a sufficiently large scale.

146. But if information on these and other lines is to be gathered on a sufficiently large scale, special Economic Enquiry Boards should be organized, on some such lines as those sketched out by the Economic Enquiry Committee appointed by the Government of India in 1925. It shall be the duty of such Boards to collect information about the workers of select trades and places for a number of years so that it will be possible in course of time to develop such studies as those conducted by Prof. Bowley to judge whether poverty has diminished or increased.

In conclusion I would like to lay stress upon the following few reforms :—

(1) I must say that the hand-loom weavers of the Telugu Districts, whom I represent, are strongly in favour of the establishment of Trade Boards and standard minimum wage. They are also in favour of the present exchange rate since they get their yarn cheaply. They are anxious that special protection is needed for them and therefore the import duties upon higher counts of yarn should be lowered, since most of such yarn is consumed by their industry.

(2) Establishment of minimum wage.

(3) Organization of Labour Exchanges, Trade Boards.

(4) Establishment of Decasualisation Schemes and Unemployment Insurance Schemes.

(5) Introduction of Fair Wages Clause in public contracts.

(6) Compulsory payment for labour on Sundays and for a short period of leave in a year.

(7) Provision of special uniform, shoes, or head dress for workers while at work.

(8) Free provision of tea and tiffin at midday.

(9) Construction of sheds for workers to rest under, big enough lavatories, baths.

(10) Provision by the employers and municipalities, housing for workers, parks for their children, schools, entertainments, etc., for working classes as a whole.

(11) Strengthening the Factory Inspection Staff by appointing more officers, by introducing social workers.

(12) Extending the operations of the Factory Act to workshops in which more than 10 workers are employed continuously for a year; with suitable provisions to avoid evasions.

(13) Establishing Trade Boards on a national scale to protect the interests of the sweated workers, in the cottage and other industries.

(14) Permanent or temporary Arbitration or Conciliation Boards or Committees.

(15) Government must establish workshops in which workers are given technical training.

(16) Rural labour, including the agricultural and cottage workers, must be assured of adequate representation in the Conference of the International Labour Office and also in the next Assembly.

✓ P.W.D. WORKERS' UNION, MADRAS.

#### Preface.

This union was organized in the year 1926, when there was a widespread fear among the workers that the contract system, which has been causing great inconvenience and trouble, would be extended in the shops. Though the workshop and the stores attached to it belong to the Government and are administered by them

the wages and the working conditions of the employees have been thoroughly unsatisfactory, as this report will show. The necessity and the incentive for the workers to combine themselves and agitate for redress have always existed. Even in the beginning more than 500 workers joined the union. It was registered under the Trade Union Act of 1926 in the year 1928.

### I.—Recruitment.

Most of the workers belong to the city and its suburbs. About 25 per cent. of them come from the surrounding villages within a radius of 30 miles. Workers from the villages have joined the shops on account of the obvious unprofitableness of agricultural labour. Contact with the villages is not great, workers going to villages only during holidays for festivals, marriages, etc.

There is no definite system of recruitment. Applications are invited for vacancies by announcements on the notice-board of the workshop, and when candidates appear in person before the shop authorities they are examined and appointed. The selection does not necessarily depend upon the qualifications or skill of the candidate. For the supervisory posts which carry higher wages outsiders are brought in when there are no qualified and capable men available in the shop. To some extent senior employees are also appointed to the supervisory grades. Even this is not done on the basis of seniority and service. There are employees of over 25 years' of service whose claims for places in the supervisory grades have been neglected in favour of men of less service and experience. The absence of grades and time scales is mainly responsible for this deplorable state of affairs. A number of educated young men are trained as apprentices in the workshop, but they are seldom given appointments after the period of apprenticeship. A number of young men have been working in the shop as volunteers. But they are not absorbed into the permanent vacancies when they occur. It is thought that the constituting of an independent committee for recruitment, consisting of officers and representatives of the employees, nominated by the union would minimize the irregularities. Selection must be based on the qualifications of candidates, and the claims of the sons of employees should be shown due consideration.

7. The unemployment in the country is great, but no definite statistics are available. When there is not sufficient work in the shop a turn system used to be introduced and the workmen were paid only for the days on which they actually worked. No wages are paid for holidays which are granted very generously to the employees. They therefore do not get any wages for Sundays and other holidays. It is not possible for them to engage themselves in any other jobs during those off-days, and the distress caused by the inadequacy of the net amount earned by them in a month may better be imagined than described, especially as the daily wages of most of the workmen are below 12 annas. Work is also given away to the contractors, who get it done by their own men. The services of these men are dispensed with by the contractors when they demand higher wages. Works which could be turned out in the workshop are also given out to the European firms such as Messrs. Massey, Binny, etc. If the work is done in the shop it could provide work for some more men.

(iv) There is no provision at present. Some scheme should be introduced. The sooner it is done the better it would be.

8. (iii) The workers can ill afford to absent themselves unless it is absolutely necessary as absence would involve loss of wages. The workers in this shop have no casual, privilege, sick, or any other leave, and absence even with or without permission is of no importance. On account of this the extent of absenteeism might be a little more in this shop than elsewhere. The main causes of absenteeism are personal illness, illness of near relatives, and necessary social and religious observances.

### II.—Staff Organization.

10. There is a general superintendent for the whole workshop, and he is assisted by an assistant superintendent. Below them there is a general foreman who exercises supervision over all the shops. All the big shops are in charge of foremen. Smaller shops are in charge of chargemen and maistries. It is desired that men of service and efficiency should be promoted to the vacancies in the supervisory grades, and that they should not be filled up with candidates from outside. Educated apprentices trained in the workshop should be preferred. Opportunities should be given for capable workmen to qualify themselves for higher posts.

14. (i) The time worked is recorded by the timekeeper, and is supervised by the departmental and general foremen. There is some dissatisfaction among the workers in this matter. They feel that by the removing of the box into which the late-comers have to drop their tickets, before the lapse of prescribed time, the timekeeper is unnecessarily giving trouble to some workmen. It is also felt that there is room for favouritism on the part of the timekeeper. Some better means of time-keeping is therefore suggested. When the workers work under the contractors, time is kept by the latter, and this gives room for a good deal of irregularities. It is only when the workers draw their wages for the month that they are able to know the amounts cut off for late attendance, etc.

(ii) Wages are paid to the workers by the assistant general superintendent.

15. (i) Contractors act as intermediaries in this shop, and it is one of the outstanding grievances of the workers. It is desired that the system, which is causing great inconvenience and difficulties to the workers, should be abolished as early as possible. In order to set at rest the fears of the workers a promise should be made to them that the administration is prepared to abolish the system altogether. About one-third of the work is done on the contract system, which exists in two forms, viz.—(a) A piece of work is allotted to the contractor, who employs his own men to do the work. The material and the machinery are placed at the disposal of the contractor. (b) A piece of work is given to the contractor, who is required to complete it within an allotted time and for a fixed amount. He is provided with the men (from the shop workers), machinery and materials. The contractor is paid the stipulated amount generally on completion of the work. He is also entitled to claim a part of it when the work has made considerable progress. He is expected to pay the men for the period they work under him, but he does not do so regularly. The men are kept waiting for long for the payment, and are thus subjected to a good deal of suffering. They are also driven into the clutches of money-lenders. On account of this system, if a worker is employed for 15 days under the contract system and for the other 15 days in the normal system he is not able to draw his salary for the month in a lump sum. The consequences of this are very distressing. The contractor is expected to take as his remuneration what is left to him after the payment is made to the workers for their labour. The profits are generally substantial, and even grossly disproportionate to the trouble taken by the contractor—which is very little. Some of the present contractors, it is said, prefer their present situations to even responsible and remunerative posts in the workshop. If the work is got done without the intervention of the contractors the profits accruing to them at present would go to increase the profits of the workshop, which might influence the administration to consider the rights of the employees for better wages, better working conditions, and other facilities.

It is claimed by the administration that they have to resort to this system, with all its defects, in order to cope with urgent or extraordinary work to be turned out. They therefore claim that the contract system to some extent or other is bound to exist side by side with the general system. The representatives of the union have had discussions with the authorities on this matter, but they have not been convinced with the arguments put forward by them. Day by day the amount of work done under this system seems to be increasing, though the authorities have assured the union that there is absolutely no likelihood of the system being introduced for the whole shop.

Under the latter system no new hands are employed. The contractor sets the men given to him on the work and supervises them. Very often even the foremen of the shop supervise the work and the contractors are not present there throughout the day. Under the circumstances we fail to understand the argument put forward by the administration for the necessity of the contractor coming as an intermediary. They contend that the workmen, left to themselves would take longer time, and as such the required work may not be turned out in time. They assume that the workmen are slack and indifferent to their work when there is none nearby to goad them. This assumption is unwarranted and amounts to a serious reflection on the integrity and honesty of the workers who have often volunteered to undertake the work and finish it within the time allotted to the contractor. It is further contended that as the shop cannot afford to have sufficient numbers of supervising staff for coping with emergent and extraordinary work the contractor is brought in only as a temporary supervisor. We are ready to appreciate the difficulties of the administration. We suggest that competent and senior workmen might be placed in something like a "selection grade" for supervisors' posts, and that from among the list one or two, as the case may be, may be appointed as a temporary foreman to supervise such extraordinary work and see that it is finished within the prescribed time. This device would, besides helping the administration to get rid of the unpopular contract system, would also increase the prospects of the workmen and the profits of the Government in conducting the shop. The following are some of the troubles and inconveniences to which the workers are subjected under this system.

Irregular payment of wages, sweating and overwork, lack of appreciation of efficiency and the consequent retarding of promotions, the break in service, the loss to the administration which might be utilized for increasing the wages of the workmen, the difference between the treatments given to the worker by the contractors and the official supervisors, etc.

The feelings of the workers on this matter are very acute, and there have been strikes and lock-outs on account of it. There was a lock-out of half a day recently, and as a result of the negotiations the general superintendent has promised to abolish the system if the workers convince him of the troubles and difficulties to which they are subjected to under it. The president of the union has already explained to the superintendent those difficulties and inconveniences in person during the interview which he had. It is also desired that no work which could be turned out in the workshop should be given to any private firms, as this practice once introduced may gradually extend and jeopardise the interests of the employees of the shop.

16. (iii) Most of the workers reside in rented houses. With their inadequate income they are hardly able to get even a single room in the working-class areas for the rent which they could afford. It is desired that the Government should construct quarters for them. For those drawing Rs. 30 and below no house rent should be levied. For those whose wages for the month are Rs. 30 and above 6 per cent. of their wages or an amount equivalent to 5 per cent. interest on the money invested in the building of the quarters, whichever is less, may be collected. Some workers, especially among those who come from the villages, may own houses of their own.

17. No provision at present. Any satisfactory scheme would be most welcome.

#### IV.—Health.

24. There is no special hospital attached to the workshop for the exclusive use of the workers. But the necessity for one is keenly felt, as they are not able to get prompt and proper attention from the Government and Corporation hospitals. It is desired that a hospital exclusively intended for the workers should be established with trained midwives and lady doctors for attending on the wives of the workers.

30. (i) No system obtains at present. Some scheme must be immediately devised. India being a tropical country and owing to the lack of nourishment fevers and bowel complaints are common and workers who live from hand to mouth and who have no leave whatever with pay, are obliged to experience great difficulties.

(ii) A system where the Government contributed two-thirds and the employee one-third will work satisfactorily.

(iii) Wherever western medicines are not suitable Unani, Ayurvedic, or Siddha system of treatment should be given.

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

34. Nil. The tiffin sheds provided within the workshop for taking the principal meal of the day have no sufficient ventilation. The space is not sufficient. In the matter of sanitary condition, space, ventilation, etc., there is much scope for improvement.

36. Nil. A night school for the workers and a primary school for their children very near the workplace will be very useful to the workers.

37. This shop is notorious for the absence of any provision for old age and premature retirement of the workmen. There is neither a provident fund scheme nor gratuity scheme, though this is a Government workshop. Workmen have to walk out on superannuation and entrust themselves to God. There are some workers who have honourably retired after long service, but are practically in the streets. This is one of the outstanding grievances of the workmen which should receive immediate attention. Either pension or gratuity should be given—the choice must be left to the individual employee. For those who are compelled to retire on account of health or other reasons before reaching superannuation, a proportionate pension or gratuity should be allowed. In short, rules governing Government employees should be made applicable to the employees of the workshop also.

38. Nil. But the workers intend organizing a co-operative society under the auspices of the union, and desire to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of the administration. A co-operative credit society is a necessity and would be most welcome.

### VI. Education.

#### 42. Effect of education on standard of living and industrial efficiency of workers.

The union by its propaganda has increased the efficiency of the workers. More educational facilities, if given, will still further increase the industrial efficiency of the workers. For education would create a deep love for the better standard of living which in turn will increase the efficiency. In the higher grades of workers education has undoubtedly encouraged better living and efficiency in work. In the lower grades the increase in efficiency is not so marked, because no welfare work, including education, has yet touched them.

Compulsory primary education and greater facilities for secondary and vocational education of all lower grade employees will create a labour force with greater potentiality and aptitude for work.

### VIII. Workmen's Compensation Act.

51. (i) Extent of use. The Workmen's Compensation Act is a beneficial measure, but, in some cases due to the ignorance of the workers of the provisions of the Act, claims of compensation decided by the Administration are sometimes found to be inadequate. The Act has induced the Administration to take measures of safety to avoid accidents.

(ii) Comparison with the extent of possible claims, etc.

The workers are not averse to compulsory insurance against accidents. But the insufficiency of their pay prevents them from agitating for the same. The authorities do not insure nor do the individual workers seem to avail themselves of those benefits from the insurance companies.

52. It would be desirable to extend the Workmen's Compensation Act to the subordinate supervising staff.

The Workmen's Compensation Act at present applies to accidents only. It must be extended to the industrial diseases.

53. In the machinery of the administration for the workmen's compensation, the union must be represented.

### IX. Hours.

55. Daily 8 hours and 46 hours in a week (only six hours on Saturday). The continuous work for six hours on Saturday should be done away with and the men should be made to work for only 4 hours, this should not however affect the wages which are paid for Saturday. When necessary the workers are called upon to work overtime within two hours. This is not however compulsory. The rates paid for overtime work on working days are the same as in the case of ordinary work—the workers getting for one hour overtime work wages for one hour only. In the railway workshops, and even in private companies, overtime wages are paid at one fourth of the usual rate. For Sunday work double wages are paid in some establishments. But in this workshop only 8 hours' wages are allowed for 6 hours' work on Sunday. Rates for overtime on Sundays should be double the usual rates, because a day's rest in a week is indispensable to the worker.

56. Days worked per week—6 days or 46 hours (only 6 hours on Saturdays).

60. (i) There is no interval in relation to fatigue. One hour is allowed between 11-30 a.m. and 12-30 p.m. for meal time. This is found to be inadequate and should be increased by at least half-an-hour more.

61. One day in a week and two hours on Saturday. The workers however do not get wages for the off day. Even the bonus for the two hours on Saturday is cut off if a worker absents himself for one day in the week, for late attendance on any day above ten minutes or late attendance of even a few minutes for three days.

### XII. Wages.

96. The minimum rate of wages prevailing in the workshop is 8 annas per diem. It is understood that a few are employed for even below that rate. Maximum is only Rs. 1 14 annas. There are very few people who draw that amount or more. The following grades are, it is understood, sanctioned by the Government but they are not in vogue.

(i) 9 annas to 12 annas, (ii) 10 annas to Re. 1, (iii) Re. 1 to Rs. 1 8 annas (iv) Rs. 1 8 annas to Rs. 2, (v) Rs. 2 to Rs. 3.

Workers are indiscriminately recruited to the grades prevailing. The grades shown above not being in vogue, workers do not get regular increments. There are many who have not received increments at all for years together. Promotion is not given on the basis of efficiency or service. It is desired that the lowest minimum wage should be fixed at, at least Re. 1 per diem, and suitable scales of pay and grades should be introduced. Workmen should automatically get their increments at the end of every year if their services are satisfactory. When the workmen have served for more than three years at the top of a grade they should be promoted to the higher grades. For promotion, seniority and length of service should be taken into consideration. When compared to other workshops like the railway workshops the wages paid here are definitely low. There is not any great difference between the wages of the agricultural labourers in the surrounding villages and the wages of the employees in this shop.

97. (i) and (ii) The increase is not appreciable and is certainly not proportionate to the rise of prices, cost of living, etc.

(iii) The cost of living, post-War, is decidedly higher than that of the pre-War rates. The wages have not been increasing proportionately.

100. Already explained. The contractors do not pay the wages regularly. It is desired that the very contract system should be abolished.

101. Wages are not fixed by negotiation. They are fixed arbitrarily by the administration without any relation to the cost of living and the standard of life expected of that class of workers.

102. The wages for overtime on working days are the same as the normal rates.

104. No remarks to offer. No great changes have occurred in the rates of wages and labour supply remains constant.

105. Minimum wages must be fixed by a Wages Board set up on the lines of the National Wages Board in England. They should be based on efficient standard of living. The Union is of opinion that a sum of Rs. 30 a month will constitute the minimum living wage under existing level of prices. Minimum wages in regard to different occupations—semi-skilled and skilled should be based on the efficiency of the worker, his qualifications, his status, etc.

106. Deductions. Fining is not very much prevalent. Deductions are made from salaries of the two hours bonus on Saturdays if the worker absents himself with or without permission for even half a day in the week.

The amount collected is not at present utilized for any scheme for the welfare of the workers as none exists. It is desired that this amount should be constituted into a separate fund and administered by a body with union representatives for welfare work such as hospitals, schools, institutes, etc.

107. (i), (ii) and (iii) The muster rolls are closed on the first Saturday of every month and the wages are paid six days after that. The date of payment therefore varies for every month. The workers have been agitating in vain for the closing of the muster roll on a particular date and the payment of the wages on a fixed date every month. Payment must be made within seven days of each calendar month. Legislation if necessary must be availed of.

(iv) When the persons to whom the wages are due are not traced and no claim is set up for such wages for a period of three years such unclaimed wage should be credited to special account and they must be administered for staff welfare work.

108. Indebtedness. No definite information is available. But it can be presumed that most of the workers are in debt on account of the insufficiency of their wages to make both ends meet.

109. No scheme is in operation at present but will be welcome if introduced after due consultation with the employees.

110. Annual or other leave. The workers are not allowed any kind of leave with pay.

111. No remarks to offer, but it is desired that the contractors should be influenced to pay fair wages to their workmen.

### XIII.—Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

112 and 113. No definite information, but we consider that the Indian worker will be certainly as efficient as his comrades in the west provided he is given sufficient opportunity. The efficiency and the skill of the worker and his sense of responsibility have increased owing to very many reasons.

114. Peculiar conditions of service and bad climate affect the physique and health of the workers. Regarding other factors no definite information is available.



**XIV.—Trade Combinations.**

117. Nil. There is an organization of the employees known as the P.W.D. Workers' Union and this memorandum is submitted on behalf of it.

118. (ii) The workers take a greater interest in their duties than before and consequently punishments and corruption have decreased.

119. The union being in its infancy is not having any benefit schemes for its members. But a co-operative society and a death or retirement benefit fund are under contemplation. The union's activities are at present confined to the ventilation of the workers' grievances, both individual and general, requesting the administration for redress and negotiating with it for the same, etc. It is also interesting itself in anti-drink campaigns, social service, etc.

120. (i) History of the union will be found in the introductory remarks.

(ii) The union has averted many strikes and lockouts. Even this month an unpleasant situation was avoided on the intervention of the union.

(iii) The administration is just beginning to show some sympathy towards the union.

121. (i) The act is utilized by the workers.

(ii) and (iii) No remark to offer. All registered trade unions should be recognized by the administrations.

122. (i) No recognized methods.

**XV.—Industrial Disputes.**

123. This union has experienced both strikes and lockouts.

124. (i) No recourse to arbitrary machinery in the past was made.

(iv) No such machinery exists at present.

(v) Opportunities are meagre. In many cases they are merely formal.

(vi) Institutions as industrial courts, trades board, joint industrial councils, will be beneficial. There are no special conditions which will make their establishment impossible in India. They will aid the growth of the trade union spirit in the country.

125. Not necessary.

126. The Government is indifferent.

### ✓ THE CORPORATION WORKSHOP LABOUR UNION, MADRAS.

The union was started in 1919, of which all the workmen of the workshop are members. An immense good has come to the labourers because of the union, yet the following grievances are to be redressed :—

(1) Most of the labourers are coming to the workshop from different places ranging from 2 to 8 miles away. They ought to be inside the workshop by 6 a.m. If any one of them happens to be a little late he is heavily fined. The amount collected thus goes to the purse of the employers.

(2) There is no hope for employees of getting permanent jobs for them. We do not get even 25 days' work a month. We may say that they work only eight months in a year—for the remaining four months they are employed occasionally. This affects seriously the daily life of the poor labourers. They get a monthly salary of Rs. 18, with which they have to conduct their families. Being unable to make both ends meet in their domestic life, they have to borrow money on heavy interest which they are unable to repay along with the interest thereon.

(3) With regard to overtime, workmen are paid only the exact wages of the hours they work but not extra wages for such time.

(4) Newly appointed men are not entitled to casual leave. Such leave is granted only to those who have worked all the days of a year for three years continuously. All labourers should be entitled to get privilege leave without any consideration of any kind.

(5) We are not given the privilege of taking sick leaves. Even on festival days we are not granted leave and it is granted only on loss of pay.

(6) Working hours are long; we have to work seven hours a day. Time allotted for mid-day meals is not sufficient. Out of eight hours in a day we should have six hours' work and two hours' rest at mid-day.

(7) We are not provided with a place to take our mid-day meals. Now we are to take it in the hot sun. A convenient place for that is absolutely necessary.

(8) There must be arrangements for the education of the labourers and their children at the expense of the employers.

(9) As the wages of the labourers are very low they must be provided with houses at the expense of the capitalists. In case it is inconvenient for the employers to do so, they must pay the labourers house rent. Now the workmen feel much difficulty to allot a sum of Rs. 5 or Rs. 7 for the house rent from the scanty salary they get.

(10) Permanent employees must be given provident fund gratuity. Those who have worked 30 years should be given pension.

(11) Unlike the present system, gratuity should be paid within 15 days from the day a man retires from service.

(12) Labourers must get seats in the legislative bodies. Every labourer 20 years old must get his franchise.

This report is submitted on behalf of the welfare of the labourers in general and to get our grievances redressed in particular.

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Mr. NADIRSHAW COWASJEE WADIA, MANAGER, THE NEW COTTON GIN AND PRESS FACTORY, TIRUPPUR, DISTT., COIMBATORE.

At the very outset I should like to say a few words about the Bombay mill-hands, for though I am not in any way connected with the Bombay labour, yet I am a native of Bombay Province, and naturally I would be interested in affairs of that Province, and secondly, having lived in Bombay for a few years, in Bombay mill area proper, I had enough opportunities to study and observe the mill hands' modes of living.

1. *Comparison and Contrast between Labour proper and Educated Labour Class, alias, Clerical Masses and/or Middle-class people.*—Before saying anything, I, in the very first instance, very much deplore that your enquiry is only confined to the labour proper only, and no efforts have been made to enquire into the grievances and miseries of clerical masses of India, who, too, strictly speaking form labour class with slight different functions, and whose worries, grievances and miseries, would be regularly more than those of the labour proper. To my opinion, labour proper earn quite sufficient, rather more than needed, according to their modes of every-day life and living, and their hue and cry, general strikes and lightning strikes, are regularly meaningless and simply aiming at extorting more and more money to have more and more luxury. As they went on getting more money, they never cared to make any solid provision for their own future, but went on passing more and more luxuriant lives; so much so, that a mill hand used to eat, drink, move and do almost anything and everything better than a clerk would do. Happy is the man whose needs are but few, but when a man is addicted to luxury his needs would constantly develop and increase with each and every day, and when he finds himself unable to cope with his thus increased needs, he would think of going on strike to extort more money to satisfy his luxurious habits; and especially there is no limit to such luxury of mill hands since the last ten years. This is the tendency, in short, of mill hands, and this is *the only reason* of so frequent strikes.

2. *Workmen's Co-operative Societies.*—Though above I have said so much about the wages secured and earned by the mill hands, etc., etc., still, however, I would say that a man who never desires to see the improved economic conditions of his country's labour, is indeed, not a human. Such an idea is neither humane nor logical. A country can indeed never prosper unless and until economic conditions of the labour are improved, and as such I would suggest that workmen's co-operative societies should be necessarily introduced and opened not only in every province, but in every district and taluq, whereby the workmen may get the sense of economy. Such co-operative societies, besides executing their usual functions, should become and prove, a medium and source of cultivating economy, and thereby the sense of responsibility amongst their members, for diligence and economy only can make even a menial independent by bestowing upon him happiness. One anna coin is a very small sum indeed, but as many such one anna coins could be saved as possible if every possible care is exercised while spending every such one anna pieces. If a man thinks not, and does not exercise due care, while spending one anna pieces, it is but quite natural that rupee coins would be similarly spent away. Hence, as said above, if the workmen's co-operative societies were to become a source of bestowing upon the labour the sense of duty either by propaganda work or by some other attractive schemes, they would indeed prove a long way in the interest of workers.

3. *Wages should be paid not in cash, but in cash and in kind.*—I am of opinion that the workers should not be paid fat wages in cash, for they being ignorant of the proper use of money, squander away most of the money illegally. The only best form of pleasure of a worker is drinking, and so far he has money in hand, however much, he would naturally waste in drinking and in such other ways, and the same old story of the miserable conditions amongst the workers would continue till age long period. I would, therefore, take liberty to suggest that a worker should be paid partly in cash and partly in kind. As for instance, a man who gets Rs. 50 per month might be paid about Rs. 20 in cash and about Rs. 30 in kind. By Rs. 30 in kind, I mean that in the course of a month the man should get Rs. 30 by way of having proportionately cheaper—say at cost price—rations, cloths and clothes from a mill he is working in. Of course, this would involve the mill management to maintain a depot of usual and every day rations, cloths and clothes; and to keep regular accounts as to what amount every worker under them has got the benefit of the said depot, so that the balance left out of the total amount earned by him might be paid in cash. It should be made incumbent on the part of every worker that he should necessarily take the advantage of such a depot of the mill he is working in to the minimum extent of 60 per cent. of his total monthly income. By so doing, a worker himself, his wife and children, would get proper and sufficient food to eat, and clothes to put on, and just limited money for other domestic purposes. Since a small sum would be received in cash, no cash or proportionately smaller sums would be wasted in drinking. The mill management shall have to some extent the advantage of having their own workers with them only under such systems of payments, and the general tendency of a worker of leaving one mill and joining another very often would be, to a great extent, curtailed, for every worker, wherever he might be, by virtue of such a system of payment would find himself happy and content at a place he is in.

4. *Weekly advances and settlement of pay on the first week of the next month.*—The general tendency of a labourer is to spend what all he has got in his hands. Instead of giving a labourer Rs. 10 every fortnight, it would be in his interest if he is given Rs. 5 every week. By giving Rs. 10 every fortnight the whole sum of Rs. 10 he would spend away within the first week only, and for the second week it would naturally go hard for him, under which circumstances he would be tempted to borrow some money, and thereby cultivate the habit of incurring debts. A labourer generally has not the good and enough sense first to buy for the whole fortnight every-day necessaries, and even if he has sense enough to think, he would not be inclined and willing to do so, thinking that there is no reason why he should worry for the week which is not yet come, or is at a distance; or that for the next week, in the next week only he would see. On the other hand, if he is given Rs. 5 every week, he would spend that sum during that week, for he well knows that for the next week he would again get another equal sum. He would indeed try to form a proper weekly budget, and he would be much better by having Rs. 5 weekly than by having Rs. 10 fortnightly. I have been connected with labour since the last five years and a half, and this is the conclusion from my personal experience.

Hence, weekly advances, partly in cash and partly in kind, should be made compulsory in each and every mill, and the cost of such advances should not exceed two-thirds of a man's would-be monthly pay. The balance of the pay should be settled every first Sunday of the next month. So the whole scheme would work out thus:—Supposing there are four weeks in a month, on one week the labourers would get the balance of their pay of the previous month, and on the remaining three weeks they would get advances to the extent of two-thirds of their would-be monthly total wages. This two-thirds of their wages should be equally divided in three weeks, but when there are five weeks in a month, this two-thirds will be equally divided into four weeks. As for example, a man with an aggregate income of Rs. 30 per month shall get Rs. 7, Rs. 7, Rs. 6, in cash and in kind means, say, Rs. 4 in kind and Rs. 3 in cash and so on; and the balance of Rs. 10 on the first week means Sunday of the next month. When there are five weeks means five Sundays in a month, the very man would get Rs. 5, Rs. 5, Rs. 5, Rs. 5, say, Rs. 3 in kind and Rs. 2 in cash, and the balance on the pay-day.

All such advances should be on Sundays, and all the labourers should attend the mills to receive their weekly advances and/or final payments on Sundays. This would perhaps again involve additional work for the mill management, but in the interest of their workers they should volunteer to do the same. I am quite confident that this system of payment would go a long way to keep the labourers contented and would improve their economic conditions.

5. *Four weeks a month and thirteen months a year.*—As is universally acknowledged the standardization scheme and the stabilization scheme are found quite necessary to be introduced, but some cut is feared in so doing. In my opinion, with such schemes coming into force, the Government should make some huge changes in the calendars

and fix 28 days in a month ; means exactly four weeks in every month and 13 months in a year. This would go to console to a great extent the labour generally, who would be able to make out, know and count and verify their own account as received from the mills ; and the educated labour class (middle class people and/or clerical masses) particularly.

6. *Factory Act should be incumbent in the Native States.*—Factory Act must be necessarily introduced and made a regular compulsion in each and every state. This would not only relieve labourers in the states, where generally they have to work for 16 hours at a stretch every day, and that too without any overtime wages, and where the question of the employment of the women and children bears no consideration and significance ; but also the undue advantage which the industrial concerns in the state enjoy over those in the British India would be to a great extent checked and put a stop to. The Factory Act to be thus introduced should be on the same footing as the one in the British India.

7. *Slight increase in hours of work and a slight decrease in the period of rest so far as Gin and Press Factories are concerned.*—The very same provisions of the Factory Act apply to the gin and press factories as to the textile mills. As everybody is aware, the textile mills run for the whole year, whereas everywhere and anywhere gin and press factories run for a certain part of the year only. Under the circumstances I suggest that so far as gin and press factories and such similar seasonal factories are concerned, eleven hours a day should be fixed and allowed, not only because they are seasonal but also because such factories have to cope with pressing demands during the season when the factories run in full swing for a certain period in the season. It would also be in the interest of the labourers of this particular trade who are mostly cultivators and/or employed by the cultivators, inasmuch as they would be able to attend the field work quite in time.

Again, I would suggest one more change or rather concession to all factories described herein above, and that is that with eleven hours a day coming into existence the period of rest should be curtailed by half-an-hour only. My contention is that so far as gin and press factories are concerned, half-an-hour period of rest is, if not more, at least quite sufficient, for from my personal experience I say that the labourers during the working hours find, and spare time, to take their meals, etc. These two changes are really felt quite necessary for the gin and press industry.

8. *Amendment in the Factory Act so far as Gin and Press Factories are concerned.*—Again, so far as gin and press factories are concerned, which are numberless in the whole of India, I would take liberty to suggest an amendment, falling within the following purport, should be necessarily introduced :—“ So far as gin and press and suchlike industrial concerns are concerned, all the merchants and/or contractors working in such factories would be liable jointly and severally as much as the owners and/or the managers of such factories, so far as their own persons (coolies engaged by them and to be paid by them) engaged in such factories are concerned under the Sections 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 35.”

Such an amendment is quite essential, for out of the total number of persons employed in gin and press factories, more than three-fourths belong to the merchants and/or contractors working in such factories ; and unless and until they are made liable by legislation the interest of the labourer would not be properly cared for. By such a legislation, merchants and contractors working in factories shall heartily co-operate with the factory owners and/or managers in the proper observation and execution of the Factory Act. If, however, such an amendment is beyond any necessity in other provinces, it should be at least made incumbent so far as Madras province is concerned.

9. *Inspection of Factories in the Madras Province.*—The inspection of factories so far as Madras Presidency is concerned is rather too limited. A factory is not visited more than twice a year, whereas I would urge that at least once in every two months a factory should be inspected by Government inspectors and/or assistant inspectors. To make this possible, assistant inspectors of factories should be appointed under all the inspectors of the several circles formed in this province. I opine that frequent visits of factory inspectors would go a long way for the labourer in general and a great moral check on greedy factory owners.

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Mr. GEORGE S. ISAAC, B.A., L.T., ENGLISH ASSISTANT, VOORGHEES COLLEGE, VELLORE, AND THE SECRETARY AND TREASURER, THE ADULT AND MASS EDUCATION SOCIETY, VELLORE, NORTH ARCOT DIST., S. INDIA.

I beg to submit a memorandum on the subjects IV, V and VI as mentioned in your schedule regarding the workers in mundi shops (wholesale and retail grain shops) and beedi factories (indigenous cigarettes).

*Problems stated.*—Everyone is aware of the stupendous ignorance of the people, brought about by the appalling illiteracy, only 8·2 per cent. of the people being literate. As if this is not enough there is another factor which destroys all our hopes in the existing schools which are intended to meet the problem, and that is the wastage in education which are of two kinds, viz., (1) retardation and elimination of pupils in schools and (2) relapse into illiteracy. "Thus, half the pupils in the general institutions below college grade are in class I, more than two thirds are below class III, and nearly four-fifths are below class IV." "In other words, of the 41 pupils in the average primary school, 22 are likely to be in class I, 7½ in class II, 6 in class III, 3½ in class IV, below 2 in class V and just over 1 in class VI. Due to this process of retardation and elimination, pupils do not attain the kind of reading and writing ability that is likely to be permanent," and whatever they have learnt when they leave the school is forgotten and they slowly relapse into illiteracy within five years of their leaving school. This applies to 40 per cent. of school children in South India. Educationists face this situation which is mainly due to economic reasons which require these boys and girls to labour and add to their family income.

It is with a view to meet these problems that this society was organized in 1928, and it has confined its activities among the workers in the wholesale and retail grain shops and beedi factories. We have divided them under three categories:—(1) completely illiterate; (2) once literate but now relapsing into illiteracy; and (3) literates who are given opportunities to maintain their literacy. We are at present dealing mainly with classes 2 and 3.

#### Aims and Objects of the Society.

*Mass education.*—(1) to open reading rooms and organize circulating libraries; (2) to give open-air lectures on civics, geography, history of India, hygiene, public health, scientific discoveries and inventions and industries, with the aid of charts, maps and magic lantern.

*Adult education.*—(1) more specific and detailed information on the subjects of useful interest; (2) to impart a knowledge of Tamil literature; (3) ability to understand English and to read.

Our method of approach has been to reach the workers in bulk and impart general knowledge by means of open-air lectures and with the aid of magic lanterns, and enrol in our Adult Educational Centres, such of those who are interested, to whom greater attention is paid according to their individual requirements. During the last year nearly 90 adults, their ages ranging from 15 to 35 years, have passed through our centres, with all the handicaps which we have had, viz., apathy on the part of the public and also on the part of the employers. Yet we have been able to secure good results. We have classes from 6 to 7·30 in the *morning*, because they have no other time. Slides on travel over land and sea, Delhi Durbar, scenes from London and English life, British army and navy and industries such as coal-mining and paper-making have been used in our lectures. They have appealed to them and roused their interest. We have to indent upon a limited supply of slides which are not intended for the kind of work we do. In this way we are able to reach nearly 2,000 persons within a space of three months. Besides we have a small library of nearly 200 volumes mostly Tamil story books which are in great demand. Each adult takes two or three books per week, and these are read not only by the students but also by their women-folk at home.

Vellore is a municipal town of great importance, being the headquarters of the district. We have nearly \* mundies and nearly \* beedi factories, Boys with little or no education are drafted into these two trades soon after they leave school, and they have got to do so, because they add to the family incomes. In the grain shops they earn from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 a month, whereas the beedi rollers get from 3 annas to 12 annas per day according to the number of beedis they can roll a day. The capitalists of the latter trade earn a very large profit and some have become leading property owners. They export large quantities also. The mudi workers put in 12 to 14 hours a day with a break of an hour or so for lunch. The beedi workers on the other hand have to work as many hours as they can to earn a decent wage since their earnings depend on their output.

Their working conditions are unhygienic and insanitary. The mundies are invariably godowns, each having only one entrance. The atmosphere is stuffy and pungent, there being no facility for free circulation of air. While they sell their wares in the open or under a roofed verandah in the front, the workers spend the

\* Figures not supplied.

whole day in hot and impure atmosphere. The sanitary arrangements are deplorable. Both for the workers in the shops and also for the people who visit them, there are at the market-place only two public (municipal) latrines which are insufficient, and the workers answer the calls of nature wherever it is convenient.

But when we come to the conditions of the beedi factory workers, one has to confess that they are thought of, not as human beings, but as automatons having neither body, nor mind, nor soul. Any place is fit enough for them, and with a view to economy any number of workers will be crowded in. It is not surprising to find them in narrow lanes surrounded on three sides with private latrines and on the fourth the drainage channel oozing and giving off bad smell. Under such conditions boys of 5 to 14 years of age and adults work squatting on the floor and rolling the beedies day in and day out. Again these conditions are aggravated by the insanitary habits of the workers themselves. These factories are scattered all over the town, and each is a potential danger-spot to the community.

The one fact that will emerge in the mind of any public worker is the apathy of the employer towards the conditions of his workers, and the lack of public opinion. No attempt is made by the employer either to improve his workers' surroundings or to do anything to improve their lot in life. It is not their job. They do not care for adult education, and they consider physical culture, recreation, and amusements as superfluous.

Most of the workers in beedi factories are boys, or rather children. Due to economic stress they leave the school before they learn the rudiments and are absorbed in this trade. Hence arises a good deal of waste in education. The following figures from the Administration Report of the Vellore Municipality (1928-29), are illuminating. It is estimated that there are 4,247 boys of school age of whom 3,764 are at school, leaving 483 (i.e., 11.3 per cent.) out of school. But the prospect becomes hopeless, when we consider the percentage in each class to total strength.

Class	I	..	..	43.5 per cent.
"	II	..	..	22.6 "
"	III	..	..	17.3 "
"	IV	..	..	10.4 "
"	V	..	..	6.2 "

The percentage of pupils in classes I and II is 66.1 of the total strength. This retardation and elimination of boys mean that they leave the school with little or no education and are absorbed in this body-destroying and soul-killing trade. And such of those who learn anything at all during a stay of 2 or 3 years relapse into illiteracy very soon. The Society aims at meeting these problems, but it has not had the support and sympathy from either the public or the employer. In passing it may be mentioned that many of the adult students have had only 2 to 3 years' schooling.

*Recommendations.*—(1) Mundis and beedi factories must be brought under factory rules; particularly the latter.

(2) The complete prohibition of the employment of children.

(3) Hours of work to be fixed, giving time for recreation, amusement, and study.

(4) Wages to be fixed.

(5) Vigorous and periodical inspection of working places by duly qualified persons.

(6) Collection of a small cess from each of the employers for welfare work either by the municipality or private agencies.

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#### Mr. R. SUBAPATHI MUDALIAR, PRESIDENT, THE MADRAS PRINTERS' LABOUR UNION.

We had to prepare this note at a very short notice. It is very much regretted that the unions which were not registered have not been invited to send their memorandum of evidence.

In the beginning we start on a salary of Rs. 15 per month and our maximum is only Rs. 20. After twenty or thirty years of hard work and reliable service one may hope to get, as a foreman, only Rs. 25. We do not enjoy half holiday on Saturdays like our comrades in other industries. We go to our work early morning at 8.30 a.m. and return from work ordinarily at 5.30 p.m. The apprentice has to undergo training for at least four months without any wage whatever. After four months he is started on a salary of Rs. 2 a month. We do not get any compensation for any danger that may happen whilst working on the machine. There is no provision for education. There are provisions for medical aid. We borrow and live.

To represent our grievances we have no representation in the Corporation or in the legislative bodies.

## THE COMMISSIONER OF COORG.

1. Some short preliminary remarks as to local conditions are necessary first. Coorg is a very small province, having an area of only about one-quarter of that of a Madras district. It is situated on the Western Ghats at an average elevation of about 3,000 feet above sea-level. An average figure for the rainfall would be about 120 inches in the year, but the actual rainfall varies enormously from place to place. On the seaward side, under the high hills, it may be over 200 inches in the year, while on the eastern side of the border of Mysore it will be so little as 40 inches.

Malaria is, unfortunately, very prevalent throughout the whole area, and this is a most important fact in connection with the labour question.

2. Beyond an odd rice mill there are no industrial undertakings in the province.

3. The planting industry is the important one. There are 40,000 acres approximately under coffee, about 3,000 under rubber, one agave plantation of an area of about 460 acres, one tea estate of an area of 415 acres, and about 5,000 acres dotted about under oranges.

The orange gardens can hardly be regarded as plantations for present purposes.

The rubber is grown entirely on three estates situated in the low country at the foot of the ghats on the western side, where the conditions are those of the rubber estates on the Malabar coast of Madras.

Practically in this present memorandum only the coffee industry has to be dealt with, it being understood that the conditions of labour employed in the ordinary cultivation of the country—mainly rice—are beyond the scope of the enquiry.

4. According to the census of 1921 there were then about 57,000 labourers in Coorg, of whom 27,000 were permanent inhabitants of the country, and 30,000 were imported. According to a census taken in 1927 by the Coorg Planters' Association, to whom most of the European owned estates belong, there were then 11,000 coolies employed on the estates of their members, but this left out of the large number of estates who do not belong to the association.

5. There are no trade unions in Coorg.

6. The Workmen's Compensation Act does not apply to the plantation industries.

7. The main question that causes trouble is the supply of labour. Perhaps because this cool wet climate is very different from what they are accustomed to, or perhaps because of the prevalence of malaria, or perhaps because under present conditions the labourers from the West Coast in particular are able to attend to their own cultivation in their own villages and in addition put in a period in the year on the plantations, or because of all these reasons, labourers from outside Coorg rarely settle here permanently.

There is an annual flow of labourers to and from the estates. The bulk of them seem to come from the adjoining Madras districts of Malabar and South Kanara, although a number come from Mysore and some also from Bellary and a few from the Tamil districts of Madras. And the bulk of the rice planting in Malabar and South Kanara is done before the labourers start coming back up into Coorg.

8. The wages paid on the plantations are normally 6 annas a day for men, 4 annas for women, and 2 to 3 annas for children, but if any labourer works six days a week a bonus of 4 annas is given. This may be compared with the 12 annas a day given to Moplah labourers, who work on roads, on paddy fields, etc., and to town labourers.

But where paddy lands adjacent to coffee plantations were seen lying uncultivated and enquiry was made as to the reason, it was said that the work was too hard and the labourers preferred to work in coffee. It may be presumed that a day's work on a coffee plantation is not a hard task.

9. A striking feature with regard to labour recruitment is the "advance" system. A maistri or some reliable person on an estate is given an advance and goes away to recruit labourers. He brings back as many as he can and in return is given a commission according to the number he brings. From this commission and from his earnings the advance is recovered. Sometimes advances are given direct to individual coolies.

At present this system is sanctioned by the Coorg Labour Act (No. I of 1926). Under this Act advances made against contracts to do work can be enforced in case of default by the penalty of imprisonment, but this Act expires in 1931.

10. There has been considerable improvement in the house accommodation, sanitary surroundings, etc., of labourers on plantations in the last few years. The Coorg Labour Act empowered certain officers to inspect these things on plantations and to take steps where their advice was not taken, but this Act, as already mentioned, expires in 1931.

It is thought, however, that other pressure will tend to have the same effect. There is increasing competition for the services of the available labour, and this is compelling estates who desire to attract an adequate labour force to provide better accommodation, to give medical attendance, to supply blankets, and otherwise to look after their labourers. It is also tending to raise the wages.

11. There is naturally some feeling where labourers take an advance and bolt with it, and proceedings are taken under the Labour Act, but on the whole relations between the employers and labourers are satisfactory.

12. Education has not made much progress among the labourers. Separate statistics are not available, but in 1921 in the classes known as depressed classes, who will be practically all labourers, there were 4,979 boys and 4,469 girls of age to attend school. Of these the actual numbers attending school were 242 boys and 58 girls. There are five schools intended exclusively for children of these classes, and they are also admitted into the other schools, but there is always likely to be opposition, covert or otherwise, from the members of higher classes to this.

But the main reason for non-attendance at school seems to be economic. Where a child can go to work when six years old and earn half as much as his parents can, the likelihood of his being sent to school is small.

13. The co-operative department have tried to start societies among the labourers but with little success.

14. The question of instituting some such Government agency to look after the depressed classes as exists in the Labour Commissioner in Madras is now under consideration, but it is a difficult matter in our tiny province.

15. A memorandum kindly sent in by the chairman of the Coorg Planters' Association is attached.

## COORG PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION.

*(Incorporated.)*

Memoranda submitted to the Commissioner of Coorg in connection with the Royal Commission on Labour.

### I—Introduction.

In presenting our memoranda in connection with the Royal Labour Commission we have to explain that we are a self-supporting association of planters and we represent mainly producers of coffee, though we have as minor products pepper, tea, rubber, and cardamoms. We are affiliated to our parent association namely—The United Planters' Association of Southern India.

In our constitution we are not an association of Europeans, but practically in effect we are, for the simple reason that Indians in the same walk of life as ourselves have not felt themselves able to follow us in the self taxation we have imposed in order to develop and protect our industry, though incidentally the Indians and the few Europeans who are aloof from our association have reaped almost full benefits therefrom.

The value of our association can be realized by reason of all our scattered members being able to take a close interest in all planting topics and with these subjects the welfare of our workmen is given every benefit.

We consider that our care for them, our provision for medical comforts, our organization of labour department agencies all over Southern India and other measures we have taken in the past, and are continuing to take, will show that we are making every endeavour to ameliorate general labour conditions.

### II.

A census of coolies employed on subscribing estates is taken in December annually, and as the figures for last year are not yet published, we can only quote those of 1927 when it was found that we employed 11,120 coolies.

Coolies are engaged and brought up to estates by their respective maistries, generally a senior man of their village. Assistance is given to them by our U.P.A.S.I. labour department agencies where, if necessary, they are able to draw money for payment of way expenses, etc.

The main districts from which we draw our labour in order of precedence, are:—South Canara, Mysore, Coorg, Malabar, Anantapur, Coimbatore, Salem, and Trichinopoly.

The castes to which our workmen belong are:—Gowdas, Balagai, Yedagai, Yerwars, Kurbars, Moplahs, Malayalees, Tamils, and Christians.



The majority of our labour returns year after year, though at times some sample the higher wage of tea but return after a year's experience.

Labour fluctuates during the coolies' harvesting seasons when they are permitted to return to their villages and the majority go to their homes for a holiday after payment in March. All labour is free to move anywhere and at any time, except those under advance when agreements are drawn up for a period of a year under the Coorg Labour Act I of 1926, which, incidentally, ceases after March 31st, 1931.

Such parties as require money are advanced under agreement—families are given from Rs. 10 to Rs. 100 and individuals from Rs. 5 to Rs. 50. Such advances are given either (a) to cover home expenses during their absence, (b) help towards marriage expenses, (c) payment of assessment on their own properties.

The nature of work is as follows:—Men; general cultivation, shade lopping, pruning, and harvesting. Women and children; weeding, handling, manuring, and harvesting.

Work starts nominally at 7.30 a.m. and continues till 4.30 p.m., though they actually start working at 8 a.m. There is an unofficial break at midday for an hour or so. Whenever possible piece work is given, which enables the labourer to finish the day's work between 1 to 3 o'clock.

During the monsoon season hours are shorter, and during harvesting they are slightly longer, but it must be remembered that they are able to earn up to 2 or 3 times their usual pay in the latter period.

At the bigger festivals absence is permitted and for the minor feasts coolies are allowed to go early from work.

Daily wages which were raised in 1920 are as follows:—Men, 6 annas; women, 4 annas; and children, 2 to 3 annas. A weekly bonus of 4 annas to those who turn out for the six days. During harvesting season picking is on contract, and as explained above they are able to earn far more. This season lasts for 3 to 5 months.

It is customary for managers or their assistants to pay out weekly wages to maistries, who distribute it to their own coolies—but at the end of the year final payment is made direct to the coolie.

The average contract is from 1st June to 31st March, during which period the average total wage earned is:—men, Rs. 75; women, Rs. 50; and children, Rs. 25. In addition to this wage, most estates issue a free cumbly and travelling expenses to those who have to return to their country by train.

At the end of the year, coolies pay up their debts if they wish to, others who prefer to remain generally take the same advance again.

The average cost of living per person per month is Rs. 4 or Rs. 15 per family of five. Price of foodstuff and clothing has dropped considerable during the past ten years.

Practically all labour lives on the estates. Lines are generally built with bricked walls and tiled roofs and are scattered about the estates. Yerwars and Kurbars prefer building their own thatched homes. Accommodation is one room per married couple plus verandah, and in the newer lines bath rooms are attached. Coolies are generally able to graze their cattle with those of the estate on estate lands and where convenient are able to grow vegetables, etc., for themselves.

Every consideration is given as regards medical attendance. There are local dispensaries with sub-assistant surgeons throughout Coorg, to which most estates subscribe according to Government rate—others maintain their own medical fund complete with dispensaries and qualified assistants.

All estates keep a supply of the commoner medicines which they issue to their labourers when required. A special diet for sick coolies is always arranged for those who need it.

Suitable allowances are made for maternity cases either in cash payments or weekly allowances. Anti-malarial measures are receiving serious attention and on some estates spraying of likely anophelene breeding grounds was started in the manner suggested by Lt. Col. McCombie Young when he visited Coorg in March, 1928.

Hookworm treatment is given annually to the majority of our coolies.

In February last we invited the Director, Ankylostomiasis Campaign, Madras, to send up a representative and the required staff to carry out a seven days' campaign in the main planting areas of Coorg, complete with cinema to explain to our labourers the wisdom of taking hookworm treatment. All the organization of this tour, and the expense was paid for by this association.

Bazaars for food stuffs and other needs are generally within a few miles of each estate. The prices are not controlled as the market is in the hands of the supplier, though we consider Government control is essential when outbreaks of plague, cholera, etc., occur to prevent profiteering. Liquor shops are under Government licence and are near to most estates.

### III.—Conclusion.

We feel that it is necessary to point out that all coolies are free to go and come as they like, unless under agreement when absence is permitted if necessary. The coolies we employ are not only earning their keep but also make money to take to their country which has a very important economic effect on such districts as Mysore and South Kanara where incidentally they have their real homes. We consider that the Royal Labour Commission would do wisely to study labour conditions in the coolies' own villages and thus realize the advantages and freedom they enjoy in coming up to our estates.

Mr. A. B. CHENGAPPA.

#### I.—Recruitment.

1. There are no indigenous workmen in the country. The supposed workmen of the aboriginal tribes, the Yeravas and Kurubas, who are supposed to have come from Wynaad, and settled down in Coorg. They do not generally go out of Coorg except in rare cases where they want to steal a big advance or to avoid a crisis of action. This labour is so limited that it is not enough to satisfy 10 per cent. of the required labour of the country. There are other labourers who come periodically from the neighbouring countries, North Malabar, Mysore, South Malabar, P. Coimbatore and the adjoining districts to the various plantations twice or three times regularly after they finish their work in their own place. These labourers are the Jemmies in these districts. They are attached to the plantations in Coorg under the Coorg Labour Act, but the method of recruitment is not at all satisfactory. It is purely an agricultural country and as there is no permanent labour, it is entirely dependent on recruited labour from outside, either special provisions must be made to bind labour to come to the country, or Government should establish a Labour Commission, establish depots in different centres where labour is available and try to recruit labour into Coorg. For want of organized recruiting, a lot of land is left uncultivated and after the Coorg Labour Act is repealed, if Government does not come to the assistance of planters, many plantations will become unproductive and will be abandoned, and many wet lands will be left uncultivated. There are no other industries in the province except paddy and coffee. For the cultivation of both of these a lot of labour is required. At this juncture when the Labour Act is to be repealed Government should come to the help of planters and agriculturists. They must be very liberal in their policy and try to encourage settlers from outside the province, when alone the lands now lying fallow could be brought under cultivation.

The method I would suggest is to establish labour commissions and depots in labour centres by Government, and to import labour to Coorg more as settlers, and to work on the plantation on the lines of Travancore and Ceylon agencies and Labour Commissions.

4. As the present imported labourers are only temporary men living here three to four months at a time there is not much disturbance of family life. The Yeravas and Kurubas always live with their families and so their family life is not disturbed. There are a few Panchamas who are also permanent labourers and they form a small number. They also live with their families and in their own huts.

7. The question of unemployment is out of the question in Coorg. Want of workmen is the general cry. As the major portion of labourers are not permanent men, nothing can be done in the shape of insurance. The Yeravas and Kurubas are sects so unreliable that you may expect them to go away any day without notice. They live in huts of their own with their families and there is no hindrance to their running away, bag and baggage, without any notice to their employer.

8. On an average the out-turn of work among the Yeravas and Kurubas is only 40 to 50 per cent., but the labourers who come from the neighbouring districts work regularly and the average may be put to 90 per cent. Laziness is the cause of absence from work among permanent labour. They are quite content working three days in the week. The chief cause of absence among imported labour is malaria, and by the first appearance they get back to the country.

#### II.—Staff Organization.

11. There is no organized staff to manage labour in Coorg. Labourers are brought from different adjoining districts by work maistries who generally hold a big advance from proprietors, which amount is always paid back by commission accumulated on the pay of labour recruited by them.

\* Palghat is in South Malabar.

13, 14 and 15. The maistry generally gets the labour, and is paid directly by the proprietor. The maistry is also paid by the employer, deducting the advance paid from the commission. There are some contractors who bring labour only for contract work, and the agreement is between the master and the contractor, in which case the labour is paid by the contractor. The attendance register with the work done is kept by the manager assisted by clerks, and the wages are paid by the proprietor or his manager. The work is supervised by the maistry and estate clerks, managers or proprietors. Where strict supervision by the proprietor is kept, as a rule very few labourers stick to work unless special inducement is given.

### III.—Housing.

16. All labour is provided with housing except Yeravas and Kurubas, who always have their own huts, and under no circumstances will they live in tiled lines built on the estate.

17. There is not much facility of acquisition of land by the labourer. It is here the Government should come for help. They must give land on very easy terms and induce labourers to settle down. It would be a great help to agriculturists if Government spent thousands of rupees on these settlers. Unless this is encouraged many cultivated lands will have to be left fallow for want of labour, which means of loss in revenue to Government, increase of lantana, unhealthiness and increase malaria, thereby the whole country will become unhealthy.

18. Tiled clean houses are provided in the plantations with ample facility for supply. Lighting is arranged by labourers themselves. Imported labour utilises the houses built on the estates, but Yeravas and Kurubas do not cultivate them. No rent is recovered but housing is free. Where labour is for the housing of paddy, the labourer always lives by the fields he cultivates, in the explanation by the proprietor. The houses are always occupied by the tenant as it is cultivated the land free of rent, and has to evacuate the same when he does not cultivate it. Generally labourers live temporarily on estates and they evacuate the house when they go to their country. The houses are not kept quite clean and in sanitary condition where the labourers are living. The proprietors clean them periodically and they are kept clean as far as possible.

### IV.—Health.

23. The general health of imported labour is good as they do not stop more than three to four months at a time on the estate. The birth-rate among imported labour is low. Infant mortality is very high in the province. There is no special system of registration of births on the estates, except the general system recorded by Patels of villages. Each labourer looks to his own dietary and in the majority of cases the physique is good. Drinking is the hobby among the labourers and they are convinced that by drinking they can avoid all diseases. Every market day, they spend a lot of their earnings in drinking.

24. All estates subscribe to the nearest hospital in the village and medicine is administered. Every proprietor is very particular about giving medical aid. No special attention is paid by Government, except there are hospitals every 15 miles apart, and labourers who come to the hospitals from unsubscribed estates are not given medicine and treatment. The whole province cannot boast of a woman doctor, nor any trained midwives. There are a few trained nurses who do not reach the women on the estates. On the care of childbirth and infant mortality very little attention is paid in the country and the plantations.

25. Many have been accustomed to undergo the English mode of treatment and this system is now above the average, but there are some who dread this treatment and prefer native treatment. Medical treatment during childbirth is hardly taken by women, though in other disease they take advantage of it.

27. After the Coorg Labour Act the official supervision is good on plantations. The civil surgeon often pays unexpected visits to estates and this has opened the eyes of proprietors to keep the premises clean.

29. The only diseases among labour are hookworm, ulcers, malaria, enlargement of the spleen. These are on the increase not only in the plantations but in the whole province. Cholera and plague occur very seldom, and the few cases are imported ones, which do not spread.

### VI.—Education.

As there are schools every five miles' radius, the children are sent to these schools, and as most of the labourers are temporary men they do not take advantage of the schooling.

**IX.—Hours.**

The number of hours worked on a plantation is from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., with an hour's rest at mid-day; that is on an average of 7 to 8 hours. They work 6 days in the week. The work turned out is not 50 per cent. of what it was 10 years back and not 35 per cent. of what it was 20 years back. As a rule, labourers are getting lazy and up to every kind of mischief. Now only piece-work is being taken by them, but even this is not satisfactory. They are much addicted to gambling and drink, and the whole night they spend on this.

**XII.—Wages.**

96. The wages current are 6 annas per man and 4 annas per woman and boy per day, with a bonus of 4 annas a week. When piece-work is done a coolie earns on an average 12 annas and a woman about 8 annas under ordinary circumstances, but when picking of coffee comes, women labourers earn over a rupee a day, so also men. People who work on paddy fields get free meals and 4 annas a day. There is a system current in villages where all labourers working on paddy flats are paid daily in kind and are fed twice daily, clothed free, fed during festivals, paid for marriage and funeral ceremonies in their family, and also given as pocket money, in kind, after harvest.

97. When compared with pre-war wages the wages have increased 50 per cent. and the living cost is also on the increase. Since the war a lot of new works have been started as a famine measure in the adjoining districts, also railway extensions, etc. The workmen get better pay in their own villages and hence there is not much attraction in Coorg. This province has become a home for malaria and fever, and labourers dread to come.

98. On an average every ordinary labourer sends Rs. 5 to 6 per month to his village, but a skilled labourer, such as carpenter, sawyer, blacksmith, copper-smith, etc., sends home on an average Rs. 20 to 30 a month.

100. A contractor does not generally pay the labourer properly, and we notice that a labourer who goes to work with the contractor one season never goes with him again.

101. The wages are fixed according to the rate current in the province and it is stated in the labour bond itself. This rate is at times changed by the whim and fancy of the proprietor, according to the urgency of the work and is always paid extra.

With the Yeravas and Kurubas any amount of increase of pay will not induce them to work more and regularly. With the increase of pay they wish to work a less number of days. With outside labour increased pay may influence them to come to this province; whether the proprietor can meet both ends with increased pay is a matter over which I have my own doubts. Paddy is a crop greatly dependent on season, and with the heavy cattle mortality and unseasonable rain a cultivator will not have much to spare; and with coffee, which is practically a crop once every four years, higher wages than what are paid now cannot be paid with comfort.

106. On plantations the system of fines is very rare, and is used only in very extreme cases.

107. Wages are paid weekly as a rule, but if the labourer is under contract to the estate he is given enough for his upkeep and paid in full at the end of the year. There is no unclaimed wage, as the balance due to any labourer is always paid to the maistry or contractor who gets the labour.

108. Local labourers and other imported labour have got into the habit of taking loans in the village with the assurance that they would come to work. Some, at times, go to work without the knowledge of their permanent employer and others do not go at all. As this indebtedness increases the labourer will not go to that part of the village at his next return from his village. Indebtedness among labourers is very great, and as Coorg is so much wanting in labour any one will have money to pay a labourer if he says he is coming for work, no matter what the consequences are. Being a sect much addicted to drink and gambling, the indebtedness is on the increase.

If Coorg is to be a prosperous country the labour department must be well established. Government should take up the work of importing labour by establishing depots, labour commissions, and give full concessions and inducements to settlers in the country. Coorg is purely an agricultural country and its future entirely depends on the permanent settlers from outside and also from outside capital pouring into the province. If no labour help from Government is forthcoming, a lot of plantations, both coffee and paddy, will have to be abandoned, which means Coorg will have very little revenue to handle for its management. The prosperity of the country is left with the labour question and if Government handles it with tact we will have a prosperous country.

## Mr. P. R. THIMMAYYA PUNJA.

As a member representing the labouring classes in the Coorg Legislative Council, I submit the following statement for consideration. Being a coffee planter myself, I am fairly conversant with the labour conditions prevailing in this Province.

## I.—Recruitment.

1. Until the advent of the pioneers of coffee about three-quarters of a century ago, the annual import of unskilled labour was almost unknown in Coorg, and even if it did exist, it was on a very restricted scale. The landlords had enough of their own permanent labour settled on their lands, who were practically slaves or descendants of slaves, and they were called "Jumma coolies." They could not change their masters as they chose. They were bound to one master and his land. That most of them, if not all, were not the sons of the soil is evident from the languages they talk. Some use the dialects of the West Coast, such as Tulu, Malayalam, etc., and some Kanarese, the chief language of the Mysore country. Perhaps, these slaves were brought and planted here during the regime of the Rajahs, and most of them, if not almost all of them, belong to the depressed classes. The descendants of these form the chief indigenous labour population of Coorg. The labourers of the depressed classes of the west coast are also mostly descended from slaves. According to the Coorg census report for 1921 the total population of the depressed classes alone, who are all labourers, is 42,139. What portion of the imported plantation labour belonging to the depressed classes is included in obtaining this figure is difficult to say. To these figures should be added the labourers of the agricultural classes, such as Moplabs, Christians, Mohammedans, etc. Most of the indigenous labourers are still sticking on to their homesteads and work on paddy fields as farm labourers, and occasionally go to work in the plantations during the slack season in the farms. Therefore, I may safely say that about 90 per cent. if not more, of plantation labour is all imported chiefly from the adjoining districts of West Coast and Mysore. Coolies are also recruited now to some extent from Salem, Coimbatore, and Anantapur.

At present there are about 41,000 acres under actual coffee cultivation, and about 2,000 acres under rubber. There is one large tea estate and one agave plantation. Then, there are the cardamom, pepper and orange gardens. All these depend almost entirely on imported labour. In addition to these, a large number of labourers are employed by the Public Works Department and Forest Department. Therefore, the total labour population may be roughly computed at more than half a lakh at the lowest estimate.

The chief cause of migration from the villages to the plantations is poverty and the indebtedness of the labourer, as also the activities of the labour recruiter. Having no credit, the labourer seeks the recruiter to pay off his debts in the village. Cases may not be wanting where labourers have migrated in order to evade paying off their debts, or on account of the tyranny of their masters.

In the villages, both here as well as the West Coast, labourers are paid in kind, but not in cash. Generally, he gets one mid-day meal and a certain quantity of rice or paddy. So, the rise or fall in the price of the staple food does not affect them, but, in bad seasons, if the crop is poor, the landlords in the village do not get any extra work done on their lands, and in such years, a larger number seek the plantations to eke out their livelihood.

2. Very few labourers settle down permanently in the plantations. Labourers who do regular farm work in their villages come to the plantations after cultivating the farms in July or August, and invariably return for harvest in September. Harvest work is most profitable in a good season, as the labourer gets a certain percentage of the grain harvested by him, and so he does not like to miss it. After harvest, he again returns to the estate and works for some months. Such labourers work only for 5 or 6 months in the year in the plantations, the rest of the time being spent in their own villages. Labourers who have no farm work to do in their villages, stay on the plantations for 9 or 10 months in the year. However, every labourer wants to return to his native village once a year, at least after the final settlement of accounts in April, as all his family ties are in his village. Therefore, strictly speaking, there is no permanent labour in the plantations. Even the few locals or imported labourers who stay on, which is a negligible number, very often keep changing from one estate to another.

3. At present, labour is mostly recruited through recruiters who are paid money in advance without interest and also a commission at the rate of 12 to 15 per cent, on the earnings of the labour he procures, in addition to his pay. The remuneration being in direct ratio to the number of labourers he procures, there is room for unscrupulous men to recruit and secure men by fair means or foul. There are persons who recruit in hundreds, earning a lot of money by this human labour traffic. Public

employment agencies may be established, but there should be no room for the middleman to seduce labourers by fraud or false promises and enticements. The labourer should offer himself of his own free will.

4. As a rule, the labourers do not bring their families to the plantations. Of late, a few that stay on the plantation for a year have begun to bring their wives and children, but the number is negligible. This separation of husbands and wives should naturally, give rise to sexual aberrations.

## II.—Staff Organization.

14. Attendance registers are checked by managers or proprietors, and payments of wages are also made by them.

15. Almost all kinds of work on the plantations are given on contract, but as it is cheaper to get the same work done by estate labour, it is resorted to only when the estate labour is short. In contract work, there is no direct dealing between the labourer and the estate manager, and the contractor is the employer and payments are made to the latter. Generally, the contractor manages to extract much more work from his employees than estate managers do, and the labourer is comparatively ill paid for the work he is made to turn out, and very often the men are not paid their dues fully, in order to keep them on with him, as he cannot advance them money under the Labour Act and have a hold on them.

## III.—Housing.

16. In all plantations, coolie lines are built for the accommodation of the coolies i.e., labourers. Each line consists of a number of rooms of various dimensions. A room is generally allotted to a number of males, according to the size. At time, even 8 or 9 persons occupy one room. If the coolie has his family with him, then he is given one room for the whole family. No separate kitchen is provided for, and the labourers have to cook, eat and sleep in the same room.

18. From the health point of view, the accommodation afforded is both insufficient and insanitary. A number of persons are huddled up together in a small room, and during the cold and rainy season, practically at all times except during summer, they sleep with doors and windows closed to keep off cold, as they are very poorly clad, if not in rags, on account of their extreme poverty.

22. It is morally objectionable to allow one or two families to live in a coolie line where all the other rooms are occupied by males, especially in a class much addicted to drink and without high moral principles. Married men should be provided with separate cottages consisting of at least two rooms in each. Needless to say it is morally degrading to make the husband, wife and children all to occupy one single room where, at times, even the accouchement does take place.

## IV.—Health.

23. Mortality is, undoubtedly, very high, but, as there is no compulsory registration system, most of the cases of death go unreported. The village Patel is expected to find out and report deaths and births, but he rarely visits the plantations, and so is in blissful ignorance of the deaths in the estates. In spite of this faulty system of gathering statistics, the figures that come to light are very high. Only deaths in hospitals are duly reported. The registration of deaths should be made compulsory, as in municipal areas, so that, if there be any undue number of deaths in any particular estate, the medical authorities might investigate and suggest remedies, if any. The physique of the coolies is very poor and deplorable. As they are ill-clad and under-fed, they are very susceptible to disease and easily succumb. They have very little vitality left in them to combat disease and death. A coolie gets about Rs. 1-4 annas or Rs. 1-8 annas per week for his maintenance if he works for six days in a week, but, when he absents himself from work, the weekly advance is cut short even if the absence is due to sickness, because the original advance has to be recovered by the end of the year, if possible. Therefore, a patient or a convalescent is forced to keep himself on the verge of starvation, instead of getting good nourishment to recoup the health. If he is a man with a family, even his little children have to suffer. In cases of real sickness, if a coolie is laid up for more than a week, in all fairness he should be maintained at the expense of the estate and some allowance granted to his children, if any. The work done by these coolies is almost of the same kind as they do in their homes, and not very hard, but they are very much handicapped by the cold and malaria, from which they cannot properly protect themselves. A very large percentage of them have enlarged spleens or livers. The condition of the labouring classes in the villages in North Coorg is worse than in the plantations.

24. A few plantations covering large areas have their own medical man and dispensary. All the rest depend upon the Government hospitals or private medical practitioners, if there be any close at hand. If medicines are to be supplied to the estates from the hospitals, the estates have to pay annually at the rate of 6 annas per acre, or else the medicine supplied will be charged for and recovered from the estate. If the doctor is sent for, the estate pays for his visit. There is no provision made for lady doctors or trained midwives.

Generally, coolies are averse to go to the hospital for treatment. They have not much faith in allopathic treatment. As a rule, they try all sorts of quack remedies, and only when their cases become very serious, they unwillingly submit to be taken to the hospital, and this too not in all cases. They are very superstitious and all illness is attributed to the devil, and so, the first thing that a coolie does when he falls sick is to propitiate the devil by offering fowls or pigs, and performing "pooja" and making vows. In the minds of many, there is a lurking fear that the poor are not cared for, and that only a few out of the number that go to the hospital return alive. In a way, it is true, because only very bad cases go to the hospital, and naturally, the death rate is high. Years back, there was a feeling among the ignorant that patients were treated for a certain period, and if their disease was found to be incurable, they were being killed in the hospitals, and so they were very much dreaded. They suspected that the Government would not unnecessarily spend money for a long time on incurables, who might spread the disease among others. Perhaps, the segregation of persons suffering from contagious diseases and the veterinary department were partly responsible for strengthening such curious notions, because, whenever an animal is found to be incurable, its destruction is recommended. I have many a time been confronted with such notions, and it is difficult to convince these people that, if a medical man killed a patient deliberately, he was criminally liable. Fortunately, such ideas are fast dying out, but yet they believe that good costly medicines are reserved for the rich, and only cheap useless stuffs are tried on them, and I believe they are not far wrong. As a matter of fact, the annual grants to the dispensaries for drugs is very inadequate, and often, towards the end of the year, they run short of most of the drugs. The average maintenance allowance for each in-patient in the hospitals does not exceed two or three annas per day. This is very insufficient, and one of the complaints of the coolie is that he will be kept on almost starvation diet in the hospitals. Larger grants should be allotted to the dispensaries, and the hospitals should be better equipped. Surgical operations are dreaded most. Women are more averse to go to the hospitals as in-patients than men. They do not like to be separated from the family even for a few days. They prefer to die in the lines uncared for rather than go to the hospital. In serious cases, they are sent to hospital almost by compulsion.

26. In the estates, no special arrangements are generally made for latrines, and the need is not felt. Water from springs or wells, and in some cases from the streams or rivers, is used by coolies for drinking, washing and bathing purposes. Of late, a few estates have introduced the water pipe.

27. Plantations are not inspected by boards of health. Such inspections will be beneficial to the labourers, if introduced.

29. Malaria is the chief enemy of the labourer in these parts. Perhaps there is not a single person that has not had an attack of malaria. Even children have huge enlarged spleens. Malaria, with its further complications, is the chief cause of the high mortality, and means should be introduced to check its ravages. Cases of cholera are very rare, and are generally imported cases, but pneumonia, dysentery and hookworm are very common. Influenza and relapsing fever have claimed terrible tolls from these poor people.

30. There is no system of sickness insurance in the plantations. The introduction of the Ayurvedic system of treatment would be welcomed by the labourers. I dare say that these people, who are used to herbs and juices and quacks' treatment, from childhood, will more readily take to it than to allopathy.

31. At present, no allowance is paid either before or after childbirth. Individuals might pay in the shape of charity, but there is no rule or general practice of paying towards maternity benefits. Legislation is necessary to enforce such allowances to labourers who have worked for more than a year in any one plantation. It may not be fair to compel the employer to pay these allowances to the seasonal worker who works only for a few months in the year and returns to her country. A female coolie turns out almost the same amount of work as a male coolie in most kinds of work, such as weeding, manuring, picking or gathering the crop, etc., but she is paid only two-thirds of the pay given to a male coolie, and so, the employer being materially benefited, ought not to grudge to give them these maternity benefits that they are entitled to.

#### V.—Welfare.

34. Welfare work of any sort is practically unknown. There are no provisions for refreshments or recreations. Toddy and liquor shops are the only places that they visit frequently if they have the means to pay for the drinks. Of late, the curse of gambling, i.e., playing cards with money stakes, seems to have taken hold of many labourers, and has even invaded some of the plantations. This is the ruinous recreation that some of them indulge in. The managers discourage it by all possible means, no doubt, but it is played in secret and the managers cannot take strong steps to put it down or hand them over to the authorities, as they are likely to lose both the labour and the money advanced.

There being no identity or permanency of interest, the mutual relationship between the employer and the employee in the plantations cannot be very cordial or binding. The employer knows that, at any moment, the coolie may leave his estate and go to another, and so, his sole object will be to exact work from him and try to recover the advance paid. The whole matter is looked at from a commercial point of view, and nobody cares to spend money on welfare activities.

36. No educational facilities are provided for in any estate for adults or children. Certainly, education should be encouraged by all possible means, but the difficulty is that the adults are generally disinclined to attend any class after a tiresome day's work, and, as for the children, they cannot possibly afford to keep them in school without work, as every member of the family is expected to earn his bread. The child, after the age of 7 or 8 years, has no leisure to attend school. If he cannot do estate work, he will be engaged to look after the small children and babies in the lines when the mothers go to work. These are literally born to work from the cradle to the grave. There is absolutely no use in keeping a boy in school just for a year or two to teach him the alphabets, which he soon forgets. Real education will make them realise their rights as well as their duties and responsibilities, and for this, they should be sufficiently long in school. Their poverty is the chief stumbling block. Therefore, these children should be maintained entirely at the cost of the Government or the State until their education is finished. It would be much better if these could be removed from their present unhealthy environments and placed in boarding schools for a number of years, and given useful education and some vocational training. If the employers are to be compelled to pay and maintain these children, I am sure most employers would not entertain labourers with children. Therefore, in this matter, it is the Government that should take action as early as possible.

37. It is absolutely necessary that provision should be made for old age and premature retirement pensions. It is, indeed, a sad sight to see these persons, who have contributed to the prosperity of the country, left adrift to live upon charity in their old age until their sufferings are ended by death. Here again, it is the State or Government that should come to his rescue. The Government might levy some tax or cess, if necessary, upon all employers of labour to meet the cost of these pensions.

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42. Most certainly, education does raise the standard of living. Labourers with some education, even of the depressed classes, live better, dress better, and their cottages are also kept clean and tidy.

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#### VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.

52. The scale of compensation provided for in Act VIII of 1923 (Workmen's Compensation Act) may prove exorbitant for the employer in the plantations, but it is desirable to extend it to the plantations for the benefit of the labourer with such modifications as to suit local conditions and with a reasonable scale of compensation. It is but fair that if a labourer is maimed for life, or rendered useless for work, or dies through utter neglect of callous indifference on the part of the employer or his agent, that compensation should be granted. At present a labourer who is absent from work, although due to an accident, is not entitled even to an allowance for



24. A few plantations covering large areas have their own medical man and dispensary. All the rest depend upon the Government hospitals or private medical practitioners, if there be any close at hand. If medicines are to be supplied to the estates from the hospitals, the estates have to pay annually at the rate of 6 annas per acre, or else the medicine supplied will be charged for and recovered from the estate. If the doctor is sent for, the estate pays for his visit. There is no provision made for lady doctors or trained midwives.

Generally, coolies are averse to go to the hospital for treatment. They have not much faith in allopathic treatment. As a rule, they try all sorts of quack remedies, and only when their cases become very serious, they unwillingly submit to be taken to the hospital, and this too not in all cases. They are very superstitious and all illness is attributed to the devil, and so, the first thing that a coolie does when he falls sick is to propitiate the devil by offering fowls or pigs, and performing "pooja" and making vows. In the minds of many, there is a lurking fear that the poor are not cared for, and that only a few out of the number that go to the hospital return alive. In a way, it is true, because only very bad cases go to the hospital, and naturally, the death rate is high. Years back, there was a feeling among the ignorant that patients were treated for a certain period, and if their disease was found to be incurable, they were being killed in the hospitals, and so they were very much dreaded. They suspected that the Government would not unnecessarily spend money for a long time on incurables, who might spread the disease among others. Perhaps, the segregation of persons suffering from contagious diseases and the veterinary department were partly responsible for strengthening such curious notions, because, whenever an animal is found to be incurable, its destruction is recommended. I have many a time been confronted with such notions, and it is difficult to convince these people that, if a medical man killed a patient deliberately, he was criminally liable. Fortunately, such ideas are fast dying out, but yet they believe that good costly medicines are reserved for the rich, and only cheap useless stuffs are tried on them, and I believe they are not far wrong. As a matter of fact, the annual grants to the dispensaries for drugs is very inadequate, and often, towards the end of the year, they run short of most of the drugs. The average maintenance allowance for each in-patient in the hospitals does not exceed two or three annas per day. This is very insufficient, and one of the complaints of the coolie is that he will be kept on almost starvation diet in the hospitals. Larger grants should be allotted to the dispensaries, and the hospitals should be better equipped. Surgical operations are dreaded most. Women are more averse to go to the hospitals as in-patients than men. They do not like to be separated from the family even for a few days. They prefer to die in the lines uncared for rather than go to the hospital. In serious cases, they are sent to hospital almost by compulsion.

26. In the estates, no special arrangements are generally made for latrines, and the need is not felt. Water from springs or wells, and in some cases from the streams or rivers, is used by coolies for drinking, washing and bathing purposes. Of late, a few estates have introduced the water pipe.

27. Plantations are not inspected by boards of health. Such inspections will be beneficial to the labourers, if introduced.

29. Malaria is the chief enemy of the labourer in these parts. Perhaps there is not a single person that has not had an attack of malaria. Even children have huge enlarged spleens. Malaria, with its further complications, is the chief cause of the high mortality, and means should be introduced to check its ravages. Cases of cholera are very rare, and are generally imported cases, but pneumonia, dysentery and hookworm are very common. Influenza and relapsing fever have claimed terrible tolls from these poor people.

30. There is no system of sickness insurance in the plantations. The introduction of the Ayurvedic system of treatment would be welcomed by the labourers. I dare say that these people, who are used to herbs and juices and quacks' treatment, from childhood, will more readily take to it than to allopathy.

31. At present, no allowance is paid either before or after childbirth. Individuals might pay in the shape of charity, but there is no rule or general practice of paying towards maternity benefits. Legislation is necessary to enforce such allowances to labourers who have worked for more than a year in any one plantation. It may not be fair to compel the employer to pay these allowances to the seasonal worker who works only for a few months in the year and returns to her country. A female coolie turns out almost the same amount of work as a male coolie in most kinds of work, such as weeding, manuring, picking or gathering the crop, etc., but she is paid only two-thirds of the pay given to a male coolie, and so, the employer being materially benefited, ought not to grudge to give them these maternity benefits that they are entitled to.

**V.—Welfare.**

34. Welfare work of any sort is practically unknown. There are no provisions for refreshments or recreations. Toddy and liquor shops are the only places that they visit frequently if they have the means to pay for the drinks. Of late, the curse of gambling, i.e., playing cards with money stakes, seems to have taken hold of many labourers, and has even invaded some of the plantations. This is the ruinous recreation that some of them indulge in. The managers discourage it by all possible means, no doubt, but it is played in secret and the managers cannot take strong steps to put it down or hand them over to the authorities, as they are likely to lose both the labour and the money advanced.

There being no identity or permanency of interest, the mutual relationship between the employer and the employee in the plantations cannot be very cordial or binding. The employer knows that, at any moment, the coolie may leave his estate and go to another, and so, his sole object will be to exact work from him and try to recover the advance paid. The whole matter is looked at from a commercial point of view, and nobody cares to spend money on welfare activities.

36. No educational facilities are provided for in any estate for adults or children. Certainly, education should be encouraged by all possible means, but the difficulty is that the adults are generally disinclined to attend any class after a tiresome day's work, and, as for the children, they cannot possibly afford to keep them in school without work, as every member of the family is expected to earn his bread. The child, after the age of 7 or 8 years, has no leisure to attend school. If he cannot do estate work, he will be engaged to look after the small children and babies in the lines when the mothers go to work. These are literally born to work from the cradle to the grave. There is absolutely no use in keeping a boy in school just for a year or two to teach him the alphabets, which he soon forgets. Real education will make them realise their rights as well as their duties and responsibilities, and for this, they should be sufficiently long in school. Their poverty is the chief stumbling block. Therefore, these children should be maintained entirely at the cost of the Government or the State until their education is finished. It would be much better if these could be removed from their present unhealthy environments and placed in boarding schools for a number of years, and given useful education and some vocational training. If the employers are to be compelled to pay and maintain these children, I am sure most employers would not entertain labourers with children. Therefore, in this matter, it is the Government that should take action as early as possible.

37. It is absolutely necessary that provision should be made for old age and premature retirement pensions. It is, indeed, a sad sight to see these persons, who have contributed to the prosperity of the country, left adrift to live upon charity in their old age until their sufferings are ended by death. Here again, it is the State or Government that should come to his rescue. The Government might levy some tax or cess, if necessary, upon all employers of labour to meet the cost of these pensions.

**VI.—Education.**

42. Most certainly, education does raise the standard of living. Labourers with some education, even of the depressed classes, live better, dress better, and their cottages are also kept clean and tidy.

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**VIII.—Workmen's Compensation.**

52. The scale of compensation provided for in Act VIII of 1923 (Workmen's Compensation Act) may prove exorbitant for the employer in the plantations, but it is desirable to extend it to the plantations for the benefit of the labourer with such modifications as to suit local conditions and with a reasonable scale of compensation. It is but fair that if a labourer is maimed for life, or rendered useless for work, or dies through utter neglect of callous indifference on the part of the employer or his agent, that compensation should be granted. At present a labourer who is absent from work, although due to an accident, is not entitled even to an allowance for

maintenance during the period of absence from work. In serious cases, he is sent to the hospital for treatment. To the best of my knowledge or information, there has been no case of compensation being granted to any labourer at any time in Coorg.

Although men employed in factories, in constructing, repairing or demolishing high buildings and big bridges, as also men employed on the telegraph lines are covered by this Act, most of them do not seem to be aware of it. Therefore, it is necessary to give proper publicity to it through the revenue officers, so that these men may know their rights and claim them when such occasions arise.

#### IX.—Hours.

78. The labourer in the estates is expected to work from about 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., i.e., about 9 hours per day continuously, although it is not strictly enforced. Usually task work is given, i.e., a certain set amount of work is allotted to each coolie and he generally manages to finish it in 6 or 7 hours working continuously. However, a leisure of an hour at mid-day will be very beneficial if made compulsory. In the case of females with babies, it is necessary that they should be allowed to go to the lines at least twice during the working hours to suckle their babies.

79. Coolies generally work for six days in the week. One day in the week is set apart for going to the bazaar and bringing things necessary for a week's consumption.

#### XII.—Wages.

105. The daily wage for an unskilled male labourer is 6 annas and that of the female 4 annas. If the labourer works for 6 days in a week, a bonus of 4 annas per week is paid in order to induce the labourer to work regularly. The present wage is hardly sufficient to maintain oneself, much less to pay off the debts or save anything, and therefore, required improvement.

107. The local and other labourers who are not under advance to the estate are paid their full wages weekly. Those who are under advance are paid weekly Rs. 1-8 annas roughly for their maintenance, and their accounts are settled once a year in March or April. Some coolies who take small sums as advance are usually paid off once in September when they go for harvest and if they return, again in March. If there be any unclaimed wages, they are paid to the recruiter who procured that labour, but such instances are rare.

108. A large majority of labourers are steeped in debt.

110. No leave is granted to the coolies with pay and they have no prescribed holidays. Only if they work they are paid, not otherwise.

#### XIV.—Trade Combinations.

117. The European planters have their own organization, but the Indian planters have none. There are no labour unions or organizations of any sort.

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#### XVI.—Law of Master and Servant.

127. The repeal of the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act has been a blessing to the labourer. The Act was being abused by unscrupulous persons, and the poor illiterate labourer was being cheated. There was ample scope for fraud, as the bond had only to be witnessed by two persons to be valid, and the labourer was not only duped but harassed.

From the employer's point of view, the repeal is not felt, as the Labour Act has taken its place.

129. For enforcement of labour the Labour Act is made use of. The following figures show the number of cases under this Act in 1928-29 :—

Offences reported .. .. .	3,205
Brought to trial .. .. .	3,972
Under trial, including pending from previous year .. .. .	3,972
Acquitted or discharged .. .. .	1,484
Convicted .. .. .	825
Died, escaped, etc. .. .. .	16
Remaining under trial .. .. .	1,647

131. Although I must confess that the Coorg Labour Act is an improvement on the much detested Breach of Contract Act, I must contend that it has a demoralising effect on the labourers. Apart from the inhumanity and the inequity of making

the non-performance of unskilled labour a criminal offence, and the troubles, misery and hardships it involves, it tends to make the labourer a perpetual servile debtor, and ultimately drives him to desperation, dishonesty and cheating. The process is very simple. Being endowed with but little forethought, the labourer readily barter his labour for the sake of money, which is soon spent, and often money is borrowed without absolute necessity. At the end of the year he finds that his debt is not paid off, and then he again borrows a larger sum. So the debt increases from year to year. He has only to give his thumb impression and he can get money easily, and so he borrows recklessly. Like the gambling craze, a craze for taking advances even without need is gradually created. After a time he realizes that it is impossible to clear his debts. He goes to another estate for more money and takes advances, stating that he is free, and when the warrant goes from the first employer the second employer has no option but to pay off the first, as otherwise he loses his money. In this way the debt mounts up very quickly and the labourer becomes desperate and begins to borrow from all possible quarters recklessly and absconds.

About a decade ago the average amount advanced to a coolie was about Rs. 20 or 25, but to-day he invariably demands about Rs. 50 to 100, and often even more, although he knows fully well that he cannot work it out in a year.

I urge that the above reforms are necessary for ameliorating the condition of the labourer, but at the same time I must admit that it may not be possible or practicable to give effect to all of them unless and until the mutual relationship between the employer and the employee is properly defined, regulated and established on an equitable basis.

#### RAO BAHADUR K. SUBBAYYA.

Coorg is purely an agricultural country. Rice has been its chief cultivation. It may be called a planting district as well, since coffee is cultivated on an extensive scale. There are a few tea and rubber estates besides cardamom cultivation.

There has been in the province no industry of any kind in the real sense of the word. No manufacture, no factory, no mining and no railways, nor any other big establishments of a similar kind.

The conditions of the province are quite unlike those of its neighbouring districts, which have all the facilities of railway communications. The country is yet to be opened up for utilizing its natural resources, such as timber, rattan, etc. There has not been a geological survey. Therefore, whether or not there is any possibility for any mining industry is yet a question to be solved. Coorg is a very mountainous country interspersed with hills and valleys, possessing many waterfalls, in all probability giving full scope for the introduction of hydro-electric schemes. It has an average rainfall of 120 inches a year, and consequently it can be safely said there is much room for utilizing the water for irrigation purposes.

The only subject in these circumstances that requires consideration is that of coffee plantation. What is applicable to this industry applies to rubber and tea cultivation, which enterprise obtains to some extent in some particular parts of the country.

The introduction of coffee cultivation into the country has, it may be fairly said, affected materially the cases of many rice landholders inasmuch as their permanent labourers who used to cultivate their wet lands joined the neighbouring coffee estates. On account of this planting industry there is a constant inflow of about 40,000 labourers annually into the country from the adjoining districts of S. Kanara and Malabar, and the Province of Mysore. This floating population stays in the country for about five months in the year, taken as a whole. The rate of wages has of late become double, the hours of work have become less, the actual ratio of work turned out is proportionately far less. On the whole, the condition of labourers is far better nowadays.

#### I.—Recruitment.

Since there is not any local labour worth the name, as almost all the permanent inhabitants of the country are landholders and are engaged in the cultivation of their lands during the greater part of the year, about 40,000 labourers every year migrate to Coorg for working in the plantations from outside Coorg. These labourers go back to their native country twice a year for attending to the cultivation of their wet lands and harvesting their crops, and consequently their stay in Coorg plantations lasts in all from four to five months in the year.

About 40,000 labourers are yearly recruited. Monies are advanced and labour bonds are taken under the provisions of the Coorg Labour Act.

If a district is rich and prosperous and if sufficient work and reasonable pay can be had there alone, much labour cannot be expected by another from such district. It is only when labourers find it a necessity to migrate in search of labour for making money that they go out. Advancing system has its drawbacks. Notwithstanding the legal provisions for punishment the labourer has got the tendency to take advances from masters more than one; besides, they fail to keep their promises as the number of cases in courts will go to show. The Labour Act should go, and with it the advance system, too. Then necessity alone will compel labourers to come to plantations there to work and then to get their actual pay. The tendency to take advances will then disappear.

3. (iii) The United Planters' Association, South India, is the only established public agency for employing and recruiting labour.

4. Mostly male labourers come to plantations leaving their wives and children behind in their native places. Since they return as above said twice a year to their native places there is no room for any disturbance of family life. In cases where wives and children are brought special accommodation is generally provided for.

### III.—Housing.

Owing to the long and continued rainfall in the country it is necessary to house the labourers in pucca-built houses and lines at a great cost to the employer; for the comfort of the labourer means regular and systematic work for the employer. It is the interest of the employer, therefore, to see to the comforts of his labourer.

16. Since the labourers do not settle down permanently on the plantations they do not provide themselves with houses, nor does Government or other public agency undertake to provide them with houses.

Houses and lines are provided to labourers regard being had to their caste and religious prejudices as far as possible.

Nowadays employers are careful enough to provide their labourers with good drinking water by sinking wells, and in some cases by introducing pipes to convey water. Better houses with light and air are provided. No rent is recovered.

### IV.—Health.

Change of place at intervals from plantation to native places and *vice versa*, and working mostly in the open air during the day and sleeping in the houses or lines during nights greatly conduces to the health of the labourers. Rare are the complaints of any contagious diseases among labourers from any plantations in the country.

Labourers buy their own provisions from the nearest markets and prepare their own food. There is, therefore, no control over their dietary. On the whole, labourers keep good health.

24. The planters pay the nearest Government hospitals at a certain fixed rate proportionate to the area of their estates. Government hospitals are generally engaged in the treatment of these labourers.

Perhaps with the object of attracting more and more labour attempts by some planters are being made in that direction.

Under the Coorg Labour Act sufficient provision is made for official supervision.

29. (ii) Hookworm and malaria are the most prevailing diseases among labourers.

### VI.—Education.

No facilities for education of labourers in plantations seem to have been introduced so far, and since labourers form a floating population no such arrangement can reasonably be expected to be made, and the purpose will be very little served.

### VII and VIII.—Safety and Workmen's Compensation.

No accidents of the kind that happen generally in factories are likely to happen in open plantations. Hence no question of compensation is ever likely to arise.

**IX.—Hours.**

(D) 78. Normally 8 hours a day, with one day's leisure in the week. Generally, when task works are given labourers as a rule finish such works sooner and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

**XII.—Wages.**

101. Wages are fixed by agreements.

107. At the end of each season (cultivation and fruit gathering) pay is distributed after deducting advances.

**XV.—Industrial Disputes.**

So far as planting industries are concerned, no dispute or strike of any kind has arisen in any plantation in Coorg. This only goes to show the happy relationship that exists between the employers and the employees.

**XVI.—Law of Master and Servant.**

131. This Act must go. It is only in the kind, sympathetic and humane treatment of labourers, prompt and regular payments, timely and seasonal sending them to their native places, non-taking of undue advantage of the labourers' ignorance and illiteracy, these alone should induce labourers to be attached to their employers. No amount of legislation will avail. The laws are there only to be observed in their breaches by the labourers.

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