

REPORT  
ON  
LABOUR CONDITIONS  
IN INDIA

*By*  
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AND  
J. HALLSWORTH.

(British Trades Union Congress Delegation to India)  
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## INTRODUCTION

THE two delegates to India left London on the 10th and arrived in Bombay on November 25, 1927. They proceeded to Cawnpore the same day, reaching there the following evening just in time for the commencement of the All-India Trades Union Congress, which they addressed as fraternal delegates from the British Trades Union Congress. In the intervals of the Congress proceedings meetings with the Congress Executive Council took place, at which arrangements were made for the tour of investigation into labour conditions which the delegates were instructed to make by resolution of the British Congress held at Edinburgh, September, 1927.

The delegates resumed their journey from Cawnpore on November 30, and from that date until March 17, 1928, travelled in India (and one of them in Ceylon) about 14,000 miles, so that, including the journey out to Bombay and the return to London, where the delegates arrived on March 31, the aggregate distance covered was between 27,000 and 28,000 miles. In the course of the tour (shown on the outline map on opposite page) the delegates not only inspected textile mills, railway workshops and offices, engineering plants and foundries, building works and wood-working shops, hydro-electric power stations, water and irrigation works, printing offices, coal and gold fields, oil-fields and refineries, tea gardens and factories, rubber plantations, peasant villages, lodging-houses of seamen and port workers, hospitals and dispensaries, and other places, and investigated the conditions in each case, but made a special point of seeing at first hand at every place visited the housing, bazaar and other social conditions of the workers. No opportunity was lost of visiting trade union offices, executives, or conferences, or of addressing meetings of workers, colleges and universities and others on the need for and value of trade union organisation. Everywhere the message of unity was listened to eagerly at meetings varying in size from a few hundreds to several thousands of persons, some reaching 10,000 to 20,000 in big centres of employment. From time to time the itinerary of the tour had to be changed in order to comply with requests for further meetings, which lasted sometimes for several hours, particularly when more than one translation was required. The great majority of the meetings were held out of doors, and, in contrast to such gatherings in our own country, the audience for the most part squatted on the ground around an improvised platform, with generally an outer ring of listeners standing.

The results of the delegates' experiences and investigations are embodied in the following pages of this Report. It is not suggested that what is thus constituted an exhaustive treatment of the subject of labour and living conditions in such a vast country as India. A very much longer stay than could be made by a delegation would be required for a complete survey, and, in any case, the necessary information is not as yet available to anybody. Statistics of all kinds of character are abundant in India, but the recorded data having sp

to labour conditions are scanty and in greater or less degree incomplete. In connection with what follows every effort has been made to elicit reliable information from the workers themselves and/or their representatives and to supplement the evidence thus gained by such official data as seemed suitable for the purpose in view.

Just as the delegation was the first one to India representative of the British Trade Union Movement as a whole, so it is believed that this Report, whatever may be its limitations or imperfections, is the first to be made on the subject of general labour conditions in that country, and it is modestly submitted to the British Trades Union Congress as the beginning of a continuing study of the life and labour of the working class in the East, which are certain to affect profoundly the position of workers in the Western world.

The first Section of the Report is devoted to a general statement on labour and social conditions and the state of Trade Union organisation; the next five Sections deal with the wages and hours of labour in various industries; in the seventh Section a statement is made on India's need of organising assistance and a plea submitted to the British Trade Union Movement to help in meeting that need; and the Report concludes with selected photographs illustrating matters dealt with in the various Sections.

(Signed)

A. A. PURCELL }  
J. HALLSWORTH } *Delegates.*

London, *March* 31, 1928.

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