

New Delhi Branch.  
-----Report for May 1929.Contents.

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GENERAL.

As indicated at page 9 of this office report for April 1929 the Viceroy addressed a joint sitting of both houses of the Indian legislature on the 12th April 1929. He said that he had two objects in view in summoning a joint meeting; the first was to associate himself with the universal resentment felt at the outrage perpetrated in that House 4 days ago, and secondly to give the decision of his Government in view of the situation created by the ruling of the President of the Legislative Assembly in regard to the discussion ~~of~~ the House on the Public Safety Bill. After announcing that the Government will not be deterred by such futile and insensit~~ive~~ acts as bomb-throwing from the discharge of its duty, to take whatever measures may seem right and necessary for the protection of the law abiding citizens, he turned to the second point and said that he was satisfied that Mr. Patel's was not the proper interpretation of the rules. He therefore proposed to amend the rules so as to take away from the President the power to interrupt the normal course of legislation. Thirdly, since the Government felt it imperatively necessary for them to have the powers proposed in the Public Safety Bill, and since the passage of that Bill was ~~stopped~~ stopped by Mr. Patel, the Viceroy announced his decision to obtain these powers by the issue of an ordinance embodying the provisions of the Bill. The Ordinance was issued on the 13th April by a Gazette of India Extraordinary.

Though this was more ~~than~~ expected, public indignation, as represented by the press and the platform, seems to be running very high against th~~e~~ action of the Government. For the moment however, the legislators at Delhi were busy packing and reserving their seats in the trains when the Viceroy was making his announcement. Both the Houses were adjourned sine die after Lord Irwin's

speech, and by the 15th of April, New Delhi had once again become what it was before November -- a town of tombs and jackals.

Immediately after the adjournment of the Houses, the Government of India and the <sup>public</sup> offices moved up to Simla and thus political interest also has migrated to the hills. One of the first questions on which the Government will soon have to make up their minds is the question of the prolongation of the life of the present houses. As many members of the Simon Central Committee in India pressed for such a prolongation, <sup>but</sup> it was not ~~deemed~~ expedient to make any announcement at Delhi; and it is not unlikely that the Central Government wanted to "tater le terrain" in some of the provinces before committing the <sup>itself</sup> ~~Central~~ ~~Legislature~~ either way. In Bengal and Assam, where general elections are being held, the swarajists appear to be coming back in strong numbers, thus indicating that if the Central Legislature were to be dissolved at the end of its due period and a general election held, then many of the Simonites would be ejected from their seats. This, according to newspaper reports, has once again set the Government of India furiously to think, and though Lord Irwin is said to be against any prolongation of the life of the sitting houses, he may at last be compelled to yield to the wishes of Mr. Crerar of the Home Department who seems to think that a prolongation is imperatively necessary.

In spite of this <sup>various</sup> apparent union between the political parties of India as against the Government, it is nevertheless becoming increasingly clear that fissures are beginning to appear in the ranks of the swarajists, the independents and the nationalists. Details of Indian party politics may have no interest for Geneva, and therefore I do not go into the differences that have arisen in all these political circles, but I must give it as my impression that though the swarajist party

may be a little weakened ~~after~~ if a general election takes place, that will not by any means reduce the popular opposition to the Government.

The investigation of the Meerut communist case has not yet come to a close. The trial of the prisoners, therefore, has not yet commenced, and what with the excessive heat of the plains during ~~the~~ this season, and what with the meagre provisions made in the jails for their comfort, some of the prisoners were taken ill and have been transferred to Dehra Dun, while nothing can authoritatively be stated as to the progress of the investigation, it would yet appear, judged from the startling newspaper reports regarding the discovery of more bombs and more would-be assassins, that the C.I.D. are hot upon the trail ~~and the~~ of a vast conspiracy ~~the~~ with ramifications all over northern India. A comic interlude of the Meerut trial is that one of the prisoners -- Shaukat Usmani -- has been set up by the communist party of Great Britain as a rival candidate for Sir John Simon at Spen Valley.

The Butler Committee which was appointed to report upon the relations between Indian (Native) States and the Government of India has now presented its report. Its principal recommendation that the princes should have direct relation with the Crown has gone much against the trend <sup>of the political classes</sup> of the political classes in India, and there is no denying that this recommendation will prove a serious obstacle to the formation of a united and consolidated India which shall contain both British India and the Native States. Criticism of the Butler Committee's report runs principally along this line, -- that the Committee intend to ~~set~~ a distinct cleavage between the two elements in Indian political society and thereby to perpetuate the British power in India with the help of the princes and as against the wishes of the people. Going into details, and apart from this particular interpretation of the desire of the Butler Committee, it seems to be on the whole a

a sensible report. A summary of the main recommendations is given elsewhere.

No announcement has yet been made as regards the Whitley Commission. And even as regards the 12th International Labour Conference the names of the members of the delegation were announced only so late as the 18th April 1929. There ~~were~~, of course, some occult reasons for this, which I have already explained.

The period under report has not by any means witnessed the emergence of industrial peace either in Bombay or in Jamshedpur. After the publication of the Favett report, and when a joint conference was still sitting to elaborate some of its proposals, ~~the~~ members of the newly-started Girni Kamgar Union started a strike in Bombay (towards the end of April), which by now has emptied half the mills of their working population. A forty-day old strike is still continuing among the tin plate workers at Jamshedpur, and there have been other alarms and excursions in Madras, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Nagpur, Poona and Cawnpore.

P.A.M

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The Indian States Committee Report.

The report of the Indian States Committee (Butler Committee) which was signed on the 14th February 1929, has been published on the 16th April. It is a unanimously signed document running to 54 pages. The Committee consisted of Sir Harcourt Butler, Mr. Sidney Peel and Mr. W. S. Holdsworth. Its terms of reference were :-

(1) To report upon the relationship between the Paramount Power and Indian States, with particular reference to the rights, and obligations arising from (a) treaties, engagements and sanads and (b) usage, sufferance and other causes, and (2) to inquire into <sup>the</sup> financial and economic relations between British India and the States and to make any recommendations that the Committee may consider desirable or necessary for their more satisfactory adjustment.

Part (1) refers only to the existing relationship between the Paramount Power and the States. Part (2) refers not only to the existing financial and economic relations between British India and the States but also invites the Committee to make recommendations.

The Committee visited fifteen States, travelled altogether 8,000 miles in India and examined 48 witnesses. Associations purporting to represent subjects of States approached the Committee with grievances and the Committee while declining to hear them on the ground that it would be outside the terms of reference, allowed them to put in written statements.

Indian States, as they exist today fall into three distinct classes: Firstly, States, the rules of which are members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right; secondly, States

the rulers of which are represented in the Chamber by twelve members of their order elected by themselves; and thirdly, estates jagirdars and others.

Of the 108 Princes in class I, 30 have established Legislative Councils, most of which are at present of a consultative nature. Only 40 have constituted high courts more or less on British Indian models. Thirty-four have separated executive from judicial functions; 56 have a fixed privy purse; 46 have started a regular graded civil list of officials and 54 have pension or provident schemes. Some of these reforms are still, no doubt, inchoate or on paper, and some States are still backward, but a sense of responsibility to their people is spreading among all States and growing year by year. A new spirit is abroad; conditions have very largely changed in the last 20 years. The proposals of the Committee are concerned mainly with classes 1 and 2.

~~The main points of the report are~~

The report is divided into five sections of which the following is the Committee's own summary:-

"There are two Indias under different political systems, British India and the Indian States. The latter differ so greatly among themselves that a uniform treatment of them is difficult, if not impossible. Treaties, engagements and sanads where they exist, are of continuing valid force, but have necessarily been supplemented and illumined by political practice, to meet the changing conditions in the moving world. We have traced and analysed the growth of British Paramountcy; though it has already lost, and should continue to lose, its arbitrary character in full and open discussions between the Princes and the Political Department. But it must continue to be paramount, and therefore it must be left free to meet unforeseen circumstances as they arise.



"We find that the relationship between the Princes and the Paramount Power, has, on the whole, been harmonious and satisfactory. No practical proposals for new machinery have been placed before us; but we have indicated the changes in procedure based on experience, which should lead to the removal of grievances and the settlement of outstanding questions. In particular, we recommend that the Viceroy and not the Governor General in Council should in future be the agent of the Crown in its relations with the Princes and that important matters of dispute between the States themselves, between the States and the Paramount Power, and ~~xxx~~ between the States and British-India should be referred to independent committees for advice.

"We have suggested methods for recruiting and training officers of the Political Department to which we attach great importance. We have indicated the ways of adjusting political and economic relations between British-India and the States.

"We hold that the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Princes should not be transferred, without the agreement of the latter, to a new Government in British-India responsible to an Indian legislature. But we have left the door open for constitutional developments in future.

"While impressed with the need for great caution in dealing with a body so heterogeneous as Indian Princes, so conservative, so sensitive, so tenacious ~~and~~ of internal sovereignty, we confess that our imagination ~~x~~ is powerfully affected by the stirrings of a new life, and new hopes in the States, by the progress already achieved and by possibilities of the future. To that future, we can merely open a vista. Our terms of reference do not invite us to survey the distant hills and valleys that lead to them, but we are confident that the Princes who, in war and peace, have already rendered such signal service, will play a worthy and illustrious part in the development of India and the Empire".

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The Bombay Riots Enquiry Committee.

In the monthly report of this office for February 1929 (at pages 25-27) was given a short account of the riots which broke out in Bombay as a bye-product of the Textile strike. In response to a widely felt desire that there should be a public enquiry both into the causes of the riots and into the methods adopted by the government to quell them, it was announced in the Bombay Legislative Council on 7-3-1929 that a Committee would be appointed for the purpose. The personnel of the Committee, as announced in the Times of India of 20-4-1929, is as follows:-

Chairman: Mr. P.E. Percival, C.I.E., I.C.S.,

Members: Mr. Mirza Ali Mahommad Khan, and  
Mr. Krishnalal M. Jhaveri.

Secretary: Mr. E. W. Trotman, I.C.S.

The terms of reference are "to enquire into the recent disturbances in Bombay, their causes and origins, the course which they took, and the measures adopted by Government to suppress them, and to make recommendations". A fairly comprehensive questionnaire of 26 questions has also been issued, of which the first 8 deal with the causes and origins of the disturbances. Questions 9 to 14 deal with criticisms of the action of the police, the military and the Government. The rest deal with suggestions for future action. All persons who wish to give evidence are asked to send in their names to the Secretary; and the taking of oral evidence is expected to commence as from 21-5-1929, unless, indeed, the recrudescence of riots in April-May 1929 continues to that date, in which case, a postponement of the enquiry till normal conditions are restored is likely.

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References to the I.L.O.

New Delhi Communiqués:- The communiqués issued by this office on the agenda of the twelfth Conference, and summarising the four ~~Congress~~ Reports, have received wide publicity. Four cuttings (the Hindu, 3-5-1929; the Statesman, 4-5-1929; the Pioneer, 5-5-1929; and the Times of India, 6-5-1929) are sent which reproduce the communiqué summarising the agenda. The longer communiqués on the separate items of the Conference have also received wide publicity. It may be pointed out that some of these communiqués are rather long, covering more than a column of a closely printed daily newspaper, but that they have nevertheless received generous treatment from the Indian press. (See cuttings from the Pioneer, 20-4-1929; the Madras Mail, 13-5-1929; the Pioneer, 15-5-1929; the Statesman, 15-5-1929, etc).

The Statesman of 8-5-1929 publishes our summary of the two blue reports of the 12th Conference. Condensed forms of this communiqué have also been published in other papers.

Dr. Pillai's reply to Lord Lytton's report <sup>of the</sup> Geneva expenditure (also issued as a communiqué through the courtesy of the Associated Press of India), has also been prominently featured by the press. It is a pretty long statement coming up to nearly a column and three quarters in the 'Pioneer', which has published it under the caption "Hardest Worked Officials; Tribute to the International Labour Office" (3-5-1929). The same interview is reproduced in the Hindu, 2-5-1929; the Statesman, 3-5-1929; the Times of India, 4-5-1929, and other papers.

There are several references in the press to the Indian Delegation for the 12th Conference. The office is thus kept perpetually before the minds of Indian newspaper readers.

The Hindu, 16-5-1929, publishes the summary of a speech by Mr. C. F. Andrews at Montreal, in the course of which he says that the League of Nations and the I.L.O. have been of great help to India in solving her labour problems. The Geneva correspondent of the Hindu, <sup>(issue of 12-4-29),</sup> has a long letter on the Hours Convention and the I.L.O. budget in which he summarises the British attitude towards the I.L.O. at the last meeting of the Governing Body. He says: "Once more, the British Government on the very eve of the general election has earned the reputation of being reactionary at Geneva. Once more its attempt to strike a blow at I.L.O. ... .. has been foiled. And once more ~~Monsieur~~ Monsieur Albert Thomas has won a victory notwithstanding the usual threat to his budget".

Among the special articles that have appeared in the Indian press which have a close bearing on the I.L.O. may be mentioned the following:-

- (1) a fairly long article on "Forced Labour" -- a report from Geneva, by "Sir Selwyn Fremantle" in the Statesman of 2-5-1929;
- (2) an article on "India and International Organisations" by the London correspondent of the Hindustan Times, in its issue of 28-4-1929 deals principally with the International Labour Conferences;
- (3) an exclusive article to the Hindustan Times of 13-5-29 on "India and the International Labour Organisation", deals, in the course of its 3½ columns, with many aspects of the I.L.O.'s work in relation to India. The article was contributed by the principal assistant of the New Delhi Office;
- (4) the March-April number (Volume II, No.5) of the Indian Labour Review has an article of 4 pages entitled "Bond or Free" -- the Problem of Forced Labour", by the principal assistant of the New Delhi Office;

(5) the April number of the Indian Review (Volume XXX, No.4) publishes a 10-column article by Dr. Pillai entitled "The World's Industrial Parliament";

(6) in the April number of the Indian Journal of Economics (Volume IX, Part 4), the leading article of 10 pages on "the I.L.O. and the Forced Labour", is ~~xxx~~ by Dr. Pillai.

Editorial comments have appeared here and there on Dr. Pillai's criticism of the Lytton Report, of which the following, from the Bengalee of 5-5-1929, is a fair specimen. Writing under the heading "the League and India", the paper ~~xxxxxxx~~ admits Dr. Pillai's arguments, in so far as ~~it~~ concerns the I.L.O., but they are inapplicable to the League of Nations as a whole. The League, according to the paper, is mainly a European League and is obsessed with European questions. The paper fails to understand why in matters of health, intellectual co-operation, social and humanitarian work, etc., on which a large proportion of the League's money is spent, India should receive such scant attention. Similarly in the matter of traffic in women and children the League's activities do not extend to Asia. The paper concludes by observing that if the present apathy continues, India will have to follow the example of Brazil and withdraw from the League.

A report on "Seamen in Bombay" published in 1928 by Mr. N.M.Joshi on behalf of the Bombay Social Service League contains in its appendices 3 and 4 the draft conventions and recommendations on seamen adopted by the I.L.O. at its 2nd, 3rd and 9th Conferences and the resolutions passed in the Legislative Assembly on the Geneva decisions.

The "Leader" of Allahabad (31-3-1929) publishes a letter from Mr. N.M.Joshi on the proposed Asiatic Labour Congress. The letter gives in full the memorandum issued under the joint signatures of Mr. Chaman Lall (represented by Mr. Bakhale) and Mr. Yunikubo, Indian and Japanese workers' delegates respectively

in 1928, regarding the proposal to hold an Asiatic Labour Conference, and refers to the resolutions passed at the 1928 session of the A.I.T.U.C. endorsing the memorandum. It continues that it has been found impossible to conv~~o~~ke the conference this year and therefore announces that it will be held in April 1930 and that it will be presided over by Mr. Suzuki. Mr. Joshi's letter invites suggestions and co-operation from all Asiatic Trade Unions.

1. P. M.

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NATIONAL LABOUR LEGISLATION.

The Trade Disputes Bill as amended by the Select Committee was passed by the Indian Legislative Assembly on the 8th April 1929 (see page 6 of this office report for April 1929), and was agreed to by the Council of State on the 11th April ~~as~~ exactly as it was sent up to it from the lower house. On the 12th April 1929 the assent of the Governor General was received, and the Trade Disputes Act, (VII of 1929) was promulgated for ~~the~~ general information in the Gazette of India of April 20, 1929. **By** a notification appearing in the Gazette of India Extraordinary of the 8th May 1929, the Government has appointed 8-5-1929 as the date on which the Act shall come into force in India.

The Bombay Government Gazette Extraordinary of 11-5-1929 publishes, as a notification from the General Department, and under section 19 of the Trade Disputes Act, rules for the purpose of giving effect to the said Act. These rules are very simple in character and relate principally to the forms to be employed, to keep <sup>ing</sup> information <sup>elicited in the course of the enquiry</sup> confidential, and to the engagement of legal representatives.

Public Safety Ordinance.

Reference has already been made, in the course of the General section of this report, to the promulgation of this ordinance by a Gazette of India Extraordinary of the 13th April 1929. One of the enclosed cuttings (Times of India, 15-4-1929) gives in full the Viceroy's statement attached to the ordinance.

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*Conditions of Labour.*

Industrial Worker in South India.

A series of 9 carefully written articles on the "Industrial worker in South India" has appeared in the Hindu of Madras during the latter half of April (20th, 24th, 25th, 27th and 29th April) and the first half of May (3rd, 4th, 7th and 11th May). The articles are so packed with information that no summary is attempted here. As an indication of what the articles deal with, it may be mentioned that the first examines the sources and material available for the study of the subject; the second estimates the number of the various classes of workers, and in particular, of that class of workers who are self-employed, like the handloom worker who does not work for a master; the conditions of the unorganised textile worker are further <sup>studied</sup> stated in the ~~third~~ <sup>third</sup> article; and in the fourth the case of the urban skilled labourer -- the mat, <sup>and</sup> the shoe maker, the tanner, etc., -- is <sup>studied</sup> stated and attention is drawn to certain factors which have an important bearing on their earnings. The conditions of life of these workers -- housing, clothing, ornaments, etc., are described in the fifth article; and in the sixth, certain measures are suggested to promote their well-being. Of special interest in this connection are the remarks on the relation between wages and prices. Articles 7 and 8 are devoted to skilled and unskilled factory labour respectively, and article 9, the last of the series, deals with the relations between workers and employers.

Commenting on these articles, the Hindu, in its leading article of 11-5-1929, remarks that the survey presented in these articles is an able representation of the facts as they exist, a clear analysis of the problem which the employer, as well as the State, is faced with. Among the points which emerge from the study is one on which special attention has to be bestowed.



The condition of labour, whether in the factory or in the worker's own cottage, are not much as we might look on with complacency. ~~The~~ An average ~~market~~ wage -- using that term to mean the average of the rates which the majority of the workers in a particular line, neither the pre-eminently skilled nor the specially un-skilled, receive -- which, though it differs slightly from one line to another, never much exceeds the barest minimum necessary for subsistence; a regime tolerant of much absenteeism: long hours not very rigorously enforced: occasional provision for the health of operatives; very rare arrangements for their education or housing; imperfect systems for rewarding hard work or successful results: liberal holidays at the workmen's expense -- these are their broad outlines. The hours of work are long, but such is the plight of labour today that even if they are not, it is doubtful if labour will benefit by shorter hours. The workers, not knowing how to employ their leisure usefully, fritter it away in idle or unwholesome pastimes.

Analysing the strikes in the Madras Presidency, the writer says: "all but two strikes sprang from genuine economic grievances -- inadequate wages, the absence of any provision such as bonus or gratuity, the grim prospect of retrenchment". it is noteworthy that even these two exceptions were cases where men struck work, not because they fell dupes to political agitators, but because of resentment at the dismissal of fellow-workmen. Neither of the exceptions, he adds, was a case of "mere perverse insubordination to authority."

Bombay Port Trust and Labour.

The Government of Bombay have nominated a Labour representative on the Bombay Port Trust, "with a view to meeting the growing and legitimate demand of Labour". It is understood that Syed Munawar, B.A., M.L.C., Secretary to the Indian Seamen's Union, Bombay has been chosen as the Workers' representative on the Port Trust.

... ..

The Corporation of Madras and Minimum Wages.

At the meeting of the Madras Corporation held on 16-4-1929 the proposal to grant a minimum wage of Rs. 20 per month to all employees was taken up for discussion. After some debating, the question was remitted to the Standing Committee of the Corporation (Taxation and Finance) for its consideration and for finding ~~the~~ out the ways and means to find the additional amounts that may be needed if the proposal is adopted.

(The Hindu, 17-4-1929).

... ..

The Hindu of 11-5-1929 reproduces the substance of an article by Miss Matheson in the "National Christian Council Review" on <sup>the</sup> application of the Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery <sup>concerning</sup> to India.

... ..

Freedom of Association in Mysore.

At the request of the miners in the Kolar Gold Fields in Mysore State, Mr. E. Kirk, the Editor of the Indian Labour Review of Coimbatore, made several visits to the mining area in March-April with the idea of starting a Union. His meetings were closely watched by the Police, and on the 6th April 1929,

when Mr. Kirk and Mr. P.M.Sarma (Secretary of the Bangalore Textile Labour Union) were proceeding to the Gold Fields for getting the draft constitution of the proposed Kolar Gold Fields Miners' Union passed by the men, prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code were served on them on the ground that their acts were likely to lead to breach of the peace (Hindu, 10-4-1929). Mr. Kirk~~xx~~ contributes an article on "Mysore and Labour" to the Madras "Hindu" of 6-5-1929, in which he condemns the Mysore Government's attitude towards Trade Unionism both in Bangalore and in the Kolar Fields. "The Government has nothing to say against the Bangalore mill owners combining for their own interests, nor against the mining officials in the Gold Fields doing the same but it is reluctant to allow a similar liberty without any kind of interference, x to workers. .... In Bangalore, the Textile Union has been prohibited from holding meetings for a period and its secretary has been the recipient of orders under Criminal Procedure Code Section 144". But the Bangalore Minerva Mills are members of the Bombay Millowners' Association, and the five separate mines in Kolar are organised into a kind of union, with ~~the~~ president and full time secretary". That labour is a factor to be reckoned with in the state is clear from the fact that a Department of Industries and Commerce has recently been created, and that the Director of this Department is also the Commissioner of Labour. There is also a Factory Act and a Workmen's Compensation Act in the State; but no Trade Union legislation of any kind. He argues that Mysore is much behind China in this respect, and pleads for the introduction of Trade Union legislation in the State, and for an invitation to be extended to the Royal Commission on Indian Labour to enquire into Mysore labour conditions as well. A meeting of the workers in Mysore, according to the March-April

issue of the Indian Labour ~~Review~~, has already passed a resolution for bringing Mysore also within the scope of the Whitley Commission's enquiry. An editorial note in the Hindustan Times of 26-4-1929 condemns Lord Winterton's statement in the House of Commons on 22-4-1929 excluding the Indian States from the scope of the Whitley Commission, and urges that the improvement of Indian labour conditions will be difficult if common standards cannot be enforced over the whole country.

... ..

#### The Bengal Labour Conference.

The newspapers announce that the Bengal Labour Conference commenced its sittings on 13-5-1929, when Mr. Varma Das was elected to the chair. The chairman of the Reception Committee is Mr. K.C.Roy Chowdhary, a former labour delegate to the International Labour Conference of 1923. Mr. Chowdhary condemned the Bombay strikes as anti-social and anti-national, and referred to the Indian Jute Mills Association's proposal for a 60 hour week in Jute mills from July 1929.

... ..

#### The Madras Electric Tramway and Supply Corporation Employees' Union.

A general body meeting of the Union was held at Madras on the 17th April 1929 with the permanent president in the Chair. After the formal business the following resolutions were passed:-

(1) That this general body meeting of the Madras Electric Tramway and Supply Corporation Employees' Union requests the authorities to give them a general increment of their wages and salaries in view of the fact that the last general revision of wages and salaries was several years ago:

(2) That this general body meeting resolves that a system of provident fund be introduced for all employees to enable them and their families to get some consolidated sum at the time of their retirement and for their future:

(3) That this general body meeting resolves that in respect of overtime work done by all employees wages should be paid for such extra hours in accordance with the rules and practice in vogue in other mills and factories relating to the said overtime charge.

... ..

The Department of Posts and Telegraphs,

Government of India.

The report of the Department for the year 1927-28 has recently been published according to which a profit of Rs. 10,24,962 made in the previous year has been turned into a loss of Rs. 26,15,138 in 1927-28. The unsatisfactory financial returns are explained as being "largely due to an increase in working expenses consequent on the introduction during the year of a number of measures for the improvement of the scales of pay and allowances of the staff as further instalments of the main scheme formulated in the preceding year".

1929

Textile  
Lightning Strike in Bombay.

The first week of April saw definite efforts being made by both the Mill-owners' Association and the Joint Strike Committee to establish peace in the textile industry. A joint conference of the two bodies met on the 8th April 1929 to discuss a few remaining points of dispute in the light of the report of the Mill Strike Enquiry Committee. Another meeting of the Joint Conference took place on the 16th April 1929, when Mr. Lalji Pandse on behalf of the Girni Kamgar Union read out a statement regarding alleged victimisation of the members of that union by certain mills. On the 19th April 1929 the Secretary of the Girni Kamgar Union sent a letter to the Millowners' Association, in which specific complaints of victimisation were made. After some preliminary inquiries, it was mutually agreed upon that a joint meeting of the Millowners' Association and the Girni Kamgar Union should be held on the 24th April 1929 to investigate the allegations. The main point at issue was that the Wadia group of mills had discharged some 6000 old hands who were members of the Girni Kamgar Union and had engaged new hands, which action the Girni Kamgar Union attributed to the desire for victimisation. At the joint conference on the 24th April 1929 differences arose as to the method of leading <sup>in</sup> evidence. According to the owners' version, the Union representatives insisted that corroborative evidence of victimization should be taken from a large number of witnesses. This the owners' representatives would not agree to and before any decision was arrived at on this point the conference turned <sup>down</sup> to the Union's demand for a return to status quo, namely, the reinstatement of the strikers of the Wadia group. The owners' side would not concede this on the ground that it meant the turning out of the 6,000 new hands engaged in that group. Mr. R. R. Bakhale's suggestion that a

small joint subcommittee should deal with the alleged cases of victimisation, and that in the meanwhile the joint discussions on the Fawcett Committee's report should be continued was turned down by the Girni Kamgar Union.

The same evening (24-4-1929) a mass meeting of the mill-operatives under the auspices of the Girni Kamgar Union was held and it was decided that if the Girni Kamgar Union's demands were not conceded a general strike of all mills in Bombay should be declared at 12 noon on the 26th April 1929. The Bombay Textile Union, of which Mr. N.M. Joshi is the president, anxious to prevent a labour crisis, also held a meeting of mill-workers, and advised the men not to resort to a general strike, as the grievances put forward by the Girni Kamgar Union were too minor and one-sided to justify a general strike.

As a result of the intense propaganda carried <sup>on</sup> by the left wing leaders, soon after the mid-day recess hour on the 26th April 1929, about 100,000 workers downed tools, with the result that 38 out of the city's 84 mills had to close down. On the 27th April 1929 only eight mills were working, the rest having closed ~~down~~ doors, throwing out of work roughly 130,000 men (Hindustan Times, 28-4-1929). Commenting on the situation, Mr. H. P. Mody, President of the Bombay Millowners' Association in a press interview said:- "The operatives, I am in a position to state, have no grievances of any sort. If, however, they are driven out, it will be entirely by the methods of intimidation with which we have become so familiar in the last few months". (Times of India, 27-4-1929).

During the days that followed, the Bombay Textile Labour Union worked strenuously for re-establishing peace under the leadership of Mr. Bakhale, but the strike fever spread, and according to a Pioneer report of the 29th April 1929, the number of mill-hands remaining idle in Bombay was estimated at 185,000.

As the situation was taking a decided turn for the worse, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, General Member of the Bombay Government, came down from Mahabaleshwar on the 1st May 1929 and held a series of separate conferences with representatives of the Girni Kamgar Union and the Millowners' Association. According to the Statesman of the 3rd May 1929, the Girni Kamgar Union is said to have put forward the following four points for consideration: reinstatement of 6000 <sup>old</sup> hands of the Wadia mills; freedom to collect subscriptions to the union inside the mills; freedom <sup>for the</sup> to mill-committee to function; and inquiry into cases of alleged victimization. The General Member's efforts to restore peace, however, proved futile, as, on the point of the reinstatement of the 6000 <sup>old</sup> discharged workers of the Wadia mills, both the owners and the workers remained obdurate.

Meanwhile, a new danger began to dawn on the horizon. The unrest in the city, which was the outcome at first of purely economic <sup>causes</sup> reasons, began to assume a communal complexion. Though the large majority of the mill-workers had struck, <sup>work</sup> a small minority had not joined, and as this minority was composed mainly of Mahomedans, clashes began to occur between the Hindu strikers and the Muslim non-strikers. On the 29th April 1929 a Hindu-Muslim riot on a small ~~xxx~~ scale took place at Currey-road Bridge in the centre of the mill area (Times of India, 30-4-29). From the 30th April 1929 sporadic communal riots began to take place in different parts of the city. The disturbances reached their climax on the 3rd and 4th May 1929, on which days serious communal rioting marred the peace of Bombay. The Times of India of the 6th May 1929 estimates the total list of ~~xxxx~~ casualties up to the 4th May 1929 as 13 killed and 152 injured. In order to prevent any recurrence of guerilla war-fare, the Government issued on the 4th May 1929 a curfew order forbidding ~~any~~ persons to move out of doors between 8 P.M. and 6 A.M. for a period of 14 days.



These vigorous measures soon put an end to the rioting, but the differences between the millowners and the workers persisted. The Governor who had come down to Bombay on the 3rd May 1929 called a round table conference on the 4th May 1929 at which the representatives of the Girni Kamgar Union, the Bombay Textile Labour Union and the Millowners placed their respective view-points before him. At the end of two and a half hours of deliberations, no agreement was arrived at, the one stumbling block being the men's demand for the reinstatement of the 6,000 old hands discharged by the Wadia mills. His Excellency then informed the conference that he had just then received the information that the Trade Disputes Act would be brought into force on the 8th May 1929, and indicated that as the round table conference had failed, the machinery provided by the new Act would be brought into effect ~~for~~ for the settlement of the dispute. (Times of India, 9-5-1929).

The strike situation began to register some improvement from the 8th May 1929. On the 8th May there was a ~~further~~ further improvement of the situation, 42 mills being opened and working as against 32 of the previous day. Meanwhile, the millowners themselves launched a vigorous campaign to fight the strike leaders on equal terms. Distribution of leaflets, picketing the mill-gates to encourage the non-strikers to go in and the use of motor lorries to escort the loyal workers to and ~~from~~ from the mills have been some of the means employed by the millowners. A notice was also put up at many of the mills announcing that, in virtue of a decision arrived at by the Millowners' Association\*, the operatives of mills continuing to work would be paid their wages for April on May 15th. In mills which had stopped working the operatives would be paid their April wages ten days after the resumption of work.

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\*Following paragraphs 87, 88, 99 and 100 of the Fawcett Committee Report.

A fresh cause of strife was thus added, the Girni Kamgar Union arguing that it was illegal for millowners to make it a condition for payment of unclaimed wages that the men should resume work. The Standing Order on the subject of forfeiture of wages, according to the Union, referred to cases of termination of contract; and it contends that the declaration of a strike does not amount to a termination of service. The Bombay Textile Union headed by Mr. Bakhale has declared itself against the new move of the millowners, and in consequence a ~~length~~ lengthening of the strike appears to ~~be~~ be an immediate possibility. On the 17th May 1929, 40 mills were said to be working with a partial complement of workers, but large numbers of them are already reported as leaving Bombay for their villages.

Jamshedpur Tin-plate Workers.

At page 35 of this office report for January 1929 was given a short account of a conference of the Tin Plate Workers Union at Jamshedpur to consider some of their immediate demands. About 3000 men of the Tin Plate Company suddenly struck work on 8-4-1929 as a result of the alleged refusal of the Company to act in accordance with the terms of settlement arrived at with Mr. Homi, the President of the Tin Plate Workers Union. The increase of two annas per day per head promised to the hot mill men and the acting allowances agreed to be paid ~~for~~ have not been given effect to; and it is alleged that a policy of victimisation of Union officials has also been started. The idea of a deputation to the manager to discuss the workers' grievances had to be abandoned owing to the management's objection to the personnel of the workers' deputation. Feelings were thus embittered between the two parties, when on 5-4-1929, a fracas <sup>occurred</sup> ensued between the company's guards and the workers at the time ~~of~~ when pay was being distributed. This untoward incident was the immediate action for the strike. The men

have hitherto been very strong, but the management has been engaging outside labour, mostly Pathans and Peshawarees, to carry on the work in the mill. The strikers have begun picketing and there have been occasional clashes with the police. The situation has ~~been~~ become so serious that on 23-4-1929 section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code has been put into force in the disturbed area. On 25-4-1929 the strikers formulated their demands as follows:-

- (1) A general increment of 20 per cent. and a minimum rate of 10 annas for coolies and eight annas for women rejas:
- (2) Reinstatement of discharged and suspended men and full compensation for lost wages:
- (3) One month's privilege leave for monthly rated men and 15 days for daily rated men as obtaining in Tatas Iron and Steel Works:
- (4) Bonus, provident fund and water benefit schemes in consultation with the workers representatives:
- (5) six days work every week:
- (6) Acting allowance and grading posts:
- (7) Preference being given to old hands in filling vacancies:
- (8) Men transferred against their will to be restored to previous positions: and
- (9) An increase in housing accommodation or rental by 25 per cent.

The efforts of Mr. V.V.Giri to effect a compromise having proved unavailing, the same tense situation continues. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the All India Trade Union Congress, has written to them congratulating them on their firmness and promising them help.

#### An averted dispute at Ahmedabad.

The relations between the millowners and the operatives in Ahmedabad became strained towards the earlier part of this month owing to some of the demands made by the Labour Union to the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association. The Union had demanded the appointment of a Joint Committee to devise immediate

measures for the improvement of the condition of dining sheds and for the supply of drinking water. The Association at first replied that "in view of creche and other welfare activities having progressed on a satisfactory level for the last three years and in view of the growing facilities for such welfare work which are recently in progress in the mills", it did not deem it advisable to appoint a Joint Committee as asked for. The Union replied that it will be obliged to support the suspension of work, after 24 hours' notice, if no tangible steps were taken within three days regarding water and seven days in the case of dining shed accommodation. The Millowners' Association replied on 8-5-1929 to the effect that immediate arrangements were being made to deal with the serious and continued shortage of water supply in the mills. The threatened strike has therefore not come off; but since the millowners challenge the authority of the Union to declare a strike after 24 hours' notice, the Union complained that the Association has not been complying with the awards of the Joint Arbitration Board since 1921, and that is why they are compelled to assert their right to strike. Beyond an academic warfare on this subject, no trouble is expected at Ahmedabad.

#### Strikes at Bangalore.

The Minerva Mills at Bangalore stopped work on the morning of 3-4-1929, in consequence of a dispute with its labour force regarding the dismissal of one of the workers, and the general request of all the workers that Sunday should be ~~xxxx~~ declared a holiday. In connection with the lock-out ten millhands were arrested on 6-4-1929 and there were clashes between the police and the locked-out workers. The mills were re-opened on 8-4-1929, but the workers were not willing to recommence work till a decision was arrived at on the points at issue and on

16-4-1929 fresh attempts were made to bring about a settlement, but the action of the Mysore Government in serving prohibitory orders on Mr. Kirk and Mr. Sarma had stiffened <sup>the</sup> opposition, with the result that the workers in the Maharaja Mills, under the same management as the Minerva Mills, went on a sympathetic strike. By 19-4-1929 the management having promised generous treatment, nearly 50 per cent of the workmen of the Minerva Mills returned to work. But there were still stray cases of intimidation and assault. On 6-5-1929 again, there was another strike in the Minerva Mills, this time as a protest against the victimisation of 35 labourers, who took a prominent part during the earlier lock-out; and the strikers have been joined by some 3,000 workers of the Maharaja Mill also. Till the date of writing there has been no resumption of work.

#### Other stoppages of Work.

##### Choolai Mill Strike, Madras.

A strike originated in the Choolai Mill, Madras in the closing week of March. The men demanded an increase in wages and some concessions with regard to privilege leave, both of which demands the management did not concede. The strike lasted for about a fortnight till 2-4-1929. The whole question at issue has been referred to the decision of the Labour Commissioner, Madras, and the management have granted a seven per cent increase in wages as also certain privilege leave facilities as from 1929.

##### Minor Strikes.

After striking work for 12 days, the sweepers of Nagpur have resumed work on 13-4-1929 on an assurance from the Municipal authorities that their grievances would be considered and redressed soon in a round table conference. Those of the

strikers who had been imprisoned for joining the strike have been released as a measure of clemency. (Pioneer, 17-4-1929).

... ..

The strike of the workers in the Ramgopal Mills, Secunderabad, which led to the closing of the mill on 16-4-1929 terminated on 25-4-1929, when the men unconditionally submitted and returned to work. One of the conditions imposed upon them is that they should not join any union. No trade union is to be recognised and men joining any union are liable to be dismissed. Dismissal and fines will be entirely at the discretion of the manager and the men are not to go on strike in future on any account. (Pioneer 27-4-29)

... ..

There was a very shortlived strike among the Poona sweepers and municipal scavengers consequent upon attempts to improve their methods of work, which came to an end by 4-4-1929.

... ..

During the earlier part of April 1929, the management of Staines and Mall Mills (Weavers' section), <sup>Coimbatore,</sup> insisted on the workers signing an agreement for reduced wages, and on their refusal, the weaving section was closed. The workers complain that the wages offered to the weavers who worked on double looms under the new scheme were very low and the Madras Labour Commissioner has been requested to intervene in the dispute.

(Hindu, 19-4-1929).

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INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION.  
Employers' Organisations  
International Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. D. S. Erulkar, Managing Director of the Scindia Steamship Navigation Company, Ltd., has been elected to represent India officially for the first time at the meeting of Council of the International Chamber of Commerce.

(Pioneer, 13-4-1929).

... ..

South Indian Chamber of Commerce and  
Sickness Insurance.

At the February-March 1929 meeting of the South Indian Chamber of Commerce, among other matters, the question of a sickness insurance scheme for Indian workers was considered by that body. The Government of Madras, Public Works and Labour Department, forwarded to the South Indian Chamber of Commerce copy of a letter from the Government of India requesting to be furnished with the views of the Chamber on the scheme to provide sickness insurance. Sickness insurance laws are now in force in nearly every leading country and the Committee of the Chamber was satisfied that the need of Indian workers for a scheme of compulsory health insurance in selected trades and industries is in no way less than the need of workers in other countries, and that it would not be wise to wait till the industry or enterprise can offer to shoulder the burden. It was also observed that though some large industrial concerns in Madras gave free medical attendance to their employees there is at present nothing like a system of boarding allowance during sickness.

The Committee of the South Indian Chamber recommended legislation in the first instance in respect of factories employing not less than 50 workmen, mines coming under the

Indian Mines Act, works and enterprises and transport services employing not less than 50 persons for six months or more, and large scale plantations employing not less than 100 persons. The Committee of the Chamber, however, suggested the reservation of discretionary powers to exempt concerns which are not in a satisfactory condition as well as to proceed against any corresponding reduction of wages to make good the employers' contribution to the Sickness Insurance Fund. It was also shown that practical difficulties like the migratory habits of labourers, lack of medical practitioners in rural parts, unwillingness of labour to contribute and the lack of a machinery of administration like registered Trade Unions all over the country could be eventually overcome.

(Hindu, 6-4-1929).

... ..

Indian Chamber of Commerce, Tuticorin.

The Indian Chamber of Commerce, Tuticorin held its annual meeting at Tuticorin on 7-4-1929 under the presidentship of Mr. R.K. Shanmukham Chetty, M.L.A. In the course of his address Mr. Chetty made a reference to the problem of the prevention of accidents while loading and unloading ships. The following is a relevant extract:-

"In the report of your committee attention is drawn to the fact that accidents to which workers are exposed while loading or unloading vessels on the roadside are getting very numerous and that it is necessary to obtain statutory protection for labourers on board ships. In this connection it will interest you to know that this was one of the subjects that was considered in the last International Labour Conference at Geneva. The question of accidents to labourers while loading and unloading was on the agenda for the last conference, and in the committee to which this question was referred there was a very interesting



and heated discussion. Our friend Mr. Narottam Morajjee represented the Indian employers on this committee. After a very full discussion a questionnaire was drafted and this was approved in the final conference. In accordance with the procedure of the International Labour Conference the discussion that took place last year was the first discussion in which questionnaires to the various Governments were drafted. The replies from the various Governments must have been received by the Labour Office by this time and the whole question will again be considered in the Conference this year. On the basis of the replies from the various Governments and the further discussion that would take place this year the Conference may adopt certain conventions on the subject. These conventions will then form the basis for making the necessary laws in our country. Those of you who are specially interested in this question may usefully read the proceedings of the International Labour Conference on this subject last year".

(Hindu, 8-4-1929).

South India Skin and Hide Merchants' Association.

The annual meeting of the Association was held at the Association Hall at Errabalu Chetty Street, Madras on 27-4-1929 with the president, Jamal Mohammed Sahib in the Chair.

After dealing with the general depression in the tanning industry, the president referred to labour's demands for higher wages and more facilities. In dealing with the exchange problem, he further expatiated on the connection between the exchange policy and the conditions of labour. "In the matter of exchange, there an attempt to set off the labourers against the capitalists. But any one who is in the know of things will undoubtedly be convinced that the exchange affects the labourer as it affects anybody else. The present exchange starves and throttles the source of their wages. Agriculture, industry and commerce which are the sources of their employment are suffering acutely and this is really at the bottom of almost all labour grievances. ~~After~~ getting any wages at all in the first instance, and then better wages, the industry must be good and prosperous. But when the industry ~~is~~ is on the wane, ~~then~~ to the financial policy of the government, many labourers will, in the nature of things, have to lose their employment, apart from the inability of the industries concerned to yield better wages. The prosperity of labour depends, therefore, upon the prosperity of the ~~country~~ economic life of the country and the economic prosperity of the country depends to a ~~very~~ very great deal upon righting the present wrong exchange policy of the government before anything else".

He further pleaded for protection for the tanning industry which is suffering from severe foreign competition. The present export duty of 6 per cent, which in practice means only 2 to 3 per cent. through low tariff valuation, is helpful so far

as it goes. But it is not adequate and he pleaded for its enhancement.

(The Hindu, 29-4-1929).

... ..

The Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Bombay.

The second quarterly meeting of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce was held at Bombay on 8-5-1929, with Mr. Walchand Hirachand, the president, in the chair. In his opening speech Mr. Hirachand reviewed the conditions in the textile industry and the real causes of the strikes in Bombay. He said that the mill operatives have not received any increase for some time past, and that, therefore, their demand for higher wages was both natural and just. It was equally true, that the mill industry was not at present in a position to pay the increased wages to the workers. To make it possible for the industry to earn more, he urged that "protection should be given to it for a period of 5 or 7 years by increasing the import duty ~~of~~ on foreign cloth by a further 10 percent; the workers should receive one-fourth of this 10 per cent. increase, which is roughly the proportion of wages in the ~~cost~~ of production at present". Expatriating on the demands of labour, he said that it is not possible to tide over the trouble by effecting ~~some~~ <sup>small</sup> economies here and there. The workers' sense of the amenities of life has developed in common with rest of the society and they find that their means have not proportionately increased. Complaints about victimisation, demand for recognition of trade union committees in the mills and of their right to collect union ~~x~~ contributions in the mill premises, the demand for reinstatement of old hands, ~~and~~ these and similar other causes are only ~~an~~ outward symptoms of the underlying discontent and dissatisfaction among the workers. It was understood all along that the mill workers' wage, is not, properly speaking, a living

wage at this time, particularly for a city like Bombay. Under the circumstances, it is easy to see ~~how~~ why the worker is ready to strike now and then. He finds that not only is there no hope of betterment of his prospects, but that he is on the contrary faced with a cut and condemned as inefficient. His whole struggle, therefore, today looks as if it is directed to maintain his present level of wages and to save himself from unemployment. The suggestion that the import duty should be enhanced by a further 10 per cent. of which one-fourth should be paid to labour will mean an increase of 10 per cent on the present wages level, ~~there~~ being moreover no talk of any ~~cut~~ cut. The workers should of course undertake on their part not to strike while the conditions continue to be normal, under this scheme of things, during the continuance of protection. All disputes during this period should be settled either by conciliation or by arbitration and it may also be suggested that government should have the power to withdraw protection immediately after any of the party breaks the conditions. Three-fourths of the suggested increase of 10 per cent. in the import duty should go to the industrialists, in as much as it is intended by this measure definitely to enable the industry to earn more, so that it may thrive and expand and meet the bulk of the country's demands in piece goods in the near future. A meagre and small protection which just enables the industry to live hand to mouth defeats the very purpose for which it is given. It is wrong to say that mills up-country, while they may be faring slightly better than those in Bombay, ~~should have no~~ <sup>are having</sup> prosperous times. Even they are earning only just enough to pay for interest and depreciation on replacement value, which is not at all what an industry is expected to live for.

(The Times of India, 11-5-1929).

... ..

An organisation to promote the economic interests  
of the country.

A meeting of the more important industrialists in Bombay was held on 22-3-1929 at the residence of Sir Dorab Tata, and it was resolved to form an association, the objects of which were approved as follows:-

"To promote, protect and safeguard the manufacturing industries of the country and generally to support the trade and commerce of India, and advance the economic interests of the country by all legitimate means, such as (1) to support and promote all measures calculated to foster and stimulate the manufacturing industries and trade and commerce of the country for the economic growth and well-being of India; (2) to secure for the above purpose the requisite political power and influence (3) to counteract all efforts and oppose all measures which are likely to be in any way injurious or harmful to the industrial, commercial and economic interests of India: and (4) to take steps to influence elections to the legislatures in order to secure adequate representation for the industries, trade and commerce of the country commensurate with their importance".

(Times of India, 8-5-1929).

Indian Merchants Chamber, Bombay.

Addressing the first quarterly meeting of the Indian Merchants Chamber, Bombay on 27-4-1929, Mr. L.R. Tairsee, the president of the Chamber, dealt with important problems affecting trade and industry, and referred in great detail to the labour situation and the present strike in the mill industry.

Speaking on the labour ~~question~~ situation, Mr. Tairsee declared that if the report of the Fawcett Committee emphasised one thing more than another, it was the need of a conciliatory and sympathetic attitude on the part of Capital and responsive

co-operation on the part of Labour. The latter would do well to carry the proposed scheme of the Fawcett Committee through, as the Millowners' Association had agreed to consider the possibility of accepting the Committee's recommendation to waive the cut of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in weavers' wages. If labour leaders were actuated by a genuine desire to advance the general interests of the industry, he would suggest that they should abandon all minor issues in their dealings with owners and concentrate on the straight issues of co-operating whole-heartedly with the owners in effecting the changes proposed in the industry, which are essential to its well-being. For the sake of peace in the industry, it was to be hoped that both sides would make all possible endeavours to meet each other in a spirit of toleration and good will in arriving at a solution of the difficulties that had so long beset the industry."

The speaker, continuing, said that the present wave of Swadeshi feeling afforded an excellent opportunity for the development of the textile industry, and regretted that just when the Fawcett Committee has created an atmosphere of peace and good-will, and ~~has such~~ <sup>suggested</sup> machinery for conciliation, a fresh strike should have been started on puerile grounds. He pleaded that the strike should be called off ~~and the matters~~ and the matters in dispute referred to arbitration.

(The Times of India, 30-4-1929).

11/10  
Workers' organisations

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All India Railwaymen's Federation.

\*A deputation of the All India Railwaymen's Federation led by Mr. V. V. Giri, the General Secretary of the Federation, waited upon Sir George Rainy, the Railway Member of the Government of India, at Simla on the 4th May 1929. The deputation consisted of Messrs. V.V.Giri (spokesman of the Federation), S. C. Joshi, M.L.C., Bombay, representing the G.I.P. staff; D.P. Chetti, G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union; Mathurani, President, North-west Railway Union; Krishnamurti, Secretary, Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Union; Fataukha Khan, President, Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway Employees' Union; M.N.Mukerjee, Joint Secretary, Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union; J.N.Gupta, representing Eastern Bengal Railway Employees' Union; Nadkarni, Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway Union and S. Guruswami, Assistant Secretary of the Federation.

The deputation represented over 100,000 railway workers drawn from almost all the railway systems of India. The demands formulated in the memorandum submitted by the deputation were comprehensive, touching all aspects of the grievances of Indian railwaymen. They were 24 in number falling under such heads as wages, promotion, allowances, hours of attendance, holidays, quarters, medical aid, leave, provident fund or gratuity, fines, insecurity of service, victimisation, racial discrimination, etc.

As regards the question of wages, it was stated that the present wages of subordinate railway employees were most inadequate both the minimum and the maximum; that employees were barred at the maximum of every grade for several years; that at the end of their service they did not get a living wage.

See pp 33-34 of this Office's report for March 1929

Another defect in the present wage system was the differentiation made in pay on the ground of the difference in designations, although precisely the same kind of work was done by the employees. It was also pointed out that there was no standardisation of working conditions and different railways paid different rates for employees doing precisely the same work. This was sometimes done by a difference in designations, a system which has resulted in anomalous positions which were more marked when the employees of the different railways worked at the same place.

The next point stated in the memorandum was the practice prevailing on some railways of making payments to men on rates below the sanctioned minimum of a grade. The barring of further increment on reaching the low maximum of each grade for want of vacancies in the higher grade was stated to be a serious defect in the existing wage systems of ~~the~~ different railways. The defect was further intensified by the irregular practice of filling vacancies in the higher posts, not according to seniority but according to personal considerations. Favouritism had a large scope in making such appointments. It was ~~Further~~ <sup>Therefore</sup> suggested that all existing grades should be amalgamated, there should be time scales of pay for all classes of employees, and the present minimum and maximum should be substantially increased.

The necessity ~~of~~ for introducing a time scale of pay for all employees was stated to be an admitted principle, as all employees in Government Departments were given the time scale of pay. The only question, therefore, which remained, was as to what should be the time scale for the different classes of railway employees. It was submitted that the Government of India and the Railway Board should follow the analogy of the time scale ~~of~~ for employees of corresponding status in other Government Departments working in different places in India. It was stated that the analogy of the Posts and Telegraphs Department might be very useful, as employees in that department were working throughout



the length and breadth of India and like railwaymen, belonged to a public utility service and worked on a commercial basis.

It was further pointed out that the principle of supply and demand, which was long exploded, should not be brought forward in sanctioning the time scale of pay to railwaymen.

With a view to avoid all anomalies, employees coming under various designations should be classified into unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, clerical (ordinary) and semi-technical.

Under the first category would come menials, coolies, lifters, pattern cleaners, etc.

The second class would include shop number takers, cranemen, strikers, shunting jemadars, fitters, oilers, etc.

Boiler makers, craners, fitters and carpenters are included under the class of skilled labour.

Foremen, Permanentway Inspectors, Block Inspectors and others can be grouped as highly technical. Accountants, Station Masters and Signallers were grouped under the category ~~xxx~~ of semi-technical.

It was further pointed out that as a large number of railwaymen had to work in big centres and their services were interchangeable with others working in different places it was desirable to have one uniform time scale of pay with suitable local allowances to compensate for varying conditions in different localities, ranging from 10 to 25 per cent. of the pay.

It was therefore suggested that the following should be the time scale of different classes of employees:-

Unskilled workers, Rs. 25-1-45.

Semi-skilled, Rs. 30-2-60.

Skilled, Rs. 50-5-150.

Clerical (ordinary) Rs. 50-5-175.

Semi-technical Clerks, Rs. 80-5-200.

Supervising staff for unskilled and semi-skilled, Rs-50-5-150

Supervisors for skilled staff, Rs. 150-10-350.

Superintendents, Rs. 350-25-700.

Superintendents for Clerks (ordinary), Rs. 350-25-700.

Semi-technical Clerks, Rs. 80-5-200.

Supervisors for Clerks, Rs. 250-20-450.

Superintendents for Clerks, Rs. 450-25-700.

It was further stated that the number of Supervisors' posts should be at least 20 per cent and that they should be filled according to seniority and competency. As regards Superintendents' posts, it was stated that there should be a competitive examination open to all employees with five or more years of service.

The memorandum then discussed various allowances. As regards the overtime allowance, it was stated that all employees who were required to work beyond the usual ~~time~~ duty hours should be given overtime allowance, and that no differentiation should be made between employees, classed under different designations.

As regards Sunday and holiday allowance, it was stated that under the Geneva and Washington Conventions it was necessary that every employee should be given one off day in a week. It was, however, stated that if it was not practicable to give concessions to any employee he should be compensated by a holiday allowance. It was further pointed out that work in different offices was steadily growing by reason of the increase in traffic submission of additional statistical information and want of sufficient relieving staff. There was, however, no corresponding increase in the existing staff to cope with that additional work. The staff was therefore required either to stay late or come on Sundays and other holidays to finish their work. It was requested that Sunday or holiday allowance should be sanctioned for such work.

It was also suggested that relieving clerks should be entitled to a relieving allowance all the time they were away from headquarters. The next question discussed dealt with insecurity of service and the terms of the service bond. The memorandum suggested a procedure to be adopted in cases where dismissal or discharge had to be resorted to, and requested that every employer should be regarded as permanent after two years continuous service. As regards fines debits and other punishments, the memorandum asked for the promulgation of clear and definite rules leaving no loop-hole for victimisation or personal malice. The fines fund should be under the control of representatives of employees and should be utilised only for the benefit of the workers. The memorandum further asked that no employee taking part in trade union activities should be directly or indirectly victimised, and offered definite suggestions as to how the spirit of the Washington and Geneva conventions on hours could be given effect to. In the matter of leave also, the employees claimed that they should be given the same treatment as government servants, and that the "Fundamental Rules" of the <sup>Indian</sup> government services should be extended to them.

In the matter of medical relief it was pointed out that if defective vision or any ailment of an employee was due to his work, ~~and as such~~ it should be treated as an injury under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Similarly, men such as drivers reduced for medical unfitness should be entitled to get compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Zenana Hospitals should be provided in railway colonies and compulsory counter-signature of medical certificates by railway doctors should be dispensed with.

The last question discussed in the memorandum was the recognition of unions. It was stated that all unions of staff should be duly recognised and should be entitled to represent individual cases.

In conclusion, it was stated that the memorandum was confined to the main grievances that the railwaymen in India were labouring under. It was hoped that if the principle of joint consultation was conceded, such misunderstanding in the future relations of railwaymen in India and the Railway administrations would be removed.

Sir George Rainy, replying, referred to the announcement, during his last Railway budget speech, of his proposal to set on foot a systematic examination of the service conditions of the lower-paid employees in order to ascertain what were the measures most urgently called for in order to bring about improvement. This examination would cover not only rates of pay and wages, but also reductions of working hours, extension of Provident Fund to new classes, improvement in housing conditions, etc. Only 4 out of the 24 proposals in the Memorandum now presented fell outside that enquiry; and these are the establishment of wages Boards - obviously a matter to be dealt with by the Whitley Commission -, racial discrimination, recognition of Trade Unions, and victimisation. Questions like bad climate allowances, supply of uniforms and creation of Railway institutes call for no general enquiry. The Government will inform the Railway Company Agents of their policy, which will be given effect to as funds permit. Questions like promotions, overtime and travelling and relieving allowances, and fines and debits may well form the subject of enquiry, but they are not urgent and must wait their turn. With regard to a third group of questions, including provident funds and gratuity, fines fund, free passes, periodical medical examination and medical certificates, enquiries have already been begun. A fourth group of subjects which called for no enquiry included piece-rates difficulties and the extension of medical aid. As regards the first, the Railway administrations wanted a free hand, and much has already been done <sup>and</sup> - this policy will be

continued - in the direction of extending medical benefits. In the fifth group must be reckoned the most important of the present proposals - those regarding wages and the position of the daily rated men, hours of work and the weekly rest day, insecurity of service and appeals, leave, quarters and house-rent. As regards wages, the limited funds at the disposal of the Government made it impossible for them to accept the wages classification suggested by the Deputation; nor can they adopt the principle of uniformity of pay in all railway administrations. The same remark applies to quarters and house rent, though in the matter of the provision of housing the Government's record was a very good one. As regards insecurity of service, Government were prepared to recognise that length of service does establish a claim when the question of discontinuing one's service is considered. Secondly, the power of discharge and dismissal will be limited to senior officers; and thirdly all appeals will be carefully gone into.

Sir George Rainy then said that he could speak only on behalf of the State-owned Railways, while some of the most important systems were company-owned. Nor, on the other hand, could the All India Railwaymen's Federation claim a representative character as it had a membership of only less than 100,000. He therefore argued that it was ~~unwise~~ to discuss specific proposals on the basis that either party can come to a binding agreement. "I cannot hold out hopes" said he, "that the questions you have raised can become the subject of further discussion between you and me". He therefore recommended the Unions to place their case before their respective agents.

The delegation then withdrew.

All India Trade Union Congress Committee.

A meeting of the All India Trade Union Congress Committee was held at Bombay on 27 and 28-4-1929 under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The meeting was attended by a large number of representatives of trade unions all over India. The recent arrests of alleged communists, the promulgation of the Public Safety Ordinance by H.E. the Governor-General, and the passage of the Trade Disputes Bill in the Legislative Assembly are understood to have largely figured in the discussions at the meeting which was conducted in camera.

Mr. D.B.Kulkarni moved a proposition to boycott the Royal Commission on Labour in view of the "repressive" policy of the Government of India. But the proposition did not find favour with the majority of the members present. It was then resolved that individual trade unions and their office-bearers be allowed to choose their own line of action without, however, committing the All India Trade Union Congress Committee to any definite view.

The Committee next considered proposals received from certain trade unions in the Central Provinces, Bengal and Bombay that the representatives of Labour at the ensuing International Labour Conference at Geneva - whose names have been notified recently - should be called upon to withdraw their consent to represent India at the Conference in view of the labor leaders' arrests, the promulgation of the Public Safety Ordinance and the passing of the Trade Disputes Bill. On this question also, there was a wide divergence of views and it was thrown out by a majority.

There was a strong debate as to who would represent the country at the ensuing session of the League against Imperialism in Paris in the absence of Joglekar and Thengde who were

elected at the last session of the Trade Union Congress and who were now awaiting trial at Meerut. One of the members present moved that two of the labour delegates at the Geneva Conference be requested to take the place of the two persons. One of the delegates-designate present is understood to have expressed his disinclination to avail himself of this offer and it was also pointed out that others too might not feel enthusiastic about their representation at the Paris session. The tangle was solved for the time being by choosing Mr. Purandare, a member of the B.B. and C.I. Railway Union, Bombay and keeping the other place vacant till such time as the consent of any one of the Geneva delegates was obtained.

A proposition to raise a Political Fund by trade unions for running elections to the different legislatures in the country was deferred till the next session of the Trade Union Congress at Nagpur. It was, however, agreed that meantime the trade unions be consulted as to the lines on which the elections should be conducted.

The Committee then passed a long resolution protesting against the policy of Government. The resolution read thus:-

"This meeting strongly condemns the recent indiscriminate and whole-sale arrests and house searches of a number of trade union workers as a part of the policy of repression directed by Government against the speedy growth of the trade union movement in India;

"This meeting further condemns the methods adopted by the authorities in bringing the accused from all parts of the country to an out of the way place like Meerut where they are deprived of their right to be tried by a jury and other facilities for a proper defence open to such accused in Presidency towns to which a majority of the accused belong;

"This meeting considers that the promulgation of the Public Safety Ordinance and the passage of the Trade Disputes

Bill in spite of the determined opposition of the All India Trade Union Congress and in defiance of public opinion in the country expressed both in the Legislative Assembly and outside constitute a great menace to the existence of the Labour movement in India:

"This meeting recommends to all affiliated unions of working class organisations to observe May day and to record its strong protest against the repressive policy of Government; and

"This meeting expresses its heartfelt sympathy with those under arrest and appeals to the Unions to endeavour to bring about cent per cent. organisation on trade union lines and thus protect their interests".

(The Times of India, 30-4-1929).

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Grievances of Post and Telegraph Employees.

A deputation consisting of Colonel Gidney, M.L.A., Mr. H. Suhrawardy, Member of the Council of State, Nawab Muhamad Ismail, M.L.A., and Mr. Amarnath Mal waited on Mr. Rogers, Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, on 10-4-1929 and presented to him the various grievances of the employees of the Posts and Telegraphs and the Telephone Department. The following points were discussed:-

(1) the more liberal appointment of subordinates of the electric branch to first division electrical appointments;

(2) grievances of postal recruited telegraphists which the department now hopes will in a measure be remedied:

(3) increase of pay for station service telegraphists in Madras and Karachi:

(4) prospects of pay and pension of taskwork peons and the granting of pensions to mistries, telephone operators and members of all other departments without any exception who at present are non-pensionable:



(5) grant of leave to peons (by hand durwans etc.):

(6) the administration and control of the Telephone Department to be made as far as possible a separate department. The deputation also stated that ample opportunities be afforded to the staff in the upper and the lower subordinate grades to rise to the higher grades, that house rent be given to the staff and that all sections of the Telephone Department be made a pensionable service. Mr. Rogers gave a patient hearing which lasted over an hour. He promised to give his sympathetic consideration to all points raised by the deputation.

(The Times of India, 12-4-1929).

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All India Spinners' Association.

The Council of the All India Spinning Association met at Sabarmati Ashram (Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram) on 4-4-1929. The annual report was passed and the audited accounts for 1922-28 were adopted. The progress of the Association has been steady. The total amount of public collections in 1927-28 for the Association was Rs. 3,44,612. Khaddar to the value of Rs. 24,16,382 was produced in the year under report, Tamil Nadu alone taking credit for about Rs. 10,00,000 worth of khaddar. The sales amounted to over Rs. 33,00,000. There are now 310 centres for khaddar, 156 of which are directly run by the All India Spinners' Association, the rest being private and aided organisations.

The activities of the Association cover nearly 3000 villages. The figures collected showing the number of spinners and weavers employed are not exhaustive in case of certain provinces, but details collected so far, show that no less than 90,212 spinners and 4672 weavers are employed in this movement. It is

estimated that a sum of Rs. 500,000 has been distributed as wages to spinners, and Rs. 700,000 among weavers employed in khaddar production. The number of literate young men employed in the work of organisation came up to nearly a thousand. Reference is made in the report to the success of the Khaddi centre organised by the Mysore Government, and to the possibility of similar work being undertaken by other Indian states, where the poverty of the peasantry necessitates the introduction of a widespread supplementary village industry. It is understood that the Baroda Government is contemplating experiment in this direction.

(The Hindu, 9-4-1929).

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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

The Banking Inquiry.

The personnel of the Banking Committee has not yet been announced, though according to the original plan the Central Committee was to have met at Simla by the middle of May (see April report of this office -- page 53). Sir George Schuster, the Finance Member, made a visit to Bombay in the closing week of April to personally discuss with the leaders of the commercial community important matters of policy connected with the proposed banking enquiry. At an interview granted to the Committee of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, the Finance Member announced that it was government's intention to appoint an Indian as the president of the **Banking Inquiry** Committee.

Early in April the Government of India addressed <sup>a letter</sup> to all provincial governments, in which it was stated that it had been decided to inaugurate an inquiry into the general banking organization of the country which is intimately connected with the question of the formation of a Central or Reserve Bank. For this purpose it was proposed to set up:-

(a) a Central Committee, and

(b) a number of Provincial Committees to deal with the special requirements of different provinces, such Provincial Committees to consist of persons who have knowledge of local conditions, which will be all important.

The Government of India added that to arrive at a clear definition of the scope and functions of the Central and Provincial Committees respectively, it was necessary to analyse in some detail the subjects which it was intended that the inquiry as a whole should cover, and the analysis arrived at in the course of the preliminary discussion was as follows:-

(i) The regulation of banking, with the object of protecting depositors and thereby increasing confidence in the banking system.

(ii) Banking education, with the object of providing facilities for obtaining training in banking and generally of creating a body of people who had a real knowledge of the principles and practice of banking, and

(iii) The development and extension of banking on sound lines.

The last item was capable of further sub-division as follows:-

(a) Industrial banks and credit ~~bank~~ facilities for India's main industries like cotton, jute, coal, etc.:

(b) Financing of foreign trade:

(c) Agricultural credit (including co-operative credit) and credit facilities for small industries:

(d) Mortgage banks: and

(e) Financing of internal trade in connection with all the above headings.

It was suggested that heads (i), (ii) and (iii)(b) should be definitely excluded from the purview of the Provincial Committees already described, and that head (iii)(a) might also be treated from the beginning as primarily the concern of the Central Committee, although it was recognized that there were certain aspects or sub-divisions of the subject to which the Provincial Committees might make a useful contribution. The main matter for study by the Provincial Committees would, however, be head (iii)(c)(d) and (e).

As regards the composition of the Committees, it was suggested that the Provincial Committees should contain the following personnel:-

(i) A senior officer of Government with considerable district experience and knowledge of rural economy, who would be Chairman:

(ii) A co-operative expert to provide special experience on rural agricultural credit:

- (iii) An Indian Economist:
- (iv) A representative of commerce:
- (v) A representative of the indigenous banking industry:
- (vi) A non-official with a close knowledge of the interests of the agricultural classes, who could represent their interests as the classes <sup>to</sup> required credit facilities: and
- (vii) Possibly another non-official similarly to represent small urban interests.

It was contemplated that the Central Committee which would act throughout in close contact with the Hon'ble the Finance Member, should include the following:-

- (a) Two members nominated in consultation with the Federation of Indian Chambers.
- (b) Two members nominated in consultation with the Associated Chambers of Commerce.
- (c) An Indian Economist.
- (d) A banker nominated in consultation with the Imperial Bank of India.
- (e) A banker nominated in consultation with the Association of Co-operative Banks.
- (f) A banker ~~in~~ nominated in consultation with the Exchange Banks Association.
- (g) A joint-stock banker, and
- (h) An indigenous banker.

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Bardoli Committee Report.

The report of the Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay to inquire into the complaints of the people of the Bardoli and Chorasi Talukas about the revenue assessments of the two talukas was published on 7-5-1929. (A brief report of the findings of the small non-official committee appointed

by the Nationalist party in the Bombay Legislative Council in July 1928 to inquire into the same question appears at pages 49 and 50 of the report of this office for March 1929). The present report is signed by Mr. R.S.Broomfield, I.C.S. and Mr. R.M.Maxwell, C.I.E., I.C.S., The terms of reference of the Committee were "to enquire into and report upon the complaint of the people of Bardoli and Chorasi taluqas (a) that the enhancement of revenue recently made is not warranted in terms of the Land Revenue Code, (b) that the reports accessible to the people do not contain sufficient data warranting the enhancement, and that some of the data are wrong; and in the event of it being held that the people's complaint was justified, what enhancement or reduction, if any, there should be upon the old assessment.

On the first issue the report finds that there is no legal hindrance in the Land Revenue Code to the basing of the assessment on "rental value". On the second issue, namely, that the reports accessible to the public do not contain sufficient data warranting the ~~an~~ enhancement, and that some of the data given are wrong, the report substantially endorses the contentions of the ryots. After discussing in detail the data relied upon by the settlement officer, especially as regards railways and roads, marketing facilities, the crop grown in the talukas and the extent to which such crops are expected, population, new houses, agricultural stock, the cotton boom, prices, increase in rents, etc., the report concludes that the Settlement Officer has in his earlier assessments erred on the side of optimism. The report accordingly finds neither the general increases sanctioned in the maximum rates nor the much higher increases in the case of particular villages warranted by the facts of the case. The report, therefore, has lowered the assessment in both the talukas.

As regards Bardoli Taluka the report proposes a net increase of Rs. 30,806 or 6 per cent. over the old assessment of the taluka. Compared with the second revision settlement as sanctioned, the new settlement shows a decrease of Rs. 89,379. In Chorasi taluka the report proposes a total increase of Rs. 17,842 or 5.24 per cent. over the old assessment. This is, however, Rs. 49,465 less than the second revision settlement. In the two talukas taken together, the second revision settlement already sanctioned imposed an increase of Rs. ~~22~~ 1,87,942 or 22 per cent, the proposals outlined in the report, on the other hand, allow only an increase of Rs. 48,648 or 5.7 per cent

The report has been hailed with great satisfaction by the nationalists and even such strong supporters of Government policy as the Times of India and the Statesman admit that the revenue policy ~~is~~ of the Government has been wrong in the present instance. The Bombay Government in their order on the report declare they are not prepared at the present stage to commit themselves to any questions of general principle discussed in the report, but accept the specific recommendations as to the maximum rates and groupings of villages, and will take steps to give effect to them forthwith.

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#### Revenue Members' Conference.

The Viceroy opened a conference of the Revenue Members of the various provincial governments at Simla on 11-5-1929.

The question of holding such a conference had long been under consideration, owing to the difficulties felt by all provinces to promote land revenue legislation. Originally it was argued that the various provinces should be allowed to pursue their own policy, but lately the idea of an informal conference has found favour with the government due, it is surmised, to certain recent developments as those at Bardoli.

It will be remembered that when Sir Pheroze Sethna's resolution asking for an enquiry into the land revenue question came up before the Council of State on 20-3-1929, Sir Mahomed Habibullah, speaking on behalf of the Government, declared that he had no objection to consult the provincial governments as to whether the appointment of a Committee of enquiry was necessary. The Committee that Sir Pheroze Sethna asked for was to investigate and report on the systems of land revenue in the different provinces of India, their economic effects, the changes and modifications necessary in those systems, in order to bring about the economic prosperity of the agricultural population, and any ~~other~~ financial readjustments that will be considered necessary as a result of the changes proposed. What are demanded by the public is the abolition of the practice of endowing the executive authority with arbitrary powers of arriving at the rate of settlement, and an effective voice to the provincial legislatures in determining the principle of re-settlement. The public argue that what is true of Bardoli today is true of any other ryotwari tract in India: and that the only solution which is consistent with democratic principles is the adoption of the recommendation of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament that the principle of re-settlement should be brought under the purview of legislation, thus giving the representatives of the people some real control over land revenue matters. (See the quotation at pages 50 and 51 of this office's monthly report for March 1929.

The proceedings of the land revenue conference are being kept confidential.

... ..



Economic distress in the Central Provinces of India.

The utter failure of crops in certain parts of the Central Provinces has given rise to a somewhat serious situation, and the Government have been compelled to remit the land revenue from those areas, and to start famine relief measures. According to a press communiqué appearing in the Times of India of 13-5-1929, the Government has now sanctioned the remission of the whole of the suspended rabi (spring) instalment of land revenue for 1928, amounting to nearly Rs. 1.4 millions in the districts of Jubbulpore, Saugor and Damoh. Sanction has also been given for the full suspension of the current rabi instalment of land revenue, amounting to over Rs. 1.6 millions. Nearly Rs. 250,000 have also been suspended in the Seoni district. The current rabi instalment in the Narbadda district has also been suspended to the extent of Rs. 300,000 out of a total demand of nearly Rs. 500,000. Consequent upon the general suspension of land revenue, the instalments of taccavi (agricultural loans to the peasants made by the State) due for payment with the current rabi revenue collection have also been postponed.

According to a statement showing the number of persons on relief works and in receipt of ~~gratuitous~~ gratuitous relief in different parts of the country issued by the Government of India on 16-5-1929, during the first week of May 1929, 60,031 persons were in receipt of famine relief in the United Provinces and 87,564 persons in the Central Provinces were either employed on relief works or were in receipt of gratuitous relief.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Prevention of Prostitution.

Bombay.

The Bombay Vigilance Association has been informed by the Government of Bombay that the Government was drafting a Bill embodying several amendments to the Bombay Prevention of Prostitution Act, and that the Government propose to appoint a committee consisting of the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, the Police Commissioner, Bombay, two nominees of the Bombay Vigilance Association, and the Under Secretary, Home Department, Government of Bombay, to consider the proposed amendments from a practical point of view. The Bombay Vigilance Association is strongly advocating the total suppression of all brothels in the city.

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Madras.

The Madras Government is also contemplating to enact legislation for the suppression of brothels. The Bill for the suppression of brothels and immoral traffic has reached the Select Committee stage. The Select Committee has been holding its sittings in Madras in the middle of April and examining witnesses in order to elicit public opinion on the proposed legislation.

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Opium Consumption in Bombay.

The Government of Bombay have appointed a Committee to enquire into the causes of the excessive consumption of opium in the city of Bombay and to suggest measures for checking it.

The personnel of the Committee is as follows:-

The collector of Bombay (Chairman)

Members: Dr. E. Moses, M.D., Executive Health Officer,

Bombay Municipality, Dr. D.M.Gagrat, L.M.S., the Hon. Sir  
Manmohandas Ramji, Kt., and Mr. Syed Munawar, B.A., M.L.C.  
The Committee is now holding its sittings and has drawn up a  
questionnaire for supply to individuals and public bodies desir-  
ing to give evidence before it.

(The Times of India, 8-4-1929)

MARITIME AFFAIRS.Seamen in Bombay\*

On account of the acuteness of unemployment among seamen in Bombay, the Bombay Social Service League, of which Mr. N.M. Joshi is the secretary, undertook an enquiry into their conditions of unemployment, so that measures to mitigate the evils may be suggested. The investigation was carried out by Mr. P.G. Kanekar, one of the workers of the League. The report describes the social and economic conditions of the various classes of seamen in Bombay such as Goans, Konkani Mohammadans, Kharwas, Moplahs from Malabar and South Kanara and Mohammadans from Bengal. In the course of the investigation 243 statements were recorded including statements from representatives ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ of saloon workers, ~~xx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xx~~, deck workers, and engine room workers. It is pointed out that owing to the long periods of unemployment and to the nature of their social customs most of the seamen in Bombay are in debt. The method of recruitment is defective and leads to bribery and corruption. The method suggested for dealing with the problem is the rationalisation of the methods of recruitment. From the evidence collected it is clear that bribes are paid by seamen for securing jobs and that employment is often given to the highest bidder. The result of this method is that the man who is really in need cannot afford to pay anything, and in consequence remains unemployed. The Union of Seamen will be able to do something to stop the existing evils of recruitment, but it will be necessary for the government to establish an employment bureau as recommended by the Committee appointed in 1922 by the Government of India to make enquiries into the subject. The report also makes a recommendation for the setting up of advisory committees of representatives of shipowners and seamen as contemplated by the

\* Report of an enquiry into the conditions of their life and work with appendices containing other valuable information. Published by Mr. N.M. Joshi, Bombay, 1929. Pp. 46. Price 8 annas

Genoa convention as early as possible. Some such machinery is necessary to deal with the present problem and those that may arise in future.

Of the appendices, the first deals with the system of recruiting seamen at Bombay and Calcutta, the second with the existing legal measures for the protection of seamen, the third with the draft conventions and recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conferences with regard to the conditions of seamen and the fourth sets forth the resolutions passed in the Indian Legislative Assembly regarding the draft conventions and recommendations on seamen adopted by the various International Labour Conferences.

(A copy of this report has already been forwarded to Geneva along with this office minute A 2/402/29, dated the 25th April 1929).

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#### The New Marine Club at Kidderpore.

A new marine club at Kidderpore, Calcutta, costing about Rs. 700,000 was officially opened at Calcutta in April 29. It is a handsome two-storied building and is built in three sections making up a single unit with accommodation in each section for captains and ships' <sup>surgeons</sup> ~~sergeants~~, officers and men. The Club is equipped with a stage and cinema, music rooms and libraries, bars and billiard rooms, 4 tennis courts and a swimming bath. Provision has also been made for the addition of a third storey to the building. A navigation instructor will be resident for the convenience of men pursuing their studies. Situated nearly a few hundred yards east of the King George's Dock, the Club is barely ten minutes walk from any of the berths.

INDIANS AS MARINE ENGINEERS.

The following press communiqué has been issued *by the Govt of India:*

The question of the training of Indians as Marine Engineers has been engaging the attention of the Government of India for sometime past. The rules for the examination of Marine Engineers prescribe certain qualifications which a candidate must possess before he can sit for examination for a second class Engineer's certificate.

Generally speaking the qualifications required fall under two heads, (a) Workshop service and (b) Sea service. ~~Practical~~ Practical training in the construction and erection of marine engines cannot at present be obtained in India, and to enable candidates to obtain the necessary training, the Government of India have decided to award this year three State technical scholarships of the value of £240 per annum each (inclusive of a bonus of £40) tenable in England for the period of training, subject to certain conditions.

The total period of training will extend from six to seven years. Of this four to five years will be required to complete the training at one of His Majesty's Dockyards or at a private firm of marine engineers as may be arranged by the High Commissioner for India. The period of apprenticeship will be followed by training for 18 months at sea in a foreign-going ship, arrangements for which will also be made by the High Commissioner.

The scholarships will be awarded after a competitive examination which will be held at different centres in India on the 15th July 1929 and following days. Rules and conditions for the grant of these scholarships and the rules for the competitive examination for the selection of candidates for the scholarships are being published in Part I of the Gazette of India dated the 13th April 1929. Applications for entry to the examination

must be made on the prescribed form copies of which can be obtained from the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Commerce, and they must reach that Department on or before the 15th June 1929.

(Hindustan Times, 12-4-1929).

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#### Deck Passengers.

Two cuttings are enclosed, one from the Hindu of 11-4-1929 and the other from the Hindustan Times of 28-4-1929, which give an account of Mahatma Gandhi's impression of the treatment of deck passengers in the B.I.S.N.Co's boats. He says:- As in railway carriages so in steamships, there was not much difference between the condition of travelling so far as the lowest class travelling is concerned. There was the same squalor the same indifference, the same over-crowding, the same stenches and the same din and noise as before". A companion of Mahatma Gandhi who made an inspection of deck accommodation on board the S.S. Aronda has made a report which is reproduced in these articles. It is there said that "there is deck accommodation on the "Aronda" for about 1,500 passengers, though in the busy season this limitation is over-looked. There are for the use of these 1,500 passengers two tiny bath rooms and twelve latrines in sets of four for the males and two bath rooms and 8 latrines for the females, -- an average of one latrine to 75 passengers and one bath room to 375 passengers. The twin or the lowermost deck is dark and dingy and stuffy and hot to the point of suffocation. Electric lights have to be kept burning for the most part and there is no direct access to sea air."

MIGRATION.Indians Abroad.

The eighth session of the East African Indian National Congress was held at Mombasa on 13-4-1929 under the presidency of Pandit H. Kunzru, M.L.A. The occasion was availed of to take stock of Indian claims vis a vis the claims of the European settlers in Kenya. The publication of the Hilton-Young Commission report had intensified feeling among both the European settlers and Indians. The Europeans have reiterated their demand for responsible government, for a majority of elected Europeans in the Council, and have declared their unwillingness to co-operate in any scheme of closer union between Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda unless they receive that larger measure of self government which would enable them to dominate the policy of the Union (Hindu, 1-4-1929)

The Indian position has been explained by Mr. Kunzru in his presidential speech at Mombasa on 13-4-1929. He strongly opposed the European demand for self-government or increase in European influence in the Kenya Government and the reopening by Sir Samuel Wilson (the Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies who is visiting Kenya in connection with the Hilton-Young Report) of the self-government question. Pandit Kunzru also pleaded for a common electoral roll, and expressed the opinion that Indians had made all reasonable concessions to meet European apprehensions. The East African Indian Congress was fully in agreement with Pandit Kunzru's views and passed resolutions supporting generally the Hilton-Young report accepting African trusteeship as adumbrated in it (which makes the Imperial Government and not the British settlers the trustees for the African natives) also opposing European self-government, and increase in the number of Europeans in the Kenya Legislative Council. The Congress, while opposed to any



political union, welcomed the economic union of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, demanded adequate representation of Indians on the Advisory Councils of the central authority, and the appointment of an Indian Private Secretary to the Central Authority. (Times of India, 17-4-1929).

At the invitation of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Government of India have deputed the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri to help the Indian community in East Africa to state its views to Sir Samuel Wilson on matters arising out of the Hilton-Young Commission's Report and to be at Sir Samuel Wilson's disposal if he wishes to make use of him in dealing with Indian deputations. Mr. Sastri sailed from Bombay on 1-5-1929 for East Africa.

#### Cape Town Agreement Threatened.

According to a Free Press telegram dated 2-5-1929 from Johannesburg, the Cape Town Agreement, one of the essential principles of which is that Indians in the Union are to be accepted as an integral part of the South African population, has been threatened by General Smuts in one of his election speeches. Speaking at Pretoria General Smuts declared "Our policy should be summarised as 'no Asiatic immigration, and as fast ~~as~~ a repatriation of those Asiatics in the Union with no chance of their returning, as is possible'".

"The Hindu" of 4-5-1929 publishes a leader dealing with the sufferings and tribulations of those Indians who have been induced to return to India. According to "the Hindu", many of the repatriated Indians have been induced to leave Africa as the result of false expectations held out to them and the Government has been guilty of callous neglect of them after their landing in India.

The following figures have been supplied by the Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic affairs to the South

African Indian Congress as regards the number of Indians who have been repatriated from South Africa to India since August 1927:-

|                 | <u>Month.</u> | <u>Men.</u> | <u>Women.</u> | <u>Boys.</u> | <u>Girls.</u> |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| <u>1927.</u>    | August        | 124         | 51            | 45           | 34            |
|                 | September     | 188         | 96            | 90           | 62            |
|                 | October       | 112         | 33            | 48           | 40            |
|                 | November      | 141         | 65            | 43           | 57            |
|                 | December      | 182         | 104           | 82           | 80            |
| <u>1928.</u>    | January       | 109         | 58            | 45           | 53            |
|                 | February      | 184         | 89            | 85           | 89            |
|                 | March         | 128         | 57            | 65           | 49            |
|                 | April         | 131         | 58            | 54           | 49            |
|                 | May           | 144         | 78            | 82           | 76            |
|                 | June          | 75          | 31            | 22           | 30            |
|                 | July          | 102         | 45            | 46           | 52            |
|                 | August        | 16          | 9             | 9            | 5             |
|                 | September     | 122         | 45            | 47           | 57            |
|                 | October       | 164         | 78            | 58           | 77            |
| Grand total ... |               |             |               |              | 4450          |

For 15 months, that is to say from August 1927 to October 1928, an average of 299 men, women and children left for India under the scheme.

(from the South African letter in the Times of India of 10-5-1929).

#### The New Fiji Constitution.

The Government of Fiji has recently issued a press communiqué about constitutional changes. The chief variations from the present constitution concern the Legislative Council. The present council consists of the Governor and 12 nominated members (including one Indian member), seven elected members and two native members. Under the new constitution there will be an increase in the nominated members of one and a reduction in the European elected members of one, an increase in the native members of one, and provision for three elected Indian members. The total strength of the new council will be distributed thus:- 13 nominated members, 6 European elected members, 3 native members, 3 Indian members. The extension of the franchise to Indians is new and coincides with the 50th anniversary in May next of the first arrival of Indians in Fiji.

(The hindu, 1-5-1929).

Standing Emigration Committee

Central Legislature.

The following have been nominated by the Member for Education with the approval of the Governor-General from panels elected by the Council of State and the Assembly, to serve on the Standing Emigration Committee:

Mr. G. A. Natesan,  
Sir Umar Hayat Khan,  
Sir Phiroze Sethna,  
Mr. Ram Saran Das,  
Sir Abdul Qayum,  
Mr. M.C.Rajah,  
Sir Darcy Lindsay,  
Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas,  
Sir Hari Singh Gour,  
Mr. Triloki Nath,  
Haji Abdullah Haroon, and  
Lieut.-Colonel H.A.T.Gidney.

(Pioneer, 29-4-1929).