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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

Indian Branch

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Report for July 1929.

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General.

The period under review was characterised by a lull in the political world. To allay the unrest and suspicion created by nationalist criticism of some of the recent actions of the Government of India, the Viceroy delivered a speech at a dinner given by the Chelmsford Club, Simla, on the eve of his departure to England. This was an important pronouncement for more reasons than one. Surveying the present political situation in India, Lord Irwin said:- "I have never either under-rated the strength of the opposition to Sir John Simon's Commission, or impugned the motives of those who felt it their duty to pursue that line of conduct. But none the less, I think that the opposition to the Statutory Commission has rested, in some degree at all events, upon a misconception of their functions!"

Referring to three recent acts of the Government of India which have brought considerable odium on the authorities - the Public Safety Bill and Ordinance, the Trades Disputes Act, and the Meerut prosecutions - the Viceroy justified each of these as dictated by necessity, and affirmed that in all of these <sup>cases</sup> Government have acted in the best interests of the State. In passing, the Viceroy made brief references to the problems of minority communities and Indian States, and said:- "I do not believe that these or any other problems are beyond the power of wise men to solve, if only they approach them with cool hands and steady heads!" In conclusion, he reiterated the British Government's <sup>unalterable</sup> ~~abiding~~ faith <sup>in</sup> the Declaration of 1917, and said that he was going at the present juncture to England to place before the British Government the different standpoints of those who can speak for Indian political opinion.

The speech, on the whole, has been well received by the Anglo-Indian and Moderate sections, but the nationalists are inclined to be a bit sceptical of the Viceroy's benevolent intentions. Thus the Hindu, (Madras), while hauling the Government of India severely over the coals for its recent record of repressive legislation, concludes a long leader with the assertion that the Viceroy's pious aspirations of an honourable partnership of Britain and India is realisable only with the grant of full Dominion Status to India.

The Viceroy and Lady Irwin left Bombay for England on the 29th June, and they are expected back by October of this year. Much is expected as the result of the Viceregal visit, and the opportunity it affords for a full and direct exchange of views between the British Cabinet and the head of the Indian administration, and this expectation is heightened by the advent of a labour government in Britain as the result of the General Elections. During Lord Irwin's absence, Lord Goschen, the senior-most among the Indian Governors, has been appointed to act as ~~Viceroy~~ *Governor General*.

No date has been officially fixed for the opening of the autumn session of the Legislative Assembly in Simla, but it is learned from reliable sources that the session will commence on the 2nd September, if not on the 30th August. The agenda of the Assembly is not as full as usual, mainly owing to the Congress ban on council entry. The location and programme of the proposed Medical Research Institute (see pp.65-66, ~~January~~ June 1929 report), the critical situation precipitated in East Africa owing to the unacceptability of the Hilton-Young Report to India, and the grant of certain subsidies to Imperial Airways Ltd., seem to be the immediate preoccupations of those Indian members of the Assembly not securely held back by the Congress leash.

If the Congress taboo is removed, there can be no doubt, that the next autumn session would witness some extremely lively scenes. There seems to be a reasonable prospect of such an eventuality coming to pass, as the Congress Working Committee's decision at its Bombay meeting to boycott the Councils (see page 3, June 1929 report) is meeting with increasing opposition in the provinces. The feeling has been gaining ground that to indulge in the futilities of a boycott of the legislatures at this juncture, however unjust the decision to extend the life of the legislatures, central and provincial, may be, would be detrimental to the best interests of the country. Madras, which showed signs of incipient revolt even at the Bombay meeting, and was only prevailed upon to give a grudging acquiescence to the boycott programme, is showing visible signs of restiveness. The Bengal Congress party, leaving aside all pretences, has extorted the consent of the Swarajist leader in the Assembly, to Bengal congressmen attending the opening of the Bengal Council. The revolt of the provinces against the boycott ukase found emphatic expression in the decision of the Working Committee of the Congress convoked at Delhi on the <sup>26th July</sup> ~~29th June~~, not to make any pronouncement on the vexed question, but to leave the decision to the competence of a special session of the All India Congress Committee to be held at Allahabad on the 26th July.

Meanwhile, the results of the Council elections in Bengal, which with Assam were the only two provinces where the provincial councils were not given a further lease of life, act as a sort of indicator of what would have been the probable outcome if the elections to the central and provincial legislatures were allowed to take their normal course. The Bengal elections show that though the Congress party

has not been returned in an absolute majority to the Bengal Council, it can with the support of Muslim adherents of the Congress, of whom there ~~are~~<sup>is</sup> a sufficient number in the Council, defeat any Ministry which might be set up. The prospects of a stable Bengal Ministry are thus dependant entirely on the chance of inducing defections of Muslim~~x~~ Congressmen from congress ranks.

The reports of several Provincial Simon Committees, which have been published during the period under review, are interesting documents in so much as they furnish a basis for understanding the minimum demands of even the co-operating section of Indians. Most of the provincial committees are unanimous on one point; they are for full-blown provincial autonomy with an element of responsibility in the Central Government, which is to be more or less substantial. The United Provinces Simon Committee, subject to an explanatory memorandum on joint electorates by a Mahomedan member, and certain minor reservations by a Hindu member, recommends for the province a bicameral legislature, a unified cabinet, transfer of all subjects with certain reservations about law and order, and a limited franchise, based on property and educational qualifications. The Muslim member has, however, advocated communal electorates. The Madras Simon Committee, while fully joining in the demand for provincial autonomy, has voted for continuing communal representation for minorities. The Punjab Committee goes the furthest in its claims for provincial autonomy, and has advocated considerable curtailment of the powers of the central government. For instance, it has suggested that the Central Government's powers for interference in provincial ~~mg~~ affairs should be statutorily defined and clearly limited; the majority even

goes to the extent of recommending that the Provincial Government should have full control over the services, including the right of appointing High Court Judges. The outstanding feature of the provincial reports, therefore, <sup>according to the Anglo-Indian press,</sup> is the utter incongruity between the exaggerated claims made for complete provincial autonomy, and the dismal failure to achieve a decent measure of communal solidarity. A second factor which emerges from the rather obscure and confused situation is that almost all the provinces while claiming provincial autonomy are careful to add the significant rider that provincial autonomy <sup>should</sup> ~~can~~ be implemented fully ~~only~~ by the creation of an element of substantial responsibility in the Central Legislature. The bulk of co-operating provincial opinion has given its verdict against the Nehru report, at least so far as the principle of joint electorates, one of its principal planks, is concerned.

The welter of political opinion in the country is further intensified by the reports emanating from responsible sources of considerable misunderstandings between the Indian Central Committee and the Simon Commission. According to the London correspondent of the Free Press, Sir Sankaran Nair, the co-operating President of the Central Committee, has already expressed strong resentment against the autocracy of the ~~xxxx~~ Simonites, and their unwillingness to act in co-operation and consultation with their Indian colleagues. Sir Sankaran Nair, it is reported, has expressed his intention to leave England as soon as the formal taking of evidence is over, not waiting for further collaboration with the Simonites in the subsequent stages of submitting a report to Parliament. The nationalist Indian press, which had never ceased to anathematise Sir Sankaran Nair for his

co-operating fervour, while leaving the affronted Sir Sankaran Nair to stew his own juice, is indulging in the exquisite satisfaction of saying in chorus "We told you so".

The charge made by the nationalists that the policy of the government is leaning more and more in the direction of repression is strengthened by the recent prosecution, trial, and punishment of Dr. Satyapal, a congress worker of the Punjab, with a provincial rather than an all-India reputation. Dr. Satyapal was charged under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code with the offence of delivering a seditious speech at Delhi on 10-3-1929, calculated to create disaffection against the Government, and to bring it into contempt. On 11-7-1929 he was sentenced to 2 years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.500/- by Mr. F.B.Pool, the Additional District Magistrate of Delhi. The gravamen of the charge against Dr. Satyapal is that he publicly characterised the government as a "tyrannical" one, and asserted that it was responsible for 150 years of oppression and misrule. In view of the fact that these charges are openly levelled against the government by almost every nationalist leader without bringing <sup>him</sup> them under the clutch of the criminal law, it is being alleged that Government is deliberately pursuing a policy of taking action only against the lesser political fry, leaving the big leaders alone for the moment, so that the nationalists might be deprived of their rank and file, and the leaders may be left without a following. It is also alleged that behind Dr. Satyapal's arrest and punishment, there is also the <sup>added</sup> motive of depriving the forthcoming Congress session which is to be held at Lahore in December of this year, of one of its strongest local supporters. It is significant

that the Punjab Government has of late been adopting a policy of consistent obstruction to the Lahore Congress, particularly ~~of~~ <sup>by</sup> creating difficulties in the matter of granting the congress organisers amenities of water and light supply and a suitable place for <sup>7</sup> meeting, which, whatever might be the differences dividing congressmen and the government, have hitherto been ~~freely~~ accorded by the governments of the provinces in which the different sessions of the Congress were held from year to year. The Lahore Congress assumes particular importance in view of the fact that on it will devolve the responsibility of endorsing or negating the mandate of the Congress of 1928 taken under Gandhi's inspiration of launching mass civil disobedience in the event of India not being accorded Dominion Status by the 31st December 1929 (see pp. 3-11, January 1929 report).

No official announcement has yet been made of the programme of the Royal Commission on Labour, but from independent sources it is learned that the forthcoming winter tour of the Commission in India will extend from October 1929 to April 1930. The Government of India have addressed Provincial Governments to prepare details for the Commission's visit. It is also learned that the Commission is not issuing any formal set questionnaire. The general heads of inquiry have already been decided upon, and the procedure as far as can be ascertained at present would seem to be to invite either written or oral statements under the general heads.



REFERENCES TO THE I.L.O.

News items of the 12th International Labour Conference have been steadily trickling down to the Indian press, mainly through Reuter, but occasionally also through the intermediary of some special correspondents. The Hindu of the 22nd and the 29th June published two long articles from its Geneva correspondent on the 12th Conference. Full texts of the speeches delivered by Mr. Shiva Rao on forced labour, and by Mr. Kelappa on the working hours of salaried employees have also been published in the Indian papers. The I.L.O. report on "unemployment" is reviewed in the Pioneer of the 20th June 1929. Editorial notes and comments on Mr. Joshi's statement that the meretricious glamour of Moscow's policies has proved more alluring to eastern workers than the slow evolutionary methods of Geneva are also frequently appearing. A short article explaining the attitude of the Fungal Chamber of Commerce on the items coming up for discussion at the 13th session of the Conference appears in the Statesman of the 29th June. All papers publish the communiqué issued by this office on the I.L.O. budget for 1930 (see the Times of India of 2-7-1929, the Hindustan Times of 4-7-1929, etc.).

... ..

The Guardian (Calcutta) of 20-6-1929 publishes an editorial note welcoming the efforts of the I.L.O. to suppress forced labour, especially as according to the "Guardian" such an attempt marks a departure from the I.L.O.'s general policy of indifference to conditions in non-European countries.

... ..

The Bombay Chronicle of 21-6-1929 publishes an editorial note on forced labour congratulating the I.L.O. on its humanitarian efforts but pleading for an accelerated pace of progress.

... ..

The Muslim Outlook (Lahore) of 22-6-1929 publishes lengthy extracts from the speech of Dr. Brahmans, the President of the 12th session of the Conference.

... ..

The Muslim Outlook of 25-6-1929 publishes a leading article entitled "The Labour Problem", in the course of which it asserts that Article XIII of the Peace Treaty is destined to usher in a sounder social order. The paper points out that the I.L.O's efforts in this direction are in complete accord with the Prophet Mahomed's attitude on labour questions.

... ..

The Madras Mail of 28-6-1929 has an editorial note on the differing view points of the Indian workers' delegate, Mr. N.M.Joshi, and of the Indian employers' delegate, Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai, on the question of hours of work in Indian factories. In the conflict of views between Mr. Joshi, who wants further reduction of hours of work and Mr. Lalbhai, who wants Indian States to come up to the level of British India before the latter makes further advances, the paper's sympathies are entirely with the employers' representative. It says:- "A 60 hour week with industrial prosperity is better than a 48 hour week with increased unemployment".

... ..

The Hindustan Times of 4-7-1929 publishes a strong editorial note supporting Mr. Shiva Rao's plea for suppression of forced labour.

... ..

The Liberty (Calcutta) of 5-7-1929 publishes the report of a special interview with Mr. D.P. Khaitan, an ex-substitute member of the Governing Body of the I.L.O., who has recently returned from an extended tour of Europe and America. Mr. Khaitan expresses the conviction that the I.L.O. has come to stay, and observes that as India cannot remain isolated from world currents, it should take its full place in the work of the I.L.O. He pleads for India being accorded a greater share in the governance of the institution.

"The European States", says Mr. Khaitan, "constitute only half the membership of the I.L.O., and yet they are monopolising the show. I hope Europe will realise the importance of securing the willing, friendly, and equal co-operation of Asiatic countries".

## Conditions of Labour.

### Textile strike in Bombay.

The Bombay textile strike is still continuing with unabated vigour. It is becoming increasingly evident that the strike is not the outcome of a genuine labour dispute, and that it has resolved itself into an open trial of strength between the entrenched forces of capital and labour. This aspect of the situation is emphasised by the evident unwillingness of both the Bombay Millowners' Association and the Girni Kamgar Union to accept suggestions helpful towards a settlement made by impartial outside bodies, such as the Bombay Municipal Corporation and the Congress party. During the first week of the period under review, the employers were buoyed up with the hope that despite the strike propaganda of the Girni Kamgar Union, the operatives would be returning to work in increasing numbers, and that the strike will collapse out of inanition. An upward tendency in the number of workers returning to work was a noticeable feature of the second half of June. Thus, on 10-6-1929 there were over 70,000 men at work (see June 1929 report, page 43); by 14-6-1929 their numbers had increased to 74,000. (Times of India, 14-6-1929). The Girni Kamgar Union countered this tendency by carrying on more intensive picketing of the mill area, and by enhancing their demands. On 15-6-1929, the Girni Kamgar Union decided to add to their existing five demands (see page 43, June 1929 report), the seventeen demands of the textile workers that were placed before the Fawcett Committee. The Union decided to place these twenty-two demands before the Governor of the Presidency.

While enlightened public opinion was disposed to condemn the excesses and the extravagant demands of the strikers, there was a considerable section of thought, which was inclined to apportion a good share of the blame for the impasse to the lack of sympathy, obstinacy, and intractability of the millowners. In an account published by the Times of India of 18-6-1929 of a conference between the representatives of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, the European Association, and the Millowners' Association, held at the invitation of the last named body, occurs the following significant observation made by Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, an ex-president of the Bombay Legislative Council, and a member of the Whitley Commission: "One point strikes me as peculiar. Can you explain why the leaders of the Girni Kamgar Union have such an enormous influence with labour, while the employers, whose servants they are, have no voice over their own employees. It seems that the owners have not kept that touch with their labour which they ought to have". In his reply to Sir Ibrahim's indictment, Mr.H.P.Mody, had to admit the substantial truth of the charge. Said Mr. Mody: "Coming to the want of proper touch, I will not deny it. All that I will say is that there have been excuses for it. The ignorance and illiteracy of the men, and the classes from whom they are drawn have not made it possible for employers of labour to get into the skins of the workpeople". The above quotations cannot help emphasizing the class aspect of the textile dead-lock in Bombay. A counterpart to the dissatisfaction of other capitalists with the obduracy of the millowners, is presented by the frankly ~~critical~~<sup>critical</sup> attitude taken up by the Congress party, which at first supported the strikers, but whose sympathies have later on been estranged by the impossible

demands of the strikers. A bulletin of the Bombay Provincial Committee advised the strikers to return to work on the condition of a settlement being arrived at through the mediation of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru.

Meanwhile, Sir Frederick Sykes, the Governor, realising the gravity of the situation, himself came down to Bombay from Mahableshwar with the General Member, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah on 19-6-1929 to study the situation on the spot, and to effect, if possible, a settlement of the long-drawn-out dispute. On 19-6-1929 the Governor conferred for over an hour and a half with a select body of newspaper editors, and this was followed by a conference of over three hours' duration with the representatives of all the important public bodies in the city. The Bombay Millowners' Association and the strikers' unions were not invited to this conference. In his opening speech, the Governor expressed his disappointment at the parties to the dispute not having invited the Government to adopt one or other of the possible processes of action under the Trades Disputes Act, which the Bombay Government had taken special action to bring into operation. As the strike could not be allowed to go on interminably, the Governor invited suggestions which would help to deal effectively with the situation. While there was general agreement in the conference about the need for setting up a tribunal to settle the outstanding points of disagreement, there was a sharp cleavage of opinion as to the desirability of resorting to any repressive policy. The Conference was adjourned to 21-6-1929. At the resumed conference, the Governor outlined the steps the Government proposed to take, which may be briefly summarised thus:-

- (1) A Court of Inquiry under the Trades Disputes Act:
- (2) Request to the Governor General for an Ordinance making intimidation a cognisable offence:
- (3) A Bill in the local legislature to ban picketing:
- (4) Extending the duration of the Chief Presidency Magistrate's order prohibiting assemblies of five or more persons, and
- (5) A Bill in the local legislature on the lines of the Presidency Areas Security Act of Bengal to deal with hooligans.

The terms of reference of the Court of Inquiry are:-

- (1) To inquire into and ascertain the exact nature of the dispute or disputes between the employers and workmen of the following mills ..... which led to the strike in those mills in March and April 1929.
- (2) If there was any such dispute, to what extent the employers or workmen or both are responsible in matters connected therewith.
- (3) What are the causes of the ~~the~~ prolongation of the strike? Whether the employers or workmen or both are responsible for such prolongation, and if so, to what extent?
- (4) What are the difficulties in the way of a settlement of the dispute or disputes between the employers and the workmen?

The Court will consist of Mr. Justice Pearson of the Calcutta High Court (President), Mr. F. S. Talyarkhan, Bar-at-Law, a well-known member of the Bombay bar and an ex-judge of the Bombay High Court, and Mr. Rupchand Bilasram, Additional Judicial Commissioner in Sind. The announcement of the Government's decision has met with a mixed reception. The representatives of the Bombay Corporation and several other bodies have expressed themselves strongly against the adoption of a repressive policy; the millowners are pessimistic, not being sure whether the decisions of the Court of Inquiry would not meet with the same fate as those of the Fawcett Committee, and the strikers have spared no pains to interpret the

contemplated measures as calculated only "to strengthen the Government's armoury of repression" to crush the trade union movement in Bombay.

The principals of the dispute, in the meanwhile, are straining every nerve to achieve their own particular ends. On 25-6-1929, the Girni Kamgar Union sent a wire to the British Premier, and to the Secretary of the British Labour Party, protesting against the contemplated measures to make intimidation a cognisable offence, and to ban picketing. The Millowners' Association led by Mr. H.P.Mody held a conference on 28-6-1929 with the Viceroy at Poona, at which the desirability of according further protection to the ~~the~~ cotton industry, in the shape of an enhanced import duty on cotton cloth was stressed. (The subject is more fully dealt with in the section of the report dealing with economic conditions). On 3-7-1929 the Bombay Millowners' Association held a conference with Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra, Member for Industries and Labour of the Government of India. At the Conference, Mr. H.P.Mody explained in detail the various steps taken by the millowners to implement the recommendations of the Fawcett Committee, but when he proceeded to expatiate on communism as the sole cause of the deadlock, Sir B.N.Mitter had to ask him "to turn the searchlight inwards" and demand whether the millowners had exhausted all remedies by way of introducing economies in their management, and of promoting the welfare of the labourers.

As a result of the Government's intervention there is a distinctly improved tone at present in the mill area. The attendance which had been showing signs of dwindling down, has again begun to show an upward tendency. According to a Times of India report of 4-7-1929 73 mills were working on 2-7-1929 with a total attendance of over 85,000 workmen.



The first preliminary meeting of the Strike Enquiry Court was held at the Secretariat on the 6th July 1929. The Millowners Association (represented by Mr. H.P.Mody, Mr. S.D.Saklatvala, and Mr. T. Maloney) the Bombay Textile Labour Union (represented by R.R.Bakhale and R.S.Asavale) and the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal (represented by Mr.Mayekar) were present at the meeting. The Girni Kamgar Union was not represented as its officials complained that they had not received a special invitation to the meeting. It was agreed upon after discussion that the Millowners Association of the various textile unions should be invited to submit written statements of their cases to the Committee not later than the 11th July 1929, and the representatives of these bodies are again to meet the Committee after the statements have been submitted. Copies of the statements will be submitted to all the parties to the dispute so that each party may acquaint itself with the views of other parties. The Court meet a second time on the 11th July 1929. The Millowners' Association in its statement maintained that the strike declared by the Girni Kamgar Union in April was unwarranted, and that the Union's attitude in respect of the Wadia group of mills was a clear case of breach of agreement. The Millworkers' Union and the Girni Kamgar Mahamandal in their statements expressed their views as to what the owners should do to satisfy the workmen, but emphasised that their Unions had never supported the general strikes of 1928 or 1929. The Bombay Textile Labour Unions statement will be submitted on the 12th July 1929. The

The Girni Kamgar Union's representatives who were not ready with their statement, maintained that those organisations which were not parties to the dispute should not be allowed to be represented, and that the proceedings should be thrown open to the public. They also maintained that the former Office-bearers of the Union, Messrs A.A. Alve, S.A. Dange, and R.S. Nimbkar, who are now under trial prisoners in the case should be allowed to come to Bombay and record their statements.

In view of the generally disturbed conditions in the mill-area, the Polic Commissioner has issued an order prohibiting the Girni Kamgar Union from holding public meetings for one week from the 12th July 1929. The Government in a communique explain its action on the ground that the Girni Kamgar Union are utilising its meetings to incite the mill-hands against the police rather than for legitimate bona fide trade union purposes. On the evening of the 12th July 1929 the leaders of the Union held a public meeting in defiance of the order and three leaders of the Union were arrested. A crowd of strikers followed the arrested leaders in a militant mood. The police had to open fire on the crowd to defend themselves. Two men were injured as a result of the firing.

On the 11th July 1929, according to a communique of the Mill-owners Association 95,555 were at work in the mills.

THE AHMEDABAD TEXTILE  
INDUSTRY.

— o —

Ahmedabad possesses a large number of cotton mills and is second to Bombay in the Presidency as a cotton manufacturing centre. In the year 1925 Ahmedabad had about 62 mills with 13,38,056 spindles and 29,383 looms. This number gradually increased and at present there are 76 mills with 16,01,577 spindles and 37,948 looms, showing an increase of fourteen mills with 2,63,521 spindles and 8,115 looms. The year 1928-29 saw 10 new mills with 1,15,704 spindles and 3,034 looms. These figures show that during the period of Bombay's labour troubles the Ahmedabad mill industry has considerably progressed. Further, before the days of trouble in Bombay, local mills had to store up their products because there was not sufficient demand for them. The Bombay strikes turned the tables. The local mills not only sold off their stored up goods but many of the mills have effected sales in advance. Not only have these sales been effected but they have been effected at better prices. Naturally the public would expect a fall in the price of cloth when cotton prices have dropped. But owing to the scarcity caused by the Bombay strikes, these goods fetched better prices and hence the condition of the local mills has financially improved. Some mills have to work both day and night to supply goods to their customers in time. The last but not least advantage to the local mills is that the Bombay mills and merchants used to export the products of their mills to Aden, Africa, Arabia,

Afghanistan and other parts. During the strike they purchased from the Ahmedabad mills and exported the goods. Some of the Ahmedabad mills are now trying to capture those markets.

The Ahmedabad mill industry has progressed on account of the harmonious relations between employers and employees. There is a Millowners' Association, with Sheth Chimanlal Girdharlal Parekh as its President, and a Labour Union. In case of dispute between the mill authorities and the employees, both these bodies work simultaneously to set things right. No strike takes place unless arbitration is refused. When the Association and the Union cannot make up their differences the matter is placed before the permanent board of arbitrators consisting of Mr.M.K. Gandhi (representing the Labour Union) and Sheth Mangaldas G. Parekh (representing the Millowners' Association). After hearing the secretaries of both Association and Union the arbitrators give their award, which is binding <sup>on</sup> ~~to~~ both parties. In case of any difference of opinion between these arbitrators, the matter is constitutionally referred to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who gives his final award as sole arbitrator. Both the Association and the Union are watchful to enforce awards on the parties concerned and would even go to the length of taking disciplinary action in cases of breach or threatened breach of any term of the award. If employees go on any unauthorised strike the Labour Union promptly condemns their action and shows readiness to expel them from the Union.

(Times of India, 11-7-1929.)

Tin-plate Workers' Strike.

The tin-plate workers' strike, Golmuri, Jamshedpur is showing no signs of an immediate peaceful settlement. The strike which started on 8-4-1929 has now lasted for more than three months, and yet neither side is showing any signs of yielding ground. It was mentioned in the report for June 1929 (see page 46) that Mr. J.R.Dain has been appointed to study the situation first hand and to report to Government, and that a deputation of the workers under Mr. V.V.Giri had presented a memorandum fully detailing the grievances of the workmen to him. Mr. Dain's investigation of the situation has not allayed to any considerable extent the discontent of the strikers, who are conducting a vigorous campaign to stiffen the attitude of the rank and file, and to enlist all-India sympathy in their fight. Peaceful propaganda, picketing and collection of funds are the immediate preoccupations of the strikers. Meanwhile, the fight is engaging the sympathetic attention of the labour leaders. On 22-6-1929, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the All India Trade Union Congress who visited Jamshedpur, issued a statement endorsing the cause of the strikers, and condemning the attitude of the managing agents, Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company. On 29-6-1929, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose visited Jamshedpur and later on broadcasted an appeal for help to the strikers. The intervention of these leaders is likely to lead to the transference of the fight to other than the strictly labour and industrial sphere. Thus Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose advocates the boycott of the products of the Burma Oil Company, which along with the Tatas own the Tinsplate Works. Other means of coercion sought to be employed are the inducement of sympathetic strikes both at the Budge Budge

(Calcutta) works of the Burmah Oil Company, and in the workshops at Jamshedpur. The dominioneering attitude of Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Company is coming in for a good deal of blame and the "Boycott" movement is a direct result of the dissatisfaction generally felt with them. The men do not seem to attach much importance to the leisurely investigations of Mr. Dain, but the ~~xx~~ rumoured visit of Sir B.N.Mitra of the Department of Industries and Labour on July 5th 1929 has considerably raised the hopes of the men, who are planning to wait in deputation on him and to submit to him a memorandum of their grievances.

Renewed strikes in Bangalore.

During the period under review Bangalore was again the venue of industrial strife of considerable magnitude. A short account was given in our last report (see page 47, June Report) of a strike in the Minerva and Maharaja Mills, Bangalore, on the ground of victimisation, and how the strike came to an end on 8-6-1929, on the assurance of the management that there would be no more cases of victimisation. The peaceful conditions which followed for nearly a fortnight were once again rudely interrupted when the workers of the Maharaja Mills suddenly downed tools on 24-6-1929, the reason given being the arrest of a few boys and workmen who are alleged to have assaulted some people and a policeman in the previous strike, and against whom prosecutions have been launched by the police. By noon of 26-6-1929 all the workmen of the Maharaja mills were out, demanding the release of all those arrested as a condition precedent to their rejoining duty. The next day, 27-6-1929, a few workmen returned to the mill, but the mill authorities told them that work would only be resumed when a sufficiently large number returned to work. On 30-6-1929 the workmen of the Minerva mills, Bangalore, struck work in sympathy with the workers of the Maharaja mills, who were still holding out. The situation was further complicated by 3,000 workers of the Binny Mills, Bangalore stopping work as a protest against the dismissal of a mechanic as a disciplinary measure by the authorities.

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End of Choolai Mill strike.

The workers of the Choolai Mills, Madras, who had gone on strike in the second week of June as the result of a Gurkha watchman at the

gate assaulting one of the workmen, resumed work on 13-6-1929. The termination of the strike was due to the intervention of the officials of the Madras Labour Union, in response to whose representations the Agent of the mill, dismissed the Gurkha watchman concerned, promised that steps would be taken to prevent such occurrences in future, and issued an order prohibiting watchmen at the gates from carrying any weapon while on duty.

... ..

#### Two strikes in Calcutta.

During the period under review there were two strikes in Calcutta. The workers of the Sri Kishen Cotton Mill, Belur, struck work on 18-6-1929, but by 24-6-1929, half of the strikers had returned to work. The spinners of the Bharat Abhuday Mills, Howrah, went on strike, but resumed work on 28-6-1929 on the removal of their grievances.

... ..

#### Labour College for Bombay.

Labour troubles in Bombay which have assumed an almost chronic character seem to have evoked in certain responsible quarters a desire to bring the situation under control. An indication of this tendency is to be found in the effort of a certain school of thought in Bombay, to found a labour college in the city. From a statement made by Dr. G.Y.Chitnis, one of the pioneers of the movement, in the Times of India of 14-6-1929, it would appear that arrangements are complete to open the classes <sup>from</sup> ~~the~~ the third week of June. The curriculum will include economics, sociology, trade union movement and the co-operative movement. The object of the college according



to the promoters is twofold: "to create a general intellectual awakening among factory workers and to train capable men and women for sane labour leadership". "My experience of the last few years has taught me that anybody with a set of imported ideas on labour can become a labour leader, provided he uses sufficiently strong language against the Government and the capitalists of the country. Such leadership is foredoomed to failure ..... Whatever shape the labour struggle may take, it must be thoroughly constitutional in its activities". It is too early to say whether the attempt will succeed and will be productive of results, as the men behind the movement lack the requisite influence and position. It has however to be conceded that the attempt tries to meet a genuine need. The fortunes of the proposed institution and its development are certainly worth careful watching.

Jute Mill Strike in Calcutta.

The weavers employed in the Alliance and Meghua mills, and the spinners in the Baranagore jute mills, Calcutta, have struck work on 6-7-1929 on the question of increase of bonus and overtime allowances (Pioneer, 10-7-1929). These three mills are situated in the suburbs of Calcutta, and employ approximately 40,000 men, of whom about 3,000 have struck work. The strike is the outcome of the change of working hours and days in the jute industry from 55 hours in the course of five days to 60 hours during six days adopted from the 1st July 1929. (In the November 1928 report of this office a reference is made to this change of working hours - please see page 23). The strike, which was throughout orderly, came to an end on 8-7-1929, the men being assured by their Union leaders of a peaceful settlement of the dispute regarding wages and hours of work (Times of India, 11-7-1929). The president of the Kankinarrah (Jute) Labour Union, Mr. K.C. Roy Chowdhury, has made a statement of the men's case in the Statesman of 9-7-1929. According to Mr. Roy Chowdhury the change of working hours in the jute industry from 55 hours in five days to 60 in six days was decided upon three months ago. The increased working hours mean a proportionate increase in wages to all mill-hands, but in the case of weavers the situation is a bit complicated by the fact that the weavers are paid on a piece work basis on so many lengths or cuts of jute fabrics taken off the looms every week. To encourage efficiency a bonus is paid to weavers on extra lengths over a certain minimum cuts. The usual minimum in some of the mills is 13 cuts of 100 yards. When the new working hours were introduced the managers decided to alter the basis of bonus to payment of bonus on extra cuts above 14, and not 13 as

hitherto, on the ground that the increased working hours from 55 to 60 would automatically increase the weavers' earnings. The weavers on the other hand, maintain that they have come to think of Saturdays and Sundays as rest days, and that if they have to work on Saturdays they must be paid overtime, or alternatively, there must be no change in the basis of the bonus. They apprehend that they will ~~lose~~ lose about Re.1/- a week if a new basis of hours is made. Efforts are being made by the Union leaders to effect an amicable settlement pending which the striking weavers have resumed work.

Forced Labour in Indian States.

It will be remembered that open charges of the existence of forced labour, and similar exactions in Indian States were made by the Indian workers' representatives at the last session of the International Labour Conference. In the absence of a properly constituted inquiry into labour conditions in Indian States, it is difficult to fully substantiate these charges. But it is significant that corroborative evidence continues to come in by dribblets, which throw illuminating side-lights on conditions in this respect in the States. The Servant of India of 27-6-1929 publishes the account of an interview which the "Libre Belgique", Brussels, had on 13-5-1929 with Dr. Zacharias, a European catholic journalist domiciled for nearly 30 years in the East, about a murderous attack made upon two Belgian Jesuit missionaries at Ambakona, in the State of Jashpur, Central Provinces, on 2-4-1929. (An account of this incident appeared in the Examiner of Bombay dated 27-4-1929). The story of the attack in brief is as follows:- Two Belgian missionaries, Father Dumonceau and Father Andries, stationed in Jashpur, remonstrated with the brother of the reigning prince of the State for exacting forced labour from the Christian converts in the State, even on Easter Sunday. The protest of the missionaries so enraged the brother of the prince that, he, it is alleged, made a night attack on the missionaries, to remove these inconvenient critics. Dr. Zacharias points out that the attack was not the result of resentment against the mission's proselytising activities, but was due to a desire for summarily removing independent critics of the unjust labour conditions in the State. The whole incident throws a flood of light on the

political, social, and industrial conditions obtaining in the backward Indian States. One can readily understand the rootedness of the institution of forced labour in Jashpur, by the fact that the mild protest of the missionaries against exacting forced labour on a single day of the year, and that on Easter Sunday, should have excited so much indignation resulting in so crude and primitive a form of revenge as a murderous night attack, and that by no less a person than the brother of the reigning prince. Dr. Zacharias points out in his interview that the continuance of such evils is made possible only by the indiscriminate protection <sup>afforded</sup> ~~offered~~ to Indian princes by the British Government. (Cutting from Servant of India, 27-6-1929 not sent, as the weekly is subscribed for by Geneva).

The Young Rajasthan, a weekly of Rajputana almost entirely devoted to the discussion of conditions in Indian States, publishes in its issue of 18-4-1929, an article under the caption "Slavery in Marwar", which gives definite and concrete instances of forced labour, and conditions analogous to slavery, in the backward Indian States of Rajputana. The article is reproduced below:-

Slavery in Marwar.

(By one who feels the pinch).

It was a graceful act of His Highness the Maharaja to have declared the abolition of slavery in the Jodhpur State a few years ago. But it seems the pronouncement was made more to placate the half-hearted opposition of the British Government to slavery than to root out the evil. The inference is inevitable in view of facts too hard to be ignored. Let me quote a few out of numerous cases.

Jaideva Tanwar's wife and children have been forcibly detained as slaves by Maharaj Ratan Singh of Raoti, and the poor man has been knocking about the door of the highest authority in vain for about three years to obtain the restoration of his dear ones.

The case of Shersingh is even more remarkable. This man, though originally belonging to village Pithapura in Sirohi, has been deprived of his wife by Maharaj Fateh Singh, a member of the royal family and Home Minister of the State. ~~Shersingh~~ Shersingh has been clamouring for justice ~~for~~ for about a year at the hands of the Maharaja Sahib, but his prayers have so far proved a cry in the wilderness. That such a responsible public servant should be allowed to forcibly enslave a citizen's wife in the very capital of the state, and against the resolution of the Council to which he has subscribed, is a disgrace to the administration. Similarly, the wife of Solanki Moolsingh has been unlawfully confined by the Deoli Thakur at his bungalow in Jodhpur, and forced to serve as a slave. She is not permitted even to see her husband. I understand that under Zenana influence, the Maharaja once called the woman to audience and ordered her release, but for unknown - and perhaps unknowable - reasons she was soon after directed to return to her captor. Nay, she was, it is said, entrusted to the Deolia Thakur, when she escaped to her home with the help of her husband in the way. Moolsingh has filed a complaint in the court of Thakur Madhosingh of Sankhavai, the Sessions Judge, but the Deolia Thakur has failed not only to send the woman to the court in answer to more than one summons, but also to show cause for such failure.

These cases refer to the capital. I shall now cite an example from the interior parts of the state. The Thakur of Sena,

a village in the Bali Pargana, has penned in the wife and daughters of Biradsingh, a native of the village, and is subjecting them to a life of serfdom. Biradsingh is a farmer and badly needs the help of the members of his family in his strenuous calling. But the Thakur seldom allows the wife to visit her home, and does not permit the girls to go out of his harem at all. The girls are of a marriageable age, and it is feared that they will be given away as articles of dowry. Biradsingh has proceeded against the Thakur in the Hakoomat court, which unfortunately is presided over by a Thakur, and there is little chance of unalloyed justice being done.

Although it is a healthy sign of the times that members of the oppressed class are mustering courage to put up a fight against their oppressors, they are an unequal match. Apart from the great political influence which the feudal lords wield in the autocratic system of rule in the Indian states, the "slaves" are seriously handicapped by their economic conditions. These wretches get only half a maund of the coarsest corn and about seven annas every month as maintenance provisions from their masters. It is unthinkable that they could meet the costs of litigation. And then they can be tortured to any extent with impunity if their intentions are prematurely divulged.

The miseries of thousands of men, women, and children smarting under this accursed system can better be imagined than described. Let those who maintain, permit, or ~~pr~~ protect it, let the feudal chiefs, the Princes, and the British Government ponder over the reaction that is bound to follow from such wrongs. I wish the Maharaja of Jodhpur could gather strength to enforce his decision both in the letter and the spirit, and wipe off this ugly blot from the fair face of Marwar without delay.

The Young Rajasthan,  
18-4-1929.

Attention has also to be invited ~~in~~<sup>in</sup> this connection to the special report on forced labour sent by this office on 4-7-1929.



## Industrial Organisation.

### Workers' Organisations.

A marked feature of the period under review was the emergence of a spirit of restlessness and dissatisfaction with their present service conditions among the employees of the various railway systems in India. An account has already been given in the May 1929 report of this office (see pages 42-48) of a deputation of the All India Railwaymen's Federation which waited on Sir George Rainy and the Members of the Railway Board at Simla on 4-5-1929, under the leadership of Mr. V.V.Giri, the president of the Federation. The evasive replies given on the occasion by Sir George Rainy to the demands of the Federation have directly contributed to the present accentuation of unrest among railwaymen. Mr. Giri has issued a detailed statement to the press on 15-6-1929, exposing the futility of the Simla discussions, and charging the authorities with unwillingness to meet the railway employees in a reasonable frame of mind. The Railway Member's gibe that the Federation, which has at present a membership of 100,000 has no representative basis, and that hence no final agreements can be made with it, has stung the men to the quick. The evasive answers given to the demands for improved wages, security of service, increased housing facilities, standardisation of work and emoluments, and better leave rules have created great discontent in the rank and file of railway labour. Mr. Giri has appealed for an intensive campaign to double the membership of the existing unions, both on state and company railways, and has directed all the railway unions affiliated to the All India Railwaymen's Federation to present

the same demands as made by the Federation at Simla, to their respective Administrations. Mr. Giri has also placed in the forefront of the railwaymen's programme, first the need for securing the recognition of the All India Railwaymen's Federation as a machinery of negotiation with the railway employees, and secondly, the acceptance by the Railway Board of its responsibilities as the controlling authority of the Indian railways, instead of the present opportunist policy of shunting off inconvenient questions inconclusively to the different Railway Administrations and their Agents.

... ..

Unrest among G.I.P. Railway employees, Nagpur.

The general unrest among railwaymen found its strongest expression at Nagpur, where the local G.I.P. Railway Union signified the first anniversary of the Union (13-6-1929) with a threat of direct action, if their grievances were not immediately redressed. At the anniversary meeting resolutions were passed expressing dissatisfaction with the G.I.P. Agent's reply to their demands; requesting Mr. Aney, M.L.A., to represent their grievances in the proper quarters; and recommending to the executive of the Central Union to permit the Nagpur branch to resort to direct action on 22-6-1929 if their demands were turned down. It is understood that the chief demands of the men, in addition to the joint demands made by the All India Railwaymen's Federation deputation at Simla on 4-5-1929, are for improved conditions in respect of the present unsatisfactory ~~working~~ water and electric supply, and overtime work without extra remuneration, and victimisation of Union members. Mr. Hutchinson,

the Vice-president of the Union, who was subsequently arrested as a communist agent on 16-6-1929, and who is now undergoing trial at Meerut, was one of the principal advocates of direct~~any~~ action, while Mr. Fuley, M.L.C., struck a different note, and pleaded for conciliation and arbitration. The situation had become so serious by 27-6-1929, that the Agent of the G.I.P. Railway had to go to Nagpur, to investigate conditions on the spot. The direct action threat is in abeyance pending the Agent's investigations.

... ..

G.I.P. Railway Employees' Annual Conference, Bombay.

The second session of the annual Conference of the G.I.P. Railway Staff Union was held in Bombay on 29-6-1929 under the presidency of Mr. Jammadas M. Mehta, M.L.A. Mr. Mehta's presidential speech was an important utterance, as while it severely criticised Sir George Rainy and the Railway Board for their unsympathetic and evasive replies to the deputation of the All India Railwaymen's Federation on 4-5-1929, it contained an equally severe warning against the dangers of workers falling easy victims to the lure of communism. Said Mr. Mehta: "We have lately heard a good deal of communism in the labour movement in India..... If any labour worker believes in strikes as a principle, or promotes strikes for purposes other than for which the union is started, such as for transferring the control of an industry or for political power, I should ask you to kkp away from such a worker, whether he calls himself a communist or not". Mr. Mehta said that the Nehru Report provided a sure and adequate guarantee for the rights of the workers, and that with such a charter of liberties "there was no reason for

setting up a counter political movement to the Congress whether in the name of the Third International, or the dictatorship of the proletariat, or any other shibboleth. When an admirer of Russia waves the red flag you might respond by waving the Gandhi flag, which is the symbol of unity, peace and freedom". The speech is important as indicating the revulsion of sane and responsible nationalist leaders against the excessive permeation of communistic influence in labour matters. The Conference passed resolutions for the introduction of a uniform time scale with local allowances, an eight hour day with a weekly off-day, extension of leave benefits to all employees including inferior servants, grant of free passes to members of the Union, provision of adequate and decent free quarters, abolition of periodical medical re-examinations, and the stopping of several kinds of victimisation.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.Floods in Assam.

Towards the last week of June 1929, vast areas in Silchar, Sylhet, and Nowgong in Assam were inundated by disastrous floods. Even so early as the 9th June, it was noticed in the Assam valley, that three rivers in the Nowgong District were steadily rising and inspite of warnings given to the villagers to remove themselves to higher places, about 3,000 persons were rendered homeless by about the 22nd June. Destruction of property caused by the floods in the submerged villages in the area is estimated at ten million rupees, and the task of rendering the distressed villages aid was rendered very difficult by the interruption of all communications. The Government have taken prompt measures to remedy the situation, and supplies of food and clothing are <sup>being</sup> rushed to the area. In a communique issued by the Government of Assam, it is mentioned that the area under water is far larger than that in any previous flood, and that the disquieting feature of the situation was the prolongation of the floods. Early in July communications were partially restored, and though complete figures of mortality are not yet available, it is reported that 41 were drowned in Cachar, and that there has been a heavy cattle mortality. Public offices have been closed as they were filled with refugees, and suspensions of collection of revenues have been ordered, and the various departments have been asked to facilitate the <sup>erection</sup> ~~extension~~ of buildings by means of <sup>fragments of</sup> thatching materials from the forest reserves for the next three months. Thanks to the assistance of the local committees and of the general public, the

immediate danger of starvation has, it is believed, been already met. But apart from the immediate needs for food and housing, the problem of furnishing suitable seed grains and cattle still remains to be met. The Government propose doing this with the aid of agricultural loans and by the intensification of the activities of the Agricultural Department. Famine conditions however still continue to prevail.

... ..

#### Scarcity and Famine.

Whereas the difficulties in the Assam valley are due to too abundant rainfall, the failure of the monsoon has been responsible for famine conditions now prevailing in the villages of the Delhi province and in certain parts of the United and Central Provinces. The District Magistrate of Delhi has been recently helping the cultivators in the locality by the grants of agricultural loans for the purchase of cattle and seeds, and for sinking new wells ~~wherever~~ wherever required. There is a very big demand for agricultural loans in certain parts of the United Provinces, such as <sup>the</sup> Agra and Bundelkhand divisions and some districts in the Meerut and Allahabad divisions. In the latter areas the Government had previously remitted 7.5 lakhs of rupees of the kharif (autumn crop) revenue demand and suspended the realisation of nearly 54 lakhs. They have now considered the treatment of the amount under suspension, and ordered the remission of another 22½ lakhs of rupees, while proposals involving the remission of an additional 6 lakhs of rupees are still under consideration. The agricultural loans recently granted

amount to nearly 31 lakhs, and some 5,000<sup>Rs</sup> <sup>maunds</sup> of tested paddy seeds have ~~be~~ also been distributed in the afflicted areas. Famine works in these districts have also been started.

In the Jubbulpore area, Central Provinces, gratuitous relief has been given to about ten thousand paupers, and some relief works have been started. The average number of persons employed on scarcity works in the Jubbulpore division during the week ending the 24th June was as follows:-

Jubbulpore	-	33,100,
Saugor	-	20,068,
Damoh	-	20,211,
Mantla	-	1,348,
Seoni	-	5,105, and
Narsinghpur	-	6,811.

The Central Provinces Government have come in for a good deal of public criticism for providing metal breaking as almost the only form of relief to the famine-stricken peasants of the division. In view of the seriousness of the famine condition there, and in view of the fact that the Government have not been able to devise any suitable scheme of work to which the people of the district may be put, the local congress committee has volunteered to organise relief by the introduction of the spinning wheel. ~~That~~ An article appearing in the Pioneer of the 28th June states that the authorities are seriously studying the congress scheme of relief work.

... ..

#### Land Revenue Settlement.

In some of the previous numbers of this report, mention has been made of the Bardoli Report published by a Committee of Congressmen appointed to inquire into the system of land assessment in the

The Indian Cotton Industry and Foreign Competition.

The textile strike, which has recently loomed so largely on the industrial horizon, has to some extent served to distract attention from the ~~difficult~~ difficult situation which the Indian cotton industry is facing on account of vigorous foreign competition. The millowners, however, have been extremely alive to the challenge of foreign efforts to capture the Indian cloth market. The views recently expressed on behalf of Bombay Millowners' Association by Mr. H. P. Mody, the Chairman of the body, on two questions having a vital bearing on the stability and prosperity of the Indian cotton industry deserve more than passing attention. The first is the Association's views on the changes effected in the Japanese Factories Law from 1st July 1929 with regard to the prohibition of night work of women and youths below 16, by way of fulfilling Japan's obligations under her conditional ratification of the Washington Hours Convention. Mr. Mody asserts in the course of a special interview to the Times of India on 3-7-1929 that as the prohibition of night work under the new changes applies only to the hours between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., and as the Japanese cotton mills will continue to work in two shifts of 8½ hours each between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. employing women and children, it can not be said that night work in its real sense has been abolished in Japan. Night work according to the Indian Factory Act, which complies with the Washington Convention, means that women and children shall not be employed in factories between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. The new law in Japan may be an improvement on the old system, which permitted the employment of all classes of labour in two shifts - the first from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the second from



7 p.m. to 6 a.m., making a total of 22 working hours. Under the new law the working day of 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. ~~is~~ contains a total of 18 working hours only, with half an hour's interval for each shift. Mr. Mody contends that, under the circumstances, it is a misnomer to say that Japan has abolished either the double shift system or night work of women and children. He stresses the fact that the power vested in the Japanese Government to suspend the application of the provisions has impaired to a considerable extent the value of the changes, and asserts that Indian cotton industry in its competition with Japan is materially handicapped by the Indian Factories Act with its severer restrictions on night work of women and young persons.

In this connection the Times of India of 3-7-1929 in a leading article points out that though the recent innovation of the Japanese factory law does not mean the adoption of the Washington Convention in its entirety, it will still materially affect the finances of Japan's cotton industry. In 1925, out of a total of 1,800,000 Japanese operatives, 732,000 were women over 16 years of age, and 223,000 were girls below 16 years of age, so that female workers considerably outnumbered male workers. According to the paper, the figures for the textile industry are still more striking, and illustrate the dependency of the Japanese cotton manufacturing trade on ~~women's~~ women's labour. Out of a total of about 973,000 workers in textiles, 591,000 were women and nearly 200,000 were girls below 16. Men numbered only 168,000, and boys under 16 came up to 13,000, a total of 181,000. The new regulation restricting the hours of night work of women, though it is limited in its application, will affect 80 per cent of Japanese mill workers, as the percentage of women's labour in the industry comes up to that high level.

The Japanese owners are meeting the situation by adding to the spindleage of each mill.

The second question raised by the Bombay Millowners' Association is the need for further protection to the industry by the imposition of an added duty on imported foreign cloth. At the Conference between the Viceroy and the representatives of the Association at Poona on 28-6-1929, Mr. Mody presented the case for enhanced import duty on cloth. In the Conference between the Committee of the Association and Sir George Rainy and Sir George Schuster at Poona on 29-6-1929, Mr. Mody further defined his views and urged the imposition of an import duty of not less than 9 per cent, which he contended would not only put the Indian textile industry on its feet, but bring to the Government additional revenue to the tune of ~~Rxxx~~ Rs. 3 crores. The Finance and Commerce Members, it is understood, have called for a detailed memorandum of the present position of the industry and the steps that have been taken to give effect to the recommendations of the Tariff Board. The Simla correspondent of the Free Press in a statement on the situation on 6-7-1929 expresses the opinion that though the Government is averse to the imposition of protective duties on cloth and incurring the enmity of Lancashire interests, yet ~~ix~~ its present financial embarrassments and the tempting bait of an extra Rs. 3 crores to spend, might induce the Government to meet the sore-pressed millowners more than half way. Sir B.N.Mitra, however, is not in favour of an enhanced import duty, on the ground that it will hit the Indian consumer very hard.

enjoining pre-puberty marriage, but a particular feature revealed by the inquiry is that only a very small section of the population seems to be influenced by religious texts, and that it is the tyranny of custom rather than the conscientious objections of orthodoxy which is standing in the way of salutary social reforms. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Committee has set its face against exemptions being granted on the ground of religious or conscientious objections.

The acceptance of the Committee's recommendations, will, of course, to a very large extent depend on the public support given to them. It is believed that immediately on the publication of the report Rai Saheb Harbilas Sarda's bill for raising the marriageable age of girls to 14, and of boys to 18, the consideration of which was postponed in the last session of the Assembly, on the ground that the Age of Consent Committee's Report was not out (see February Report page 6), will be proceeded with (at the ensuing autumn session of the Assembly).

#### Efforts to elevate the Depressed Classes.

At page 64 of the report of this Office for June 1929, mention was made of the Depressed Classes and Aboriginal Tribes Committee, which has recently been appointed by the Government of Bombay to inquire into and report on the economic and educational condition and the grievances of the untouchables and aboriginal tribes in the Bombay Presidency, and of the questionnaire framed by the Committee. The questionnaire which is divided under the four main heads, education, economic, social, and general, is suggestive of the extremely depressed conditions of these classes occupying the lowest rungs of the social ladder. Most of them are ~~and~~ serfs in perpetuity of the village land-holders, because of their chronic indebtedness.

There are indications to believe, that in some parts at least of the Presidency, they are compelled to do forced labour. The arrogant upper classes have gone even to the extent of decreeing that the depressed classes shall not put on good clothes and ornaments. It is to be expected that as a result of the inquiry, more light will be thrown on the whole problem, and the depressed classes will be allowed to develop in their own way unimpeded by social taboos. Already much good work has been done in this direction by the Mysore and Madras Governments. It is to be expected that Bombay will follow in the footsteps of Madras and Mysore. Below are given some accounts of the main activities of the two latter governments in this direction

Adi Karnatak Co-operative Society.

In the year 1927 an order was passed by the Mysore Government for starting as an experiment one Adi Karnatak Co-operative Society consisting of 20 members who, at the time of selection, were residing within easy reach of one another. Each member of the society was to be given 6 to 8 acres of land free, on condition that they should not be alienated by the members for a period of ten years from the date of the grant. Provision was also made for advancing to each family a sum of Rs.80/- for the purchase of a pair of bullocks and Rs.20/- in all for agricultural implements, manure, seed and fodder for the bullocks. For subsistence till the first harvest, ragi and other articles of food were to be supplied on credit up to a limit of Rs.10 for each family per month. Half the amount advanced for the purchase of bullocks, etc. and half the cost of the provision supplied to the members for subsistence was to be treated as a free grant and written off, and the other half to be recovered from the members in 5 to 8

equal annual instalments, according to the circumstances of each individual case. The cost of starting a society on these lines was calculated to be Rs. 3,000 as detailed below:-

Cost of 20 pairs of bullocks at Rs.80 per pair.	Rs. 1,600
Subsistence charges 20 families for 5 months at Rs.10 per family per month.	.. 1,000
Implements, manure, seed, fodder, etc.	.. 400
	<hr/>
	Rs. 3,000

Activities of the Commissioner of Labour, Madras.

An important branch of the work of the Commissioner of Labour in the Madras Presidency is to act as a Protector of the Depressed Classes. His main lines of work in this connection are the provision of house sites, the organization and supervision of Co-operative Societies, provision of schools including hostels, the construction of wells, tanks, and roads and the provision of burial grounds, latrines and path-ways for these classes.

Where the Depressed Classes have not sufficient space in the gaothan or it is unsuitable, Government waste land is sought for and converted into village site, and distributed amongst those who need it. As a rule however such land is not available, and the Labour Commissioner has to acquire land under the Land Acquisition Act. The compensation is advanced by Government and is repaid gradually by the new holders through a Co-operative Society.

The establishment of special schools for the Depressed Classes is a very important feature of the work. Instruction is free, and books, slates etc., are provided. Most of the teachers are recruited from the Depressed Classes. Scholarships for maintenance whilst in

schools or undergoing industrial training are allotted through the Department.

The Labour Commissioner also watches over the interests of the Depressed Classes in the matter of distribution of land and in their representation on the local bodies.

#### Depressed Classes Settlement at Palghat.

The Government of Madras is trying an interesting social experiment at Olavakkot, in the Palghat Taluk. The Nayadis of the taluk belong to the lowest of the untouchable classes of Malabar, and are treated as beyond the pale of society. Their number all told in the Palghat Taluk does not exceed a couple of hundreds. Inexorable social customs decree that these poor people should live far away from all human habitation in huts made of leaves. They are not allowed to do any decent work, and are even allowed to beg only on two days of the week, on Saturdays and Wednesdays. To elevate the condition of these depressed people, the Labour Department of the Government of Madras has evolved a scheme to construct a colony for them. Nine and a half acres of land have been acquired for the purpose of building huts and for cultivation. As an experimental measure five huts have been already built for them, and a large well has also been dug. At first, though the huts have been ready for some time, no Nayadi would come forward to enjoy the amenities provided for by the Government, as they suspected the motives of the Government in being so friendly. After persistent canvassing five Nayadi families consisting of 34 members have been persuaded to move into their new homes. The Government is giving each Nayadi member of this colony, nearly three quarters of a Madras measure of rice

(enough for a man's daily food), with two annas for incidental expenses, and half an anna worth of kerosene oil for the first day and a quarter anna worth of the same for subsequent days. A steward has been appointed to look after the welfare of the colonists. After the Nayadis have become familiarised with their new environments and methods of life, the Government is planning to instruct them thoroughly in farming and husbandry, through the officers of the Madras Agricultural Department. The colony was opened on 17-6-1929.

Child Marriage Prevention Act, Baroda.

According to the Hindu of 2-7-1929, the Baroda State Gazette has announced that the new Child Marriage Prevention Act will come into operation in the State from the 1st August 1929. Under the Act, a marriage contract entered into without ~~xxx~~ the special permission of a magistrate between parties who have not completed eight years is invalid, and persons arranging such a marriage are punishable with fine and simple imprisonment.

## MIGRATION.

### Indians in East Africa.

The position of Indians in East Africa is still engaging the earnest attention of Indian politicians and the public. In the monthly report of this Office for May, mention was made of Sir Samuel Wilson's (Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, who has been specially deputed by the British Government to study the situation on the spot and report) visit to East Africa, and of the Right Honourable V.S.Srinivasa Sastri, being deputed by the Government of India to lay the Indian case before him (see May Report, pp.72-73). Mr. Sastri sailed for East Africa from Bombay on 1-6-1929. On 10-6-1929, a deputation of Indians headed by Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru, M.L.A., president of the last session of the East African Indian Congress, met Sir Samuel Wilson at Nairobi, when Mr. Sastri was also present. The following are the main points in the memorandum presented by the Indian deputation on the occasion. The deputation first referred to the views of the Government of India on the question of a common electoral roll, and asked for joint electorates, as recommended by the Hilton-Young Report. Secondly, regarding the Kenya Legislative Council, the deputation strongly condemned the proposals of the Hilton-Young Commission for the creation of a non-official European majority, and regarded the proposal for the replacement of four officials by four non-official Europeans to represent native interests as inevitably leading to a control of the Colony by the Europeans. The deputation urged that the official majority must be preserved, and the status quo maintained. Thirdly, the natives should be represented by natives, and failing this, native



representatives should be selected in equal numbers from Indians and Europeans. Fourthly, it was pressed that Indians should be associated with the responsibilities of trusteeship by appointment to the higher civil services, from which they are at present entirely excluded. Fifthly, as regards closer union, in the sense of political union and federation, the Indian viewpoint was strongly opposed to it. Close co-operation was practicable in economic matters, but legislative powers must be retained by each territory, and the native policy must be controlled by the High Commissioner. Sixthly, the memorandum stressed the need for the provision of better educational and medical facilities for Indians. After receiving the deputation and listening to the presentation of the case for India, Sir Samuel ~~Wilson~~ Wilson left East Africa for England from Mombasa on 12-6-1929. Mr. Sastri and Pandit Kunzru also left for India on the same day.

The infructuous nature of the Wilson mission and the futile embassy of Mr. Sastri, <sup>are</sup> furnishing much food for anxiety among Indian leaders about the future of the Indians in East Africa. The Indian community does not welcome the Hilton-Young recommendations as an unmixed blessing, but for the sake of the principle of a common roll and a joint electorate embodied in the report, it was willing to overlook the recommendation for a non-official European majority in the Council after the registering of a formal protest. But Sir Samuel Wilson's announcement that the proposal for a common roll will have to be scrapped because of the Kenya Whites' opposition to it is regarded by the Indian public, as well as by the Kenya Indians, as a culpable concession to European intransigence at the expense of helpless India.

Pandit Kunzru on his return from East Africa, in the course of an interview to a representative of the Times of India on 24-6-1929, said that the late Conservative Government's tendency to shelve the proposal of a common roll was a policy which should find but little support from the Labour Government, in view of Labour's repeated declarations, while out of office, of the essential justice of the Kenyan Indians' demand for a common roll and joint electorates. He also pointed out that considering that there were 26,500 Indians as against only 12,500 Europeans in Kenya, an equitable share of the Kenyan revenues should be set apart for the provision of better educational and medical facilities for Indians. The Indian papers, including even Anglo-Indian journals, are all agreed upon the reasonableness and modesty of Indian demands in this connection, and are united in urging upon the Government of India to press India's case with the utmost vigour before the British Cabinet, lest the country's case should go by default.