

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE
INDIAN BRANCH

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Report for May 1 9 3 8.

N.B. Every section of this Report may be taken out separately.

<u>Contents.</u>	<u>Pages.</u>
1. <u>National Labour Legislation.</u>	
(a) Safety in Coal Mines: Amendments to Indian Coal Mines Regulations, 1926.	1
(b) The Payment of Wages (Federal Railways) Rules, 1938.	1
(c) The Draft British Baluchistan Factories Rules, 1938.	1
(d) The U.P. Trade Union Recognition Bill, 1938.	1
(e) 15 Days' Leave with Pay in French India: Grant by Government Notification.	2
(f) The Motor Vehicles Bill, 1938: Provisions re. Minimum Age and Hours of Employment of Drivers.	2-3
(g) The U.P. Maternity Benefit Bill: Legislative Council adopts Measure on 10-5-1938.	4
(h) Collection of Sickness Statistics among Mill Workers in Madras: Government Notification.	4
2. <u>Conditions of Labour.</u>	
(a) Labour Conditions of Factory Operatives in Baroda State, 1935-36.	5-7
(b) Dining Sheds and Rest Shelters for Workers in Ahmedabad Mills: Enquiry by Bombay Labour Office.	7-8
(c) Proposal for 45-Hour Week for Jute Mills: Obstruction by Smaller Mills.	8
(d) Labour Conditions in Travancore: Memorandum of All-Travancore Labour Association.	8-10
(e) Labour Officers for Individual Mills: Bombay Mill-owners' Association's Lead.	10-11
(f) The City of Bombay Municipal (Third Amendment) Act, 1938; Introduction of Adult Franchise for Municipal Elections.	11
(g) Grievances of Calcutta Press Workers: Extended Application of Factories Act demanded.	12
(h) Provision of Alternative Employment for Women excluded from Underground Work in Mines.	12
(i) Labour Unrest in Pondicherry: French Colonial Office institutes Enquiry.	13
(j) Uniform Labour Programme for Congress Provinces; Recommendations of Congress Labour Sub-Committee.	13-15
(k) Cawnpore Textile Labour Strike.	15-17
(l) Labour Unrest in C.P.	17
(m) The Coimbatore Textile Dispute: Increased Wages and Reduction of Hours recommended by Court of Enquiry.	18-19
(n) Plantation Labour in South India: Madras Government's Decision to establish Unemployment Exchanges.	19
(o) The Madras Tramway Dispute: Dismissed Workers Re-instated by Arbitrator's Award.	20

r

	<u>Pages</u>
3. <u>Enforcement of Conventions.</u>	
Factory Administration in India, 1936.	21-23
4. <u>Industrial Organisation:</u> <u>Workers' Organisations.</u>	
(a) Third All-India Kisan Congress, Comilla, 14 and 15-5-38.	24-26
(b) Amalgamation of Provincial Branches of A.I.T.U.C. and N.T.U.F.	26
(c) Progress of Trade Unionism in Bombay Province, 1936-37	27-28
(d) Progress of Trade Unionism in the Punjab, 1936-37.	28-29
(e) 5th Conference of Cochin Labour Union, Cochin, 1-5-1938.	29-30
(f) Organising Indian Sugar Mill Workers; Committee appointed by All India Sugar Mill Workers' Conference, Gorakhpur, 30-4-1938.	30-31
5. <u>Economic Conditions.</u>	
(a) Report of the Proceedings of the 9th Industries Confer- ence, Lahore, December 1937.	32
(b) Indian Match Industries Claim for Protection: Deputation waits on Government of India.	32-33
(c) Zamindars' Protest against U.P. Tenants' Bill: Oudh Zamindars' Conference, Lucknow.	33-34
(d) Economic and Industrial Survey of Bombay Province: Special Investigators for Small-scale Industries.	34
(e) Breakdown of Indo-British Textile Talks; Commerce Member Flies to London to resume Trade Talks.	35
6. <u>Employment and Unemployment.</u>	
(a) Working of the Punjab Unemployment Bureau, 1935-38.	36
(b) The Bihar Employment Board.	37
(c) Collection of Employment Statistics; Provincial Governments favour Federal Legislation.	37-38
7. <u>Public Health.</u>	
Housing Scheme for Middle Classes; Ahmedabad Municipal Enterprise.	39
8. <u>Education.</u>	
(a) Liquidating Illiteracy in Bombay: Bombay Adult Education Committee's Report.	40
(b) Vocational Training in Textile Mills; Government of Bombay's Scheme of Paid Apprentices.	41
9. <u>Agriculture.</u>	
Agricultural Indebtedness in Hyderabad State; Report of Special Officer.	42-43
10. <u>Migration.</u>	
Government of India stops Assisted Emigration to Malaya; Sequel to Reduction of Wages.	44
11. <u>General.</u>	
Labour and Social Policy of Congress; First Conference of Congress Prime Ministers, Bombay, 12 to 14-5-1938.	45-46

National Labour Legislation.

Safety in Coal Mines :
Amendments to Indian Coal Mines Regulations, 1926.

Attention is directed to pages 1072 to 1082 of Part I of the Gazette of India dated 21-5-1938 where are published certain amendments to the Indian Coal Mines Regulations, 1926. The amendments relate to the ensurance of improved safety measures in ~~various~~ mines. (The draft of the amendments were published at pages 2015-2025 of Part I of the Gazette of India dated 18-12-1937.)

The Payment of Wages (Federal Railways) Rules, 1938.

Reference was made at page 14 of our September 1938 report to the draft of the Payment of Wages (Federal Railways) Rules which the Central Government had notified its intention to adopt. The Rules as finally adopted by the Government are published at pages 943 to 953 of Part I of the Gazette of India dated 7-5-1938.

The Draft British Baluchistan Factories Rules, 1938.

Attention is directed to pages 244-260 of Part II A of the Gazette of India dated 23-4-1938 where is published the draft of the British Baluchistan Factories Rules.

The U.P. Trade Union Recognition Bill, 1938.

Reference was made at page 5 of our April 1938 report to the introduction of the Trade Union Recognition Bill in the U.P. Legislative Assembly on 5-4-1938. The Bill, which has been circulated for eliciting opinion is published at pages 307 to 308 of Part VIII of the U.P. Gazette dated 16-4-1938.

2

15 Days' Leave with Pay in French India:

Granted by Government Notification.

According to an Associated Press Message dated 22-5-1938 from Pondicherry, the Government of French India has notified that casual leave with pay for labourers and employees of the different industrial institutions in French India has been fixed at 15 days during a year, in accordance with the provisions of the French India Labour Code promulgated on 6-4-1937. 15 days' leave with pay will be allowed only to those who have been in service continuously for a period of one year; for those who have put in not less than six months' service, the number of days allowed will be only seven.

(The Hindustan Times, 23-5-1938).

The Motor Vehicles Bill, 1938: Provisions re.

Minimum Age and Hours of Employment of Drivers.

The Motor Vehicles Bill, 1938, an official Bill introduced in the Central Assembly on 18-3-1938, contains, among others, the following provisions of interest to the I.L.O.:

Age of Employment of Drivers.-Section 4: (1) No person under the age of eighteen years shall drive a motor vehicle in any public place. (2) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (3) of this section and of section 14, no person under the age of twenty-one years shall drive a locomotive, tractor or transport vehicle in any public place. (3) A Provincial Government may make rules under section 21 providing for the issue of licences, to be effective only within the province, to drive locomotives, tractors or transport vehicles, or any specified description thereof, to persons who have completed their eighteenth but have not completed their twenty-first year of age.

Section 14. relates to the grant of licence for driving motor vehicles which are the property of the Central Government; such licences are to be granted only to persons who have completed their eighteenth year.

Hours of Employment. Section 61: (1) Except as otherwise provided by rules made by the Provincial Government under section 64, no person shall drive, or cause or allow any person employed by him or subject to his orders to drive, -

- (a) for any continuous period of more than five hours and one-half, or
- (b) for continuous periods amounting in the aggregate to more than eleven hours in any period of twenty-four hours commencing two hours after midnight, or
- (c) so that he has not at least two consecutive hours for rest in any period of twenty-four hours calculated from the commencement of any period of driving:

Provided that it shall be a sufficient compliance with the provisions of clause (c) if the driver has at least nine consecutive hours for rest in any such period of twenty-four hours and has an interval of at least twelve consecutive hours for rest in the next following period of twenty-four hours.

(2) For the purposes of sub-section (1),-

(a) any two or more periods of time shall be deemed to be a continuous period unless separated by an interval of not less than half-an-hour during which the driver is able to obtain rest and refreshment, and

(b) any time spent by a driver on other work in connection with a vehicle or the load carried thereby, including, in the case of a passenger vehicle, any time spent on such vehicle while on a journey in any other capacity other than as passenger,

shall be reckoned as time spent in driving.

(3) This section shall not apply where the completion of a journey is inevitably delayed by circumstances which could not reasonably have been foreseen.

Statement of Objects and Reasons .- According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to the Bill, the present measure is to replace the Motor Vehicles Act, 1914, which has become inadequate under the present changed conditions. In the interests alike of the safety and convenience of the public and of the development of a co-ordinated system of transport, much closer control is required than the present Act permits.

The present Bill incorporates the main recommendations of the Motor Vehicles Insurance Committee and of the Wedgwood Committee and is the outcome of consultations with Provincial Governments and the third Transport Advisory Council which deliberated on it in December 1937. The principle of compulsory insurance has been approved by almost all the Provincial Governments, though there are differences of opinion as to whether its adoption should be entirely optional or whether, in the interests of uniformity, its adoption within a certain period of time should be obligatory.

The text of the Bill is published at pages 49 to 119 of Part V of the Gazette of India dated 26-3-1938. +

4

The U. P. Maternity Benefit Bill: Legislative
Council adopts Measure on 10-5-1938. +

The U.P. Maternity Benefit Bill which was passed by the local Legislative Assembly on 26-4-1938 came up for discussion in the U.P. Legislative Council on 10-5-1938.

In the course of discussion members urged the extension of the Act to local bodies. The Hon. Dr. K.N.Katju, Minister for Labour, replying to the debate pointed out that Government was desirous of extending maternity benefits to women employees of municipal boards but thought that it was not right to make any provision in ~~this~~ the present Bill without consulting the boards. He also said that an amendment of the law relating to local self-government was under consideration and that there would be a suitable opportunity of providing maternity benefits for women employees of the local bodies in that Bill.

It was also pointed out that in the meanwhile general instructions had already been issued by the Government to all local bodies urging the desirability of giving maternity benefits to their women workers.

The Bill was passed by the House the same day.

(The Leader, 12-5-1938.) +

Collection of Sickness Statistics among Mill Workers
in Madras: Government Notification.

Attention is directed to page 663 of Part I of the Fort St. George Gazette dated 10-5-1938 where are published two draft notifications (Nos. 415 and 416~~7~~ dated 2-4-1938: G.O. No. Ms. No. 901, Development) proposing to make certain changes in the Madras Factories Rules, 1936. The proposed amendments require owners of factories to maintain a record of the period of sickness of the workers with a view to provide material for the formulation of measures for the relief of sickness among factory workers. The two notifications will be taken into consideration on or after 12-7-1938. +

Conditions of Labour.

Labour Conditions of Factory Operatives in Baroda State,

1935 - 36.*

Number of Factories.- According to the annual Report of the Department of Commerce, Industries and Labour, Baroda State, for the year ending 31-7-1936, the number of factories on the register was 133 as against 116 in the previous year. Of these, 125 were in actual operation -27 perennial and 98 seasonal. 14 Factories out of the perennial class and 93 out of the seasonal class were connected with the cotton industry. 19 factories were registered during the year. Efforts were made in seasonal factories to enforce the Act strictly in matters of regulation of working hours, grant of holidays and maintenance of safety devices.

Number of Operatives.- The total number of factory operatives during the year was 27,644 as against 25,242 in 1934-35. Of these, 24,037 were employed in the cotton industry and the rest in other industries. Of the 27,644 workers, 22,738 were men, 4,555 were women and 351 were children.

Shifts.- Of the 27 perennial factories, 13 worked during night time on a shift system. 6 of the perennial factories worked on night shift throughout the year. Some cotton ginning factories also worked partly during night time on shift system.

Inspection. - With the exception of a few, all the perennial factories were inspected more than twice and the seasonal factories once, and in some cases more than once.

Wages.- The average monthly rates of wages of higher paid skilled labour continued to decline except in the cases of foreman (in which case the rate slightly increased from Rs. 87-0-0 to Rs. 89-0-0), blacksmiths, firemen, oilman and peon (in which cases the rates showed no change). The average wages of daily paid labour was, for men Rs. 0-9-0, and women Rs. 0-7-3.

Sanitation.- Sanitation continued to receive the attention of the Inspector. Statutory limewashing of the walls of latrines, urinals and departments of factories has been insisted on and generally complied with. Compounds of factories are maintained generally in a clean and drained state.

~~Strikes~~ Ventilation and cooling of factories have been found satisfactory though there is need for considerable improvement.

* Annual Report of the Department of Commerce, Industries and Labour, Baroda State for the year 1935-36 (ending 31st July 1936) - Baroda State Press 1937. - Price Re. 0-10-0 - pp.85

Strikes.- There was no labour strike of long duration or great magnitude in any of the factories. Minor ones of short duration which occurred in the Baroda City and in the towns of Petlad, Kadi and Dwarka were all settled, without any serious happenings.

Health of Operatives.- The health of factory operatives was found to be generally satisfactory; there was no case of any occupational disease.

Welfare Work - Housing and Medical Relief.- Housing accommodation was provided by the various mills only for 1,965 workers. The provision of medical relief also progressed slightly. Besides these welfare activities, a few mills provided creches, cheap cloth and grain to their workers.

Fencing of Machinery.- In course of inspections it has generally been found that guards are some-times made inactive by the workers themselves to derive facility in working. Jobbers and workers have been severely warned to desist from adopting such practices. Tight clothing is now generally supplied to workers engaged on hazardous work on machinery and the workers have also learnt to use this clothing throughout their period of active work.

Accidents and Compensation.- 155 accidents were reported to have occurred in factories as compared with 126 in the previous year. Out of the 155 accidents, 2 were fatal, 20 serious and 133 minor as against 3 fatal, 20 serious and 97 minor, last year.

During the year under report, compensation amounting to Rs. 6,712 was paid to workers injured by accidents as against Rs. 5,259 in the previous year. The Inspector scrutinized the amounts of compensation paid to workers and where same was found inadequate it was referred to the Commissioners for Workmen's Compensation.

Revision of the Factory Act.- The Committee, which in the last year's report was reported to have been appointed to consider the advisability of otherwise of revising the existing Factory Act on lines of that in force in the British India has concluded its work. Majority of the members has recommended the revision of the existing Act in accordance with the British Indian Factories Act of 1934, in almost all matters except those relating to reduction of working hours and grant of Sundays as holidays.

Maternity Benefits.- The report points out that there is a satisfactory increase in the amounts given to women workers as maternity benefit as compared with last year and this is due to the persistent efforts of the Inspector. The rules under the Maternity Benefit Act drafted by the Inspector on lines of those prevalent in British India, have received the assent of the Government.

Out of 1,018 women employed in factories, 14 applied for benefits and the total amount of maternity benefit paid was Rs. 128-4-0.

(The report on the conditions of labour of factory workers in Baroda State during 1934-35 is reviewed at pages 24-27 of our December 1936 report). †

Dining Sheds and Rest Shelters for Workers in Ahmedabad Mills: Enquiry by Bombay Labour Office. †

The April 1938 issue of the Labour Gazette, Bombay, publishes at pages 625-631 the result of a second enquiry conducted in 1937 by the Government Labour Officer, Bombay, into the arrangements for provision of dining sheds and rest shelters for workers in Ahmedabad mills. (The first inquiry was conducted in 1930.)

Dining Sheds: Inadequacy of Accommodation.- 63 of the 68 mills covered by the enquiry provided dining accommodation for the benefit of their employees. Out of the remaining five mills, one mill, employing 578 workers, was constructing a new building, which it was reported would be used partly as a ~~an~~ creche and partly as a dining shed; while the other four mills employing 1,266, 1,001, 751 and 220 workers respectively did not provide regular dining sheds for the use of their workers. The first two of these latter mills, however, reported that the matter was under consideration.

Out of the 63 mills which have dining sheds, 37 have provided dining accommodation for between 10 and 20 per cent. of their operatives, 11 have got accommodation for between 1% and 10 per cent., while the remaining 15 mills have dining space sufficient to accommodate between 20 and 45 per cent. of their workers. It is estimated roughly that in 45 or nearly two-third of the mills covered by the enquiry, the average daily number of workers who take their meals within the mill compound varied between 40 and 80 per cent.

Supply of Drinking Water.- Almost all the mills have provided water-rooms in which water is stored in big earthen kothis, or water-taps in or near the dining sheds. Separate arrangements are usually made for important sub-castes amongst Hindus and for Mohammadans. In some mills pucca cemented water-tanks have been specially built with taps around them for drinking purposes.

Other shelters.- Only 20 out of the 68 mills covered by the enquiry had provided smoking or other rest shelters as

apart from the dining sheds. Besides the dining, smoking and other sheds mentioned above, workers use part of the mill hotel accommodation or verandahs or godowns or spare temporary sheds within the mill compound for dining or resting during the intervals..

Proposal for 45-hour week for Jute Mills:

Obstruction by smaller Mills..

45-hour week in Jute Industry: Efforts to restrict production.- Mills representing 98 per cent of the total number of looms in operation in Bengal and almost 95 per cent of the total number of looms in India have agreed in the second week of May 1938 to enter ^{into} an agreement of five years' duration, during the first year of which weekly loom hours should be 45. The other most important part of this contemplated agreement is that there should be no extension of jute mill machinery. It is clearly recognised that there must, however, be hundred per cent agreement between the mills in India to avoid a repetition of the circumstances nullifying the agreement of 1933.

Concessions to small Mills: 54-hour week.- Recognizing the position of the smaller interests, it has been proposed that they should be permitted to work longer hours than others, and mills with less than 250 looms will be allowed to work 20 per cent more hours than the others in the agreement, i.e., 54 hours per week as opposed to the other's 45. Further, should necessity demand, these other interests are prepared to reduce their hours to 40 per week but the minority would not be asked to go below 54. Accordingly a 35 per cent concession in hours would in these circumstances be granted them.

Obstruction by smaller mills.- The small mills, however, want to work 108 hours per week and at the same time be given permission to increase their looms beyond their present figure. The negotiations are still being held up by the demands of small mills, which, if granted, would defeat the purpose of the agreement, namely the ensurance of an economic price-level for the products of Indian jute factories.

(The Statesman, 10-5-1938)-

Labour Conditions in Travancore:

Memorandum by All-Travancore Labour Association..

The following information about conditions of work in the coir (cocoanut fibre) industry of Travancore is taken from a memorandum submitted in the first week of May, 1938 by the All-Travancore Labour Association to the Enquiry Officer recently appointed by the Government of Travancore to enquire

into the labour disputes in the coir factories of Alleppey, the principal centre of this industry in the State. The memorandum also contains valuable information on general labour conditions in Travancore.

Wages - Drastic Reductions.- During the last 15 years wages in the coir factories of Alleppey and its suburbs have been reduced by 50 to 75 per cent. In the coir factories owned by Indians the proportion of reduction in wages is much worse than in European factories. Under present conditions, a labourer who works for the whole day gets an average Rs. 6 per mensem. This is because of the contract system and the reduced rate of wages.

Payment in kind.- The present wages are quite insufficient for the bare necessities of an ordinary labourer and even these reduced wages are not paid in cash by many of the factories. The memorandum deals with the evils of the system and demands that a stop should be put to it.

Truck System.- The truck system is prevalent in almost every factory outside the town with the result that unreasonably high prices have to be paid for articles supplied by the employers to the labourers in lieu of wages in cash.

Delay in Payment of Wages; Fines and Exactions.- In some factories wages are paid only once in six months. In most of the coir factories, fines are unjustly levied and there are instances in which even wages of one full week are levied as fines by clerks, contractors and foremen. Some of the lower staff of the factories, collect monthly amounts from labourers and also sell tickets for dramas, cinemas, festivals in temples and charities. In the present state of affairs in factories, continuity of service of a labourer depends upon making such payments.

Economic Conditions.- The argument advanced by the factory-owners for the reduction of wages is that the prices realised in the European markets for their products have considerably gone down. Such a regrettable state of affairs has been brought about by the unhealthy competition amongst the employers. Even so, the memorandum affirms that the employers are in a position to pay increased wages. To prevent men without sufficient capital starting coir factories, the Government should insist on a cash deposit of Rs. 5,000/- by all coir factory owners.

Minimum Wages of Rs. 30/- per mensem.- The memorandum urges that as the standard of living is abnormally low in Travancore, a minimum wage must be fixed by legislation. The existing system of piece-work must be stopped and it must be made possible by law for every labourer to earn at least Rs. 30 per mensem. It is also necessary that there should be standardisation of wages.

Other Demands: Labour Legislation to be accelerated.- There should be a permanent Board consisting of representatives of labour and employers on the lines recommended by the Cawnpore Committee. A Payment of Wages Act on the lines of the British India Act should also be enacted for Travancore. For the satisfactory working of factories and for ensuring harmony and goodwill between the employer and the employee, it is necessary

that all factory-owners in Travancore must recognise the Travancore Labour Association. The provision in the Trade Union Regulation that all labour associations should be registered must be cancelled. All factories in the State, however small, must be brought within the purview of the factory regulation. The provision in the Trade Unions Disputes Bill making declarations of strike unlawful under certain circumstances must be removed. The memorandum further requests the Government to push through legislation regarding payment of wages, maternity benefit and unemployment insurance. Labour should be given adequate and satisfactory representation in the legislature of the State. For the settlement of disputes between labour and capital a permanent committee, consisting of representatives of labour and capital, should be constituted. The memorandum also urges the creation of a Labour Department and the appointment of a Labour Commissioner.

Health and safety measures.- After pointing out the lack of proper sanitary arrangements in Indian-owned factories, the memorandum, in conclusion, says that in the opinion of the Travancore Labour Association, many of the factories, buildings and rooms are not constructed in accordance with the Factory Regulation, and as such, the factory owners should not be allowed to carry on work in them. The labourers engaged in stencilling work must be provided with rubber hoses for protecting their hands and legs. They should also be provided with spectacles. The contract system that is now in vogue in all the factories, being a positive danger to the interests of labour, must be completely abolished.

(The Hindu, 10-5-1938.) ~

Labour Officers for Individual Mills:

Bombay Millowners' Association's Lead. †

The Bombay Millowners' Association has recommended the adoption by member mills of an active policy of appointing labour officers for individual cotton mills in Bombay, with a view to bringing about better employer-employee relationships. The decision is based on a recommendation of the Whitley Report.

The Association will shortly be evolving a system of training labour officers. The main duties of the labour officers will be to supervise recruitment, prevent abuses, ensure a fair deal for labour and generally assist the management in all labour matters. It is understood that the labour officers appointed under the scheme will be entrusted with the following work, among other duties:- The proper working of the badli control system, preliminary inquiry regarding workers' complaints, checking absentism among workers and prevalence of bribery and corruption, suggesting to management

means for better utilisation of leisure hours and other measures for the general welfare, the collection of information about the labour situation and activities of labour organisations and supervising the filling in of returns under various Acts.

(The Times of India, 4-5-1938.)

City of Bombay Municipal (Third Amendment) Act, 1938:
Introduction of Adult Franchise for Municipal Elections.

On 3-5-1938, the Hon. Mr. L.M. Patil, Minister for Local Self-Government, Bombay, introduced in the Bombay Legislative Assembly the City of Bombay Municipal (Third Amendment) Act, 1938, which, among other stipulations, makes provision for adult franchise for the Bombay municipal elections. The first election under the new Act will be held in 1942. According to the Bill, a person is not entitled to be enrolled in the municipal election roll as a voter of any ward unless such person:-

- (a) has, on the 30th day of September in the year preceding that for which the roll is being prepared, attained the age of 21 years, and
- (b) has the requisite residence, business premises or taxation qualifications.

(A person is to be deemed to have the requisite resident qualification or the requisite business qualification if he has ordinarily used a dwelling in the City as a sleeping place or occupied business premises in the City, as the case may be, for the qualifying period.) Under these provisions, almost the whole adult labour population of Bombay will be enfranchised so far as municipal elections are concerned.

The Bill was discussed in the Bombay Assembly on 3, 4 and 5-5-1938 and was passed on the last date (The Bombay Chronicle dated 5, 6 and 7-5-1938). The text of the ^{Act} Bill is published at pages 383-³⁵⁰~~372~~ of Part IV of the Bombay Government Gazette dated ~~3-5~~³²⁻⁵ 1938. +

Grievances of Calcutta Press Workers: Extended
Application of Factory Act demanded. .

A mass meeting of the press workers and binders of Calcutta was held at Calcutta under the auspices of the Press Employees' Association on 22-5-1938 under the presidency of Mr. Aftab Ali, M.L.A., Vice-President, All-India Trade Union Congress. The meeting considered fully the various grievances of press workers and binders, and adopted, among others, the following resolutions: (1) that *an* All-Bengal Press Workers' Conference should be held at Calcutta to further ventilate grievances and secure redress for them, (2) that the Factories Act should be extended to those presses and binding establishments that are worked with or without the aid of power and wherein ten or more persons are employed, (3) that the attention of the Calcutta Corporation should be drawn to ^{the} extremely insanitary conditions of living of the industrial workers of the presses and binding establishments of Calcutta, and that the Corporation should be requested to take up the work of providing better housing for press workers, and (4) that the recently established Welfare Committee of the E.I. Railway Press, Calcutta, should be modified on the lines of the Works Committee of the Government of India presses.

(The Amrita Bazar Patrika, 28-5-1938.)+

Provision of Alternative Employment for Women excluded
from Underground Work in Mines. .

It was reported in the earlier reports of this Office that women workers have been excluded from underground work in all mines with effect from 1-10-1937. The Government of Bihar was having under consideration schemes for providing alternative ~~work~~ ^{for} work to the large numbers of women excluded from Bihar coal fields, and it is now understood that it ^{has} decided to open, with the initial grant of Rs. 30,000 from the Government of India, two schools at Jharia and Kustore, in the colliery area where training in weaving and wicker work will be given to the displaced women mine workers. The two schools will be opened in June 1938.

(The Hindustan Times, 26-5-1938.)+

Labour Unrest in Pondicherry:
French Colonial Office Institutes Enquiry. +

As a result of labour unrest in Pondicherry (French India), during the last few months, the French Colonial Government has ordered an official enquiry into labour conditions in French India, and has appointed Mr. Tixier of the French Colonial Office to conduct the enquiry. Mr. Tixier arrived in Pondicherry early in May 1938.

of Inquiry (The Hindustan Times, 1-5-1938.)

The Commission appointed by the French Government ~~to~~ to study the social, political and economic status and conditions of the people in the French Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated Territories, ~~is~~ ^{is} expected to visit French India and French Indo-China very shortly for gathering ~~the~~ evidence.

(The Hindu 30-4-1938.)+

Uniform Labour Programme for Congress Provinces:
Recommendations of Congress Labour Sub-Committee. +

The labour policies and programmes of the Congress provinces were taken up for consideration at a meeting of the Labour Sub-Committee of the Congress held at Bombay on 15-5-1938.

The following members of the Committee were present: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Jairamdas Daulatram, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, Mr. Shankarlal Banker, Acharya Kriplani, Messrs. Gulzarilal Nanda, M. R. Masani and Khandubhai Desai.

Resolutions. The following resolutions were adopted by the Committee:

Bombay and U.P. Textile Inquiry Committees: Similar Committees to be appointed in other Provinces.- This Committee notes with satisfaction the appointment of Committee made by the Provincial Governments of Bombay and the United Provinces for inquiry into the wages and conditions of workers engaged in the Textile Industry and trusts that Governments in other Provinces and Indian States where the textile industry is established, will, with a view to bring about simultaneous improvement, take similar action at an early date.

Bombay Millowners Congratulated.- The Committee expresses its satisfaction at the recommendations made by the Bombay Textile Inquiry Committee and accepted by the Government having been generally carried out by the employers in the Bombay Presidency.

The Committee hopes that the millowners in the other Provinces will also carry out such recommendations of the Inquiry Committee as are accepted by the Governments of these Provinces.

Bihar Labour Inquiry: Similar Inquiries urged in other Provinces.- The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Bihar Government have appointed a Committee to inquire into the conditions of labour in the important industries in the Province and hopes that similar inquiries will be instituted in the other Provinces, particularly in regard to sugar, mining, ginning, pressing and other organised industries.

Need for Inquiry into Conditions of Shop Employees.- The Committee is of opinion that the wages and hours of work and other conditions of the employees engaged in shops and similar establishments, are far from satisfactory, and requests the Congress Ministries to institute suitable measures for improving the same. The Committee further expresses its general approval of the legislation proposed to be introduced by the Government of Bombay in this behalf.

Leave with Pay during Sickness: Bombay Government Congratulated.- The Committee welcomes the expression by the Government of Bombay of their intention to introduce legislation for provision of leave with pay during sickness and hopes suitable action will be taken by other Provincial Governments in this behalf.

54-Hour Week in Baroda State.- The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Baroda Government have notified the introduction from 1-8-1938 of a nine-hour day in response to the demand made by the Textile Labour Association. It hopes that other Indian States will take immediate action in this direction.

Labour Statistics to be Collected by Provincial Governments.- The Committee reiterates its opinion that the collection of statistical information regarding conditions of working class people engaged in important industries is an indispensable preliminary for suitable action for ameliorating the same, and expresses its earnest hope that the Provincial Governments which have not yet made such arrangements will take prompt and effective steps for making up the deficiency.

Extension of Factory Act.- The Committee expresses its satisfaction at the action of the Government of Bombay in extending the application of the Factory Act to factories employing 10 persons or more where the manufacturing processes are carried on with or without power and expects that other Governments will take early steps to extend the application of the Act on similar lines at least to all urban areas.

Maternity Benefits: U.P. and Bombay Governments Congratulated.- The Committee notes with satisfaction that U.P. Government have passed legislation providing maternity benefit and that the Bombay Government have extended the application of the said Act even to ~~the~~ smaller centres where the Act did not apply till now, and trusts that Governments of Provinces where there is no such provision, will take measures to introduce the necessary legislation.

Provision of Creches.- The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Bombay Government and the U.P. Government have issued

orders for compulsory establishment of 'creches' where women workers are employed and trusts other Governments will take action in this direction.

Extension of Prohibition to Industrial Areas.- The Committee welcomes the declaration made by the Government of Bombay to introduce Prohibition in the industrial city of Ahmedabad and expressed hopes that urban industrial areas in other Provinces will also be soon taken up for carrying out the Prohibition programme by the Congress Ministry.

Personnel of Labour Committees.- The Committee is of opinion that such Committees as may be appointed by the Provincial Governments for the purpose of enquiry into conditions of labour or trade disputes should be mainly composed of persons associated with public life and national movement.

The Committee also considered the questions of standardisation and raising of wages.

(The Bombay Chronicle, 17-5-1938
and the Hindustan Times 15.5-1938.)

Cawnpore Textile Labour Strike.

References were made in the earlier reports of this Office to the labour dispute in the Cawnpore textile mills and at pages 8¹/₁₁ of our April 1938 report to the recommendations of the Labour Enquiry Committee which was appointed by the U.P. Government to go into the dispute. While, the Cawnpore Mazdoor Sabha, on behalf of the workers, accepted the recommendations of the Committee, the employers after subjecting the Committee's Report to a critical and detailed analysis came to the conclusion that it was biased in favour of labour and based on wrong or insufficient data, and therefore rejected its recommendations.

The rejection of the report by the employers caused fresh labour unrest in Cawnpore, and on 16-5-1938, 25,000 workers in 10 mills struck work, against the advice of the Mazdoor Sabha to await the decision of the Government on the Report. (The Statesman, 17-5-1938.) By 17-5-1938 the strike had affected all Cawnpore mills and involved nearly 40,000 workers. On the same day, the Strike Council resolved to confine the strike to the textile industry for the present. On 18-5-1938 the employers of 16 textile mills declared a general lock-out, refusing to negotiate with labour at this stage or to appeal for Government intervention. (The Statesman, 19-5-1938). On 19-5-1938, the strike spread to a few non-textile concerns and the number of workers affected rose to 45,000.

From the beginning, the Government had taken adequate measures like the promulgation of Sec. 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code

and the increasing of police pickets to ensure public safety. But the workers have been, on the whole, non-violent. The U.P. Government, however, ~~has not~~ ^{did not} approved ^{of} the workers' resort to the strike weapon without waiting for the Government's decisions on the Enquiry Committee's Report.

U.P. Provincial Congress Committee's Review of Situation.- On 22-5-1938 the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee adopted a long resolution endorsing the Cawnpore Labour Enquiry Committee's recommendations and reviewing the strike situation. The resolution supported the demand of the workers for increased wages, condemned the employers for their reactionary attitude in refusing to accept the Enquiry Committee's recommendations, and urged the U. P. Government to take immediate and favourable action on the recommendations. Further, the resolution foreshadowed the possibility of "more stringent State control" of the textile industry being adopted if the employers refused to accept the Government's decisions. At the same time, it condemned the workers for resorting to a general strike without notice and against the advice of their leaders, and without waiting for Government's decisions.

The resolution is reported to have been drafted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (the Leader 25-5-1938 and the Hindustan Times, 24-5-1938) and is likely to influence considerably the Congress Ministry of the province.

On 24-5-1938, the Employers' Association of Northern India issued a communiqué to the effect that though it had rejected the Enquiry Committee's report, it was prepared to adopt any practical proposals likely to restore peace in the industry.

Strikers' Minimum Demands.- The strikers have hitherto remained peaceful, except for ~~picketing~~ ^{preventing} clerical and other staff members like jobbers and maistries from entering mill premises. A number of workers have been arrested for picketing.

It is understood that ~~Mr.~~ Mr. Balkrishna Sharma, President, U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, has, in consultation with the Mazdoor Sabha, submitted to the Government the following minimum demands: (1) acceptance by employers of the Enquiry Committee's recommendations, (2) 12 per cent. increase in wages, (3) setting up of conciliation machinery to prevent victimisation of strikers,

(4) recognition of the Mazdoor Sabha by the Employers' Association, and (5) an undertaking by the employers not to penalise strike leaders. The Government is expected to review the situation at the Cabinet Meeting to be held on 9-6-1938. (The Hindustan Times, 29-5-1938).

An unconfirmed report states that the employers are willing to grant a general rise of ten per cent in wages if the strike is immediately called off. (The Statesman 31-5-1938)

The strike is proceeding. +

Labour Unrest in C. P.

The main recommendations in the majority and minority reports of the C.P. and Berar Textile Labour Enquiry Committee were summarised at page 18 of our April 1938 report. The workers were not satisfied with ^{the} restoration to the extent of 60 per cent. in the wage cuts effected since 1934 recommended in the majority report and under ~~threat~~ ^{threat} of a general strike demanded at meetings held in connection with the May Day celebrations, restoration to the extent of 75 per cent. in wage cuts, recommended in the minority report. ("Statesman", 3-5-1938). The employers on the other hand considered the time inopportune for increasing the burden on the industry, in view of the present slump in textile prices. (The Times of India, 9-5-1938).

The Nagpur Textile Union convened a C.P. Textile Workers' Conference on 19-5-1938 at Nagpur to examine the C.P. Labour Enquiry Committee's Report. Mr. M.R. Masani presided. The Conference passed a resolution demanding restoration to the extent of 75 per cent in the wage-cuts effected since 1934 and appointed a Committee to place their demands before the Government and the employers. Failing satisfactory response the Committee is to meet on 12-6-1938 to decide on further action, including a general strike. Another resolution urged the appointment of an Enquiry Committee to undertake a comprehensive survey of labour conditions in C.P. and Berar and make recommendations. (The Indian Labour Journal, 29-5-1938).

It is understood that the Government of the Central Provinces is contemplating the appointment of a Labour Committee to enquire into general conditions of work in the province. (The Leader, 28-5-1938). +

The Coimbatore Textile Dispute:
Increased Wages and Reductions of Hours recommended by Court of
Enquiry. +

References were made in the earlier reports of this Office to a labour dispute in the Coimbatore textile mills and to the appointment of a Court of Enquiry to go into the grievances of the workers. (Vide pages 24-25 of November 1937 and page 32 of December 1937 reports). The Report of the Court of Enquiry has recently been published. It analyses the available data under five heads: welfare schemes, hours of work and shifts, trade unions, wages, and conditions of service.

Findings of the Court.- The more important recommendations of the Court are as follows:-

(a) Wage Increase.- No skilled worker should be paid less than Rs. 13 per month and no unskilled worker less than Rs. 11, excluding regular attendance bonus of Rs. 2 and Re.1 per month respectively. Increases recommended range from 5 per cent. to 25 per cent. in the wages of workers getting below Rs. 30.

The Court holds that standardisation of wages is a more urgent problem than fixing of minimum wages.

A bonus of one month's average wage a year is being given in some mills, and is recommended for adoption by the other mills.

(b) Hours of Work.- The reduction of the hours of work to 8 per day, if other textile provinces take similar action, is suggested. In any case, the reduction of the working hours during night shifts to 8 is urged; an extra 20 per cent. in addition to the usual rate of wages for night work is to be paid.

(c) Recognition of Unions.- The Report states that no condition can be laid down as necessary for the recognition of a trade union; registration under the Trade Unions Act is held to be sufficient. The Coimbatore Labour Union and the Millworkers' Union have on their rolls almost all the workers in the textile mills of Coimbatore and, therefore, deserve recognition.

(d) Other Recommendations.- Other recommendations include: (1) Provision of housing accommodation, adequate medical relief to the workers and their families and educational facilities; (2) creation of a provident fund system, under which the worker as well as the employer contribute equally; (3) formulation of definite rules for the guidance of the persons concerned in the matter of discipline, suspension, dismissal, etc.; (4) nine days' leave on account of sickness and six days' casual leave on account of urgent business with pay; (5) payment of same rates of wages to female as well as male workers; (6) curtailment of the present disproportionately large number of women workers; preference being given to unmarried women and widows for employment; (7) grant of Sunday as weekly day of rest; (8) payment of

wages during normal working hours; (9) exclusion of children and adolescents from night shifts and (10) establishment of a wage fixing board.

(The Hindu, 23-5-1938)

Government's Order on the Report.- The Government of Madras has generally endorsed the conclusions of the Court and has recommended for immediate action by employers, the findings regarding payment of increased wages and grant of casual and sick leave. Some of the recommendations of the Court involve legislation and some amendments of the rules framed under the Factories Act. A few also involve executive action on the part of the Government. These recommendations are under the consideration of Government.

(Page 742 of Part I of the Fort St. George Gazette dated 24-5-1938.)

Views of Employers and Workers on the Report.- The Coimbatore Indian Chamber of Commerce has issued a lengthy statement on the Report of the Court of Enquiry. The Chamber criticises the Report as being based on insufficient data and is of opinion that a rise in wages at the present time will spell disaster to the Coimbatore textile industry, since its competitive advantage over surrounding textile centres will be lost.

The Coimbatore Mill Workers' Union, has, on behalf of the workers, accepted the recommendations of the Report, but has stated that the wage scales recommended could have been more liberal in view of the prosperous condition of the industry in Coimbatore.

(The Hindu, 31-5-1938.)

Plantation Labour in South India:

Madras Government's Decision to establish Unemployment Exchanges.

The Hon. Mr. V.V.Giri, the Minister of Labour, Madras Government, outlined the Madras Government's policy in regard to plantation labour in South India at a Conference of the Estate Staff Association of South India held at Coonoor on 22-5-1938. The following details are taken from a report of the Conference sent by the Ootacamund Correspondent of the Times of India to that paper:

The Madras Government was considering the adoption of legislation to set up unemployment exchanges at an early date, and matters relating to the subject were being discussed with employers and workers. ~~Statement~~ The Madras Government, Mr. Giri said, had come to certain conclusions on the conditions of plantation labour and hoped that, when its report was circulated, the planters would give due consideration to their recommendations.

(The Times of India, 25-5-1938.)

The Madras Tramway Dispute:Dismissed workers Reinstated as result of Arbitrator's Award. +

A dispute was in progress during the last few weeks between the Madras Tramway Co., and its Workers' Union over the dismissal of five of the Company's employees. The allegation of the Union was that the five employees were victimised for their association with the Union and the strike of March 1937. The Company, on the other hand, claimed that the services of the five workers in question were dispensed with for insubordination and unsatisfactory performance of their duties. Since the workers threatened to go on strike over this issue, the Madras Government appointed Mr. Justice Pandrang Rao to arbitrate upon the dispute. The Arbitrator has found that the five men were victimised for their connection with the union and the strike of March 1937.

As a result of the finding, the manager of the Company has offered to re-entertain the five victimised persons, with the break in their service condoned.

(The Hindu, 26 and 27-5-1938)+

Enforcement of Conventions.

Factory Administration in India, 1936.*

The following are the salient features of the annual report on the working of the Indian Factories Act, in ^{1934,} British India during 1936. The figures given below include Burma which formed part of the Indian Empire throughout the period under review.

Amendment of the Factories Act.- In 1936 the extending section 5 of the Act was amended so as to empower Local Governments to extend provisions of the Act to 'precincts' (even in the open air) as well as to 'premises', which did not come within the general definition of factories.

Number of Factories.- The total number of registered factories increased from 9,918 to 10,226, surpassing last year's record figure by 308. The number actually working, which included 307 notified under section 5 (1) of the Act, was 9,323 of which 5,581 were perennial and 3,742 seasonal. 91 per cent. of the registered factories worked during the year as against 89 per cent. in the preceding year. The increase in the number of factories actually working was 492, the provinces of Bombay, Madras, the Punjab, Bengal and Sind mainly accounting for the increases; there were decreases in Baluchistan (6), Bangalore (4) and the N.W.F. P. (1). The number of new factories registered was 684 and the number struck off the registers 376.

Number of Operatives.- The average number of operatives employed during the year increased from 1,610,932 in 1935, which was then the highest figure ever recorded, to 1,652,147 in 1936. The most marked increases were in Bengal (18,036), the U.P. ~~18,422~~ (8,242), Madras (8,055), the Punjab (5,771), Sind (4,492), the C.P. (3,290) and Bihar (2,707). The number of workers employed in the cotton textile industry fell from 438,820 to 427,920. In Bombay, the decrease is attributed to the temporary cessation of night shift working in the Presidency (excepting Ahmedabad). Jute mills registered an increase from 277,986 to 289,136, as a result of the Jute Mills' Association's decision to increase production.

Employment of Women and Children.- There was an increase in the number of women employed from 229,726 in 1935 to 234,206 but the employment of children decreased from 15,457 to 12,062. The percentage of women and children to the total factory population was 14.1 and .73 respectively, as against 14.26 and .96 in 1935.

Working Hours.- Percentage of factories in which normal weekly hours are:-

* Statistics of Factories Subject to the Factories Act, 1934 (XXV of 1934) for the year ending December 31, 1936 together with a note on the working of Factories Act during the year. pp.37.

		Not above 42.	Between 42 and 48.	Above 48.
<u>Perennial.</u>				
For men.	...	5	23	72
For women.	...	12	18	70
		Not above 48.	Between 48 and 54.	Above 54.
<u>Seasonal.</u>				
For men.	...	27	12	61
For women.	...	35	10	55

The majority of factories worked to the full limits permitted by the Act. The tendency to employ overlapping shifts in the Assam and Burma rice mills, in textile factories particularly in the U.P., and in certain non-association jute mills in Bengal made it difficult to detect irregularities.

Wages.- The wages of both skilled and unskilled workers were more or less steady. In Bengal, there was no material change in the principal industries, but the Jute Mills Association reported further progress towards the standardization of wages in mills situated in the same districts, a step recommended by the Royal Commission on Labour. In the C.P., there was a further considerable drop in wages due to cuts, reduction in cotton mills and unemployment. In Madras, the wages of skilled labour remained fairly constant on the whole, though there were considerably adjustments between classes; the rates for unskilled labour showed a decline.

Safety. The safeguarding of machinery and plant continued to receive close attention in all provinces and their reports indicate that the causes of accidents were closely analysed.

Accidents.- 25,660 accidents were recorded in 1936 as against 23,119 in 1935. Fatal accidents increased from 207 to 232, serious accidents from 4,831 to 5,015 and minor accidents from 18,081 to 20,413. The incidence of all accidents per 100,000 operatives rose from 1,435 to 1,553 in the year under review. According to the report fluctuations in employment involving the engagement of untrained men, was partly responsible for this. Greater activity in the engineering industry, where the incidence of accidents is high, and better reporting swelled the totals.

Housing, Health and Sanitation.- Progress in housing was recorded in most of the provinces notably in the U.P., where 906 new quarters (716 - single and 191 double) were constructed in 1936, and in Bombay.

The health of the factory employees in almost all provinces was generally good and there were no epidemics except in Bengal, where Small-pox in protracted epidemic form and influenza in a moderately severe form were prevalent. Sanitary arrangements were on the whole found to be satisfactory. In Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Orissa, Sind and the C.P., there is still room for considerable improvement, particularly in the small factories and those in outlying areas.

Inspections and Prosecutions.- The number of factories inspected during the year was 8,060 or 86.4 per cent. of working factories. The percentage of perennial and seasonal factories inspected to the total number of such factories was 85.6 and 87.6 respectively as against 92.90 and 86.8 in the preceding year. No factory remained uninspected in the Central Provinces and Berar, Sind, Ajmer-Merwara, Baluchistan, Delhi, Bangalore and Coorg.

The number of convictions obtained under the Factories Act was 940 as against 955 in 1935.

(~~The~~ Factory administration in India during 1935 was reviewed at pages 35^b40 of our March 1937 report.)+

Workers' Organisations:

3rd All India Kisan Congress, Comilla, 14 & 15-5-1938.

The 3rd session of the All India Kisan (Peasants) Congress was held at Comilla, Bengal, on 14 & 15-5-1938 under the presidency of Swami Sahajananda Saraswati.

Presidential Address.- Below is given a brief summary of the presidential address delivered by Swami Sahajananda which is important for its ~~discussion~~^{elucidation} of the position of the All India Kisan Movement vis-a-vis the Indian National Congress and the indications it gives of growing tension between the two bodies.

Need for Separate Kisan Organisations.- Discussing the plea made by certain Congress leaders for abolition of separate kisan organisations, Swami Sahajananda said:

The Kisan Sabha must be a separate and autonomous organisation. It is dangerous to agree that the Congress is a Kisan organisation, because 95 per cent of its members are Kisans. Such reasoning would lead to the fallacious view that the Congress is a Hindu organisation because an overwhelming majority of its membership is Hindu. The Congress no more belongs to the Kisans than the country belongs to them by virtue of their overwhelming numerical strength. As a national organisation the Congress has perforce to safeguard the interests of all classes. It cannot fight for the interest of Kisans simultaneously with its regard for the promotion of the class interests of the Zamindars. Any attempt to suppress the Kisan Sabha by the Congress High Command will result in the transference of its leadership to reactionaries - as unfortunately has already happened in certain places - and in the ultimate effect of suppression of ~~and~~ the Kisan movement.

Use of Red Flag.- Referring to the criticism of the use of the Red Flag by Kisan organisations, he said: "The sight of red flag in the Kisan Sabha causes annoyance to many and they protest against it." The Kisans are not hostile to the tri-colour flag of the Congress, whereas the tri-colour is a symbol of nationalism, the Red flag is that of the international solidarity and ^{of the} aspirations of the exploited and oppressed.

Policy of Congress Ministries.- Stressing the view that Congress Ministries were merely 'reformist' in tendencies, he said: No great significance need be attached to the measures of agrarian reform adopted by the Congress Ministries, because they are the outcome of a reformist mentality. The Congress is afraid of revolutionary tendencies, and that is why Congress Ministries are discouraging strikes and demonstrations by peasants, workers, students, and the unemployed. He complained that the Kisans and their leaders were being prosecuted under Congress Governments, and asserted that the election pledges given by the Congress were being dishonoured by Congress leaders. Nevertheless,

in the fight against British Imperialism, he said, that the Kisans were prepared to co-operate with the Congress.

Resolutions.- The following is a summary of the more important resolutions adopted by the Congress.

Agrarian Revolution.- The Congress impressed upon its constituent sabhas the need for raising the work of the Kisan movement, from its present preliminary stage to more intensive forms of struggle which would help to bring about an agrarian revolution. It expressed the view that this revolution cannot be completed within the framework of Imperialist rule, and therefore advised the Kisans that, while fighting for their class demands through their class organisation, they should also fight in alliance with other sections of the people and work through the Indian National Congress against Imperialism and replace it with a full democratic Swaraj. It advised Kisans to form joint committees with the Congress and organisations of industrial workers, youth movements, etc. It also stressed the need for closer unity with agricultural and industrial workers belonging to the depressed classes.

Class Collaboration Impossible.- The Congress affirmed that the theory of class collaboration i.e. the principle that the interests of the exploiting and exploited classes can be adjusted and reconciled within the frame-work of the present society as preached by the Gandhi Seva Sangha and some of the nationalist leaders can only tend to paralyse the strength of the masses, and expressed the view that such collaboration, even on the excuse that the anti-imperialist struggle demands such a policy for the sake of so-called national unity, can result only in perpetuation of economic enslavement, in obstructing the achievement of Swaraj for the masses and ultimately in a settlement between the traditional exploiters of the masses and Imperialism by which the masses could be more intensively exploited.

Criticism of Agrarian Policy of Congress.- The Congress expressed dismay at "the attempts being made by the High Command of the Indian National Congress to give a further lease of life to the existing vicious agrarian system under the guise of allowing it to mend itself", and declared that any one who supported the Zamindari system was working for the continuance of the British raj. The resolution condemned the policy of Congress of strengthening pro-Zamindari elements in Congress Ministries.

Zamindari System Condemned.- The Congress condemned the zamindari and every other intermediary system of collecting land tax or rent, as such intermediary systems work to the detriment of the essential interests of Kisans and society at large. The resolution described the zamindari system as "most costly, least efficient and most corrupt". It therefore stressed that no reforms in tenancy laws could substantially alleviate the woes of the Kisans so long as vast areas of land remain vested in non-cultivating landlords, and exhorted all Kisan sabhas to work for the abolition of all feudal systems without paying any compensation.

Demand for Complete Cancellation of Agrarian Debts.- The Congress demanded the total cancellation of all debts of peasants, tenants and agrarian workers, and condemned all existing and proposed legislation providing for settlement of agrarian debts through debt conciliation boards, arbitration boards, etc, as Kisans will not be appeased till the whole volume of their debts is liquidated.

Land Tax to be substituted by progressive Income Tax. - The Congress affirmed that the Governments in India, including Indian states, have continued to tax land without considering the peasant's capacity to pay and that the land revenue is largely devoted for the benefit of non-agricultural classes who pay the least to these Governments. It therefore urged the immediate abolition of the land tax and its substitution by a system of progressive income-tax, exempting all incomes under Rs. 500. per year.

Kisan Volunteer Corps.- The Congress resolved that to prosecute the Kisans' struggle against the zamindars a Kisan Volunteer Corps should be organised, and appointed a Committee to draw up a scheme for it if need be in cooperation with the All India Trade Union Congress.

(The Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16-5-38 &
The Bombay Chronicle, 30-5-1938). +

Amalgamation of Provincial Branches of

A.I.T.U.C. and N.T.U.F. +

Reference was made at pages 22-26 of our April 1938 report to the joint session of the N.T.U.F. and the A.I.T.U.C. held at Nagpur on 17-4-38 at which unity was restored in Indian trade union ranks. This has been followed by amalgamations of provincial branches of these two bodies. Thus, a joint meeting of the Bengal Provincial T.U.C. and the Bengal Branch of the N.T.U.F. was held at Calcutta on 8-5-1938 at which these two bodies were amalgamated; similar meetings were held at Nagpur and Delhi to amalgamate the corresponding organisations in the C.P. and Delhi. *

Progress of Trade Unionism in Bombay Province, 1936-37.*

Number of Registered Unions.- During the year ending 31-3-37, the period covered by the report under review, 6 new unions were registered, bringing the total number of registrations as at 31-3-1937 to 112. Of these, the registrations of 50 unions had been cancelled before 1-4-1936; the names of the 12 unions in Sind were transferred to the register of the Registrar of Trade Unions of the province on 1-4-1936 and the registrations of 7 unions were cancelled during the year under report. The net number of unions on the register on 31-3-1937 was thus 43.

Of the 43 registered unions, only 39 unions submitted annual returns. The 43 unions may be classified thus: Railway Workers' unions, including those of railway workshop employees - 11; Tramway employees' unions -1; Textile Labour unions -8; unions of printing press employees -3; unions of municipal workers -1; Seamen's unions -2; Docks and port trust employees' unions -4; and miscellaneous unions -11. Of the 43 unions, 1 was an employees' association.

Membership of Unions.- The total membership of the reporting unions increased from 45,970 to 52,852 or by 12.5 per cent. It is interesting to note that all groups contributed to this rise, the more important among them being "Textile" -29.07 per cent., "Municipal" -52.44 per cent. and "Miscellaneous" -109.47 per cent. The position as regards female membership showed greater improvement during the year. In 1935-36, there were 12 unions with 635 female members on their rolls. During the year under report, however, the figures increased to 14 and 1,945 respectively.

Finances of Unions.- The principal liability of the majority of the unions was the general fund. It formed the only liability of sixteen unions and a minor liability of two unions, while two other unions had liabilities other than the general fund. The total amount at the credit of the general fund account of all the unions was Rs. 321,754-12-3 and other liabilities amounted to Rs. 26,234-10-8 as against total assets amounting to Rs. 183,390-1-8 for unpaid subscriptions the real value of which is very doubtful. The amount of cash assets was as usual the largest in the case of the Railway group and amounted to Rs. 37,673-15-2. To this amount the National Union of Railwaymen of India and Burma, Bombay, alone contributed cash assets amounting to Rs. 24,081-10-7. Securities amounting Rs. Rs. 73,526-1-0 were held by six unions of which the National Union of Railwaymen of India and Burma, Bombay, again alone held securities worth over Rs. 58,000.

Federation.-The assets of the Federation -the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad,- were made up of cash amounting to Rs. 1,638-3-7, securities worth Rs. 46,610 and "miscellaneous" assets amounting to Rs. 136,705-15-0. The liabilities of the Federation was composed of the General Fund amounting to Rs. 88,656-9-3 and other liabilities to Rs. 96,297-9-4. The

* Annual Report on the Working of the Indian Trade Unions Act (Act XVI of 1926) for the Bombay Presidency, 1936-37. Govt. Central Press, Bombay. pp.19 +

Federation also maintained a political fund which had a balance of Rs. 17,513-2-9 at the end of the year. It is interesting to note that the Association spent about Rs. 27,200 in conducting trade disputes and paid Rs. 24,446 as compensation to members for loss arising out of them.

Number and Membership of Registered and Unregistered Unions.- At the beginning of the year the number of trade unions - registered - as well as unregistered - in the Bombay Presidency was 111 with a membership of 108,227. Forty-four of the unions were registered under the Act. Of the remaining unions, 32 were associations of the Postal and Telegraph Department consisting mainly of clerical workers.

Auditing of Unions.- The number of unions which actually engaged auditors was 18. Of the remaining 22 unions, 17 had their accounts audited by two ordinary members, 4 by persons holding offices as members of legislature or municipality and 1 by the holder of a Government Diploma in Accountancy. The auditors' remarks pointed to serious irregularities in certain cases.

General.- An event of considerable importance during the year under report was the holding of the first elections under the Government of India Act, 1935, for the purpose of filling the six seats allotted to trade unions in the Bombay Legislative Assembly.

(The Annual Report on the Working of the Trade Unions Act in the Bombay Province for 1935-36 was reviewed at pages 52-55 of our April 1937 report.) +

Progress of Trade Unionism in the Punjab, 1936-37.* +

Number of Registered Trade Unions.- According to the Report on the working of the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, in the Punjab during 1936-37, the number of registered unions, including 3 federations, increased from 33 to 37 during the year under report. 6 unions were registered during the year and the certificates of 2 were cancelled. 4 of the registered trade unions relate to railway clerks and workers, 6 to textile workers, 4 to municipal workers and menials, 6 to transport workers and employers, 3 to electrical, mining and mechanical workers, 2 to press employees and 9 to miscellaneous callings.

Returns were received during the year from 23 out of the 37 unions.

Membership and Finance of the Unions.- The total number of members of the unions from which returns have been received, showed a decrease from 64,053 last year to 46,792 during the year under report, while the average number of members per union declined from 2,911 to 2,034. The biggest union in the Punjab, viz., the North-Western Railway Union, Lahore, continued to maintain its

*Report on the Working of the Indian Trade Unions Act 1926 in the Punjab during the year 1936-37. Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab. Price Re.0-10-0 or ls. pp.5+iv

29

premier position with a membership of 35,227.

There was no change in the number of federations which stood at 3. The number of unions affiliated to the Central Labour Federation and the Punjab Provincial Trade Union Congress, Lahore, continued to be the same as last year. The returns from the third, viz., the Punjab Labour Board, Lahore, have not been received.

The opening balance of the 23 unions from which returns were received during the year was Rs. 5,413. The income during the year was Rs. 9,872 and the expenditure Rs. 10,283. The closing balance was Rs. 5,002. The average income per union increased from Rs. 375 to Rs. 429 while the average expenditure also increased from Rs. 400 to Rs. 447.

Activities of Unions.- The Registrar remarks that the unions continued to do useful work in furthering the interests of their individual members particularly vis a vis their employers.

Free Audit of Unions.- The facility of free audit of registered trade unions continued to be extended during the year under report. 5 unions took advantage of it.

(The report on the working of the Indian Trade Unions Act in the Punjab during 1935-36 is reviewed at pages 43-45 of our March 1937 report.)+

5th Conference of Cochin Labour Union, Cochin,

1-5-1938. +

The 5th annual session of the Cochin Labour Union was held at Cochin on 1-5-1938 under the presidentship of Mr. P.N.Krishna Pillai, M.L.C. (Travancore).

Presidential Address.- In his presidential address Mr. Pillai pointed out that the problems of the labourers of the Travancore and Cochin States were identical and urged the adoption of common programmes of action by the labour organisations of the two States. Dealing with labour conditions in Indian States, he asserted that they were much lower than those in British India, and as examples directed attention to the existence of forced labour in several States of North India and the low level of labour legislation even in the more progressive States. In particular, he deprecated the fact that the I.L.O. was not able to make itself felt in the States.

Resolutions. The Conference adopted resolutions (a) demanding (1) an 8-hour day, (2) 30 days' leave with pay in the year, (3) introduction of schemes of unemployment, old age and sickness insurance, (4) recognition of trade unions, (5) legislation fixing minimum wages at Rs. 30 per month, and (6) abolition of payment of wages in kind; and (b) condemning the denial to labour of representation in the Cochin Legislature by the Cochin Franchise Committee.

(The Hindu, 3-5-1938)+

1.4. It is also understood that the Cochin Labour Union has decided to agitate for the proper representation of labour in Indian States at the I.L.Conference.

(The Times of India, 18-5-1938).

Organising Indian Sugar Mill Workers: Committee Appointed
by All India Sugar Mill Workers' Conference, Gorakhpur, 30-4-38.

Preliminary steps to organise the workers engaged in the Indian sugar industry, who have as yet no well-organised trade unions to defend their interests and whose seasonal work differentiates them from other categories of industrial labour, were taken, at the All India Sugar Mill Workers' Conference held at Gorakhpur, United Provinces, on 30th April and 1st May 1938, Mr. M.N.Roy presiding. The sugar industry, with a capital investment of Rs. 300 millions, 150 modern factories, over 100,000 operatives, and 2,000 graduates employed on the technical side, it may be pointed out, has within the course of the last seven years become one of the major industries of India.

Presidential Address.-Mr. Roy in his presidential address dealt at length with the economic aspects of the tariff protection accorded to the industry under the shelter of which it has grown to its present huge dimensions. He explained that the imposition of high protective duties reduced the customs receipts of the Government of India under this head and that to make good the deficit thus occasioned the Government proposed to levy an excise duty on sugar. The millowners naturally disliked this impost and tried to pass on the burden to the workers by denying them fair wages. He said that the millowners' fears of over-production of sugar in India were ill-founded; if the workers' wages were increased, they would consume more sugar and thus the bogey of over-production would be laid. To enforce the workers' demand for increased wages, he stressed they should organise themselves into unions and resort to collective bargaining. He also pointed out that the seasonal nature of sugar workers' employment created certain organisational difficulties, and necessitated unions differing from the usual trade unions. Further, a common platform for the cane-growers and sugar mill workers was wanted, and this, he said, were ready to hand in the local Congress Committees of sugar cane growing districts, ~~higher~~ which the workers should capture. For the sugar mill workers he demanded higher wages, continuous employment and decent living conditions, and for the cane-growers a guaranteed sale and a higher price for the cane grown. The workers were also advised to demand lower prices for sugar so that consumption might be increased and sugar manufacture stimulated.

Organising Committee for Sugar Workers Union. - The most important resolution adopted was that appointing a Committee to conduct propaganda and take the necessary steps for organising *An* Indian Sugar Mill Workers' Union. The following is the personnel of the Committee:-

Dr. Bishwa Nath Mukherjee - President; Mr. Bishwa Nath Roy - Secretary; and Mr. Parma Nand of Bihar, Dewan Chaman Lal and Mr. Azad of the Punjab, Mr. V. Raghavayya of Madras, Dr. M.R.Shetty of Bombay, Mr. Sib Nath Pathak of Bengal, Messrs. Bhupendra Nath Sanyal and Vishnu Saran Deblish of the United Provinces and ~~several~~ several others, members.

(The Bombay Chronicle, 2, & 5-5-38) +
The Amrita Sagar Patrika, 2-5-38).

Economic Conditions.

Report of the Proceedings of the 9th Industries Conference,
Lahore, December 1937. +

A brief review of the proceedings of the 9th Industries Conference which was held under the auspices of the Government of India at Lahore on 15 and 16-12-1937, was given at pages 72-74 of our December 1937 report. The Government of India has now issued as No. 65 in its Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour Series, the report of the proceedings and the various memoranda submitted by Provincial Governments on the items on the agenda. Particular attention is directed to Chapters II and III of the report which deal with middle class unemployment and ^{the} publication of a handbook containing information regarding industrial and technical institutions in India, including Indian States. (A copy of Bulletin No. 65 was forwarded to Geneva with this Office's minute D.1/793/38 dated 4-5-1938.)..

Indian Match Industry's claim for Protection: Deputation
waits on Government of India. +

A deputation on behalf of Indian match manufacturers led by Mr. K. A. Somjee waited on the Secretary to the Commerce Department, Government of India, on 19-5-1938 at Simla to lay before the Government the grievances of Indian match manufacturers against the undue control exercised over the industry by the Swedish Match Combine and to press the case for grant of tariff protection to the Indian industry.

Claim for Tariff Protection.- The deputation alleged that the Swedish Combine is carrying on an unfair competition, as a result of which 13 Indian factories in Western India alone have stopped working, leaving only three which are struggling for existence. The deputation further allege, inter alia, that the Swedish Combine have a monopoly of the sale of match making machinery, that no Indian match manufacturer has been able to get machinery from them, and that the methods of advertisement and propaganda adopted by them are such as had been condemned by the Tariff Board. The deputation therefore claimed that the time had come to take action as suggested by the Indian Tariff Board in 1928 to safeguard the Indian match industry against alleged unfair competition by the Swedish Combine.

Demand for Committee of Inquiry and Fixing of Manufacturing Quotas and Prices. - These charges are also made in a memorandum submitted to the Government of India by the President of the Indian Match Manufacturers' Association, Bombay, and the deputation, in giving support to them, wanted that Government should appoint a committee to inquire into them, and that this committee should have on it a representative of the Indian Match Manufacturers' Association. The deputation also ~~ask~~^{wanted} that Government should undertake legislation, fixing the quota for each match factory in British India, and also, if necessary, to establish by legislation a Board of Control which could fix prices, or alternatively, that the Government of India should, in consultation with the Association, take such other steps as they think necessary to prevent Indian match factories going out of existence.

(The Times of India, 20-5-1938.) +

Zamindars' Protest Against U.P. Tenancy Bill: Oudh

Zamindars' Conference, Lucknow. +

An Oudh (U.P.) Zamindars' Conference was held under the auspices of the British Indian Association at Lucknow on 28 & 29-5-38, with the Maharaja of Darbhanga presiding. The main object of the Conference was to record a strong protest against the U.P. Tenancy Bill, introduced in the local Legislative Assembly by the Congress Government, and to consider measures to organise the zamindars to offer a united front to the Congress propaganda against them and to the schemes which were being formulated to end the zamindari system eventually. Though the Conference passed no resolution laying down the line of action which the zamindars should adopt if the Tenancy Bill, despite their strong opposition, became law, and indicating how far they could go to give relief to the tenants, a number of important resolutions ~~was~~^{were} passed; a summary of the more important resolutions is given below:

1. Communist Menace. - The Conference adopted a resolution urging the mobilisation of forces which support maintenance of rights of private property to fight the communist and socialist menace. Sir J.P. Srivastava, a former Minister of the U.P. Government, in supporting the resolution instanced the present Cawnpore labour troubles as illustrating the strength of the menace.

2. Organisation of Propaganda. - The Conference resolved to organise a volunteer corps for countering Congress propaganda against the zamindari system.

3. Protest Against U.P. Tenancy Bill.- The Conference, while expressing sympathy with attempts to improve the conditions of tenants, protested strongly against the U.P. Tenancy Bill, as, in its opinion, the adoption of the Bill tended to accentuate the class struggle and seriously curtail the proprietary rights of zamindars.

4. Relief of Rural Distress.- Another resolution expressed the opinion that the problem of rural poverty cannot be solved unless (1) pressure on land is removed by development of large-scale industries and revival of cottage and rural industries; (2) agricultural productivity is increased; (3) the problem of rural indebtedness is solved and a system of providing cheap rural credit is evolved and (4) an efficient system of marketing is established. "In view of the failure of the Government" to take action along these lines, the Conference appointed a Committee to draw up a comprehensive scheme for forming a corporation to solve the problem of rural poverty along the above lines. +

(The Leader, 1-6-1938). +

Economic and Industrial Survey of Bombay Province:

Special Investigators for Small Scale Industries. +

The Bombay Economic and Industrial Survey Committee (vide page 28 of our April 1938 report) has decided to appoint special investigators and Divisional Committees to assist the committee in collecting information in regard to the various small industries. This method of collecting information is being adopted in preference to the usual method of hearing evidence, in view of the fact that persons engaged in small industries are unorganised and that a large number of them are illiterate.

(The Times of India,
18-5-1938) +

35

Break-down of Indo-British Textile Talks:

Commerce Member flies to London to resume Trade Talks.

The Indo-British textile talks, reference to which was made at pages 28-29 of this Office's April 1938 report, began at Simla on 10-5-1938 and were continued till 23-5-1938, when the talks were abandoned as no agreement could be reached between the viewpoints of the Indian non-official advisers and the Lancashire Textile Delegation. It is gathered that the negotiations broke down on the following proposals:-

Reduction of Tariff Duty to 11 per cent.- The Lancashire Delegation demanded the reduction of tariff duty on British cotton piece-goods to 11 per cent, but the Indian side were not agreeable to reduce it.

Export Quota of 600 million yards.- The Lancashire Delegation wanted to be able to export to India 600 million yards of cotton piece-goods. It appears that the Indian side were prepared to allow 400 million yards. The Lancashire Delegation also wanted that in case it was found that they could not export to India 600 million yards, the duty should be further reduced from 11 per cent. to enable this quantity to be exported to India. To this the Indian advisers did not agree.

Offtake of Indian Raw Cotton.- As regards the offtake of Indian cotton, the Lancashire Delegation were prepared to give a guarantee for a minimum of 400,000 bales, but the Indian side wanted it to be fixed to a quota in relation to the imports of cotton piecegoods as in the case of Japan.

The Governments to Negotiate directly.- The divergence of the demands being considerable, it was agreed to give up the negotiations through non-official delegations and allow both the Governments to consider the issues involved.

(The Hindustan Times, 24-5-1938)

Indo-British Trade Talks.- The Government of India have deputed their official delegate to the Indo British trade talks to proceed to London for the next and final stage of negotiations. Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan (Commerce Member - the official delegate) accompanied by Mr. N.R.Pillai, I.C.S., his Secretary, flew to London ~~from~~ on 31-5-1938. Talks between the Government of India's delegate and the British Board of Trade are expected to last for about two months. These will be based on the tentative conclusions arrived at earlier meetings between both the delegations assisted by un-official advisers last year and on the joint deliberations between the Lancashire delegates and the Indian advisers, which though did not result in an agreement, furnished sufficient material for both the Governments to explore avenues for a satisfactory agreement.

(The Hindustan Times, 28-5-1938.)+

36

Employment and Unemployment.

Working of the Punjab Unemployment Bureau, 1936-38. †

An employment bureau was established by the Department of Industries, Punjab, in August 1936, with a view to bring together the employer and the un-employed and to record statistics of educated un-employed (vide pages 63-64 of our July 1936 Report). The Bureau has now been in existence for over a year and half and according to a Communiqué recently issued by the Punjab Government, its establishment has been brought to the notice of the general public through press communiqués, but the response of the un-employed to get their names registered with it has been meagre. The Bureau has been approached by a number of factory owners and large business concerns in the Punjab for filling up technical and clerical posts in their establishments, but owing to the very limited selection on the registers of the Bureau and in some cases due to the total absence of registered un-employed with the requisite qualifications, the Bureau has been greatly handicapped in fulfilling its aim.

Unemployment Statistics.- The purpose of the Bureau in compiling statistics of the un-employed has been criticised in some quarters as being of little or no practical value to the un-employed. It is pointed out in the communiqué, that the statistics of unemployment which the Bureau aims at collecting will serve to provide an index for the better correlation of supply to the demand of trained persons and will thereby furnish a basis for estimating the requirements of trained men in various professions and vocations.

Unemployed Invited to Register.- The question of unemployment, the communiqué points out, is receiving the serious consideration of the Punjab Government and the Government of India and the unemployed are invited to get their names registered with the Bureau not only to make available reliable statistical data which is so indispensably essential for finding ways and means to assuage the conditions of unemployment in the province, but also to improve their own chances of employment.

(Summarised from a Communiqué issued by the Information Bureau, Punjab Government, a copy of which was sent to this Office). †

57.

The Bihar Employment Board.

The Government of Bihar has constituted an Employment Board with the Hon. Minister for Education and Development (including Employment) as Chairman, for a period of one year in the first instance, to advise and help the Employment Bureau attached to the Department of Industries in finding employment for educated young men belonging to the province and to consider and advise the Government on schemes and proposals and any other measures necessary for relieving unemployment. The Officer-in-Charge of the Employment Bureau is ex-officio Secretary of the Board.

(The Amrita Bazar Patrika, 4-5-1938.)

Collection of Employment Statistics:
Provincial Governments favour Federal Legislation.

Reference was made at pages 42-44 of our May 1937 report to a circular letter of the Government of India to Provincial Governments about the adoption of legislation regarding the collection of statistics of educated ~~un~~employed in the country. It is ^{now} understood that all Provincial Governments have accorded their general support to the proposal of the Central Government. All the Provincial Governments have expressed their willingness to the enactment of legislation on the subject by the Central Government.

Since statistics of employment is a provincial subject, the Government of India has suggested to the Provincial Governments the adoption by their respective legislatures of the following resolution:

"That this House do resolve that it is desirable that the following matters, being matters enumerated in the Provincial Legislative List, should be regulated in this province by an Act of the Federal Legislature namely, (1) Statistics of employment and (2) offences against and the jurisdiction of Courts with respect to the said Act of the Federal Legislature."

The Bihar Legislative Council has already adopted the suggested resolution.

The Governments of Bihar and Bengal have suggested that the Central Legislation to be enacted should give power to

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Provincial Governments to call for such additional statistical information as might be required by the Provincial Governments for their own purposes. The Government of India has agreed to this proposal and provision will be made in the Act accordingly.

(The Statesman, 28-5-1938 and the Hindu, 10-5-1938.) *

27

Public Health.

Housing Scheme for Middle Classes: Ahmedabad Municipal
Enterprise. +

At a meeting of the Ahmedabad Municipal Board held on 30-4-1938, the Municipality decided to construct a number of tenement blocks to house the lower middle class population of the city whose monthly incomes range between Rs. 35 and Rs. 60. These blocks are to consist of several units; each unit is designed to lodge one family, and will consist of two living rooms (one of them will have to serve as kitchen also), a bath room and a water closet. A minority in the Board stressed the view that such housing enterprise should not be taken up by the Municipality, but should be left entirely to private enterprise; the ^{majority} Municipality however, were of opinion that housing came within the purview of legitimate municipal activities. It was also pointed out that the projected housing scheme would serve two purposes: first, the waste lands belonging to the municipality could thereby be profitably utilised, and, secondly, municipal deposits in banks which at present fetch hardly one per cent. interest yearly can, if invested in such schemes, be made to yield 4 per cent. per year; at the same time a part of the lower middle class population of the city can be housed under improved sanitary conditions and the general health of the city considerably improved.

(The Bombay Chronicle, 10-5-1938.) +

40

Education.

Liquidating Illiteracy in Bombay:
Bombay Adult Education Committee's Report. +

Reference was made at pages 37-38 of the January 1938 Report of this Office to the appointment of an Adult Education Committee by the Government of Bombay. The following information, about the recommendations made in the report of the Committee, which it is understood has been submitted to Government in the second week of May 1938, is taken from a special article published in the Times of India of 12-5-1938.

Liquidation of Illiteracy.- The liquidation of illiteracy, the Committee holds, calls for an attack on two fronts: extension of primary education and extension of adult education. The Committee urges the linking up of adult instruction in rural areas with the general programme of rural reconstruction.

Central Board of Adult Education.- The Central Board of Adult Education which the report recommends will contain three members who will be generally responsible for organising and administering the programme of adult education in the province. The Board will work in the closest co-operation with the Education Department. The preparation of suitable text-books for adults and advising, for instance, on the ways of expending Rs.50,000 set apart by Government for rural libraries will be among the subjects within the purview of the Central Board. Incidentally, the Committee, it is learnt, has recommended village libraries of the circulating type.

Workers' Education.- Employers, it is urged, should share responsibility with Government in the education of workers. It is suggested that Government should appeal to employers of labour to look upon the liquidation of illiteracy among their employees as a moral responsibility. The Committee, however, is understood to be not very optimistic about visual education. In the present condition of adult illiteracy, it is feared, cinemas will not have the desired effect as in other more advanced countries. Expenditure on visual aids is, therefore, regarded by the Committee as of secondary importance. The Committee is more sanguine about broadcasting, and recommends further experimentation with village broadcasting. Experimental as the field is, the Committee is prepared to recognise the radio as an auxiliary agency in the adult education programme.

(The Times of India, 12-5-1938.)+

41

Vocational Training in Textile Mills:

Government of Bombay's Scheme of

Paid Apprentices. +

The Government of Bombay has recently introduced an apprentice scheme for vocational training in textile mills and other establishments in Bombay city and Ahmedabad. Under the scheme youths not below 16 nor over 20 years of age and who have completed the pre-matriculation class and are of good physique may be sent to industrial establishments for training for about five years, during which period they will get about Rs. 15 a month as wages and will attend technical classes in the evening. The Director of Industries, Bombay, will receive applications from intending apprentices, and select candidates. . .

42

Agriculture.

Agricultural Indebtedness in Hyderabad State:

Report of Special Officer.*

In August 1935, the Government of H.E.H. the Nizam of Hyderabad appointed a Revenue Officer of the State as Special Officer to conduct an enquiry into rural indebtedness in the State and review the progress made in ^{respect of} the debt conciliation; the report of this enquiry has recently been published. It is estimated that the total rural indebtedness in the State is about Rs. 646 millions.

Causes of Indebtedness.- The more important causes of rural indebtedness, given in the report, are: (1) small size of holdings accentuated by fragmentation, (2) recurring loss of cattle, (3) insecurity of crops, (4) extravagant expenditure on marriages and other ceremonies, (5) litigation, and (6) exorbitant interest rates charged by money-lenders. The principal point which emerges from the report is that although there is a large volume of agricultural debt in the State, the agriculturist is solvent because even at the present low value of land, his land is worth at least five to six times the volume of his debt. The agriculturist should be able to pay off this debt from the surplus produce of his land, if suitable relief measures are adopted.

Measures of Relief.- The principal measures for relief of agriculturists proposed in the report are: restriction on alienation of land, conciliation of debt by agreement, establishment of land mortgage banks for debt redemption, establishment of co-operative marketing, and village panchayats, regulation of money-lending by statute, enforcement throughout the State of standardised weights and measures and consolidation of fragmented holdings.

Measures Contemplated.- During the last seven years, Government have set in motion two ordinances, one for the prevention of usury throughout the State and the other for the restriction of alienation of land except to agriculturists, hitherto applied in only two districts of the State. The working of the Land Alienation Regulation during the last few years has demonstrated its great usefulness and success and the Government has therefore decided to extend it to other districts in the State. Recently this Regulation was modified so as to fix a minimum holding, land below which cannot be alienated.

Other measures contemplated are (1) establishment of voluntary debt conciliation boards; (2) adoption of legislation for the registration and licensing of money-lenders; (3) prevention of land passing into the hands of money-lenders; (4) fixation of interest rates by Statute; and (5) establishment of multiple object co-operative societies.

* Agricultural Indebtedness in H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions by Mr. S.M.Bharucha, Additional Revenue Secretary, Hyderabad-Deccan Government Central Press, 1937. pp. 98. *

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All these measures are expected to be introduced at an early date; a Debt Conciliation Regulation has already been adopted; it received the assent of the Nizam on 12-5-1938.

(From a communiqué issued by the
Information Bureau, Hyderabad State.)

2/11

Migration.

Government of India stops Assisted Emigration
to Malaya: Sequel to Reduction of Wages.

The Government of India, after consultation and with the concurrence of the Madras Government, ~~has~~ decided to exercise its powers under the Indian Emigration Act and prohibit all assisted emigration to Malaya until the supply and demand of labour there approach an equilibrium. With the same object it has urged on the Malayan Government the desirability of repatriating, free of cost, all labourers who are without employment or who are unwilling to work on reduced wages.

The decision is a sequel to 10 per cent. reduction of wages made in Malaya with effect from May 1, 1938, with the prospect of a further reduction if conditions do not improve. On being informed in March 1938 by the Agent of the Government of India in Malaya of the possibility of such reduction, the Government of India requested the Malayan Government to send a detailed statement of the reasons for reduction and in the meantime to postpone reduction until the Government of India had had time to examine the position. But as the rubber position worsened in April 1938, the Malayan Government decided to reduce wages by 10 per cent. from 1-5-1938 and justified this action on the ground that the Malayan rubber industry was running at a loss, and that in spite of the present reductions, wages in Malayan rubber estates were higher than elsewhere.

The memorandum announcing the decision refers to the 20 per cent. reduction in wages made in 1930 and the partial restoration of this cut following Mr. Srinivasa Sastri's visit. After the appearance of the Sastri Report, the rates of wages in force prior to 1930 in easily accessible areas - (50 cents. for men and 40 cents for women) - were restored for all areas with effect from April 1, 1937. These rates, however, were not accepted by the Government of India who considered that higher rates were justified, and decided that a re-examination of the whole question should be undertaken by their Agent. Before that examination could be made, the conditions of the rubber industry again became less prosperous, and the present developments have taken place.

(The Hindustan Times, 31-5-1938.)

Labour and Social Policy of Congress;

First Conference of Congress Prime Ministers, Bombay, 12 to 14-5-38

The first Conference of Congress Prime Ministers was held at Bombay on 12, 13 and 14-5-1938. The following subjects, among others, were discussed: the agrarian problem generally and the difficulties in this sphere confronting the U.P. and Bihar Governments, agricultural indebtedness, provincial and inter-provincial educational policy, medical services with special reference to the Indian Medical Service in each Province, the need for the immediate appointment of an inter-provincial expert committee to collect data for the purpose of national reconstruction and social planning, the national boy scout movement, and the labour policy of the Provincial Governments. (The discussion on labour policy was based on the report submitted to the Conference by the Labour Sub-Committee of the Congress; a summary of this is given at pages 13-15 of this report.)

Inter-Provincial Expert Committee for Social Planning.- The conference devoted much attention to the question of the appointment of an inter-provincial expert committee in terms of the resolution adopted in August 1937 by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha. ~~That~~ That resolution bore the imprint of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and adumbrated an ambitious project, the scope of which extended throughout the length and breadth of the country, embracing all aspects of Indian life. It sought to bring within its purview such matters as arise from economic, social, industrial, geological, engineering and scientific problems, and to collect data for the purpose of national re-construction and social planning.

The Working Committee was of the opinion that the proposed expert committee should be able to suggest the formation of special committees to consider each problem separately and to advise the Provincial Governments concerned as to the joint action to be undertaken.

It was mentioned at the conference that, with a view to carrying out the intention of the resolution, some Provincial Governments had already appointed expert committees. For example, in Bombay, special committees had been appointed to deal with various questions and some of those committees had already submitted their recommendations which were being implemented by Government.

Uniform Labour Policy.- In regard to the labour question, several Ministers explained the policy being pursued in their respective provinces. In Bombay, for instance, Government have already implemented the recommendations made by the Labour Inquiry Committee in its interim report. It is gathered that the policy adopted by the Bombay Government generally commended itself to the Conference. On the other hand, the difficulties being experienced

in other provinces where the labour problem is acute were also pointed out and certain lines of action were suggested. The main suggestion was to the effect that the other Provincial Governments might revise their policy in the light of that pursued by the Bombay Government.

(The Bombay Chronicle and "Times of India" dated 16-5-1938.) +