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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

INDIAN BRANCH

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Report for February, 1931.

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References to the I.L.O.

An article appearing in the Hindustan Times of 1-2-1931 on economic conditions in India during 1930 says that it was an year of acute anxiety for the Government and the people - for employers and workers particularly. The unemployment problem, the article ^{states} continues, had assumed alarming dimensions, but, the established standards of conditions of employment were maintained throughout the year. The ^{article} ~~writer~~ attributes the safeguarding of these standards in great measure to the work carried on by the International Labour Organisation which "in addition to creating a network of formal undertakings on the part of states to enforce the observance of specified minimum conditions, also provides a strong moral deterrent to any measures which might be regarded as retrograde". The article concludes with a reference to the activities of the 14th Labour Conference and to the progress made in the ratification of Geneva Conventions during 1930.

... ..

On 7-2-1931, the Director of this Office delivered a speech at the Criterion Club, Delhi, on the "New Democracy in India". In the course of his speech, the speaker said that labour conditions in India left much to be desired and that conditions in factories which do not come under the Indian Factories Act approximated to slavery. The conditions in factories coming under the Act were better, but were still exceedingly behind the requirements of the times. The speaker entered a strong plea for a generous policy of labour protection under the new constitution so as to make the new Indian democracy a real one. In ~~his~~ conclusion he pointed out

how the labour laws of India have slowly been operating to remove the more clamant of the industrial evils, and how the I.L.O., which has been so successful in assuaging the discontent of the workers in Europe and turning it into constructive channels of nation-building, could prove an invaluable ally to this country in the great task of social reconstruction which is awaiting her. (A summary of the speech ~~has~~^{is} been published in the Hindustan Times of 9-2-1931).

... ..

The Hindu of 10-2-1931 publishes a few extracts from the minutes of the proceedings of the Monthly General meeting of the Madras Chamber of Commerce, held on 27-1-1931. The proceedings, inter alia included the consideration of the Government of India's circular letter inviting recommendations for the nomination of non-Governmental delegates and their advisers to the 15th Labour Conference. The Chamber's reply to the Government of India on the subject was to the effect that the Chamber supported the recommendation made by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that the Government of India should nominate Mr. E.S. Harlton (vide page 2 of the December 1930 report).

... ..

The Hindu of 12-2-1931 publishes an editorial article reviewing the book "Unemployment and Public Works" recently issued by the I.L.O.

The Times of India of 12-2-1931 publishes a letter from its London correspondent in the course of which a lengthy reference

is made to the book. The writer concludes his reference thus:-
 "The report deserves attention, both from those in all countries who are now concerned with details of national or provincial finance, and also - or perhaps even more especially - from any who are likely to be in that position in the early future."

* The book has also been reviewed in the Hindustan Times of 14-2-1931 and the Pioneer of 15-2-1931. (Review sent by this office)

... ..

The Pioneer of 14-2-1931 publishes an article on the results achieved by the Geneva Unemployment Committee. ^{The article is} based on the Geneva communique: ["] ~~on~~ "The Problem of Unemployment and the International Labour Office", copies of which have been supplied to the press by this office.

... ..

The Hindustan Times of 18-2-1931 publishes a news-para about the efforts made by the I.L.O. to reduce hours of work, and refers to the campaign initiated by the International Federation of Glass Workers to get an international convention passed applying a system of four six-hour shifts instead of three eight-hour shifts which is now in vogue in the glass industry in Germany and Czechoslovakia.

... ..

The January 1931 issue of the Indian Journal of Economics, Allahabad (Vol. XI, Part III, No. 42) publishes at pages 332 to 346 a paper under the caption "Geneva and Indian Labour", read by

Mr. D.G. Karve, Professor of Economics, Fergusson College, Poona. The paper was read at the 14th Conference of the Indian Economic Association held at Lahore in January 1931. The following is a brief summary of Professor Karve's paper:-

"The I.L.O. is a new factor in the Indian Labour situation. It is in the interest of labour and of the nation that it should be utilised to the full as an aid to the solution of the labour problem. Its implications from the national economic standpoint should be adequately studied with a view to the adoption of a discriminating attitude on particular items. The separate organisations of labour and capital, and such a political body as the supreme legislature cannot be entrusted with this independent and almost technical responsibility. The position of Indian States in this respect also needs study and definition. To achieve these ends it is suggested that : (1) there should be constituent sectional and regional bodies in the I.L.O., e.g., an Asiatic Section in the main Conference at Geneva and an Asiatic Labour Conference; (2) there should be established in India an Economic Council composed of all interests and of independent expert ~~men~~ opinion, with purely deliberative and advisory functions; (3) the Indian States should have a position in this Council".

Special attention is drawn to pages 573 to 578 of the ~~XXXX~~ Journal where a brief account is given of the discussions which followed the reading of Professor Karve's paper.

In the same issue of the Economic Journal is published at pages 456-465, a paper read at the Economic Conference by Dr. R.B. Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., on the subject of "Labour Recruitment and Wages", in the course of which reference is made to the Geneva

Convention and recommendation of 1928 dealing with minimum wage fixing machinery and the action taken by India on them. (Copy of the Economic Journal is not forwarded as the journal is being subscribed for by Geneva).

... ..

The Department of Industries and Labour of the Government of India have ~~issued for publication~~ ^{shed} the Report of the Delegates of the Government of India to the 14th Session of the International Labour Conference, as Bulletin No. 46 in the Bulletins of Indian Industries and Labour Series. After describing at length the part played by the Indian delegation in the various sessions of the Conference and in the different Committees appointed by it, the report concludes with the following review of the work ^{of the Confer-} ~~ence~~.

"The end of the 14th Session of the International Labour Conference witnessed the adoption of a Convention of doubtful value concerning the regulation of hours of work in commerce and offices, the failure of the attempt to reach a European agreement regarding hours of work in coal mines, and the adoption of a Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour by a very large majority, but with the principal Colonial Powers, save Great Britain, either abstaining from voting or making reservations. It must be admitted that the immediate achievement of the Conference was small. Its direct achievement may, however, prove to be considerable, especially as regards forced labour. Forced labour cannot escape association with the stigma attaching to slavery, and the existence of an international Convention on the subject, combined with the knowledge that international opinion must again be faced in five years' time

is likely to result in ameliorative measures being taken by the most conservative of Colonial Powers".

(A copy of ~~the~~ Bulletin No. 46 was forwarded to Geneva with this office's minute D 1/131/31 of 19-2-1931).

... ..

At page 446, the January 1931 (Vol. X, No.5) issue of the Labour Gazette, Bombay, reproduces from "Industrial and Labour Information" ^{on the position of labour in the future constitution of India} of 8-12-1930, its report of the speech delivered by Mr. N.M. Joshi at the Indian Round Table Conference held in London ~~on the position of Labour in the future constitution of India.~~

... ..

New India of 26-2-1931 (Vol. IV, New Series No.48) publishes an article by Mr. N.M. Joshi under the caption "What Indian Labour wants in the Constitution of India". Mr. Joshi makes a strong plea for making labour a federal subject under the new constitution for the reason that India will be able to discharge her international obligations as a member of the I.L.O. only if the Central Government is vested with the power to take action on Geneva Conventions, which will not be ~~in the future constitution of India~~ possible if labour is made a provincial subject.

(Copy of New India containing the article is not forwarded as New India is subscribed for by Geneva).

... ..

New India of 12-2-1931 (Vol. IV, New Series No. 46) publishes in full the speech delivered by Mr. B. Shiva Rao at the plenary Session of the Round Table Conference in London. Mr. Shiva Rao

also urges that Labour should be made a Federal subject and not merely a Central subject. He argues that if Indian States do not keep abreast of labour legislation in British India, the future course of Indian labour legislation will be greatly impeded, and that the protection afforded to Indian workers by International Labour Conventions will be weakened.

... ..

The February 1931 issue of the "Unionist" (Vol.II, No.11), Nagpur, the organ of the Central Provinces Branch of the All-India Postal and R.M.S. Union, reproduces from the Daily Herald, London, the report of a press interview given by the Director of the I.L.O., Geneva, on the methods of combating the unemployment problem.

... ..

Wide publicity ^{is} ~~was~~ given in the Indian press to the statement ^{issued} made by Mr. N.M. Joshi ^{expressing} ~~on~~ his views on the Round Table Conference. In the course of the statement, Mr. Joshi stresses the importance of keeping labour ^{as} a Federal subject in the new constitution so as to provide for the ratification of Geneva conventions both by British India and Indian States. The statement has been published in the Times of India of 9-2-1931, the Hindu of 16-2-1931, the Servant of India, Poona, of 12-2-1931 (Vol. XIV, No.7) and by other prominent papers and journals.

... ..

Young Utkal (Cuttack) of 6-2-1931 (Vol. V, No.12) reproduces the ^{from} ~~article~~ on "Forced Labour in the Indian States" which appeared in "Industrial and Labour Information" of 5-1-1931.

The February 1931 issue of the M.& S.M. Railwayman (Vol. II, No.8), Perambur, Madras, publishes at pages 213 to 220 an article under the caption "The I.L.O. and Trade Unionism" written by Mr. S. Keshoram, a member of the staff of this office. The article deals with the influence of the I.L.O. on Trade Unionism all over the world, particularly with its influence on Indian trade unionism.

(A copy of the issue of the M.& S.M. Railwayman in which the article appeared has been forwarded to Geneva with this office's minute H 4/170/31, dated 5-3-1931.)

... ..

In a letter contributed to the Times of India of 12-2-1931 by its London correspondent, reference is made to the report presented by the Deputy Director of the I.L.O., Geneva, after his recent mission of enquiry into industrial conditions in the United States.

... ..

Recruitment of Labour for Assam Tea Gardens
from the Madras Presidency - 1929-30*.

The following details about the recruitment of labour from the tea gardens of Assam are taken from the report on the working of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act in the Madras Presidency for the year ending 30th June 1930 published by the Commissioner of Labour, Madras.

System of recruitment.- The recruitment for the tea gardens of Assam is conducted under the general supervision of the Assam Labour Board. The Board itself does not conduct recruiting operations; its functions are confined to giving advice to applicants for "local agents'" licences and exercising general supervision over recruitment. The actual recruitment is carried on under the auspices of the Tea Districts Labour Association which is composed of representatives of the companies in the Assam valley. Only one form of recruitment is now permitted, viz., recruitment by garden sardars (recruiters) licensed under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act of 1901. The garden sardars work under the supervision of the local agents who usually give them advances which come from ^{the} Assam Tea Districts Labour Association. The Association charges ^{the garden} a commission on all coolies recruited through its agency. This system is believed to encourage emigration by families and, since the activities of the recruiters are carefully supervised, to be free from serious abuse.

*Report on the Working of the Assam Labour and Emigration Act for the year ending 30th June 1930. Madras: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, and published by the Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta. 1931. Price, 10 annas or 1 sh. pp. 17.

Local Licensed Agents.- Under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, local agents may be licensed for the purpose of representing employers in all matters connected with the supervision of the garden sardars within the local areas. During the year, 28 licences were issued to local agents.

Garden sardars.- Licences for garden sardars are granted only to bona fide labourers on the books of the tea gardens and each licence must be countersigned by a Magistrate in Assam. The garden sardars when sent to recruit must on arrival in the districts from which they intend to recruit labour, report themselves to the local agents. ~~xxx~~ 4,491 garden sardars including 572 sardarnis (women recruiters) were employed and worked under the licensed local agents

Number of Emigrants registered.- ~~Number of emigrants~~ 8,855 emigrants were registered during the period ~~ix~~ under review in the Presidency by garden sardars working under licensed local agents, as against 8,891 in the previous year. 8,156 of these were recruited for Assam, 102 for Cachar and 597 for Sylhet. The number of dependents registered with these emigrants was 1,515 or 17.11 per cent. as against 1,872 or 21.06 per cent of the previous year.

Despatch of Emigrants.- Out of the 8,855 emigrants registered by sardars, 7,199 emigrants were despatched from the forwarding stations for the labour districts of Assam proper. Of these 4,686 or 65 per cent. were men, 1,407 or 20 per cent were women and 1,106 or 15 per cent were children. Of the total number of 509 emigrants who proceeded to Cachar and Sylhet, 265 or 52 per cent were men, 136 or 27 per cent were women and 108 or 21 per cent were children.

Note The present system of recruitment for Assam is described in Chapter XVI of the Whitley Commission Report.

CONDITIONS of LABOUR

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Reduction of working Hours in Jute Mills.

At pages 24-25 of the report of this office for June 1930 reference was made to the decision of the Indian Jute Mills Association, Calcutta, to reduce working hours in jute mills from 60 hours to 54 hours. It is understood that owing to the slump in the jute trade the Indian jute Mills Association ^{has decided} to make a further reduction in working hours, to seal a certain percentage of Hessian looms and introduce single shift working from 2-3-31, a step entailing the discharge of about 40000 jute mill employees (The Statesman 20.2.31). Mr. R.B. Laird, the Chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, speaking about the proposed reduction of hours, at the 1931 annual meeting of the Association on 30-1-31 declared that it was the policy of the Association to restrict jute production to the requirements of the market ^{and,} if necessary, ~~and~~ to reduce working hours to 40½ hours a week (The Times of India 2-2-31).

The decision to introduce single shift working in jute mills has produced wide-spread discontent among jute workers. In a letter to the President of the Indian Jute Mills Association, Miss Probbabati Das Gupta, President of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, says that the proposal means unemployment for 80,000 workers with no provision of any kind and a cut in the wages of those ^{who will be} kept employed, without reducing the mills' monthly production per working loom. The workers demand a revision of the policy of the Association so as to maintain wages at the old level and keep all looms working, and, if this is found impossible, ^{that} ~~to pay~~ every discharged worker, ^{should be paid} one month's wages, his railway fare home and a pension proportionate to ^{his} ~~his~~ years of service rendered, ^{by him}. The letter closes with the assertion that if the demands of the workers are not conceded, the responsibility for threatening the public tranquility with the discharge

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80,000 workers will rest upon the Indian Jute Mills Association (The Statesman 20-2-31).

According to more conservative estimates, it is apprehended that between 15,000 to 20,000 operatives will be thrown out of work as the result of the introduction of the single-shift system in jute mills in and around Calcutta City. In anticipation of the report of the Royal Commission on Labour, which it is believed recommended the ~~substitution~~ ^{adoption} of the single-shift system, it has been already introduced in about 70 per cent of mills in Calcutta. The remainder, it is expected, will adopt similar measures on 2-3-31 (The Times of India.21-2-31).

Owing to the introduction of the single-shift system about 5000 employees of the Lawrence Jute Mills, Howrah, have struck work on 19-2-31.

Working of the Piece-Work System on the
N. W. Railway .

Useful data regarding the working of the piece-work and bonus system introduced on the North-Western Railway is now available. The information is contained in a note furnished to the Public Accounts Committee by the Financial Commissioner of Railways.

The State Railway Workshops Committee, which visited the shops in 1926, commented adversely on the bonus system, which was in vogue on the North-Western Railway, and recommended its immediate replacement by a more scientific system based on accurate timings of individual operations carefully carried out by a skilled rate-fixer with considerable experience. As soon as fair progress had been made in the direction of introducing modern methods of planning, progressing and scheduling, attention was given to the investigation of the shortcomings of the bonus system and it was decided to introduce the piece-work system.

Main Features of the System: - Under this system the men are required to do a certain amount of work for their daily pay which is guaranteed. Any work done in excess of this amount entitles the men to a profit (bonus). In cases where a man fails to perform the work within the required time, a proportionate deduction is made from any profits which may have been earned by him in the same month, and the man is paid the difference. The method by which the amount of work to be done daily by a man in order to earn his daily pay is fixed, is based on ^{the} English practice. To the basic time

is added 33 per cent and if a man does the work in this time but not quicker, he gets no profit. ^{There} ~~and~~ before a man becomes entitled to any profit, he must reasonably exert himself, with ultimate saving to the Railway.

Results Achieved: - The beginning ^{of the new system} was made in November, 1927 and it took ten months to bring the men to a state of efficiency that enabled them to earn ~~the~~ profits. At the commencement there was a loss to the men, but at the end of a period of 16 months a gain of over 20 per cent was shown - a decrease in the output time of 61.04 per cent for which the men received 20.34 per cent extra wages only.

A report recently received from the North-Western Railway shows that ~~the~~ labour charges have been considerably reduced on the North-Western Railway in comparison with the amount of work done. On broad lines, the work done by the railway as regards the maintenance of ~~power~~ is the number of engine miles run. The cost of doing this work is the total labour charges in all Locomotive, Mechanical and Transportation Workshops and includes all ordinary time, overtime bonus and piece work profits.

~~The~~ Labour charges have been decreased ^{on the N.W. Railway} from Rs. 7.1 millions in 1926-27 to Rs. 6.6 millions in 1929-30 and the engine miles run have increased from 30 millions to 35 millions during the same period. The labour cost per engine mile has, therefore, been reduced from 3.79 annas per engine mile in 1926-27 to 3.01 annas per engine mile in 1929-30. This alone shows a saving in labour cost of .78 annas per engine mile on the additional five million engine miles run, or a saving of Rs. 2,44,000 per annum. Still greater saving will be found to have been effected if the engine miles are con-

verted into equated engine miles, which takes into account the larger and heavier engines now employed.

The saving arrived at by this method works out to Rs.4,15,000 per annum. The whole of the saving is not entirely attributable to the introduction of the piece work system. The reorganization of the workshops, the concentration of work at Moghulpura and Sukkur, and the introduction of better methods of work of which the piece-work system forms only a part, are other important contributory factors.

(The Statesman, 24.2.31).

Grievances of Hyderabad (Deccan) Railway Workers.

A memorandum has been recently submitted to the administration of the Nizam's State Railway by the president of the Railway Employees' Union, drawing attention to certain grievances and requesting the administration to take measures to redress them.

The following is a brief summary of the more important of the demands made by the Union:-

In the first place, the administration is asked to recognize the Union as the only organization that can speak and act on behalf of the Railway employees and not to encourage rival institutions such as workshop or staff committees.

Adverse changes, said to have been introduced without consulting the staff, the Union demands, should be cancelled and there should be no curtailment of service privileges on any account.

On the question of wages, the Union submits that the only solution

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for the present "unsatisfactory" system is to introduce time scale payment for all the staff. It complains that there is practically no leave reserve for ~~other~~ services. Certain changes in the hours of work and removal of grievances in connection with the award of punishments are also urged.

As regards staff quarters, the Union demands that they should be remodelled on the recommendations of a joint committee of the Railway and the Union.

Many improvements in sanitation and medical aid are suggested. Occupational disease and injuries while on duty should, it is urged, be compensated on a standard which should not be lower than the standard prescribed by the Geneva Workmen's Compensation Convention, and full pay for periods spent in hospital should be allowed. Moreover, whenever accidents occur Union representatives should be associated in the inquiries instituted by the administration.

The Union finally submits that the case of workers who are deprived of their bonuses by the former administration should be sympathetically considered.

Concluding, the Union says that it fully appreciates the financial difficulties of the administration and urges that those of its demands which require no financial adjustment should be fully conceded, while the others should be discussed and all facts and figures relating to them should be made available ^{to} ~~on~~ the Union.

(The Statesman, 1-2-1931).

Industrial Disputes in British India in 1930.

According to a ^{on Industrial disputes in British India in 1930} communique issued by the Department of Industries and Labour of the Government of India, under date 6-3-31, the total number of strikes during the year was 148 and the total number of men involved ~~was~~ 196,301, as compared with 141 strikes involving 531,059 men during 1929. The total number of working days lost during the year was 2,261,731, as compared with 12,165,691 during 1929. Two strikes which occurred during the year - one in the Old Champdany Jute Mill, Hooghly, and the other Jute Mills at Titagarh, Bengal - were by themselves responsible for a loss of 548,185 working days involving 34,718 operatives. The most important strike of the year was the general strike in the Great Indian Peninsula Railway which affected 22,608 men and involved a loss of 893,617 working days. The number of strikes where the workmen were successful in gaining any concessions was approximately 39% of the total number.

During the year under review, there were 75 industrial disputes in Bombay involving 79,415 employees and entailing a loss of 1,092,136 working days, Bengal comes next with 34 disputes, involving 69,722 men and entailing a loss of 705,631 working days, Assam had 16 disputes involving 7,885 men and entailing a loss of 12,065 working days, Madras had 11 disputes involving 13,616 men and entailing a loss of 216,659 days, Delhi had 2 disputes involving 11,388 men and entailing a loss of 62,690 working days, Bihar and Orissa had 4 disputes involving 5,785 men and entailing a loss of 62,726 working days, Burma, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces had 3, 2 and 1 disputes respectively involving on the whole 8,490 persons and entailing the loss of 109,804 working days.

Of the 148 disputes during the year, 69 were due to questions of wages, 34 to those of personnel, 7 to questions of leave and hours, 4 to those of bonus and 34 to other causes. Of these 148 strikes, 36 were successful, 22 partially successful, 89 unsuccessful and 1 was in progress at the end of the year.

Classified according to industries, there were 68 disputes in cotton and woolen mills involving 67,343 men and entailing a

loss of 363,894 working days, 13 disputes in jute mills involving 56,017 men and entailing a loss of 688,396 working days, 10 in engineering workshops involving 1,618 men and entailing a loss of 14,496 working days, 9 in Railways including railway workshops ~~involving~~ involving 43,470 men and entailing a loss of 956,331 working days, and 2 in mines involving 5,473 men and entailing a loss of 60,368 working days. In all the other industries together there were 46 disputes involving 22,380 men and entailing a loss of 178,246 working days.

(The Communique issued by the Government of India on Industrial disputes in British India during 1929 is reviewed at pages 35-36 of the report of this office for January 1930.)

Quarterly strike statistics (period ending 31-12-30)

The Department of Industries and Labour of the Government of India in a press communique dated 6-3-31, has published the statistics of Industrial Disputes in British India for the quarter ending 31-12-31. During the period under review there were 35 disputes involving 25,388 men and entailing a total loss of 159,560 working days. The largest number of disputes occurred in the Bombay Presidency, where 28 disputes were recorded involving 21,364 men and entailing a loss of 73,104 working days. Bengal comes next with 3 disputes involving 386 men and entailing a loss of 2,877 working days. There were 2 strikes in Madras involving 3,038 men and entailing a loss of 82,329 working days, 1 in Assam involving 500 men and entailing a loss of 1,000 working days, 1 in the Central Provinces involving 100 men and entailing a loss of 250 working days, while no strikes were recorded in the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, Delhi and the Punjab.

Of the 35 disputes during the quarter under review, 16 were due to questions of wages, 6 to those of personnel, 3 to those of bonus and 10 to other causes. In 16 disputes the workers were successful, in 4 partially successful, in 14 unsuccessful, and 1 dispute was in progress at the end of the quarter.

Classified according to industries, there were 27 disputes in cotton and woolen mills involving 20,010 men and entailing a loss of 64,462 working days, 1 in jute mills involving 2,878

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men and entailing a loss of 80,584 working days, 1 in engineering workshops involving 160 men and entailing a loss of 1,745 working days and 6 in other industries involving 2,340 men and entailing a loss of 12,769 working days.

(The statistics of industrial disputes for the quarter ending 30-9-30 is reviewed at page 37 of the report of this office for November 1930).

Industrial Organisation.Workers' Organisation.Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad.

The Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad, one of the best organised bodies of workers in India. A practical programme of work for the year 1931 formulating the steps to be taken for the redress of the main grievances of the textile workers of Ahmedabad was drawn up at a recent meeting of the Joint Representative Board of the Textile Labour Association. The following is a summary of the more important of the resolutions passed:-

The first resolution urges a substantial reduction in the hours of work and directs the Secretary to make a preliminary inquiry and report on the extent to which a reduction is called for, keeping in view the conditions of the local industry and the requirements of the working people.

Another resolution draws attention to the tendency on the part of millowners to reduce the number of women workers since the passing of the Maternity Benefit Act "with a view to escaping the liability connected therewith" and requests the Millowners' Association to remove this "unfair distinction against women on the score of sex".

A third resolution demands the immediate introduction of weekly payment of wages; and a fourth demands the abolition of night shifts, as these are prejudicial ^{to} ~~and affect~~ the health and ^{adversely affect the} domestic life of the workmen, ~~and creates unemployment when night shifts are given up.~~

A fifth resolution warns those workers who drink that other workers will be asked to refuse to work with them; thus they will run the risk of unemployment.

(The Times of India, 28-2-31)

Intellectual Workers.

Forthcoming Second All-India Salaried Employees'

Convention.

The second session of the All India salaried Employees' Convention is to be held at Madras during the Easter Week in April. The first All-India Salaried Employees' Convention was held last year in Calcutta (see pages 49-50 of the report of this office for January, 1930). The object of the present Convention is to safeguard the interests of the employees by agitating for proper representation in all public bodies now in existence and also in the proposed new constitution for India. The agenda of this year's Convention includes, inter alia , the following subjects : (1) representation of salaried employees in the proposed new Indian Constitution, and (2) solution of the wide spread unemployment problem in India. Salaried employees belonging to the Railways, Port Trusts, Municipalities, District and Taluk Boards, Universities, educational institutions, Insurance and Banking concerns, Mercantile and Trading firms, Printing concerns, etc., besides Employees' Unions (in India, Burma and Ceylon) are entitled to send delegates to the session.

The following questionnaire has been issued by the Convention to elicit information about the actual conditions of work of salaried employees and to facilitate the formulation of

Resolutions

subjects to be considered at the coming Convention.

1. The minimum or starting salary in your office.
2. The nature and scale of increment.
3. Have you got any Provident Fund in your office?
4. Do you get all ~~the~~ Bank holidays?
5. Do you get any share of the profit at the end of each year, or a general bonus yearly; if so at what rate?
6. Are there any prescribed rules for leave (~~privilege, casual~~) ^(medical, etc.)?
7. Is there any pension system for the staff?
8. What are the usual working hours in your office?
9. Are you ever paid overtime allowances for extra work on Sundays or holidays?
10. Are you paid any tiffin allowance from the office?
11. Are you given any time for recreation?
12. Does your office pay a full month's pay to an employee when he is discharged without previous notice?
13. Does your office provide the staff with newspapers, magazines and other literature during ~~the~~ leisure hours?
14. Any other point you may desire to ~~send, raise~~

(The Hindu, 24 & 28-2-31)

Salaried Employees of Bombay.

A public meeting of the salaried employees of Bombay was held under the auspices of the Clerks' Union on 22-2-31, in the ~~hall~~ of the Bombay Students' Brotherhood, when the following resolutions were unanimously passed. (1) That this public meeting of the salaried employees of Bombay resolve to call a conference of all the salaried employees of Bombay to formulate ^{demands about Conditions of} their ~~necessities in~~ services, ^{More relating to} such as, hours of work, scale of pay, provident fund, etc., etc., and that the Conference be held as early as possible this year. (2) That a Reception Committee be formed to organise the Conference ^{that} and a fee of Re.1 be fixed for joining ^{the} such a Reception Committee, ^{that} any salaried employee of Bombay ^{should} ~~to~~ be allowed to join the Reception Committee on payment of the requisite fee.

The meeting appointed a provisional working Committee to hold

the first meeting of the Reception Committee within a fortnight after 75 members had joined, to elect office-bearers and carry on the work in support of the Conference.

(The Times of India, 25-2.31)

Railway Budget for 1931-32 and Wages of Railway Workers.

The railway budget for 1931-32 presented in the Legislative Assembly by Sir George Rainy, Member for Commerce and Railways, on 17-2-31, was perhaps the gloomiest which that body was ever called upon to consider. The estimates show railway working at a loss for the first time since railway revenues were separated from general revenues. The final result of 1930-31 is anticipated to be a loss from commercial lines of Rs.29.3 millions. The loss in strategic lines of Rs. 21.9 millions brings up the total loss on all railways to Rs 51.2 millions; and consequently, to meet the contribution to the general revenues of Rs.57.4 millions, Rs.108.6 millions will be taken from previously accumulated reserves, leaving a balance of 55 millions .

Prospects for 1931-32. Assuming modest improvement in traffic and minor alterations of rates and fares, the estimates of traffic receipts on account of commercial lines in 1931-32 are Rs.99.5 millions or nearly Rs.60 millions higher than in the current year. The working expenses are expected to be Rs.75 millions lower, in spite of ^{an} increase of Rs. 3.7 millions under depreciation fund for capital expenditure during the current year. The final result of 1931-32 is expected to be a surplus from commercial lines of 31.7 millions or Rs.60 millions more than in the current year . The balance left after deducting Rs.19.6 millions for loss in strategic lines is Rs.12.1 millions representing the gain on all lines during 1931-32.(The Hindu,17-2-31).

In his speech, Sir George Rainy pointed out that the fall in railway revenues is bound to have unfavourable repercussions on the conditions of service of all classes of railway workers and that adjustments will have to be made permanently to a lower level prices.

The three main factors which will affect the conduct of railway administration in the future will be : (1) the extreme importance to the national life of cheap transport, and in particular low rates for agricultural produce, (2) the desirability of satisfying the equitable claims of the great body of railway servants in India, and (3) the scale of contribution which, under the altered conditions, the railways can fairly be asked to make in aid of the general taxpayer.

Discussing the question of the possibility of a reduction in the scale of wages and salaries on the railways, Sir George Rainy said that hitherto the scale of wages, so far at any rate as the lowest class of railway employees are concerned, was inadequate and that measures were necessary to bring about an improvement. Two years ago the Government promised to ascertain what was the most that could be done for the lower paid employees without injustice to other interests which Government were equally bound to safeguard. In pursuance of that statement, an immense amount of work has been devoted during the last two years to reviewing the scales of wages in force on almost all the State-owned railways in India, and in preparing schemes in order to ameliorate conditions. The ultimate cost of the schemes for the revision of wages already sanctioned is about Rs.3.2 millions per annum and the bulk of the railway servants covered by these schemes draw pay not exceeding Rs.30 per mensem. In so far as we are dealing with this class of establishment, that is, the people who draw not more than Rs.30 a month, and having regard to all that has passed in the last two or three years, the Government thinks that any reduction in wages and salaries is not immediately feasible. Unquestionably these low paid servants of the

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railways must have gained substantially by the fall in prices, but before any question can arise as to a reduction in the scales of pay recently fixed, it should be shown that the new level of prices is likely to be permanent, and that having regard to all the considerations involved, the existing scales are excessive.

Discussing the comparative earnings of different grades of railway servants, Sir George Rainy said that endeavours have been made to ascertain the cost of the various classes of railway establishment, and though the figures arrived at, are only approximate so far as the subordinate establishments are concerned, certain facts emerge clearly. If the large class of railway servants who draw less than Rs.30 a month is excluded, the cost of the remaining establishments, is about Rs.250 million a year so that a ten per cent cut in wages and salaries would mean a saving of ~~the~~ 25 millions. Out of the total, the salaries of gazetted officers amount to only Rs.20 millions a year and a ten per cent cut would give us only Rs.2 millions. It has not been possible to ascertain with the *range of* accuracy the cost of the upper subordinate establishment, that is, of subordinates drawing Rs.250 a month and over or on scales of pay rising to Rs.250 a month and over, but probably Rs.70 millions a year is an outside figure and the amount may actually be a good deal less. A ten per cent cut in salaries applicable only to the gazetted and upper subordinate establishments would yield therefore a sum substantially less than Rs.10 millions a year. It will be obvious from these figures that if a really substantial saving in expenditure is to be effected, the reduction will have to go right down the scale excluding only the lowest paid establishments of all who seldom draw more than Rs. 30 a month. It may be that this question will have to be faced and a reduction effected in order *that*

railways may become fully solvent and able to contribute to the extent the Legislature may consider proper to the general expenses of Government. The Government think that when large bodies of Government servants on comparatively low rates of pay are being dealt with- and it must be remembered that the average wage of all the railway servants in India does not exceed Rs.45 a month - it would be unfair to single out this Department alone for special treatment, and that if a reduction is finally found to be necessary, it ~~should~~ should be general and applicable to all Departments of Government.

Referring to the effects of the shrinkage in railway revenues on the progress of the various schemes initiated for the benefit of the railway staff, and particularly for the lowest paid employees, Sir George Rainy said that the fall in railway revenues would mean a slower rate of progress for them. ^{He} ~~The speaker~~ said that the ~~Staff~~ ^{his attention} Member of the Railway Board has devoted to every question connected with the welfare of the staff, and to the solution of a number of difficult staff problems which have arisen since the war and which could not be properly tackled until the headquarters organisation in question ~~XXXXX~~ in the Railway Board was properly organised for the purpose, and referred specially to the schemes which have been prepared and brought into force on most of the railways in India for improving the pay of the lowest paid employees, and the steps which have been taken to give effect to the obligations incurred by the Government of India under the Geneva and Washington conventions regarding the hours of work of railway employees.

(Summarised from Sir George Rainy's speech introducing Railway Budget. Legislative Assembly Debates .Vol.1, No.16, 17-2-31, pages 917-929).

The Railway Budget for 1930-31 is reviewed at pages 18 to 23 of the report of this office for February, 1930.

Board of Economic Inquiry, U.P.

The Government of the United Provinces have recently decided to constitute immediately, both a Board of Economic Inquiry and a small department, to be called "Bureau of Statistics and Economic Research". The latter will be placed under the Director of Land Records as Director of Statistics, who will have at his disposal a staff of statistical clerks and investigators. The duties of the bureau will be

- (1) to collect and collate economic data already available in official and non-official publications;
- (2) to supply or secure any economic information that may be demanded by the existing departments of Government;
- (3) to advise the departments of Government regarding the best means of collecting statistics, and the statistics best worth collecting ;
- (4) to keep all statistics up to date ;
- (5) when and as possible , to carry out such economic investigations as may be suggested by the Board of Economic Inquiry.

The Board of Economic Inquiry will serve a dual function.

- (1) It will advise the bureau, both generally, and particularly with regard to any inquiries which it may propose to undertake or statistics which it may propose to collect.
- (2) It will , either with the bureau's assistance or on its account initiate and carry out economic investigations.

The Board will consist of 19 members, of whom 8 will be nominated by the Government, 2 will be selected by Chambers of Commerce , 5 will be selected by the five Universities of the Province, and four will be ex-officio members.

(Note. This is in consequence of Sir Arthur Haller's visit to the U.P. P. P. P.)

(The Pioneer . 9-2-31).

Decline in Imports of Textiles:

Figures for 1930.

Tell-tale statistics relating to the import of foreign textiles into India during 1930 are contained in an official document issued *on 16-2-31* today by the Bombay Millowners' Association.

According to this ~~document~~, during the calendar year 1930 imports of piecegoods into India fell to 297 million yards, as compared with 565 million yards during the previous twelve months, showing a decrease of 268 million yards, or roughly 48 per cent. 6 of the 297 million yards imported, the United Kingdom's share was 142 million, against 281 million yards last year, and Japan's 121 million against 219 million yards.

During the same period the import of yarn totalled 16 million pounds against 28 million pounds in 1929. Imports of piecegoods during December, 1930, stood at 6.6 million yards, against an average monthly import of 47 million yards.

(The Pioneer. 19-2-31).

Unemployment.Unemployment among Anglo-Indians in Calcutta.

Mr.H.B.Whitham, Secretary , District Charitable Society, Calcutta, in the course of an interview given ^{on 26-2-31} to a representative of the Statesman, Calcutta, estimates the number of Anglo-Indians unemployed in Calcutta City at 10,000. Of these, between 1,000 and 1,500 belong to the better class, of whom 550 were dismissed from employment during July and August 1930. Mr.Whitham attributes the abnormal conditions of unemployment among Anglo-Indians in Calcutta to the fact that there is a great rush of members of the Anglo-Indian Community to Calcutta under the mistaken impression that employment is easily obtainable in the city.

(The Statesman 26-2-31).

Social Conditions.Abolition of Devadasi System in Cochin, State

At page 73 of the report of this office for July, 1930, reference was made to the abolition of the system of dedicating Devadasis (dancing girls) to serve in the Hindu temples maintained by the Government of Travancore. The Legislative Council of the neighbouring State of Cochin has, according to the Times of India of 24-2-31, ^{recently} passed a Bill prohibiting the dedication of women in Hindu temples within the State .

Public Health.Housing scheme for Empress Mills' employees, Nagpur

The Empress Mills, Nagpur, of which ^{the} ~~Tatas~~ are the proprietors, have been very progressive in the matter of attending to the social welfare of their employees. Schools, ~~scouting~~, an excellent medical system, creches, and tiffin sheds are some of the welfare ^{activities} ~~works~~ ^{that} the mills have undertaken during the past few years. They have followed these up with a scheme for the housing of ^{their} ~~the~~ employees, of which the first stages are now complete. The following details regarding the scheme ^{are} ~~have been~~ taken from an article on the subject appearing in the Times of India of 10-2-1931.

The site covers an area of 200 acres which has been supplied by the Government on favourable terms. The site is a mile and a half from the mills and very near to the settlement there is a railway siding.

So far 150 houses have been built and about 30 others are under construction. The houses are built on plots measuring 36 feet by 53. Each house is surrounded by its own compound and nearly every one has a garden. The house occupies only a third of the plot, and any worker who wants ~~to have~~ a bigger house is allowed to take two plots. Workers are allowed to build houses of their own designs, provided that the designs are approved as coming up to a minimum standard. Each house, it is also stipulated, is to have good-sized windows and six-foot doors.

The basic ~~idea~~ has been to encourage the workers to own their houses and be as far as possible independent of the mills in their private life. The cost of the houses range from Rs. 150 to ^{Rs.} 1,800. Any worker can obtain a loan depending on his earning capacity. The loans are made by the mills free of interest for four years in the case of Kachcha houses (houses made of mud) and ^{five} ~~four~~ ^{years} in the case of pukka houses (houses made of bricks). After that, if the worker wants more time to pay, he can obtain easy terms. Over Rs. 70,000 ~~has~~ been given out in this way in the last three years. After the loan has been paid off the worker is absolute master of his house and has to pay only eight annas a month in land rent and municipal taxes. He cannot be evicted, and if he leaves the service of the mills he can still stay on. If he wishes to sell his house he can dispose of it privately to another millhand, or if he gets no adequate offers he can sell it back to the mills. If he cannot agree with the mills about the price, the matter can be referred to the

Deputy Commissioner, and the mills are then bound to buy the house at the price which he fixes. The mills have thus deliberately deprived themselves of the weapon of unfair economic pressure often used ^{during strikes} by owners during strikes in other parts of the world. A worker who has served ~~only~~ five years with the mills can obtain a permanent lease of his land, and after that he cannot be evicted.

Besides having their own compounds, the houses are arranged in groups of 20 to 25, with an open space in the middle as a common ~~playground~~ playground. The average density is $7\frac{1}{2}$ houses to the acre, compared with 7 houses to the acre at Bournville, Messrs. Cadbury's garden city near Birmingham. A Child Welfare Centre has already been established, and the settlement has one of the most up-to-date sewage systems in India. Government and the municipality are helping by cleaning up and beautifying the neighbourhood and Government has promised to tar the adjoining main road, so as to avoid dust. Space has been left where maternity and general hospitals will be built, and some of the Mahars are now settling aside a rupee a month each to build a temple. Four or five acres have been provided for a big playing field, on which work has already ^{been} started. It will include a full size football ground, with a running track round it, wrestling pits and facilities for minor games and amusements.

The settlement is the only part of the civil station of Nagpur where compulsory primary education has been introduced. The mills have put up an excellent school building at the cost of Rs. 17,000 and loaned it to the municipality in the daytime. The Sisters of Mary Immaculate run a day-school for girls in the same building, and the Y.M.C.A., is opening a night-school for adults. The Y.M.C.A., which is in charge of the Empress Mills welfare work throughout the city, has taken the greatest interest in helping with the development of the model settlement.

The intention of the mill authorities is to abolish the system of employer - landlords which has caused a great deal of labour trouble in western countries. The ultimate cost to the Empress Mills is estimated at Rs. 25 lakhs, and even if the mills do not ultimately get their money back in the shape of goodwill and a permanent labour force, as no doubt they will do, the effort will not have been fruitless. A permanent contribution has been made to the problem of housing labour in India.

(The Times of India, 10-2-1931)

Co-operation.

Progress of co-operation in Hyderabad State *during 1930*

The fifteenth annual report of the working of the Co-operative Societies in ~~the~~ Hyderabad State, Deccan, ^{during 1930,} with the Government review thereon, was issued in January, by the Director General of Commerce and Industry with the Hyderabad State.

During the year audit was finally separated from supervision and other work. Supervision in future is to be in the hands of the Central Banks, subject to the control of the Co-operative Union and the Registrar's staff. In some of the central banks, by way of experiment, inspectors were appointed as "inspectors-managers," their main duties being to manage the work of the central banks and to supervise the affiliated societies by constant touring.

The Government expresses satisfaction at the progress made in the re-organisation of the Dominion Bank, whereby the Central Banks have become share holders and have begun to elect directors to the Board. The financial position of the Dominion Bank itself is stated to be satisfactory. There were 29 central banks whose share capital, reserve fund and deposits continued to increase. The public appeared to be gaining confidence in the movement even in the outlying towns, and most of the central banks were able to report an increase in their deposits. The Government hopes that as time goes on the village societies will be ^{benefited} more and more financed from money coming from the districts in which they are situated. During the year a sum of 1 million rupees was collected from the societies out of a total of Rs.5.6 millions which was owing, but at the close of the year, a sum of nearly Rs.700,000 was still owing by way of interest alone. The net increase in the number of agricultural societies was only 16. Out of Rs.6.0 millions as principal and Rs.2.9 millions owed as interest by the members to their societies, only Rs.300,000 was collected by way of principal and Rs.500,000 by way of interest. Government consider these results as amounting almost to stagnation.

The Government records great dissatisfaction with the working of the Department. The review states that the touring of most of the Assistant Registrars was inadequate because of the few societies they were able to inspect. Further, owing to various causes, one of which was the failure of the staff to carry out their duties, only 813 out of 1,901 societies were audited. The Government has stated explicitly that in future no excuses would be accepted for failure to complete the statutory audit.

(The Times of India. 3-2-31)

(The progress of cooperation in the Hyderabad State during 1929 is reviewed at pages 43-44 of the report of this office for September 1930).

The Co-operative Estate Scheme in the Sunderbans,
Bengal.

Reference was made at page 44 of the report of this office for January 1931, to the Sunderbans Co-operative Scheme sponsored by Sir Daniel Hamilton. Further details regarding the scheme are now available, as the result of an interview given recently by Sir Daniel Hamilton to ^athe representative of the Times of India, Bombay.

The amount of Rs.150,000 advanced by the Government of India for the co-operative training institute at Bolpur is, it is understood, to be recovered gradually from the villages of Bengal when they have been organised co-operatively. Spread over the entire province the cost of the establishment of the institute, Sir Daniel reckoned, would be only about an anna per villager.

The institute is to be divided into two parts, one situated

at Bolpur under the guidance of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, ^{and} the other at Gosaba, Sir Daniel's own property in the Sunderbans. Thus divided, the institute will cover the drier and moister climates of Bengal and will ensure practical and theoretical training in both. One thousand young men may be given training at a time which, in addition to co-operative training, will consist of a twelve months' round of farming and handloom weaving, ^{and} also spinning if possible, ^{with the double object of giving them} ^{the training has been devised} ^{selected men} a working acquaintance with ^{for} the village life and testing their capacity for work in rural areas.

The young men so trained are to be taken over by the co-operative department of the Government of Bengal for the spread of the co-operative movement in the villages and helping to rescue the agriculturists from the hands of the money-lenders.

Regarding the finance necessary for the relief of the ^(cultivators) rayat, ~~continually~~ Sir Daniel's suggestion is that the paper currency reserve of the Government of India ~~which is now purely a~~ ~~currency system and~~ which exchanges notes for rupees and rupees for notes should be developed into a banking business as the metallic reserve is very much greater than is required for purely currency purposes, and that on the strength of the surplus silver in hand credit in the form of notes should be issued to the village societies for productive purposes only. At the present time the Government of India holds fully 90 per cent. of metal against its note issue, and if 50 per cent. should prove sufficient the excess silver would be a sufficient backing for very many ^{millions} ~~crores~~ of productive credit money, which money is lying idle at present when India is crying out for it.

Sir Daniel Hamilton, it may be mentioned, was the senior partner in India of the firm of Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie and Company, and while in Calcutta he acquired ^{a large agricultural} the property with a view to getting a working knowledge of agricultural life in that province. If his ^{Bengal} scheme materialises ~~in Bengal~~, it is understood that he would like to see similar institutes established in other provinces as well as in the Indian States.

A Colonisation Scheme for Anglo-Indians.

1. Mr.E.T.McCluskie, President of the Bengal Branch of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association, has recently formulated a Colonisation scheme on a co-operative basis for Anglo-Indians. The outlines of the scheme are now complete, and according to the Statesman, Calcutta, of 11-2-31 as soon as the land required for the colony are granted by the Government a start will be made with the scheme. The main feature of the scheme is to give an agricultural bias to Anglo-Indians, who hitherto have been confining themselves mainly to industrial and urban occupations.

At a conference held on 8-1-31 to consider the proposals it was pointed out that agriculture being the basic industry of the world, the economic foundation of the Domiciled community would not be firmly established unless a large proportion of them became agriculturists.

The objects of the scheme are:-

- To settle the community on the land;
- To train the community to agriculture;
- To sell the trade produce of the colony or colonies;
- To encourage education, especially technical education, and
- To establish industrial undertakings for the employment of members of the community.

The colonization sites have been selected for their agricultural possibilities in regard to climate, soil, accessibility to markets, transportation, latent conditions and possibility of expansion and development. A settlement has been selected in the north of India and another at Hosur in the South of about 40,000 to 50,000 acres. It is estimated that the return on capital subscribed will be from seven to ten per cent a year. The scheme is meant to be a co-operative venture. It is deemed essential that no one should be allowed to hold more than Rs.1,000 worth of shares, and it has therefore

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been thought advisable to register it under the Co-operative Societies Act (No. 11 of 1912). It is proposed to form a society with a capital of Rs. ^{millions} ~~1000000~~, divided in ^{1 million} ~~ten lakhs~~ of shares of Rs. 10 each. Dividends will be limited under the Act to 12½ per cent per annum ; under the Act 25 per cent of the profits must go to a reserve fund, and the liability of the Society is limited, and the liability of each member is limited to the number of shares held by him. One vote will be allowed to each shareholder, irrespective of the number of shares held by him.

It is maintained in many quarters that the Anglo-Indian will never make an agriculturist in India. Although there are many successful agriculturists among them at the present moment, the urban and industrial bent of the community must be admitted. It is the desire of the organizers and those interested in the venture to ^{take up} youths and train them for agriculture.

The produce will be taken by the Society and sold by the marketing board. The settler thus secures his price on his produce on which he makes a profit, and also ^{shares} in the profits of the Society ^{obtained} by the sale of the produce (his dividends). The lay-out of each colony will be a town in a convenient position with an area of about two square miles. The rest of the land will be laid out for agriculture and leased to settlers.

(The Statesman. 11-2-31).