

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

C 1903/12

Indian Branch

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Report for November 1929.

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* These pages were sent in again in a corrected version, for which see last pages of this copy

General.

The past month has been singularly devoid of political events which deserve to be chronicled. After the Viceroy had left Delhi by the end of the first week of November, it is understood that no decisions of first class political importance have been taken by the Government of India. There has been a great deal of speculation both as to the personnel and as to the ultimate success of the Round Table Conference; as regards the first point the rumour is that it will include the two Nehrus, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam, Sir Mahomed Shafi, Pandit Malaviya, Mr. M.A.Jinnah, Dr. Moonje, Sir C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer and Sir A.P.Patro, but it must, however, be stated that the whole thing is now in a state of fluidity, and that neither the composition nor the strength of the Round Table Conference are now definitely known to the public. Attempts are being made to win complete approval and co-operation for the Conference and not to hedge the Conference idea round with conditions of all kinds such as were laid down in the leaders' manifesto referred to in our earlier report. On the other hand, though the independence party now seems to be lying low, there is a great deal of discontent against the leaders who have signed the Delhi manifesto. It now seems practically certain that the Round Table Conference will be the rock upon which the Lahore Congress will split, and that not even the great influence and personality of Gandhi will be able to avoid a rupture.

The Trade Union Congress which was held on the last day of November and the first day of December at Nagpur has been the only sensational event of the month. Elsewhere in this report is given a brief summary of the proceedings, and though some of the erstwhile members of the party which was opposed to the moderate

group are now holding out olive branches, it is expected that the rupture in the labour ranks, brought about by a fundamental difference in principles and policy, will not be easily healed. It is noteworthy that the International Labour Organisation has come in for its own share of attack during the passages at arms between the moderates and the extremists. This is all the more curious when it is known for a fact that several leaders of the extremists were themselves actively canvassing for election to the Geneva labour delegation before the divergence between the two parties became so acute.

Among the important places visited by the Whitley Commission this month were Ahmedabad, Bombay and Nagpur, all of them centres of the textile industry. The response from organised labour at both Ahmedabad and Bombay was of a rather poor character, the Ahmedabad Labour Union having, according to newspaper accounts, decided on a boycott in the same way as the Girni Kamgar Union of Bombay. In the latter centre, the only organised labour union to offer evidence was the Bombay Textile Labour Union, which had presented a memorandum and sent its secretary, together with four workers, as witnesses. From the employers' side abundant information was forthcoming; at Bombay the Millowners' Association presented a memorandum and offered evidence and the Sassoon group of mills offered evidence separately in regard to their new "efficiency" scheme. The managements of the B.B.&C.I and G.I.P. Railways were also examined.

One of the members of the Commission, Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, has been ordered absolute rest for six months, but according to a

Mr.

press communiqué issued by Whitley he has been requested by his colleagues not to resign his place ~~from~~ the Commission. Mr. Joshi, though he is bravely carrying on, is still far from well; and during the major part of November, Mr. Birla also was away from the Commission.

A batch of news paper cuttings dealing with the work of the Commission is sent separately. This office has not yet succeeded in getting copies of the memoranda presented by the Ahmedabad and Bombay Millowners Associations, which will be very useful to us for our textile enquiry; but a copy of the Bombay Government's* memorandum is being sent separately.

(Continued: see next page)

The cold weather session of the Legislative Assembly will begin ~~its sittings~~ on the 20th January 1930, and the session is bound to be lively as it will be held three weeks after the Lahore Congress and some time before the Round Table Conference. Besides, several Departments of the Government have a number of bills left over from the last session and many more for introduction in the Assembly before the end of the current financial year on the 31st March 1930. There are also, in addition, more than four dozen non-official bills at various stages, of which special reference should be made to Mr. Haji's Coastal Reservation Bill.

Important changes will soon take place in the personnel of the Government of India. In the place of Sir Muhammad Habib-ul-lah, who represented India at the League Assembly this year, Sir Fazl-i-Husain, who was acting for him during his absence in Geneva, is to be appointed Member for Education, Health and Lands. Mr. J.W. Bhore, I.C.S., who is now a Joint Secretary of the Simon Commission, is to take the place of Sir B.N. Mitra, the present Member for Industries and Labour, who will be retiring in April. Mr. Bhore has won a high reputation for administrative ability while he was the principal Secretary to the High Commissioner for India in London, and later when he became the Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Education, Health and Lands.

References to the I.L.O.

The Indian papers are still devoting considerable attention to the controversy over Sir Geoffrey Corbett's remarks at the meeting of the Credentials Committee of the 13th International Labour Conference, to which reference has been made in Para 1, page 8 of the October report of this office. The point of view of Indian employers' organisation is lucidly set forth in a memorandum addressed by the South Indian Chamber of Commerce to the Government of India, inviting Government's attention to and protesting against the statement made by Sir Geoffrey Corbett that European Chambers have Indian membership and that in no insignificant proportion. In view of the importance of the controversy the main submissions of the South Indian Chamber are given below :-

The Chamber objects to the argument that the fact of Europeans and Indians moving together in certain institutions indicates the right of the former to be treated as Indian nationals. In the second place, the Chamber repudiates the suggestion that there is any reasonable proportion of Indian members in European Chambers of Commerce. Taking the major provinces of Madras, Bombay and Bengal it is found that in the Madras Chamber of Commerce there are only two Indians out of a total of 58 members; that in the Bombay Chamber of Commerce among a total number of 162 members there are only 16 Indian concerns which are managed by Indians and are members of the Chamber; that in the Bengal Chamber of Commerce out of a total of 229 ~~mm~~ members there are only 12 Indian concerns managed by Indians which are members. The plea that these Chambers serve to any extent the interests of Indian nationals is belied by the fact that in none of the Chambers are the Indian members allowed to

occupy positions of power or responsibility whether among the office bearers or among the Managing Committee or Standing Committee Members. In these circumstances the Chamber submits that Sir Geoffrey Corbett's statement is incorrect and misleading and requires to be publicly withdrawn by him or ~~it~~ by the Government of India.

A summary of the Chamber's memorandum is published in the Hindu of 2-11-29.

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The adoption of "Forced Labour" as an item on the agenda of the International Labour Conference is evidently responsible for the frequent references that are made to this topic in Indian Papers. The Hindu of 22-11-29 and all papers publish the summary of a memorandum submitted by the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay to the Government of Bombay, in the course of which the Chamber criticises the Government of India's "halting" policy in the matter of the abolition of forced labour and urges the complete abolition of forced labour in India.

The Times of India of 30-11-29 publishes a two column article under the Caption "Forced Labour in India --- Conditions in Gujerat" contributed by a correspondent specially deputed by the paper to make a study of conditions in Gujerat in this respect (A summary of this article is given in the section of this Report dealing with conditions of ~~E~~ labour).

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The Hindu of 22-11-29 publishes the names of persons recommended by the South Indian Chamber of Commerce to represent Indian

employers at the 14th International Labour Conference. The following persons have been recommended by the Chamber:-

Mr. Amritlal Ojha, M.L.C., (Indian Mining Federation, Calcutta) as the delegate and the following four to be his advisers: "Messrs. P. Mukherjee (Punjab Chamber of Commerce, Delhi), J.K.Mehta (Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay), Ramjeedas Vaishya, (Gwalior Chamber of Commerce) and Ganganand Sinha, M.L.A.

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The New India, a Madras Weekly in its issue of 28-11-29 (Vol. III New Series, No.34), publishes an article entitled "Labour in India" by Mr. B. Shiva Rao, adviser to the Workers' delegate at the 12th International Labour Conference, in the course of which a strong plea is made for bringing the Indian States within the purview of the International Labour Conference.

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Mr. B. Shiva Rao, adviser to the Workers' delegate at the 12th session of the International Labour Conference contributes an article on the Asiatic Labour Congress to the New India dated 31-10-29 (Vol.III New Series, No.30) in the course of which he refers to the warm approval extended to the idea ~~xx kxx~~ of holding such a Congress by M. Albert Thomas during his recent visit to the far east.

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The October 1929 (Vol.VIII, No.10) issue of "Education" (Cawnpore), and the November, 1929 (Vol.VI, No.5) issue of the "Progress of Education", Poona publish an article entitled "The International Labour Organisation and Educational Bodies" contributed by the

Director of this office.

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The pamphlet "India and the International Labour Organisation" published by the League of Nations Union, 11, Grosvenor Crescent, London, is appreciatively reviewed in the Reviews section of the monthly magazine "Education" (Vol.VIII, No.11, November, 1929), the official organ of the United Provinces Secondary Education Association. The reviewer urges the desirability of publishing such pamphlets in the more important of the Indian languages.

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The Indian Labour Review in its November 1929 issue (Vol.II, No.11), under the section News and Reports makes a reference to the ~~big~~ gift of \$25000 to the International Labour Office by the Ford Motor Company, Ltd., on behalf of the 20th Century Fund, for the carrying out of a special investigation into wages in Europe.

In the same issue of the Indian Labour Review references is also made to Mr. M. Daud's (workers' delegate, 13th International Labour Conference) opposition to the resolution ~~x~~ tabled by employers at the 13th International Labour Conference with regard to who should and should not be eligible as delegates and advisers to the Maritime Conferences of the International Labour Office, on the ground that the employers were seeking to amend the Peace Treaty by substituting "shipowners" and "seamen" for "employers" and "workpeople" in the provisions relating to the nominations of employers' and workers' delegates.

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The October, 1929 (Vol. IX, No.2) issue of the Labour Gazette

publishes in extenso the questionnaire of Hours of Work of Salaried Employees. By way of introduction to the Questionnaire, the Labour Gazette publishes a brief review of the circumstances that led to the placing of the subject on the Agenda of the International Labour Conference, reproducing copious extracts from the summary of the Grey Report on the subject contributed by Dr. R. Fuhs, to the June, 1929 issue of the International Labour Review.

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The "M. & S.M. Railwayman" (Official Organ of the M. & S.M. Railway Employees' Union) in its November, 1929 issue (Vol.1, No. 5) publishes a photograph of India's representatives at the 12th International Labour Conference.

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The Times of India of 1-11-29 publishes an article entitled "Taking stock at the League" contributed by Mr. Otto Rothfield. The article deals with the last meeting of the League. Special attention is devoted to the work of Sir Chunilal Mehta, India's representative on the Opium Committee.

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On Sir Mahomed Habibullah's return from the sessions of the Tenth Assembly of the League of Nations, a representative of the Times of India interviewed him in Bombay on 4-11-29. Referring to the fact that he was the first Indian to lead the Indian Delegation to the Assembly, Sir M. Habibullah said "The representatives of the States who sent delegations this year welcomed the appearance of an Indian leader. This, I regard, is a happy sign

for the future".

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The recent decision to establish a wireless station for the League at Geneva has received considerable publicity in Indian papers. The Pioneer of 7-11-29 in a short editorial note welcomes the decision and expresses the hope that the wireless station will serve as a useful link between the Geneva organisation and non-European States.

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"The League of Nations -- Its work in Education", is the title of an article contributed by Mr. Arthur Mayhew, M.A., I.E.S., (Retired) to the Hindu, and appearing in its issue of 20-11-29. The article directs special attention to the possibilities of international co-operation in academic institutions.

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The Hindu of 20-11-29 publishes a fairly lengthy report of an address on "The League of Nations" delivered by Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar before a gathering of the students of the Presidency College, Madras, on 20-11-29. Dr. Annie Besant also spoke on the occasion. Both speakers spoke in highly appreciative terms of the work of Geneva, and pleaded for the stimulation of Indian interest in the work of the League.

Conditions of Labour.Quarterly strike statistics (period ending 30-9-29).

The Department of Industries and Labour of the Government of India has in a press communique dated the 28th November 1929 published the statistics of industrial disputes in British India for the quarter ending 30th September 1929. During the period under review there were altogether 38 disputes involving 417,790 workmen, and entailing a total loss of 6,202,810 working days. The largest number of disputes occurred in the Bombay Presidency, where 18 disputes involving 129,112 men were responsible for a loss of 3,056,287 working days. Bengal comes next with 9 disputes involving 277,921 workers and entailing a loss of 3,103,552 working days. There was no trouble in the United Provinces, the Punjab, Delhi or the Central Provinces. While there is a disparity as regards the number of men involved in Bengal and Bombay, statistics show that the number of days lost was almost the same, viz., over 30,56,000.

Regarding the nature of the demands which led to disputes, it is interesting to note that on the question of wages there were no less than five out of nine in Bengal and three out of 18 in Bombay. Three were over personnel in Bengal, while 18 were over the same cause in Bombay.

Most of the disputes were unsuccessful for no fewer than four in Bengal and 15 in Bombay fizzled out easily. In fact, none was successful in Bombay, and only two in Bengal and one in Madras. Two disputes were still in progress in Bengal and Bombay at the end of the quarter.

Twenty of the disputes were in cotton and woollen mills, involving over 1,33,000 men, while there was only one dispute in a jute

mill, with 2,72,000 hands involved.

The statistics for industrial disputes in British India for the 1st quarter of 1929 are given at page 38 of the June report of this office, and those for the 2nd quarter at page 18 of the August report of this office.

Strike situation in Bombay, Calcutta and Golmuri.

Bombay Strike Situation. Though the Bombay textile strike has ~~has~~ collapsed completely and the city's mills are working with the normal complement of workers, the atmosphere prevailing in labour circles is far from satisfactory. The Police Commissioner has, therefore, in the second week of November, extended for a further period of one month his order prohibiting the holding of meetings of mill-hands. (Times of India, 14th November 1929). The Chief Presidency Magistrate's order under the Criminal Procedure Code, prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons in certain parts of the city is still in force. The Times of India, in a leader published on the subject in its issue of the 8th November 1929, while admitting that the two special Orders referred to above cannot be continued indefinitely as they constitute an unwelcome infringement on the rights of citizenship, attributes the peaceful conditions

conditions prevailing in the city to the fact that these orders are still in force.

The Girni Kamgar Union's organ "Krantī" (Revolution) has been trying its best to lash up the workers into a state of fury, and the articles in it have been advocating class-war. By way of reply to the Girni Kamgar Union's militant attitude, the Bombay Millowners' Association has published the following notice withdrawing recognition of the Union:-

"In view of the happenings of the last few months, the findings of the Bombay Riots Inquiry Committee and the Court of Inquiry, and the inflammatory appeals which continue to appear in the "Krantī", which voices the opinions of the leaders of the Girni Kamgar Union, the Millowners' Association has decided to withdraw recognition from the Union".

(Times of India, 28-11-1929).

At a meeting of the Girni Kamgar Union held on 28-11-1929, to consider the new development, a resolution was passed recommending the Millowners' Association to reconsider its decision to withdraw recognition.

Calcutta Strike Situation. As has been mentioned in the October Report of this office, the Calcutta strike situation has completely eased down. The strike in the Orient Jute Mill, Budge Budge (see October Report, Page 20) has also been settled as the 5000 odd men who had gone on strike resumed work during the first week of November. (New India, 14-11-1929).

Tinplate Workers' Strike, Golmuri. Though November has been devoid of incidents at Golmuri, the tinplate workers' strike is still continuing. The tinplate works are being run by new labour.

Ahmedabad Wages Dispute: Umpire's Award.

At pages 44-45

of the report of this office for June, 1929, reference was made to the demand of the Ahmedabad Labour Union for the restoration of the cut of fifteen and a half per cent on wages made in 1923 and to the fact that arbitration proceedings were then about to begin. (see para 2, page 45, June, 1929 Report). The machinery for securing arbitral awards on matters of dispute in the Ahmedabad Textile industry has been explained at page 19 of the report of this office for July, 1929.

As the permanent Board of Arbitrators consisting of Mr. Gandhi (representing the Labour Union), and Sheth Mangaldas Girdhardas (representing the Millowners' Association) could not agree on issue of increased wages for local millhands, Dewan Bahadur K.M. Zaveri, Retired Judge of the Small Causes Court, Bombay (chosen in place of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya), was appointed umpire. After discussing the problem with the two arbitrators, Mr. Zaveri pronounced his decision on 3-12-1929. The award gives an 8 per cent. increase to the employees of the Spinning Department and a 5 per cent increase to the employees of the Weaving Department from January 1, 1930. Though the award is favourable to the employees, it has not given them all that they wanted, nor does it accept the Millowners' plea of not giving any increase. It has taken a middle course by way of compromise. In the course of a lengthy award, he observes: "Looking at the state of the industry and the circumstances under which the cut was imposed, I do not see any ground to characterise it as either unwarranted or unjustified. That depression was there was a fact, but that would not stop Labour from raising the question of enhancement of wages whenever they think the industry is in a position to afford it. What

was justified in 1923 might not be so in 1929. If the circumstances have changed for the worse, a cut might be necessary, if for the better a proportionate enhancement might be demanded. As to whether there has been any improvement or not the parties naturally differ. Broadly speaking, I do not find that there has been an improvement in the state of the industry. I am unable to hold that the state of the industry would not warrant a small increase in the wages of the workers. I find that the worker does not get enough wages to enable him to maintain a suitable standard of living and he can ask his employer to pay him wages which would enable him to do so". (Times of India, 6-12-29

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Hours of Work in Karachi Docks.

At page 19 of the report of this office for October, 1929, reference has been made to a strike of the dock workers of Karachi. The undertaking then given by the Karachi Port Trust to favourably consider the question of hours of work has now been implemented by its decision to reduce with effect from 1-12-1929 the hours of work for dock labourers to 9 hours during day as well as during night. The dock workers however have not been satisfied, and practically all of them left work on 1-12-1929, after having worked only for 8 hours. At a conference of the workers held on 2-12-1929 resentment was expressed at their night hours being one hour in excess of Bombay dockworkers' hours. They have submitted a representation to the chairman of the Karachi Port Trust praying for the introduction of the same hours of work as in the Bombay docks.

(Pioneer, 6-12-1929).

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The Assam Labour Board.

Details of the working of the Assam Labour Board during the year ending 30th June 1929 are available ~~for~~ from the annual report of the Board published under resolution No. L-1723, dated the 4th November 1929, of the Department of Industries and Labour of the Government of India. The Assam Labour Board, it may be mentioned, is the agency responsible for ensuring that the recruitment of labour for the tea-gardens of Assam would be carried on under proper conditions, and that the labourers are not imposed upon by recruiting agents. The Board exercises its authority by granting recruiting licenses only to approved agents and by cancelling the licenses of agents guilty of recruiting labour by dishonest methods.

The total number of persons recruited during the past season was 73,198 as against 39,549 in the previous year, and the number of garden sardars at work was 44,751 as against 39,677, in the previous year. The average number of recruits per sardar was 1.63 as against .99 in 1928. The year under report was very good for recruitment owing to scarcity and famine conditions prevailing in the various parts of the country. It is not expected that the same high figures will be attained during the current year. The total number of garden sardars prosecuted for offences in connection with recruitment was 75 as compared with 85 in the previous year; and 39 garden sardars were returned to gardens without prosecution on account of minor irregularities, as against 51 in the previous year. Similar offences were occasionally differently treated from district to district. In some cases ~~irregularities~~ irregularities in law were brought to the notice of the district magistrates concerned by the Chair.

During the year under review 1,927 applications for the grant or renewal of the licenses of local agents in British recruiting districts were received from the Tea Districts Labour Association and other pre-existing recruiting agencies. All these were recommended by the Board. Eighty-three applications were received for appointment of local agents and for licenses on behalf of local agents supervising recruiting in Feudatory States. Eight Indian planters, who formed an association called the Indian Planters' Association, applied to the local Government for recognition which was recommended by the Board. At the close of the year 41 local agencies were at work. The conduct of local agents has been satisfactory.

Conditions of labourers in S.Indian Tea Gardens.

The following account of conditions of labourers in the tea-plantations of South India has been forwarded to this office by Mr. B. Shiva Rao, adviser to the workers' delegate at the 12th I.L. Conference, on 21-11-1929. The facts are collected from communications reaching Mr. Shiva Rao from the clerical staff of several tea plantations in South India.

"The food of the workers in the plantations consists only of boiled rice, salt and chilli. Milk and vegetables are practically unknown. Every one of my correspondents agrees that the whole trouble in the tea and coffee plantations is due to the peculiar system of recruiting. If, instead of recruiting agents being entrusted with the work, Labour Bureaus were started and Protectors of Labour were employed to see that the workers are treated fairly, there would be very considerable improvement. They all lay stress upon housing, and even more than on housing, upon pure water supply. While no doubt the planters may seek to mislead the public by giving glowing accounts of conditions, actual

investigation would reveal a very different state of affairs. For instance, it will be said by the planters that there are dispensaries. While this is true, it must also be added that these dispensaries are in charge of very poorly qualified men, no better than compounders. Medicines will not be supplied to the workers, except on payment of 2 to 4 annas to the compounder, who pockets the money. Some planters no doubt spend large sums of money on their hospitals. But it would be worth enquiring how much of this is spent on tonics for the European superior staff, and how much on the actual workers. The great need in many plantations is adequate feeding of those who are ill. The planters make out that the fact of the same labourers returning year after year is proof of the satisfactory conditions obtaining therein. But these workers are so heavily indebted to the recruiting agents that they are compelled to return to the plantations, not because they voluntarily come, but because of the compulsion of the recruiting agent. Although the Planters Labour Act penalising breach of contract has been abolished, this fact is known to very few of the workers. The plantations must be brought under the control of the Inspector of Factories, who at present examine the actual tea factories only where tea is manufactured. But 97 per cent of the labour are in the estates on the plantations, and only 3 per cent in the factories. So, the 97 per cent get no benefit at all from the control of the Factories Department. There must also be frequent inspections by Officers of the Health Department, and non-official inspectors should be appointed in various places. Otherwise, the planters regard themselves such superior beings that they will not allow even Government officers to come into the plantations in the course of their duties!

An account of conditions in Ceylon Tea ~~EA~~ Plantations is given at pages 32-35 of the report of this office for June, 1929.

Forced Labour in Gujerat.

The following observations about conditions of labour analogous to forced labour in Gujerat are taken from an article entitled "Forced Labour in India - Conditions in Gujerat" contributed by a correspondent of the Times of India who has been specially commissioned to make investigations on the subject and appearing in the Times of India of 30th November 1929.

Forced labour still survives in many forms in Gujerat, especially in hilly places inhabited by aboriginal tribes and remote villages which are still in a primitive state. Such labour takes the form of exaction of work either entirely without remuneration, or for a ~~small~~ paltry consideration. The system is known by different names in different districts, but they all connote the same thing - a modified form of slavery.

"Veth" is a common expression in vogue in Gujerat, and the continuance of Veth is sanctified by a long usage. It is known as "Khawas" or "Londa" in Rajputana. In Kathiawar the people who are thus bound to give their labour are called "Chakars" or "Golas". The class of people whose labour is liable to be impressed from long established custom is called "Kaliparaj" or depressed classes and it comprises the Dheds, the Dublas and the Dhodias. Those privileged to exact ~~the~~ their labour are known as "Dhaniama", or masters. The latter class is of well-to-do land holders which include the Anavlas, the Patidars and the Kunbis. These terms do not merely convey the idea of servants and masters or employees and their employers. Their special ~~existing~~ significance lies in the relationship existing between bond slaves and their owners. There is not merely an implied sense of inferiority in the one and superiority in the other class. The nomenclature connotes in fact that the one is the property of the other.

In the Surat district this class of indentured labourers is called "Halis". A man becomes a Hali by reason of a debt contracted either by him or by his ~~farer~~ forefathers. These Hails are, or were at one time, owners of land and not entirely dependent on manual labour for his Dhaniamas. When a man of his class contracts a debt for a marriage or a funeral ceremony he becomes a Hali and his creditor a Dhaniama. He pledges the only thing he has of any value - his labour for the rest of his life, or till the debt is repaid. But the debt has a tendency of constantly swelling and never diminishing. So long as the debt remains ~~■~~ so long does he remain a slave of his Dhaniama. And after him his children inherit the debt and the Hali system thus becomes perpetuated from generation to generation. These debts range from Rs. 100 to Rs. 800 or thereabouts. Interest is calculated at the rate of 9 to ~~■~~ 12 per cent. The "khata" or account is of course kept of the Dhaniama and he takes care to get his Hali's thumb impression on the khata periodically so as to keep him in constant terror of the civil court. A landlord has his Halis as a part and parcel of his property and he uses his Halis for field labour or domestic work according to his needs. Until not long ago the Halis were treated virtually as a commodity which could be purchased or sold in liquidation of the debt and even to this day such transactions, though not common, are not unknown.

There is another form of compulsory labour under the constitution of the so-called village economy. It is labour exacted from the "Mahars" and the "Chambers" of a village for the skinning of dead animals. It is a long standing tradition in the village constitution that these members of the depressed classes are compelled to skin the carcasses of animals. Thanks to the agitation carried on by the Depressed Class

Mission in some parts of Maharashtra, the Mahars and Chambaras of those places have revolted against this exaction and are refusing either to skin or to eat the carrion and the owners have to dispose of the carcasses by burial.

INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONEmployers Organisations.Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce.

The annual meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce will be held at Delhi on the 14th February, 1930. Many of the provincial chambers have notified to the Federation the resolutions they propose to move at the session, and the Southern India Chamber of Commerce will raise a discussion about the rate of freights for goods on Indian railways, the need for protecting the tanning industry and the rates of Indian and foreign exchange. The following resolutions will be moved by the representatives of the Chamber at the Delhi meeting.

"That the rates of freight for goods on the Indian railways are too high to permit the fullest expansion of Indian trade and industries and should therefore be examined by a committee consisting of officials and non-officials, with a majority of non-officials with a view to overhaul the whole tariff on the lines of policy adopted in advanced countries of the West. "That the tanning industry of the country requires to be protected against foreign competition by means of a duty of 15 per cent ad valorem on exports of raw hides and skins and that a no impost shall be levied on the skins or hides treated in Indian tanneries or exported in a tanned or a semi-tanned state. "That in view of the slow development of Indian enterprise and the repeated changes in law and administration which affect their growth during this period of transition, the Government of India be urged to amend the Indian Income-tax Act so that profits of any business concern in the year to which the assessment relates may be set off against any losses of the concern in the preceding years.

"That as the official rate of Indian and foreign exchange has remained at great variance with the market rate in spite of the best efforts of Government and has been extremely detrimental to the export trade and the agriculturists and the general economic well-being of the country, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce desire to request Government to reconsider the decision at an early date."

(HINDU .- 14-11-29).

Associated Chambers of Commerce of
India and Ceylon.

The 1929 annual general meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India and Ceylon will be held at Bombay on the 16th and 17th December 1929. The following are some of the more important subjects that will be discussed at the Conference :-

Income-tax on sums expended as commissions and bonuses to employees; income-tax; Carrying forward of business losses; double super-tax on companies; internal air services; air communications across India; railway finance; railway freight rates on cotton; government competition with private enterprise; mechanical cultivation; the interference of unregistered trade unions in industrial disputes; hours of work of salaried employees.

Workers' Organisations.All India Trade Union Congress, Nagpur.

The tenth session of the All India Trade Union Congress was held at Nagpur from the ~~28~~³⁰th November to ~~18~~¹⁸ December, under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The session was an eventful one. As it was apprehended from the beginning that momentous issues affecting Indian labour in general and the Indian Trade Union movement in particular, would come up for discussion and settlement at the present session, there was a record attendance of trade union leaders and delegates. ^{Of the} 51 unions on the register of the Congress, 50 were represented at the Congress.

Signs were not wanting even long before the session of the Congress to show that the extremist left wing of the All India Trade Union Congress deriving its inspiration from Moscow would make a determined bid for capturing the Congress, and for committing it to a policy incompatible with genuine trade unionism. Even at the 9th session of the A.I.T.U.C. held at Jharia in December 1928, the proposal to hold an Asiatic Conference according to the agreement arrived at Geneva between Joshi and Suzuki in 1925 and Chamanlal and Yonekubo in 1928 found the extremist wing even then in open opposition. Not content with this, the left wing tried its best to commit the Jharia Congress to a policy of non-participation in the International Labour Conferences at Geneva. Further, at Jharia, the extremists fought hard to secure the affiliation of the A.I.T.U.C. to the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the moderates were able to carry through the negative proposition of seeking no affiliation with any outside body at that stage. (see Special Report sent along with this office minute C 3/1/29, dated the 3rd January 1929).

At the meeting of the Executive Council of the A.I.T.U.C. held at Bombay on 27-4-1929, the differences between the two wings of the Congress became even more pronounced. The left wing utilised the occasion for endeavouring to commit the A.I.T.U.C. to a policy of boycott of the Royal Commission on Labour, and renewed the attempt to non-co-operate with the International Labour Conference by securing the withdrawal of the Indian labour delegation at least from the 12th Conference, on the plea that such action would serve as a gesture against the Government's repressive policy against trade unionists. (see Special Report accompanying Minute C 3/581/29, dated 6-6-1929).

It was in such an atmosphere of open tension and with tempers exacerbated by the prolonged Bombay textile strike and the Meerut trial that the tenth session of the A.I.T.U.C. met under the junior Nehru's presidency at Nagpur. The contentious nature of the meeting of the Executive Council of the A.I.T.U.C. on 29-11-1929, prior to the open session, gave early promise that the Nagpur session would be a stormy one. The communist left wing was led by Messrs. Deshpande, Ruikar, Kulkarni, Kandalkar, Ginwalla, mostly hailing from Bombay and finding their supporters in the Girni Kamgar Union and the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union. The moderate right wing which showed greater powers of coherence and united action than in 1928 was led by Joshi, Chamanlal, Giri and Shiva Rao. The president though he had not fully ranged himself with the communists was more in sympathy with the left wing, and in fact by his predilections fatally tilted the balance at a critical stage. The moderate section had to object to the placards placed prominently in the pandal bearing such slogans as "Down with Chamanlal", "Down with Joshi" and was able to have them removed only after hot debate. The question of the affiliation of the Girni Kamgar Union with its membership

estimated at 54,000 which was next taken up provoked serious opposition from Chamanlal, Giri, Shiva Rao and others, who contended that the strength of the Girni Kamgar Union should be put down at 4,000, as no audited statements of the Union were submitted to justify the higher figure. As a via media, Mr. Ginwalla moved a resolution to put down the strength of the Union at 40,000. The voting on this resolution resulted in a tie, and on the casting vote of the President, the resolution was carried. This decision had important consequences, as it was the exaggerated voting strength thus accorded to this extremist union which enabled the left wingers to commandeer the requisite majority and to capture the Congress, and which in its turn forced the moderates to secede.

The open session of the Congress was held on 30-11-1929. In his opening speech Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru advocated the setting up of a socialistic order of society in India in which the interest of the workers would be supreme. Referring to the controversial issue of the boycott of the ^{Whitley}~~Simon~~ Commission, he advocated the boycott on the ground that the Commission was a "useless show", that the British labour government's record did not justify trust in them, and that the requisite atmosphere for the successful working of the Commission was lacking because of the Indian Government's repressive policy as evidenced by the arrests of trade unionists, the Meerut trial, the passing of the Trades Disputes Act, and the promulgation of the Public Safety Ordinance. On the question of the affiliation of the A.I.T.U.C., the president expressed himself against affiliation both with the Second International and the Third International, with the former because it stood for labour imperialism, with the latter because, though he admired

4. Soviet policy, he could not justify Soviet methods. Defining his political position, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that despite of the offer of the Round Table Conference, he stood still for the independence ideal.

The open session was followed by a meeting of the Executive Council ~~on 30-11-1929~~. Discussion centred round the resolution moved by Mr. Deshpande of the Girni Kamgar Union for boycott of the Whitley Commission. The resolution contained three parts: (1) Boycott, because of its appointment by the British Imperialist Government, "which is pursuing a policy of repression"; (2) Condemnation of Messrs. Joshi and Chamanlal; and (3) Condemnation of the old executive in not giving a ^{having} lead ~~on~~ ^{concern regarding} the Whitley Commission. Messrs. Ginwalla, Ruikar and Kulkarni and several others of the left wing supported the boycott proposal. Mr. Shiva Rao of Madras brought forward a substantive motion ~~in~~ welcoming the Commission, which was supported by Giri, Ramanjulu Naidu and others. After a stormy debate, at one stage of which the President had to threaten adjournment of the house, the first part of Mr. Deshpande's resolution was carried by 53 votes to 41, 5 remaining neutral, while the two latter parts were dropped.

The differences between the right and left wings of the Congress reached their climax at the meeting of the Executive Council on 1-12-29. Mr. Deshpande moved a resolution for affiliating the Congress to the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat and ^{advocating that} ~~not~~ to the Asiatic Labour Conference. Dr. Choksy's motion for postponement of the question for one year was lost, ~~as also Rai Sahib Chandrika Prasad's amendment for affiliation with the Asiatic Labour Conference.~~ Finally, Mr. Deshpande's resolution was carried. Another motion carried by the Executive Council packed

with extremist votes was the one for cutting off all connection with the International Labour Organisation. This was followed by the anticipated break from the A.I.T.U.C. of the Moderates led by Chamanlal, Joshi, Giri, Shiva Rao and other moderate leaders, who were followed by twenty-four unions.

The open session of the A.I.T.U.C. Congress on 12-12-1929 was robbed of all interest because of the secession of the moderate elements. In the absence of all real opposition, the Congress passed in quick succession several resolutions of an extreme character advocating boycott of the Whitley Commission, condemning the Nehru Report and the Viceregal Announcement, urging complete independence and the establishment of workers republic, affiliation with the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat and sympathy with the League against Imperialism. That the secession of the right wing had dampened the ardour of the extremists was however evident from the fact that the A.I.T.U.C. in its open session though there was no opposition, found it expedient to drop Mr. Deshpande's resolution for affiliation with the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, and adopted Dr. Choksy's motion for postponement of the question for a year. The President at this stage read a letter signed by Joshi, Chamanlal, Giri, Shiva Rao, Fuley, Kirk and other right wing leaders explaining the reasons for their secession. The statement asserted that the policy of the A.I.T.U.C. under its new executive was fundamentally opposed to the interests of the working classes as indicated by the resolutions for the boycott of the Whitley Commission, affiliation with the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, rejection of the proposal for an Asiatic Labour Congress, severance of relationships with Geneva, rejection of the offer for the Round Table Conference and repudiation of the Nehru Report. Referring to the packed nature of the A.I.T.U.C.

the statement says that out of a total voting strength of 930 in the Congress no less than 350 votes belong to the G.I.P. Union and the Girni Kamgar Union, whose membership figures were denied and challenged by us and never accepted by us, - the two Unions which are mainly responsible, among others, for the adoption of the new policy underlying the above mentioned resolutions -.

The following office-bearers were then elected for 1930.- President Mr. Subash Chandra Bose, Vice-Presidents: Messrs. D.B.Kulkarni, Kandal-
kar, Dr. Dutta, R.S.Chandika Prasad and Bonken Chandra Mukerjee,
Secretary: Mr. S.V.Deshpande, Assistant Secretaries: Messrs. K. K. Sen
and S.B.Banerjee, Treasurer: Mr. Ginwala.

It was also decided to hold the next session of the Congress in Bombay. The tenth session of the All India Trade Union Congress ended on 21 12-29.

The All India Trades Union Federation.

On the 1st December representatives of the 24 seceding unions headed by the moderate leaders, together with some 50 members of the Executive Council of the A.I.T.U.C met under the presidency of Dewan Chaman Lal and resolved to form a central organisation called the All India Trades Union Federation, composed of unions desiring to work purely on trade union lines, and appointed a committee with Mr. V. V. Giri as chairman and Mr. R.R.Bakhale as secretary for the purpose of drafting a constitution.

Among the resolutions passed by this meeting were one calling upon all trade unions in India and Burma to tender evidence before the Royal Commission on Labour, and another approving of the Round Table Conference announced by the Viceroy and demanding adequate labour representation thereon. A third resolution recommended to the Government of India the names of the following gentlemen to represent labour at the ensuing session of the International Labour Conference; Delegate - Mr. S. C. Joshi, M.L.C.; Advisers - Messrs B. Shiva Rao; S.K.Bose; I.D.Sawhney; A.N.Bose; Umar Rajab; Abdulla Khan and Ernest Kirk. The meeting warmly approved of the suggestion to keep out of the Federation Communist Unions, and it was generally agreed upon that a meeting of the Federation should be summoned some time during the Easter holidays to ratify the draft constitution and make the necessary arrangements for a systematic continuation of its work.

Following the step taken by the 24 seceding unions, a few other unions, some of them of a distinctly extremist character, and others whose natural disposition would otherwise have been to sit on the fence, have also issued statements to the effect that they are seeking disaffiliation from the Congress. As a result the A.I.T.U.C

has degenerated into a mere rump, a majority of its members having deserted it for one reason or another. It may, however, be pointed out that those of the seceders who are of extremist persuasion are not likely to join forces with the federation.

All India Railwaymen's Federation.

The sixth Convention of the All India Railwaymen's Federation was held at Nagpur on the 2nd December 1929, with Mr. N.M. Joshi, M.L.A., in the chair. Previous to the open session of the Convention, there was a meeting of the Executive Council at which the form of the resolutions to be passed at the Convention was settled. As the Federation met immediately after the closing of the All India Trade Union Congress, it was noticeable that the proceedings of the Congress, and particularly the secession of a majority of the members of the Congress had a chastening effect on the more ardent spirits present in the meeting. Thus, though Messrs. Ruikar, Ginwalla, Kulkarni and Randive were members of the Executive Council of the Federation, their voices of protest were not loudly raised against the Executive Council's decision regarding the Whitley Commission, the projected general strike and the proposed deputation to wait on the Government of India.

In the course of the annual report presented by Mr. V.V. Giri, the Secretary of the Federation, it was mentioned that the membership had risen from 100,000 to nearly 150,000. The body of the report dealt with the deputation of the Federation which waited on Sir George Rainy, the member of the Government of India in charge of Railways, on the 4th May 1929, the full details of which have already been reported to Geneva (vide this office's monthly report for May, 1929, pages 42-48). With regard to Welfare Committees, the report made it absolutely clear that the workers were opposed to the formation of such organisations as they feared that they would stifle the growth of trade unionism in India.

In the course of his presidential address, Mr. Joshi referred to the unredressed grievances of the railwaymen of India and suggested that a deputation might once again wait on the Railway Member of the

Government of India in order to ascertain what steps the Government have taken to meet their demands since May 1929. He stressed the peculiar characteristics of railway service and exhorted the workers to bear in mind that, as workers in a public utility service, their masters were the entire public of India, whose support and sympathy they should attempt to win by not resorting to any forms of ~~direction~~ action which might cause serious public inconvenience, but to always pursue conciliatory methods. He expressed himself definitely in favour of negotiation as opposed to strikes which were to be regarded only as an ultimate weapon to be employed when all other remedies fail. If circumstances compelled them to resort to strikes, they should take particular care not to infringe the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act; even though those provisions seriously curtailed the possibility of a successful strike, and were to that extent an encroachment upon the legitimate rights of labour, Nevertheless, so long as they remained on the statute book he counselled them that ready obedience should be given to them. Finally, the success of the Unions both in negotiations and in strikes depended on the degree of organisation they had attained; and in order that the railway workers might organise themselves for victory, they had to increase their membership and bring into the fold of the Federation every railway union and every railwayman in India.

Among the more important resolutions passed by the Federation were those advocating co-operation with the Royal Commission on Labour in India, and the formation of a deputation to wait afresh on the Railway Member.

Mr. I.B. Sen was elected President and Mr. V.V. Giri re-elected General Secretary for 1930.

All-Ceylon Trade Union Congress.

The second annual general meeting of the All-Ceylon Trade Union Congress was held on the 1st and 2nd November, 1929, at Colombo under the presidentship of Mr. A. E. Goonesinha.

Mr. Goonesinha in his presidential address reviewed at length the labour situation in the country, and deplored the efforts that were being made by the capitalist classes of Ceylon to deny the franchise to the labouring classes of the country. (The Donoughmore Commission has recommended that the franchise should be given to all men over 21 years and to all women over 30 years of age who have resided in Ceylon for a minimum period of five years. ~~But~~ Lord Passfield, the Colonial Secretary, while generally approving the report, has made the modification that, instead of women over 20 only being given the vote, all women of 21 and over should be given the franchise. The procedure laid down in respect of the Reform scheme is the report as modified should, in the first instance, be submitted to the Ceylon Legislative Council, and that in the event of the Council throwing out the scheme, a fresh election should be held on the issue) Mr. ~~Goonesinha~~ Goonesinha pointed out that the present Council was a reactionary body, elected by an extremely narrow electorate, consisting of only 4 per cent of the population. As such it would be opposed to the introduction of universal adult suffrage, which would give a share of the political power to the masses, including the labouring classes. Under the circumstances, he apprehended that the Reforms scheme would surely be thrown out by the present Council, as well as by any future Council elected on the existing limited franchise. The barren record of the present Council in the matter of even elementary labour legislation was a

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signal proof of the betrayal of a sacred trust. He said that if the Reforms scheme with its provision for universal adult suffrage would be finally accepted a true democracy will be established - "a democracy of the Heart that would care for the babe in the slum, the mother in the factory and the father in his old age".

Comparing the attitude of European and Indian employers to labour, he said that the European employers were much more sympathetically inclined to labour than Indian employers, and pointed out that while the European members of the Ceylon Employers' Federation tried to work out in the best spirit the fact arrived at between the Employers' Federation and the All-Ceylon Trade Union Congress, (see pages 36-37 of the report of this office for June 1929) he could not say the same of the Indian employers.

The following are among the more important of the resolutions passed by the Congress :-

1. That this Congress on behalf of the unrepresented masses of the country do accept the Recommendations for the reform of the Constitution as adumbrated in the despatch of Lord Passfield and thank the Government for the granting of Adult Suffrage and the establishment of the Committee system of government as conducive to true Democracy. 2. This Congress strongly deplores the reference of the recommendations to the Legislative Council for acceptance, or rejection as unnecessary and undesirable and calls upon the Government to refer the Reforms if needs be to a Plebiscite. 3. That in view of the greater responsibilities entrusted to the working people in regard to the Government of the country the Congress urges upon every union and every member of such union to act unitedly and in a spirit of loyalty, fraternity and solidarity for ~~the~~

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the progress and development of the ideals of the Congress. 4. "That the Congress do accept the invitation of the Japanese and the Indian Trade Unionists to participate in the Asiatic Labour Conference to be held in ^{India} Calcutta next July". 5. "That this Congress do strongly urge upon the Government to establish a Rent Restriction Act to safeguard poor tenants". 6. "That this Congress requests the Government to appoint a Committee with a representative labour to investigate the conditions of labour in the matter of wages, old age Pensions, Compensation for injuries, Housing, etc."

Andhra Labour Conference.

The first session of the Andhra Labour Conference was held at Bezwada on 15-11-29 under the presidentship of Mr. Trivikrama Rao. The president in his opening address said "In Andhradesa (the northern Telegu speaking districts of the Madras Presidency) labour is mainly engaged in agricultural operations, in transport, in industries like rice, oil, cotton and jute mills, and in intellectual forms of clerical labour. Andhra labour is not yet organised, but attempts are being made to bring it within the ambit of the Trade Union Movement. Each department of industrial, agricultural and intellectual activity has to be formed into a distinct local group, and affiliated to its superior federations". (Hindu 16-11-29)

The Conference passed a number of resolutions. The first resolution condemned the recent "indiscriminate and wholesale arrests and house searches of a number of Trade Union Workers" and considered the promulgation on the Public Safety Ordinance and the passage of the Trade Disputes Bill as constituting a great menace to the existence of the Labour Movement in India. The Conference by the next resolution opined that legislation should immediately be passed providing for all workers in all organised trades and industries:-

- (1) Adult franchise, (2) Eight Hours day or 44 hours work week, (3) Machinery for fixing minimum wage, (4) Sickness and unemployment insurance, (5) Old age pensions and pensions of widows and orphans, (6) Maternity benefits, (7) Weekly payment of wages.

Resolutions inviting the attention of the Government to the serious problem of unemployment of the Indian workers and urging upon them to take immediate steps for satisfactory solution thereof asking the Government to take

necessary steps for giving proper effect to the recommendations of the Tariff Board about the reduction of running cost of the steel and various other industries, not by the reduction of low paid workers, but by adequate retrenchment of the supervising staff and speedy Indianisation and urging upon the Government of India to appoint a Committee to revise the Workmen's Compensation Act and insisting that the All India Trade Union Congress should be given adequate representation thereon, were also passed.

The Bengal Labour Conference.

The 4th session of the Bengal Labour Conference was held on 16-11-29 at Kankinnarah under the presidency of Mr. H. C. Suhrawardy, M.L.C., The futility of resorting to strikes without exhausting all other means of redress was stressed at the Conference. Mr. K. C. Roy Chowdhury, M.L.C., warned the mill-hands not to be misled by the advocates of direct action. The president Mr. Suhrawardy pointed out the great danger of the labour movement being used for political purposes and stressed the necessity for co-operation with the Whitley Commission.

(Hindustan Times.- 20-11-29.)

All India Federation of subordinate
Government services.

The November, 1929 (Vol.VII, No.8), issue of "General Letter", the organ of the All India (including Burma) Postal and R.M.S. Union publishes an appeal over the signature of Mr. S. C. Joshi, Hony. Secretary of the Central Board of Revenue Ministerial Officers' Union, Bombay, to start an All India Federation of the Subordinate Government Service Associations on the model of the All India Trade Union Congress. It is proposed to hold an inaugural meeting of the representatives of the several Unions of the Imperial and Local Governments, but no definite date has been fixed. The aim of the organisers is to co-ordinate the activities of all the existing Unions and Associations of subordinate government servants, and thus to improve their collective bargaining capacity.

All India Federation of Teachers'
Association.

The fifth Conference of the All-India Federation of Teachers' Associations will be held at Madras, on the 27th, 28th and 29th December 1929, under the presidentship of Sir P.S.Sivaswami Iyer. The Conference is open to teachers of all types and of all grades ~~of both sexes~~ - University, Secondary, Primary and Technical. The Federation is affiliated to the World Federation of Education Associations and is recognised by the Government of India for representation at World Education Conferences.

(Times of India.- 9-11-29).

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world's tea trade was abundantly reflected in a decline in the value of shipments from Rs. 324.8 millions to Rs. 266 millions, although the quantities registered during the year showed only a very small decline from 362 million lbs. to 360 million lbs. The value of shipments of oilseeds advanced from Rs. 266.9 millions to Rs. 296.3 millions owing primarily to a steady development of the trade in groundnuts, which expanded in bulk from 613,000 tons to 788,000 tons. In spite of the depression in the leather industries of the United Kingdom and Germany, there was considerable vitality in the Indian trade in hides and skins, exports, of which were valued at Rs. 95.6 millions as compared with Rs. 88.1 millions in 1927-28. Lac made a very significant contribution, its shipments having risen both in quantity and value from 544,000 cwts. with a declared value of Rs. 69.9 millions to 743,000 cwts. valued at Rs. 86.4 ~~xxxx~~ millions. There was also an appreciable improvement in exports of raw wool, the value rising from Rs. 43.6 millions to Rs. 48.9 millions. Among less important items, there was an interesting development in respect of oil-cakes, exports of which swelled in value from Rs. 25.3 millions in 1926-27 to Rs. 31.4 millions in 1927-28 and Rs. 38.4 millions in the year under review.

The visible balance of trade in merchandise and treasure for the year 1928-29 was in favour of India to the extent of Rs. 520 millions compared with Rs. 500 millions in the previous year, Rs. 400 millions in 1926-27, and the record figure of Rs. 1,090 millions in 1925-26.

The effect of Industrial Unrest on Economic Conditions.

The review pays more than passing attention to the troubled industrial conditions that prevailed in the country during the year,

and their repercussions on Indian trade. More than one important industry was seriously affected by the wave of labour unrest that swept over the country. Reference is made to the long-drawn-out strike in the Bombay Cotton Mills, which started in April 1928, lasted till October of that year, and was continued soon after in the guise of a new strike. The Bombay textile strike, it is needless to say, affected the trade of India to a considerable extent. The strike in the Tata Iron and Steel Works at Jamshedpur which lasted from the middle of April to the middle of September 1928, seriously affected the steel output of the Company. In Southern India there was a prolonged railway strike. The frequency of labour unrest had a profoundly disturbing effect on the economic life of the country.

Tariff Changes.

The Indian Tariff (Amendment) Act, 1928, and the Steel Industry (Protection) Act, 1928, do not come under the period under review as they were passed before April, 1928. Later in the year, another Act, viz., the Match Industry (Protection) Act, 1928, was passed in pursuance of the recommendations of the Tariff Board regarding the grant of protection to the match industry. This Act, which came into force on the 25th September, 1928, maintained the then existing rate of import duty on matches and converted it into a protective duty. It also converted the then existing import duties on undipped splints and veneers into protective duties to make the duty on matches effective.

The Indian Finance Act, 1929, which gave effect to one of the main recommendations of the Indian Road Development Committee, raised the import and excise duties on motor spirit from 4 annas to 6 annas a gallon with effect from the 28th February, 1929. It is proposed

Indian labour in Malaya*

At pages 52-57 of the report of this office for July, 1929, extracts are given from the report for 1928 of the Chief Secretary to the Government of the Federated Malay states on labour conditions in the Federated Malay states, with particular reference to the conditions of Indian emigrants. The information there given is supplemented to a considerable extent by the recently published annual report of the Agent of the Government of India in British Malaya for the year 1928.

For a correct appreciation of conditions in Malaya, some knowledge of the main political divisions of the country is necessary. Malaya may be divided into three main political divisions :-

(1) Straits Settlements which comprise Penang, Singapore, Labuan and Cocos Islands and Province Wellesley, Dindings and Malacca on the Malay Peninsula. They form a crown colony administered by the Governor of Straits Settlements with the aid of an executive and Legislative Council at Singapore.

(2) Federated Malay States comprise the States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang. The Governor of Straits Settlements is also the High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States as well as Unfederated Malay States. Kuala Lumpur is the Federal Capital. Matters common to all these four States are legislated by the Federal Council whose President is the High Commissioner. Each State has besides a British Resident and a State Council with the Malay Sultan as its President.

(3) The Unfederated Malay States of Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan

* Annual Report of the Agent of the Government of India in British Malaya for the year 1928. Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch. 1929. pp II 34 . Price Rs.2-2-0 or 4s.

Trengannu in the Malay Peninsula and Brunei in the island of Borneo are governed by their respective Malay Sultans assisted by British Advisers and State Councils.

Population statistics - The following table gives the distribution according to the 1921 census :-

General information relating to Malaya as per 1921 census.

Political division.	Area sq. miles.	Total population.	Indian Population.		
			Males.	Females	Total
(a) Straits Settlements.	1,600	883,769	78,254	26,374	104,628
(b) Federated Malay States.	27,648	1,324,890	211,342	93,877	305,219
(c) Unfederated Malay States.	27,354	1,149,395	45,889	15,930	61,819
Total ...	<u>56,602</u>	<u>3,358,054</u>	<u>335,485</u>	<u>136,181</u>	<u>471,666</u>

The total Indian population of 471,666 out of a total general population of 3,358,054 in 1921, may be divided into the following groups :- Of the total Indian population 82% or 387,597 were Tamils; 4% or 17,190 Malayalies; 3% or 15,504 Punjabis and 2% or 11,389 Bengalis and others. Considering the balance of immigration in favour of Malaya during the period 1921-1928, the total Indian population of Malaya including North Indians may be estimated at 680,000 approximately. About 70 per cent of them might be considered as labourers employed in rubber estates, tin mines, Government Departments such as Railways, Public Works Department, Harbour Boards, Municipalities,

etc., firms and companies, and under private persons and small holdings. The rest are engaged in trade, business and the learned professions.

Arrivals in 1928 and sex Ratio. - Owing to unemployment or under-employment of Indian labour consequent on the Rubber Restriction scheme there was a considerable fall in the volume of emigration to Malaya during 1928. The total arrivals in Malaya numbered 63,072 as compared with 156,132 of 1927; on the other hand there was considerable increase in the number of departures, the total for 1928 numbering 91,252 as against 84,767 of 1927. The sex-ratio among the number of assisted emigrants in Malaya registered an improvement in 1928, as the proportion in 1928 stood at 1.8 male to 1 female, as against 2.8, 3.3, the four preceding years. Exemption of Malaya from the operation of the sex ratio rule was in force till the end of the year. During November 1928, the Controller of Labour, Malaya, visited Delhi and conferred with the Government of India on important matters affecting the welfare of Indian emigrants in Malaya; and as a result of the discussions that took place there, further exemption has been granted for a period of 18 months from 1st January 1929.

Repatriation. - A phenomenal increase in the number of decrepit and destitute Indians repatriated during 1928 is noticeable; 18,147 persons, including 4,328 minors, were repatriated during 1928 as compared with 9,495 persons including 1,802 minors in 1927; 3,205 in 1926; 2,271 in 1925 and 2,032 in 1924. Repatriates are provided with free clothing wherever necessary, and given free rail and steamer passages till they reach their houses in South India. They are also paid a cash bonus of Rs.10 in addition. The cost of repat-

riation is borne in part or in whole by the Governments concerned, the Indian Immigration Fund, and employers of labour, according to the circumstances of each case, The repatriates were also supplied during the year with mats and tin cups during their voyage. On the whole, the sum of \$443,249 is stated to have been spent on repatriation during 1928.

Economic position of Indian labourers: Work and Wages.- The Indian Immigration Committee during 1928 fixed as standard wages 50 cents for men, 40 cents for women, and 20 cents for children over ~~the~~ ^{ten} years and above. These rates were approved by the Federated Malay States and were notified as coming into force on 1st February 1929. The rule evoked considerable opposition from the Planters' Associations, but it is hoped the new rule will have the effect of raising the general wage level to 50 cents for ~~men~~ men and 40 cents women, in the case of estates and other private places of employment. In the case of inaccessible, more costly, and less healthy areas the higher rates ^{of 50 cents for men and 40 cents for women} were legally adopted. Instances, however, are not rare where estate managers have attempted to lower the rates even in areas ^{where the new rule was} introduced. Such cases are reported to the Controller of Labour on ~~deduction~~ ^{to}. Besides direct attempts at breaking the new wage rules, private employers attempt to avoid the payment of standard wages by such evasive methods as payment of labourers engaged in weeding, tapping, etc, on a task work basis instead of by the day-wage system. The consent of the labourer for such tasks, as required by the law, is more often assumed than really taken; and the ignorant and illiterate Indian labourer submits without demur to ~~any~~ task that may be imposed on

him. Failure to complete the task on any day entails ^{the loss of a} a half day's wage. Cases of hardship have been brought to the notice of the Controller of Labour.

Hours of Work . - The existing labour laws provide that "no labourer shall be bound to work on more than six days in one week, or for more than six consecutive hours or more than nine hours a day of actual labour", but as a rule full nine hours work was rarely exacted from labourers. The introduction of standard wages has stiffened the attitude of employers, several of whom are now insistent on the exaction of nine hours work. Employers are expected to provide work for at least 24 days in a month, but the average number of actual working days often falls below this limit. The labourers have not yet fully come to know that they are entitled to demand work for 24 days, or wages for days of enforced idleness.

Cost of living: Co-operative Societies.- The cost of living is considerably higher than in India. Some of the provision shops on estates run by persons in authority over the labourers charge unreasonably high prices. A system of co-operative purchase and distribution amongst the labourers might be introduced with advantage. The report states that at the end of 1928 there were 19 registered societies with a membership of 3,794 labourers having to their credit \$38,469 as share. Subscription, as against 8 societies at the end of 1927. The labour laws do not permit employers to make ~~in~~ deductions from the labourers' wages except for the supply of provisions, or the payment ~~large~~ ^{small} of cash advances in anticipation of wages. Hence, indebtedness is not widespread among the labourers.

Health, Welfare and Housing . - In 1928 the number of deaths was

much in excess of the number of births; but this was largely due to the lesser number of females. Malaria and pneumonia were the chief causes for the larger percentage of deaths. Under the labour laws, employers are obliged to provide sufficient housing accommodation, fresh and wholesome water supply, and other necessary amenities. Not more than three single men, nor more than a single family may be accommodated in a standard room of 10' by 10'. Labourers living with their wives and children are to be housed separately from single men and bachelors as far as possible.

Legislation. - Important amendments were passed during the year to the Federated Malay States Labour Code, 1923, and to the corresponding Straits Settlements Labour Ordinance, the chief amendments being :-

- (i) recognition of contracts for skilled work entered into in British India,
- (ii) boarding of immigrant ~~XXXX~~ vessels by the Agent of the Government of India,
- (iii) publication of abstracts of labour law in the vernacular for the information and guidance of Indian labourers,
- (iv) fixing of Standard Wages for working minors,
- (v) penalty for non-payment of standard wages,
- (vi) allotments of land at one-sixteenth of an acre for cattle grazing or for garden cultivation, and
- (vii) issue of permits regarding supply of rice and provisions.

A further Amendment Enactment to the Federated Malay States Labour Code to ensure proper housing, health and sanitation on places of employment other than estates and mines was also passed during the year.

A consolidated law relating to vagrants was also passed during the year, whereby able-bodied beggars may be arrested and detained in custody and sent to work in Settlements to be created under

that law. A proviso was inserted that the powers of repatriating Indian labourers possessed by the Controller of Labour should not be affected by this Enactment.

An ordinance entitled the Immigration Restriction Ordinance was passed in the Straits Settlements, whereby the Government could prohibit or restrict the arrival of immigrants from China or India by the issue of a Proclamation in times of emergency. On representation made by the Government of India, a clause was added to it enabling the Agent of the Government of India to board steamers conveying Indian emigrants on their arrival.

The labour laws of the States of Kelantan and Brunei were amended in several important respects so as to provide greater amenities for Indian immigrant labourers working in those States.

Strikes .- There were no serious strikes or disturbances among Indian labourers during 1928. Some minor strike on account of insufficiency of wages, excessiveness of tasks, illtreatment or other causes were settled without much trouble through the intervention of the Agent of the British Government in Malaya.

The report summarises the general position of 1928 thus :-
 "The economic position of the masses of the community has distinctly advanced during this period; this is a matter of utmost importance for the future progress of the community. Several important laws tending to the welfare of the community have been placed on the Statute Book. Considerable impetus has been given to the spread of the Co-operative Thrift movement amongst the community. The community has secured representation in the Federal Council and its claim for representation in State Councils has also been recognised.

Important questions connected with Education, Health, Toddy drinking, Land Settlement, etc., have come to the forefront and are being seriously considered. Much has been achieved; but much yet remains to be done. The community is yet in a formative stage; and its future will in a large measure depend upon the manner in which its activities are guided at the present juncture."

~~The All India Trade Union Congress~~
 4 JANV 1930
10th Session, Nagpur.

corrected papers

The tenth session of the All India Trade Union Congress was held at Nagpur on the 30th November and the 1st December 1929, under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The session was an eventful one. As it was apprehended from the beginning that momentous issues affecting Indian labour in general and Indian trade union movement in particular would come up for discussion at the present session, there was a record attendance of trade union leaders and delegates. Of the 51 unions on the register of the Congress 50 were represented at the Congress.

Signs were not wanting even long before the session of the Congress to show that the extremist left wing of the Indian labour movement, which is popularly believed to be deriving its inspiration from Moscow, would make a determined bid for capturing the Congress and for committing it to a policy incompatible with legitimate trade unionism. Even at the 9th session of the A.I.T.U.C. held at Jharia in December 1928, this left wing was very much in evidence, and it was due to their persistent opposition that many measures which are in reality acceptable to the rank and file of Indian labour, were held up or condemned. Thus the proposal to hold an Asiatic Labour Conference according to the agreement arrived at between Messrs. Joshi and Suzuki in 1925 and Messrs. Chaman Lall and Yonekubo in 1928 was interpreted by them as a step taken at the bidding of an "imperialistic" government to check the influence of such organisations as the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat and the League against Imperialism. There was also an attempt to non-co-operate with the International Labour Organisation, once again on the

ground that it was an organisation composed of imperialistic states. The same ground was advanced for voting down a proposition to affiliate the A.I.T.U.C. with the International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam. In spite of their opposition, however, wiser counsels prevailed, and but for the fact that the moderate labour leaders permitted themselves to be hustled into voting in favour of the resolution affiliating the A.I.T.U.C. with the League against Imperialism for a period of one year only, the Conference at Jharia was a technical victory for the moderates.

In the elections for the office bearers for 1930 the communists once again pursued their tactics, with the result that the moderates and their supporters were constrained to vote for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for the presidential chair. Pandit Jawaharlal calls himself a socialist, and though an admirer of Soviet policy and methods, does not call himself a communist. It was on this ground that the moderates gave him their support in his election. That the new president was determined to change the complexion of the A.I.T.U.C. and convert it into a political organisation was apparent from the proceedings of the first meeting of the Executive Council of the A.I.T.U.C which was held under his chairmanship (a report of this meeting of the Executive Council has been sent to Geneva along with my minute C 3/581/29, dated 6-6-1929). At that meeting the usual objections were brought forward to co-operating with the Whitley Commission and to sending a labour delegation to the International Labour Conference; but due to the restraining influence of Mr. N.M. Joshi, the Council agreed not to withhold the labour delegation from Geneva and to give each labour union in India complete discretion as to whether it should co-operate or not with the Whitley Commission. Since then both Pandit Jawaharlal

Nehru and the communist leaders have been carrying on a persistent propaganda in favour of boycotting the Commission.

It was in such an atmosphere that the tenth session of the A.I. T.U.C. met at Nagpur. The prolonged Bombay textile strike, which, under the inexperienced leadership of the Girni Kamgar Union, had fizzled out, had embittered the communist contingent from Bombay, and the rank and file of Indian labour were still feeling that the Meerut ^{was} was an attack directed against the Indian labour movement. That these ideas and sentiments would find open expression in the Congress was a foregone conclusion; and this conclusion was justified by the events.

The proceedings of the open session of the Congress were preceded by animated meetings of the Executive Council, on the 29th, ^{and} 30th November and the 1st December. It is significant of the relative importance of the Congress and its Executive Council that while the open ~~session~~ proceedings of the Congress, which were more or less of a formal nature, occupied ~~nearly~~ two evenings on the 30th November and the 1st December, the meetings of the Executive Council took up nearly three days. It is, therefore, necessary to bestow some attention ~~of~~ ~~to~~ what happened at the meetings of the Executive Council in order that the proceedings of the open session of the Congress may be adjudged at their real value.

The first serious tussle that took place in the Executive Council was over the question of affiliations and reaffiliations. Under the constitution of the Congress, Article 4, sub-section (e), "no union shall be affiliated to the Congress which has not had its accounts and statement of paying members audited by a qualified auditor". Two unions which, between them claimed a membership of 70,000, viz., the Girni Kamgar Union with its alleged membership of 40,000 and the G.I.P.

Railwaymen's Union with its alleged membership of 30,000, claimed affiliation and recognition even though they failed to produce the necessary audited statements. It was common knowledge that the membership of these unions was very much exaggerated, and that the Girni Kamgar Union had in November 1929 barely a membership of over 4,000. The extremists fought a pitched battle over this issue, ~~and~~ as these Unions represented the most aggressive and militant elements in the Indian labour movement, and it was only with the help of the voting strength which these alleged figures would confer on their party that they could hope to secure a majority in the Congress. Even though the moderates pointed out how it would be a breach of the constitution to affiliate these two unions, the motion for affiliation was carried. In the case of the Girni Kamgar Union, where there was a tie, the president gave his casting vote in favour of affiliating it ~~and~~ on its alleged strength of 40,000. The Council then proceeded to consider what action the Congress should take with regard to the Whitley Commission, and after a very heated debate carried a motion calling upon all the unions to boycott the Commission. Messrs. Joshi and Chaman Lall pointed out in the course of this debate how, at many previous sessions of the Congress they had been asking the Government to appoint a Committee to investigate conditions of life and work of the Indian labourer and how therefore a resolution of this kind, if it were now accepted by the Congress, would stultify their past record. But their advice did not prevail. The Executive then condemned the Viceroy's move to summon a representative round table conference to settle the future constitution of India, and decided also not to send further delegations to the International Labour Conferences, not only on the ground already alluded to above, but also on the ground that the prospect of a free trip to

Geneva at Government's expense has had a corrupting influence on the Indian labour movement. It also affirmed its opinion that the proposed Asiatic Labour Conference was designed to counter the growing influence of the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat and the League against Imperialism and, therefore, resolved to recommend to the Congress that Indian labour should not be represented at the proposed conference.

The last ~~and~~ important decision taken by the Executive was to recommend to the Congress the affiliation of the A.I.T.U.C. to the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. Messrs. Joshi, Chaman Lall, Shiva Rao, Giri, Bakhale and their followers in the Indian labour movement felt that the nature of the decisions taken at the Executive Council of the A.I.T.U.C. was such that they could not continue to co-operate with those who were responsible for this resolution, and since these later had a majority in the Congress, they felt it necessary to secede from the Congress and organise themselves into a new body called the All India Trade Union Federation. At the first meeting of the open session of the Congress on the 30th November, the President read out a statement signed by Messrs. Joshi, Chaman Lall and representatives of 24 trade unions informing him that they did not propose to attend the Congress or to keep within its fold any longer.

The first meeting of the open session of the Congress was held, as previously stated, on 30-11-1929. In his opening speech, the President advocated the setting up of a socialist order of society in India in which the interests of the workers would be supreme. In his judgment the Whitley Commission was bound to be a "useless show" and he, therefore, recommended that it should be boycotted. The record of the British Labour Government did not justify the Indian worker reposing any trust in them, and the requisite atmosphere for the successful functioning

of the Commission was lacking because of the Government's repressive policy as evidenced by the arrests of Indian trade unionists, the Meerut prosecutions, and the passing of the Trade Disputes Act, and the promulgation of the Public Safety Ordinance. He expressed himself against the idea of affiliating the Congress to any foreign organisation since the Amsterdam International stood for labour imperialism and the Red International has recently been developing methods which he could not appreciate. Defining his own political position he said that he still stood for independence and that the Labour Government's offer of the Round Table Conference was only a new diversion.

The resolutions which were passed by the Executive Council were then formally presented to the Congress and accepted by it, with the important exception of the resolution affiliating the Congress to the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. Even though at the open session of the Congress only the extremist wings were represented, owing to the secession of the moderate leaders and their followers, yet they reversed their own decisions in the Executive Council, and deferred the question of affiliation with the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat for another year.

The following office bearers were then elected for 1930:-

President - Mr. Subash Chandra Bose, Vice-Presidents - Messrs. D.B. Kulkarni, Kandalkar, B.N. Dutta, R.S. Chandrika Prasad, and B.C. Chatterji, Secretary - Mr. S.V. Deshpande, and Treasurer - Mr. Ginwalla.

The tenth session of the Congress ended on the 1st December 1929, after deciding that the next session should be held in Bombay.

Special attention is invited to an article entitled the "Indian Labour Movement and the Nagpur Split" appearing at page 12 of the "Times of India" of December 18, 1929. This article is based upon the information confidentially imparted to Mr. Byrt, the representative of the Times of India at New Delhi, by the Director of the New Delhi Office.
