

145

**PAPERS FOR THE MEETING
OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE
ALL-INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS**

File No - AI-35

**30th, 31st August & 1st September, 1957
New Delhi**



AITUC DIGITAL ARCHIVE - 2021

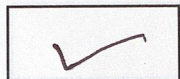
Folder Code: 4 **File No.** AI-35 **S. No.** _____

Digital File Code: _____

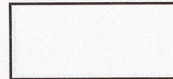
File Title: Papers for the Meeting of the Working
Committee (August & September, 1957)

Year: 1957 / _____ / _____

Metadata:



Scanned:



Note:

**ALL-INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS
4, Ashok Road, New Delhi.**

WORKERS' EDUCATION PROGRAMME

In accordance with the decisions of the Fifteenth Indian Labour Conference, a Committee was appointed to prepare a scheme of workers' education in the Second Five Year Plan. This Committee in turn appointed a Sub-Committee to draw up the details. The Sub-Committee has drawn the following syllabus. It is not the syllabus drawn by the AITUC. This is being reproduced for information and study.

As can be seen from the broad points given in the Syllabus, it does not give one an idea as to what will be the content of the education that will be offered to the workers. If it is left totally to the Government or the teacher administrators who are to be trained by Governmental seminars, then one does not know how they will define wages or how they will define trade unions, or relate them to the question of inflation and the development of the economy as a whole.

Therefore, the AITUC Committee on the Committee put forth the viewpoint before the Committee that this syllabus should be given more concreteness by elaborating the ideas in each chapter, so that there should be no confusion as to what each teacher is going to teach.

The AITUC Schools have had some experience in this matter and therefore, it would be necessary for the Working Committee to evolve a syllabus for its own Schools basing itself on the outline that is being adopted in this Scheme. Hence we are circulating this for study and opinion by the Working Committee.

S Y L L A B U S

1. THE MODERN INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY - History of its growth in India and present position - Industrial Geography of India.
2. THE TRADE UNION: - Purpose and functions - place in democratic society - History and present position of the national federations of workers and employers - Organisation and administration of trade unions - Election of office-bearers-union finances -
3. THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT - A brief review of international labour problems - I.L.O. - Its history, objectives and functions - I.L.O. Conventions - Important trade union laws and practices all over the world -
4. THE LEGAL ASPECT: - Labour legislation in India and abroad - Detailed study of the Minimum Wages Act 1948 and the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 as amended upto date - Constitution of India - Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy - Constitution and functioning of Parliament and State Legislatures - Election of President, M.Ps and M.L.As.-
5. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: - Causes of industrial disputes in India - Machinery to settle industrial disputes - Functions of Ministries of Labour at the Centre and in the States - Attached offices and their functions - Settlement Procedure - Negotiation - Adjudication - Arbitration - Collective Agreements - Collective bargaining - Strikes, lock-outs and other forms of pressure - When and where permissible -
6. WAGES AND SOCIAL SECURITY - Wages - Minimum Wage, Fair Wage and Living Wage - Time rates and piece rates - Job evaluation and work standardisation - Time and Motion Studies - Incentive Schemes and Merit Rating - Production Bonus - Standardisation of Wages - Cost of living and dearness allowance - Profit Bonus - Fringe benefits - Industrial housing schemes - Social Security - Existing legislation and benefits.
7. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - . . . 7. Employment and Training

-
7. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - Broad analysis of the employment situation - utilisation of the services of the employment exchange organisation - crafts-men training schemes - cottage industries and how they can help.
 8. INDUSTRIAL WELFARE - Human relations in industry - industrial psychology and personnel management - industrial physiology, health, hygiene and safety - welfare amenities for industrial workers -
 9. SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN - The Concept of Planning - Achievements of the First Five Year Plan - Aims and Objectives of the Second Plan - Labour and Labour Welfare policies and Programmes in the Second Plan -
 10. WORKERS' DISCIPLINE AND WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT - Need for discipline in industry - rights and duties of management and unions - Standing Orders and grievance procedure - Works Committees - Joint Councils of Management - Experience of other countries - cost of manufacture and problems of management - Productivity and rationalisation. •
 11. PRACTICAL TRAINING - How to lecture and organise discussion groups, seminars and conferences - How to organise and run unions; sports, games and entertainments; reading rooms, canteens and co-operative societies - How to prepare graphs, charts and pictorial display matter - Use of slides and projectors.

(Circulated as Appendix I, received along with the "Report of the Sub-Committee on Workers' Education")

ON "DISCIPLINE IN INDUSTRY" SUB-COMMITTEE
MEETING - August 27, 1957

We are reproducing below for the information of comrades a note on 'Discipline in Industry' prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Employment for discussion before the Sub-Committee of the Indian Labour Conference.

The main conclusion on discipline in Industry adopted by the Indian Labour Conference provided for a tripartite sub-committee to study the question further. Accordingly, the sub-committee set up for this purpose was to meet on 27th August. For this sub-committee, the Government put forward for discussion the following note.

Even a casual reading of this note will show any one that the note tries to take away completely almost all the vital rights of the working class in the matter of their right to strike and their activities in relation to strike struggles or even ordinary democratic activities.

The original understanding in the Labour Conference on the question of strike stated: "There should be no strike or lock-out without notice." But this clause as elaborated by the note submitted to the sub-committee states as follows: "not to cause or take part in any form of strike (including sit-down, stay-in, hunger-strike, sympathy strike or slow-down) against the employer."

This, it will be seen, totally negates the right to strike which is completely at variance with the agreement arrived at at the Labour Conference as the quotation above would show.

Similarly, there are other clauses which take away the right to demonstrations, almost of any kind. This Draft thus shows how the bureaucrats would like to read their own reactionary content in general agreements arrived at in the tripartite conference. If the workers are not vigilant, then the ordinary healthy principles agreed to would soon be turned into a weapon to put down all the activities of the workers and the trade unions in the name of voluntary agreements.

The AITUC representative on the Sub-Committee, Com.T.C.N.Menon, M.P., pointed out these things to the Committee and refused to accept any of these conditions which were proposed. It is reported to us by our comrade that a number of changes were made after we lodged our protest.

The finally agreed draft has yet to be submitted to the Sub-Committee members and we shall let the trade unions know what the final draft will be. But it is certain we cannot agree to any of the conditions that have been proposed in the draft as circulated here. We would only abide by the general agreement made in the Labour Conference, which has been circulated to our comrades in a separate pamphlet.

August 27, 1957.

S.A.DANGE,
General Secretary.

COPY OF THE "DRAFT CODE FOR DISCIPLINE IN
INDUSTRY" DRAWN UP BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR
& EMPLOYMENT FOR DISCUSSION AT THE SUB-COMMITTEE
ON "DISCIPLINE IN INDUSTRY".

1. TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE IN INDUSTRY, there has to be (i) a just recognition by employers and workers of the rights and responsibilities of either party, within the framework of existing laws and agreements and (ii) proper and willing discharge by either party of its obligations consequent on such recognition.

To accelerate the process of
better discipline in Industry,

II. MANAGEMENT & UNION(S) AGREE (i) to affirm their faith in democratic principles and thereby, bind themselves to settle all future differences, disputes and

. . . grievances by mutual

grievances by mutual negotiation, conciliation, conciliation and voluntary arbitration and to give up recourse to (a) coercion (b) victimisation (c) undue litigation (d) strikes and (e) lock-outs.

(ii) to encourage an atmosphere of constructive cooperation between their representatives at all levels and as between workers themselves and to abide more by the spirit of agreements mutually entered into than by a narrow interpretation thereof;

(iii) to establish immediately, upon a mutually agreed basis, a grievance procedure which will be uniformly applicable to all cases and which will ensure speedy and full investigation;

(iv) to settle as many disputes as possible at the lowest possible level;

(v) to abide by various stages in the grievance procedure and to take no arbitrary action which would short-circuit this procedure.

III. MANAGEMENT AGREE (i) not to create in any fashion or cause to be created any lockout of all or a group of employees;

(ii) not to require any speed-up inconsistent with agreed work-loads;

(iii) not to wilfully delay action on grievances, settlements and awards;

(iv) not to support or encourage any unfair labour practice such as (a) interference with the right of the employee to enrol or continue as union members (b) discrimination, restraint or coercion against any employee because of his union activity and/or in the exercise of trade union functions, and (c) victimisation of any employee and abuse of authority in any form;

(v) to display in conspicuous places in the undertaking, the provisions of this Code in the local (language)s;

(vi) to distinguish between actions justifying immediate discharge and those where discharge must be preceded by a warning, reprimand, suspension or some other form of disciplinary action. However, all such disciplinary action should be subject to an appeal through the normal channels of the grievance procedure and

(vii) to censure its officers in cases where enquiries reveal that they were responsible for precipitate action by workers leading to indiscipline.

IV. UNION(S) AGREE (i) not to cause or take part in any form of strike (including sit-down, stay-in, hunger strike, sympathy strike or slow-down) against the employer;

(ii) not to engage in any form of physical duress or demonstration likely to cause alarm to or reduce the freedom of persons against whom the demonstrations are directed;

(iii) that their members will not engage or cause other employees to engage in any union activity during working hours, except for grievance settlement as per the grievance procedure;

(iv) to discourage unfair labour practices such as (a) negligence of duty (b) careless operation (c) damage to property (d) interference with normal work (e) insubordination (f) causing disturbances to others (g) utilising employee's official status further union activity and (h) divulging confidential information of the undertaking to outsiders;

(v) that workers shall perform any work which the supervisor may direct and if the worker objects to the work, he shall perform the work and then take up his objections with the grievance machinery;

(vi) to display in conspicuous places in the union offices, the provision of this Code in the local language(s);

(vii) to censure members found guilty of serious offences.

On Recent Agreement

In The

COAL INDUSTRY

I

The minutes of the meeting with the representatives of the employers and employees of the Coal Industry held at New Delhi on 26 June 1957 forwarded to us by the Ministry of Labour & Employment No.LR-II-55-I(26)/57 dated 6-7-57 is given below:

The Union Minister for Labour & Employment Shri Gulzarilal Nanda had discussions on the 26th June 1957, first separately and then jointly with the representatives of employers and workers in the coal industry about the situation that has developed after the Labour Appellate Tribunal had given its decisions on the award of the All-India Industrial Tribunal (Colliery Disputes). The Union Minister for Steel, Mines and Fuel, Sardar Swaran Singh and the Union Deputy Minister for Labour, Shri Abid Ali, were also present. The following attended the meeting on behalf of the employers and workers:

EMPLOYERS: Indian Mining Association - Shri D.Hogg
Indian Mining Federation - Shri I.M.Thapar
Shri J.N.Mukerjee
Shri N.S.Singh
Indian Colliery-owners Association - Shri D.K.Samanta
Madhya Pradesh Mining Association - Shri Manubhai Shah

WORKERS: I.N.T.U.C. - Shri B.P.Sinha
Shri R.N.Sharma
Shri R.K.Dubey
A.I.T.U.C. - Shri Kalyan Roy
H.M.S. - Shri Mahesh Desai
U.T.U.C. - Shri S.V.Acharior

The following agreement was arrived at at the joint meeting:

- (1) Employers will withdraw their appeal before the Supreme Court and implement the award of the Labour Appellate Tribunal.
- (2) Government will notify an interim price increase of Rs.1.50 per ton to cover the cost of the increase in wages resulting from the Labour Appellate Tribunal award including the retrospective effect of the award. This interim increase will be subject to such adjustments as may be found necessary after the report of the Coal Price Revision Committee is received and examined by Government.
- (3) The payment of wages at the increased rates awarded by the Labour Appellate Tribunal will commence in the week following the notification of the interim price increase by Government.
- (4) The arrears of wages arising from the Labour Appellate Tribunal award will be paid to Labour by the Employers in nine quarterly instalments, the first instalment by the middle of October 1957 and the rest in every quarter thereafter.
- (5) Government will take steps to ensure that the agreement is binding on both parties.

Annexure

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY COM. KALYAN ROY,
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE A.I.T.U.C. AND I.M.W.F.
at the meeting on 26 June 1957

With reference to the discussion we had with the Labour and Production Ministries on the 25 and 26 June, in connection with the complications arising out of the employers' appeal in the Supreme Court against the Award of Labour Appellate Tribunal and subsequent agreement which was arrived at, I am placing the following suggestions. I have already spoken about these in the Tripartite meeting yesterday.

1. The Central Government soon after the notification should set up an Implementation Committee, consisting of Government, Labour and Employers' representatives to implement the Award of the LAT. The formation of the Committee may be preceded by another Tripartite Meeting under the Chairmanship of the Labour Minister.

We feel strongly about the Implementation Committee because it is our sad experience that the employers including the State Collieries do not implement the Award properly. There are a very large number of collieries where the Mazumdar Award has not been implemented at all.

The Chief Labour Commissioner, Shri Pattanayak, did convene a meeting after the publication of the Mazumdar Award, but nothing came out of it. This time the Government must take the implementation seriously, and without a proper machinery, we apprehend that the Award will not be properly implemented.

2. Regarding interpretation of the LAT Award, there is bound to be difference between Labour and Management and between management and management. So the Implementation Committee may also deal with those questions of interpretations. Or an ARBITRATOR acceptable to both sides, may be appointed to settle these differences whose decisions will be final.

All complaints regarding ARREAR pay should be referred to Labour Inspectors who should be asked to settle these points within a fortnight. And the Government must take special care that all workers who were on the payroll on the 25th May, 1956 are paid arrear wages. Otherwise, we fear a very large number of workers will be deprived of arrear wages and our agreement will come to nothing.

While we deeply appreciate the efforts of the Labour Ministry to bring about this agreement and hope that these efforts will continue, we feel that unless the above-mentioned steps are taken, the purpose of the agreement will be lost. On our part, we are ready to fully cooperate with the Labour Ministry to implement the Award properly and peacefully.

 II

Resolutions adopted by
the Indian Mine Workers Federation

ON IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

This meeting of the Executive Committee of the Indian Mine Workers' Federation expresses relief, with pleasure, of the successful conclusion of the tripartite meeting at Delhi held on 26.6.57. It congratulates the Hon'ble Union Labour Minister, for his initiative in holding this Conference and his efforts for its successful outcome.

The Committee approves of the agreement reached at in the tripartite meeting and will contribute its best for the effective implementation of the agreement, while at the same time it maintains its conviction that the increase in coal price, acceded to by the Government is a gift to propitiate the colliery owners at the cost of the consumers.

The Committee feels that the chief task now facing the parties to the above agreement is one of proper implementation of the LAT Award to the maximum satisfaction of the employees and employers and to reduce the misunderstanding on this score to the minimum.

Taught by the experiences of the implementation of the Award of the Mazumdar Tribunal, the Committee has reached to its deep conviction that such successful and smooth implementation can only be carried out by the help of a Standing Tripartite Machinery. The Committee's idea about the tripartite machinery is that it should be composed of the representatives of those organisations of employers and labour that took part in the above tripartite meetings along with the representative of the appropriate Government departments. That this central tripartite body should be assisted in the matter of implementation in the individual collieries by the similar regional bodies set up for the purpose. That these committees should function hand in hand with the existing machinery of the Union Labour Ministry, trade union organisations and personnel departments of the employers. That these committees should provide ground for exchanging opinions, for coming to understand the opposing viewpoints, for reaching a common understanding on the matters of detailed interpretation and practical application for having conciliation of the differences, and for jointly solving the unforeseen difficulties. That the regional committees under the guidance of the central committee, will have to tackle specific issues of complaints, misunderstandings, appeals, reviews, etc., from the individual collieries and departments.

The Committee is of full conviction that should the proposal of the Committee is accepted and given a fair trial by all the parties concerned then, it is not only that the Award of the LAT will be implemented in the Collieries fully and smoothly to the maximum satisfaction of the parties concerned but that the industrial relation in the coal mines of the country will register an unprecedented improvement rendering great benefit to the community at large for quite a long time to come.

The Committee, therefore, urges upon all the parties concerned specially the Ministry of Labour to give serious consideration to the proposal contained in the resolution with the same spirit in which it is put forward by the Committee.

ON PROPOSALS FOR CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL SAVINGS CERTIFICATES AND CO-OPERATIVES

The Committee (Executive Committee of the Indian Mine Workers Federation) gladly approves of the proposals of the Hon'ble Labour Minister regarding the contribution of a part of the arrear wages to the National Savings Fund and towards the formation of co-operative societies of different types.

The Committee also accepts the responsibility of convincing the workers of the need for contributing towards the National Savings Fund in the greater cause of the community and persuading them to actually contribute to the Fund.

The Committee instructs the branches of the I.M.W.F. to take up the question of organising co-operatives of the necessary and suitable type conforming to the needs of the units concerned, and to take initiative in organising the workers into co-operatives wherever possible, with the help of the arrear wages that they are going to receive. The Committee firmly holds the view that for the contribution to the National Savings and co-operatives, the principle of voluntary co-operation should be acted upon and no element of compulsion should be allowed to be employed in this field.

The Committee opposes the proposal of compulsory contribution towards the National Savings and co-operatives as this is contrary to the present consciousness of the workers, and will give rise to unnecessary antagonisms without any fair gain in return.

III

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES
OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE COAL INDUSTRY
AT ASANSOL, 16 AUGUST 1957

A meeting of the representatives of the employers and employees of the Coal Industry was held at Asansol on the 16th August, 1957 under the chairmanship of Shri Abid Ali, Union Deputy Labour Minister. The Chief Labour Commissioner, New Delhi, and the Regional Labour Commissioner (c), Dhanbad, were present at the meeting. The following representatives of the employers and employees attended the meeting:

EMPLOYERS: Indian Mining Association	-	Shri D.Hogg
		Shri R.Maulik
Indian Mining Federation	-	Shri I.M.Thapper
Indian Colliery Owners Association	-	Shri B.K.Samanta
National Coal Development Corporation	-	Shri B.R.Bagroy
		Shri B.L.Ohri
EMPLOYEES: Indian National Trade Union Congress	-	Shri Kanti Mehta
		Shri R.N.Sharma
		Shri B.P.Sinha
		Shri S.Dasgupta
		Shri Keshav Banerjee
All-India Trade Union Congress	-	Shri Kalyan Roy
		Shri Binod Mukherjee
		Shri Lalit Burman
Hind Mazdur Sabha	-	Shri Mahesh Desai
United Trade Union Congress	-	Shri S.V.Acharya
		Shri Shanker Singh

2. The Chairman while welcoming the representatives of employers and employees recalled the joint Agreement arrived at recently at Delhi for implementation of the decision of the Labour Appellate Tribunal in Colliery disputes and stated that with goodwill and understanding on the part of employers and labour, it should be possible to ensure smooth implementation of the Coal Award and overcome the difficulties and differences that might arise in the course of implementation. He also referred to the recent decision of the Indian Labour Conference at Delhi on the promotion of discipline in industry and observed that it has created a great impression on all sections of the people in the country. He expressed the hope that the employers and labour in the coal industry would give their wholehearted cooperation in implementing the principles laid down in the conference and thereby ensure industrial peace and maximum production.

3. The meeting took up the following matters for consideration:

(1) Progress of implementation of the decision of the Labour Appellate Tribunal in the appeals against the Award of the All India Industrial Tribunal (Colliery Disputes).

(2) Promotion of discipline in the industry as per the decision of the Indian Labour Conference held recently at New Delhi.

(3) Consideration of the suggestions put forward by the Indian National Mine Workers' Federation to meet the difficulties arising out of the implementation of the decision of the Appellate Tribunal.

4. The progress of implementation of the Coal Award was discussed. Both the employers' and labour representatives stressed the urgency of appointing a tripartite Committee for the purpose of interpreting the disputed points arising out of the Coal Award and for securing its smooth implementation. They expressed the hope that all doubts and difficulties arising out of its

. . . . implementation would be

implementation would be amicably settled through the good offices of this Committee without resorting to adjudication or arbitration. It was accordingly decided to have a committee consisting of 5 representatives each of Employers and Labour together with a representative each of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Steel, Mines & Fuel.

The employers' representatives will be one each from the Indian Mining Federation, Indian Colliery Owners' Association, Madhya Pradesh Mining Association and the National Coal Development Corporation.

The employees' representatives on the Committee will be two from the INTUC and one each from the AITUC, HMS and the UTUC.

The Chief Labour Commissioner representing the Ministry of Labour will be the Chairman of the Committee. It was further decided that this Committee will have its first meeting at Calcutta in the Coal Controller's office on the 5th September, 1957. In order to deal with the issues of local nature, this Committee will be competent to appoint zonal or local committees.

5. It was agreed that the first instalment of arrears of wages due to the workmen consequent on the implementation of the Labour Appellate Tribunal's decision would be paid to the workmen in full and that the workmen will contribute 25% of each of the remaining 8 instalments to the Small Savings Scheme. The Trade Union representatives have undertaken to persuade the workers to implement this decision. It was further agreed that the Trade Unions will organise Consumers and Credit Co-operatives amongst the workmen for utilising as much of the balance of arrears of wages as possible. In case of death, medical unfitness, superannuation, discharge, dismissal or retrenchment of workmen, the arrears of wages due to them on account of the implementation of the Award will be paid in full immediately, instead of in nine quarterly instalments. The employers agreed to refund to the workmen the house-rent deducted from their wages by the middle of October, 1957.

6. The principles laid down in the Indian Labour Conference held recently at Delhi for promoting discipline and peace in the Industry were fully endorsed at the meeting. The Trade Unions undertook to propagate and popularise these principles among the workmen, while the employers' representatives agreed that notices embodying those principles will be displayed conspicuously at the collieries for the information of all concerned in local languages that the managements would be instructed to honour them fully.

7. It was further agreed that the issues raised by the Indian National Mine Workers' Federation should be taken up for consideration by the Implementation Committee. Other issues, if any, arising out of the implementation of the Award will also be circulated by the parties to all concerned before 26th August, 1957 so that they may be taken up for consideration by the Committee at its meeting on the 5th September, 1957.

(The copy of the minutes given above was received from the Office of the Chief Labour Commissioner, (Central), New Delhi, Camp: Dhanbad, No. CLC-CAV-2(11)/57 dated 19/20 August 1957)

FACTS ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS
ON THE THREATENED STRIKE OF
P & T AND OTHER CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

July 9-10, 1957

The Federal Council of National Federation of P & T Employees at its session in Delhi on 9 and 10 July, 1957 took a decision of General Strike of P & T workers with effect from 8th August 1957 (midnight).

Five other Central Government Employees Unions also joined it, on 12 July.

July 15, 1957

The following strike notice was served by the Federation to the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, New Delhi:

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the provisions contained in sub-section (1) of section 22 of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, we hereby give you notice that we propose to call a strike on midnight of the 8th/morning of the 9th August, 1957 for the reasons in the annexe.

Yours faithfully,
Sd.
(B.N.GHOSH)
SECRETARY-GENERAL
N.F.P.T.E.

(Sd)
(A.S.RAJAN)
General Secretary,
A.I.P.E.U.-Cl.III

(Sd)
(JAMNADAS AKHTAR)
Dy.General Secretary,
A.I.P.E.U.-Postmen
and Class IV

(Sd)
(R.P.CHATTERJEE)
General Secretary,
A.I.R.E.U.-Cl.III

(Sd)
(O.P.GUPTA)
General Secretary
A.I.R.E.U. Mail-
Guards & Cl.IV

(Sd)
(P.S.R.ANJANEYULU)
General Secretary,
A.I.T.T.E.U.-Cl.III

(Sd)
(DHARAMVIR)
General Secretary,
A.I.T.T.E.U.-Cl.III

(sd)
(O.P.GUPTA)
General Secretary,
A.I.T.E.E.U.-Cl.III

(Sd)
(KABAL SINGH)
General Secretary,
A.I.T.E.E.U.-Line-
staff & Cl.IV

(Sd)
(S.K.PAKRASI)
General Secretary,
A.I.A.O.E.A.-Cl.III & IV

A N N E X E

The National Federation of P&T Employees are submitting to you the following demands as detailed in Schedule I and II and if these are not conceded before or by the expiry of the 1st August, 1957, the National Federation of P & T Employees would resort to strike vide the notice sent herewith.

. . . . DEMANDS

DEMANDSSchedule I

1. A. The appointment of a Pay Commission with powers to appoint and obtain the advice of Expert Committees, to enquire into and report on the following matters in connection with all persons in the employment of the Government of India in the P&T Department including the Extra Departmental Staff;
- (a) The entire conditions of service with particular reference to:
 - (i) what should be the structure of their pay scales, standards of remuneration, Dearness and other allowances and amenities;
 - (ii) what changes, alterations and additions are required in the conditions and terms of service and work of the aforesaid persons;
 - (iii) what should be the recruitment policy of the Department in respect of all cadres with a view to provide full complement of staff without any protracted delay and to make provision for adequate promotional chances.
 - (b) The machinery for negotiating and settling questions relating to conditions of service which may arise out of differences between Government and its employees;
 - (c) The extent of Trade Union and Civic rights to be enjoyed by P&T Employees;
 - (d) The Pay Commission to fix a date/dates from which its various recommendations should be brought into effect.
- B. That on the publication of the report the opposite party (the employer) should implement the recommendations as recommended in the report.

Schedule II

Pending the report of the Pay Commission and implementation thereof:

2. The Dearness Allowance of the above-said persons should be fixed and regulated in accordance with the recommendations of the last Central Pay Commission in this behalf as from 1st January, 1957.
3. Rules in the matter of (i) Leave and Leave-Reserve, (ii) Medical Attendance and (iii) Pension, (iv) Travelling Allowance and Daily Allowance for Class III be made applicable to Class IV.
4. In respect of (i) holidays, (ii) weekly off, (iii) night co-efficient and (iv) working hours, none of the aforesaid persons, i.e., the employees of the P&T Department shall be placed in a less advantageous position than that of any other section of the employees under the Central Government.
5. The full amount of Dearness Allowance should be merged with pay as from 1st January 1957 for the calculation of all allowances, remunerations and benefits for which pay is taken into account, without any adverse effect on the emoluments.
6. Payment should be made to the Extra Departmental staff proportionate to the hours of work performed, at a rate not less than the rate payable to regular employees of the P&T Department.
7. Grant of Assam (Special) Compensatory Allowance for all employees stationed in Assam Circle, an amount to the extent of 25% of pay subject to a minimum of Rs.30/- p.m. and the implementation of the assurances held out by the Hon'ble Minister for Communications regarding non-victimisation as a result of Assam P&T workers going on Strike in February, 1957.

. Adjournment motion .

Adjournment motion moved in Lok Sabha by Opposition Members.

July 18, 1957

On the adjournment motion, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Minister of Communications, made a statement in the Lok Sabha as under:

"In the first category were such demands as the appointment of a Second Pay Commission and immediate increase in the rate of dearness allowance and the merger of the entire dearness allowance with pay. I had explained to the representative of the Federation that these demands which have serious financial implications cannot be considered in relation to P & T employees alone. The question is, in its larger context, under the consideration of Government."

About other demands like removal of discrimination amongst the various cadre as between members of Class III and Class IV, liberalisation of pension rules, he said these have been conceded.

"Another important demand pertains to the grant of compensatory allowance to P&T employees posted in Assam. This matter has been considered by us and certain tentative conclusions have been reached. We have addressed the State Government in this behalf."

The following concessions were listed by the Hon'ble Minister:

"(1) The avenues of promotion have been enlarged. All posts of time scale supervisors in post offices, R.M.S., and D.L.O.s, carrying the scale of Rs.60/170 plus allowances have been upgraded to those of lower selection grade in the scale of Rs.160/250. Further, all lower selection grade head post offices in the grade of Rs.160/250 have been upgraded to higher selection grade in the scale of Rs.250/325.

"(2) Special relaxation will be granted to enable the recruitment of some or dependants of such employees as die or become permanently incapacitated as a result of accident while on duty.

"(3) Efforts will be made for constructing an appreciably larger number of staff quarters, dormitories, rest houses, dispensaries, etc.

"(4) A Telegraph Enquiry Committee has already been appointed.

"(5) The proposal for the creation of the cadre of Assistant Inspectors of Post Offices and RMS which might have adversely affected avenues of promotion has been abandoned.

"(6) Split duty at night has been abolished and night duty co-efficient has been liberalised.

"(7) Water allowance will be sanctioned at the same rate as is allowed to State Government employees.

"(8) A Standing Committee will be set up to provide machinery for negotiation and speedy settlement of disputes.

"(9) A National Welfare Board for P & T employees will be set up to draw up a comprehensive plan for their welfare."

Shri Shastri pleaded for "fruitful method of negotiation" and "choosing the path of reason and moderation".

The representatives of the Federation met the Chief Labour Commissioner/Ministry of Labour and asked for Government viewpoint re. appointment of Pay Commission. He was unable to say anything.

. . . 19 July

July 19, 1957

Lok Sabha discussed the non-official resolution for the appointment of the Second Pay Commission moved by Com.K.K.Warior, M.P. (General Council member of the AITUC). Com.Dange, General Secretary, AITUC supported it. The resolution was rejected. The Government took the stand that acceptance of this demand of higher wages will lead to higher prices and inflation and would widen the difference between the scales of pay of Central and State Government employees.

On almost the same plea, the Government had talked out a similar non-official resolution moved by Shri D.C.Sharma (Congress), M.P. on 29th July 1955 in the Lok Sabha. This was vigorously supported by among others the M.P.s belonging to AITUC.

Finance Minister Shri T.T.Krishnamachari announced during the discussion of the non-official resolution that an Inquiry Committee to probe into the pay structure of Government Employees (without any terms of reference, composition, period, etc.) can be appointed.

July 20, 1957

In order to open avenues for resumption of negotiations which were reported to have been deadlocked, Comrade Dange, on the eve of his departure for Europe to attend the Executive Bureau of the WFTU, gave the following interview to the press:

"Mr.S.A.Dange, leader of the Communist group in Parliament, on Friday, appealed to the Central Government employees and the National Federation of Posts and Telegraphs Employees in particular "to resume the thread of their negotiations with Government."

'Commenting on the statement laid on the table of the Lok Sabha on Thursday by the Transport and Communications Minister, Mr.Lal Bahadur Shastri Mr.Dange said: "Mr.Shastri's statement, in my opinion, does leave some room for conducting negotiations on the demands which affect Government employees in general and the Posts and Telegraphs employees in particular. The Confederation of Central Government employees in particular should have no objection to resume the thread of negotiations with the Government. Such a resumption should not be influenced by considerations of prestige on either side. I am sure all the parties in Parliament would do all they can to help the employees in their negotiations and in securing the core of their demands.'" (P.T.I.)

The Federation representatives met the Chief Labour Commissioner again and asked for details of the proposals made by the Finance Minister in the Lok Sabha on 19th July. The Chief Labour Commissioner had no information.

July 22, 1957

Federation representatives met the Chief Labour Commissioner. He again failed to throw light on the details of the proposal and only suggested withdrawal of the strike as a gesture of goodwill.

July 23, 1957

Federation representatives met the Chief Labour Commissioner again who suggested them to apply for interview with the Prime Minister. The Federation representatives replied that they have already done so.

July 26, 1957

Federation representatives met the Prime Minister at 4 P.M. and discussed the issues. The Prime Minister said that there was no objection to call the 'Inquiry' Committee, a Commission. He could not give the details of the terms of reference of the Commission. He also pleaded inability to give cash interim relief immediately.

. . . . After the Prime Minister

After the Prime Minister had left, Shri G.L.Nanda and Shri L.B.Shastri, Labour and Communication Ministers, continued the talk. Shri Nanda made the offer that the question of interim relief be referred to the Pay Commission.

Shri B.N.Ghosh, Secretary-General, NFPTE, issued the following statement after this meeting:

"The Prime Minister granted an interview to the members of the Federal Executive at 4-30 P.M. and he was assisted by 3 Ministers, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, G.L.Nanda and Raj Bahadur. Shri V.G.Dalvi led the delegation of the Federation Executive. Discussion took place for 1 hour 10 minutes. The Prime Minister was in a conciliatory mood and he did not mind whether the proposed Enquiry Committee was termed as Pay Commission and agreed to the proposal of inclusion of the question of revision of the pay structure of gazetted officers in the terms of reference. In connection with the demand for the increase of D.A. in accordance with Central Pay Commission recommendations, he categorically expressed his inability to say anything in the matter. So the position which stood after discussion with Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri continues to be the same even after discussion with the Prime Minister. As regards merger of D.A. he did not make any commitment and the other items were not discussed. After the Prime Minister left, Shri G.L.Nanda made the proposal for referring the question of interim relief to the proposed commission. The proposal was not acceptable to the Federation. Therefore, our decision regarding strike remains unchanged and the strike notice stands."

July 27, 1957

The Federation withdrew from the Conciliation proceedings, due to Chief Labour Commissioner's "efforts at conciliation have borne no fruit" and considering that no useful purpose will be served by continuing the conciliation proceedings with the Chief Labour Commissioner. (Federation letter No.F/100 (Strike) dated 27.7.57, w.e.f. 5 p.m. on 29.7.57)

Joint Council of Action endorsed the statement of Shri B.N.Ghosh, issued on July 26, after interview with the Prime Minister.

July 30, 1957

Failure of conciliation proceedings was announced by the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central)

August 2, 1957

Com.Dange, General Secretary, AITUC, issued the following statement supporting the strike of Central Government and P&T Employees from Bombay on his arrival from Europe:

"As soon as I landed yesterday in Bombay, I was confronted with the statement of Pandit.Nehru, denouncing the strike of the P&T workers and Government employees as anti-social, especially when, according to him, India is threatened with external difficulties.

"I have already replied in the Parliament ten days ago to similar statements of the Premier. The AITUC considers the demands of the employees to be completely just and fair in view of the rise in cost of living and the failure of the Government to check prices and profits. The AITUC will support the P&T workers and the Government employees in whatever course of action they decide to follow to realise their aims. If Government fails to satisfy them and they decide to strike, the Unions of the AITUC will fully support them.

"It is necessary to point out what I noticed in Europe while I was there and which our Prime Minister also must have seen, when he was there but which he refuses to tell our workers here.

. . . . In all the big capitalist

"In all the big capitalist countries there and in America, the monopolists are making boom profits with the help of Governments. As a result, the trade unions there are forced to go on strikes to extract wage increases from the employers and the Government. In America, the P&T workers have put up a claim for wage rise. In England, from whose Trade Unions, the INTUC draws its philosophy, all the big Unions have given strike notices to enforce higher wages and they have got them. In Pakistan too, when I passed thru Karachi, I found their papers reporting that their Government employees also are demanding a Pay Commission. Surely, our Premier could not have failed to see this.

"Curiously enough, in these countries, too, the Governments and employers talk the same way as our Prime Minister talks. There too they speak of danger to national economy and danger of inflation. It is strange that our Socialist Prime Minister of India and the Capitalist Ministers in Europe should address the working class in the same tone, the same threats and same excuses. It means that the strike struggles against monopoly profits is not a specific feature here but is common throughout the world, and the resistance of Governments and employers is the same everywhere.

"The AITUC, therefore, would request the Government to settle the dispute amicably. But, if the unprovoked firing on the sweepers in the very Capital of the Premier is an indication of the methods that the Government wishes to follow in their dealings with the workers, it is certain the workers cannot afford to be cowed down. All trade unions of all shades must stand united since the Government taxes and monopoly profits are attacking everybody's life and living. The AITUC once again appeals to Government to give up police methods of ruling and agree to the just demands of the Unions. The AITUC appeals to all Unions to unite on this question of defending the workers' claims for wage rise, irrespective of political opinions, as the issues are not political but one of simple bread and butter of the working people."

The General Secretary of the Hind Mazdur Sabha, Shri Baga Ram Tulpule, also issued a statement supporting the P & T workers demand and stand.

August 3, 1957

At 11.00 A.M. in the Lok Sabha, Shri T.T.Krishnamachari, Finance Minister announced the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry with Shri Justice Jagannath Das as Chairman. The terms of reference of the Commission were:

1. The Commission shall examine (I) the principles which should govern the structure of emoluments and conditions of service of Central Government employees; (II) Consider and recommend what changes in the structure of emoluments and conditions of service of different classes of Central Government employees are desirable and feasible, keeping in mind the considerations mentioned in paragraph two below; and (III) Recommend in particular the extent to which the benefits of the Central Government employees can be given in the shape of amenities and facilities

"2. In making its recommendations, the Commission will take into account the historical background, the economic conditions in the country and the implications and requirements of developmental planning and also disparities in the standards of remuneration and conditions of service of Central Government employees on the one hand and of the employees of the State Governments, local bodies and aided institutions on the other and other relevant factors."

At 11.12 a.m., Home Minister Shri G.B.Pant sought leave of the House to introduce Maintenance of Essential Services Bill, giving power to the Government to declare strikes illegal and making participation in or aiding such strikes a penal offence.

. . . . In the evening Shri L.B.Shastri

In the evening (Aug.3), Shri L.B.Shastri, Communication Minister, in an interview broadcast by the All India Radio said that the Finance Minister's announcement did not alter the position re. the Government's willingness to refer the question of interim relief to the Commission, that the Government hoped to come to a decision as early as possible re. Assam Compensatory Allowance, avenues of promotion, etc.

August 4, 1957

The Joint Council of Action in a statement reiterated the strike decision saying that the announcement is vague and these require clarifications specially about the fixing of a dateline for a report and the interim relief being granted with retrospective effect from the date of appointment of the Commission.

August 5, 1957

Home Minister moved for consideration of the Maintenance of Essential Services Bill at 12.20 P.M.

Federation representatives met Shri L.B.Shastri, Communication Minister at 4.00 P.M. who said that a Committee will be appointed for Extra Departmental problems if the Commission would not go into their cases, Assam compensatory allowance would be given to all P&T workers in Assam, the question of holidays, etc. could be discussed further within the course of a month or so and the question of interim relief would also be referred to the Pay Commission.

At 8.30 P.M., the Prime Minister made a broadcast speech in which he said:

"It is for this reason that we are appointing a pay commission headed by an eminent judge of the Supreme Court which will go into these questions in all their aspects and make such suggestions as are not only helpful to employees of Government, but also keep in view the whole community and our economy and future development. As I have said, they can make interim reports about relief or other matters. . . ."

"If there are other problems, apart from pay and allowances, these could be dealt with separately and I hope as speedily as possible." s .
l v s i n e v , l s a n t r o x i u s i d t e s h a d t l

"We have . . . regretfully had to introduce a Bill in the Lok Sabha for the maintenance of essential services. This Bill need not and will not come into effect if there is no strike."

The Joint Council of Action reiterated strike decision and sought an interview with the Prime Minister.

August 6, 1957

At 6 P.M., Federation representatives met the Prime Minister and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri who reiterated their earlier announcements.

Maintenance of Essential Services Bill passed by the Lok Sabha in the teeth of strong criticism and walk-out by the Opposition.

Joint Council of Action appealed to the Prime Minister for more categorical assurances re. Interim Relief.

Also a point was raised in the discussion that the assurances given in the broadcast and in meetings have no statutory binding. Steps should be taken to incorporate them into one and announce as Government order.

. . . August 7, 1957

August 7, 1957

Ordinance promulgating the Maintenance of Essential Services Act issued.

Amendment to the Government Servants' Conduct Rules prohibiting even demonstrations and providing dismissal from service as punishment in case of disobeying, announced.

Certain Presidents of the A.I.Unions of P&T belonging to the Congress Party meet the Communication Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. No change in the situation.

August 8, 1957

Members of the Action Committee of the Confederation of Central Government Employees Unions along with their President Shri Nath Pai, M.P., conferred with Com.Dange, General Secretary of the AITUC, in the morning.

It was suggested that the AITUC and HMS should at this juncture give their advice to the Joint Council of Action as to whether it was wise to adhere to the call for strike in view of the steps taken by the Government in appointing the Pay Commission, etc. The suggestion was accepted and the AITUC accordingly drafted a letter. The suggestion was agreeable to Shri Nath Pai and Shri Rajini Mukerjee of HMS.

The following letter was addressed to the P & T Federation as it was considered that it might help them in arriving at their final decision on the matter of strike. Some of the P & T leaders were first consulted whether a letter from the AITUC and the HMS would be of any help to them. Some of the HMS leaders who were here were consulted and they agreed that a letter containing our views on the situation could be given to the P&T Federation. Accordingly the following letter was sent on behalf of the AITUC.

As will be seen from the last paragraph of the letter, it was not meant for publication, in case the P&T Federation disagrees with our viewpoint. The letter was to be conveyed only to the Action Committee and for its consideration. But later on, it was found that the Action Committee took the same view as is expressed here though they took the view independently on their own. It was also found that the Action Committee in their resolution calling off the strike on 8th August referred to this letter, though at the time they took the decision, only a gist of our views was conveyed to them and the letter actually had not been delivered.

ALL INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS,
4 Ashok Road, New Delhi.
August 8, 1957

To
The Council of Action,
P & T Federation,
Pusa Road, New Delhi.

Dear Friends,

Today, the 8th of August, when you are on the eve of finalising your proposed momentous action of strike, the members of the Working Committee of the AITUC who are at present in Delhi would like to address you a few words.

You are an independent Federation of Government employees and as such you are not affiliated to any Central organisation of trade unions. The trade unions of the AITUC, the vast sections of the working class in industries and services other than those of Government, have declared their support to the cause of the workers in Government services.

. . . These workers have been suffering

(AITUC's letter - contd)

These workers have been suffering for a long time, along with their brethren in other industries, trades and professions from the policies of high taxation, rising cost of living, rising prices and monopoly profits which are the principal elements at present in the economy of our country causing the crisis in the life of our people.

The demand for the removal of this suffering in the Governmental services took the form of a demand for Pay Commission.

It is nearly eleven years now that a Pay Commission once judged the question of the emoluments of Governmental services. It was high time to even if there was no serious rise in the cost of living to demand that this structure of emoluments and conditions of service which we had inherited from the days of the British system be overhauled and rendered rational and liberal. But the Government of India, unfortunately, refused to pay heed to this demand thinking that the Governmental services were not such a highly organised force as to be taken note of. The result was that the Government resisted the appointment of a Pay Commission for a very long time.

In the meanwhile, the P&T Services, divided into several independent organisations, merged into a central Federation and became a powerful organisation. Other Governmental services such as those of the Civil Airlines, CPWD, Central Government offices, also developed their associations and trade unions and gave expression to their demands. The movement assumed a very organised and acute form, especially after the prices began to shoot up very swiftly and after the additional heavy burdens were imposed on the people by way of new taxes while prices were not pegged to any reasonable standards and profits remained uncontrolled. A general atmosphere of resistance to these taxes, rising prices and profits had come into existence in the whole country.

At this moment, the P & T federation and trade unions of Governmental services gave notice of strike to the Government of India.

At the same time, the resolution on Pay Commission was moved in the Parliament and the Government was given an opportunity to make its stand clear on this question. The resolution on Pay Commission was supported by the Communist Party, the Praja Socialist Party, the Socialist Party, the Scheduled Castes Federation and even some of the Congress M.P.s as well as representatives of the various trade unions in the House.

The debate around the Pay Commission generated great enthusiasm in the country and especially among the Governmental services, whose morale and organisation gathered strength as a result of the move in Parliament. The P & T Federation built up a strong support for its notice of strike to realise its main demands, one of which was the major demand for the appointment of a Pay Commission.

In this context when the Pay Commission came to be debated in the Parliament, the Government considered it necessary to admit the appointment of some form of a Committee to enquire into the emoluments and conditions of service of the Government employees. This Committee, as indicated in the speech of the Finance Minister, however, had no soul or body put into it and appeared to be a nebulous affair and therefore it did not satisfy any section of the workers or the movers of the resolution.

Naturally, the movement to prepare for the strike continued unabated. A countrywide response came from all the sections of the workers for the proposed strike of the Governmental services and no amount of threats was going to intimidate the workers in the surrender of their demands.

The Government took note of this state of affairs and on 2nd of August announced on the floor of the Parliament, the appointment of a Pay

. . . Commission with three terms

(AITUC's letter - contd.)

Commission with three terms of reference which are well-known to you. The mere fact that the demand for which all the Governmental services were agitating and which was being so hotly pressed on the floor of the House and which as a central demand for the last several years had been conceded by the Government should have generated an atmosphere of victory and a sense of pride and should have led to the reconsideration of the notice of strike given by the Governmental services' organisation. It did not happen so, and quite rightly.

Because, the appointment of a Pay Commission which was resisted for so long and was at last conceded was immediately followed by the introduction of the Essential Services Maintenance Bill which was the "big club" the Government was going to wield against the Governmental services, if they did not give up their decision to strike. Not even that. In the speech introducing this Bill, the Home Minister made a speech explaining the terms of reference in such a way of putting the difficulties in the way of granting of demands even through the Pay Commission that one could almost draw the conclusion that the Government did not want the Pay Commission to yield any wage increase and benefits to the Governmental services.

As a result, the appointment of the Commission itself almost went unnoticed and main attention was concentrated on the question whether any benefit would come out of the Pay Commission, whether any interim relief was being given or not or whether there was some limit for the consideration of the whole question.

When this was pointed out by the Opposition speakers, then in the reply to the debate, the Home Minister made a reference that the Pay Commission might consider the question of interim relief if it felt it was competent to do. This sort of hedging statement made things more suspicious and therefore, the question of interim relief and some time limit became the central question of negotiations. It was right then in that situation that the Central Council of Action rejected any proposals to call off that action in view of the most half-hearted and almost negative statements made by the Home Minister on the tasks of the Pay Commission and the outcome that was to be expected.

Negotiations, therefore, were carried on by Parliament members, trade union representatives and others including the Council of Action, with the Government on the now two remaining main points, whether interim relief was either being granted immediately or if not whether it was being added as a term of reference to the Pay Commission or not and whether there would be some time limit to the report of the Pay Commission on this particular question and if there was any time limit about that, then whether the interim relief would be granted with some retrospective effect.

In response to this when the Prime Minister made a radio speech, he said that the question of interim relief would be considered by the Pay Commission. But during negotiations with various Ministers, it was found that on this question there was no common viewpoint in the ministerial circles and in fact, some Ministers were doubtful whether the interim relief could be referred and the trade union circles were entitled to conclude that on this question, the Government was hedging and vacillating.

Many members of Parliament belonging to the political parties and trade union organisations which had taken interest in these negotiations and in helping the movement forward came to the conclusion that Government must refer the question of interim relief categorically to the Pay Commission and indicate that the matters would be reported on speedily.

The AITUC knows that the working class has got a bitter experience in this matter. For example, the report of the Kalyanwala Committee referring to the defence employees was completely suppressed by the Government and

. . . practically no action was taken

(AITUC Letter - contd.)

practically no action was taken on the basis of this report except in so far as the report went against the workers. When the defence employees' organisations almost came to a stage of general strike on this question, then some action was taken on that report and that report itself was made available to the workers.

It is also well-known that in the matter of railway employees on the very minor question of removing the anomalies among the various wings of the railway services, the Shankar Saran Tribunal has been sitting for months and years and yet there is no outcome until the INTUC came forward and even got the Tribunal suspended and proposed to resolve matters through negotiations.

In view of these and other incidents, the workers wanted a definite statement on the floor of the House that interim relief is referred to the Commission positively and that some time limit is indicated.

Matters were on the point of breakdown on these questions despite the fact that not only the main demand for the appointment of a Pay Commission has been achieved but that the P & T Federation particularly had received assurances openly that two or three of its important demands such as the question of 80,000 workers in the extra-departmental employment and the question of Assam compensatory allowance and questions of leave, etc., were being settled separately. It was promised, for example, that since the E.D.A. staff of 80,000 was not actually in Government service, their problems would be considered by a separate Committee to be appointed. These things were paving the way for a settlement, we thought, if the question of categorical assurance and the other two points mentioned above were forthcoming.

At this juncture the Council of Action and the Members of Parliament again tried with the Government and it is now on record that the Government made a statement on the floor of the House definitely referring the question of interim relief to the Pay Commission and assurance was also given to those who negotiated these matters that the Government would request the Commission to expedite its report and would give whatever interim relief is recommended from the date of the announcement of the Commission.

In view of these latest assurances, a question has been posed whether it is now desirable to pursue the call for strike. The AITUC as such has never been approached by the P & T Federation and the Governmental services for any advice so far in this dispute or any other dispute, though these organisations have been rendering all the moral support it could to the P & T and Governmental Services.

Still, we think that we should give to the Council of Action, our considered opinion on the question now before the P & T Federation, whether to pursue the call for strike after these events have taken place.

We think that it would be right on our part to indicate to the Council of Action our view that in view of the fact that the Central demand of all Government services for a Pay Commission has been conceded, that the demand for interim relief which first did not appear in the terms of reference has now been made a term of reference to the Pay Commission, that the question of expediting a report on the interim relief has also been sent up to the Commission, that an unofficial assurance that the relief would be granted with retrospective effect from the date of the appointment of the Commission, we feel, the Council of Action would be well advised if it calls off the strike notice and take further organisational steps in order to create conditions in which all the promises made by the Government are fulfilled and the workers' demands are satisfied in the course of the next phase of the movement.

A genuine fear exists that the calling off of the strike if it were so decided by the Council of Action would lead to demoralisation amongst workers who have now keyed themselves up to a determined struggle in defence of their needs

.....It has been asked whether the

(AITUC Letter - contd.)

It has been asked whether the calling off of the strike would not disarm the workers to such an extent that the Government with its repressive legislation and victimisation would smash the organisation and nullify the possibility of making any gains further.

Our considered view is that there is no doubt that a certain amount of anger would remain in the minds of the workers if the Council decides to call off the strike. It would lead to some demoralisation in a small section of the workers. It would even make some people doubt the wisdom of the action. But as against this, if the Council of Action succeeds in bringing to the attention of the people the fact that the main core of the demands on which the whole movement was built, has been conceded though a tangible sum of rupees has not fallen into their hands in the form of interim relief and if the Council of Action were to point out that an orderly withdrawal of the action in view of the concessions given and a further development of the organisation and its strength in order to hold down the Government to its words and its fulfilment and the saving of the hundreds and thousands from dismissals and imprisonments would lead to an attitude in the minds of the workers which would strengthen their organisation further and not weaken it. It would enable them to take a leap forward from the positions they have attained so far in order to achieve still greater results.

There, of course, remains the question that even after we have resolved this deadlock, the repressive Act will be there to be fought out. Certainly, the democratic movement throughout the whole country will have to take steps to fight this measure. But that question should be separated at present from the question of the settlement of the demands of the workers. The repressive Act will surely be fought by the working class and the democratic masses in the country unitedly until it is abolished from the statute book.

On a balance, we find the gain would be more than the loss which loss would be quite temporary. Hence we would request you to give due consideration to this viewpoint and take your decisions with calm consideration, which should not be allowed to be vitiated by the ideas of prestige or subjective prejudices.

The AITUC and all those who have participated in this, pledge their support to your cause. This letter of ours is not meant to, in any case, divert the workers away from the Council of Action and the Federation but it is only meant to help you in arriving at correct decisions and it is only meant for the consideration of the Council of Action and the leadership of the P & T Federation and the Confederation of Trade Unions of Governmental services.

We wish you all success.

The Prime Minister made a statement as under, conceding on the floor of the House that in the notification appointing the Commission, reference would be made to the question of Interim Relief being considered by them and that the Commission will be requested to make an interim report:

"Government, and I am sure this House, are deeply concerned about notices and news of impending stoppages of work in various essential services in the country. This matter has come before the House in different forms on several occasions during the last two weeks or more. I should like to keep the House informed of recent developments in what the Government have done in this matter and propose to do.

"While it is the duty of the Government to take necessary powers to maintain essential services and take steps to that end, it is equally their concern to deal with the problems that have arisen, taking into account all the aspects involved and the demands of the workers affected.

. . . . During the last three

"During the last three weeks or more I have myself been intimately connected with this matter and so have indeed my other colleagues in Government. On the 26th July I met a deputation from the National Federation of Posts and Telegraphs Employees. My colleagues, the Ministers of Labour and Communications, were also with me. We had long and friendly talks in the course of which I explained to the deputation more fully our ideas about the proposed Pay Commission. The question of interim relief was then raised and the deputation was informed that this would also be referred to the proposed Pay Commission.

I came away from this meeting feeling that an atmosphere of friendly cooperation had been created and the proposed strike would not take place. I was therefore much surprised and distressed to learn the next morning that the strike decision had been confirmed by the Committee of P&T Federation.

On the 3rd August the terms of reference of this Commission were announced in the House by the Finance Minister. These terms were to form part of the subsequent notification to be issued by the Government of India.

On the 5th August I made a broadcast to the country in the course of which I spoke about the Pay Commission and referred to their functions. In particular I stated that the question of interim relief would be referred to the Commission.

I was informed later that some representatives of the P&T Federation wanted to meet me again to seek some clarification. I met them on the late afternoon of the 6th August and had a long talk with them. The principal subject discussed was that of interim relief and I explained again that this would be referred to the Commission. Thereupon I was pressed for some immediate grant of relief. I pointed out that as this matter was being referred to the Pay Commission it would neither be desirable nor possible for us to accept any such proposal for immediate relief. This would naturally affect many others, apart from the P&T people.

The question of a dateline or time-limit being fixed for the Commission to present their interim proposals had also been raised. I made it clear that in our opinion this would not be proper nor suited to the dignity of the high-level commission that we were appointing.

Thus, Government have already announced that the high-powered Commission with an eminent Judge of the Supreme Court as Chairman will be appointed soon. In the notification appointing this Commission reference will be made to the question of interim relief being considered by them and they will be requested to make interim reports. I have no doubt that the Commission will consider with care and expedition all problems brought to their notice.

It will appear that Government are well seized of these problems. They have given adequate assurances that they have met and intend to meet all reasonable demands of the workers. It is in the interest of the workers themselves as well, as the country as a whole that there should be no stoppage of work in our essential services and that these problems should be dealt with by peaceful approaches and methods of conciliation to which Government are committed.

If, however, there is a stoppage of work in these essential services, then it is the duty of Government to see that the essential services are maintained and we seek the cooperation of public in this matter.

In view of the re-affirmation of the strike threat, in spite of the efforts that Government has made, Government has been compelled to advise the President to issue an ordinance on the lines of the Essential Services Maintenance Bill passed by the Lok Sabha on the 6th August. I trust, however, that there will be no stoppage of work and that it will not be necessary therefore for this ordinance to come into operation."

. . . Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri in the afternoon announced the same and the other decisions earlier talked over on the floor of the House.

The Joint Council of Action withdrew the strike decision at about 4 P.M.

Extract from the review of strike by the Federation of P & T Employees:

DEMANDS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Pay Commission | Accepted |
| 2. Grant of D.A. | Referred to Pay Commission for Interim Report |
| 3. Abolition of distinction between Class III and IV | Leave, Pension and Medical Rules Already decided upon. T.A. and D.A. under consideration. Other matters referred to A/C. |
| 4. Abolition of other distinctions | Referred to Pay Commission |
| 5. Merger of full D.A. | -do- |
| 6. E.D.A. | A Committee to be appointed |
| 7. Assam C.A. | A favourable decision is assured. |

August 13, 1957

The President revoked the Maintenance of Essential Services Ordinance.

Major C.V.Rajan appointed on the One-man Committee for E.D.problems.

August 22, 1957

The Finance Minister laid on the table of Parliament, Government resolution as below appointing the Pay Commission:

As promised by the Prime Minister to the representatives of the Unions, the final terms of reference provide that the Commission may consider demands for interim relief. The Commission is also authorised to indicate the date from which this relief should take effect. The following is the text of the Government of India resolution placed before the Lok Sabha by the Finance Minister and before the Rajya Sabha by the Deputy Minister, Mr.B.R.Bhagat.

"The Government of India have decided to set up a Commission of Enquiry composed of the following:

Chairman: Mr.Justice Jagannadha Das, Judge of the Supreme Court.

Members: Mr.V.B.Gandhi
Mr.M.K.Sidhanta
Mr.M.L.Dantwala
Mrs.Maragatham Chandrasekhar
Mr.L.P.Singh, I.C.S., Member-Secretary.

Associate Secretary: Mr.H.F.B.Pais.

"The terms of reference of the Commission will be as follows:

. . . Examine the principles

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PAY COMMISSION

- (i) Examine the principles which should govern the structure of emoluments and conditions of service of the Central Government employees;
- (ii) Consider and recommend what changes in the structure of emoluments and conditions of service of different classes of Central Government employees are desirable and feasible keeping in mind the considerations mentioned below;
- (iii) Recommend, in particular, the extent to which benefits to Central Government employees can be given in the shape of amenities and facilities; and
- (iv) In making their recommendations, the Commission will take into account the historical background, the economic conditions in the country and the implications and requirements of developmental planning, and also the disparities in the standard of remuneration and conditions of service of the Central Government employees on the one hand and of the employees of the State Governments, local bodies and aided institutions on the other and all other relevant factors.

"The Commission may consider demands for relief of an interim character and send reports thereon. In the event of the Commission recommending any interim relief, the date from which this relief should take effect will be indicated by the Commission.

"The Commission will devise their own procedure and may appoint such advisers as they choose for any particular purpose. They may call for such information and take such evidence as they may consider necessary. Ministries and departments of the Government of India will furnish such information and documents and other assistance as may be required by the Commission. The Government of India trust that the State Governments, Service Associations and others concerned will also extend to the Commission their fullest co-operation and assistance.

"The Commission are requested to make their recommendations to the Government as soon as practicable."

TEA PLANTATION ENQUIRY - 1954

A Summary of
THE REPORT

The Plantation Enquiry Committee, appointed by the Government of India in 1954, in its report on Tea industry in India, says:

"In an industry in which capital is so largely in the hands of foreign business houses and 75% of whose production is controlled directly by a limited number of agents of these foreign firms and whose produce is sold largely to the same foreign country and in many cases through the same agents, it is inevitable that there should be a high degree of concentration. Large concentration of business . . . can conceivably work to the disadvantage to the sellers in certain circumstances. . . . Excessive concentration of economic power (auctioning and warehousing) give room for complaints of discrimination and other grievances. The situation is therefore inherently unsound. . . . In the marketing of tea in Calcutta the brokers have come to an unusually strong position. The business is concentrated in the hands of four non-Indian firms. We note that there is excessive concentration of economic power in the hands of a few brokers."

"The larger proportion of old plants, those planted before 1900, are in gardens under non-Indian ownership ranging from 43.4% in the case of non-Indian Rupee companies to 29.4 in the case of Sterling companies. The percentage of tea plants planted before 1900 in Darjeeling region amount to 79.16%. . . . During the ten years ending 1953, the extent of replanting has been less than 1% per year. In spite of the need of a programme of replanting for the very existence of the industry, in the long run, we have observed that the progress has been tardy."

The Commission went into the condition of the industry in all its aspects including its cost structure, and has revealed a number of most disquieting facts, which the AITUC, INTUC and other Central TUs had been pointing out for a long time. But the Government of India so long paid no heed. In a memorandum submitted by the West Bengal Committee of the AITUC to the official team on Tea Industry appointed by the Government of India in 1952, pointed out: "A number of old gardens have been changed hands at a very high price, and the Indian entrepreneurs find it difficult to run the gardens and invest further capital which these old and almost exhausted gardens badly need. . . . Most of the gardens of Darjeeling and Cachar are in a condition of exhaustion. The planters, instead of investing on new planting, . . . continued to squeeze the plants for the last three quarter of a century to their exhaustion. . . . Moreover, ^{that} the foreign investors do not take any interest in the industry is shown from the fact that only 20 crores of capital was added in 50 years while many of the companies have unbroken dividend record since the 'Eighties of the 19th century."

The memorandum also pointed out: "The British monopolists, finding East Africa as better soil to exploit the workers . . . are investing capital on Tea Industry there. . . ." The findings of the Commission corroborates the points in the Memorandum.

Emphasising the importance of the industry, the Commission points out that India produces nearly half of the total world production, having 40.5% of the total world acreage. In the year 1954-55, the total value of

Dealing with the structure of the tea industry and the high concentration, the Commission observes, out of the total capital of Rs.113.06 crores, . . . 64.2 per cent is non-Indian

64.2 per cent (Rs.72.55 crores) is non-Indian and 35.8 per cent (Rs.40.51 crores) Indian.

Thirteen leading houses in Calcutta control over 75% of the production in North India. Of these, 7 companies control 50% and 5 companies as much as 36% of the production. Eight agency houses of producers in Calcutta within associate firms purchased over 50% of the tea at the Calcutta auction in 1954.

The retail distribution of tea in India is controlled by two non-Indian firms in Calcutta to the extent of 85% who also control in blending and distribution, 95.6% of packaged tea and 54.4% of tea for internal consumption in India.

The growth of the paid-up capital from 1938 to 1953 . . . shows that the increase is not very significant. What little increase there has been is also wholly accounted for by the issue of bonus shares.

In the marketing of tea in Calcutta 4 non-Indian houses handled 96.5% and 2 Indian firms only 3.5% of tea in Calcutta auction in 1954. In the majority cases they act as brokers both for sellers as well as buyers. They also act as financiers to producers.

In the sphere of export of tea, Indian firms exported 88.6% and non-Indian firms 99.1% of their total export through the U.K.Banks in 1952. In the year 1953-54, non-Indian banks advanced Rs.33.02 crores to both Indian and non-Indian producers and realised Rs.64.47 crores by sale of hypothecated tea. In the same year, Indian banks advanced only Rs.6.28 crores and realised Rs.11.75 crores. Calcutta warehousing is controlled only by one non-Indian Agency House, who are also producers and exporters.

Thus the Commission's findings show the grip of the British monopoly capital over our industry and its trade.

COSTS: "Changes in cost of production are prima facie indications of the competitive position of the industry in the international market and its profitability" says the report. Sri Sivaswami, a member of the Commission, in his note of dissent, remarked: "The producer got such a competitive price that it could cover the uninterrupted growing costs since 1933. . . The object of concentration is restriction of surplus and maintenance of highest possible price."

The report of the Commission notes that in 1953, the Sterling Companies had the highest total costs at Rs.135.67 per 100 lbs. and the Director-controlled Indian public Ltd., companies, the lowest costs at Rs.102.11 per 100 lbs. of tea. According to the Cost Accounts' reports, the causes of high cost were the following:

Non-Indian Rupee Companies: Managing Agency commission based on sales and manager's commission based on profits; high costs of recruiting labour and high salaries of tea-makers; heavy building repairs shown under current expenditure; extraneous payments in the name of technical consultants and additional assistants and increase in overseas pensions.

Sterling Companies: General increase in salaries and allowances and employment of extra European assistants; cost of recruitment and medical facilities.

Indian Companies: Low yields due to low costs; more expenses under salaries, plucking and depreciation; all directors taking a commission of 5% on profit.

According to the Commission, there is room for reduction of costs under the head "General Charges" which accounted for 32.41% of the All-India average, total costs, by decreasing the remuneration paid to Managing Agents and Secretaries, by abolishing the Commission paid to managers, etc., by increasing Indianisation of managerial personnel and reducing the non-Indian managerial personnel to the minimum, etc. etc.

PROFIT AND ITS DISTRIBUTION

The total gross profits of 247 companies (covering nearly 50% of the total acreage) rose from 4.75 crores in 1939 to Rs.11.16 crores in 1946, Rs.15.64 in 1950 and Rs.21.09 crores in 1953. In 1954, the gross profits of a smaller number of companies namely 123, amounted to Rs.22.98 crores. Generally speaking the ratio of gross profit to total capital employed in the tea planting industry has been very high. Sterling companies made comparatively less profits; but they distributed a large percentage of their profits as dividends than Indian companies. Distributed profits expressed as percentage of profit after taxation was higher in Sterling companies in 1953 than in Indian companies though it was less than that in non-Indian rupee companies, says the report.

MANAGING AGENTS' COMMISSION:

One of the reasons for the high costs and lower profits of the non-Indian companies is their remuneration to Managing Agents. The Commission to Managing Agents, Secretaries, by 210 tea companies rose from Rs.140 lakhs in 1950 to Rs.164 crores in 1953. Even in 1952 when most companies registered losses, the total commission paid by those 201 companies amounted to Rs.91 lakhs.

PROFITS OF NON-INDIAN BROKERS HOUSES

Regarding the non-Indian Brokers' Houses of Calcutta and Cochin, the Commission observes that in 1953-54 while their capital employed was Rs.16.82 lakhs, reserves were Rs.45.15 lakhs, they had a gross income of Rs.91.38 lakhs and net profit after deducting all expenses and providing for taxation was Rs.22.2 lakhs. An examination of the total paid-up share capital of brokerage firms reveals that nearly half the paid-up capital is accounted for by allocation of shares for considerations other than cash. On one company, the entire share capital with the exception of a very nominal sum has been thus allotted, observes the Commission.

HIGH SALARIES

Regarding highly-salaried personnel, the following figures reveal the position of 136 companies as on 1.1.1955:

In the salary group (including allowances) of Rs.1000 to Rs.3000, the Indian technical and managerial personnel numbered only 134 as against 1104 non-Indians. In the salary group of above Rs.3000, there were no Indians but only 53 non-Indians.

While the production of tea in India has steadily increased from 56.05 crore lbs. in 1947 to 61.36 crore lbs. in 1952, to 61.47 crore lbs. in 1953, to 64.41 crore lbs. in 1954. The number of labour employed has decreased from 10.33 lakhs in 1950 (from Tea Board's figure) to according to Commission's report 9.70 lakhs in 1953, which shows a decrease of 6.3 per cent in total employment.

The Commission observes that in Assam, labour per acre decreased from 1.44 per 1951-52, 1.36 in 1952-53, to 0.86 in 1953-54. Thus decrease of labour per acre between 1951-52 and 1953-54 stands at 5.8%.

In spite of this increase in production and decrease in number of workers, the Commission emphasised the need of "increased productivity" by rationalisation and retrenchment. The Commission observes "rationalisation operation is necessary to increase productivity" and further says, "Government and labour should be willing to face problems of retrenchment arising from increased productivity."

When unemployment is one of the acute problems in the country, when the First Five Year Plan has failed to tackle it and there is no hope of its solution in the Second Plan, particularly when the problem of surplus labour in tea gardens has become acute, one fails to understand how the Commission expects the workers to willingly face further retrenchment.

. . . . It is useless to say as the

It is useless to say, as the Commission has recommended, that steps should be taken to provide alternative employment for those who would be retrenched due to rationalisation, when lakhs and lakhs of jobless people are remaining in the country, when the Government in spite of its pious wish has failed to provide even a small part of them with employment, when the problem of surplus labour has not yet been solved to any extent. It is our bitter experience that no amount of promise of the Government, not to speak of the Commission's recommendations serves any purpose. The reality is that if rationalisation is not resisted by the workers, it will end in heavy retrenchment. No doubt, workers will resist any rationalisation resulting in further retrenchment.

The Commission observes that the labour cost on total production for 1953 was 12 annas per lb. The Commission naturally had to rely on the figures supplied by the management. It was also noted by the Commission that garden expenses in case of rupee companies and total expenses by managing agency or secretaries in case of sterling companies are not audited. Particularly in tea estates, there is no system of taking signatures or thumb impression during any payment to the workers. There is, therefore, enough scope for doubt about the actual expenses that were incurred by the management of tea estates. Particularly when the Commission itself finding the Sterling companies' returns submitted to their London Office by the Agency Houses in India without any auditing and "in the case of Rupee companies also, the auditors' certificates indicate that certified return from gardens are accepted as such," "recommends" "it is essential that a system of local audit of the garden expenditure and other branch office expenditure should be insisted upon by the Government in case of all companies." It is evident that without any auditing no one can take the accounts seriously. So we cannot accept this high labour cost. It is all the more doubtful about the expenses on labour amenities, which to the estimation of the Commission was 15% of the total labour cost.

Dealing with the question of wages of the workers which are Rs.1.12.3 in Assam, Rs.1.11.6 in Duars, Rs.1.11.0 in Terai, Rs.1.9.6 in Travancore-Cochin, Rs.1.7.0 in Madras and Rs.1.6.0 in Darjeeling, the Commission observes that the minimum wages should be uniform in all States varying only for difference in cost of living. The Commission has not gone into the question of whether the present extremely low standard of living justifies the present most inadequate wages. On the contrary views are that wages increment would not improve the standard of living, but more amenities such as implementation of Plantation Labour Act would serve the purpose better. But our experience is that without any further wages increment no improvement in the standard of living is at all possible. It should be noted that the tea workers spend about 77% of their earnings on food alone, still the diet they take lacks nutrition even to the minimum. Under the circumstances, immediate wages increase is urgently needed. Moreover the Commission's recommendations for uniform minimum wages for all States, we are afraid will give a plea for the managements to decrease the wages of all areas to the lowest minimum prevailing in Darjeeling or Cachar. There must be definite recommendation that nowhere the wages can be reduced than at present and wages of other areas with lower wages should be increased to the present maximum. The recommendations of the Commission on the rates of plucking areas:

- i) It should be progressively increased for quantities plucked.
- ii) It will have to be higher in cold season or for bushes recently pruned when the quantity of leaf is small.
- iii) It should be fixed in such a way that it enables a worker to earn, at least minimum wage for a normal working day.
- iv) The rate should be equal for men, women and adolescents.

While recommending the above, the Commission wants a definite quantum of work which must be finished within the prescribed time, it also wants the

. . . plantation workers to work full time

plantation workers to work full time during the plucking season as well as during the winters to earn their minimum wages. But, firstly, this combination of quantum of work and time will only help the management to enforce increased intensity of labour without any proportional increment of wages. Secondly due to meagerness of the wages, the workers are forced to do certain work such as collecting fuel, etc., during the winter season. It is not possible till the present wages and living condition of the workers continue to work eight hours during the winter. The Commission has recommended for payment of Bonus to the workers, subject to the following conditions:

- i) Depreciation allowance by the income-tax authorities should be separately funded and drawn up only for meeting expenditure on replacement and renewal of fixed assets.
- ii) The tea planting fund should be set apart.
- iii) After providing for taxation, such Company should build out of its profits a statutory reserve for meeting development expenditure and unforeseen charges.
- iv) From what is left over, a certain minimum dividend should be provided for as a percentage on share-capital.
- v) The remainder should be divided between the share-holders and labour staff according to a suitable formula.

After fulfilling the items (i) to (iv), we are afraid there will remain very little for the workers to get a bonus. These conditions should therefore be reconsidered, so that a minimum bonus may be guaranteed irrespective of the so-called "losses."

PLANTATION LABOUR ACT

The Commission recommends phased programme of implementation of the Act on grounds of non-availability of funds. We feel that the housing and other provisions of the Act may not need the estimated expenditure provided the managements take the co-operation of workers and employ the unemployed workers living in each garden. To depend on contractors for every bit of job requires much more expenditure than if done directly by the management with the help of the workers. We think the Commission's suggestion to find out materials locally for building workers instead of waiting for the Cement, steel, etc. This, if taken into consideration and workers cooperation taken, the expenditure will certainly be much less than the present estimate. It will save time and hasten the building of badly-needed houses for the workers. Phased programme cannot be accepted as the planters have been delaying the implementation since 1951 on various pleas.

Even in the year 1954-55 when fabulous profits were earned, the planters did not think it necessary to keep sufficient funds before distribution of profit. According to the Commission, funds for implementation of the Plantation Labour Act should be set apart and in case of sale of any garden without discharging this obligation, the Government should deduct the amount from the sale proceeds before the transfer deed is allowed to be registered.

The Government should enforce necessary legislation on the matter without delay.

Regarding the suggestion of forming a welfare organisation under the control of the Union Government, we feel that all the Central T.U.s should be adequately represented in the body.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

"Unfair practices such as refusal to grant interviews or negotiate, favouritism and discrimination in treatment of employees, evasion in implementing the Plantation Labour Act, dismissal of workers without cause, supporting one union against the other - these acts on the part of some managements increased disharmony (in industrial relations). The illegal methods sometimes resorted to by some labourers in expressing their grievances, already referred to, add to it," says the Commission.

While all the responsible Trade Union leadership always want peaceful solution of all disputes and persuade the workers not to be provoked by managements' actions, the attitude of the managements remain the same as the Commission's findings as stated the above.

We hope the Government and the employers will take note of the above findings of the Commission and take immediate steps to act on them, if they really want industrial peace.

MONORANJAN ROY

Year	No. of Stoppages	No. of workers involved	Manhours lost
1951	1068	6,91,320	38,18,928
1952	960	8,09,244	33,36,960
1953	972	5,80,132	34,11,078
1954	1072	4,67,138	37,72,630
1955	1539	7,34,412	47,15,858
1956	1690	10,19,181	70,95,960
1957 January	154	1,26,995	3,95,003
February	135	1,00,198	2,60,794
March	116	40,488	2,77,013
April	144	59,309	3,53,245

NOTE: The figures given above have been taken from the Monthly Abstract of Statistics, Cabinet Secretariat, Central Statistical Organisation, New Delhi. The figures for 1951 and 1952 are based on Monthly averages. The figures for 1953, 1954, 1955 and 1956 have been taken from the issues dated March 1955, May 1955, March 1957 and June 1957 respectively. The figures for the months in 1957 is based on the issues for those months for which figures are indicated.

SUGGESTIONS ON

PLANTATION T. U. s

Report from Tamilnad

We are sending herewith a note for consideration by the Working Committee on the situation amongst the unions in the Plantations. We have tried to pose the problems that face us as regards organisation and the workers' demands.

I

The plantation workers all over India are organised in trade unions affiliated to one or the other of the all-India organisations. But there is no coordination amongst them and we find that the conditions of service, wages, etc., vary from place to place, even in neighbouring areas (Tamilnad and Kerala; West Bengal and Assam; etc.).

The managements dictate terms not only to the workers but to the Government also. They were able, for instance, to influence the Government to delay the implementation of the Plantation Labour Act for more than two years. Even today the whole Act is not in force. Take also the recommendations of the Plantation Enquiry Commission—the Government have been influenced to turn them down.

Realising the need for a more coordinated movement here in Tamilnad, we are in the process of forming a provincial federation—the first step towards this is that of amalgamating the AITUC Unions. We are a major force in Anamalais area and Kulasekaram - in the Nilgiris, we are making some headway.

In the past few years with the growth of our movement in the plantations we have faced difficulties in organising coordinated action even in our State. Some organisational remedy must be found for this. Particularly is it important for us to have some organisational coordination with the unions in Kerala, because the same companies operate in both regions.

We feel that, therefore, on an all-India scale a federation drawing in all the trade unions, irrespective of their central affiliation (as exists in Cement, for instance) would be of great value—from the point of view of labour as well as the industry. We hope that the AITUC will take the initiative to call a meeting of representatives of plantation labour which could be preceded by a meeting of AITUC representatives. We would like to add that we are quite willing to act as the hosts for such a representatives' meeting.

II

The immediate attention of the Unions should be drawn to the following issues affecting plantation workers:

1. Wages: Wages, as per the Minimum Wages Act, have been fixed taking 3 wage earners in each family—this has now been rejected by the Study Group of the Planning Commission and by the recent Indian Labour Conference. So early and effective steps should be taken to change the bases for the present wage structure and revise, the rate in accordance with the new formulations.
2. Plantation Labour Act: A number of provisions (creches, hospitals, schools, canteens, etc.) are yet to be implemented.
3. Bonus: In other industries irrespective of the fact that we may have our own formula, the LAT formula is being accepted as the basis for calculation of bonus, whereas in the plantations there is no such basis. The practice that now obtains here is that the Managements declare an ad hoc quantum and then when the workers agitate, another ad hoc quantum is fixed as a settlement. In the South, the managements have not so far given their balance sheets or profit and loss account to decide bonus at any time. We must undertake a campaign to bring the necessary pressure to bear on them to see that a formula is evolved for payment of bonus in plantations.

. . . . In Madras State, for the

In Madras State, for the years 1952 to 1956, the bonus dispute is still pending. On August 19, 1957, there were tripartite talks in presence of the Labour Commissioner on the 1955 and 1956 bonus issue. The managements have so far paid for these two years 9% and 6¼% (ad hoc) and now state they are prepared to pay 6¼% more for both the years bringing the total to 21½%. The Government also put forward this proposal. They have based themselves on the recent agreement brought about by the Labour Minister in Kerala. None of the Unions here have so far agreed to this and the talks have been postponed to a later date (possibly first week of September). We have asked for figures of profit and loss--the managements have so far said that such figures are not available.

4. Award of the Special Industrial Tribunal: Everyone is aware of the award by the Special Industrial Tribunal for the plantation workers which was given after detailed investigation for 4½ years. The management moved against this in the Supreme Court and have obtained a stay. They are moving for quashing of the award as a whole.

In the meanwhile, some of the unions--the INTUC Union and Neelamalai Unions in Nilgiris--have signed an agreement binding them for five years in which they have given up almost all the benefits granted in the Award. The wages have been reduced by them from Rs.2.4.0 to Rs.1.11.6.

The AITUC Unions and all the other Unions in Valparai did not sign this agreement. The employers have therefore resorted to harassing the workers individually and are getting them to sign documents agreeing to the same terms as are set down in the agreement. We have pointed out that this is unfair labour practice but it continues. In the Anamalais a large number of workers (belonging to our Union especially) are still refusing to sign. The managements hope to produce these signatures before the Supreme Court and get their case settled thereby.

Contrary to ILO recommendations two grades of wages have been accepted in this agreement for one and the same area--one for estates of 200 acres or less, another for more than 200 acres, a third for coffee estates, a fourth for Salem area, etc.

We approached the Government to call a conference to reopen discussions on an area basis. But at this Conference the management adopted a stiff attitude of sign the agreement and nothing more. So the talks broke down, but the Labour Commissioner has asked us to give concrete proposals in writing and then he will try for another conference.

We learn from the papers that an agreement has been signed in Kerala also on the same lines as the Madras agreement, but are told that AITUC Unions are not party to this agreement. We have been unable to get detailed information about this.

At present, the workers in the Anamalais are holding out--nearly 500 of them marched in procession on foot for 70 miles and staged a demonstration before the building, where the talks were taking place. If we could have a meeting with the Kerala comrades and hold talks with them, we could certainly plan some concerted action which would strengthen our position vis-a-vis the employers. According to the figures given in the Plantation Inquiry Commission, the Anamalais are a very prosperous region--we have made this our starting point in asking for reopening of the talks. The yield per acre in this region is the highest in India.

P.Vriddhagiri
A.Ramanathan
Parvathi Krishnan.

Coimbatore,
August 20, 1957.

On UNESCO Awards

FOR WORKERS STUDY TOURS IN ASIA

by K.B.Panikkar

The WFTU has taken considerable interest in the UNESCO programme for the Workers' Study Tours. In 1955 study tours for workers in Asia was initiated by the UNESCO. The 9th General Conference of UNESCO held in New Delhi last November decided to continue this programme for 1957 and 1958.

Quite a good number of WFTU affiliates have taken initiative in participating in the Workers Study Tours for Europe and were accorded UNESCO grants for workers study tours in Europe for 1957.

"The purpose of the scheme is to use the links which bind workers of a similar occupation as a bridge to increase the comprehension of the history, culture and customs of another country. It is not to provide an opportunity for technical training. The grants are intended to benefit ordinary wage earners who would otherwise have no opportunity for an educational experience in foreign countries." (UNESCO document EXP/W/664-482)

Hence the participation in the exchange of workers delegation under UNESCO auspices will contribute greatly in forging closer links with workers of other countries of Asia, in exchanging experiences and enriching the cultural level of the workers and strengthening mutual understanding and international trade union unity and solidarity.

During 1955-56 many trade unions in the countries of Asia have taken advantage of UNESCO awards including the INTUC and the All India Co-operative Union from our country.

Participation by the AITUC in the UNESCO programme of Workers Study Tours in Asia will be of advantage to our organisation.

The following conditions apply:

- * Applications are accepted from workers' organisations, which are of affiliates of the international workers' organisations having consultative status with UNESCO. Since the WFTU is in consultative status with UNESCO, the AITUC is competent to apply.
- * The application should be sponsored by the National Commission of UNESCO in each country. (Here, care of Ministry of Education).
- * The study tours should be planned sufficient time in advance (4 to 6 months). Within one month after receipt of the application the Director-General of UNESCO will inform applying organisation whether an award is granted or not.
- * The grant will cover return travel (air, tourist class) between the point of departure in the country and the town to be visited in the host country.
- * Majority of the participants of the Study Group should be rank and file workers. Grants will be awarded to normally to groups of not more than five.
- * The beneficiary organisation is at liberty to increase the number of participants in its group and to distribute the total UNESCO grant over the whole number.

. . . . Ordinarily the organisation

(Ordinarily the organisation applying for grant should meet the cost of accommodation, excursions in the country visited and other incidental expenses either through its own funds or through arrangements with organisations in the host country. In special cases when the organisation applying for a grant cannot meet these expenses, the UNESCO will be prepared to contribute an additional sum, not exceeding the equivalent of 150 US Dollars per person for a period of not less than one month.)

* The study tours are arranged within a continent or geographical region, from one UNESCO member State to another UNESCO member State. The following countries of Asia are members of UNESCO: Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaya-British Borneo (associated member), Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, South Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, the USSR.

* It is a condition of the award that the beneficiary group undertakes to prepare a report, on its experiences and impressions which should be sent to UNESCO's Exchange of Persons Services within two months of the return home, together with press cuttings, photographs or similar material.

The Working Committee of the AITUC may consider seriously as to how effectively we can participate in this programme of the UNESCO during the year 1957 and 1958..

A.I.T.U.C. NOMINEES
ON GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED CONFERENCES & COMMITTEES

1. Indian Labour Conference	....	Nominated from time to time
2. Standing Labour Committee	....	-do-
3. Technical Education	....	Com.SHANKERLINGAM
4. Directorate of Resettlement & Employment	....	Com.S.G.PATKAR
5. Minimum wages:		
(i) Advisory Board	....	Com.P.BALACHANDRA MENON
(ii) Revision Board	....	Com.INDRAJIT GUPTA
(iii) Fixation Board	....	Com.V.D.CHOPRA
6. Provident Fund	....	Com.TUSHAR CHATTERJEE (Resigned)
7. Employees State Insurance Corporation	....	Com.S.A.DANGE
8. Central Advisory Council for Industries	....	Com.S.A.DANGE
9. Workers' Education	....	Com.MOHD. ELIAS
10. Tripartite Technical Committee for drawing up Tripartite Agreement on Working Conditions in the Cement Industry	....	Com.N.SATYANARAYANA REDDY
11. Advisory Council for development of Internal Combustion Engines	....	Com.T.R.GANESAN
12. Vocational Training	....	Com.VITTAL CHOUDHURY
13. Sub-Committee on Workers' Participation in Management & Discipline In Industry	....	Com.T.C.N.MENON

Some Recent Working Class Struggles
in Foreign Countries

The year 1957 opened with a wave of massive united struggles waged by the working class for higher wages, shorter working hours and for improvement in working conditions, throughout the capitalist world.

UNITED KINGDOM

In Great Britain, as the year 1957 opened, about 7 million workers including three and a quarter million engineers and shipbuilders, one million building workers and various others such as miners, bank employees, railwaymen, shop assistants, textile workers and policemen were demanding wage increases.

The Engineering workers and railwaymen demanded a 10 per cent wage increase while the Mineworkers decided to ask for a minimum wage of £10 per week for daily-paid underground workers and £9 for daily-paid surface workers.

In March 1957, 2 lakh shipyard workers in Great Britain were involved in the biggest stoppage for 30 years, demanding a 10 per cent wage increase. Another 2½ million engineering workers have also decided to launch their struggle on March 23 for a 10 per cent increase.

The impending strike of 1¼ million strong engineering and shipbuilding workers was called off by a narrow vote when the Government announced a court of enquiry. An agreement signed with the employers provides for an increase of 6½ per cent as against the 10 per cent demanded by the Union.

One lakh bus drivers in Britain were engaged in a nation-wide strike from July 20 to 29. They were demanding a wage increase of approximately £1 per week. They have obtained a rise of 11 shillings. The employers had previously refused to grant any increase higher than 3 shillings a week.

JAPAN

The SOHYO of Japan, which includes in it the Government and Public workers, coal miners, chemical, railway and metal workers of Japan called for launching a struggle jointly with Independent unions of electric manufacturing workers, brewery workers, gas and petroleum workers to press for a minimum wage of 8,000 yen per month, wage increases to enable a living wage to be made on the basis of an 8-hour day and other demands.

These joint demands came in the wake of a successful struggle waged by 2.4 million Government and Public workers, including railwaymen in December, 1956, which forced the Government to concede an additional annual bonus of 15 percent thus bringing the total up to 165 per cent of the monthly wage.

The Spring offensive led by the 3-million strong SOHYO was opened on February 6 by 200,000 coalminers which ordered its members to begin one-hour daily sit-down strikes, carried out in the form of a complete enforcement of rest time, in order to press for their wage increase demand of 2,000 yen a month.

The coalminers have won a 1,300 yen wage increase after a 72-hour strike in March, 1957.

FRANCE

During the week March 11-18, a whole series of limited strikes took place in France. The miners struck work for 24 hours on March 11, the postal workers on March 13 and the Air France personnel also struck work.

A 48-hour strike of railwaymen was held throughout France on April 17-18. Not a goods train ran during the period and only 5 per cent of passenger trains were in service. They were demanding higher wages.

ITALY

The Postal and Telegraph workers numbering 105,000 went on strike for 48 hours on March 1 and 2. The Railway workers have won a £5 rise in wages following their token strike.

On March 23, 370,000 railway workers commenced a strike for wage increases.

WEST GERMANY

Over a million building workers won a 45-hour week together with an increase in hourly pay of 7 pfennings from April 1, 1957.

A four-month long strike of 34,000 metal workers in West Germany was called off in February following the partial concessions won by them.

*

In CANADA the railway workers struck work from January 2 to 11, demanding a 25 per cent wage increase and against the dismissals arising out of mechanisation and automation. The ten-day strike was called off after the Government decided to set up a commission to examine the dispute.

In MALAYA, 320,000 workers succeeded in winning a wage increase of 33 cents a day, after a long drawn out struggle. Gold mine workers in the State of Pahang, civil aviation employees, smelter workers and Government and bank employees and teachers, carried out strike struggles for rise in wages.

In NIGERIA, the railway workers after a dogged struggle succeeded in winning a 7 hour day.

The ARGENTINE railway workers resorted to a "go slow" strike in support of the demand for higher wages in January, 1957. On April 6, 50,000 municipal workers struck work. They were joined on April 9 by 60,000 workers employed in the cold storage depots. On July 12, about two million workers took part in a 24-hour General Strike.

In INDONESIA, the SOBSI warned the Dutch Government that, if it insisted on retaining West Irian, it would call for a general strike by its 2½ million members in all Dutch enterprises throughout the country.

In SOUTH AFRICA, 100,000 African working people took part in a remarkable bus boycott following increase in fares and in defence of their rights as Africans. 20,000 walked nearly 20 miles a day at Alexandra Township to go and return from the factories. 8,000 people were arrested.

In the PHILIPPINES, the transport workers have gone on strike demanding reinstatement of 20 trade union members who were dismissed and repayment of excessive deductions from the pay-packets of trade union members over a period of more than 30 years. This is the most important transport workers' strike that has ever been seen in the Philippines.

In BRAZIL, 40,000 metalworkers in the Rio de Janeiro district came out on strike on July 22 in support of a wage claim.

In BELGIUM, the Metal Workers Trade Union decided to call a general strike for all metal workers to commence on July 1, in support of their demand for extra holiday bonus. The strike lasted 15 days. The employers agreed to a wage increase of 2-3% in the form of productivity bonus and the Government declared itself willing to examine the problem of tax relief on wage earnings.

In GREECE, a 24 hour general strike called by the General Confederation of Labour took place in Athens on May 28. The demand is for a wage increase of 30 per cent for about 5 lakh Greek workers.

In the UNITED STATES, the International Association of Machinists has endorsed the objective of 30 hour week. The Steel workers and all unions in the electrical and machinery field have already gone on record for a shorter working week and so have the oil and textile workers. The automobile workers have also demanded that the "shorter work-week" should be accompanied by "increased take-home pay," because of the rapid increase in production alongside the lag in people's purchasing power. There are also suggestions for a four-day week rather than a reduction in the hours of work each day.

S T R U G G L E D I A R Y

1956-57

JANUARY 1956.

The Central Committee of the AIBEA called on Bank employees all over India to observe a protest strike against the wage cuts imposed by LAT Award on January 6 & 7. 12,000 employees went on a one-day strike in Bombay on December 28, 1955. In Calcutta on the same day, bank employees struck work for an hour. One hour token strikes took place in Madras, Lucknow, Allahabad, Banaras, Amritsar, Ambala, Kanpur and other Cities.

10,000 workers from all departments of the British-owned Calcutta Tramways Co. went on a token strike on January 4. The strike was called jointly by the Tramway Mazdoor Union (AITUC) and the Tramways Mazdoor Panchayat (HMS) to protest against rejection of workers' demands by the Industrial Tribunal.

General strike of 14,000 textile workers of Nagpur continues against rationalisation in Empress Mills and closure of one of their units. The strike which started from January 29 lasted over 87 days.

APRIL 1956

Over 8,000 dock workers of the reserve pool in Calcutta Port went on strike on April 15 as their mid-month advance of wages was not paid and for other demands. The strike was withdrawn after two weeks following an assurance from the authorities that payment of the mid-month advance would be made on the 15th of every month in future and that the other demands would revive sympathetic consideration.

Nearly 3000 civilian employees of the Indian Naval Dockyard in Bombay went on an indefinite tools down stay-in-strike from April 18 demanding constitution of a joint negotiating machinery at the Dockyard level and restoration of leave facilities which had been curtailed to employers with more than 10 years of service.

About 1000 workers led by Jahazi Mazdoor Union, Bombay, went on strike on April 22 demanding better pay and service conditions.

Over 3000 stevedore workers in Bombay Port went on strike on April 10 demanding new wage scales as required by the Award of the Labour Appellate Tribunal.

22,000 employees of the Damodar Valley Corporation decided on a strike ballot on April 1 to resist retrenchment of several thousand employees.

The Madurai Textile Workers' Union served a strike notice on April 21 on the management of the Madurai Mills Co., for six months' basic wages as bonus for 1955, raising the basic minimum wage to Rs.30 per month and D.A. at the rate of 4 annas per point of increase in the cost of living over 100, etc.

MAY 1956

7000 workers employed at the Dum Dum Engineering Works of Jessop & Co., went on strike on May 15 demanding higher pay and better amenities and withdrawal of suspension orders served on 16 members of the Union's executive. The strike was called off after a week on an assurance from the management that the demands would be considered favourably.

120 firemen employed in the Central Railway at Kazipet went on strike on May 12 demanding among other things stoppage of direct recruitment of firemen to Class B and payment of officiating allowance to Class C firemen when they work as first firemen.

2500 railwaymen in the Adra and Chakradharpur dist of the S.E.Rly and loco and traffic staff struck work on May 7 to protest against an assault on a ticket collector by a railway constable at Muri station.

The Executive Committee of the All-India Defence Employees' Federation at a meeting held in Delhi on May 17 decided to postpone the strike which was to take place from May 21 till such time as the Federation decided otherwise.

Four railway loco workers were

Four railway loco workers were killed and seven seriously injured when the police fired upon railway workers at Kalka station on the Northern Railway on May 29. Protesting against this firing railway workers in Delhi junction went on strike on May 30. Operational staff, firemen, loco shed, cabin workers and engine drivers joined the strike, demanding open inquiry into the firing and payment of compensation to the families of workers killed and suspension of the Chairman of the Railway Board. The strike was called off on May 30 when a judicial enquiry was instituted on the firing.

12,000 workers of the railway workshop and loco sheds in Kharagpur Workshop returned to work on May 28 after a strike which lasted 21 days. The strike began on May 8 in support of the stand of 112 painters in the wagon section of the Kharagpur Workshop who refused to do skilled work when drawing wages for unskilled work.

JUNE 1956

8000 workers of the four collieries in West Jammuria went on strike from June 4 to protest against victimisation of Union leaders.

500 workers of a spinning and weaving mill in Mirzapur who had been on strike for 65 days returned to work on June 22, following a settlement. The strike was against dismissal of six workers and for withdrawal of mass fine.

600 employees of the running staff of the State-managed Orissa Road Transport Company serve a strike notice on their management to win realisation of their demands.

2200 workers of the Maharana Mills of Porbunder locked out by their management on June 18, alleging a go slow action on the part of the workers.

AUGUST 1956

About 2500 workers of the Alagappa textiles in Kerala struck work on August 6, on a demand for 4 months' bonus for the year 1955, 25% increase in D.A. and confirmation of badal workers. The strike was a joint action by the INTUC-led union and other unions. The strike was withdrawn following an agreement reached with the management.

Fifty TUs representing 75,000 workers in Hyderabad State decided at a conference on August 19 to prepare for a general strike from September 18 if the Government fails to concede their demands for wage increases and allowances. The unions were affiliated to the different national centres - AITUC, INTUC, HMS, &c.

Seven workers were killed and 25 injured when the police opened fire on August 25 for the second time within a month upon the striking workers of the iron and manganese ore mines in Barbil, Orissa. The employers had violated agreement with the Union and imposed an illegal lockout.

SEPTEMBER 1956

- Sept. 17 - 50,000 workers in 26 collieries in the Raniganj area, 80 miles outside Calcutta, struck work against irregular implementation of award and for increase in wages, reintroduction of rations, bonus, free rice and other amenities.
- 12,000 KGF workers struck work to win their demand for increased wages and allowances.
- Sept. 18 - 700 Civilian employees of the Ordnance Depot at Sewri in Bombay struck work to protest against retrenchment of 30 employees.
- 2000 C.O.D. workers of Allahabad and Ambala struck work to protest against retrenchment of defence employees.
 - 1500 gold miners of Hutti struck work demanding a wage increase of Rs.35 in basic wage and a D.A. of Rs.55.
 - Bombay, Poona, Khapur and Cossipur Defence workers decide to give strike notice as from Sept.20.
 - Calcutta and Bombay dockers give strike notices (to take effect from October 5.)
- September 21

- Sept. 21 - 8000 out of the 17,000 defence employees of Poona struck work in pursuance of a call given by defence employees' Federation.
 - 2000 civilian defence employees at Bangalore go on indefinite strike.
- Sept. 25 - Calcutta and Howrah observe a 10 hour Hartal to protest against rise in prices. The call was given by Price Increase and Famine Resistance Committee.
 - Dehra Dun and Agra Ordnance workers strike.
- Sept. 26 - Firing at Jomuria takes a toll of 3 (coal strike)
 - 2000 conservancy employees of Madras strike for wage increases. Salem and Coimbatore conservancy workers go on a token strike.
 - Kamaria defence installations workers go on a token strike.
- Sept. 27 - Muradabad Ordnance workers strike completes second week.
 - 5000 employees in various civilian defence establishments in Bombay go on strike at a call of Indian Naval Dockyard Employees' Union.
- Sept. 28 - Dehu Road Defence employees join strike.
 - Port & Dock workers' strike postponed to Nov.15, 1956.
- Sept. 30 - 2000 workers of defence establishment join strike.

OCTOBER 1956

- Oct. 2 - Defence employees at Poona resume work.
 - 8000 Jabalpur beedi workers strike in support of 12,000 workers throw out of jobs following a dispute between bidi contractors and the Co.
 - 8000 tramway workers of Calcutta strike as a protest against alleged high-handedness of a superior officer towards one of their colleagues. The strike continued for four days.
- Oct. 6 - 6000 workers in electricity supply, water works, municipality, PWD workshop, public gardens, of Hyderabad struck work demanding minimum wages and interim relief.
- Oct. 8 - 700 employees of Indian Aluminium Co., Always, withdrew their 56 day old strike after an agreement was reached between the workers' representatives and the management.
- Oct. 19 - 1000 employees of the Delhi RMS went on a spontaneous 'Hands Down' strike against transfer of Union activists. The action was withdrawn after 3 days and work resumed.
- Oct. 26 - 1000 workers of the Hunter Colliery in Bolamau dist. went on strike to protest against serving of retrenchment notices on 291 workers.

NOVEMBER 1956

- Nov. 3 - 674 workers of Hindustan Shipbuilding Yard of Vizag went on strike protesting against termination of services of one supervisor and not heeding seniority in making appointments.
 - 10,000 jute workers of Jugdala went on a token strike in sympathy with workers of 3 other jute mills locked out three weeks earlier.
- Nov. 15 - Central Railway employees asked to prepare for strike action to win their vital demands - such as appointment of CFC, a 25% rise in the interim period, 50% rise in D.A., confirmation of temporary staff, and 42 hour week in railway workshops and sheds.
- Nov. 18 - 4000 colliery workers of Chanda decide to go on strike from January 1, if colliery owners fail to implement satisfactorily the award by then.

Nov. 21 - 1000 employees of Indian Airlines Corporation observed one hour tool down strike to protest against discharge notices on 250 of them.

DECEMBER 1956

Dec. 5 - Insurance employees all over India observe a token strike to protest against the new pay scales and service conditions sought to be imposed by Life Insurance Corporation.

JANUARY 1957

Jan. 3 - Auto-rikshaws in Delhi remained off the road to demand withdrawal of the order banning plying of tonga type rikshaws.

Jan. 4 - 10,000 Champion Reefs Mines employees struck work as a protest against the non-implementation of the bonus award for the year 1953, 1954 granted by Industrial Tribunal, Madras.

Jan. 5 - Seamen of seven coastal freighters strike in Bombay Harbour against the vindictive attitude of shipowners.

Jan. 12 - Workers of Mysore Kirloskar Machine Tool Factory ended their 10 day old strike over payment of bonus.
- 15,000 teachers working in Delhi schools went on a one-day token fast to press for their demands, pending over 10 years. These include demands for revision of scales of pay and confirmation in service.

Jan. 13 - Central Council of North Eastern Railway Mazdoor Union decides to call a general strike from February 14 to win the demands included in a charter presented to the administration.

Jan. 16 - 35,000 teachers employed in Dist. Local Board Schools give strike notice to win their demands for new scales of pay and allowances.

Jan. 21 - Executive Committee of the Indian Telephone Industries Employees Union decides on a strike ballot to protest against the indifferent attitude of the management and to win demands for better pay scales, DA, house-rent allowances, two months' bonus, etc.

Jan. 25 - 26,000 Station Masters and Asst. Station Masters of Railways decide to defer acceptance of their pay as a protest against "non-fulfilment of their demand for minimum living wages."

FEBRUARY 1957

Feb. 2 - North Eastern Railway Mazdoor Union served a strike notice on authorities after a strike ballot.

Feb. 7 - Defence Employees Co-ordinating Committee of Bombay Area at a meeting here yesterday decided to take a strike ballot to enforce their demands which include the appointment of a new Pay Commission and 25% increase in wages.

Feb. 12 - 6000 P & T employees in Assam and Manipur region struck work to win compensatory allowance and winter allowance. The strike has been called by eight different unions.
- Strike on N.E. Railway put off for 3 months to facilitate negotiations.

Feb. 17 - P & T strike in Assam called off on Minister's agreeing to consider sympathetically the employees' demands after the General Elections.

MARCH, 1957

Mar. 2 - 800 workers employed in tugs, dredgers and launches and shore establishments in Bombay Port strike work to protest against Government's failure to honour the assurances given to Port & Dock Workers' Federation.

. . . . March 15

- Mar. 15 - Strike by Delhi State Electricity Board Workers' Union called to demand reinstatement of the Union Secretary removed from service on a charge of insubordination, postponed.
- Mar. 16 - 1800 workers employed on Central Railway, Lalgude station serve a notice on authorities to strike in protest against victimisation of workers who participated in an earlier strike declared illegal.
- 200 members of the house staff including doctors struck work to protest against rude behaviour of Hospital Secretary.
 - 1000 electricity workers of Delhi went on a lightning strike when the condition of one of the hunger-strikers took a turn for the worse. Their demand was reinstatement of union activists victimised for trade union work.
- Mar. 18 - The electricity workers' strike called off following an agreement entered into by Union officials and administration.

MAY 1957

- May 16 - 4000 Delhi telegraph employees resort to 'go slow' action in pursuance of their demands placed before the administration.
- May 17 - Over 5000 civilian employees of various defence establishments observed a one-day tool down strike in pursuance of the call given by the Coordination Committee of Defence Employees of Bombay, waging a speedy settlement of their various demands.
- May 20 - Delhi telegraphists end protest following agreement reached with Union Ministry. The demands were: Appointment of a Telegraph Enquiry Committee, Gazetted posts to telegraph office clerks, higher pay scales for telegraphists and cancellation of the supplementary list of the Telegraph Masters' Examination of 1953.
- Naval Dockyard Employees of Bombay observe a token strike on May 17 in pursuance of their demands.
- May 30 - Price Increase and Famine Resistance Committee called for a General Strike to protest against new taxation proposals. Over a million workers and office employees and shop assistants participated.
- The General Council of Kapra Mazdoor Ekta Union of Delhi asks the Delhi textile weavers to go on strike from July 1. The action is for drawing attention to important and longstanding demands of the workers which include a demand for 33% wage increase and increase in D.A. and other allowances.
 - Strike action by 52,000 village officers of Madras State averted following negotiations between the Workers' Committee and the Administration.
 - 1000 workers of Ranipur Colliery of Jharia struck work demanding abolition of payment of their weekly wages through contractors.

TELCO WORKS STRIKES
a n d
DISPUTE IN TINPLATE COMPANY, JAMSHEDPUR

JAMSHEDPUR, August 16.

Shri Kedar Das, M.L.A. (Bihar) has issued the following statement to the Press, on certain remarks which Shri J.R.D.Tata, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Tata Locomotive & Engineering Company Ltd., made while delivering his speech at the Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders, on August 12, 1957:

The recent strikes in the Telco Works and the dispute in the Tinplate Company of India Ltd., have come in for a considerable commentary by Shri J.R.D. Tata in his Annual speech to the shareholders of the Tata Locomotive & Engineering Company Ltd. He has raised an alarm about a Communist conspiracy to paralyse not only the Telco Works, but the entire industrial complex of Jamshedpur. He has also called for what seems to be obviously repressive measures to suppress the Trade Union movement in Jamshedpur and I therefore consider it my duty to give the true version of the developments in the Steel City.

The Communist bogey raised by Shri J.R.D.Tata is a very crude attempt on his part to confuse the real issues and pose as if the workers have no real grievance. The facts are however otherwise. The grades of the Telco workers are extremely low and the piece-rate bonus system most inequitable and unscientific - a fact testified by no less a person than Mr.Fish, an expert of the International Labour Organisation, who examined this question some two years back at the instance of the Company. Mr.Fish's report which told some unpalatable home truths about the recognised Union also has been suppressed for obvious reasons.

The fact that about one thousand casual labour are made to work on skilled and semi-skilled jobs on rates as low as Re.1/- per day without any dearness allowance, etc., in the Telco Works and without being absorbed in the regular labour force is, I believe, a genuine cause for discontent. Similarly the fact that workers are not ordinarily confirmed after the expiry of six months and even after they are confirmed, they are not made permanent for years together.

With regard to the Tisco and other Factories, nobody can perhaps deny that the prices of essential commodities have steadily increased, particularly during the recent months, but no increase in dearness allowance has been effected in Jamshedpur after 1952.

Similarly, indisputable is the fact that the productivity of the worker has gone up everywhere but workers have not got any increment in their rates in any industry since 1947.

I have been greatly astonished to see a man of Shri J.R.D.Tata's eminence seeking to further befog the issue by introducing the question of Foreign Experts and further by stating wrongly that the Telco strike took place against the normal routine transfer of three workers from one department to another.

Before the Telco workers went on strike on the 5th August, 1957, the casual workers were already on strike for their demand of being absorbed in the regular labour force and increase in their pay. These casual workers work sometimes on skilled job inside the works and so when the casual workers went on strike, the management sought to send the permanent workers to do their jobs. This the permanent workers refused to do and when the workers were sought to be forced into it, that became the immediate cause of the strike.

Shri Tata has taken a great objection to the fact that the striking workers refused to be represented by the recognised Union. I do not know if this will be news to Shri Tata and the Government, that the total membership of this recognised Union - The Telco Workers' Union was just 150 when its annual elections were held last year and even today it cannot claim a membership of more than 500, but of the total strength of 7500 workers.

. . . . If the workers of the Telco

If the workers of the Telco demanded that they should be represented by the Jamshedpur Mazdoor Union, of which I happen to be the General Secretary, even though this is not recognised by the Company, there is no reason why Shri Tata should consider it a crime or smell a "Communist conspiracy" behind it.

I am sorry that the German Experts' question has been raised in this context by Shri Tata. I fully agree with him that some of the Foreign Experts were doing a great service to our country by helping us to develop our industries and we are thankful to them for it. But while doing so, we expect and demand that the Indian workers working under them should be treated as human beings and not as members of an inferior race, which unfortunately, seems to be the attitude of a few of the German experts at Telco, who perhaps are unaware of any other tradition except that of Hitlerite Germany.

The rude, insulting and often abusive behaviour of these experts in the Telco and also some in the Kaisers Engineers at Tiscow, had been the cause of great discontent among the workers and one would only expect that the methods of slave-driving should be given up in the interest of all. But it is quite wrong to say that there was any manhandling of the German experts in the Telco.

The perfect discipline of the workers and their exemplary forbearance is brought out by the fact that even though serious attempts were made to provoke the strikers by throwing brickbats on them inside the Boiler Shop on the 6th August which injured 3 workers, absolute peace was maintained. Secondly, when the Labour Commissioner refused to negotiate with the Jamshedpur Mazdur Union, and the workers refused to be represented through the recognised Union, it was at the instance of the Labour Commissioner that a representative Committee was formed to conduct the negotiations with the Labour Commissioner.

The demands put forth by this Strike Committee were also pressed by the recognised Union even though it had opposed the strike in the beginning. Does not this prove the absolute genuineness of the demands that the Union which is such a favourite of the Company had also to support them?

A few words about the situation in the Tinsplate Company of India Ltd., where the strike is alleged to have been brought about in a bid to expand the Communist influence. For the last three months a number of disputes have arisen in this Company because of the extreme corruption and nepotism prevalent therein in the matters of appointment and promotions and very great inefficiency in dealing with the most petty cases. The latest dispute which is being magnified into such a big affair is also another example of the slovenliness, inefficiency and provocation of the Tinsplate management.

The facts of this strike are thus: The Packers, Stickers Openers, etc., of the Shear & Opening Department were promised an increment in their rates from 1st July 1957. But when the workers received their pay-slips in August they found that the promise had not been kept. The workers were naturally incensed and there was a stoppage of work from the "C" shift on the 9th August.

Once again the justice of the workers' demands is demonstrated by the fact that the Company issued a notice giving the increment to the Packers at 11.30 in the night. Such however is the inefficiency or purposeful provocation - I do not know which - that no increment was given to the Packing in-Charges whose rates became equal to that of the Packers. Naturally they refused to work as Packer in-Charges. Similarly the Sticker-Openers also insisted that their rates should increase along with those of the Packers. It has to be remembered that the demand for the increment had come because an additional Mill had been installed in this Department without any increase in the labour complement and that similar increments have been given in other departments in similar situations.

The Tinsplate workers had also placed their basic demands for the revision of Grades and a 25% increase in basic wages, increase in Dearness Allowance and its linking with the cost of living Index, Hot Mill Bonus, Incentive Bonus, Accident Allowance, etc.

. . . The Company has issued charge-

The Company has issued charge-sheets to about 50 workers threatening them with discharges for this dispute. Even workers who are unfit and were not on duty, including a worker who is in jail, have been charge-sheeted for "inciting the strike".

Shri J.R.D.Tata has called upon the Central and State Governments to suppress the workers in Jamshedpur. But no amount of threats and victimisation of the workers can solve the problems unless the grievances of the workers are redressed. We are all interested in maintaining industrial peace for the development of our industries and the successful completion of the Second Five Year Plan. To ensure that let there be an increase in the Dearness Allowance - commensurate with the cost of living index, an interim 25% increase in the Basic Wages, let an end be put to the policy of victimisation of the Trade Unionists and let the question of recognition of the Unions be decided with reference to the wishes of the workers and their confidence.

Copy of letter dated 23 August 1957
from the Jamshedpur Mazdur Union to:

1. Labour Minister, Government of India, New Delhi
2. Labour Minister, Government of Bihar, Patna.

Sir,

I, on behalf of the Jamshedpur Mazdur Union want to place before you the following facts regarding the latest developments in the labour situation at Jamshedpur.

Recently there has been the seven days' old strike of the Tata Locomotive & Engineering Co. workers. A political colour is sought to be given to this strike. It is sought to be made out that the Communist Party is seeking to paralyse the whole industrial complex of Jamshedpur and the strike of Telco was the result of some conspiracy to sabotage the industrial production of Jamshedpur. This was the purpose of the speech of Mr.J.R.D.Tata at the Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of Tata Engineering and Locomotive Co.

While nothing will be farther from truth than the above insinuation, it seems to us that the representatives of both the Central and State Governments have gulped down this piece of interested propaganda and the workers of the Telco are already having a taste of the "firm measures" demanded by Mr.Tata against the workers.

Our first complaint is that the Government machinery and particularly the Labour Department has failed to remain impartial in a dispute between the workers and the management. Mr.Tata in his speech mentioned above refused to accept the strike at Telco as a normal dispute between the workmen and management, because he says "the workers demanded to be represented by a Communist group led by a Legislator of Bihar Assembly" because "the normal channels of the recognised Union were not used by the workers."

Actually the striking workers of Telco demanded that the Government and the Management talk with the General Secretary of Jamshedpur Mazdur Union, who also happens to be an MLA. The Labour Commissioner of the Government of Bihar refused to do so, saying that he does not know such a Union and its General Secretary. Now the Jamshedpur Mazdur Union is a Registered Union of the Steel and Engineering Workers at Jamshedpur, and while we can understand the Management refusing to talk with the General Secretary of Jamshedpur Mazdoor Union, because they have a policy of not recognising Unions which do not function to their dictates, we are unable to understand the reason for this attitude of the Labour Commissioner. We would like to know, whether it is the policy of the Government also not to conduct any negotiations or discussions with a Union, which is not recognised by the Management. Why and how should the Government make a distinction between a Union recognised by Company and another not recognised by the Company? Why should the Government insist that the workers should represent their

. . . claims solely through a

claims only through a recognised Union, when there is no law governing recognition of Unions in Bihar? Such brazen-faced violation of impartiality was underlined by the Labour Commissioner, when he told Mr. Kedar Das categorically that he refused to talk to him as General Secretary of the Jamshedpur Mazdoor Union.

What is the position of the recognised Union - the Telco Workers' Union? It has not got on its rolls more than a few hundred members, while the Jamshedpur Mazdoor Union claims to have a majority of Telco Workers as its members.

We would submit that such an attitude by the Management and particularly the Government is bound to further aggravate the Labour situation in Jamshedpur and not help in solving it.

Coming to the facts of the strike of Telco Workers, we would like to submit two or three points for your consideration.

Firstly we would like to refer to you the report of Mr. Fish, the I.L.O. Expert who examined the question of Bonuses in the Telco Works.

His findings are that the Bonus Scheme in the various departments of Telco is most inequitable, unjust and unscientific and is the biggest source of unrest and trouble in the Works. His remark that the rates of basic pay are unreasonably low can give a clue to the situation in Telco. This report of Mr. Fish seems to have been put in cold storage by the Company.

Our third submission is regarding the question of German technical experts in the Auto Division of the Telco Works. While the workers do and will always welcome the opportunity of getting the necessary training at the hands of foreign experts, they also expect that they should behave towards workers in a civilized manner. We invite the Government of India or the Government of Bihar to appoint a Board of Enquiry into the manner in which these German officers in the Auto Division have been behaving towards the Indian workers. Their behaviour is most rude, offensive and insulting and the abuses they seem to be in the habit of hushing at the workers, is one of the biggest causes of unrest among the workers of Auto Division.

Finally, about the genesis of the strike at Telco Works. It is absolutely wrong to state that the strike in Telco Works started against the routine transfer of two workers from one department to another. The fact of the matter is that two permanent workers of the Auto Division were asked to do the job of Casual Workers who were on strike for better pay. The strike took place when the management threatened to force them to do a job, considered by the workers to be straight and simple strike-breaking.

The whole dispute of the Telco Works including the demand for a revision of basic pay structure, D.A., Bonus, etc., has now been referred to a Tribunal. Following the appointment of a Tribunal, the Jamshedpur Mazdoor Union advised the workers to resume work and the strike was withdrawn with effect from 12th August. The workers had expected that now at least they shall be allowed to work in peace and they started making preparations for putting their case before the Tribunal through the Jamshedpur Mazdoor Union.

However, the management of the Telco Works seems bent upon making further trouble. Since it cannot discharge or dismiss any worker on account of the dispute which has been referred to the Tribunal, it has instituted cases against large number of workers for alleged assault on the German officers. The police has obliged them by already arresting three workers and even though there is not a shred of evidence that violence was used against the officers, cases have been instituted u/s 147, 337, etc., and on the strength of this, three workers of the Auto Division have already been suspended indefinitely. A new practice has been started of suspending the workers during the pendency of the cases. Similarly a worker, Khushi Ram, has been discharged by violating the normal procedure of the Standing Orders.

. . . We want to vehemently

We want to vehemently protest against this attack on the workers after the appointment of the Tribunal and want to emphasise that this is in no way conducive the growth of normal relationship between the management and the workers.

We earnestly desire the return of normalcy in the worker-management relations, which we can assure you cannot be achieved by measures of victimisation and repression.

We are therefore taking this opportunity of drawing your attention to the serious situation at Telco Works, with the request to intervene immediately in the matter.

We demand that:

- * All cases instituted against the workers in connection with the strike commencing from 5th August be immediately withdrawn and the suspension order rescinded.
- * Tribunal proceedings should be expedited.
- * A referendum should be held to determine the representative character of the Jamshedpur Mazdoor Union and the Telco Workers' Union.

Hope this will receive your early attention.

Yours faithfully,
Sd.
General Secretary,
JAMSHEDPUR MAZDOOR UNION.

On the Question of

RECOGNITION OF TRADE UNIONS

by K.B.Panikkar

The trade union movement in India and especially the AITUC has been continuously struggling to win the most important trade union right, viz., the Recognition of Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining.

In spite of the considerable advance the trade union movement has made in our land, this right has yet to be won.

The right of recognition and collective bargaining is one of the most important rights which greatly helps the working class in their struggle for the improvement of their working and living conditions and also in contributing their proper share in the development of the national economy. It assumes an added importance today, especially in the context of developing national economy and increased industrialisation in our country.

There is no doubt that the importance of this question is recognised by all trade unions. The employers as well as the Government, though not formally opposing its need, have been continuously bypassing this issue for years together. During the last few years, the lack of unity in the trade union movement and the multiplicity of trade unions in our country has also been made an excuse for denying this vital right to the trade unions. Yet in some States, the Congress Governments throwing overboard all democratic considerations have forced on the workers certain unions of the INTUC as recognised unions in the textile industry. Such partisan and undemocratic approach naturally leads - and also led - to worsen the industrial relations and helps to widen the disunity among the workers.

It is the prime task of the AITUC as a national organisation of the working people of our country which makes determined efforts to unify the trade union movement, to put forward the most democratic and feasible proposals and mobilise the working class behind such proposals for adoption. In order to do this, there should be a common understanding within the AITUC itself on vital points.

While considering this problem certain essential points need be kept in view. The proposals if implemented should strengthen the position of the working class vis-a-vis the employers. They should be conducive to industrial peace and strengthen industrial relations. They should encourage and respect the democratic will of the workers, help the different trade unions to move towards unity voluntarily, provide fullest possibility for collective bargaining and minimum compulsion from the law and easy and feasible for implementation. The problems posed are:

Should there be a law giving the right of recognition and collective bargaining to trade unions and making it compulsory on the employers to give such recognition? There seems to be no difference of opinion on the need for such a law.

If a law has to be enacted, what should be the main provisions governing such recognition and collective bargaining? Differences of opinion begin to crop up on the following:

In an industrial establishment or industry, if there are more than one union, what should be the criteria for affording for according recognition? Should all trade unions existing and functioning in an establishment (or industry as the case may be) irrespective of their membership, influence or mobilising

. . . capacity or work be afforded

capacity or work be afforded recognition and be given the right of collective bargaining with the employers? Those who share the view that all trade unions should be given this right, argue that at present it is rather difficult to assess the real strength of different unions due to split in the TU movement and also due to the partisan attitude of the Government and the employers towards certain trend of unions. Under the circumstances, it will greatly help to develop strong and democratic trade unions if the workers are given opportunities to test them in action. In this way, each union could get an opportunity to prove its worth before the workers and the workers at a later stage will be able to select the best union as the only bargaining agent. This will help to develop a strong and united trade union democratically chosen by the workers through practical experience. Thus those who hold this view consider that this phase will be a temporary one but an essential one under the present stage.

According to this view, in an establishment where there are more than one union, if a particular union reaches an agreement with the employers and if that agreement is contested by other union or unions (may be backed by certain percentage of workers) such agreement or agreements should go before the workers for ratification. In this way, on every contested agreement, it will be the will of the majority of the workers that will prevail.

There is another view which though in the main accepts the above-stated position makes a qualification that all unions with a certain percentage of members only should be given the right of collective bargaining.

There is a view which opposes the desirability of affording recognition to all trade unions. According to this view, such a position will lead to utter chaos and also add to the existing disunity. Their solution is: Give the right for collective bargaining only to one union. And the workers should be given the right to choose such a union out of all the existing unions by a secret ballot. The union which secures the largest number of votes from the workers should be considered as the bargaining agent. In the ballot, all workers irrespective of whether they are members of the trade union or not will participate. This point of view asserts that this the most simple and practicable solution basing on the democratic will of the majority of the workers.

There is another point of view which sees certain desirable features in both the above-stated positions. The basis from which this point of view starts is that sufficient opportunities should be given to the existing unions to voluntarily come together. There should be neither compulsory merger nor any effort to reduce the position of other unions to only paper existence. This point of view at the same time, also asserts that the right to collective bargaining and the conclusion of the agreements should not be vested in more than one union. Because it feels that in the event of disagreement between the unions, the employers will have sufficient scope to make the whole thing ineffective. Implementation will be most difficult and on each and every agreement, final ratification from the workers may have to be resorted to which in turn discourages the conclusion of agreements.

Basing on the approach of this point of view, the following proposals are placed:

In an establishment or industry where there is only one union, this Union shall be recognised as the bargaining agent. The agreement shall be binding on all the workers.

In an establishment of industry where there are more than one union, a ballot of all the workers shall be taken and the union which secures the largest number of votes should be given the right of the bargaining agent.

Provided that either at the outset or during a specified period (say, one or two years) if all the unions agree to constitute for the purpose of collective bargaining an Ad-Hoc negotiating body composed of the representatives of the agreeing unions, such a negotiating body should be treated as the bargaining agent.

. . . . The agreement concluded

The agreement concluded by such a body should be binding on all the unions. If such a negotiating body comes into existence, there should be a specified time limit for the functioning of the Ad-Hoc Negotiating Body after which, if there is no agreement between the unions either to merge or choose one union, the bargaining agent shall be chosen by a ballot of all the workers and the union which secures the majority of votes shall be considered as the only bargaining agent.

In case, no negotiating body comes into existence and the bargaining agent is chosen by the ballot in order to prevent any abuse of its position by the bargaining agent, certain safeguards are also proposed. If an agreement concluded with the employer by the bargaining agent is opposed by any other union or unions backed by certain minimum number of workers, such agreement should be placed before all the workers for ratification. In case an agreement fails to get ratification, the agreement should be considered null and void. If a bargaining agent fails to get ratification on two occasions consecutively or three ratifications during the period of one year, it should be considered that the bargaining agent has lost the confidence of the workers and as such, a new bargaining agent should be chosen on the basis of the ballot of the workers.

Even though the right of collective bargaining is given to one union or authority this point of view stresses the need to associate other unions. Towards this, it suggests that it should be made obligatory on the part of the bargaining agent to consult other unions on all matters connected with the collective bargaining. To achieve this end, it is suggested that the bargaining agent before submitting its demands on the employer should circulate this demand to other unions; opinion of other unions on the demands should be sought and the bargaining agent should give consideration to the views expressed by other unions. But this in no way should prejudice the right of the bargaining agent in either submitting its demands or concluding an agreement.

According to this viewpoint, all unions should have equal rights with the bargaining agent on all matters save that of collective bargaining.

This question of the bargaining agent being the most controversial one, it appears very necessary and desirable to have clarity. Hence the need for the working committee to consider this.

There are many other important points connected with this question, such as the procedure after failure of negotiations, authorities to enforce the provisions, nature of the labour courts, or tribunals, etc. But there is also a general agreement that the authorities under the industrial relations law should be reduced to the minimum and procedures should be quite simplified. Hence, if a common understanding could be arrived at on the major question posed above, it seems easy and possible to work out other proposals.

REPORT FROM BIHAR T.U.C.

(In Reply to
AITUC letter dated 3.6.57)

PATNA, 19. 6. 57

1. Movement About Increase in Wages,
Bonus and Dearness Allowance.

(a) One day's protest strike by about 15,000 mica (factory) workers of Bihar for a rise in their wages on 2nd July, 1956. All the three Unions, INTUC, HMS, AITUC gave a call separately for this strike. The issue was since referred to an Industrial Tribunal. The AITUC submitted its memorandum and argued the case in the Tribunal.

(b) Strike notice by HMS-led Union at Dalmianagar for bonus in March, 1957 ended in a compromise.

(c) Strike by 4,000 State electric workers in Bihar for a period of ten days between 8th February to 18th February, 1957 for increase in wages and other demands. Strike withdrawn without demands being immediately fulfilled, on assurance of no victimisation. The State Council have again resolved to take to direct action if demands not fulfilled by July 1957. The State Electricity Workers' Union is comprised of elements from UTUC, HMS and AITUC.

(d) The State hospital employees have also demanded a rise in wages and are considering direct action if demands are not fulfilled.

(e) Bank employees are submitting a memorandum for increase in D.A. in Bihar in view of the special rise in the cost of living in Bihar.

2. Closure of Factories, Compensation and Reopening:

Large number of biri and mica factories have been closed. But this does not reflect the real condition of trade in these industries. In fact, factories are closed just to deprive the workers of some of their rights, e.g., annual leave with pay, bonus, etc. Such factories generally do not pay any compensation to workers and they reopen in another name. The TUC took up the cases of about 350 of the 2000 retrenched Biri workers of Biharsharif and pursued the matter with the Government. A case was instituted and a sum of Rs. 95,000 was decreed in favour of the workers. The employers have since appealed to the higher court and the Labour Department is paying scanty attention to the case. Other cases for retrenchment relief are not taken up by the labour department generally and it becomes difficult for the workers to wait and pursue matters for long time. Ways and means should be devised to surmount this difficulty so that the workers may really get the retrenchment reliefs.

3. The Second Five Year Plan and its First Year of Working: Nothing tangible has come out of it for the workers in Bihar.

4. Experience, if any, of Workers' Participation in Management: There has been no case of a real participation of the workers in management. Even the much-boasted Tata-John agreement was characterised by the Finance-cum-Labour Minister in his speech in the Assembly this time as a first step towards a future participation of workers in management. Since AITUC is informed amply on this agreement, we need not tell much about it.

5. Works Committees: Works Committees everywhere is not constituted properly inasmuch as while selecting the representatives of the workers, the AITUC unions (where there is more than one union) were not consulted. In such Works Committees where the representatives of AITUC Unions constitute the workers' representative, they tend to become a Committee of deadlock where most of the issues remain unsettled. In many other places where non-AITUC unions'

. . . . representatives

representatives are on the Committee, they generally do not function and at times even act as a repressive agency of the management.

6. Rationalisation in Mills and Factories: Not possible to write a note in a short period that is at our disposal.

7. Working of Employees State Insurance: The scheme has recently been introduced in Bihar at three centres, viz., Patna, Monghyr and Katihar. The Monghyr Tobacco Factory workers (though led by INTUC) have strongly protested against its introduction as they had been enjoying much more facilities from the company than those proposed to be given in this scheme.

It will be a welcome measure at Patna and Katihar where the employers do not give any medical aid to their employees. But it is too early to comment as to how the matter in reality will work out.

8. Compilation of the Cost of Living Index and Any Complaints or Suggestions about it. It appears that the cost of living index is not compiled properly and does not reflect the real rise in prices. Even Shri Murli Manohar Prasad, a prominent Congress leader of Bihar, wrote on 12th June, 1957, in an article in the INDIAN NATION captioned "Food Crisis - A Jolt to Official Infallibilities:"

"Both at the Centre and in Bihar there has been a tendency to minimise the phenomenon of rising prices.

	<u>Jamshedpur</u> Base 1944 - 100 (1)	<u>Jamshedpur</u> Base August 1939 - 100 (2)
1954 (1) Eastern Economist, May 17, 1957		
(2) Bureau of Statistics & Economics Govt. of Bihar	140	427
1955	135	409
1956	149	447
1957 January	144	430
February		448

The disparity between the two series is obvious.

9. Strikes, Firings, Arrests in your Areas: Please refer to item No.1 where some information about strikes is given. Apart from those, the important strike struggles in our State have been:

(a) Strike by the Bank of Bihar employees against victimisation which ended after 11 days in a compromise to refer the matter to an arbitrator and assurance of no victimisation and payment of wages during strike period.

(b) Strike by 6,000 Bermo Coal workers on 28.5.57 for 11 days on the issue of payment of arrears and other local demands. An agreement was reached. Strike led by AITUC union.

(c) Strike for 7 days by Tata Town Workers against victimisation. The strike ended without achieving any demand.

No firing on workers since firing at Patna in August 1955.

Arrest and cases are continuing in Giridih, Bermo, Dhanbad, Jamshedpur, Katihar, for demonstration, u/s 107 and Industrial Disputes Act (illegal strike at Jamshedpur) and strikes in coal, jute, electric and Tata workers.

10. Tribunal Cases and Experiences: Since sometimes past, it is our general experience that the tribunals are very reluctant to consider favourably the demands of the workers and nothing tangible has come out since the last

. . . three years from the industrial \

three years from the industrial tribunals. They exhaust the patience of the workers and take so much time in deciding issues that the workers lose their interest on such issues. For example, the bonus for the year 1954 is pending before the Tribunal since 1955 and nobody knows if the matter will be concluded this year. Similarly, the wage question of mica workers remain undecided for the last one year. Such examples can be added ad infinitum. Moreover, in the course of Tribunal proceedings, the employers on a small pretence run to High Courts and Supreme Courts thus delaying the matters all the more.

11. Trade Unions And United Actions: No such movement has yet grown which can force different central trade unions to join hands on issues. Even the UTUC and HMS do not generally tend to act jointly on issues affecting the workers. However, there are certain unions and trade Federations (e.g., Press, Electric), where except INTUC, other TUs or representatives thereof work jointly.

Since sometimes past a trade union coordination committee has grown out of solidarity action and sympathies shown by Unions to the various struggles of workers in Patna. This co-ordination committee of Patna includes most of the effective TUs, in Patna, viz., Bank, Insurance, Working Journalist Association, P & T employees, BTUC and other big and small unions of Patna. Such a coordination committee was recently formed at Muzaffarpur.

On the question of rise in prices and food crisis in Bihar, some joint actions are being contemplated through the Patna TU co-ordination committee.

12. Food Situation: Food situation is very bad. Newspaper reports will reveal. A comparative study of the cost of living index reveal the following:

1956 - The cost of living index figures in Bihar was higher in this year by 21 points above Kanpur, 38 points above Nagpur, 98 points above Calcutta and 109 points above Bombay.

Jan. 1957 - In this month, the Bihar index was higher by 12 points above Kanpur, 32 points above Jagpur, 96 points above Calcutta and 111 points above Bombay.

Feb. 1957 - The figures in this month in Bihar stood 65 points above Kanpur, 133 points above Calcutta and 142 points above Bombay.

13. Effects of the Election Results on T.U. Work. We have won from only one T.U. centre in Bihar and that is Jamshedpur. This has aroused some enthusiasm among the Jamshedpur workers which need be consolidated.

14. T.U. Schools and Workers' Education: No schools by any agency so far as our information goes for the last 2 years.

R E P O R T
O F
ASSAM T.U.C.

Tinsukia, 24.6.57

The period under review witnessed so many partial victories of the trade union movement on the issues like wages, bonus, dearness allowances, etc. During the period, the Coal Tribunal Award has been implemented bringing certain substantial improvement in workers' wages. The new wage rates introduced by the Company, i.e., Assam Railway & Trading Company (producing 80 per cent of the coal in the State) on the basis of an agreement arrived at earlier between the said Company and the Assam Colliery Mazdoor Congress (INTUC) along with Company's separate Bonus Scheme are in most cases better than the minimum fixed by the Tribunal. But the wage-rates coupled with all sorts of bungling in the process of implementation and constant attack on the working conditions have only made the workers indignant, not to speak of satisfying them. The significant event in the movement of the miners of the State is that in the post-Tribunal period, the Assam Coal Mine Workers Union has come into existence and the INTUC Union is completely ousted and now it is a de-registered and defunct union.

OIL: Along with the recent rise in the cost of living, the workers of the Assam Oil Company Ltd., have been carrying a campaign for a rise in D.A. commensurate with the rise in the cost of living. A.O.C.Labour Union (not affiliated to any all-India TU centre or Federation) has demanded an increase of D.A. by 30 per cent of the amounts the Company was and is paying at present to its workers. Negotiation is going on with the representatives of the Union and the Company. Earlier, the Union had signed an agreement with the company whereby the workers would get 3 months' bonus.

CENTRAL GOVT EMPLOYEES: About 40,000 Central Government employees of Assam have long been moving for special compensatory allowance for meeting the higher cost of living. It was one of the issues on which the N.E.Railway Mazdoor Union had served a Strike Notice for resorting to strike on and from 14th February, 1957. Subsequently, the strike was postponed on certain assurances of the Government. The P & T workers had launched a strike on and from 11th February and the strike was called off on the assurances given by the Government. (It can be recalled in this connection that by the latter part of 1956, after a round of agitation on the issue, the Ministry of Finance sanctioned a compensatory allowance for the non-gazetted Central Government servants posted in four hill districts of Garo, Mizo, Naga and United Mikir Hills and North Cachar at graduated rates commencing from Rs.5 to Rs.20.) Now, after the aforesaid strike, the Government have selected seven big towns of the State for paying a kind of allowance which is, however, much below the demand. Further negotiation is going on in the matter.

LIFE INSURANCE AND BANK EMPLOYEES: The general upward revision in the pay-scales and dearness allowance of 21,000 clerical and lower grade employees of the Life Insurance Corporation of India was announced by the Union Ministry of Finance. How it affects the wage-scales the employees remains to be ascertained.

The Bank employees have observed "Demand Week" in the month of May last.

All these are all-India developments and I am not dealing in details here separately.

EMPLOYEES UNDER THE STATE GOVERNMENT: So far the Government servants under the State Government are concerned, the Pay Committee's recommendations were already out by August 1956 whereby the minimum basic pay has been raised from Rs.22.8.0 to Rs.28.0.0. Obviously, this has failed to satisfy the employees. We are gathering the informations regarding how it has affected various sections.

. . . But, it is found that

But it is found that even the All Assam Aided High School Teachers' Association has accepted the new pay scales "under protest".

TEA: You are aware of the fact that Tea Plantation workers of North-East India will receive bonus totalling Rs.2 crores to Rs.2½ crores on account of the year 1956 according to an agreement arrived at between employers and INTUC leaders and J.Mitra. According to the agreement, full bonus entitled to a worker in Zone I in Assam will be Rs.67/-, Zone II Rs.57/-, Zone III Rs.49/-, Dooars Rs.23/-, Terai Rs.14/-, Darjeeling Rs.9/- and Cachar Rs.4/-.

CLOSURE OF FACTORIES: There was no closure of factories as such so far as the major industries of the State are concerned. But occasional closures and then reopening are general features in saw mills and other such small factories and mills, and, hardly a worker gets any pay or benefit in case of lay-off or retrenchment.

RATIONALISATION is a feature in all major industries. Introduction of most upto date machines (which replace workers) is not yet a perturbing feature, because quite contrary is the case in Assam. It is haunting workers' lives in the workplace in the form of new changes in working arrangements coupled with increased workload. Recently, the representatives of IBCON (Private) Ltd., have been brought by the AOC for re-fixing nomenclatures and categorisation of the workers.

Re. WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT, we have got no concrete experience in this province.

WORKS COMMITTEES that exist in Railway, AOC, etc., are mere showpieces. These Committees do not enjoy any power except approving or confirming any plan of the management whenever occasion arises.

EMPLOYEES STATE INSURANCE SCHEME is not in operation in any industry in the State so far my information goes.

FOOD SITUATION: Though Assam always enjoyed the credit of being surplus in the past, people today suffer from chronic food crisis. Prices of essential commodities - everyday necessities of life have risen so high that it caused sharp fall in the purchasing capacity of the people.

Price of rice has gone up to Rs.30 per maund. Vegetables of all kinds sell at a very high rate. Potatoes are selling at annas 10 per seer (six months ago it was As.6/-). The small quantity of fish which are available are more costly.

In the Fair Price Shops, rice is available to public at Rs.18.12.0 per maund but that rationed rice is also not regularly available. When Assam's Finance & Supply Minister specially met the millowners in the last month, they promised to release 5000 maunds of rice for sale through special dealers at Rs.23.8.0 per maund (transport charges are to be borne by the Government!). So what can be position in open market can be easily understood. In spite of Government's pompous declarations for arresting the rising prices of food, hoarders and profiteers dominate the market. Due to abnormal rise in prices, the people in general are facing great crisis.

