

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

Indian Branch

--

Report for October 1929.Contents.

C 1903/11

	Pages
1. <u>General</u>	
The Viceroy's announcement; Royal Commission on Labour 	1 - 7
2. <u>References to the I. L. O.</u>	8 - 13
3. <u>National Labour Legislation</u>	
(a) The Bombay Prevention of Intimidation Act 	14 - 15
(b) The Bombay Presidency Area Security Act 	16
(c) The Bombay Port Trust Amendment Act ...	16
4. <u>Conditions of Labour</u>	
(a) The Tinplate workers' strike, Jamshedpur ...	17 - 18
(b) Dock Workers' strike, Karachi 	18 - 19
(c) Conditions of work - Karachi Port Trust ...	19 - 20
(d) Calcutta strike situation 	20
(e) Bombay textile strike 	20 - 21
(f) Hours and wages in cotton mills;)... ... Bombay Labour Office Inquiry)	21 - 22
(g) Factory administration in Burma, 1928 ...	23 - 24
(h) Factory administration in U.P., 1928 ...	25 - 27
(i) Slavery and Forced Labour in Indian States ...	28 - 33
(j) Forced Labour in Kashmir 	33 - 34
5. <u>Industrial Organisation</u>	
<u>Employers' Organisations</u>	
(a) Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay 	35 - 36
(b) The Indian Merchants' Chamber and Hours Convention 	36 - 37
(c) The Associated Chambers of Commerce ...	37
(d) The Indian Railway Conference 	38 - 40
(e) Late Seth Narottam Morarjee 	40 - 41
<u>Workers' Organisations</u>	
(a) Indian Railway Trade Unions (General) ...	42 - 45
(b) G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union 	45
(c) Anglo-Indians in Railway Employ 	46
(d) All India Telegraph Workmen's Conference ...	47 - 48
(e) Central Labour Board of Madras 	48 - 49
(f) Trade Union movement in Burma 	49 - 50
6. <u>Intellectual Workers</u>	
Clerks in a Government of India Office 	51 - 52
7. <u>Economic Conditions</u>	
Cotton Ginning Pools in India 	53 - 54

			Pages
8.	<u>Education</u>		
	Hartog Committee Report	...	55 - 57
9.	<u>Migration</u>		
	Indians in East Africa : Sir Samuel Wilson's Report	...	58 - 59.

General.

For some time past the newspapers have been busy with conjectures and speculations as to the probable outcome of Lord Irwin's visit to Great Britain. It had all along been realised that Lord Irwin would be getting into personal touch with the members of the Labour Cabinet and with the leaders of the other two political parties in Great Britain and would discuss with them the situation created in India by the successful boycott of the Simon Commission and the rise into prominence of the Indian Independence League. An observable feature of the utterances of leading public men here on this subject was that, coupled with a frank expression of their want of confidence in Great Britain's pledges to India there was an expression of faith in the Viceroy's sincerity and desire for conciliation. For about two weeks before Lord Irwin's return to India it was being freely remarked that an explanatory statement of the British ~~Government~~'s views about India would soon be simultaneously issued both from London and New Delhi, and that this explanation would go a long way to conciliate political India. Lord Irwin reached Bombay on the 25th October and arrived in Delhi on the 27th October. A Gazette of India Extraordinary issued on the 31st October 1929 contained the long expected statement. While restating that it would be both impossible and improper to forecast the nature of the constitutional changes that may be proposed after the Simon Commission's report is laid before parliament, the announcement stated that the broad question of constitutional advance in British India in co-operation with the authoritative exponents of public opinion in the country had been engaging the attention of His Majesty's Government.

Sir John Simon had suggested that the relations of the Indian States with British India should be fully examined, before laying down the main lines of the new polity for India. He, ~~Advisors~~, suggested that after the publication of the reports of the Simon Commission and the Indian Central Committee, but before the stage is reached of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, a conference should be called in which His Majesty's Government should meet representatives, both of British India and of the States for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which the government would later on submit to parliament. With this view His Majesty's Government is in complete accord. The second main point of the announcement was ~~where~~ the Viceroy, speaking on behalf of His Majesty's Government, stated clearly that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as contemplated in the declaration of 1917 is the attainment of Dominion Status. The Conference referred to above will be called when the reports of the Simon Commission and the Indian Central Committee have been published and considered by the Government; and representatives of different parties and interests in British India and representatives of the Indian States will meet separately or together as circumstances may demand, for the purpose of discussing both British Indian and All-Indian problems.

Even though it may be slightly anticipating our Report for November, it seems worth while to narrate the sequence of events which followed the announcement. Under the auspices of the All-Indian Congress Committee a so-called "Leaders' Conference" was held on the 1st and 2nd November in the house of Mr. Patel, the President of the Assembly. Most of the leaders present seemed to have been

favourably influenced by the conciliatory tone of the Viceroy's announcement, though, at the instance of Mr. Gandhi, the Conference, while welcoming the statement, added as conditions precedent to the successful issue of the Round Table Conference suggested therein, that (1) a general policy of conciliation should be inaugurated by the government, (2) a general amnesty should be given to political prisoners, and (3) that the personnel of the representatives to the Round Table Conference should be chosen predominantly from the Congress group. There are, however, considerable numbers of prominent leaders, mostly of the moderate persuasion, who are for welcoming the announcement unconditionally. The intransigents are led by Messrs. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Subbash Chandra Bose, and Dr. Kitchlew. In face of the Calcutta Congress resolution which was cast-iron in form, it has to be confessed, that ~~their~~ theirs is a logical position, in as much as the viceregal announcement as to the goal of political progress in British India does not by any means imply that India will be given Dominion Status before 31st December 1929. (See page 7 of this office's report for January 1929). It is significant, however, that Mahatma Gandhi~~x~~ himself has veered round to a conditional acceptance of the suggestion for a Round Table Conference, and that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President-elect of the 1929 Congress, and one of the most influential advocates of the complete-independence-idea, has also been brought over to the "right" side. Altogether, therefore, the political tension has been considerably eased, though it may be safe to predict that the next Congress will see a split in its ranks.

... ..

Mr. Whitley and a majority of his collaborators on the Royal Commission landed in Bombay on the 11th October, ^{Mr. Whitley has} and issued the following statement to the press:-

"The wise man speaks, if he speaks at all, ~~at~~ putting off his harness, not when he puts it on. My vocation too has led me to be a ~~listener~~ listener rather than a maker of speeches. Moreover, it is only now that I have had an opportunity of meeting most of my Indian colleagues, to whom I ~~ix~~ look for much help in the performance of our difficult task. These considerations would lead me to prefer silence to speech, but courtesy calls for just a few words when I set foot on Indian soil for the first time.

I understand that Indian opinion is nearly unanimous in desiring a great advance of Indian industry. This is a desire which I share to the full. As I understand the position, India has emerged from the first stage of industrial evolution and, as far as I have been able to judge, she seems to have surmounted the ~~diff~~ difficulties inherent in transition more easily and more smoothly than did some of the Western countries. She is now entering the second stage. New factors, both human and economic, have come into play and the problem has become as much international as national.

Manufacture and commerce are more affected by worldwide conditions. Superiority in organisation or technique soon overleaps national boundaries and great nations cannot for long be content with the supply of their internal needs. But there can be no true progress in industry unless the progress is reflected in the conditions of the masses of workers who make the industry possible: any advance in which they did not share would be a transient advantage.

Healthy and permanent progress is bound up with a steady improvement of the economic status of the rank and file of the industrial army. It is the well-being of all persons engaged in an industry which constitutes the contribution of that industry to national wealth. This is, I think, generally recognised in India, where the aim in view is that as many as possible should contribute to the advance that is expected and that the benefits to be secured should be shared as widely as possible.

It is my hope that our work in India will result in a contribution of some value towards this aim. I hope by examining the conditions and suggesting the lines of development, we can help India to forge ahead so that, in respect of labour questions, Indian industry generally may profit by the successes and avoid the mistakes made elsewhere, or in particular parts of this great country.

This is an ambitious task and one which the Commission unaided can hardly be expected to accomplish. We shall, of course, do our best to form opinions and reach conclusions but that best will be a poor one unless our own thought on the subject is stimulated by the thought of the employers, the workpeople and the wide public of India.

The problems which face us are not new to most of those interested in Indian industry. There has been, I am sure, much quiet examination of them during the last few years. I hope no one who feels he has anything to contribute either in experience or ideas will hesitate to come forward and help us.

As you are no doubt aware, we are to have with us as Assistant Commissioners the representatives of employers and workers in each province. Similarly, we expect to derive great assistance from the association with us of Indian women whose help we have been promised.

We have asked for written evidence to be submitted to us at an early date but it may be well to state that no relevant matter will be excluded from our consideration which reaches us in time to be dealt with in a practical manner".

The statement has been favourably commented upon by the press, and several newspapers have devoted leading articles to the work of the Commission. The Commission arrived at Karachi on the 12th October and began its work on the 14th. Two ladies were co-opted as assessors for the Karachi sittings, which lasted from the 15th to the 17th October. The Sukkur Barrage works were visited on the 18th and ^{the} Khewra salt mines from the 19th to the 22nd. Evidence was taken at Lahore from the 23rd to the 29th, on which date it also visited Amritsar to examine conditions in the carpet factories. It reached Delhi on the morning of the 30th October, and after examining the Member in charge of Industries and Labour in camera and other government and private witnesses such as the secretaries of the Commerce and Industries Departments, ~~and~~ the Railway Board, the Director of Army Ordnance Factories, the Inspector of Factories, the Industrial Surveyor for Delhi, the Delhi Municipality's representatives, representatives of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce, the Health Officer for New Delhi, and Dr. Ruth Young, representing maternity welfare interests, left Delhi on the morning of the 9th November. Mrs. J.C. Chatterjee was the lady assessor to the Commission at Delhi, and on behalf of the railway employees Col. Gidney and Mr. Gregory represented the Anglo-Indian element, and Mr. Chandrika Prasad the Indian element, as assessors.

It has not been possible to follow the work of the Commission and summarise the evidence gathered by it consistently and carefully

for two reasons. In the first place, the secretaries informed me that they are unable to supply copies of the memoranda on which the various witnesses were examined either to me or to the press reporters as they are treated as confidential documents. Secondly, and as a consequence of the first, the press reports of the open sittings are very scrappy and unreliable and in all cases unsatisfactory. No attempt was therefore made to summarise the evidence gathered by the Commission, and this office was obliged to rest satisfied with forwarding to Geneva the press cuttings dealing with the enquiry.

References to the I.L.O.

The 13th session of the International Labour (Maritime) Conference has received a satisfactory degree of publicity in all Indian newspapers. Reuter's telegrams from Geneva chronicling the day to day progress of the Conference have appeared in all Indian papers. Besides, several papers, like the Hindu of Madras, have published supplementary messages from the representative of the Free Press of India at Geneva. The protests lodged by Indian commercial organisations against the Indian Government's nomination of Mr. Browne as adviser to the Indian employers' delegate and the verdict of the Credentials Committee have received wide publicity in the Indian press. According to a Free Press of India message appearing in the Hindu of 29-10-1929, the Secretary of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, has addressed a telegram to the Indian Government drawing attention to a Free Press message from Geneva, wherein Sir Geoffrey Corbett is reported to have stated in the Conference that the Indian employers' delegation would have been nowhere but for Mr. Browne and taking objection to the "objectionable" remarks and urging the withdrawal of the remarks in the open conference with an apology.

... ..

The Indian press has naturally devoted the greater share of its attention and space to the doings of the Indian delegation, and to other matters having a bearing on Indian affairs. Thus, the Hindu of 26-10-1929 and all papers give prominence to the decision of the Conference to initiate consultations with the various governments with a view to the conclusion of an agreement fixing the length of the seaman's working week, and to the amendment moved by Mr. Daud

to exclude allusions to special conditions which, he feared, might debar Indians from the benefit of the Convention. Similarly, Sir Atul Chatterjee's protests against the delay in the communication of the reports of the I.L.O. to oversea countries, the holding of the second maritime conference at Geneva in the middle of winter which would prevent far eastern delegates from attending on account of climatic difficulties, and the cost involved by the increase in the number of committees have all received a good deal of attention in the Indian press.

... ..

A two column communiqué issued by this office on 15-10-1929 explaining the inwardness of the dead lock created by the attitude of the employers at the Conference has been published in all papers. (Times of India, 17-10-29, Statesman, 17-10-29, Hindu, 16-10-29, Pioneer, 18-10-29 and Hindustan Times, 18-10-29).

... ..

Special letters from papers having their correspondents at Geneva have been regularly appearing in some of the papers. Two letters from the Hindu's correspondent at Geneva dated 12-9-1929 and 24-9-1929 have appeared in the Hindu of 5-10-1929 and 19-10-1929 respectively. An occasional correspondent ~~in~~^{of} the same paper has contributed a long letter from Geneva to the Hindu of 11-10-1929, which directs pointed attention to India's inadequate representation in the League Secretariat despite its heavy contribution to the League's funds.

... ..

The Servant of India of 3-10-1929, and 17-10-1929 publishes two letters from its correspondent at Geneva. The correspondent deals mainly with the last League Assembly and refers to the able way in which Sir Mahommed Habibullah, the first Indian to lead an Indian delegation to the Assembly, has discharged his duties. The second letter (Servant of India 17-10-1929) is interesting as the writer concludes his argument for greater representation of Indians at Geneva with the assertion that "it is difficult for an Indian to be optimistic about Geneva unless there is an early prospect of her position with regard to the League proper being at least what it is in regard to the International Labour Office".

... ..

The Daily Gazette of Karachi in its issue of 14-10-1929 publishes the account of an apocryphal interview by its correspondent with the Director of this office. The interview deals mainly with the objects and scope of the work of the Indian branch of the I.L.O. and makes a strong effort to counter the belief entertained in certain Indian circles that India is not accorded proper consideration at Geneva. This is interesting as showing that the I.L.O. has at last come to be regarded as good "copy" for enterprising journalists. It may also be mentioned that the interview appeared in ~~the~~ Karachi on the very date the Royal Commission began its ~~work~~ work in India.

... ..

The October, 1929 (Vol. X, Part II, Serial No. 37) issue of the Indian Journal of Economics publishes Captain W.J. Ellison's article on the twelfth International Labour Conference.

... ..

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The Indian Finance (Calcutta) of 2nd November 1929 (Vol.IV, No.17) and the Indian Social Reformer of 9th November 1929 (Vol. XL, No.10) publish reviews forwarded by this office of the I.L.O. publication "The Encyclopaedia of Industrial Hygiene", and of "International Migration, Vol. I, Statistics" compiled on behalf of the I.L.O. by Imre Ferenczi.

... ..

The Pioneer of 17-10-1929 publishes a short paragraph about the 14th session of the I.L.Conference which will open at Geneva on 9th June 1930. It gives a brief summary of the items on the Agenda of the Conference and notes that all suggestions relating to nomination of delegates should reach the Government of India by 10-1-1930.

... ..

The Times of India of 31-10-1929 gives a list of the persons suggested by the United Provinces Chamber of Commerce for nomination to the employers delegation at the 14th Conference.

... ..

The September-October (Vol.II, No.10) issue of the Indian Labour Review publishes several articles which are of interest to Geneva. Under the caption "An Indian Mission at Geneva", Mr.G.Venkataramanan, B.A., B.L., contributes an article putting in a strong plea for the Indian National Congress, the All India Trade Union Congress and other bodies to maintain unitedly an Indian mission at Geneva. In the section "Our Portrait Gallery", a sketch is published of the life and activities of Mr. M.Daud, the workers' delegate to the 13th Conference which contain copious references to the work of the I.L.O. for seamen.

Mr. Ernest Kirk's article "Labour and the Colour Bar" derives its inspiration mainly from Mr. N.M. Joshi's advocacy of removal of the disabilities of coloured labour at the 12th Conference.

... ..

The September (Vol. VI, No.12) issue of the Indian Labour Journal publishes an appreciative article on the 12th International Labour Conference. The article urges that in selecting the personnel of the workers' delegations as far as possible only actual workers should be selected. The same issue of the paper contains an informative article on "Slavery and Forced Labour in Indian States". The October (Vol.VII, No.1) issue of the journal publishes an article entitled "A birthday Greeting" contributed by the Director of this Office on the occasion of the Journal completing the sixth year of its existence.

... ..

The Times of India of 3-10-1929 announces that the Nagpur University has created an endowment called the "University League of Nations Essay Gold Medal Fund". The net income accruing from the fund will be applied to the award of a gold medal on the best essay in English on a subject connected with the League of Nations.

... ..

The Pioneer of 20-10-1929 reports that a movement is on foot to start a branch of the League of Nations at Nagpur and that members are being enlisted.

... ..

The Hindu of 9-10-1929 publishes an appreciative review of the publication "Educational Survey" issued by the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

... ..

The report of an address delivered by Mr.A.Ramaswami Mudaliar, President of the Corporation of Madras, at the first anniversary of the Students' United Literary Association" on 20-10-1929 on "India in International Affairs" is reported in the Hindu of 21-10-1929.

^{the} League of Nations naturally claimed a good deal of the speaker's attention.

... ..

The activities of the League's Malaria Commission now touring India are receiving a fair share of attention in the press. The Pioneer of 27-10-1929 publishes the account of a short interview which its correspondent had with Dr. Swellengrebel, a member of the Commission.

... ..

National Labour Legislation.

Labour Legislation, Bombay.

At page 19 of the report of this office for the period 15-31 July, 1929, was given in full the text of a Bill to make the offence of criminal intimidation cognisable in certain parts of the Bombay Presidency in times of emergency. After a full debate in the Bombay Legislative Council this Bill with certain alterations passed its final reading on the 10th August 1929. The Act was assented to by the Governor General on the 30th August 1929, and was published in the Bombay Government Gazette of 3rd September 1929. As this measure is mainly intended to deal with the troubles arising from picketing by strikers its full text is reproduced below :-

BOMBAY ACT NO.VIII OF 1929.

(First published, after having received the assent of the Governor General, in the "Bombay Government Gazette" on the 3rd September 1929.)

An Act to make the offence of criminal intimidation cognizable in times of emergency.

WHEREAS it is expedient to take power to enable the police to deal effectively with the ~~offic~~ offence of criminal intimidation in certain areas of the Bombay Presidency;

And whereas the previous sanction of the Governor General required by sub-section (3) of section 80A of the Government of India Act has been obtained for the passing of this Act;

5 & 6
Geo. V,
c. 61.

It is hereby enacted as follows :-

1. (1) This Act may be called the Bombay Prevention of Short title, extent, duration) Intimidation Act, 1929.
and commencement.)

(2) It extends to the Presidency Area and shall remain in force for a period of g five years.

(3) This section and sections 2 and 3 shall come into operation forthwith; section 4 shall come into force in the whole of the Presidency Area or in any part or parts thereof on the date or dates on which a state of emergency is declared to exist in such area or part or parts thereof by notification under section 3, and shall continue to be in operation for such period, not exceeding one month at a time, as may be specified in such notification unless such notification is sooner cancelled by the Local Government.

Defini-
tions.

2. In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,

(a) "Presidency Area" means the City of Bombay and the Bombay Suburban District;

(b) "Criminal Intimidation" has the meaning assigned to it by section 503 of the Indian Penal Code.

XLV of
1860.

Declara-
tion of
state of
emergency.

3. The Local Government, if satisfied that the public tranquillity in the Presidency Area or any part or parts thereof is endangered ~~in~~ by the prevalence of criminal intimidation, may, at any time by notification in the Bombay Government Gazette declare that a state of emergency exists in the whole area or in any part or parts thereof and shall set forth the reasons for such declaration in the notification.

V of
1898.

Offence of
criminal
intimidation
to be cog-
nizable.

4. Notwithstanding anything contained in the Second Schedule to the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, the offence of criminal intimidation shall be a cognizable offence as defined in that Act and the rest of the provisions of that Act shall have effect accordingly.

The Bombay Presidency Area Security Act.

The Bombay Presidency Area (Emergency) Security Bill, the text of which was also given in this office's report for the period 15-31 July 1929 at page 21, passed its final reading in the Bombay Council on the 4th October 1929. A copy of the Bill as passed into law will be incorporated in one of our future reports.

The Bombay Port Trust Amendment Act.

It is worth while to mention that Bombay Act No.XVI of 1929 (An Act further to amend the Bombay Port Trust Act No. VI of 1879) published in the Bombay Government Gazette of the 17th October 1929 has for its object the addition of a representative of labour to the Board of Trustees of the Bombay Port Trust.

Conditions of Labour.

The Tin-plate Workers' Strike, Jamshedpur.

There is no prospect of an early settlement of the Jamshedpur Tinplate Workers' strike (see pages 24-25 of the report of this office for the month of September) as both parties to the dispute seem to have been embittered by the prolonged trial of strength that has already taken place. According to a statement issued on 4-10-29 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who specially visited Jamshedpur to study the strike situation, over 2,000 men are still holding out, though many have been forced to abandon the strike owing to acute distress. According to the statement, the Tinplate Company has struck off the water supply to the quarters of some of the strikers. (Hindu, 5-10-29).

On 1-10-1929, the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress which met at Lucknow passed the following resolution regarding the strike:-

"Having read the papers prepared by the Secretary in connection with the Golmuri tin-plate workers' strike, the Working Committee regards the demand of the strikers as eminently reasonable and just and regrets that the Bihar Government would not entertain the demand, and hopes that a representative and impartial committee would be forthwith appointed for enquiring into the grievances of the strikers, with full power to grant such relief as the strikers are found entitled to.

The Committee notes with satisfaction the stand taken by the members of the Assembly recommending the withdrawal of the protection granted to the tin-plate industry".

Mr. Rajendra Prasad, a prominent non-co-operator and lieutenant of Mr. Gandhi, visited Jamshedpur on 23-10-1929 and after conferring

with the strike leaders left on 24-10-1929 to consult Mr. Gandhi in the matter of bringing about a settlement. Mr. Giri and other labour leaders interviewed Mr. Dain, the Deputy Commissioner, in the third week of October and urged on him the desirability of government intervention in the shape of the appointment of a Court of Inquiry. Mr. Giri and his colleagues, ~~ix~~ had further interviews with Sir Bhupendranath Mitra and Sir George Rainy in Delhi towards the end of October, but it is reported that no basis of settlement could be arrived at as the result of these peace efforts. The hope engendered by the strong expressions of public opinion in favour of the strikers, both in the Bihar and Orissa Council and the Assembly, of an early settlement has thus been belied. Meanwhile, the strikers are receiving considerable public sympathy. According to the Hindu of 3-10-1929 donations of £ 50/- and £ 25/- were received for the relief of the strikers from the British Trade Union Congress, and the British Steel Corporation Union, London.

Dock Workers' Strike, Karachi.

A lightning strike of some 700 dock workers broke out at Karachi on 17-10-1929. The strike was intended to call the attention of the Whitley Commission, ^{which was just then at Karachi,} to the grievances of dock labourers working under stevedores and dubashes. The main demand of the workers was for shorter hours, which prior to the strike is reported to have been eleven hours in the day time with an hour's break, and eleven hours at night without a break. The strikers demanded a nine hour day and a seven hour night. (Hindu 18-10-1929). As the strike was not organised by any labour union, there was no definite formulation of demands before resort was had to the strike, but it is understood

that the insufficiency of the rates of wages, particularly for coal-bunkering, was also among the grievances of the strikers.

The strike which lasted from 17-10-1929 to 25-10-1929 was ultimately brought to a termination as the result of a six-hour conference on 24-10-1929 between the representatives of the dock workers, employers, and other interests affected. Several of the strikers' demands have been conceded and a compromise has been arrived at on other demands. The Karachi Port Trust has expressed its willingness to consider favourably the question of shorter hours of work, and the stevedores have agreed to higher rates of wages. The stevedores' agreement is subject to acceptance by the shipping companies, but it is not expected that the latter will repudiate the arrangement. The rates of pay for coal bunkering have been referred to an arbitrator. (Statesman, 3-11-1929).

It is estimated that the strike has caused a loss of nearly Rs. 100,000 besides causing great inconvenience to steamship agents, consignees of cargoes, and to workmen.

Conditions of Work - Karachi Port Trust.

According to the Administration Report of the Karachi Port Trust for 1928-29, recently published, the Accident Insurance Fund instituted to meet liabilities under the Workmen's Compensation Act and to pay compensation to employees injured or killed in the execution of their duty under section 22(7) of the Karachi Port Trust Act, stood at Rs.16,214 on 31-3-1929, and an amount of Rs.5,000 was allotted to the Fund during the year.

As regards the health of the employees it is stated that the total attendance at the Port Trust Dispensary at Manora was 15,541,

giving a daily average of 42.7⁸; of these, 27.6 were males, 4 females, and 11.1 children. The prevailing ~~am~~ diseases were malaria, rheumatism and diseases of the respiratory and digestive organs, and eyes. 1301 employees attended the Medical Officer's Room at the Port Trust Office. In addition to maintaining its own dispensary at Manora and its medical arrangements at Karachi, the Port Trust contributed Rs.16,900 to the other medical institutions of Keamari and Karachi. An anti-rabi^t campaign was carried out during the year in the Keamari yard and the wharves.

During the year, the Port Trust instituted 2 scholarships of Rs.360 each per annum for training Indian boys ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ the I.M.M.T.S. "Dufferin", and it was decided to formulate a ~~xxx~~ scheme for the training of Indians in England and other countries to enable them ultimately to fill the higher posts in the Traffic and Engineering Departments of the Port Trust.

Calcutta Strike situation.

The Calcutta Jute Workers' strike (see page 19 of the report of this office for September, 1929) had fizzled out during September. There was a slight recrudes^ence of trouble, however, on 18-10-29 when 3400 men employed in the Orient Jute Mill, Budge Budge, str^uck work on the ^{new} ground of arbitrary dismissals of certain workmen. The strike did not spread and caused only local trouble.

Bombay Textile strike.

The Bombay textile strike (see page 19 of the report of this office for September 1929) has not yet been formally called

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off, but for all practical purposes the strike is at an end. According to a report in the Times of India of 21-10-29, Mrs. Dange and Mr. V.A.Joshi, two of the leaders of the Girni Kamgar Union, have issued a statement criticising the extremst labour leaders for their unbending attitude and urging the immediate calling off ⁷ the strike, as, if the strike ^{were} ~~is~~ continued the new hands taken in place of the 30,000 odd strikers who have gone to their villages would get time to ~~learn~~ learn their work, and thus deprive the strikers of their jobs.

The Bombay mills are now working with their full complement of men.

Hours and wages in Cotton mills:

Bombay Labour Office Inquiry.

The following information has been furnished by the Hon'ble Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah in the Bombay Council on 3-10-29 in response to a question standing in the name of Syed Munawar in regard to the inquiry recently conducted by the Bombay Labour Office into the hours of work and wages in the cotton industry. According to Sir Ghulam Hussain the present inquiry is intended to obtain complete particulars in the case of each individual workers with regard to the number of days worked, total out-turn in the case of piece-work, rates of wages, basic wages, additional remuneration in the form of "dearness allowances", deductions made in respect of fines, bonuses paid for good attendance or better production, and net earnings payable. The inquiry is unlike the two previous inquiries conducted in 1921 and 1923, when information was obtained

for different groups of workers in different occupational classes for each mill with regard to the aggregate number of days worked by each group, and the total aggregate earnings for the number of days worked. A report of the inquiry is now under preparation by the Bombay Labour Office, and is expected to be published before the close of 1929.

Factory Administration in Burma, 1928*

The number of factories in Burma and the Northern Shan States registered at the end of 1928 was 1,047, of which 79 were closed, as compared with 1,007 factories of which 67 were closed during 1927. The majority of the factories are rice mills, their total number being 606. In addition, there are about 250 small unregistered rice mills, so that there are probably over 900 rice mills in the province. The milling capacity is much in excess of that required to deal with the rice crop, and consequently many of the mills have to work intermittently. Industrial conditions in Burma, the report observes, would be greatly improved if some new industry could be introduced which can be worked by small capitalists.

Number of factory workers: women and children. The total number of persons employed increased from 101,353 in 1927 to 101,586 in 1928. The total number of women employed in 1928 was 10,249, as against 10,492 in 1927, and 9,381 in 1926. The total number of children employed was 845 in 1928, as against 1,089 in 1927, and 1,340 in 1926. A few cases of illegal employment of women have been detected, and it is suspected that many cases of this sort remain undetected owing to the inadequate strength of the inspecting staff.

Housing and Sanitation. Some of the larger factory owners have taken proper steps to ensure the proper housing of their workmen, but lower down in the scale housing conditions are far from satisfactory.

*Annual Report on the working of the Indian Factories Act, 1911, in Burma for the year 1928. Rangoon: Supdt., Govt. Printing and Stationery, Burma - 1929. pp. 2 + 60. Price,- Rs.3=4s.6d.

In the larger towns the problem of the housing of factory workers becomes merged in the wider question of the satisfactory housing of the working classes in general. The report is apprehensive that in the absence of effective public opinion on this point nothing much will be done in this respect in the near future. As the bulk of the factories in the province consists of rice mills, the problem of sanitation does not present great difficulties, the only serious problem to be tackled being the elimination of rice and paddy dust.

Fencing of machinery and Accidents. There has been an all-round improvement in the arrangements made for fencing of machinery, but new difficulties are presented by the task of ensuring that the fencing provided is maintained in good repair. The total number of accidents during 1928 was 1482, of which 16 were fatal, 248 serious, and 1,218 minor accidents. The corresponding figures for 1927 were 1,452; 28; 275 and 1,149 and those for 1926 were 1,388; 28; 282; and 1,078.

Administration and Inspection. The strength of the inspecting staff, according to the report, is inadequate to the requirements of the province. The factories are spread over a large area and an additional handicap is provided by the poor means of access to most of them. As a result, of the 1,047 factories only 968 were inspected once, leaving 253 as totally escaping inspection. Very few revisits were paid and even some cases of fatal accidents could not promptly be investigated.

Factory Administration in the United Provinces, 1928*

The total number of factories in the United Provinces subject to the control of the Indian Factories Act (Act XII of 1911), stood at 373 in 1928, as against 354 in 1927. Out of these, 338 factories worked during the year, while 35 remained closed. The number of operatives in all industries, as obtained from the annual returns submitted, was 86,531 in 1928, as against 88,319 in the previous year. The main cause of the decrease is the closing down of a number of ~~x~~ spinning mills in Agra. Textiles absorbed the largest number of workers, 25,780 being employed in this industry, while next in order comes ~~x~~ Government and local fund factories with 24,353 workers, gins and presses with 9,602 workers, food, drink and tobacco with 9,319 workers, and engineering with 6,779 workers.

Employment of women and children. The average number of women employed was 6,343 in 1928, as against 6,567 in 1927, and that of children 1,076 in 1928, as against 1,606 in 1927. The number of women and children employed thus registered a decrease. ⁶f the total factory population, 7.33 per cent were women, and 1.24 children in 1928, as against 7.4 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively in 1927.

Sanitary arrangements and ventilation. Considerable improvements have been made in the ventilation, cooling power, and movement of air in certain cotton mills. The principal changes introduced are:-
 (a) ~~extractim~~ fans for removing heated air in factory halls, (b) induction fans for drawing cool moist air into the room through wet khus khus tatties and mats, (c) removal of large-sized unprotected steam pipes from rooms, (d) provision of smaller propeller type of fans on individual looms, and (e) placing of khus khus tatties to

*Annual Report on the working of the Indian Factories Act in the United Provinces for the year 1928. Allahabad: The Superintendent, Government Press, United Provinces, 1929. pp. 47. Price, Rs. 2.

windows on windward side of mills.

Fencing of machinery. The report states that though there was a fair amount of progress in this direction, considerable apathy is still shown by certain owners, and 7 prosecutions had to be instituted for neglect of this very essential duty.

Accidents. 1,611 accidents, of which 26 were fatal, 178 serious, and 1,407 minor, were reported during the year, as compared with a total of 1,226 in 1927, of which 14 were fatal, 81 serious, and 1,131 minor accidents. The increase in all classes of accidents ~~is was~~ considerable when compared with the figures of the previous year. ~~The report~~ ascribes the increase in accidents to indulgence in unsafe practices which rules alone cannot adequately control, and observes that personal individual instruction by managers and supervisors would tend to mitigate the evil.

Housing of Factory Operatives. The housing conditions of operatives in some industrial centres, particularly Cawnpore, are very bad. The U.P. Government is considering a scheme for building housing accommodation for 20,000 employees and their families, but the scheme has not passed beyond the committee stage as yet. Meanwhile, some private employers have been pursuing a forward policy in this respect. The British India Corporation, one of the largest employers of labour in the province, has already provided a settlement consisting of 2,200 pukka dwellings of various types in which are accommodated over 6,000 employees and their families. The Corporation has acquired an additional 50 acres of land on which it proposes to construct houses for 200 more workmen.

Hours of employment, wages, etc. The majority of factories worked up to the maximum limit allowed by the Act. The weekly hours of 56 factories were not more than 48, of 22 factories not more than 54, and of 254 factories above 54. No shortage of labour was reported; on the contrary there was a surplus of labour in some districts ~~was~~ owing to the failure of the monsoon rains. The average wages for the province remained unaltered with the exception that the monthly rate of compositors, printers, and dyers increased by Rs. 4, Rs. 6 and Rs. 3 respectively, while that for boilersmiths was reduced by Rs. 3. During the period under review there were no serious strikes in the province.

Slavery and Forced Labour in
Indian States.

The following article by Mr. Sunder Kabadi, Secretary, Indian States People's Conference, London, under the caption "Slavery and Forced Labour in Indian States" is taken from the September, 1929 (Vol. VI, No. 12) issue of the Indian Labour Journal, edited by Mr. V.R.Kalappa. The article sheds a flood of light on the actual conditions in the more backward of the Indian States, particularly in the Rajputana States. In this connection attention is specially invited to the special report on forced labour accompanying ~~minute~~ ^{minute} New Delhi C3/663/29, dated the 4th July 1929.

"In this article, I propose to point out that slavery in the ordinary sense does exist in the Indian States, justifying immediate intervention on the part of the British Government to abolish it.

The fact of the matter is there are several communities of slaves in many of the Rajputana States, and some States in the Western Indian States Agency, including the Kathiwar States. According to the Census Report of 1921, in Rajputana and Central India alone, there were in all 160, 735 slaves. They are known by various names, such as Darogas, Huzaris, Ravana Rajputs, Chelas and Golas, etc, and are owned by the Princes and their wives, Hindu and Moslem alike. They are bound to be life-long servants of their masters and are not allowed to possess any property barring a few necessaries. In return for their services, they are given bare food, which ordinarily consists of remnants left in their masters' dishes. Their masters exercise the power of disposing of their wives and daughters and their marriages and divorces depend largely upon the sweet will

of their masters. If they run away to other States, they are liable to be brought back and returned to their masters. In fact, there were laws in some of the States until recently, prohibiting these slaves from leaving their masters or from emigrating from one State to another without obtaining the previous permission either of the district magistrate or their masters.

In Jodhpur, if the Darogas deviate from service commensurate with the position and requirements of the masters, the latter is legally entitled to take adequate service from them. If the number of Darogas exceeds the position and requirements of the master, he keeps the requisite number and discharges the rest, who, however, when summoned, must attend marriage and other ceremonies at the master's house, and live there for such a time as the master chooses and gives him in return nothing but mere food. Rajputs who have Darogas born in their houses and who have brought them up are entitled to give away their daughters (Darogas') in dowry along with their daughters. Rajputs of position are also entitled to give away in dowry even the whole families of the Darogas. They are further permitted to give away in dowry daughters of those Darogas who having exceeded in number the position and requirements of the master have sought employment elsewhere.

In Kotah, agricultural labourers, peasants, shepherds, cowherds and serfs of the State are not allowed to emigrate to another State unless they have arrived at a settlement with their masters. As a rule, they have to obtain permits from the Nazim (a district magistrate) or from their Masters before emigrating from one State to another. Besides this, any born slave of the jagirdars, who has

entered State Service, is, on receipt of information from the jagirdars, forthwith dismissed and no complaint by any such slave against the jagirdars is heard until it has been ascertained that the complainant is not a slave. His Highness looks upon this practice favourably and considers it proper that no born slave of any jagirdar should be employed in the police, the army, and any other department of the State and that if such a slave at the time of his appointment conceals his identity and thus succeeds in entering the State Service, he should be removed from the Service as soon as ^{his} the identity is revealed.

In Bikaner, whose ruler was a delegate to the League of Nations and is a signatory to the Treaty of Versailles, there were according to the Census Report of 1921, in all 10, 884 born domestic slaves of the classes known as Chakars and Darogas. In Alwar, another State, whose Maharaja was represented by Mr. Wedgewood Benn, His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, as a "remarkable man who shines in every walk of life and whose State bears the marks of the good administration of its ruler", there were, according to the Census Report of 1921 (?) male and 2599 female slaves. In Jodhpur, once again, according to the Census Report, there are in all 48,100 slaves.

Forced Labour.

Coming to the subject of Forced Labour, the system of VETH and BEGAR, which means Forced Labour, prevails in almost all the Indian States and all classes of labourers, workmen and artisans are compelled to work for the Princes, and their officials for remuneration which is nothing but bare food. They are compelled to

work at any time and for such time as the State requires and are also forced to go miles away from their houses into the villages, to the hills or jungles to follow the prince or his guests, shikar camps and tours of officials.

The following extracts from one of the Bundi State Regulations will, I trust, indicate the exact nature of Forced Labour prevalent in many of the Indian States:

- (1) Barbers shall continue as a matter of usual free service
(a) to make lighting arrangements in the evening at public offices and (b) to do the plastering and smearing of such offices with clay and cowdung;
- (2) Oilmakers shall continue to dig pits and spin hemp when necessary for State purposes and they shall be given food in return;
- (3) Brewers shall continue to supply fuel and spin hemp under the same conditions as the oilmakers;
- (4) Betel-sellers shall continue to supply screen and curtains under the same conditions as the oil-makers;
- (5) Butchers shall continue to supply free of charges skins for drums belonging to temples;
- (6) Peasants shall continue to supply dry cowdung for fire-places at public offices without any charge.
- (7) Bhils (aborigines) shall continue to be sent on errands and deputed to keep watch and shall be given food.
- (8) For bullocks engaged in Bundi City on hire and bound for places outside the city, commission at the rate of one

anna in a rupee shall continue to be charged by the State.

(9) For all labour done for the State purposes food will be given and for all work done for public servants wages shall be paid, but such labour shall be done by the very same classes as have been doing it hereditarily and if persons of these classes refuse to do their work, they shall be properly punished.

The Udaipur State, in July 1923, appointed a Commission of Enquiry presided over by Mr. C.G.Chenix Trench, I.C.S., to investigate into the grievances of the peasants of Begoon Jagir. One of the complaints made before the commission was that "Bolas, Bhils and Balais, even if they have given up their calling, are compelled to build roads, ^{and} carry beddings of officials from one village to another without any payment" but in the opinion of the Commission, which was presided over by an English Civilian. "this burden is not on cultivators but on the bhill, bola and balai communities. When they are summoned on occasions of the visits of high officials, they are given food. But if it is not customary to give them food, it shall be given in future. Every such labourer shall be paid daily wages of annas two if he does not want food". The Agents to the British Government in India who are fairly well acquainted with these conditions, instead of discouraging the princes are sometimes indirectly supporting and encouraging the system as will be seen from the following speech delivered in 1923 by the Agent to the Governor General in reply to an address given to him by the Kotah Durbar, which announced that it had abolished BEGAR in the State. The Agent said :-

"It is not an institution that ~~reduces~~ reduces people to the level of serfs. It is on the contrary only an evidence that the right kind of relations exists between the princes and his nobles

and their ryots. It is a service of affection rendered with spontaneity and willingness and received with kindness and benevolence. Even in British India, BEGAR is not evidence of the wickedness of the system of administration. In olden days supplies of fodder and fuel and so forth were freely given to touring officers, as a sign of affection and hospitality, and gratitude ^{for} and protection and help in time of trouble. Abuses have no doubt crept in, and the system of administration has become less dependent on the personal factor and the institution has had to be curtailed. But I for one should be very sorry if it were completely abolished even in British India and I hope that it will long survive in the States".

Forced Labour in Kashmir.

Interesting and instructive side-light on the difficulties of abolishing forced labour completely from Indian States is furnished by certain observations made by H.H. the Maharaja of Kashmir at a dinner given by the European residents of Srinagar, Kashmir, at the Srinagar Club on the occasion of the celebration of the Maharaja's thirtyfifth birthday. The remarks of the Maharaja were the outcome of certain criticisms recently levelled against him in respect of his not being a party to exactions of forced labour in connection with the visits of tourists to Kashmir. The visitors to Kashmir, mainly foreign, number on an average about 10,000 a year, and the problem of ~~package~~ porterage in that mountainous country entailed in this connection, ^{hitherto} was to a large extent solved by exactions of

forced, or at any rate, grossly underpaid labour. The following extract from the speech of the Maharaja is taken from the Pioneer of 4-10-29 :-

"During one of my tours in the state I came across an outlying place which is a regular jumping-off ground for sportsmen. I found that labourers were being forcibly collected there from the thinly-populated villages of that mountainous country so that sportsmen should be provided with transport. Those wretched people were brought sometimes 40 or 50 miles from their villages and kept for days on the chance of some sportsman coming through and requiring transport. As if that was not bad enough the rates which had been fixed for such labour were so shockingly inadequate that these wretched people received hardly three annas per day by the time they were permitted to come again."

"I abolished forced labour and raised the rates. I was immediately accused of nefarious designs for keeping Europeans out of Kashmir. I am glad to have this opportunity of publicly stating that I welcome visitors of all nationalities and my Government will as usual gladly extend all reasonable facilities to them so long as it is not to the sacrifice of my people or detrimental to the interests of the state which it has pleased God to entrust to my care".

Industrial Organisation.Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay.

The third quarterly general meeting of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, was held at Bombay on the 26th October 1929 with Mr. L.R. Tairsee in the chair. Referring to the World Economic Conference at Geneva and its recommendation for the abolition of import and export restrictions, the chairman pointed out that India could not participate in the tariff holiday-making, as Indian industries were so poor that, without tariff protection, they would not be able to survive foreign competition.

Speaking at some length on the labour situation, he stated that a chastened mood was now prevailing both among the employers and among the workers in Bombay as a result of the last strike and the great damage done by it. "Labour has seen where its extreme leaders have led it; against the loss in wages they have but earned for Bombay the two Acts of legislation: the Goonda Act and the Public Safety Act. Capital has also seen what harm can be done by small pin-pricks and that some provision is necessary to convince the worker that he gets fair treatment and to make him believe that he gets it. The workers' status must be improved by provision and safeguards against dismissal and victimisation; assurances should be provided against arbitrary dismissals for disciplinary and other offences and for alleged inefficiency. The workers and their leaders have to realise that their own material interests are bound up with the prosperity of industry and that this prosperity cannot be secured without co-operation with capital. Capitalists have to realise that no industry can make any

any progress worth the name if the workers without whom it cannot exist have their human needs and aspirations unsatisfied and are deprived of their due share of the fruit. If on the acceptance of these two vital facts a negotiating machinery is agreed upon and arranged, the industry would be on a fair way towards a system of co-operation and industrial swaraj necessary for its prosperity. It should be the aim of both labour and capital to increase the economic results of industry by greater efficiency, discipline and continuous work, and thus bring to the highest pitch the contributions of both to it. The lack of touch and contact by Capital with Labour has been one of the most important causes for the prevailing industrial unrest in Bombay! The rest of the speech was devoted to a spirit of defence of Mr. Haji's Indian Coastal Shipping Bill against the attacks made on it by the Associated Chambers of Commerce which represents European ~~Trade Union~~ interests in this country.

The Indian Merchants' Chamber and the Hours Convention.

Replying to the questionnaire issued by the International Labour Conference with reference to the proposed extension to ^{retained} ~~the industrial~~ ~~employees~~ and ~~commercial~~ undertakings of the Washington Convention restricting hours of work ~~for salaried employees~~, the Indian Merchants' Chamber protest against its "revolutionary character as far as the trading and commercial conditions in this country are concerned". The Chamber point out that in all villages and even in a majority of the towns and cities, shops are a one-man show and shop-keepers live and trade in the same premises. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to lay down in such cases how long a man should sit in his shop,

when he should open, and when he should close it. The Chamber believe that the progress of education and the development of trade and industries would bring about a change in the present system automatically, and they strongly recommend that the pace must not be forced.

(Hindu, 5-10-1929).

The Associated Chambers of Commerce.

At this year's annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce which will be held in Bombay next December, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce is expected to sponsor a resolution "requesting the urgent attention of the Government of India to the extent to which, in the recent industrial disputes, unregistered trade unions have interferred between employers and their workers; affirming the views expressed in their resolution of December 16, 1924 to the effect that ~~the~~ registration be compulsorily enforced in respect of every trade union, and picketing be declared illegal and effectively dealt with in the interests of peace and prosperity in the industries of India; and urging the Government to introduce at as early a date as possible legislation to amend the Trade Unions Act XVI of 1926 accordingly".

The Indian Railway Conference.

The Indian Railway Conference, which was instituted ^{twenty} six years ago to deal with comparatively minor matters of ~~Indian~~ inter-railway concern, has now developed into an affair of almost Parliamentary importance. Every department of the great business of railway transport, its equipment, methods, development and improvement according to the best that world wide knowledge and experience can show now comes under its review. This year's session of the Conference was held at Simla on the 12th and 13th October, with Sir Ernest Jackson, the Agent of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway Company, in the chair. Dealing with the relations between the ~~office~~ officers and the staff, he said that there was no deep-rooted feeling of dissatisfaction amongst the employees, though many difficulties had been experienced in the wake of the passage of the Trade Union Act, for requests of every imaginable character had been put forward by the unions. Some unions had often made use of the word "grievance" to camouflage extortionate demands. Among the reasons why greater progress had not been made in bringing about a modus operandi agreeable to the unions and to the management alike was the general idea among the members of the unions that the administration is opposed to their staff becoming the members of such associations. Secondly, if railway administration can feel more or less assured that only fair and reasonable representations would be put forward, their uncertainty, almost amounting to distrust, in the responsible management of certain labour associations would very quickly disappear. He instanced the fact that applications ~~run~~ ^{run} tumble over each other when a vacancy occurs in the railway ~~service~~ ^{service} as indicating that the conditions of service offered by railway systems were usually appreciated by the staff.

According to him, the real

the real trouble was that a very large majority of the men falling within the category of menials are entirely in the hands of the money-lenders. "My endeavour has been", said Sir Ernest Jackson, "to bring relief to these men by freeing them from debts carrying these huge rates of interest, to find funds with which to satisfy the money-lender, and to replace the loans by others carrying a reasonable rate of interest. A partial remedy for this lies in providing more opportunities for putting by savings, by deductions from pay sheets, for starting more railway co-operative societies. Another point on which he dwelt referred to the strenuous opposition which the Railway Staff Committees met with from the Unions. These Committees represent different branches of the staff and were ~~formed~~ ^{founded} ~~with~~ with the set purpose of bringing to the notice of their superiors those directions in which they consider improvement and relief can be given, and he therefore failed to see what objection could be taken to these Committees by any Union which really has the best interests of the staff at heart.'

Addressing the Conference, Sir George Rainy also referred to railway labour problems. "All big questions are coming to the ~~front~~ front, hours of work, scales of wages, leave rules, especially of the lower-paid officers, and housing conditions in particular areas, and we must do our best to effect improvements in these matters when such improvement is shown to be reasonably necessary. It is on matters such as these that attention is usually concentrated when labour questions are discussed, but I cordially welcome other and more indirect methods by which the welfare of labour can be promoted. What the administration of the B.B. and C.I. Railway has done by the encouragement of co-operative credit societies to lighten the load

of debt under which its servants are too often weighed down is of the highest value, and I should like to assure all railway administrations that whatever they may find it possible to do on similar lines will have the cordial sympathy and approval of the Railway Board and of the Government of India".

With the conclusion of the opening proceedings, the Conference settled down to its detailed agenda, and one of the questions of first class importance appearing on it relates to railway labour problems. It may here be mentioned that the Committee appointed by the Conference a year ago to submit a report on this problem has not as yet presented its report. The railways are large employers of labour and there have been ^{in certain centres during the past year} such outbursts of unrest that a considered report by the Railway Conference Association would be of great value to all employers of large bodies of labour and to every one concerned in the modern development of the labour problem in India.

Seth Narottam Morarjee, who was the Indian Employers' delegate ~~to~~ the 11th International Labour Conference, met with a tragic death on the 6th November 1929. While motoring between Bombay and Sholapur, he got down to see a precipice called "tiger's leap point" in the Western Ghats, and it is ~~suspected~~ that he slipped and fell down the ravine, as his body was discovered the next day in a hollow about 1400 feet below.

The late Mr. Morarjee was among the most prominent commercial magnates in Bombay, and had a seat on the directorate of many important firms. As the chairman of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company he rendered abiding national service by bringing to the forefront

the questions of mercantile marine and reservation of the coastal traffic for India.

On behalf of the office, the Director of the Indian branch sent a telegram of condolence to the late Mr. Morarjee's son.

Industrial Organisation.

Railways.

The simmering discontent among the Railway workers of India consequent on what they consider to be the unsatisfactory reply made by Sir George Rainy, the Member for Railways and Commerce in the Government of India, to the deputation of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation which waited on him last May has appreciably stimulated the activity of many Railway Unions.

On the 29th September 1929, the General Council of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation met at Nagpur, 22 representatives from various affiliated unions being present. After prolonged discussion, consideration of the question of the boycott of the Whitley Commission was deferred to the Annual Convention of the Federation, which is to meet in Nagpur this November. A result of this decision has been that the All-India Railwaymen's Federation has not been able to take any action on the Government's request that a representative of it should be chosen as an Assistant Commissioner to collaborate with the Whitley Commission. Other resolutions dealt with the unsatisfactory nature of Sir George Rainy's reply, the appointment of propaganda committees to prepare within three months for a general strike on the railways if the Government did not accede to the minimum demands of the railway workers, and the problem of dealing with unions started in rivalry to the existing affiliated unions.

Among the railway unions that have been exceptionally active during the period under report is the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union. This Union has recently been reorganised by Mr. V.V. Giri, and has been encountering a considerable degree of opposition from the Railway Management, first because

Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, an ex-President of the Indian National Congress, has been elected one of its prominent officers, and secondly because the Union is opposed to the Management's system of recruitment for its staff committees. As the second point is of some importance, it is considered useful to give an idea of the functions of these committees, as explained by their official sponsors.

The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Company have a proposal on hand to establish District ^{and} Central Staff Committees in the Transportation Department, and the Railway authorities have explained to a representative of the "Hindu" of Madras (see its issue of the 11th October 1929) that the objects of these committees are to increase the good relations between the officers and the staff, to discuss general or individual grievances of members of the staff, to discuss suggestions for improving the efficiency of the service and thus to give the staff a better insight into the working of the company as a whole and increase their interest in it.

The district committees will have thirteen members each representing one grade of the staff (driver, station-master, signaller, etc.) in the Transportation Department. Each representative will be elected by the men in his grade, the minimum qualification for voting being two years' service.

The district committee will, after discussing a particular subject or subjects among themselves at a preliminary meeting, place those subject or subjects at a second meeting which will be held under the chairmanship of the senior district officer. Other district officers will also be present at that meeting.

The Central Committee will consist of one elected member from each district committee and one representative from the staff at Salt

Cotours. The Chief Transportation Superintendent will be the president of this Committee. Matters requiring representation to the Traffic Manager and the Chief Transportation Superintendent and matters which could not be finally disposed of by the district committees will be placed before this committee, which will meet periodically for consideration.

At a meeting of the M.& S.M. Railway Employees' Union (Bangalore Branch) held at Bangalore on the 3rd October 1929, the workers expressed ~~their~~ that these staff committees were being formed to undermine the existing unions, and passed the following resolutions:

(a) The employees of the M.S.M.Railway at Bangalore City Station view with grave concern the attitude of the administration in attempting to stifle the activities of the Men's Union by forcing upon them the Staff Committees against their will.

(b) It is hereby resolved that the authorities should be informed that the employees have no faith whatsoever in the working of the proposed Staff Committees and wish to emphasise that such Committees can never be representative bodies, in the real sense of the term, of the employees.

(c) If, however, Staff Committees are appointed in spite of the General protest of the employees, they wish to make it known to all concerned and to the Royal Commission on Labour that the Committee thus elected on the inspiration and guidance of the employers consisting of their own men will represent none but themselves to gain their own ends.

Meetings of the Bezwada branch of the same Union held on the 9th October 1929, and of the Bangalore and Madras branches held on the 17th October 1929, have adopted the same attitude towards ~~to~~

the Staff Committees, and it is understood that Mr. Maynard, the Deputy Transportation Superintendent of the M.S.M. Railway, is touring the line to explain the functions of these committees, while representatives of the Unions are also going from centre to centre stiffening the men's opposition to them.

G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union.

A meeting of the executive of the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union was held at Nagpur on the 20th October and was attended by ~~the~~ representatives from the unions at Jhansi, Itarsi, Bombay and Manmad. After authorising the president of the meeting to inform the Agent of the G.I.P. Railway that his unsympathetic attitude towards the demands of the railway workers will compel the ~~workers~~ men to resort to a general strike, the meeting accorded its support to the programme for the preparation of a strike arrived at by the General Council of the All India Railwaymen's Federation at its meeting of the 29th September last. All the centres were called upon to do their best to increase their membership and to collect money for a strike fund.

Other railway meetings held during the period under report were the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway Loco Workers' meeting at Bombay on the 2nd October 1929, and the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway Employees' meeting at Secunderabad on 3rd October 1929. The principal point considered at these two meetings was the attitude of the Railway Managements concerned towards the men's demands for better conditions of service.

Anglo-Indians in Railway Employ.

Anglo-Indians in Railway Employ.

A representative meeting of the North Western Railway employees, European and Anglo-Indian, was held at Lahore on the 27th October, when ~~with~~ Lt-Col. Gidney, M.L.A., now acting ^{ed} Assistant Commissioner with the Whitley Commission, spoke on the "problem of Anglo-Indian Labour conditions and employment on railways". He expressed great dissatisfaction at the official interpretation of "Indianisation" which had led to so much hardship among Anglo-Indians as what was happening was merely a displacement of one kind of labour by another. He advocated that this policy should be replaced by a policy for levelling up of the economic conditions of labour rather than an economic levelling down. He forecasted three major grievances which would have to be considered by the Whitley Commission. The first of these was the abolition of the word "subordinate" as unnecessarily creating an artificial grade and an inferiority complex. Even competent subordinate officers acting for long periods for covenanted railway officers had no chance of being confirmed in the higher grade, and this practice meant that the Anglo-Indians were merely being made ~~a~~ ^{menial} contingents to serve the interests of their European colleagues.

Secondly, there was the general question of workshop recruitment and hours of work, which in many cases have caused considerable hardship. The third point concerned the living standard as compared with the prevailing standard of wages. Uniformity of treatment was impracticable when the conditions governing living wage were different. This ~~once~~ again led up to the policy of enforcing uniformity of wages on the higher and not on the lower standard.

All-India Telegraph Workmen's Conference.

The first session of the All India Telegraph Workmen's conference was held at Bombay on the 8th and 9th October 1929 with Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, M.L.A., in the chair. Mr. F.J. Ginwalla, M.L.C., the chairman of the Reception Committee, in his welcome address referred to the unsympathetic treatment the telegraph men of India have received from the Government as regards their demands regarding salaries, promotions pensions, provident fund, hours of work, allowances and the gradation of service. whereas the postmen are considered to be in the superior service, the telegraph men ~~are~~ who had equally responsible work ^{to do} are designated as inferior servants, and the telegraph worker, called the Task Work Peon starts at a salary of Rs. 12/- per mensem which with house allowance and message allowance bring him a sum of not ~~less~~ more than Rs. 40/- per month. It is also frequently the case that he does not earn more than this starting salary at the time of his retirement. After 30 years' service he is given a pension of only Rs. 4/- per month. This was the situation in Bombay and he considers that the situation elsewhere must be even worse.

The president said that the Government have perpetually disregarded all the complaints submitted to them by the telegraph workmen. He emphasises the need for organisation if they were anxious to solve their special ~~x~~ problems.

The following are ^{among} the resolutions passed at the session:-

"This Conference reiterates the demands contained in the Memorial submitted by the Bombay Presidency Telegraph Workmen's Union to the Government of India in July 1927 and the Memorials submitted by the All India Telegraph Workmen's Union, Lahore, and resents the

failure of the Government to grant any one of the demands in spite of repeated representations made by the Unions in that behalf.

This Conference requests the Government of India to abolish the present menial grade of the Telegraph Delivery Peons and class them as superior servants and introduce a grade, and scale of pay and time similar to that of the Postmen.

This Conference is of opinion that the present rate of monthly pension, viz., Rs. 4/- allowed to the members of the Telegraph Delivery Staff is not only ridiculous but worthy of condemnation and further that the arbitrary distinction drawn between Postmen and Telegraph Delivery Peons, as the grade of the former is classed as superior and that of the latter as menial, is grievously prejudicial to the interest of Telegraph Delivery Peons.

This Conference is of the opinion that in order to promote solidarity and class association between the Postal and Telegraph Employees Associations all over India, a Federation of all Unions and Associations be started with a suitable constitution and funds and such Federation should hold its meeting at the time and place of the meeting of the All India Trade Union Congress!

The Conference then elected Diwan Chamanlal as president, Messrs. Jawaharlal Nehru, N.M. Joshi, Jamnadas Mehta and Ishwardas Sowhney as Vice Presidents; Mr. P.B. Datar as Secretary, and Mr. F.J. Ginwalla, M.L.C., as Treasurer for the year 1929-1930.

Central Labour Board of Madras.

The labour leaders of Madras have for some time been considering the resuscitation of the now defunct Madras Central Labour Board,

and two or three informal conferences had been held during the period under report to discuss the question. At one of these meetings Mr. B. Shiva Rao, President of the Madras Labour Union, explained how such a Board would be most useful in co-ordinating the activities of the Labour Unions. There was general agreement with the view that that Board should confine itself to such problems as housing, health, working hours and economic conditions, leaving party politics severely alone. Each Union would be empowered to elect three representatives on the Board and a further meeting is to be held on the 3rd November for the regular constitution of the Board.

The All India Trade Union Congress will meet from the 28th November to the 1st December at Nagpur. The All India Postal and R.M.S. Conference will hold their annual session on the 9th and 10th November 1929 at Peshawar under the chairmanship of Diwan Chamanlal M.L.A. Among the items on the agenda are the following:-

- (1) Federation of Unions;
- (2) Abolition of Provincial Branches
- (3) Time-test;
- (4) Town Inspectors appointment and selection grade examination;
- (5) Denial of the D.G. to receive a deputation of the Union; ^{and}
- (6) Mutual Benefit Fund.

Trade Union Movement in Burma.

According to the report on the working of the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, in Burma during the year ending 31st March 1929, issued by the Labour Statistics Bureau, Burma, the trade union movement is not making any appreciable progress in Burma. The organised workmen form but a small proportion of the total labour population in the Province. Only one trade union has so far registered itself under

the Act and none of the other trade unions in existence has shown any inclination yet to take advantage of the provisions for registration afforded by the Act. This may have been due partly to the low standard of literacy and intelligence prevailing among the working classes in general and also partly to the fact that conditions in Burma are better than in India. The labourers in Burma are perhaps as a class a more satisfied lot than their brethren in India. However, with a view to making the provisions of the Act known as widely as possible steps are being taken to print a pamphlet containing the Act and the rules and regulations issued thereunder and to distribute copies to the existing trade unions in the Province.

Intellectual Workers.Clerks in a Government of India Office.

About five or six years ago, the Government of India was recruiting accountants
clerks, for the Indian Stores Department on rather low rates of monthly salary (Rs $\frac{200}{50}$ per month in the scale of pay of Rs. $\frac{200-20-500}{50-6-140-5-200}$), but on account of the arduous and responsible kind of their duties they were also given a special pay of Rs. $\frac{80}{60}$ per month. One of the conditions of the order of appointment was that, if it was subsequently decided to convert the whole or any portion of the special pay into compensatory allowance, they will have to accept that decision without protest. The Government subsequently ordered that the special pay should gradually be withdrawn and that no compensatory allowance should be made at all. With effect from the 1st September 1929, only $\frac{2}{5}$ of the special pay is being given to them; even this reduced rate of special pay is to be finally withdrawn as from the 31st August 1931, if it is established that the growth of work in the office has become regularised by that time. Since, under the terms of their contract, these employees are entitled to compensatory allowance in lieu of the special pay thus stopped, there has been much unrest among them, and it is understood that from the 1st September 1929 onwards they have been refusing to receive the special pay at the reduced rate. Memorials have also been sent to the Government showing that this sudden stoppage, which in many cases reduced their monthly income by about 50 per cent, has been causing them serious hardship. No action so far appears to have been taken on these memorials, and a deputation of this class of employees which waited on the Auditor General early in November 1929

is reported to have received a stern warning against their rebellious conduct which, it was hinted, might end in their wholesale dismissal. In consequence, it is reported that they have now expressed their willingness to abide by the decision of the Government for the suppression of the special pay without giving any compensatory allowance in lieu thereof.

Economic Conditions.Cotton Ginning Pools in India.

The Vice-President of the Gujarat Cotton Traders and Factory Owners' Association has addressed a communication to the Secretary to the Government ~~of India~~ in the Department of Commerce and Industry, Bombay, defending the system of cotton ginning pools in India from certain criticisms directed against it by the Indian Central Cotton Committee. This Committee had requested the provincial governments to take action against the existence of the system of cotton ginning and pressing pools on the ground that it was convinced that the presence of these pools in most, if not in all ^{of} the cotton growing tracts in India is detrimental to the interests of the grower~~s~~ in as much as he has to pay a much higher rate for the ginning and pressing of his cotton. The Vice-President of the Gujarat Cotton Traders and Factory Owners' Association says that a pool or a combination of factory owners in a limited area is not in a position to impose its own prices on the cultivators who have to sell their ginned cotton, since the price obtainable by the cotton cultivator on the margin of production depends on the existing state of the general market, and that secondly only a very small percentage of the ginned and pressed cotton belonged to cultivators' societies and individual cultivators, whereas about 98 per cent of it was brought to the ginning factories by large commercial organisations interested either in the trade or in the direct utilisation of cotton. The McKenna Cotton Committee of 1918 says in paragraph ~~22~~ 231 of their report that the result of the formation of the pools has frequently been that new ginning and pressing factories, which are never intended to work, have been

erected with the sole object of sharing in the profits of the pools, which are unduly large on account of the monopoly of ginning and pressing work created by the combination of the factory owners and that this monopoly works to the detriment of the cultivator. This statement is characterised as an exaggerated allegation and the Association protests against the method suggested by the McKenna Committee to put an end to this system.

(Pioneer, 30-10-1929)

Migration.Indians in East Africa: Sir Samuel Wilson's Report.

The report of Sir ~~Am~~ Samuel Wilson to which reference has been made at page 60 of the report of this office for August 1929 has recently been published. The principal recommendations made in the report are the following:-

(1) The appointment of a High Commissioner, who will rank senior to the Governors of the three territories, and will exercise complete control, legislative and administrative, over certain common services, namely, customs, railways (including ports and harbour), posts and telegraphs, defence and fundamental research. (2) In the exercise of legislative powers the High Commissioner is to be assisted by a central council having an official majority. The powers of the central council are to be limited to transferred subjects, all other matters being left to local legislatures. (3) Regarding the position of Indians in East Africa, the report says that ~~the~~ Indians might be induced ^{to accept} nomination to the Legislative Council instead of election provided (a) an undertaking is given that the door is not closed to a common roll, (b) that the Kenya Government would miss no opportunity to bring Indians and Europeans together. (4) As regards the re-constitution of the Kenya ~~Legislative~~ Council the report suggests three alternative schemes, the common features of which are (a) a decrease in the abnormally large number of officials now in the Council, and (b) a small increase in the number of non-official Europeans compared with their demands in the past.

In a preface to the report, the Secretary of State for the Colonies says that the report does not in any way commit the Government to the suggestions embodied therein.

The members of the East African Deputation in India have issued a statement (Times of India, 10-10-1929) condemning the report as reactionary and as an abject surrender to the white settlers in Kenya. The deputation holds that no surrender is possible on the demand for a common electoral roll and demands an equal number of seats for Indians and Europeans in the Legislative Council.