

GENERAL.

58. Facilities for corresponding with relatives in India.—In all colonies facilities are afforded to emigrants for corresponding with friends or relatives in India or elsewhere. At the office of the Protector of Immigrants or Agent General as well as at the office of each Inspector or Divisional Agent assistance in addressing or despatching both letters and remittances is freely and constantly given. We have seen an officer on tour halt and accept letters from labourers by the roadside, note the address, and arrange to have each letter enclosed in a stout and legibly addressed envelope and posted. It was not an accident but part of an understood system. Envelopes were specially prepared with the word 'Village', 'Thana', 'Tehsil' and 'District' printed on the cover, a blank space being left opposite each. The delivery of three or four letters occupied about a minute. A few inquiries about the immigrants' well-being occupied about another minute, and the labourers returned to their work in the adjoining field. Emigrants who do not receive replies to letters or private acknowledgments of remittances habitually go to officers of the Immigration Department who endeavour to clear the matter up through the emigration agencies in India. Illiterate immigrants whether on estates or settlements in towns or villages can get their letters written without any difficulty. The only obstacle to writing is a feeling of shame on the part of those who have not remitted money. Many men whom we questioned about their communications with relatives stated that they did not like to write unless they also sent money orders. After our arrival in India we were informed that the largest employer of indentured immigrants in Fiji was arranging not only to have letters written *gratis* for labourers but to defray the postage to India. It might be well if all employers urged on their labourers to send with their letters an addressed envelope for the reply from India. Many immigrants told us sorrowfully that their letters were not answered.

For the four West Indian Colonies arrangements were made some years ago by which certificates of payment of money orders in India were forwarded by the Indian Post Office to the colonial remitter, *i.e.*, the Indian emigrant, on payment of a fee of 2 annas (two pence). The same arrangement has recently been entered into with the Government of Fiji.

We were especially struck with the Surinam arrangements. The Immigration Department of that colony transmits a large number of letters, in recent years averaging 1,000 yearly, free of cost, and a poor and illiterate Indian need only dictate his letter. Though the actual amount of assistance given varies from colony to colony in all it is substantial, and its money value is not its most important aspect. This practical recognition of the immigrants' moral claim to sympathetic assistance in his private needs and difficulties is productive of much goodwill.

59. Terms of agreement.—Labourers emigrating sign an agreement form on the reverse of which the conditions of service are summarised. All important matters with one exception are mentioned. No reference is made to the sanction by which the observance of conditions is enforced. The agreement does not state that refusal to work, unlawful absence, etc., are punishable by fine or imprisonment on conviction by a Magistrate. This liability should of course be clearly stated. The omission was referred to by labourers in the colonies, and while it is doubtful if penal clauses of the Ordinance were in fact so unexpected as they were sometimes represented to be, it is certain that the absence of any specific mention of these clauses in agreements is cherished as a grievance. In the Calcutta depôt probably every batch of emigrants includes a number of persons, men and women, re-emigrating. In up-country collecting depôts the recruits include such persons frequently. They mingle with the others for many days and are not likely to deny themselves the privilege of airing their own experiences as veterans. We visited four of the largest collecting centres in the United Provinces and two in the Madras Presidency. We questioned recruits regarding the conditions of service in the colonies, and especially about penalties for breach of agreement and about cost of living. We were surprised that so many were well informed on these as well as other points. The remainder seemed to be not merely ignorant but indifferent, and while none of the ignorant betrayed surprise or dissatisfaction at being

DEPT. OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, EMIGRATION A, JULY 1915

REPORT BY McNeill & Chinman Lal on Indentured Labour
on their visits to Colonies

enlightened on these matters the majority seemed anxious to explain that their conduct would be too meritorious to deserve any kind of punishment. Failure to refer to the penal clauses exposes the system of recruitment to justifiable criticism but does not apparently result in recruits being obtained who would be unwilling to emigrate if the omission were supplied. If our proposals regarding previous sanction to prosecutions and disposal of complaints by Inspectors meet with approval the part of the disciplinary system should also be recited in the conditions of service.

So far as we could ascertain each recruit in up-country depôts had the printed conditions of service read over and explained. Registering officers not only question recruits when brought before them but visit sub-depôts at intervals and question recruits found in them. Again in Calcutta and Madras the Protectors question recruits on arrival at the main depôt. While it would probably be untrue to state that each individual recruit has all the conditions fully and clearly fixed in his mind it is undoubtedly true that a good deal of trouble is taken to make matters clear and that where ignorance or misapprehension exists it is due to obtuseness and indifference on the part of recruits and not to systematic deceit. In up country depôts a batch of recruits may usually be divided into three classes, those who will ask intelligent questions about the conditions those who will not ask questions but will listen with interest to the answers given to others, and those who regard questions and answers with stolid indifference. In one class of cases we think deceit affected the recruits' willingness to emigrate. The cases were not numerous and the individuals were literate men of non-agricultural castes. We were told by such men in more than one colony that recruiters had promised work other than agricultural work, but the promise was coupled with an injunction to say nothing about this to the local registering officer or to any higher officer in Calcutta. They were recommended to give false names and castes and describe themselves as labourers, and were assured that their intelligence and ability to read and write would ensure them superior employment in the colony almost immediately. These emigrants accordingly made on three occasions untrue statements to the registering officer, the Emigration Agent, and the Protector of Emigrants. They went to the colony and found that manual labour was required. As a matter of fact, though the recruiter is unlikely to have known it, emigrants have from time to time had their indentures cancelled and been given special employment, and a few indentured labourers are given employment in hospitals, offices, etc. The persons so deceived were naturally aggrieved, but it is fair to the system in operation to recognise that the recruiter's deceit would have been ineffective but for the untruthfulness and dishonesty of the person deceived. The colonies and the emigration officers want only genuine manual labourers and try to exclude all others. An examination of the hands of recruits is carried out systematically, but even this test can be evaded. It might be well to affix in up country sub-depôts a large placard containing not only the conditions of service but general information including a warning against irresponsible promises of any work but agricultural labour. Quite apart from the question of deceit, men who cannot or will not work with their hands are not wanted. Where the density of population is from 700 to 900 per square mile and agricultural labourers earn a bare subsistence without hope of betterment a true statement of an emigrant's prospects may safely be relied upon.

While on the subject of recruitment it may not be out of place to advert to the complaint of employers that most shipments included men who were physically unfit for agricultural work. We were shown men who certainly looked unpromising and were stated to be useless. A few rejections occur on the arrival of each ship in a colony; those rejected being repatriated as soon as possible. We inquired regarding the tests applied in India, and had existing methods been invariably practised in the past unfit men could hardly escape elimination. No man who is obviously unsound can pass the medical tests and in the depôt registers summary rejections by the Emigration Officer on the ground of generally defective physique are recorded. What seems to have occurred is that in years when employment is obtainable near recruiting centres and fewer recruits are available the standard is lowered as regards general physique. Men who are known to be organically unsound are never passed. It would appear that formerly in Madras physical tests were

ess strict than in Calcutta. It is in every way desirable to maintain a high standard of physical fitness. Men of good physique will earn good wages and may easily become prosperous settlers. Weedy men will do little more than maintain themselves and their grumbling is infectious.

We think that the emigration agencies would do well to repatriate and employ experimentally as recruiters a few emigrants who had recently completed their indentured service. These men should be sent back to their own districts on a small fixed salary *plus* a small bonus per approved recruit, a further sum of a few hundred rupees being paid to them after ten years of good work. Only industrious men who had worked steadily in a colony should be employed and their field of operations should be separate from that of the existing recruiters. They could answer all questions put to them by recruits or by any one else interested in their work. They would begin with a clean record, would be slow to forfeit their employment by misconduct, and would have a reward to hope for after a reasonable period of work besides a stimulus to activity while employed. They would not merely hang about the centres to which the unemployed drift but could go to find recruits. They would hold up their heads and rely on nothing but the truth. At least one recruiter now employed in the United Provinces had grown up and been educated in Jamaica before his parents returned to India, and on short acquaintance he compared favourably with any other recruiter. The recruiters now employed are generally disliked and distrusted and their knowledge is obviously second hand. An intelligent man who had himself worked in a colony, knew what industrious men might expect, and could give proofs of what he said, would inspire more confidence.

The existing forms of agreement are polyglot. It would be better to have forms printed in English and one other language. For each emigrant the form printed in the language understood by him would be used. Notices in depôts might be polyglot.

60. Indentured women.—The system of restricting the industrial service of women under indenture to three years out of the five years of indentured residence is a matter about which there is much diversity of opinion. On the whole we think that it is rather less than more advantageous. It was recommended by Surgeon Major Comyn twenty years ago in the expectation that it would induce more women of a respectable class to emigrate. The class of women does not seem to have been affected. Some managers think that both men and women are more contented if the woman is free of all obligation to work after three years. Others think that a woman who is not occupied otherwise than in cooking her husband's food is more likely to get into mischief, and several stated that men have privately asked that women should be sent out to work. So far as we could ascertain employers are not particularly anxious that women should work provided that they are properly maintained and absence from work does not merely mean exposure to temptation and possibility of serious trouble. Even during the first three years a woman who is known to be safely and usefully employed at home will not be sent out to the field. The women who come out consist as to one-third of married women who accompany their husbands, the remainder being mostly widows and women who have run away from their husbands or been put away by them. A small percentage are ordinary prostitutes. Of the women who emigrate otherwise than with their husbands or parents the great majority are not, as they are frequently represented to be, shamelessly immoral. They are women who have got into trouble and apparently emigrate to escape from the life of promiscuous prostitution which seems to be the alternative to emigration. It is obviously difficult to elicit from the women themselves a full and frank account of their antecedents. But what appears to be true as regards a substantial number is that they ran away from home alone or accompanied by someone by whom they were abandoned, that they drifted into one of the large recruiting centres, and after a time were picked up by the recruiter. The recruiter is represented to have pictured to them a condition under which they could both earn good wages and begin domestic life afresh. The recruiter is sometimes regarded in India as a man who habitually tempts women to leave their homes. The statements made to us by women do not bear out that view. He picks up his

recruits in the towns to which women immigrate from rural areas where recruiters seldom appear. In our visits to depôts we have found that registering officers are not backward in exercising the discretionary power conferred on them by section 31 (2) of the Indian Emigration Act as regards postponing the registration of women recruits whom they believe to be married. The great majority of the unmarried women cohabit with one man and remain with him. The union is sometimes but rarely legalised by marriage. On large estates there are always some women of notoriously lax morals, and there are of course a considerable number of unmarried men. The risk in allowing women to absent themselves from work is that both married women and those who would otherwise remain loyal to an irregular union are more likely to be tempted by these men. Experience shows that the authority of husband or protector is not always able to overcome a woman's disinclination to work, and even apart from possible temptations from outside it is frequently better for all parties that this authority should be reinforced. What would be much more beneficial than permitting women to absent themselves from work after three years is the adoption of another proposal made by Surgeon-Major Comyn, namely, that during advanced pregnancy and after child birth a woman should be entitled both to remain idle and to receive free rations or diet ordered by a medical officer. The whole period should be not less than four months and might advantageously extend to six months. There is on and off estates a considerable mortality among children under one year. Exact figures were not obtainable, and though the corresponding mortality in other sections of the community in the West Indies is possibly higher, it is likely that the grant of free rations would contribute to an improvement. In the Trinidad Indian community generally the proportion of still-births is very high. A woman is never compelled by her employer to work when she is pregnant or has been recently delivered, but unless her husband is an exceptionally good worker her earnings will be a consideration, and she may easily continue too long at work before delivery and recommence work too soon afterwards. Another obvious risk is that the birth-rate may be artificially checked if bearing children is expensive. We strongly urge that this proposal should be adopted. It would be for the Colonial Government to decide if the cost should fall wholly on the estate or wholly on the Immigrant Fund or partly on each. The third course seems most equitable. It may also be convenient to recommend here the universal adoption of a measure which is systematically adopted in Fiji and Surinam and has been tried sporadically in other colonies. This is the maintenance on each estate of a regular nursery in charge of one or more women. This ensures that whether mothers do not work, do light work, or do a full day's work small children are well cared for. They are properly fed, and articles of food such as milk, etc., which are easily contaminated, can be kept in insect-proof cupboards away from dust. If the number of children under four years of age exceeds five a nursery should be provided.

As regards the class of women recruited we think that an improvement could be affected. The employment of returned immigrants as recruiters should contribute to the recruitment of a larger percentage of married persons. We were at first disposed to recommend that the proportion of *adult* women to men be increased from 40 to 50 per cent in order to reduce the disproportion between the sexes. An increase to 100 per cent may seem at first sight suitable but becomes less attractive on consideration. The majority of young men go out with the intention of saving and remitting money and returning to their own villages and not of marrying. Unless the women emigrated as wives insistence on a parity between the sexes would be anything but a gain to morality. The additional women would almost all be disreputable. There are in Trinidad now in round figures 1,20,000 Indians of whom 50,000 are females and 70,000 males. The figures in British Guiana are almost the same, the exact proportion being 160 males to 73 females. An immigrant who wants to marry in these colonies can find a wife. If all the unmarried women are deducted from the numbers emigrating the diminution in the total female population is slight and becomes yearly less noticeable. In the other colonies the proportion of males to females is approximately 2 to 1, but the discrepancy is decreasing. We think that it would be better to modify the rule which requires that for each 100 men 40 women over ten years of age be shipped. There need in our opinion be

no minimum limit of age and the percentage of females to males should be raised to 50. Under the existing rule recruiters must accept such women as they can get. As young girl children do not count towards the percentage and as all ineffectives are costly to emigrate and to maintain on an estate, single women are now in more demand than a family including small girl children. If young girls count towards the percentage a married couple with two or more girl children will be very desirable recruits. There will be no need to recruit disreputable women and in a very short time the disproportion between adult men and women will be further reduced. There would soon be a substantial and steady increase in the number of marriageable women, while the professional prostitute would tend to disappear. There need be no fear that girls will not find husbands. Industrious men marrying in the first four years of their indentures might be entitled to an advance not exceeding £3 recoverable in instalments of a shilling per week. On estates the married quarters should be fenced off. The married quarters would be 'out of bounds' for the single men, and the conditions of life need occasion no special anxiety as regards morality. The recruiter responsible for recruiting married couples or girls with their parents should be rewarded. Whatever methods may be adopted for recruitment it would be for the emigration officers of the colony to satisfy the Government of India that both methods and results were satisfactory. We recommend that the question of re-extending the industrial period of women's indentures to five years be left to the colonial authorities. It is possible that even a desirable change, merely because it is a change, may give rise to more trouble than the anticipated advantages would justify. The other measures recommended might be tried first. It will be remembered that we have proposed a system of rewards for well behaved people in the later years of their indentures, and its adoption will enable employers to discourage reprehensible idleness among women.

61. Suicides and immorality on estates.—In Trinidad parti-

Year.	(1)	No.
* 1903-4	...	4
1904-5	...	11
1905-6	...	19
1906-7	...	15
1907-8	...	19
1908-9	...	21
1909-10	...	18
1910-11	...	6
1911-12	...	7
1912-13	...	22
Total	...	142

Year.	(2)	No.
† 1903-4	...	1
1904-5	...	2
1905-6	...	5
1906-7	...	4
1907-8	...	5
1908-9	...	9
1909-10	...	4
1910-11	...	4
1911-12	...	4
1912-13	...	5
Total	...	43

culars of suicides among the indentured are not given either in the Protector's annual report or in the separate annual return of mortality on estates. Apparently no report regarding the occurrence of a suicide is received by the Protector, and the causes assigned for these suicides are not recorded in his office. In the annual report on vital statistics suicides among Indians are included in the general figures. The Registrar General was, however, good enough to have the original records searched for ten years and communicated the number of suicides amongst Indians as shown in the marginal table * (1). Since our return to India information regarding suicides amongst the indentured has been supplied as in the marginal table † (2). The mean Indian population was 106,000 during the decade, and the mean indentured population 10,700. The suicide rate

for the total Indian population was 134 per million and for the indentured 400 per million.

In British Guiana the suicides were as follows:—

Year.	INDENTURED.			Rate per million of indentured population.	UNIDENTURED.			Rate per million of un-indentured population.	Whole number.	The colony rate per million of total population (all races).
	Male.	Female.	Total.		Male.	Female.	Total.			
1903	1	...	1	67	8	...	8	72	9	72
1904	1	...	1	67	6	2	8	70	9	71
1905	2	...	2	16	1	1	2	17	4	31
1906	...	...	5	476	6	1	7	59	11	94
1907	1	...	1	102	7	2	9	75	10	77
1908	0	...	...	...	3	1	4	38	4	31
1909	...	...	...	...	6	...	6	51	6	47
1910	1	...	1	110	6	1	7	59	7	55
1911	...	...	...	...	2	...	2	10	2	15
1912	1	...	1	103	3	...	3	25	4	31

In four of the cases among indentured immigrants the motive seems to have been domestic trouble, and in two of these cases jealousy. In other cases ordinary quarrels, depression owing to illness, or unknown motives were assigned. During the period the indentured population varied from 15,000 to 9,500. Twelve cases occurred in ten years amongst a mean population of upwards of 12,000, giving an average annual rate per million of 100. Of the twelve cases five occurred in a single year. During the last five years the rate was lower than in the provinces from which the labourers emigrated, but the whole population concerned was of course very small. Amongst the unindentured, with a mean population of 108,000, there were 56 cases in ten years, giving an annual rate of nearly 52 per million.

In Jamaica the number of suicides amongst the indentured labourers in each of the last ten years was:—

Year.	Number of suicides.	Mean Indentured population.
1903	1	1,800
1904	2	1,250
1905-06	2	1,100
1906-07	1	2,200
1907-08	...	2,800
1908-09	...	2,600
1909-10	...	2,200
1910-11	2	3,100
1911-12	2	3,000
1912-13	...	3,600

The rate is 396 per million throughout the ten years.

In two of the cases the motive assigned was jealousy and in one case grief for a wife's death. Depression owing to ill-health, quarrels with other labourers, and unknown motives were assigned in other cases. As the Government of India is concerned to know how far the suicides are the consequence of the indentured system it seems hazardous to draw confident conclusions in this case from calculations of rates. The population is very small and in four out of the last six years no suicides occurred. For these six years the rate per million is 215. The suicides amongst the unindentured, as distinguished from the rest of the population, are nowhere separately recorded.

The following table gives the number of suicides amongst the indentured and non-indentured Indians in Dutch Guiana for ten years :—

Year.	INDENTURED.		UNIDENTURED.	
	Suicides.	Population.	Suicides.	Population.
1903	1	3,611	3	15,445
1904 ... ..	...	3,003	1	16,377
1905 ... ..	...	2,816	1	16,259
1906	1	3,508	...	16,426
1907 ... ..	...	3,897	...	17,729
1908	1	5,035	1	18,693
1909	1	5,879	1	19,100
1910 ... ..	...	6,119	1	19,700
1911 ... ..	...	5,876	...	19,665
1912 ... ..	...	3,953	1	23,103

In one of these cases the motive assigned was domestic trouble, and in another jealousy. In the majority of the remainder quarrels with friends or neighbours were found to be the immediate causes. In two cases depression owing to illness was assigned. Here again the figures are small. The average rates per million are for indentured 27 and for unindentured 49. While it may be prudent to abstain from positive conclusions based on results recorded amongst a few thousand persons the absence of suicides for several years in succession amongst indentured immigrants in British Guiana and Dutch Guiana will at least suggest doubts as to the consequential connection between the indentured system and the suicide rate.

The suicides in Fiji during each of the last ten years were :—

Year.	SUICIDES AMONG		Indentured population.	Free population.
	Indentured.	Free.		
1903	12	3	...	...
1904	8	...	...	...
1905	6	...	...	...
1906	8	1	...	...
1907	12	5	...	...
1908	11	6	11,999	21,151
1909	10	1	12,243	23,163
1910	8	4	12,757	26,557
1911	16	2	14,310	25,976
1912	18	5	15,369	32,482

We were informed that the Madras labourers were much more prone to commit suicide than other Indians. In 1911 special instructions were on this account issued to employers to treat these immigrants with special care particularly during the first few months after their arrival. Cases arising out of domestic quarrels and jealousy were the largest class, next to these coming cases in which the deceased had been accused of a serious crime, and cases in which chronic ill-health had produced despondency. In two cases the deceased had been struck by a Sirdar a short time previously. In many cases no probable motive was ascertainable. The rate amongst free Indians is high and amongst indentured Indians very high in this colony. Yet for some years the conditions under which the indentured people work have compared favourably with those in other colonies. Prosecutions have been fewer, and sentences of imprisonment much fewer. The health conditions are unusually good owing to the absence of malarial fever and to good sanitary and medical arrangements. Wages are higher than in any other colony and the standard of task is lower. A circumstance peculiar to the colony is that the sale of alcoholic liquor to Indians is forbidden. Doubtless occasional evasions of the prohibition occur but broadly speaking alcoholic liquor in any form is unobtainable. The colony is being newly opened up and comparatively large communities of Indians such as are found all over West Indian colonies do not exist. Immigrants find themselves in small groups in a strange and very sparsely populated country. Labourers on many estates cannot during holidays or week-ends exchange the monotony of their daily lives for the social attractions of an Indian town or village in the vicinity. The few Fijian villages could have no attraction for Indians, who regard their amiable and interesting but rather primitive inhabitants as 'juugglies'.

The rate amongst indentured was 92½ per million of adult population in the last five years, and among other Indians 147 per million. In comparing this high rate with rates recorded in India or elsewhere some allowances must be made. In the first place there is in the colony no tendency to minimise the number of cases. The record may even be increased by the inclusion of cases which would be classed elsewhere as doubtful. The Immigration Department has happily allowed no bias to affect the result of inquiries and is concerned mainly with the possibility of any ill-treatment or neglect being responsible for the fatality. In his annual report for 1911, the Hon'ble Mr. Coates, the Agent General for Immigration, referring to the suicides recorded states:—“ * * * and in five other cases immigrants were found dead after a lapse of time under circumstances which permitted of the theory of suicide but without sufficient evidence of the cause”. There is no tendency to give undue weight to remote possibilities or to base verdicts on considerations disconnected with the conduct and motives of the deceased. Again, suicide rates for a country or province, especially where the majority of the people are engaged in ordinary agricultural pursuits, differ from rates in centres to which people immigrate for work under what are to them abnormal social and economic conditions. The rate for a population normally constituted as regards the distribution over age periods differs from that of a population with an abnormal age distribution. We endeavoured to obtain figures for purposes of comparison after our return to India. The statement printed as Appendix 46 was obtained from the Commerce and Industry Department records. It shows that in the Bombay Presidency as a whole the average rate is 28·8 per million while that of the United Provinces whence most emigrants are drawn, is 63, and that of Madras, the other chief source of supply to Fiji, is 45. The only source from which we could obtain carefully compiled statistics was Bombay City, where suicides have been tabulated analytically by the Bombay Anthropological Society. In the years 1901-06, during which the suicide rate was lower than in the previous quinquennium the general rate averaged 75 per million, that is nearly three times the rate for the whole Presidency. Further, if the rate for the age-period '20—30' is extracted the rate per million was 107 taking the average population of this age at 250,000, which is probably in excess of the actual. This rate is approximately four times higher than the Presidency rate. On estates more than three-fourths of the immigrants are between 20 and 30 years of age. We have no data as regards suicide rates for varying age-periods, or in centres attracting industrial

சென்னை மாநகர சுகாதார அமைச்சர்
 மார்ச் 1912
 ம. சி. சிவசாமி

immigrants in the provinces of India from which labourers emigrate to the colonies.

But when all allowances are made the suicide rate in Fiji is very high, and it is impossible not to conclude that the conditions under which indentured labourers live conduce to a high suicide rate. Whether this consequence results solely or mainly from the fact that the labourers are under indenture must be left to the judgment of the individual. If the same labourers emigrated to a distant and sparsely populated country but lived and worked as they liked the suicide rate might be lower, but the conclusion can only be speculative. The period of indenture not only comprises the dangerous age-period of emigrants but is also the period immediately following emigration when home-sickness is experienced by the great majority. After his indenture has expired the immigrant is free to work ~~where~~ and when he likes. He is also a trained worker, acclimatised, and accustomed to the conditions of the country, and he has passed the most dangerous age-period. The Fiji estates have neither Indian settlers within their border nor, in most cases, Indian communities in the immediate vicinity. The life on estates would be much more cheerful if more land on and near estates was occupied by Indians. The largest employer of indentured labour, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, is now endeavouring to establish settlements on what may be called a wholesale plan, and we think it highly probable that the creation of a number of compact centres of Indian social life will react markedly on the suicide rate. We have recommended more active organisation of settlements by the Government of the colony. The experience of other colonies will at least suggest caution in concluding that the condition of being indentured in itself influences the suicide rate amongst immigrants. The fact that there are in Fiji only 43 adult females to every 100 males may possibly have some effect, but this is not noticeable in the case of Surinam. We have elsewhere made recommendations for accelerating the reduction of the discrepancy between the sexes. From the record of inquiries it appears that in 15 out of 109 cases sexual jealousy was recognised as responsible, assuming all domestic quarrels to originate in this way. Even if these cases are eliminated a high rate remains to be explained. If, as we gathered, a lower standard of physical fitness was formerly accepted in emigrants from Madras the fact would much more seriously influence the suicide rate. Despondency owing to ill-health was one of the motives frequently assigned. The reasons for the high rate in Fiji might more readily be deduced if the cases were tabulated with reference to localities, age-periods, duration of indentured service, caste, and province (and preferably district) of origin. The motives so far as they are ascertained with reasonable probability, should also be classified.

As regards immorality on estates we have in dealing with the question of indentured women stated that the majority of women are not married to the men with whom they cohabit on estates. Of these unmarried women a few live as prostitutes, whether nominally under the protection of a man or not. The majority remain with the man with whom they form an irregular union. They are, however, exposed to a good deal of temptation as there are on all estates a number of young unmarried men with much more money than is needed for their personal wants. A few women change their protectors and out of these desertions trouble not infrequently arises. In each colony a few cases of homicide or grievous hurt annually result from quarrels about women. Probably the best guarantee against infidelity to regular or irregular unions is the birth of children. We have in another paragraph made recommendations which will both minimise the risk of restricting births and render the rearing of children a burden on the estate or the colony as well as on the indentured parent. There is no doubt that the morality of an estate population compares very unfavourably with that of an Indian village, and that the trouble originates in the class of women who emigrate. We have recommended that as married women are a minority of the adult women who emigrate and as the remainder are women who are or would become prostitutes in India the proportion of female emigrants should be increased but at the same time no minimum limit of age be imposed. We anticipate that a larger number of girls will emigrate with their parents and that a much larger number of married couples will shortly be

found on estates while disreputable women will be reduced to a minimum. The only practical remedy for the evils existing is to increase the proportion of marriageable women and, therefore, the number of marriages. Under any system of emigration there will always be a large proportion of young unmarried males. Of the men who return from these colonies more than half are still unmarried (*vide* Appendix C), and the proportion of females steadily rises in the resident population.

62. Wages returns.—As regards the inducements held out to Indian emigrants in the form of wages during indentured service we venture to suggest that these may be shown in annual reports more intelligibly than at present. What an intelligent emigrant should wish to know clearly is the probable surplus which he will earn over the sum which is needed to supply his reasonable wants. Those interested in the welfare of emigrants also wish to know this, and those concerned with the local supervision of indentured Indians wish to know the surplus which accrues on each estate and to inquire how far bad management or bad sanitation affect this surplus. Statements of average earnings per working day or per day worked in themselves do not give sufficient information. Even if information as to average daily expenditure is added a complex calculation must be performed before the annual, monthly, or weekly surplus is arrived at. What we propose is that for each estate there should be ascertained at the end of the year (a) the total wages paid to able-bodied men and women separately and (b) the average number of able-bodied men and women employed. The result of dividing (a) by (b) will be the average yearly earnings. The average yearly expenditure per head of men and women for each estate would be ascertained by multiplying the sum which the Immigration Department recognised as the reasonable daily expenditure of men and women on food, clothing, and miscellaneous wants by 365 *minus* the average number of days spent in hospital by men and women on the estate. The earnings *minus* the expenditure will be the surplus. Days spent in hospital are deducted in calculating annual expenditure because on those days an immigrant neither earns nor spends money, and for present purposes the larger or smaller number of these days is unimportant. Firstly, the meaning of days spent in hospital must receive separate attention, and secondly, where sickness is excessive gross earnings and surplus will fall. Women will obviously be 'in hospital' for a longer period than men. The cost of living is not uniform on all estates in the same colony. One is near a large market and another is served by a single shopkeeper who transports all his wares from the large market. Women and men will have separate daily rates of expenditure. What is proposed may be illustrated by a concrete case.

An estate employs 50 men and 20 women (average for 12 months). The men's aggregate annual earnings amount to £700 and the women's to £170. The average earnings per head are £14 and £8½ respectively. The recognised daily expenditure for men on this estate is 5½*d.* and for women 4¾*d.* The men are ill for 25 days yearly, and the women for 45 days. The men's annual expenditure is 5½*d.* × (365—25) = £7-15-10. The women's is 4¾*d.* × (365—45) = £6-6-8. The surplus per head for men is £6-4-2 (or Rs. 93-2-0) and for women £2-3-4 (or Rs. 32-8-0). Information in this form can be very easily compiled and is in our opinion much more intelligible and valuable than statements of earnings per working day or per day worked which involve much calculation and skilful interpretation. It does not matter to the healthy labourer whether he earns good wages by working hard for 4½ days weekly or steadily for 5½ days, and time spent on finding which method is preferred on individual estates is wasted. It is desirable to know generally what he does when absent on working days, but as regards his earnings the annual surplus is in our opinion more important than anything else. In the 'statement of work and wages' recommended by the Sanderson Commission we should prefer to substitute for the columns showing wages per working day and per day worked three columns showing (a) average annual earnings per head, (b) average annual expenditure per head, (c) average annual surplus per head.

The Immigration Departments may be trusted to work out a trustworthy daily expenditure figure for (b) for each estate. In the body of the annual

report the maximum and minimum daily expenditure allowance might be given. If this proposal is adopted a good deal of calculation now necessary might be discontinued. A monthly return which might be prepared in a few minutes would be sufficient for the information of the Agent-General and the local Inspector. The latter would of course examine the pay-sheets of each estate in detail as at present and check the accuracy of statements received.

It will be seen that we refer only to the able-bodied. The inclusion of non-able-bodied for purposes of calculation of averages is misleading. They are a small percentage of the whole number and occasion special trouble and expense. They are often given rations when they do not work. Their defective physique is no fault of their employers. Their individual cases are the subject of constant inquiry by medical and other officers. The separation in the pay-sheets of able-bodied and others involves no difficulty.

As regards labourers imprisoned for serious crimes and deserters we think they should not be counted on the strength of the estate during months for which they were absent for more than 15 days. Arrivals, deaths, and cessation of indentures, will also cause the monthly totals of labourers to fluctuate. The annual average will often be a fractional and not an integral number, thus 50½ or 139·3. This involves no difficulty.

Not the least advantage of this suggested form of exhibiting earnings will be the facility afforded of contrasting colony with colony. If a labourer earns a shilling per working day it is important to know whether his daily cost of living is four pence or seven pence on all days.

One theoretical objection may be made to the calculation, namely, that clothing and some of the miscellaneous expenses are yearly charges and that no part of such charges should be included in the amount of expenditure deducted for sick days. An experimental calculation will show that the inaccuracy is insignificant, while the unrecognisable additional earnings due to supply of rations at less than retail price is more than adequate compensation.

63. Summary.—While dealing in detail with each of the matters to which our attention was specially directed we have unavoidably laid more stress on what appeared to be remediable defects in the existing system of emigration than on the advantages which have accrued to emigrants. As we consider that the removal of defects would be the most satisfactory result of our inquiries both for emigrants and for the colonies to which they emigrate we think it desirable to recapitulate briefly the more important general remedies which we have recommended in the preceding paragraphs. They are as follows :—

I. Unsuitable emigrants, men or women, should be excluded. The agreements should state clearly how misconduct will be punished. The proportion of female to male emigrants should be raised from 40 to 50 per cent, and the present minimum age limit should be abolished.

II. In all colonies, provisions, whether operative or inoperative in practice, which are unduly rigorous or restrictive, should be expunged from the Ordinances. The punishments prescribed should in most cases be reduced and fines imposed should be recoverable in small instalments.

III. The intemperate use of the disciplinary provisions of the Ordinance should be prevented by empowering the officers of the Immigration Department in each colony to control employers in this respect.

IV. The officers of the Immigration Department in each colony should be empowered to adjudicate in cases brought by employers against labourers so that the concern of Courts of criminal jurisdiction with the enforcement of contracts may be minimised if not extinguished.

V. Separate places of detention should be provided for labourers who, notwithstanding the revision proposed in II, may be sentenced to imprisonment for breaches of the disciplinary provisions of the Ordinance.

VI. Subject to a limitation of the proportion of labourers on an individual estate who may commute their indentures within a single year, the labourer should be entitled at any time to commute his indentures by payment of a graduated redemption fee.

VII. Facilities for occupying land on a satisfactorily secure tenure should be provided.

VIII. The registration of marriages should be facilitated.

IX. The special needs of Indian children in the matter of primary education should receive consideration.

X. The regulations affecting the grant of medical relief to the poorer class of Indians not residing on estates should be revised.

XI. The annual reports of the Immigration Department of each colony should give more intelligible and precise information regarding the health of indentured immigrants. They should also show not only the average earnings of immigrants but the cost of living and the surplus.

We are convinced that, notwithstanding our possibly disproportionate presentation of the unsatisfactory features of the existing system, a careful study of the facts elicited during our inquiry will result in the conclusion that its advantages have far outweighed its disadvantages. The great majority of emigrants exchanged grinding poverty with practically no hope of betterment for a condition varying from simple but secure comfort to solid prosperity. Emigrants live under very much better conditions than their relatives in India, and have had opportunities of prospering which exceeded their own wildest hopes. They became citizens of the colonies to which they emigrated and both they and their descendants have attained to positions commanding general respect and consideration. Though liable to be prosecuted for disciplinary offences while under indenture they realised also that in everything affecting their daily lives their legal rights were not merely defined but firmly maintained. Employers also were liable to judicial punishment and to still more severe punishment, namely, disqualification for employment in the colony in the only occupation at which they could expect to earn a livelihood. Nor should it be forgotten that both employers who were too prone to invoke judicial assistance in the management of their labourers and employers whose authority was exercised with more skill, temper, and self-reliance, have in many ways tempered the exercise of authority with manifestations of kindness and generosity. It is not an uncommon thing for an emigrant who has settled down after the expiry of his indenture at a distance from an employer by whom he has been formerly prosecuted to pay occasional friendly visits to his accuser who has not forfeited his good will. If too many labourers were judicially punished all but the most worthless were gainers in skill, enterprise, and self-respect. The savings or remittances of the industrious represent only the material gain to emigrants. They are as a body probably more conscious of the far-reaching legal protection which they enjoy than of the legal liabilities to which they are exposed. Our proposals involve the recognition of further rights and the reduction of liabilities, and we venture to claim that their adoption will justify the system being fairly described as one of protected emigration, in which the protection ceases when no longer required. We do not regard the system as solely or mainly concerned with securing fair wages and fair treatment of Indian labourers who are content to emigrate for a few years, save a few hundred rupees, and return to their homes. Following the example of the great majority of the emigrants themselves and their descendants we regard it rather as a system of colonisation under which poor but industrious Indians, whether landless labourers or the sons of poor cultivating landowners, who are content to be trained and acclimatised under private employers in need of a steady supply of labour, are offered prospects much more favourable than they could hope to realise at home. While an emigrant's freedom of choice between settling down in a colony or demanding repatriation should be maintained it

is obviously necessary to recognise the manner in which the choice has been exercised in the past. If our proposals are accepted we are reasonably confident that those who elect to return will in all colonies be an insignificant minority of those emigrating under indenture. We are conscious that the acceptance of our proposals will increase the cost of indentured Indian labourers to their employers and may in consequence lessen the demand but it may also have the effect of raising the standard of capacity expected from employees.

64. We wish in conclusion to express our gratitude to the colonial officials and the employers of indentured labour for their frank and ungrudging helpfulness and their many acts of personal kindness. We have also reason to be grateful to many others who were in no way concerned with the object or result of our inquiries. We are in a special measure indebted to the Governors of the colonies visited both for their actively sympathetic attitude in relation to our inquiries and for their unflinching kindness and hospitality.

We have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient servants,

J. McNEILL.

CHIMMAN LAL

RECEIVED
1912
General Assembly
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA