

Indian Labor Inst.

IV.

February, 1926.

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The Indian Labour Journal

Official organ of the B. N. Railway
Indian Labour Union.

EDITOR—V. V. GIRI.

Bar-at-Law.

Vol. III

February 1926.

No. 5

"Millions of Newspapers definitely hostile to Labour circulate everyday, because they are bought by the working men who have not yet acquired the habit of spending their money on a friend instead of an enemy."

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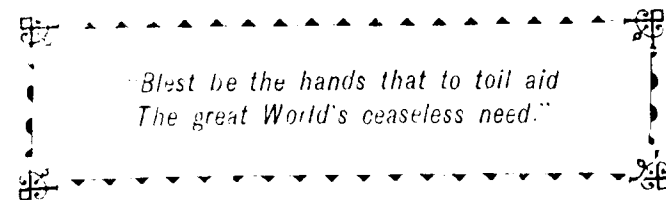
All literary communications such as contributions, reports of events, etc., should be sent to Mr. V. V. Giri, Bar at law, Editor, the Indian Labour Journal Berhampur, B. N. Ry., (Ganjam District)

Business communications of every kind such as subscriptions, advertisements, complaints, changes of address etc, should be addressed to the General Secretary B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union, Khargpur.

Notice to Subscribers.

—:o:—
The attention of the subscribers is drawn to the fact that their subscriptions expire with the September 1925 number. The **Indian Labour Journal** commences its third year from October 1925. Present as well as all other intending subscribers are therefore requested to send by money order Rs. 2 as subscription for the year ended September 1926 to the General Secretary B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union, Khargpur. Present subscribers wishing to discontinue the Journal should at once intimate the manager of their intentions. In the absence of any such intimation the Journal will be sent to them per V. P. P. for Rs. 2-6-0

By order.



The Indian Labour Journal.

February 1926.

Mr. Hasiltines Retrenchment.

THE employees on the B. N. Ry. more especially the Indian Staff, are very much perturbed and agitated over the retrenchment fever due Haseltine's axe. We have received reports of the proceedings of large and representative meeting of the employees at Garden Reach and Khargpur protesting against the method of retrenchment which will be published in the next issue of our Journal.

The Central Council of the B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union passed a resolution eight or nine months ago requesting the administration to appoint a Committee (impartial) to go into the ways and means of effecting a just and equitable retrenchment and were even ready to wait on Mr. Haseltine on this matter if he so desired. But unfortunately the union has never been consulted and we now find an ex-parte retrenchment being effected all

along the line. The employees in our opinion have a just grievance against Railway administration in the matter. It is not only reasonable, but expedient in the interests of all concerned, that the administration should, with the help of an organised union representing the employees, should effect a retrenchment on the right lines if it were found necessary at all.

We are glad that the Central Council of the Union has called for a meeting of its executive to take stock of the situation and consider over ways and means of preventing an unjust retrenchment. In the meanwhile we appeal to all the employees who have not yet enrolled themselves as members, to do so immediately and that it is the best and a constitutional way of showing to the administration that they are prepared to stand by their trade union in all actions taken by it on their behalf.

A WORD FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY.

It pains me very much to complain that too many individual cases are pouring in the Central office without their being ever handled by the Branch Secretaries. This is irregular & the pity of it is that even petty cases are sent in here. I therefore feel the necessity of enforcing some restrictions and I am sure, no one would consider them as unreasonable. For instance, no complaint in future will be accepted unless the complainant has been reported by a Branch Secretary as a bonafied member of the Union by the time a complaint is brought forward. In token of such membership the complainant must invariably show at the very top of the letter the No. and date of the latest printed receipt in possession of the party concerned. Frivolous and spurious cases on no account should be entertained.

In the case of members residing on the line they must first send their papers to his District Branch Secretary who will himself dispose or forward the same to the Central office according to the nature of the case. I trust members do not misunderstand the above facts which are after all very necessary for the safe and sound working of an orderly organization.

Khargpur
13-2-26

P. R. R.
General Secy

B. N. RAILWAY INDIAN LABOUR UNION SHALIMAR BRANCH

I beg to send you herewith the following for publication "A mass meeting of the B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union was held at Santragachi on Thursday the 11th instant at 7 P. M. under the Chairmanship of its Vice-President Mr. V. R. Kallappa. The meeting was well attended.

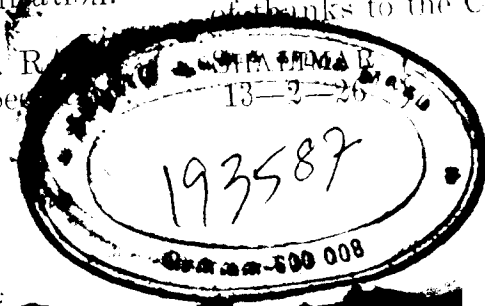
The Chairman after opening the meeting explaining the object of the gathering invited Mr. Yakub Hussain to address the mass. Mr. Yakub gave short speech explaining the various difficulties.

Mr B. N. Das, Secretary of the Branch gave a speech pointing out the various grievances redressed by the Railway Administration after due representation by the Union and emphasised that unless and until the employees strengthen the Union they will not be able to get full Justice from the Administration.

He further stated that since this Union came in to existence the minor troubles of the employees are day by day decreasing.

The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

B. N. DAS,
Secretary.



Full Proceedings of Major Graham Pole's visit at Khargpur.

Under the auspices of the B. N. Ry Indian Labour Union a huge monster meeting of about 10,000 employees was held to welcome Major Graham Pole and Mr. B. Sivarow who have come down to this country deputed by the International Trade Union Congress to study the Labour, and as far as it concerns labour, political conditions in India.

Mr. Venkatrailu, Secretary of the Khargpur, Branch of the Labour Union proposed Mr. Mukundlal Sircar who accompanied Messrs. Pole and Sivarow from Calcutta, to the Chair and the proposal was unanimously seconded.

The President introduced Mr. Pole as an enthusiastic and sincere worker of the British Labour Party and a Member of Parliament, who has taken the trouble to go over to Khargpur at great inconvenience as he has been ill for the last day or two. Mr. Pole has been shown round the settlement of Khargpur the Institute, the Dispensary, the quarters of the employees and so on and he would represent all this in Parliament. The President also introduced Mr. Sivarow as a prominent member of the Madras Labour Union

and a co-worker of Major Graham Pole. He then exhorted the audience to listen to their advice and act up to it.

Then the following a beautiful song in Bengali composed specially for the occasion, welcoming Major Pole and Mr. B. Sivarow. Similar songs in Urdu were recited by Mohamed Usman Sahib and Rasuluddin Miya.

Translation of Bengali Song.

Oh you, the God-head in the person of man! Come from the far-off land on the other side of the deep blue Oceans; come, please, come as the resplendent Sun to the blinded Indians blind with the profound darkness of despair and despondency!

Forsaking your splendid palace for the sake of the poor labourers, you have been travelling over the World and suffering endless troubles and hardships for their uplift and betterment.

Oh you, the foremost of the Leaders of the nation that wields the sceptre of half the World today, you have come today to India in the guise of a hermit and a sage!

Oh you, the life of Labour. Your tender and loving heart wept when the Mill-hands of Bombay were made to weep and bleed; you, the friend of the poor who rendered yeoman's services to them with unremitting finance and to the N. W. Ry. Strikers, along with the assistance and Co-operation of the Indian veteran Chief, Mr. Shivarow of Madras; Come, ye, oh friend of the friendless, the stay and prop of the helpless, the redresser of their wrongs and grievances, come you here amongst us, and deign to accept this sincerest and grateful welcome accorded from the very core of our hearts to your magnanimous and venerable self as the Labour Leader at London and Member of the Parliament of the British Labour Party, who have been always working for the raising of the conditions of Labour of the World and who are so disinterestedly interested in the labour and Swaraj cause of India.

We, the poor sons of India give the most cordial and enthusiastic welcome to you who have already ensured some elevation of Labour cause by taking part in the Sixth Session of the All India Trade Union Congress held at Madras in this very month!

Oh, how hopeful and joyous are we to get you in our midst, you, who are now touring all over India to find

out and ascertain the real economic condition of Indians with the noble object of doing solid and substantial service to them by ventilation of their grievances among the British people at home on return!

You, please see with your own eyes, the miserable and deplorable conditions of your Indian Brothers here in India and may God bless you, too, with a long and healthy and happy life to crown with success and glory, the High and Generous mission of your life in the glorious abundance of God-gifted prosperity.

Translation of Urdu Song

1. Oh God! If you be kind on us, there is no reason then why Union should not prosper.

2. Please give a cup of wine made of Union so that every one may be intoxicated with it.

3. Every high & low accept you, when unity will be your necklace.

4. If we are all united some will call you brother, some Papa and some with some other name.

5. What fear is there in your army when Commander like Major Graham Pole is at the helm.

6. By the grace of Almighty that day will soon dawn when the Union will be in a prosperous condition.

7. We have done nothing yet, but we promise to do something in future if all members co-operate.

8. This is the result of your idleness, but not too late, you can still get up and be doing.

9. How to describe the hard labour done by Ramachandrarao and Pandit Kashinath Muttu and pray that more men like Venkat Raika may appear.

10. Railway Officers are taking interest in the welfare of the "Union" particularly we may mention Mr. H. L. Cole.

11. Those in the World prosper who can co-operate with each other like milk and sugar.

12. Shelve up your inter-communal dispute and those who do not like it may be ruined.

13. Your work i.e. poetry valuable like Murshads Charm will be when every one will utter at a glance to enlist his name in the Union.

The President then called upon Major Graham Pole to "give us advice and speak few words although I know that he is not well today. The members of the Union are very thankful to him that although he has been suffering from indisposition, he has come down and we hope that we will be very much benefitted by Major Graham Pole's advice".

Major Graham Pole, rising to speak amidst absolute silence to an expectant audience said, "Mr. Chairman and Friends, I hope you will excuse me if I speak only for a very short time to-night, because I am here against Doctor's orders and what is a much more important than that I am here against my wife's orders (laughter). However, you will have something really better than my speech because my friend Mr. Sivarow who is co-operating with me in the enquiry we are making into political and industrial conditions in India will speak immediately after me. I want here to thank Mr. Sivarow for the splendid work he did on behalf of Indian Labour in England during the past some years.

Trade Unionism in India is more or less in its very early stages and the early struggles in every country are very much the same. Every Trade Union movement is built up on the struggles and the sacrifices of the early

workers. You have the chance the early Trade Unionists in Europe had not, because you can learn here by their mistakes what to avoid. Labour in Europe, and especially in England, is now taking a much more international outlook and realises that your troubles and their troubles are much the same. They are anxious to know your difficulties and they are anxious to help you wherever they can; but there is one thing that I would like to impress on you that in the Labour Movement we are one big brotherhood that here should be no communal or other differences. We are not in the Labour Movement Hindus or Christians, Mahomedans or anything else. We are all brothers, fighting under one and the same banner (hear hear). There is too much the idea in India that Labour Unions should come into being when you want or when you think there should be a strike and go out of existence soon afterwards. The purpose of a Labour Union is not to organise strikes. The purpose of a Labour Union, if it does its work properly, is to prevent strikes and strikes can be prevented if men will join their unions if every workman will join his Union and if every workman will abide loyally by the decisions of the Union.

If you elect officials and an executive council, you elect them and you put certain power in their hands.

You should then loyally follow them and not go off when you do not agree with their decisions. If you do not agree with the decisions come to by your Executive Council if you do not agree with what your General Secretary or other officials do your remedy is to turn them out at the end of the year; but, while they are there, follow them loyally.

Friends, I am sorry I cannot speak longer on this occasion but for your comfort I want to tell you that 25 years ago there was only 1 Labour Member of Parliament. To-day, Labour is the only alternative Government to the present one. We have some 150 or more Labour Members of Parliament and at next elections, we shall have a Labour Government with a majority (unless we are all very much mistaken) and this position has been achieved not by spasmodic efforts but steady, solid work and organisation, and that is the only way. This is the best advice I can give you to go on steadily from day to day with the work of your organisation, and if you try that if you unite with other unions if you build up one strong federation, there is nothing then that can resist you nothing that you cannot achieve (hear, hear).

"Now I request Mr. Sivarow to address you."

Mr. Sivarow then addressed the meeting. "Mr. Chairman and Friends, Major Graham Pole has already told you that he and I have been asked by the International Department of the Trade Union Congress and the British Labour Party to make a report on Industrial and Labour conditions in India. So, our chief business here, as in other parts of India, is to study for ourselves the conditions of Labour rather than to make speeches. So, in a sense we feel our work here has really been done by taking this file of your grievances and a statement of your position here. We have spoken to some of your officials of the Union to send to England every week regular statements of your position here.

Never the less, we want to take this opportunity here of showing to you the good will not only of the Labour Movement outside India which is mainly Major Graham Pole's function, but also the good will of Labour Union in other parts of India.

I began my Labour work in Madras about 5 or 6 years ago, in connection with the Railway Workshops of the Madras & Southern Maharatta Railway. We collected at the time we started our Union over Rs. 10,000 from the members of the Union for starting cheap grain stores, a dis-

pensary and generally for improving the conditions of the members of our Union. But just as we have been going to start our work, a big strike took place in the Textile Mills near by, and the members of our Union unanimously decided to divert practically the whole of the sum which we had collected for the improvement of the conditions of our men for the help of the strikers. I was moved to admiration at the spirit of self sacrifice which that act of our Union showed. It is by such self sacrifices that any great movement is built either in this country or in any other.

When I started Labour work in Madras, there was no Trade Union Congress in this Country. It is one of the signs of the rapid growth of the labour movement in India that today we have a Trade Union Congress which represents not one trade or industry, not one or two provinces, but the whole of this country and all the industries therein.

When we started labour work in Madras, the men were afraid to join the Union because of the fear of dismissal and I know, as a matter of fact, that in every Union, that we started, those who took prominent part in building up the Union were generally insecure in their posts.

Examiner Shalimar.

Babu Pitamber Biswal the Train Examiner of Shalimar informed me that his pay has been reduced from Rs.105/- to 100/- P. M. with effect from 1-1-26 for alleged unsatisfactory conduct (1) leaving his work on 25-9-25 without the permission of the Train Examiner in charge. (2) not using his influence to restrict the staff from leaving their work (3) not assisting the Train Examiner Incharge to carry out his duty and seeks redress of his grievance from you through this Union as he states that although matters were explained at length in defence of the unfounded charges brought against him before you at K. G. P. on the 6th instant, Babu Pitamber failed to get justice. In the way of explanation Babu Pitamber states as he has already done before you that the work of the periodical and sick line at Shalimar, as well as the Chief Train Examiners Office and Stores were all closed on the 25-9-25 on account of the Shalimar 2nd. Local Train, as per orders of the Chief Train Examiner, as done in the previous years and that prior to the Shop being closed Babu Pitamber was on duty.

The staff according to the order of the Chief Train Examiner left their duty at the time stated above and as

Babu Pitamber is at a loss to make-out as to what lead to the allegation being brought against him regarding not having offered due assistance to the Chief Train Examiner to carry out his duty.

In this connection I have to state that I have had enquiries instituted and understand that some malicious agencies at Shalimar are endeavouring to manufacture charges and concoct cases against him. As to whether Babu Pitamber was actually on duty or not can very easily be detected from the Muster Roll and other records.

In the event of the shop being not closed and the workmen leaving duty of their own free-will and choice, it is a pity to see that the Chief Train Examiner who is an Officer higher in rank and commands much more influence, as he ought to do, failed to persuade his staff from leaving work and that Babu Pitamber should bear the brunt of the situation for the conduct of some one else.

As regards the allegation of Babu Pitamber failing to render due assistance to the Chief Train Examiner, I have to state that the charge is vague and indefinite. Will you please ask the Chief Train Examiner to furnish us with specific and definite cases

We in India were profiting by the experience and the sympathy of the labour movement in every country in the world.

You have all reason to be very deeply grateful to Major Graham Pole, because he does far more for you and for every labourer in his country than you can ever realise. When the great mill strike took place in Bombay few months ago, the officials of the Trade Union movement in England came constantly to my friend's office for information about that strike. It is because of the information that he was able to give that the British Trade Union movement sent a large sum of money for the relief of those who were out of work and I know this from Mr. Joshi that but for the help which came from England, that strike would have broken down, and the men would have gone back to work on reduced wages. I want you to realise this that great as a friend of ours Major Graham Pole is, he is not alone. There are hundreds like him in England who are watching the growth of our movement with keen and active sympathy. I know that the Trade Union movement in England is anxious to help in the organisation of labour in this country (hear hear), and I am confident that we may be able to persuade the officials of the Trade Union movement in England

to send out men to this country who will stay few months or even a year visiting different parts of India and help us in the organisation of our Labour Unions.

Difficult as your life may be in many ways, I want you not to feel lonely in your lives, but to feel as one in one big world movement. Labour is organising itself in every country in the world. Why should we be behind other countries in this great work? We can only build up a movement like this if only every one of us who is engaged in some trade or industry will join his respective trade Union.

I learnt after coming here with some regret that although there are more than 20,000 workmen in this workshop, only about 5 to 6 thousand are members of the Union. If you want to build a successful Union, those of you who are members of the Union must see to it that every one who is not a member of the Union comes into the movement as soon as possible. That is the best welcome you can give to Major Graham Pole, (hear hear) not by listening to speeches made here, but by enabling us to report to the Trade Union Congress in England that Labour in India is quickly organising itself because that will show your determination that although your lives may be hard, you are not going to

allow your children or your grand children to have the same sufferings. Any improvement in your conditions can only come through efficient organisation. It cannot be a matter of pride to those who are not members of the Union to share in those improvements without joining the Union and making some sacrifice for it, because it is only as you come in larger numbers into your Unions and take more active interest in the activities of the Trade Union Congress, that a really efficient All-India organisation can be built.

When I attended the last session of the Trade Union Congress in Madras, I was struck with one fact. It was that a very large number of those who took active part in the Trade Union Congress were not Trade Unionists themselves, but rather friends of labour like those of us who are sitting on the platform, and although we regret it, as a privilege to help in the building up of this movement, we feel that solid Trade Union movement cannot be built up in India until you yourselves become the leading officials therein. So the sooner you get rid of us, the better for yourselves, (laughter) but we are not going to give up our places because of the pressure from the employer. We shall stick to our places until you come along and shove us aside. But, as I

said, the sooner you can get rid of us the better for the growth of the Trade Union Movement.

Now, one or two things which strike me within the last few weeks is the utter ignorance of the Indian labourer of his rights. A great deal of legislation has been passed within the last 3 to 4 years in this country. It is of considerable benefit to the Indian Labourer though not as much as you might wish it to be. It would have been much better if instead of one Mr. Joshi, we had 10 or 20 to represent your point of view. For one friend of labour, there are 20 to 30 representatives of the employers. In spite of this, a good deal of legislation has been passed to improve your conditions. The Factory Act has been amended in order to bring down the maximum hours of work. No man may be compelled to work more than 60 hours in a week, and when I learnt to my amazement that in a place not far off from Calcutta, systematic over-working has been going on for weeks, possible for months, I realised such things would not be possible if all of you had joined your Trade Union and insisted upon your rights being observed.

For nearly 2 years now, there has been a Workman's compensation Act in force in this country. Before this

act was passed, if a workman lost his leg or his eye in some way in the discharge of his duty, the employer could send him away with a few rupees of baksheesh. I came across a case a few years ago in Madras, in which a man after 13 years of work lost his leg in the discharge of his work, and was dismissed with the magnificent sum of Rs. 11/. Such things are not possible today if only you knew what your rights are.

Speaking of a labour meeting a few days ago in Madras, we were quite surprised to learn from the members of a certain Union that not one of them knew that the Workman's compensation Act had been passed. It is your duty in this Union to know exactly what your rights are.

Now there is one other point to which I want to turn your attention for a few moments; and that is you as a Trade Union should not depend upon parties in politics for your help. People will come to you making all sorts of promises which they promptly forget the moment their backs are turned to you. So, my advice to you on this particular point is that "Do not judge a man by what he says, or what to what party he belongs; but judge a man by what he does". You have friends of labour in every political

party in India; also, you have enemies of labour in every political party in India. So do not go by mere party labels, but by the work that every individual does, or fails to do for you. But we as members of the Trade Union Movement have to take an active interest in politics. We have to realise who are our friends and who are our opponents. We must see to it that every legislative Council we fill with as many friends of labour and as few enemies of labour as possible. The Bengal Legislative Council consists of over 100 members, and yet I want to ask, if you have any grievances, to how many of those over 100 members can you go with any assurance of active help? And why is it that a very large number do not take that active interest in your welfare as they should? Because, in their elections to the Councils, they do not depend to any great extent upon the votes of those who are in any Trade Union. If any of you have votes if a large number of you have votes, then those who stand for the legislative council would think it worth their while to come to your midst and enlist your sympathy in order to get into the Legislative Councils. Therefore, your first duty in this respect is to see that as many of you as can vote should have your names put on the voters' lists for the next election. It is work of a kind in which

the Officials of your Trade Union will help you, I am sure.

We are making arrangement with those who are leaders of your Union to supply us with definite figures and statistics regarding your grievances. We want figures with regard to the number of cases which have come under the Workmen's Compensation Act. We want to know how many of you are in debt and what rate of interest you pay on your debts. We want to know whether you get any maternity benefits from your employees. We want to know what are your housing conditions. How many lavatories there are for your houses? What kind of Hospital accommodation you have? We want figures for all these things because one of the difficulties I encountered in England was when I described your conditions, the people in England thought that they were so horrible that they could not be true. One of my friends said, after seeing a house of a Workman in Bombay, that he would not put even his dog into such a house.

I have spoken to you of many matters, but there is just one point on which I want to speak to you before I sit down. I understood from the President of your Union that the relations between the members of this Union and the Employers were most

cordial and satisfactory. Having been acquainted with that fact, I was disappointed to a certain extent that there is a certain amount of misunderstanding over the appointment of your Workshop Committees. Now, the principle of Trade Union organisation is this; that you are not going to be dictated to in any respect by your employers. You as labourers are willing, or should be willing to recognise the rights of the employer. On the other hand, the employer should be just as willing to recognise your rights. Even in the business of Govt, the grievances of the people are put forward before the Government by men who are not elected by the people themselves. We all object to the principle of nomination by the Government because we fear that those who are nominated by the Government will be mouth-pieces of the Government and not the real representatives of the people. If you, as labourers, have any grievances of your own, it would be much more satisfactory that they should be represented by committees elected by yourselves, and not nominated by the employer. I understand that your Union is admirably conducted; I am told that even your employers are willing to recognise that yours is an efficient organisation; and I am told also that you have a very satisfactory Executive Committee. I fail

to understand why under these circumstances it should be necessary to have a Workshop Committee nominated by the employer independent of the Executive Committee elected by yourselves. The existence of 2 Committees cannot but lead to friction in the end. The right of the Trade Union to have its own Executive Committee elected by itself and representative of the general body of Trade Unionists, cannot be challenged by the employer or any one else and remember this point. It is the last I am going to put to you whether in this or in any other respect, you must stand absolutely on the insistence of your rights as the equal partner of the employer. However kind and however good the employer may be, he must be made to realise that he is not your master, but your equal. (hear hear). Until that recognition comes from both sides, there is always room for trouble. Do not be provocative in your demands; do not do anything to irritate the employer, but, on the other hand, do not give way on any question of principle.

I think I have spoken to you long enough, but I cannot sit down without saying both for Major Graham Pole and myself how very very happy indeed we are to be here amidst you all and to see for ourselves the conditions in which you live.

The President then called upon Mr. Jogarow to speak a few words.

"Mr. Chairman, Major Graham Pole, Mr. Sivarrow and my dear friends I hardly find sufficient words to express the exact sentiments of joy which were all felt on this occasion unprecedented in the history of the B. N. Railway Indian Labour Union, when it has, in its midst, Major Graham Pole, one of those most sincere and veteran workers in the cause of labour and one of the most prominent Leaders of the British Labour Party, London. It is, therefore our opportunity to avail of this rare chance and acquaint him with our real conditions in life and through the kind co-operation and hearty support of himself, and through himself his party in London, we hope to achieve in the near future some material and substantial advance, especially in the direction of a suitable living wage.

As the time allowed to me today is very short, I do not think I will be able to impress him with all that passes in my mind just now, or what I ought to tell without any fear of contradiction or victimisation. However, I have got this much of confidence that himself being a wide reader of human thoughts and sentiments and aspirations and a seeker in search of truth, he will doubtless be able to understand much more than what I

can myself tell him by simply looking up at our care-worn faces, weak limbs, shabby clothing and above all the great nervousness and cowardice that suffuses our very being.

To give a practical example, the clerks on this Railway are most light-heartedly dealt with on account of the enormous supply created by the unemployment in the country, and therefore our administration in particular show the least consideration in the matter of their prospects better conditions and of providing quarters. I can particularise condidates who have put in more than 5 years service and yet we had no salivation, and about those who were already provided with quarters, you have seen those quarters yourself and they speak much better than myself. They are so bad that you cannot escape nothing with all your unpreparedness.

Regarding leave we have, for instance, X'mas holidays Durga Pujha holidays and many other holidays, when we will be called upon to work in the holidays by separate section orders, and the passes granted to us will be only a matter of fun and show, because we will not be able to perform the journeys and still enjoy the holiday as most of us have come here from several hundreds of miles.

Even in the case of foreign railway passes there are too many restrictions and these are too hard in the case of clerks drawing Rs. 75/- and below, and the largest number of clerks on this railway are within this limit of Rs. 75. To my mind a coolie perhaps deserves greater consideration, and I claim to be a coolie instead of a clerk.

The average clerk gets only Rs. 40/- As such it is nothing but a mere pretence to feed himself, his wife his children and a host of widows, who are a life long burden upon himself. He will have to look after the marriages of his children their education, their clothing, their nourishment and medicines. Well Sir, if you compare the wages of a Clerk in London with those of ours, the difference will be exactly the difference between heaven and earth. Bonus, Gratuity and other things there are, but they can be dreamt of only when we survive the yearly retrenchment that ever hangs on our necks. Just today at Khargpur there is Mr. Haseltine, sharpening his knives. I fear Sir, Major Graham Pole, if you can find the same persons again should you be please to revisit us before your departure to London. The top heavy expenditure in the superior and supervising staff who are generally Europeans and Anglo Indians unscrupulous

system of continued recruitment of supervising staff from abroad under the unholy plea of efficiency greatly intensifies the agony of the subordinate Indian service. I hope I have ventured to give Major Pole in a way the fate of the Indian Clerk on this Railway and his miserable condition. If you carry with you one full set of our Journals so far published for the last two years, they will, I am sure, give you all the required details with the necessary specifications.

I sincerely hope and trust you will use your influence and power in such respects as you consider best to the amelioration of the Clerical labour in India as they are undoubtedly, though highly educated, the poorest on the face of the earth.

I have almost finished my paper, but there is one more thing which I am anxious to state here before you. I have got up this platform to speak on behalf of the Clerical Labour and I will be failing in my duty if I do not represent a particular feature about which so many of our fellow clerks are under great trouble. Today, perhaps, it will be a great surprise to our guests to learn from us that the administration have thought it fit to appoint a special Anglo-Indian Clerk on about

Rs. 85/- a month to note how many times a clerk passes urine. This is the situation, we are to take tickets, ask permission to answer calls of nature like any ordinary school boy and enter the time we go out and the time we come in, and any delay or wastage according to the standards (their own and variable) of the Officers will be attended with explanation and fine and God knows what. This is the position in which the Clerks on the B. N. Railway stand to-day and for a wide reader and traveller and wide experienced man like Major Graham Pole, will be kindly pleased to tell us whether in his travellings anywhere either here or other countries, the reexist such sort of things in the world. With these few words I take my leave.

Then Mr. Mukundalal Sircar, the President, thanked both Major Graham Pole and Mr. B. Sivarow on behalf of the Labour Union, Khargpur. He exhorted the audience to at once take active part in the organisation of the Union and make it a point every one of those present who has enlisted himself in the Union to enlist on his own initiative at least one member.

Then with a vote of thanks to the Chair and the Guests, the meeting was dissolved.

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Representation Gazette.



Jamadar Raghu Prothan of Benapur applied for a month's leave as he did not take any leave during his 7 years service.

This leave was granted by the D. C. O., Khargpur without pay for want of a reliever and a substitute was appointed from 6-1-24. The 'Relieving hand' was available from 1-12-24 when the substitute was withdrawn.

On a representation by the Central Council of the Union, the D. C. O. stated that the rules did not permit the grant of any pay to him for the period a substitute was engaged. It is hoped that the Administration will do a great favour to the staff by removing such difficulties by keeping a sufficient number of Relg. hands or relax the rules in cases where Relieving hands are not available in time.

If this is not done, it is a matter of great regret that a poor man has to suffer even after a long service without availing leave at his credit.

Commulative leave not being permissible to the menial staff is another gloom to the misery and therefore some consideration should be shown to the poorly paid staff as is the practice on the State Railways.

Signaller A. L. Narayana Rao of Khargpur applied to the D. C. O., KGP for 7 days leave for the purposes of his marriage.

This was not granted and the matter was represented by the Central Council of the Union.

In reply the D. C. O. stated that he stood too far down the list to be considered and so he could not depart from the rules and regulations in that connection.

On a further representation explaining the urgency of the case the leave asked for was granted.

The Union is thankful to the authorities for this justice.

Sant Kumar T. No. 3243 working in the Millwright Shop as a second grade fitter drawing Rs. 1-8-0 per day, was put on to fit a key for coke breaking machine and when he had partly completed it, Charge hand Mr. Mackenzie entrusted him with another work and thus prevented him from completing the work on the key above referred to.

In the meanwhile the key which was not correct to the dimensions was put up to the Workshop Investigating Officer by Maistry Magarsingh T. No. 2925, with the recommendation

that the man did not deserve the second grade and the rate he was drawing.

As a result of this, the man was reduced from 2nd to 3rd grade and also from Rs. 1-8-0 to 1-2-0 per diem, without giving him any chance to explain his case.

The case was represented by the Branch Secretary, Khargpur, to the Supdt. of Workshops, Khargpur who in reply stated that the reduction was made after a proper trial and that the case was properly handled.

The case was then sent up to the Central Office and was again represented to the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Khargpur, giving full details.

The Chief Mechanical Engineer upheld the L. S. W's decision and added that the practice of appealing to him against the decision of the Supdt. of Workshop was becoming far prevalent and so such cases should be considered with greater care before submitting the appeals.

The matter was once more represented by the Central Council for reconsideration in reply to which the Chief Mechanical Engineer stated that the Supdt. of Workshops is the officer competent to decide the value of the man's services to this Railway and that he saw no reason to question his (L. S. W's) judgment in the matter and so the papers were filed.

Now, we do not question the authority invested in the Supdt. of Workshops but what we wish to point out is that under the circumstances aforesaid the Workshop Investigating Officer was misinformed by the Maistry of the actual circumstances under which the work was left unfinished and the man was doubly punished by reducing both in grade and pay without giving him a chance to explain his case. The Supdt. of Workshops even on appeal from the Union did not give the man a fair trial or enquired into the case but depended upon the Workshop Investigating Officer's one sided report.

This is a piece of injustice and it is hoped that the authorities will be good enough in future to give a fair chance to the staff to defend their case when enquiries are instituted. The Foreman in charge who is alleged to have deputed the Fitter to some other work, leaving the key unfinished, is stated to have been misguided by Maistry Magarsingh on whom the former placed a blind faith.

SCALE OF ANNUAL INCREMENT TO OFFICE MENIALS

Hitherto peons were granted an annual increase of Re. 1-0-0. Now this scale of Annual increment has been altered into 0-8-0. This does not

To,
The Superintendent Carr: & Wagon
Branch B. N. Ry. Kharipur.
Ref:-- Babu Pitamber Biswal Train
Examiner Shalimar.

Babu Pitamber Biswal the Train Examiner of Shalimar informed me that his pay has been reduced from Rs.105/- to 100/- P. M. with effect from 1-1-26 for alleged unsatisfactory conduct (1) leaving his work on 25-9-25 without the permission of the Train Examiner in charge. (2) not using his influence to restrict the staff from leaving their work (3) not assisting the Train Examiner Incharge to carry out his duty and seeks redress of his grievance from you through this Union as he states that although matters were explained at length in defence of the unfounded charges brought against him before you at K. G. P. on the 6th instant, Babu Pitamber failed to get justice. In the way of explanation Babu Pitamber states as he has already done before you that the work of the periodical and sick line at Shalimar, as well as the Chief Train Examiners Office and Stores were all closed on the 25-9-25 on account of Dasara Festival after the arrival of the Shalimar 2nd. Local Train, as per orders of the Chief Train Examiner, as done in the previous years and that prior to the Shop being closed Babu Pitamber was on duty.

The staff according to the order of the Chief Train Examiner left their duty at the time stated above and as

such the necessity of using Babu Pitambers influence in retaining his staff on duty did not arise.

Babu Pitamber is at a loss to make-out as to what lead to the allegation being brought against him regarding not having offered due assistance to the Chief Train Examiner to carry out his duty.

In this connection I have to state that I have had enquiries instituted and understand that some malicious agencies at Shalimar are endeavouring to manufacture charges and concoct cases against him. As to whether Babu Pitamber was actually on duty or not can very easily be detected from the Muster Roll and other records.

In the event of the shop being not closed and the workmen leaving duty of their own free-will and choice, it is a pity to see that the Chief Train Examiner who is an Officer higher in rank and commands much more influence, as he ought to do, failed to persuade his staff from leaving work and that Babu Pitamber should bear the brunt of the situation for the conduct of some one else.

As regards the allegation of Babu Pitamber failing to render due assistance to the Chief Train Examiner, I have to state that the charge is vague and indefinite. Will you please ask the Chief Train Examiner to furnish us with specific and definite cases

proving of his (Pitamber) refusal to words rendering due assistance to the Chief Train Examiner. The charges as it stands now is so vague that it appears mere imaginary.

I hope you shall reconsider the matter and withdraw the punishment inflicted on Babu Pitamber.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Copy of letter No. 14749 dated 30-1-26 from the Superintendent. Carr: & Wagon Branch, Kharipur to the Secretary, B. N. Ry. I. L. U. Shalimar.

Re:- TRAIN EXAMINER PITAMBAR OF SHALIMAR.

Your No. 109417 of 23-1-26.

I personally enquired into this case in my office on the 6th January 1926 and come to conclusion that Train Examiner Pitambar was responsible for leaving his work without the permission of the Chief Train Examiner, and not using his influence to restrain the staff from leave their work.

Chief Train Examiner Narayan Rao who was in-charge of Shalimar Carriage Shed at the time of this occurrence, states that at 7 hours on the 25th September 1925 the sick line staff asked to get the day off, and they were informed that they must work up to 11.30 hours in order to complete urgent work.

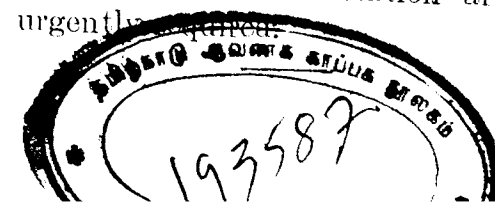
When the Chief Train Examiner returned again at 9 hours all the staff

including Train Examiner Pitambar had gone home.

I could see no reason for doubting the statement made by Chief Train Examiner Narayana Rao. Further support to this statement is the report made by the District Carriage & Wagon Supdt. Shalimar to the effect that, at the first enquiry Train Examiner Pitambar admitted to the Distt. Carr: & Wagon Supdt. in the presence of the Carriage & Wagon Inspector and the Chief Train Examiner that he had left work without the permission of the Chief Examiner.

In view of the fact that the enquiry held by me was delayed owing to Train Examiner Pitambar being on leave, and the Distt. Carr: & Wagon Supdt. being on the sick list when Train Examiner Pitambar resumed duty, also that the Distt. Carr: & Wagon Supdt. and the Chief Train Examiner have since been transferred, I have decided to reconsider the decision arrived at and give Train Examiner Pitambar the benefit of any doubt. Under the circumstances I have cancelled the notice of reduction of pay issued in this case.

The Transfer of Train Examiner Pitambar to Mohuda cannot be cancelled as the services of a Train Examiner at this station are very urgently required.



YOUR No. 1 4749 DATED 30-1-26.

I have to thank you very much for the consideration shown towards Babu Pitambar and for cancelling the notice of reduction of his pay.

The service conditions over B. N. Ry. would indeed become very hard if for every trivial irregularities, the poor employees, who have already to work under extreme conditions, have to accept forcible forfeiture of their very hard earned money. Any disciplinary measure, not compatible with justice, and taken in hot haste, leads to alienate to loyalty of an employee, whereas on the other hand, sobriety and balanced justice enhances the attachment and loyalty of the employee towards the employer.

Thanking you once again.

Notes & Comments.

S. I. Ry. Agent and Labour Unions—A Press message from Trichinopoly states that Mr. B. Scott, Agent of the South Indian Railway, is reported to have "expressed himself strongly in favour of organised labour" and to have stated that he would deal with recognized railway unions. We trust that Mr. Scott has been correctly reported for it indicates a true perception on his part of what is essential for the future happy and harmonious working of our Railways. Organised labour is an advantage in India. It permits of redress through recognized unions of grievances which otherwise would lead to strikes. Most people in authority realize this, but few have moral courage enough to come forward

and take a definite public stand on the side of what was once considered, "low class sort of stuff". We welcome Mr. Scott's utterances and hope that it will lead to definite assurance of the same nature from other similar sources.

We congratulate the Editor of the Indian Railway Gazette on the above note. He has rightly observed that "organised labour is an advantage in India. It permits of redress through recognized Unions of grievances which otherwise would lead to strikes." Let the employers in this country understand in unmistakable terms that organization of Indian Labour is mostly to fight out not so much for better wages and better conditions as for practical realisation of privileges already provided by the employers but denied to the poor workers through the corruption and high handedness of petty Officials and intermediaries. Meagre as the privileges and concessions are, they are mercilessly denied to the dumb and inarticulate workers, who have no other go than meekly submit to all harassment and ill-treatment on the part of their immediate superiors, who unfortunately stand as trusted intermediaries between the employers and themselves.

An organisation of labour will naturally root out all such corruption and bring about a more contented service which will indeed go to strengthen the hands of employers.

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Volunteers—The volunteers of M. S. M. Ry. employees Union who served during the recent Labour Week in Madras deserve to be congratulated. They deserve the present of silver cup they have earned from the President of the All India Trade Union Congress (6th session).

The Volunteers maintained a remarkable discipline characteristic of

devotion, sense of duty and humility. Most of them belonging to the workshops served the cause of labour sacrificing their wages. They served day and night, not caring for their comforts and even their food. Such was their devotion and love of service. They even cleaned the dirty plates of the guests, swept the floor and thus served as scavengers. What a love for service and what a noble sacrifice!

To

THE EDITOR, B. N. Ry.

INDIAN LABOUR UNION JOURNAL.
ANTICS OF A LOCO AUDITOR

SIR,

PLEASE publish the following in your valuable journal. The Accounts clerks of the C. M. E's Office deserve the sympathy of all who stand for justice & fair play. It is a known fact that the Loco auditor of Khargpur was responsible in the year 1923-1924 for dismissal of several clerks and the imposition of unjust fines and stoppage of privileges which lead to a general appeal by the Union to the then C. M. E. Mr. Gibbons who promptly took action by re-instating some of the dismissed hands and cancelling the said orders after giving careful consideration. The officer seems to have embarked again

on a similar course in the year 1925-26 with greater vehemence. His latest venture which will ever be resented by all respectable Indians, has been the introduction of jail methods into the B. N. Ry. Administration more unpopularly known as the lavatory tickets issued to the staff attending to calls of nature and thus check the irregular attendance of the employee.

A representation has been made by the Union to Mr. Cole the C. M. E. whose consideration for the spirit of self-respect in the employee is so well known and he came to the rescue by cancelling this obnoxious system.

It may also be mentioned incidentally that prior to the introduction of the above system this very officer introduced one time record clock (which was primarily intended for watch-men

and other menials) for making the attendance of audit clerical staff. The machine was purchased at a cost of Rs. 900 and one really wonders why the administration allowed this officer to spend such an amount which could have been avoided by the introduction of a simple attendance register.

It is a well known principle often forgotten, that the officers of any administration could get work done by their staff more easily through kindness

and unflinching courtesy than by harsh treatment of their employees in the shape of rough language not befitting the dignity of men in high position. The Loco officer will kindly note the maxim adopted by other officers with exceptions and earn the good will of the workers on the railway. Otherwise he would not be able to serve the interests of either his employer or the employee.

A CORRESPONDENT.

1 Pay your subscriptions regularly remembering that your duty to the Union only begins and not ends with the payment.

2 Avoid becoming a defaulter.

3 In thought, word and deed be loyal to your Union and its office bearers. It is an evil bird that fouls its own nest.

4 Take every opportunity of enhancing the reputation of the Union and increasing its membership. Every non-member is an opponent to your Union, even though he bewails his hardship and hopes for your success.

5 Remember that you do not pay your Office-bearers, who work for you in their spare time therefore assist them in every way. Bear in mind that failure of one officer to discharge his duty does not justify neglect on your part.

6 Inform your Officers of any new rulings that come to your knowledge

7 Perform your Official duties conscientiously and diligently; interest and pride in your work becomes the enthusiastic unionist.

8 Make the Union a real part of your life, talk of it, discuss it and if you have any suggestion for improving it do not fail to make them known.

9 Remember that you are legion in number and just conceive what your united efforts can achieve for you

10 Remember that the loyalty of each Railwayman towards the cause of the Union means victory to all

(Adopted from the South African Postal and Telegraph Herald)

Indian Labour Union Death Benefit Fund.

Join the Union Death Benefit Fund without any further delay. Apply to your Branch Secretary for necessary forms and information.

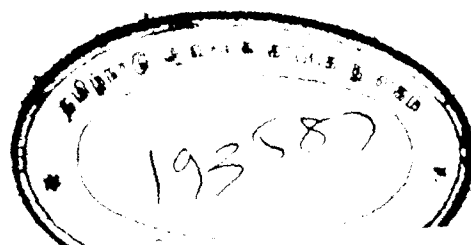
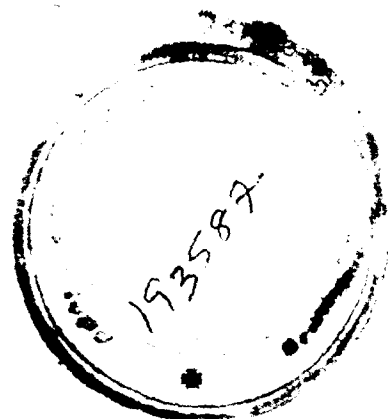
Truth about Death Benefit Fund.

The uncertainty of life is proverbially true. The strongest and healthiest man may be stricken down in a moment by accident or disease. This uncertainty of life should be a strong inducement to provide against evil day. To do this is a moral and social as well as religious duty.

—“Smiles.”

If a man does not provide for his children, if he does not provide for all who are dependent upon him and if he has not that vision of conditions to come and that care for the days that have not yet dawned then he has not opened his eyes to any adequate conception of human life.

—‘President Wilson



Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union.

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