

Indian Labour Journal

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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

May 1926.

No. 8

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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.

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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.

Blest be the hands that to toil aid
The great World's ceaseless need.

The Indian Labour Journal.

May 1926.

Khargpur Tragedy.

It is our painful duty to draw the attention of the reader to the most distressing Communal riot at Khargpur. For some time past, there has been a vague feeling of communal discontent existing at Khargpur; but thanks to the work of the Union executive as well as the level headedness of both Hindu & Mahomedan leaders, no untoward event ever happened & no breach of peace ever occurred. It is within the memory of every one namely the public, the Govt. as well as the administration, that the Union has been a very important factor all along in holding scales evenly between the Communities and every body thought that the Union has succeeded. The best proof, if indeed proof were necessary, it may be mentioned that it was

expected by many that there would occur some trouble at Khargpur at the time when there was rioting in Calcutta but events have falsified the surmise.

It is now considered and we agree with the view taken by those in authority, that the externed gundas from Calcutta have found an easy access to Khargpur and it is a well known fact that the Gundas, be they Hindus or Mahamadans, have no respect for religion or law and loot and rapine is their religion. Thus it will be observed that the riot at Khargpur came as a painful surprise. We need not enter into details of the riot, as various versions of the same have been reported from time to time in the daily press.

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What has happened cannot be recalled and there is no use of crying over spilt milk.

The time has arrived for both Hindu and Mahomedan leaders to take stock of the situation & make the rank & file understand that communal friction would do no good to either community. They should understand & adjust mutual differences through arbitration & conciliation and not by law of the stick. While we cannot speak with authority as regards the rest of India, we have enough confidence in our Khargpur brothers (Hindus & Mahomedans) & in their integrity, sweet reasonableness to feel sure that they will find a Via media to get over the communal tension for all time to come. We need hardly assure them that our services, humble as they are, are always at the disposal of both the communities.

NOTICE.

Subscribers who have not been receiving the copies of the B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Journal should immediately intimate the fact to Mr. V. V. Giri Editor B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Journal, Berhampur Ganjam. The complaints will receive prompt attention.

Berhampur Ganjam)
15-6-26)

V. V. GIRI,
EDITOR

Labourers, to whatever caste, creed or religion they may belong, will be committing suicide & bringing ruin into their families if they bolster up the communal bogey. Labourers, without distinction, working at the common wheel or machine day-in & day-out, would be false to their very creed of Unity which in our view is their religion above all religions if they, like others, think of fighting amongst themselves. We are assured that better counsels have been prevailing and very soon cordial and brotherly feelings would exist amongst the communities as heretofore.

We have to express our unreserved admiration for the cool and reasonable way in which Mr. L. Greenham the Agent and Mr. H. L. Cole the C. M. E. have dealt with the situation which required indeed a good deal of courage and statesmanship.

Extract from The Presidential Address

BY

MUKUNDA LALL SIRCAR

AT

THE FIFTH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE B. & N. W. RAILWAYMEN'S
CONFERENCE HELD AT GORAKHPUR ON THE 21ST MARCH, 1926

I have had opportunities of studying the working conditions of some of the Railways in India. The Railways constitute one of the most important public utility services in the country, serving the needs of the people at large and the trade, if I leave out of consideration the strategic value they have. It is, however, a matter worth deploring that the men who carry on the humbler but on that account, not less important duties on railways, arranging for and looking after the comforts of the travelling public and rendering assistance by their work to the varied commercial interests, are not able to secure comfortable conditions of life for themselves, adequate food and sufficient clothing to live suitably like men. Quite a large number of them, unknown and unremembered, have to work 12 hours at a stretch and in some cases extending to 14 and 16 hours, and at the same time they are to remain content with poor and scanty meals and little rest and recreations. And thus they are afforded no opportunities of refreshing themselves before returning again to take up the tiresome routine, which

is the lot of their life in service. It is really a matter of great regret that in spite of the Washington Convention, no improvement has yet been made in this direction in this country. On Railways it is absolutely necessary that the staff should not over-work, as accidents and collisions may occur through unconscious inattention on the part of the over-worked staff. In all the civilised countries the convention above referred to is being ratified, but in this unfortunate country our lot is quite different, although we are often told that the principle of eight-hour-day has been accepted by the Government of India.

There are many instances of employees, suffering from illness or troubled by illness in their family not getting medical relief, and what is worse, their being not able to leave their stations for want of leave. This is another bad practice found on railways that the men are to wait for uncertain period for leave, as the men who applied before, must get leave first and then the leave to others will be

granted in the order of priority of preference to the applications submitted. Under this red-tapism, some men requiring immediate leave for treatment and rest on account of their illness have been found to leave this world altogether before they could leave their stations for treatment and safety. It is certainly due to the bad system and shortage of relieving staff. There is no good arrangement for medical relief. The hospitals where there are such at all, are not well and adequately equipped and there are no Zenana hospitals provided for female patients. Doctors cannot attend the patients on Road-side stations regularly, as the area under their control is unmanageable and at the same time, they are not provided with ready conveyances in all places.

I know that the grievances of railway employees are innumerable and it is impossible for me to enumerate them all within the scope of this address. I, therefore, propose to mention only a few of them and the time has come when it is necessary that the Government of India should again consider this matter seriously and give effect to the resolution passed by the Assembly last year, urging for an enquiry into the grievances of subordinate employees of Indian Railways. I am sorry that the Honourable the Commerce Member

assumed a very wrong attitude in this matter and did not hesitate to give an indirect and unconscious hint to the railway workers, as they might have misunderstood what was pronounced by him in the Assembly, as to prove the existence of their grievances by strikes. I emphatically differ from the view that strike is the only indication of the workers' grievances. If the Government are confident that there are no grievances, is it not better for them to institute an enquiry immediately and establish publicly the truth of what they say every now and then in this regard and at the same time to ridicule the public on whose behalf the members of the Assembly demanded this enquiry. I fail to understand why the Government have not yet come forward to take the step. What we want is a through enquiry by a Joint Committee, as was recommended by the Assembly.

Racial Discrimination.

The very title 'Racial Discrimination' forms an important part of the catalogue of grievances of Railway employees. We are often told that no racial discrimination exists in the railway service, but we fail to believe it when we turn our eyes and ears to the actuality of events that prevail in the Railways throughout the country

Notwithstanding the declarations made by the Government of India from time to time regarding the absence of racial discrimination, differentiations are still made in matters of appointment, pay, promotion, leave, accommodation, retrenchment etc., and Indians are not generally appointed to certain higher posts even in the subordinate grades. For ready reference, if we take the instance of B. N. Railway, we find that an Indian Driver of lower grade begins with Rs. 42 and goes up to Rs. 58 in five years, whereas a European or Anglo-Indian Driver of the same class begins with Rs. 165 and goes up to Rs. 210 in four years. An Indian Shunter begins with Rs. 32 and goes up to Rs. 40 in three years, whereas a European or Anglo-Indian Shunter begins with Rs. 130 and gets Rs. 150 in the second year. If an Indian Fireman in the same Railway begins with Rs. 20 and goes up to Rs. 24 in four years, a European or Anglo-Indian begins with Rs. 80 and goes up to Rs. 110 in three years. The situations for higher classes of Station Masters are reserved for Europeans and Anglo-Indians, while the lower classes of less pay are meant for Indians only. On the same Railway it is found that the posts of Yard Masters are exclusively the monopoly of Europeans and Anglo-Indians. An Indian Ticket Collector begins with Rs. 39 rising up to Rs. 85 in about 15 years, whereas a European or Anglo-

Indian begins with Rs. 40 rising up to Rs. 120 in about the same period. If an Indian Ticket Collector passes the Guardship examination, he is allowed an increase of Rs. 4 per month, whereas in case he is a European or an Anglo-Indian, he gets an increase of Rs. 10 per month. In the Trains Examining Staff, the Chief Trains Examiner, if European, begins with Rs. 350 rising up to Rs. 400 in the course of two years, while an Indian in the same post begins with Rs. 160 and rises up to Rs. 220 only. An Assistant Trains Examiner, if European or Anglo-Indian, begins with Rs. 70 rising up to Rs. 140 whereas an Indian in the same post begins with Rs. 45 rising up to Rs. 80 only. In Shed Apprentices Staff an Indian begins with Rs. 11 rising up to Rs. 20 in five years, whereas a European or an Anglo-Indian begins with Rs. 40, and rises up to Rs. 50 in the same period. Indian Head Fitters get Rs. 130 whereas Europeans or Anglo-Indians get Rs. 420 per month. All the above classes of men do the same work with same responsibilities, but it is a pity that they are paid at different rates on racial basis alone. And yet we are asked to believe that no racial discrimination exists. If it is no racial prejudice, what else it can be called?

If we refer to the statistics of subordinates drawing Rs. 250 and over, as shewn in the Administration Report or

Indian Railways for the year 1924-25, no room is left for any doubt to arrive at the conclusion as to how the racial discrimination is practised on the Indian Railways. Out of 7,840 subordinates, 2,810 are Europeans, and 2,949 are Anglo-Indians; the total for these two classes being 5,759 or in other words 73.43 per cent of these posts are held by the Europeans and Anglo-Indians who form 11.02 per cent only in population, whereas the Indians hold only 2,081 appointments and the Indians and Burmans (literate in English), who are 88.57 per cent of the population in English, hold only 25.55 per cent of posts under this particular head. Statistics of appointments of above Rs. 100 and below Rs. 250 will also be similarly interesting and will go to prove how racial discrimination is prevalent. Among the officers, the percentage of Europeans is much higher than that in the subordinate grades. On the B. & N. W. Railway it is 92 per cent. The position of Indians among the upper subordinates is equally unsatisfactory, because ordinary justice is denied them in the matter of recruitment and subsequent promotions and the privileges of various kinds. We say this not because we envy the prospects of our European and Anglo-Indian friends, but because we want justice for the Indians also and at the same time greater economy in the management of Railways in India.

Housing Arrangements.

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Insufficient accommodation, insanitary surroundings and in some cases want of quarters for Indian staff of railways are the general cries among their various grievances and they call for immediate redress. The housing accommodation for Indian employees is much below the standard of such for Europeans and Anglo-Indians, in respect of space, ventilation, lighting, water-supply and sanitary arrangements. Their houses are not constructed with due regard to sanitary and hygienic necessities. The policy is a mistaken one, as in a house lacking the above facilities, the vitality of the inmates is lowered, which reacts on the work performed by the employees living in those houses. This also engenders a moral degeneration, as under the combined effect of work and worries entailed by personal sickness and sickness in the family, the employees are not able to carry a cheerful mind when reporting themselves to carry on the allotted day's work. This is a loss to the administration in a way, and if the number of employees is taken into consideration, the loss is not inconsiderable, although I am sorry to say, this aspect of the question is not still being recognised. It is regrettable that in these days of civilisation and advanced scientific knowledge, such things are allowed to continue, specially

in a public utility service as a railway. On Railways, night duties have to be performed and over-time work has to be carried on. What would be the combined effect of such transgression of the laws of nature, committed in the performance of duty under the exigencies of work and living in houses not constructed as per the requirements of sanitary engineering, can well be imagined.

I was told about a year ago, that there is no arrangement for providing free quarters to Running staff of the B. & N. W. Railway. Out of 5,000 workmen in the Loco and Engineering Workshops, only a few hundreds are accommodated in the Loco Colonies, whereas a large number of these workmen live in unhealthy parts of the town and as a consequence thereof, they fall an easy prey to the fell diseases of Cholera, Plague, Influenza and other diseases during the outbreak of an epidemic. My attention was drawn some time ago to the fact that staff at stations like Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Mankapur and several other places on this Railway are suffering most on account of insufficient accommodation and insanitary quarters. I was simply shocked to learn when I was informed about the miserable conditions as regards the quarters for staff at certain stations in the

Sonapur and Chaukaghat Districts. They practically remain under water for some time during the rainy season and as a result, the houses become most unhealthy and soon after the rainy season, a virulent type of Malaria assumes its prominence. It is most deplorable that in many stations the menial staff live in thatched huts erected by themselves at their own cost and they suffer most for this sort of poor and insanitary habitation. The conditions of the Signallers, Booking Clerks, Trains Clerks, Guards and such others also deserve serious consideration in the matter of housing accommodation.

Fine System.

The officers and departments under the Government are subject to the restrictions of fixed rules, according to which they are regulated. The employees are therefore, aware of the rules under which they are governed and consequently whims & fancies of superior officers do not play a large part in those places. The case of the Railway is different. This is specially so in regard to the practice of imposing fines, which is not systematised under definite rules. This is a matter which needs no comment. The Railways are to an extent under the control of the Government, and some of them are

State Railways. The position, therefore, is anomalous, at least so far the State Railways are concerned. The system of fines is not practised in any other department of the Government, and it is questionable whether it is a legal form of punishment. Moreover, the collection under this head accumulate in a fund on almost all the railways, and the major portion of such fund is utilised for the benefit of European and Anglo-Indian employees for sports, games and other things, although the bulk of the contribution is derived from Indians. You will all agree with me when I say that we do not grudge the benefits extended to Europeans and Anglo-Indians; my reference to it is only to bring out the contrast. Fairness and equity requires that it should not exist at all. To maintain the procedure of inflicting fines amounts to an indirect encouragement to those not benefited, to impose heavy fines on flimsy and trivial grounds, the temptation being to swell the funds. It is also necessary that the method of utilising the fund be improved and it requires to be spent for more useful purposes. The wages and working conditions of most of the employees are such that physical breakdowns are very frequent and if a considerable portion of the fund were used towards such cases, it would be profitably employing it. I must say that this illegal form of punishment

should be abolished and sufficient agitation should be carried on urging the Government to pass legislation making deduction of fines from salaries or wages, illegal.

Institutes.

In many important centres and stations on different Railways there are no Institutes for Indian employees, except a very few in some places. A comparison of the Indian Institutes where there are some, with those provided for the European employees, will show that the Indian Institutes suffer from poor financial backing. It is also regrettable that a difference is emphasised by Indians being not allowed to join the European Institutes. In my opinion, there should be no two separate Institutes, and the Railway authorities would do well to provide Institutes for common use by both Europeans and Indians and a spirit of fellowship promoted thereby amongst the two classes of employees.

Representation in Legislature.

Railway service is one of the most important public utility services in India and as the Railways are under the direct supervision and control of the Government of India, Railway labour which is a component part of public utility service, must have a direct voice in the central Legislature

and the Railway Advisory Councils. Without adequate protection of the interests of railway labour and in the absence of necessary legislation for the same, the efficiency of the railway service is bound to be impaired. It is high time that the railwaymen in India should have their own elected representatives in the Legislative Assembly to represent their interests, as labour should also have a share in determining the legislative measures towards the direction and shaping of the policy of railway administration and its various other aspects. At present Labour has no direct representation in the central legislature, and as such, it is being thoroughly neglected, whereas in the same Assembly no less than 20 seats, that is to say, nearly 14 per cent of the total strength, are occupied by those who are in a way employers or represent their interests. If I take the United Provinces, I find that it has a population of about a crore from among the depressed and labouring classes and the railway employees alone number 60,304 in the United Provinces. In the Provincial Council, there is only one member to represent the depressed classes but there is none for the labouring classes; and that too rests with the selection and nomination by the Govt. itself. In the Legislative Assembly there is no elected representative to

look after and watch the interests of labour. It is wrong in principle that labour has not been given the right of electing its own men in the provincial and central legislatures, while the employing classes have the right of returning their own representatives to the Councils. I am strongly against the principle of nomination, as it does not and will not improve matters any more than what obtains without it. Nomination affords an opportunity to the Government to select any person it likes, without taking into any consideration the confidence that the nominee may command, except that of the Government. It is, therefore, imperative that at least one seat should be reserved in the Assembly for the labouring classes in the United Provinces and at least 8 seats in the Provincial Council. Further 3 seats should be reserved exclusively for Railway labour throughout India, in the Legislative Assembly and the right of electing such representatives should be vested in the All-India Trade Union Congress Executive Council for the Assembly seat, the All-India Trade Union Congress Provincial Committee in the United Provinces for 8 seats in the local council and the All-India Railwaymen's Federation for the three seats in the Legislative Assembly for Railway labour.

One more point is necessary to be impressed here and it is this that a pressure should be brought to bear upon the Government in the matter of amending the present Government of India Act so as to make the Executive Council responsible to and removable by the Legislature, as the legislature in its turn is responsible to and removable by the constituencies in the country. Because, still the present legislature seems to be impotent, inasmuch as the voice of the legislature is ignored by the Executive Council. Take for instance the Legislative Assembly resolution which was passed without division on the 5th February last year, recommending to the Governor-General-in-Council to institute an immediate enquiry into the grievances of subordinate employees of India Railways, but the resolution still remains a dead letter. When questioned in the Assembly by its members the Government replied that the Government of India were not in agreement with the resolution in question and would not, therefore, initiate the enquiry recommended in that resolution. It is, therefore, clear that everything depends upon the bureaucracy, in spite of the unanimous verdict of the people's representatives in the Legislative Assembly. To transfer the power from the Executive to the Legislature

and to make the former responsible to the latter has become a matter of immediate necessity. And for this purpose the whole country should now make every possible effort to get the present constitution changed, in the real interests of democracy and the growth of democratic institution.

Discontent.

I know there is discontent throughout the whole country and the workers in all the industries are agitated over their service conditions. Personally I welcome this discontent, as it makes the men unite, organise and agitate for betterment of their conditions. This will lead to greater unity and stronger organisation among the workers, and along with this, the better will be our prospects and the earlier will be our success in the labour movement in India. With this faith I earnestly appeal to you, to join your Association in thousands and present your loyal support to it for the good of all and remember that "each for all and all for each."

Recognition.

Before I take my seat I would like to impress on you the fact that the Unions, almost in all places, are anxious to seek recognition from the employers and they become disappointed when they do not get it.

What is the value of recognition on a piece of paper, which can at any time be withdrawn by another piece of paper. The real recognition lies in the strength and solidarity of a Union, which can never be ignored, as it can show its existence and aliveness by marching ahead. It is no use begging for recognition unless and until the Union seeking recognition, accumulates its numerical and financial strength and at the same time attains its respectability as a Trade Union. It is further harmful and beneath the dignity of labour to accept any recognition from the authorities under any dictatorial and humiliating terms. In referring to the question of recognition by the Railway Administrations, Sir Charles Innes pronounced his hope that the Trade Union Act would lead to improvement in relationship between the railway authorities and the Unions, and the Unions registered under this Act would have no difficulty in getting recognition. This I can understand well, but I cannot understand when he says again quoting Mr. Johnston M.P.'s

opinion about the labour organisations in Jute Industries, that a large number of Unions were not representative of labour and were only got up by some politicians for their own purpose. Sir Charles would have done well by clearing this issue with definite facts and particulars in support of his sweeping remarks. I do not wish to dilate upon the conditions of labour Unions in Jute Mill areas to which Sir Charles Innes evidently refers, as this is not the proper platform for it. But I would, however, like to point out that the remarks made by the Hon'ble the Commerce Member is not at all applicable so far as the organisations of railwaymen are concerned.

Comrades, my humble advice to you is to unite, organise and agitate for the assertion of your rights and the redress of your legitimate demands.

Comrades, I am grateful to you for the patient hearing you have accorded me and I thank you once more for the honour you have done me.

Railwaymen's Grievances.

GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE.

The railwaymen in India have been agitating over their long standing grie-

vances in the matter of their service conditions, but they are receiving no happy response nor any remedy from the authorities of Indian Railways. As a result the discontent is growing

more among the workers and the public should take serious notice of it in the interest of the efficient and peaceful working of the railways. Neither the Railway Administration nor the Govt. of India is paying any attention to this burning question of the day nor will they do so unless they are forced to take some effective steps to remedy the grievances of railwaymen. For the last two years the Legislative Assembly has been pressing the Government for an enquiry into such grievances and to suggest remedial measures, but so far the policy and attitude of the Government appear to be indifferent. We have been told by the Hon'ble the Commerce Minister that the Government has referred the debates of the Assembly in regard to the question of enquiry and also the debates on the Railway Budget specially in reference to the grievances ventilated by the members of the House to the Railway Administrations and expressed the hope that the different railway authorities would certainly remove the workers' grievance if they exist. The actuality of events in this regard tells us quite a different story and we find the railwaymen in much the same place, if not in a worse one as they were two years before. The bureaucratic attitude remains unbending and it is only due to the fact that the Executive is not responsible to and

removable by the Legislature. The public is being bluffed by the Government in almost every stage and in almost every matter and we are getting accustomed to receive evasive replies to questions and enquiries.

In the beginning of March last Mr. J. Senn, M. P. (Labour) declared in the House of Commons that considerable unrest prevailed among the employees of the Bengal Nagpur Railway owing to the alleged indiscriminate dismissals. He said that the representations of the men had been ignored and that there was a danger of stoppage of work. He asked whether Earl Winterton would cause an inquiry to be held with a view to meeting the grievances of the men.

Earl Winterton in his reply pointed out that the Bengal Nagpur Railway was a Company-managed Railway and Lord Birkenhead was not prepared to intervene in the matter.

The reply appears to be most unsatisfactory and disappointing and the Government is not right in giving this opinion, as the Bengal Nagpur Railway is a State Railway and has been leased to the Company for working purposes only. In the contracts for the working, the Secretary of State for India has reserved to himself full powers of control and supervision over the working of the company. In

recapitulation of the powers of the Secretary of State under the contract of the working companies, the Mackay Committee of 1908 expressly declared in their report that in all other matters (besides maintenance of railway lines and works, timing of trains, keeping of accounts) relating to the line, the company is subject to the supervision and control of the Secretary of State who may appoint such persons as he may think proper for the purpose of inspection of the line, auditing the accounts or otherwise exercising the power of supervision and control reserved to him. In particular the Secretary of State has the right to appoint a Government Director on the Board of the Company, with power of veto in all proceedings of the Board.

So while being the powers of the Secretary of State, we fail to fall in with the argument of Earl Winterton in connection with Lord Birkenhead's not intervening in the matter of grievances of employees engaged in a Company-managed railway. The Secretary of State has delegated most of the powers to the Government of India and still we are told that they cannot interfere in the working of the Company-managed railway administrations. It is really a matter to be regretted that the Company should be allowed to deal with the railway staff in any way they

like. The people of India have defrayed all charges and losses on account of state Railways and are responsible for all the debts that may be incurred for the railways. It is, therefore, quite meet and proper that the people and their representatives should press the Government to so control the Company that it treats the people of India including those employed on the railways in a just and reasonable manner. It is certainly unfair and wrong on the part of the Government of India and the Secretary of State for India to leave the railway servants entirely at the mercy of the Company's officials and take no notice of cases of ill treatment to the subordinate staff. Some definite steps should immediately be taken to enquire into the grievances of railwaymen in India, devise suitable means for their proper remedy to ensure better efficiency and smooth working of the railways.

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To,

The Editor,

B. N. Ry, INDIAN LABOUR JOURNAL,
BERHAMPUR.

Dear Sir,

I shall be much obliged if you will kindly allow a little space for me in publishing the following few lines in your popular Journal.

Assistant Train Examiners are appointed on 3 years probation. Up to now during my term of service they used to appoint men on 6 months probation, after which these men were able to enjoy the benefits of the Provident Fund. Now the months are converted into solid three years to deprive the poor low paid Assistant Train Examiners from the benefits of the Provident Fund, as they are not allowed to subscribe to the above fund during their probationary period.

Mr. Editor, I leave it to you to imagine the hard-ship of these men in these 3 years and at the same time the administration holds these Pro. Assistant Train Examiners equally responsible in the work as that of Permanent Asstt. Train Examiners, but they are denied equal rights. I know for certain that even the Porters in the Traffic Department of the Railway are allowed to contribute to the Provident Fund, if they draw Rs. 15 and above, and thus you will notice that these Pro. Assistant Train Examiners are treated worse than menials.

Mr. Editor have you ever heard that in any country that such a long period of probation is in existence? In the last session at Delhi, the Commercial Member said that the Railway staff are well satisfied with the privileges and benefits given by the Railway administration to their staff. Will you please draw his attention through your columns, if such treatment can be called a satisfactory one.

Mr. Editor, if any thing happens to such employees during the probationary period, what would be the fate of his family members.

There is a lot to write yet and which I will do so in the near future.

Yours sincerely,
P.V.O.

DEATH CALL.

Owing to the death of Babu M. Ramaswamy Mudaliar late Guard Dongoaposi an "A" Class Member (Registered No. A/1137) a call of Rs. 2 only will be made from the remaining members of the "A" Class enrolled up to 4-10-1925 through the Salary Bill for the month of May 1926.

(Sd.) D. K. G.
GENERAL SECRETARY,
Indian Labour Union Death
Benefit Fund Chakardharpur.

NOTICE.

All the Branch Secretaries, members of the Fund and whoever it may concerns, are hereby informed that in pursuance of the resolution passed at the 2nd Annual General Meeting of B. N. Rly Indian Labour Union Death Benefit Fund, held on 13-12-25, the Office and head quarters

of the Fund has been transferred from 2, Ashu Babu's Lane, K id d e r p o r e, to Chakardharpur, Singhbhum District, B. N. Rly. All communications should hereafter be addressed to the General Secretary, B. N. Rly. Indian Labour Union Death Benefit Fund, at Chakardharpur.

V. V. GIRI D. K. GHOSH,
President General Secretary.

Major Graham Poles Address

AT THE SESSION OF THE ALL INDIA
TRADE UNION CONGRESS HELD
UNDER THE PRESIDENCY

Mr. V. V. GIRI

After the Report was read, the President requested Major D. Graham Pole to address the Congress.

Major Pole began by stating that the object of his present visit to this country was to study the political and industrial conditions here and to report to the British Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress on them. Referring to trade unionism in Britain, he said that entirely owing to the efforts and to the organisation of trade unions 80 per cent of the whole of the British Trade Unionists were having a week of 48 hours or less. At the last session of the Trades Union Congress at Scarborough, which he attended along with Mr. B. Shiva Rao, they decided that Trade Unions in Britain must become

100 per cent organised, because they felt that any man who was working alongside of them who did not join a union and did not subscribe to its funds was a great traitor to the cause of labour. The tendency in Britain was more and more to form unions which were larger and larger, in other words, to amalgamate many of the smaller unions into one big union. Since 1920, the number of separate unions had decreased by over 15 per cent. The benefit of that was that they were able to consolidate their strength and broaden their power.

Continuing, Major Graham Pole alluded to some of the serious problems that the working classes of England had to encounter in the near future and said that in England, just as in other parts of the world, they had been passing through some years of very, very bad trade. The only remedy that occurred to the capitalists was to cut down wages. Since 1923, the trade unions to help the improvement of trade, had accepted the capitalists' proposals and agreed to reductions in wages amounting to £550 millions every year. The reason they had learnt from this in England was that the more they cut down wages the more unemployment they had in the country, because if the people could not get wages they could not spend on clothing, food, books, etc., then the goods were not required, and

so the men that manufactured them had to be thrown out of employment. With that vicious circle, their home markets had been to a great extent destroyed. The only persons in England that did not understand this were Mr. Baldwin and his Conservative Government and Party. They were on the eve of a very big industrial unrest in England. The Great Western Railway, one of their biggest railways, proposed to suspend the guaranteed hours of work in the week. The coal miners would be faced in the month of May with a very big struggle, and it was proposed that they should return to the 8 hour-day underground. In the cotton trade, so that they could compete with the undercutting of Bombay, they proposed that the maximum week of 48 hours should be made the minimum, and to do away with the maximum altogether. In the Engineering trade, they proposed that the minimum week of 47 hours should be increased to 50.

Every one of these things, continued the speaker, would be resisted not only by the trade unions concerned, but by the whole of the Trade Union Movement in Great Britain. Great Britain was one of the principal parties to the Washington agreement on hours of work. India had, to her credit, ratified most of the Washington agreements. Great Britain had not ratified it to this

day because the Conservatives were opposed to it.

Thus, the Trade Unionists in England had their own troubles to face—and very serious troubles at that. That, however, had not prevented them from taking an interest in the troubles of Indian labourers. In the recent mill strike in Bombay, they took a very great interest. They were fortunate in having Mr. Shiva Rao, who put the position before the Secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions, Amsterdam, in a long talk he had with him, and before Mr. Tom Shaw, Secretary of the International Textile Workers' Union. The speaker thought that in one respect, the British Trade Unionists had been more loyal than the Indians to the mill workers in Bombay, because they refused to speak of the thing as a strike, and they consistently spoke of it as the Bombay Mill Lock-out. He was in hearty agreement with the President of the present Congress when he said that strikes were not the object of trade unions, but were only their last resort. Indeed, the best way to avoid strikes was to build up very strong trade unions. He was much horrified to hear that apart from compulsory holidays, they were sometimes put out of work without any pay. It was a scandal, because no man who drew his pay and

called it 'salary' had holidays, without pay. He thought that the President of the Railwaymen's Federation said very well that salaries were rising and wages going down. If these things were known in England, they would get any amount of support from the British trade unions who already gave some financial backing to the Bombay mill workers to show what their feelings were. They were anxious to help

in every possible way, but could not help without knowledge. So they asked Indian labour to help them to know things, and he appealed to them to help Mr. Shiva Rao and himself with information on which the British Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party would make every endeavour to help them in India to better their conditions of work. (Loud cheers).

REPRESENTATION GAZETTE

Babu H. P. Ghose, Station Master, Sudamdih, applied for 15 days leave on 21-6-25 to attend his wife and children who were dangerously laid up. He received a reply that his name was duly registered. He wrote back another letter stating that unless leave was granted from 25-6-25, he would be compelled to leave the station in view of the urgent necessity. Receiving no reply, he handed over the charge to the A. S. M. having received a telegram about the seriousness of his wife's health. On return after only 12 days he was punished with reduction of pay permanently by Rs. 5 in addition to the loss of pay for the period of absence and degraded to work in a Black Hat Station called Bhutgeria, from the position of S. M. of 7 years standing in an important station.

On a representation of the matter, the administration was pleased to allow the Station Master to his former pay with effect from 1-3-1926.

Thanks of the Union are due to the Agent for his just consideration of this case.

S. Manikyam T. No. 13654 in the Khargpur Workshops applied for pass and P. T. O's for self and his dependent widow mother. He was asked to produce a medical Certificate to the effect that his mother is invalid and incapable of earning her livelihood.

From enquiries it was known that the mother of the party is solely dependent upon the earnings of her son. His financial circumstances compelled him to take up a job on a low salary in the shops to start with. He felt degradation in his community to allow his mother to earn her livelihood. Corrigendum No. 1 para 52 (o) IV of pass rules allows the grant of passes to mother if she is a widow. In this case the mother was a widow and she has had passes and P. T. O's on previous occasions without being subjected to any humiliations. The matter was represented to the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Khargpur who allowed the passes asked for. The central council is extremely grateful to him for sympathetic consideration of the legitimate grievances of one of his employees.

Notes & Comments.

Santragachi Dances.

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EUROPEAN INSTITUTE & INDIANS.

During the last X'mis festivities an Indian of Middle class had to go to the European Institute at Santragachi in order to supervise his portion of work in connection with the arrangements that had to be made at the Institute for the night. He did not enter into the hall but was only waiting on the Verandah that he might be of use in case his service were required. But Mr. Jordon the Honorary Secretary, of the Institute on seeing him took exception to his presence.

We would not have taken any notice of the conduct of the Honorary Secretary Mr. Jordon if he took exception to the presence of Indians who went to the European Institute either for taking part in their amusements or even for sight-seeing; for we cannot countenance breach of any rule or law whether legal, social or religious, however unreasonable or ridiculous it may appear to be. We respect the customs and rules of all societies. But in this case the Indian who went to the Institute did not go either to be a partner in the dance or patronise the bar but only to serve and help those who were entitled to make use of the Institute. If the Institute was entirely devoid of Indian element the Secretary Mr. Jordon

may feel nervous to allow a solitary Indian even to help in the arrangements. All the paid staff of the Institute have been Indians, and as such he had no cause what so ever to get bewildered at the sight of an Indian.

After all this Indian gentleman was not a stranger to Mr. Jordon. He was very well known to him being a Co-member of the station committee. Nor was he negligently in his costumes with the prospect of being unsightly to the visitors. He was decent enough in his dress polite in his manners to be respectable enough from the western point of view. Yet Mr. Jordon would not bear his sight because he was an Indian.

IS THE RULE STRICTLY OBSERVED?

That very night in the dance immediately after 12 i.e. X'mis an Anglo Indian who pretended to be particular about rule Over Joyously joined the company with a small Indian girl aged about 7 or 8 years as his partner and danced. Did he forget in his merriment of X'mis and extreme joy that he was breaking a rule which he would like others to strictly observe or did he think that a gentleman who assumes he has same position was at liberty to make or break rules and do whatever he pleased? One seems as probable as the other.

It is none of our concern whether he danced with an Indian or Eskimo but we only wish to point out how an Anglo-Indian gentleman pretended to be strict and did not mean to practice what he would preach to others. It is remarkable

that even Anglo Indians at Santragachi could see this sort of pretended strictness on the part of the Honorary Secretary who is very clever in quoting rules wherever it is convenient to him.

KHARGPUR BRANCH SECRETARY'S REPORT

Re-Hindu Musalman Tension.

On 16th May 1926 Mr. V. V. Giri President, P. R. Rao, General Secretary and myself left Khargpur by Bombay Mail to complete the organisation of the Union for the current year. After visiting some of the important Centers on the line, we got down at Bilaspur & great surprise & pain on 20-5-26 we have learnt about the communal riots at Khargpur. Our President at once wired assistance to the Railway Authorities and learnt in return that the situation was unsatisfactory and was in the hands of the Civil Authorities. No sooner the reply was received, I left on 20-5-26 by Bombay Mail for Khargpur and arrived on 21-5-26 to allay the situation to some extent.

On 21st and 22nd I visited throughout the settlement to pacify the burning feelings of communal hatred and endeavoured my utmost to restore good-will. The efforts of the Union Executive specially of our Vice

President Pandit Kasinath Muttu instead of being futile, have on the other hand, given scope to sink down the differences by forgiving each other and forgetting what had happened. We have availed this opportunity to interview the leading members of the town, the District Magistrate and the Railway Authorities and as the Employees were hard up due to their payment being held up we have arranged for their payments and issue of passes with escorts to those who were in need by approaching the authorities.

We have tried our utmost to negotiate with Mahammadan and Hindu Leaders for an amicable settlement. Though Mr. Fakuruddin, on behalf of the Mahammadans was ready for any settlement, the matter could not be pushed on since none of the Leaders of Hindu Sabha was present at the time in the station to represent the Hindus.

I have visited the indoor hospital with important members of the Union on 21st, 22nd and 24th May 1926 and enquired into the welfare of all the injured patients and offered them my assistance if needed in any respect. They wanted that arrangements should be made to make their payments in the hospital only. I approached the authorities who readily sympathised and immediately arranged payments. I am also glad to learn from the patients that the treatment meted out to them in the hospital was good. The following casualties were recorded in the hospital.

Deaths 10 (6 Muhammadans
4 Hindus.

Injured 31 (5 Hindus
26 Muhammadans.

Besides these figures I understand that some more cases occurred but have not been reported.

On 25-5-26 the District Magistrate the Agent, and the Chief Mechanical Engineer held an informal meeting with the Hindu Leading Members of the Town when Pandit Kashinath Muttu and myself were also invited. After discussing the whole situation, on behalf of the Union we requested the authorities to open the shops for regular work, as the workmen were anxious to resume work. However we asked for a days time to consult

the workmen. Mr. P. R. Rao joined us from 25-5-26. We and other Hindu representatives i.e. Messrs. M. Genesh Rao, R. K. Nath, Pathanker, Sanyasiah Dr. Narayan Swamy, B. N. Sircar and Venkatram went round to know the public feeling. The authorities quite willingly complied with our request and placed at our disposal one Motor Lorry. After going round to different localities we were pleased to gather an unanimous opinion for the re-opening of shops. We also advised one and all for conciliation and peace. The workshops were then opened from 27-5-26.

The storm has abated and there was full in the atmosphere. For this and for everything, the District Magistrate, the Agent and the Chief Mechanical Engineer deserve the heart-felt thanks of the public for handling the situation with utmost promptness and for restoring peace and order within a short period of 4 days i.e. by the 21st May 1926.

The arrangements made by the Government were excellent. B. N. Ry. A. F. I. Force 1st and 2nd Battalion has been on duty throughout this period. The Agent purchased three Motor Lorries and placed them at the disposal of the Civil Authorities. The Military pickets were fixed throughout the settlement. The Dist Magistrate

with his Police and C. I. D. officers was on the spot throughout the situation i.e. from 18-5-26 to 27-5-26. The Agent of the Railway Mr. L. Greenham visited this place frequently to help the situation. Railway officers headed by Mr. H. L. Cole were all along on the spot to help the Civil Authorities and save the situation. The Police searched several houses and made some arrests. There is a feeling that some innocent men also were arrested, but I am sure they will be released, if the Authorities are informed of the facts of the case. Our Vice President Pandit Kashinath Muttu is in touch with the situation and the Civil Authorities from 18-5-26 and rendered services to them as much as he could. I joined him on and from the 21st inst. and moved freely with both the communities to help them in all possible ways. Our General Secretary joined us from 26-5-26.

Unfortunately few stray cases occurred subsequent to the opening of Workshops as follows:—

On 27th few huts of Hindus were burnt at the Sini Phatak.

On 28th few huts of Hindus were burnt at the Sini Phatak near the European Grave Yard.

On 30th few huts of Hindus were burnt at the Sini Phatak near the European Grave Yard.

On the 27th one Hindu Workman of Engineering Workshops was stabbed on the palm by Mohammadan butchers when the former was going on his byke to old Khargpur. The case is under enquiry and two butchers were arrested.

On the 29th at 2 P. M. one Hindu boy of about 10 years was stabbed on the chest by Mohammadans. This case also is under enquiry; two arrests have been made in this connection. The boy is in the Hospital and on the way to recovery.

The Magistrate again summoned few leading members of both the communities on the 31st evening and advised them to ease the situation and stop. The Leaders assembled requested the Magistrate to summon a Conference of both communities and settle the matter. Accordingly a Conference was held on the 1st June 1926 at 6-30 P. M.; about 30 Mohammadan Representatives and 50 Hindus assembled. The District Magistrate Mr. R. N. Reid Presided. Messrs. H. L. Cole, C. W. Bluett and A. M. Robertson and some Police Officers were also present.

Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union.

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