

Indian Labour Journal.

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July, 1926

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Reg. No. M-2127

The Indian Labour Journal

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

EDITOR—V. V. GIRI.

Bar-at-Law.

10-11

Vol. III

July & August 1926.

No.

~~9 & 10~~

"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."

J. R. CLYNES M. P.

*Lord Privy Seal and Ex Leader
of the House of Commons.*

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They voice your views, fight for your cause and exist to vindicate your rights.

the Indian Labour Journal which wants more readers.

193660

BUSINESS NOTICE.

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All communications and articles intended for publication in the Indian Labour Journal must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. Correspondents are requested to write legibly on one side of the paper only. The rejected contributions cannot be returned unless a stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed for the purpose.

Rates of Subscriptions.

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Yearly, including postage, Rs 2-0-0

Single copy 3 As.

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.

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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 Secretary 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

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

The Indian Labour Journal.

July & August 1926.

TRADE UNIONS

The organisation of Trade Unions in India on modern lines is but a few years old. Extreme Caution and fore thought should be the watch words of the organisers of the movement and its success at any rate, in India depends on the understanding between the capitalist & Labour of the mutual differences existing. It must be admitted that Labour as at present organised is still in a weak condition as compared to the position of the employer, but if the latter is conscious of this fact and ill-treats or at any rate does not take into consideration the just grievances of the employee and redress them, he will come into hot-waters & nobody will have cause to regret it. The employer however rich & powerful he may be cannot get on for a single moment unless he has his employee to help him.

It is therefore absolutely essential for both the employer & employee to realise that the Trade Unions are not only necessary but extremely desirable in mutual interests. It is then alone that an organised labour can with dignity and reasonableness appeal to an already organised capitalist. It is then alone that public opinion, which in our view in the safest Judge, can decide on particular state of facts being placed before them whether the capitalist or labourer is just & right in a dispute arising.

The organisation of Labour has been carried on with such force in recent years that everybody in the country has realized that it has become a living issue which cannot be neglected. So, the Government have introduced legislation however defective it may be &

After some discussion the Agent was kind enough to say that he would reconsider the matter.

IV PUNISHMENTS

The President brought to the notice of the Agent that the present system of inflicting punishments in the majority of cases without the issue of a charge-sheet to the accused and taking his explanation is quite illegal and gives rise to several mal-practices. This is very prominent in the case of menials and workmen. It was explained that in all cases of punishments to individuals of any rank, it is necessary that a charge-sheet with distinct charges should be framed and handed over to the party to enable him to prove his innocence. The Present practice is for the person in charge to write out the explanation of the accused and take his thumb impression if he were illiterate. This system was explained to be likewise open to objection and it was requested that the charge-sheet should be made over to the party who would get the explanation written by a man of his liking. The Agent promised to bestow his attention upon this matter.

V CONVERSION OF DAILY RATE OF WORKMEN INTO MONTHLY RATE.

The President said that he would discuss the matter later on with the Agent.

VI ALIBUX-SIGNAL FITTER, TATANAGAR.

After some discussion the Agent was pleased to say that he would grant gratuity to this Fitter (subsequently granted by the Agent vide his letter No 10983 dated 28-5-26 to the General Secretary.

VII GRANT OF CARD PASSES TO THE UNION.

Previously each Branch was granted an Inter class pass with jurisdiction over the Branch and upto Khargpur, and the Central one second and one Inter for the whole length of the B N. Railway in addition to two first class passes to the President and Vice-President. This was subsequently curtailed to one second for the Central and a first to the President or Vice-President. The President explained to the Agent the necessity of passes to the Union for organisation and requested the Agent to see his way to grant passes as heretofore. The Agent kindly took notes of the number of passes required and promised to go into the matter shortly.

VIII INVITATION TO THE AGENT TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL.

The Agent assured that in case of his inability to attend the meeting he would send a letter of sympathy wishing success to its deliberations.

The President considered it his duty to make a particular mention of the kindness and uniform courtesy shown by him and the patient hearing he gave to all matters placed before him. The employees should congratu-

late themselves in having in Mr. Greenham an administrator with a high sense of justice and fair-play.

The interview was ended.

P. RAMACHANDRA RAO
General Secretary.

President's interview with H. L. Cole Esq, Chief Mechanical Engineer on the 11th July 1926 at his residence.

Mr V. V. Giri arrived at Khargpur and discussed outstanding questions in relation to the dismissals of Messrs. B K Biswas, Benishiam Wahie Moulana Mazarali and other communal leaders and the agitation amongst the Wagon Shop employees regarding their grievances such as Mr. Murphy's ill-treatment, transfer of quarters etc. after consulting with the General Secretary, Branch Secretary, Khargpur, Prof. Ramalingam and Pandit Kashinath Muttu Vice Presidents before interviewing the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

Then an interview with the Chief Mechanical Engineer took place at 4 P. M. on the same day.

The President expressed to the Chief Mechanical Engineer his appreciation of the manner in which the administration tackled the Hindu Mahamadan tension but stated in unmistakable terms at the disappoint-

ment and regret which every body felt at the dismissals of the Leaders not warranted either by circumstances or by expediency. He further told him that such a drastic step was unnecessary and undesirable and that this has unnecessarily been causing heart burnings in the minds of the members of both the communities. It would enhance the prestige of the administration if they only recall their orders in this respect and reinstate the gentlemen. He further stated that if the administration thought it desirable (which in his opinion unnecessary) they might transfer the individuals concerned. The President made particular reference to the case of Mr. Biswas a young man whose good prospects and bright future have been blighted by his dismissal. The Chief Mechanical Engineer stated however that a decision was arrived after a good deal of deliberation. He feared the administration will not be

able to revise their decision. But the President stated he could not see eye to eye with the administration and that a step in the wrong direction has been taken by the authorities in the matter. The President mentioned that he wished to interview the Agent on behalf of these men but Mr. Cole stated as some of these orders were issued by the Agent himself and the others were discharged with his consultation, he held no hope.

QUARTERS:—

Next the discussion turned towards the burning question regarding the transfer of quarters of the Loco employees. Employees whether belonging to new wagon shop or not are being directed by the authorities to go to the new quarters near the shop. So, there has been a reasonable agitation on the part of the employees for redress. Further it is stated that only the Hindu resident wagon shop workmen are compelled to go to those quarters and not the Mohamadan workmen.

President told the Chief Mechanical Engineer that it was wrong in principle and undesirable in practice to segregate the different communities and they would further lead to great communal tension which the administration as well as the Union sincerely desire to avoid at any cost and under all circumstances. It was always safer to bring the communities together and

make them neighbourly and thus further avoid friction.

The President further desired that an assurance should be given that the New wagon shop men alone (Hindu and Mohamadan) should be asked to reside there and not others unconnected with these shops.

It is a matter for gratification that Mr. Cole has agreed to both the proposals and gave assurance as desired by the President and stated that he after discussing with the officials, Leaders of both Hindu and Mohomadan and Labour Union representatives on 4th July 1926 came to the above conclusion. Mr. Cole assured that none of his office clerical staff would be compelled to go to the Mathurakati settlement.

The B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union had to mention with regret the conduct of Mr. Murphy the Foreman Wagon Shops who has not been properly treating his workmen but showing bad temper. The President desired that some action should be taken against him in the matter and put him right. C. M. E. informed the President that he warned the Foreman Mr. Murphy about this attitude towards the employees and that he has left instructions to his successor and the L. S. W. in this respect. The administration would take further notice if there is no change in his attitude.

With this the discussion was brought to a close and the President thanked Mr. Cole for kindly granting an interview without minding all his difficulties just on the eve of his departure to Australia and wished him bon-voyage.

P. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
General Secretary.

—O—

Sympathy from India.

When the news of the General strike reached India, there sprang up universal sympathy for the workers involved in it, particularly from the Trade Union Movement in India. Several messages were sent to the British Trades Union Congress wishing the British workers every success in their gigantic struggle. We give below a few of these messages:—

(1) Mr. Joshi sent the following cablegram on behalf of the All-India Trade Union Congress:—

"Indian workers express sympathy (and offer co-operation with British Workers in their great fight for maintenance of standard of life. Wish success"

(2) The B. N. Railway Indian Labour Union sent a message as follows:—

"Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union, Khargpur, expresses fullest sympathy (and supports British Trade Union Congress in its present struggle vindicating workers' rights and prays speedy success."

The Union also held a mass meeting in which it was resolved "that the members of the Union do express their fullest sympathy with the British Trade Union Workers in their struggle for existence and offer their most dutiful co-operation and pray for the vindication of

workers' rights with a credit befitting the cause of labour and Humanity at large."

(3) The Mechanical Engineers' Association, Central Provinces, Berar and Khandesh, cabled a message expressing heartfelt sympathy to miners and the just cause of British Labour.

(4) The Calcutta Indian Seamen's Union, Bengal Mariners' Union, and the Indian Quarter-Masters' Union jointly expressed their sympathy with and support to the British workers in their present struggle and repudiated the idea that the strike was against the British Constitution.

(5) The M. & S. M. Railway Employees' Union, Perambur, Madras, at a general body meeting of the Union passed the following resolution:—

"That the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union, Madras, deeply sympathises with the strikers in Great-Britain and supports them in their just and great struggle and wishes them every success in their cause."

(6) The Bombay Textile Labour Union at a public meeting of the textile workers of Bombay passed the following resolution:—

"This public meeting of the textile workers of Bombay sympathises with the English miners in their strike consequent upon the reduction of

their wages and expresses its indignation at the attitude of the employers".

The Union also sent the following cable to the British Trades Union Congress:—

"Bombay textile workers deeply sympathise with British Workers in their just and unprecedented strike. We fully support their cause and wish them success".

(7) The B. B. & C. I. Railway men Union, Bombay, sent the following cable.—

"Union Supports British Coal Miners' just cause. Remitting poor help through Indian T U C."

Messages of sympathy were also sent by the Punjab Labour Organising Board and other Labour Unions in the Punjab.

Besides these messages of sympathy, some monetary assistance was also sent from India. The General Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress issued an appeal to the public and the trade unions in this country requesting them to help the British workers in their hour of difficulty. He also issued a circular letter to the affiliated unions of the Trade Union Congress and requested them to remit their contributions, howsoever small they may be, to the British Trades Union Congress. We knew that our contributions to them would be like a drop in the ocean; their requirements demanded millions of pounds every day and our poor resources could allow us to send only a few pounds. But we did so not with a view to assist them in any way—that is impossible so long as our Trade Union Movement is in its infancy and so long as its finances are poor—but with a view to express our genuine moral sympathy with their cause. We give below a list of contributions, sent through the All-

India Trade Union Congress to the British Trades Union Congress.—

(1) £ 500 as under:—	Rs.	a.	p.
(a) Bombay Labour Organisation and Relief Fund Committee (first instalment) £ 200 ...	2,680	10	0
(b) Bombay Labour Organisation and Relief Fund Committee (second instalment) £ 275 ...	3,579	7	0
(c) Bombay Textile Labour Union £ 25 ...	334	8	0
(2) £ 100 as under:—			
(a) All-India Trade Union Congress ...	1,251	10	6
(b) B. B. & C. I. Railwaymen's Union, Bombay ...	50	0	0
(c) Colliery Employees' Association, Jharia, £ 2 ...	27	0	0
(d) "A Parsee Socialist," Bombay ...	10	0	0
(e) Mr. A. D. Nayar, Kasuali ...	2	0	0
(f) All India Railwaymen's Federation ...	500	0	0

It may be stated here that the contribution of £ 100 shown in No. 2 above was sent for the relief of the miners after the General Strike was called off.

Besides these contributions sent through the all-India Trade Union Congress, the G. I. P. Railway Workmen's Union, Bombay, and the Telegraph Workmen's Union Bombay sent £ 5 and 1 respectively direct to the British Trades Union Congress. It was also announced in papers that the All-India Railwaymen's Federation and the Girni Kamgar Maha Mandal,

Bombay, cabled £ 35 and £ 10 respectively as their contributions to the strike fund in England,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM LONDON:—
Immediately after the General Strike was called off, Mr. Pugh, Chairman of the General Council

of the British Trades Union Congress sent Mr. Joshi the following cable:—

"On behalf of British organised workers the General Council send cordial thanks for your practical expression of sympathy"

BENEFIT FUND.

Proceedings of the 3rd Committee Meeting of the B. N. Rly. Indian Labour Union Death Benefit Fund held at Chakardharpur on 23-5-26 in the D. B. Fund Office.

MEMBERS PRESENT:—

- 1 V. V. Giri Esqr.,
President.
- 2 P. G. Patankar Esqr.,
Vice President.
- 3 Mr. P. Ramchandra Rao,
Khargpur
- 4 Mr. Ramkrishna Jadu,
Shalimar
- 5 Mr. Nibaran Chandra Roy,
Adra
- 6 Mr. J. L. Chowdhury,
Chakardharpur
- 7 Mr. Balwant Singh,
Chakardharpur
- 8 Mr. P. S. S. Iyer,
Chakardharpur
- 9 Mr. D. K. Ghosh,
Chakardharpur

1 Proceedings of the last committee meeting held on 14-2-26, read and confirmed, except resolution No. 6 which is to be put up in the next meeting.

Proposed by Ramkrishna Jadu, seconded by P. S. S. Iyer. Carried unanimously.

2. I Resolved that in the case of one Nando Lal Ghosh (A224) the full benefit be fixed at Rs. 382 and the said amount be paid to the nominee, Monorama Ghosh widow wife of the deceased) after deducting the amount as noted below:—

Benefit Fund subscription for the year 1923-24	Rs.	2
Labour Union Subscription do.		4
Advance of benefit money paid on 22-6-24		200
do. 18-10-24		150
Total		356
Therefore net payment (Rs. 382—356) =		Rs. 26/- only.

II Resolved that in the case of one K. A. Narasiah (A/62) the full benefit be fixed at Rs 365/- only and the said amount be paid to the nominee K. Venkataratnamal (widow of the

deceased) after deducting the amount as noted below:—

Death Benefit Fund Subscription for the year 1924-25	Rs. 2
Advance of benefit money paid on 9-9-24	200
do. do. 11-11-24	150
Total	352

Therefore net amount (365—352) = Rs. 13 only.

III Resolved that in the case of one K. T. Iyer (A/299) the full benefit be fixed at Rs. 37 only and the amount be paid to the nominee Visalakshmi Amma widow of the deceased).

IV Resolved that in the case of one Ganapat Mulchand (A/102) the nominees Saraswati Bai (widow) and Kashi Bai (sister) of the deceased be paid Rs. 500 each as 2nd instalment of the benefit money in view of the delay in final settlement.

V In the case of one Panchanan Dey (D/671) it is evident from the records that the deceased left two widows viz. Charubala Dey and Umatarra Dey to get equal shares of the benefit money. The said Charubala Dey being a lunatic, one Tarangini Dasi was appointed by the District Judge of Nadia as the guardian of the person and the manager of the property of the said lunatic.

Resolved that Rs. 700 be paid to Tarangini Dasi guardian of lunatic

Charubala (widow of the deceased) as the 1st instalment of benefit money and also Rs. 450 to Umatarra being the 2nd instalment of benefit money (first instalment of 250/- paid to Umatarra on 31-5-25)

VI Resolved that on instalment of Rs. 1350 be paid to Prafulla Bala Debi widow of late Manindra Nath Benerji (A/119) in view of the delay in final settlement.

VII Resolved that in the case of one S. Ramaswamy Iyengar (A/452) Rs. 1600 be paid to the nominee (Champakam widow of the deceased) after deducting Rs. 70 already advanced to the widow by the Branch Secy., I. L. U. Khushi Branch.

VIII Resolved that in the case of one B. B. Nath A/366 an instalment of Rs. 1300 of the benefit money be paid to the nominee i. e. widow of the deceased.

IX Resolved that in the case of one M. Ramaswamy Mudaliar A/1137 (for whom a call has been made in this month i. e. in May 1926) the widow mother, being the nominee, be paid an instalment of Rs. 500 of the benefit money in view of the delay in final settlement.

X Resolved that in the case of one Satish Chandra Banerjee B/268 a 2nd instalment of Rs. 200 be paid to

the nominees viz. Suresh Chandra Benerjee minor son and S. Krishna Vabini Debi mother of the deceased, (The said Krishna Vabini Debi is the guardian of the minor son in view of the delay in final settlement.

XI Resolved that in the case of one P. Ranganatham B/218 a 2nd instalment of Rs. 37 only be paid to the nominees, Lengambal widow of the deceased in view of the delay in final settlement.

Proposed by P. S. S. Iyer, Seconded by Ramkrishna Jadu.

Carried unanimously.

XII Resolved that a sub committee consisting of 3 members viz. Mr. P. G. Patankar, Mr. K. S. Nagarkar and the General Secy. be formed to scrutinize the documents of the following deceased for whom no calls have yet been made and of the papers are in order. Nominees of all the A. class members be paid Rs. 250 each and those of B. class members Rs. 100 each.

A/689	Biraj Mohan Mukherji	A. Class members.
A/652	Jatindra Nath Mukherji	
A/1171	Chandra Sekhar Sen	
A/255	Ram Krishna Rao	
A/167	L. A. Swamy	B. Class members.
B/4	Samarendra Nath Mukherji	
B/197	P. Ramulu	

Proposed by the President, seconded by D. K. Ghosh. Carried unanimously.

3 Resolved that one call of each class be made in the month of June 1926 i. e. in A. class due to the death of B. M. Mukherji A/680 and in B. class due to the death of Samarendra Nath Mukharji B/4 and the same be notified in the B. N. Rly. Gazette for the information of members concerned.

Proposed by D. K. Ghosh, seconded by N. C. Roy, carried unanimously.

4 Resolved that henceforth the actual expenses incurred by each members in attending the committee meeting be paid.

Proposed by Ramkrishna Jadu, seconded by N. C. Roy, carried unanimously.

5 Resolved that the half yearly Budget Estimates as put forward by the General Secy. amounting to Rs. 1664 be passed. (For detail please see statement attached)

Proposed by President, seconded by P. S. S. Iyer, carried unanimously.

6 Resolved that the General Secy. should make necessary arrangements for printing of necessary forms and rule books.

Proposed by P. S. S. Iyer, seconded by Ramkrishna Jadu, carried unanimously.

7 With the permission of chair the General Secy. presented a bill of Kidderpore Printing Press amounting to Rs. 21 only for printing forms order to meet emergent demand.

Resolved that the bill be passed for payment.

Proposed by the President, seconded by P. S. S. Iyer, carried unanimously.

8 With the permission of the chair a bill for Rs. 155.40 being the expenses incurred by the Branch Secy.

Anticipated income for the year 1926-27 and budget provision for half year ending 30th of September 1926

Particulars	Anticipated income for the year 1926-27	Expenditure for half year ending 30th Sept. 25						Balance	Remarks
		Establishment	Contingencies including postage & house rent	Printing & stationery	Equipment	Organization & travelling	Total for half year		
Balance B. F.	481								Detail:— Clerks & a peon @ 132 p.m. Contingencies including postage & house rent @ 30 p.m. Printing & Stationery @ 25 p.m. Travelling & @ 24 p.m. 211/- Average per month Equipment L. S. 400/- This includes the cost of a Typewriting machine
Yearly subscription for the year 1926-27									
A. class 1263X2	2526								
B. class 487X1	487								
Total	3494	3494							
Budget Provision	...	...	792	180	150	400	142	1664	
		3494						1830	

REASONS FOR EXCESS (a) Establishment. Though the subscribers of this fund are increasing gradually there are only two clerks at present and they can

I. L. U. C. K. P. Branch for holding the general meeting of the D. B. Fund at C K. P. on 13-12-26, presented by the General Secy. before the Committee for decision. Resolved that the above mentioned bill be passed for payment.

Proposed by P. G. Patankar, seconded by P. S. S. Iyer, carried unanimously.

Sd. V. V. GIRI,
President.

barely cope with all the current work what to say of arrears. As a matter of fact accounts ledger will have to be posted from 1-4-25 to date. So a provision is made for one more clerk to make up all the arrears.

(b) Contingencies including house rent and postage:—House rent and lighting charges are the two new items of expenditure amounting to Rs 8 p. m. As regards postage there are nearly 300 A. & B class members paying direct calls. During the last six months there were only two calls whereas during the period under review we shall have to make 7 calls both in A. & B classes.

—:O:—

Electric Telegraph Signallers and their grievances.

AGENT, B N. Ry., Calcutta.

Your No. 6594 dated 26-3-26.

In reply to yours my Council begs to submit the following for favour of your kind reconsideration.

You have been pleased to consider the subject from the view point of the efficiency of the Rly. and also in the interest of the Signallers themselves.

But my Council begs to differ from the view that the present system under which an efficiency bar has been placed after a Signaller's pay has raised upto Rs 38 or Rs. 44 is a sound one, even from the point of view of the Railway for the following reasons.

A reference to the present system obtaining in other Railways as S I. Ry. M. & S M. Ry., E. I. Ry., E. B. Ry. etc, would show that the Signallers are not compelled to pass the Assistant Station Master's examination and the efficiency is in no way impaired thereby in those Railways.

As in the case of Railways like S. I. R. the recruiting ground for the Assistant Station Master's should be open to all such employees as General clerks, Coaching clerks, Parcel and Luggage clerks, Trains clerks and not restricted only to the Signallers requiring consequently their passing of the Assistant Station Master's test compulsorily.

If it be thought that Assistant Station Master's should be selected from this class of employees, my Council begs to submit that it should not be compulsory for all the Signallers to pass the said examination but only to those who wish to qualify themselves for the Assistant Station Master's posts.

Even if you are pleased to differ from this view, the present proviso requiring the passing of the Assistant Station Master's test should be included initially in the Telegraph training course & not later victimising thereby

many Signallers after having put in some years of good service on this Railway. In this connection, I may be allowed to point out that the passing of Line Clear examination is included in the curriculum of studies for the Telegraph Training class. My humble contention is, if at all necessary the Signallers should be asked to pass the necessary tests before entering service and not be compelled to do so afterwards, especially when the tests appertain to a different profession to which the Signallers may not have any liking.

The best Signallers may be worst Assistant Station Master's and are debarred from drawing further increments because of their fault of being best Signallers only. The present system victimises a Signaller even if he may have put in some years of most loyal and creditable service on this Railway, if he happens to fail in Assistant Station Master's examination. A typical instance of this nature has already been reported to you in connection with the case of Mr. K. L. Narasimham Relieving Signaller of Khargpur whose services were dispensed with for having failed in the medical examination prior to the Assistant Station Master's test, under dubious circumstances, even though his services as a Signaller have been highly appreciated.

From the Signaller's point of view, the present arrangement is quite unsatisfactory.

If because of the present system in 1925, 51 Signallers were promoted as Assistant Station Masters, more than 101 Signallers have been victimised because of it and their further prospects are hanging in balance. Each of them is subjected to a loss of Rs 10 per mensem because of the stoppage of further increments and there is no source of income to compensate them for this loss even if they pass the required examination without receiving any training as Assistant Station Master's.

The long and the short of the whole question is even certain Signallers are capable of becoming good Assistant Station Masters, they should not be compelled to do so against their wishes.

Nor does the passing of the A. S. M's examination seem to me a better immediate prospect financially. There are nearly 15 cases on record, which have come to our knowledge wherein even after qualifying for the Assistant Station Master's posts, no increment according to time scale of pay, has been yet granted even though designated as Relieving Asstt. Station Masters.

If the fortunate few are promoted as Assistant Station Master's by the present system, many unfortunate Signallers are left behind in the lurch because of it.

Moreover the present proviso complained of was introduced on 1-4-1920. This came as a bolt from the blue to those who entered service prior to this date with the hope that they would be allowed to work as Signallers only throughout their life and never dreamed that they would be compelled to become A. S. Ms. contrary to their tastes, on pain of losing further prospects, nay even service as in some cases on this Railway.

This is a serious injustice and my Council begs to request you not to apply this proviso to such Signallers.

In short, the present arrangement has neither sympathy nor approval from the Signallers this is in itself an indirect proof that it does no good for them. Incidentally, I beg to draw your attention to the cancellation of the

orders of the Superintendent General, that the Shed Clerks should not be promoted above Rs 40 per month unless they pass the Assistant Goods Clerk's examination.

Considered from every point of view, the present system does great injustice to the Signallers both because of its inherent defects already mentioned and also its application to all these workers irrespective of their being employed before the promulgation of the present proviso or after it.

Under the circumstances, my Council appeals to you to be pleased to reconsider the whole question after comparison with the system prevailing in the Railways already referred to.

Thanking you in anticipation of a favourable decision.

P. RAMACHANDRA RAO.

System prevailing in E. B. R., E. I. R., S. I. R., & M. & S. M. Ry. Electric Telegraph Signallers.

From my enquiry from other Railways I find that the following arrangements exist on different Ry.s. for the training of A. S. M's.

(a) On the E. B. Ry., Signallers are not compelled to pass the A. S. M's examination nor there is a bar to their grade increment on this account but those who desire to be A. S. M's appear at the Train passing, Coaching and Goods examination held from time to time.

The following is the scale of pay of Signallers on that Railway.

A Class	Rs. 30	4	70
B Class	Rs. 75	5	115
Special class	Rs. 120	10	170

(b) On the East Indian Railway, if a Signaller is willing to appear in the A. S. M's examination he is examined by the A. T. S. or some other officer deputed for the purpose.

There is neither any compulsion on Signallers to pass the A. S. M's examination nor their promotion is barred in any way, but their grade increase is always open to them in the capacity of Signallers.

The following are the grades on that Railway.

Signallers class A	Rs 30	2	38
" B	40	2	52
" C	60	3	75
" D	78	3	90
" E	100	5	140

(c) On the S. I. Ry, A. S. M's are recruited from Signallers, General clerks Coaching Clerks, Parcel and Luggage clerks and Train clerks if they pass the A. S. M's test but the option of accepting the A. S. M's post is with the man himself.

The following is the grade on that Railway.

25	21½	35
35	21½	45
45	21½	60
60	5	70
75	5	95

(d) On the M. & S. M. Ry. there is a separate Traffic Telegraph Department and the following grades have been fixed for Signallers.

D Class	22-8-0 to	40/-
C "	41/- to	55/-
B "	56/- to	75/-
A "	76/- to	120/-

They work as Signallers only and are not compelled to pass the A. S. M's examination until they express their willingness to go up for that examination.

P. RAMACHANDRA RAO.

RAILWAYMEN'S GRIEVANCES.

Government's Attitude.

(BY A RAILWAYMAN).

The very unsympathetic attitude taken by the Government of India towards the grievances of Railway subordinates is most deplorable. The perversity and obstinacy with which the Hon'ble the commerce Member on behalf of the Government of India, first tried to prevent and later refused to accept the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly to institute an enquiry into the many real and deep-rooted grievances of Railway subordinates and workmen stands in glaring contrast with the over-zeal with which the Government sought to

redress the imaginary grievances of the Superior Service in India. What other lesson can possibly be drawn from this contrast except that in spite of the much-advertised Montford Reforms the voice of the people has still very little influence on the doings of the Executive in India? Further increases in pay and other emoluments to the already over-paid Superior Officers is an absolute necessity for the well-being of India! Then the offices of the plaintiff and the Judge are combined in one and same person how can there be any difficulty in

securing such a favourable decree? That is the lesson of the Lee Commission and the Superior Officers on Railways got their due share of the "Lee Loot"! The rise in prices, changed world conditions, growing responsibilities were all urged in favour of granting more and more emoluments to the officers; but in the case of the poorly-paid and hard-worked subordinate employees, the Government declared that there were no legitimate grievances, that the men were all very amply paid, very well treated, and were most happy and contented!

THE ASSEMBLY'S VERDICT.

The Assembly no doubt on the 5th of February 1926 rejected the specious and frivolous objections of Sir Charles Innes and without a division passed Mr M K Acharya's resolution recommending an inquiry into the grievances of the subordinate employees of the Indian Railways. But the subordinate employees not being White men, the Assembly's resolution has not been given effect to by Government up to date. Can executive high-handedness go further? Is this the kind and measure of responsible government we have got in India?

The heart-felt gratitude of every Railway subordinate and workman in India is due to Mr. M K Acharya and other Labour leaders in the Assembly like Mr Joshi and Mr Chaman Lal and Mr P. Sinha, for their unwearied efforts to press the subject matter of the above resolution on the attention of Government. In September 1925, Mr. Acharya interpellated Government and got the reply from Sir Charles Innes that.—

"Government are not in agreement with the resolution referred to by the Hon'ble Member and do not propose to initiate the inquiry suggested in that resolution. They have drawn the

attention of the Railway administrations to the debates and they have no doubt that any genuine grievances which exist will be remedied by the Railway administrations concerned"

This reply, it was pointed out, was equivalent to treating with contempt the considered verdict of the Assembly. But Sir Charles Innes claimed technically that under the constitution the Government were at liberty to disregard the recommendation of the Assembly.

A VOTE OF CENSURE.

On 26th February 1926, therefore, during the debate on the Railway Budget, Mr. M K. Acharya proposed a reduction of Rs 100 in demand 'No 4 General Administration—Working Expenses' as a vote of censure upon government for their "failure to redress the grievances of railway subordinate employees." Sir Charles Innes opposed the motion with his stale arguments of "No grievances" and "Enquiry dangerous, and so on, but the House after fully hearing the specious pleadings of the Commerce Member passed the motion by 53 votes to 40. If India had responsible Government this vote of censure would force the Executive to resign; indeed there would have been no need for such a vote of censure; for in other civilised countries could the executive have declined to carry out a resolution of its Legislature. God alone knows what effect this last vote of censure is going to have upon the autocratic Government of India.

OPPOSITION EXPOSED.

The opposition of Government to Mr. M. K. Acharya's resolution demanding an inquiry into the grievances of railway employees has been throughout as unreasonable as obstinate. In the opinion of Sir Charles Innes it was "a thoroughly dangerous resolution." "Railway

servants are generally speaking happy and contented." To appoint any commission of inquiry "is the very way to excite them to discontent." Even the discussion of such a resolution in the Assembly was sure to "paralyse the efficiency of your railways." Lastly according to Sir Charles Innes, this demand for an inquiry came not from the Railwaymen themselves but from politicians like Mr. Joshi and Mr. Acharya. All these specious arguments urged mainly because the inquiry demanded, if instituted, would thoroughly disprove the hypothesis of no grievances, and because Sir Charles Innes wanted to prevent the exposure of the terrible autocracy in Railway Administration, were, after full discussion, rejected by the Assembly as indeed they deserved to be; and Government did not even dare to challenge a division when the President declared Mr. Acharya's resolution passed on the 5th of February 1925. All this was pointed out clearly by Mr. Acharya in his censure motion on the 26th February 1926.

In the course of his vigorous speech Mr. Acharya said :—

"The Hon'ble Sir Charles said that the question had been referred to the Agents. When the sheep complain against the wolves, you refer them back to the wolves! If after an inquiry a Committee says there are no grievances, then I for one am prepared to surrender my point. But until that is said by an independent, impartial Committee of Enquiry, I am not prepared to take the word of Sir Charles Innes. The British rulers of the land never admit that the Indian people have any grievances. And in the same way the Agents say that the Railwaymen are very happy, that the grievances are the creation of mischief-mongers who desire to create unrest. How do the Agents make such reports? On what evidence? I attach no value to such reports,....."

This spirited challenge from Mr. Acharya was met by Sir Charles Innes with the same old specious 'ipse dixit.' He ventured to repeat the false plea: 'We had no evidence before us that there was any demand on the part of our railway employees for a commission of enquiry. As far as we know the demand for that inquiry came from Mr. Joshi himself and not from the railway employees—a charge which Mr. Joshi instantly denied. Sir Charles Innes in fact overshot his mark in putting forth such specious pleadings; and so the Assembly for a second time, as already pointed out, carried out Mr. Acharya's motion by 53 votes to 40.

THE WORK AHEAD.

Our leaders have thus done their utmost in the Assembly. It now remains for the Railway employees to help themselves and strengthen the hands of their leaders. And with this object the following practical suggestions are made:—(1) We Railwaymen all over India must join in thousands our respective Unions, formulate our grievances and agitate for their redress; (2) All those Railway Associations and Unions who prior to February 1925 had already represented their grievances to the higher authorities should republish them. A copy may be sent again to the Railway Board through the Agents concerned; a copy may be sent to the Secretary All-India Railway Federation and possibly also copies to Mr. Acharya at Madras and to Mr. Joshi at Bombay. Then the public will know how far Sir Charles Innes spoke the truth when he said that no demand for any inquiry came from the railway employees themselves; (3) Railway Unions must agitate to get direct representation in the Central Legislature and in the meantime, at the coming elections to the Legislative Assembly Railway Unions may well adopt one or two well known friends of labour in each Province as their accredited representatives qualified to speak with authority in their behalf. (4) We must stand united, work hard and raise enough funds, and if driven to that extreme, be prepared to "Strike Work" until our grievances are redressed. This of course is our very last weapon. Let us hope that we may not be driven to have recourse to that unpleasant weapon of ours.

MASS MEETING AT SHALIMAR.

A mass meeting of the B. N. Railway Indian Labour Union, Shalimar Branch was held at Santragachi under the Chairmanship of Mr. M. N. Mukerjee B. A., Vice-President of the Branch on 19-6-1926 at 7 P. M.

After explaining the object of the meeting the Chairman exhorted to render all possible aid to the father of the deceased Bhaskar who got drowned on the 13th of March last, to enable him to meet the Court expenses in connection with the case brought in the Howrah Criminal Court under Section 336 I. P. C. against Messrs. Goudoin, Clarke, Ford and Paskal. He then called upon the Secretary to explain in details the actions taken by the Labour Union of late in representing the case of the deceased Oriya Cooly Bhaskar as well as other cases in connection with the current affairs. The Secretary while explaining expressed his regret for not having received any reply or even the courtesy of an acknowledgment from the Railway officials to his letters in connection with Bhaskar's case. He then emphasised on the value of combination, the attainment of which above will enable us to demand justice from the authorities and stated that the redress of our grievances in the past are due to combination which we have at present.

Messrs. R. K. Jadu and D. N. Singh also spoke on the power of Unity and

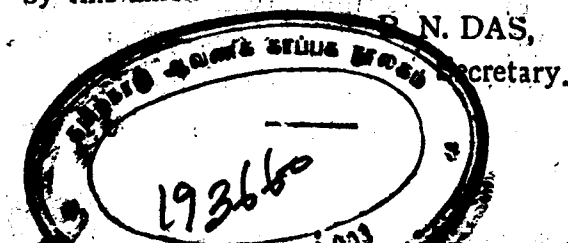
pointed out the ill habits of backbiting and carrying information to the subordinate officials and urged to reform themselves if they want their conditions to be improved.

The following resolutions were passed:—

1. In view of the fact that leave is denied to the menial staff of the Traffic Department at Santragachi when applied for and that the staff have to wait for considerable time till their turns come, it is resolved that this meeting draws the attention of the District Commercial Officer, B. N. Ry. Khargpur to this effect and urges upon him to engage adequate percentage of Relieving staff to adjust affairs.

2. Where as great discontentment is brewing amongst the staff of the Traffic Department at Shalimar in view of the hardships, it is resolved that we do express a disapproval of the conduct of the Asstt. Commercial Officer and hope better relations will soon be established.

Before closing the meeting, the Chairman urged upon the members of the Carriage Department at Santragachi to be more punctual in their attendance and regretted for the receipt of such complaints by this union.



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REPRESENTATION GAZETTE.

—(ॐ)—

No. 46:—One Ali Bux, Signal Fitter was transferred from Gidni to Tatanagar and was entrusted there with the management of interlocking of three stations namely Tatanagar, Karkai Block Hut and Gommarish with the help of one cooly only.

Finding difficulty in managing these stations with one cooly only, he appealed to the authorities concerned to sanction one more cooly to him but in vain.

Unfortunately he was not in the good looks of his P. W. Inspector and on 3rd June 1925 an accident of breakage of the rods occurred due to pulling back out of all proportions by the said P. W. Inspector against the strong warning of Ali Bux that unless the services of a Blacksmith and a cooly are requisitioned to mend the bent rods they were liable to break. It is reported that the P. W. Inspector was annoyed and abused him for this incident. In his explanation Ali Bux had to waive all responsibility of the mistake which occurred due to the wanton indifference of his P. W. Inspector.

From this time onwards, the said P. W. Inspector began maliciously reporting against him to the District Engineer with the result that the

unfortunate Signal Fitter was dismissed for the alleged fault of disobedience of orders.

Ali Bux asserts that he never disobeyed his superiors orders. In fact, he obeyed all the orders while at the same time he was appealing for the help of one more cooly. His services were previously much appreciated by his superiors such as Sir G. C. Godfrey the then District Engineer, Balasore and Mr. M. N. Chakravarty B. E. of Gidni.

Unions representation of the case to the Chief Engineer, could not please him to reconsider the decision already passed in the case.

As a typical case of injustice, the Agent was appealed to and though he has not been pleased to reinstate him, we are glad to note that he has been kind enough to agree to our request to allow Ali Bux his gratuity in consideration of his 18 years loyal service to this Railway.

Incidentally the Union begs to thank the Agent for the kind consideration shown in the case.

—O—

No. 47:—Peon Ramrup of D. C. O's office, Khargpur was discharged from service for having forgotten to attend the Chief Clerk at his bungalow on one Monday as expressly ordered.

It was represented that Ramrup attended the office at the time when he was required to attend the Chief Clerk at his bungalow, only due to forgetfulness.

The D. C. O., Khargpur was pleased to kindly reconsider the case and reinstate the man. The Union begs to offer its grateful thanks for his just and sympathetic consideration shown in this case.

—O—

No. 48:—One Saturday night at about 1.30 A. M. Mr. S. N. Phatak Relieving Control Assistant Station Master, was returning to the Traffic Settlement from the Old Settlement, at Khargpur, after attending to a rehearsal of a drama. Avoiding the road leading to the Traffic Settlement from the Indian Institute as this road has acquired notoriety, he walked to the station and crossed the over bridge to take the road leading to the Traffic Settlement. As he was nearing the junction leading to the Goods shed, he described two men, armed with lathies passing in the opposite direction. Just as he was walking on the way near the road leading to Mr. Harnam Singh's quarters one of the men he saw, suddenly accosted him and demanded him to stop.

Fearing that these men were drunkards bent upon doing mischief, he quickened his pace and began

shouting for help. A sentry came in at the time but he could not do anything apparently he feared the worst for himself. The two complained of, charged Mr. S. N. Phatak of having attempted to steal the mangoes from the goods wagons and began abusing him in most vulgar language while they dutifully caught him by the hands. Soon Detective Inspector Mr. Bose was brought by one of the men who were found to belong to Railway Watch & Ward Department. Mr. Bose soon understood the real situation. By this time, some friends of Mr. S. N. Phatak, too came to the spot and Mr. Bose let him off after taking his address. The conduct of these two members of the Watch & Ward in using foul language and roughly handling the man as well as audaciously charging a respectable man as being a thief, are to say the least simply condemnable.

The matter was brought to the notice of the District Commercial officer Khargpur who found no evidence in the charge against Mr. S. N. Phatak but thought it necessary to place this in his personal file so that in the event of any such reports coming against him in future he may be discharged from service.

The case was taken up by the Union which demanded a full report of the case from the Superintendent

Watch & Ward who declined to comply with our request. It was pointed out to the District Commercial Officer by placing the case in Mr. Phattak's personal file, it was adding further insult to the injury suffered by him in having been falsely charged. It was also shown from the evidences of two most respectable men as the Presidents of Utkula Sistikarna Samaj and the Secretary of Bala Saraswati Association, that Mr. S. N. Phattak left the office of the Samaj at about 1 A. M. on the night referred to and that he was a man of quite honest temperament.

We are glad to say that the District Commercial Officer, Khargpur was pleased to withdraw the remarks from Mr. S. N. Phattak's personal file.

No. 49:—Babu Ramnarain Singh, L. A. T., Khurda Road was fined Rs. 2-5-0 on a charge of slack working for not properly noting certain small defects in 202 Up on 6th August 1925. It was replied by the Union that he was only allowed 15 minutes for examination as per the Standing Orders the breach of which would have resulted in his punishment and it was not possible to look into all the small defects within the 15 minutes, when he had other trains to examine, to the letter of District Loco and Carriage Supdt. who stated that the L. A. T. would not have been blamed if only

15 minutes were allowed him but the train stood at Khurda Road more than 4½ hours during which time proper examination could have been made.

The fine was cancelled and a warning has been given instead to maintain prestige Mr. L. A. T. cannot be held responsible reasonably to attend to the repairs within such a short space of time.

No. 50:—Mr. A. Suryanarayana, Signaller class II of Bhaga having reached the maximum of his grade, prayed for transfer to any station outside his District so that he may have better prospects. He was favoured with orders of transfer to Khargpur and was given to understand that he would be allowed to draw his increment after assuming duties there. Passes were also issued yet he was not relieved. He had to undergo disappointment thus nearly two or three times.

After Union's representation of the case, we are glad to say he has been posted permanently at Khargpur and his further increments allowed him.

No. 51:—The usual grade increase of Mr. P. C. Chakravarthy, L. A. T., Khargpur, falling due on 1st March 1926, was sanctioned to him as a result of the Union's representation.

No. :—P Kanakamma lost her two sons P. Appalaswami and P. Chinniah both of the Khargpur workshops within a short space of time while working on the B. N. Ry. The unfortunate lady with her minor boy of less than 12 years old, is left in most pitiable straitened circumstances. The workshop investigation officer of Khargpur, District Magistrate and Tahsildar of Vizagapatam have all recommended her for being granted compassionate gratuity. The provident assets amounting to Rs 219-13-11 were all expended by the poor mother for the funeral expenses of her son and towards the payment of debt incurred by the deceased so that nothing is left for the maintenance of the widow mother and her minor son.

The matter is under correspondence and the Union will be highly thankful to the Agent for sanctioning the Compassionate gratuity which the poor mother so richly deserves.

No. :—Babu L. N. Patnaik, Late Asstt. Coaching Clerk Jajpur Road after a period of indifferent health for over three months, developed signs of acute rheumatism on 18-9-22 and after a medical examination by the local Medical Officer in the presence of Station Master, he reported sick on 19-9-22 to the District Traffic Supdt., B. N. Ry., Khurda Road. His condition

was so serious that some sort of help from outside for nursing him, was absolutely necessary but as there was previous ill-feeling between him and the Station Master, his servants could not help him and in the circumstances he had to go to his native place.

Another medical certificate from M. H. A., Bhadrack was sent on 22-9-22 asking for sanction of his leave and he waited for the reply from the District Traffic Supdt., till 24-9-22 when his condition became worse. As he had none to give him even hot water to drink, he was compelled to go to his native place for help and so he left the station with the permission of the Station Master his immediate superior, in an extremely precarious condition.

On 24-9-22 the Station Master reported that Mr. Patnaik left the station without permission without mentioning that this was asked for by Mr. Patnaik in a letter the copy of which has been afterwards shown to the District Traffic Supdt. by the Vice President. On the basis of the malicious report of this Station Master the man's services were dispensed with. The very first communication to the District Traffic Supdt., Khurda Road on the subject from the Union elicited the hopeless state of the records in the D. T. S. office concerning the man's case because the D. T. S. replied that he could not find any trace of the

medical certificates sent through Asstt. Surgeon, Bhadrack but he acknowledged the receipt of his leave application of 19-9-22. It was expected that the District Traffic Supdt., Khurda Road would have some consideration for the extreme miserable condition to which Mr. Patnaik was put in dealing with his case.

After the prime charge for his dismissal namely leaving the station without permission was proved to be false and the extenuating circumstances were clearly pointed out, it was expected that the man would be reinstated but irrelevant issues have been raised that his previous record was bad pointing out 2 instances, wherein it was alleged that the man was guilty of disorderly conduct. The Union showed that it was the Asstt. Station Master (who was afterwards

dismissed) that was responsible for these and not Mr. Patnaik. Yet the Superintendent General has been courteous enough to say that he is not prepared to give any details regarding the man and laterly has sought a safe refuge by saying that his previous record was sufficiently bad to condemn the man. He has not deigned to reply on what definite charges he could be held to blame. All this clearly point out that for a false step taken initially by condemning a man wrongly, the administration does not at times hesitate to stoop to use unfair means to maintain their prestige. We would like to point out that prestige maintained on such a basis is sure to defeat the very ends of the purpose for which it is sought to be maintained in the long run.

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Bhojudih Branch Annual Report 1925-26.

—O—

Mr. Chairman and Brother Association.

I have much pleasure in presenting, as Secretary of the Bhojudih Branch, B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union, the annual report of the Branch for the year ended 31st March 1926. Although this Branch has been brought into existence since the inception of the B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union, no annual report on the work of this Branch has hitherto been put before the public. Mr. A. C. Chatterji of Mohuda shouldered for a few years, as the Secre-

tary, the responsibilities of the branch. He was, however, relieved of his responsibilities. The work of the Branch is being looked into in a manner possible at Bhojudih and I was called upon to do the work during the year 1925-26.

The progress made by this Branch during the year under review, though not unappreciable, ought to have been more speedy. I am glad to report that moral support and sympathy consequent on the progressive realisation of the importance

of unity, have become the main stay of this Branch. There had been no open air meetings to educate the illiterate workers; in spite of this it seems they do not lag behind. No doubt there is dearth of genuine workers, who could conveniently spare time to devote a space of time for the cause of the Union, otherwise the result under the favourable circumstances, I have described above, would have been strikingly brilliant.

MEMBERSHIP.

The strength of previous years is not available. The total number of members during the year is 196 out of this number 78 have either been transferred to other District or not in service.

MEETINGS.

There had been only 6 meetings to transact the current business. The general meetings could however not have been held. It is anticipated that greater enthusiasm will prevail in future.

FINANCE.

The total collection during the year is Rs 190-3-9 and the receipts and expenditure are shown in the statement attached.

ORGANISATION.

Though much attention could not be given towards organisation and a healthy constitution of this branch, happily the members literate and illiterate alike were not lacking in their endeavour to promote the cause of the Union in enlisting them-

selves voluntarily. We owe a heavy debt of gratitude to Mr. S. Subhramanayam organiser, for the help we received at his hand as he was largely instrumental in adding to our numbers.

CASES REPRESENTED.

We had only one case in which it was alleged by the petitioner that there was grave miscarriage of justice. The party concerned was Babu J. C. Gupta Shorthand Typist of Mining Superintendent's office, Bhaga, who is said to have been discharged on frivolous grounds. The case was duly represented to the authorities through the Central Council; but it is regretted that no satisfactory result could be obtained.

Thanks to the virtue of the constituents of this Branch that they have been smarting under the rigour of all sorts of difficulties, a few of which I make mention below

GENERAL GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS.

The most chronic difficulties are paucity of quarters for accommodation of staff, insufficient water supply, absence of lighting arrangements and want of watchmen at night. To make the position worse it would not be out of place to mention here, that the type of clerical quarters erected in the recent past are without jafferies in the verandahs, which has the resultant consequence of affording greater opportunity to the men committing thefts and allowing stray cattle to come in. We

call for the attention of the administration and urge upon them the necessity of providing jafferies in quarters which are at present without them.

PASSES.

The existing pass rules do not serve our purpose at all as only two sets of passes are allowed in a year and even the Pujah and X'mas concession passes are hardly made available owing to fresh restrictions which had been imposed on two previous successive occasions.

RECREATION.

Bhojudih station has an Indian population of more than 1000 souls but

unfortunately for themselves, there is not a place of recreation or amusement for the people. The residents are now in hopeful mood in having Mr. Faruque as the President of the Bengalee Club and hope with his sincere co-operation and assistance in the matter, a general improvement will soon be achieved.

In closing my report I offer my thanks on behalf of the branch to all patrons and well-wishers for the help rendered to up lift the cause of the Union and hope for the future that all will volunteer their services to the union and vindicate their rights.

BHOJUDIAH BRANCH.

Annual Statement of Accounts for the year 1925-26.

RECEIPTS.		EXPENDITURE.	
	Rs. As. Ps.		Rs. As. Ps.
To subscriptions collected	187-15-9	By Postage Stamps	4-4-0
To subscription for Indian Labour Union Journal for 1925 collected from Traffic Inspector, Bhojudih	2-4-0	By Printing Stationary	8-9-0
		By Meeting expenses	4-8-6
		By Imprest	5-0-0
		By Organisation	3-15-0
		By Remittance to central	68-0-0
		By Expenses incurred on attending Central Council meeting at Khargpur and Death Benefit Fund meetings at G. R. C. and B. S. P.	25-15-3
		By Remittance to Central Secretary Central Committee Khargpur on account of I L U. Journal collected from T. I., B. P. R.	2-4-0
Grand Total	190-3-9	Total	122-7-9
		Cash on hand	67-12-0
		Grand Total	190-3-9

Audited and Found Correct.

(Sd) M L BENERJEE,
Hony. Auditor.
27-3-26

(Sd) N. MUDI,
Hony. Treasurer.

(Sd) A. K. BHABANI,
Hony. Secretary.

FROM CHEMIST BOY TO CABINET M. P.

LIFE STORY OF MR. J. H. THOMAS.

Peculiar interest attaches to the career of Mr. J. H. Thomas who rose to the Privy Council and the Cabinet out of the very humblest beginnings. Recalling his early days he writes as follows in "Tit-Bits":—

The very earliest days of my youth were of that exceedingly dull nature so common to the lives of the poor. But this was through no fault of my dear old grandmother. I can see her now as I saw her then, busy at the washtub from morning till night, yet a confirmed Tory of the old school. She was all too familiar with the hard labour of life, and all too little acquainted with either leisure or pleasure. If there is one thing of which I am more proud than another concerning my own success, it is the fact that I was able to do something for her while she was still alive. She lived to see me a member of Parliament and she died in 1913 surrounded by greater comfort than she had ever known before.

MY GRANDMOTHER

It was when I was nine that life began in deadly earnest. At this age I decided that I was big enough and strong enough to help my grandmother to keep me and a roof over our heads and one day I went home proudly to announce that I had obtained a job with a chemist in the town. His name was Phillips.

After that I was up at 6-30 every morning except Sundays, and by 7 o'clock I was at work. I swept out the shop, cleaned the windows, polished the brasses, carried physic till a minute or two before nine, when I scurried off to school. I spent the dinner time at the shop, where I had a hasty meal followed by hard work till afternoon school began and after school hours were over for the day I returned to my master and toiled for him till eight or nine o'clock at night. On Saturdays there was no school, so I worked all day for the chemist—and at midnight trudged with four shillings in my pocket as the price of my hire.

I had very little time for play, but I made the most of such moments as were legitimately free; and one of my bitterest experiences was the fact that I could not join a Whit Monday Sunday-school treat—after weeks and weeks of joyous anticipation—because I didn't possess a suitable Sunday suit. I think my grandmother was almost upset as I was about it, and I know that I shall never forget that Whit Monday. In later years, when my wife and I were living in Cardiff, we organised a Whitsun treat for children liable to suffer as I had suffered. We started with the aid of friends by sending four hundred urchins on a jolly outing and before we left Cardiff we were present at one of these treats in which not a few

hundred but several thousand children took part—many of them in ragged garments and bare feet.

Of these childish days I seem to remember mainly the tiredness I felt on all of them. The school master's name was Vernon, and the boys called him "Fatty Vernon" because he must have weighed close upon twenty stone. Sunday school was held in the same premises as the day school, and attendance at Sunday school was obligatory. The presence of the ponderous Vernon at Sunday school (he lived on the premises) was not entirely appreciated by us; but the vicar, who always attended, was a very kindly old fellow indeed.

AMBITION TO BE DRIVER

There were no public swimming both in Newport, but I learned to swim among the rafts and floating timber of the dock—a form of recreation frequently interrupted by a policeman followed by a dash for safety usually in a state of nature with one's clothes in one's hands. But we boys had another bathing place at Alteryn Lock a spot known as "Little Switzerland"—which formed our summer rendezvous. And here I tried to learn to drive, but was discouraged for ever more by "fetching bottom" one day when taking a header into the canal.

I left school at the age of twelve, but the precious hours which I had devoted to learning were so little appreciated by the

chemist that he paid me only an extra two shillings a week for their inclusion in the day's work. Eventually, therefore I deserted chemistry for drapery though I remained an errand boy. But the drapery trade in its turn proved unprofitable, so I got a job with a house decorator, and learned to mix paint for the painters and to prepare paste for the paper hangers.

I left this job to find employment in the Alexandra Docks shops, not because I specially wanted to work in these shops, but because I wanted more money, and it interests me to realise that but for my sojourn there I might never have worked on the railway or achieved such success as I have achieved. For it was from the windows of those shops that I used to see the lordly Great Western engines passing and repassing over the lines day in and day out till they came to fascinate me. I began to envy the drivers and it was not long before I wanted above all things to become a driver myself.

Now one does not become an engine driver in a day, and the driver of the fastest engine the kingdom must begin his career modestly (and durtilly) as an engine cleaner. In course of time he becomes a fireman, spends a lengthy novitiate on a goods train and so progresses slowly to the coveted goal. Incidentally, a cleaner's job is the dirtiest job on the line. But the knowledge of all these facts failed to deter me. I was determined to become a driver. So I applied at the locomotive department of the Great Western Railway at Newport

and after passing a searching examination, which seemed rather needless, I was permitted to become a 'call boy'.

I remained a call boy for twelve months and it was not a specially attractive occupation in itself. Night after night I spent the smallest and darkest hours in wandering from house to house, arousing drivers firemen and guards who were due out with their engines and trains at various hours. All night and on into daylight I went about my task, whistling as I went to keep up my courage; for I was only a little fellow, and the dark is full of mystery—especially for a boy with any imagination.

When I became a full-blown engine cleaner, I took a genuine pride in my work like the rest of the cleaners in the sheds. It was not for nothing that I had cleaned the brasses in the chemist's shop; I knew something about cleaning. And in those days the "motions" of engines were kept so spotless that a linen handkerchief could have been passed over them and remain untarnished. At this period I sought to increase my education by studying at night when I was on day duty and by day, when I was on night turn.

MY FIRST STRIKE.

At the age of fifteen I organised my first strike. The officials of the company reduced our daily allowance of tallow from three ounces to two—and two ounces were not enough for the satisfactory performance of our job. We won our fight, the missing ounce was restored and obtained a

striking lesson in the power of combined action!

It was not till I was eighteen that I became a fireman and then I was sent to Barnstaple in North Devon, where I had to pay for my Board and lodgings out of my wages of 18s a week, as well as send money to my grandmother in Newport. Consequently I was not sorry to get back to my native town where I soon became a member of the Amalgamated Society of Railway servants, now merged in the National Union of Railwaymen.

I had no knowledge of public speaking but this did not trouble me in the least. I simply said what I had to say at the meetings. And gradually I came to take an active part in all sorts of delegations and deputations.

MARRIED.

In 1898 at the age of twenty-three I became a delegate to the annual meeting of the A. S. R. S. at Leeds—and a married man. My bride was a working girl in Newport and an orphan. We had been schoolmates as children, and we had always been the greatest of chums. We still are the greatest of chums. My wife has been a constant source of encouragement to my labours, and my wisest counsel for. She attended my first Congress with me and she has attended almost every Congress since.

She has been wonderful. Even in the days when I was getting twenty-four

shillings a week and we were living in two rooms with a young family she never complained of my absences from home on the business of the Society but she would deny even my dearest friends the right to disturb me when she considered that I was in need of sleep.

As a first class fireman I was moved from Newport to Swindon, and there in course of time I became an engine driver. Also, three years after my arrival in the town, I became a local councillor and Chairman of the Finance Committee. The Great Western Railway Company offered me an official position at double the salary I was getting; but I refused it because I preferred to stick to the workers.

I lived and worked for the Great Western Railway and for Trade Unionism in Swindon for some years; and I left the town at the age of 29 to take charge of the Manchester district as organiser for the

A. S. R. S. That of course, was the end of my career on the line, and strictly speaking it was more than the end of the days of my youth.

How subsequently I went to Cardiff and after embarking upon a Parliamentary campaign in that city was invited to stand for Derby is quite another story which like the story of the effects of the Great War upon Labour problems and the story of present day conditions both industrial and political, have no place in these memoirs. But you may be sure that the small boy in Newport never, in his most imaginative moments, foresaw the advent of a Labour Government during his own lifetime, let alone the honour's which his fellow workers have so generously bestowed upon him. The moral of the story of my early days seems to be completely summed up in the ancient Latin tag: "Labour conquers all things". But even this moral is capable of more than one interpretation!

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The Union's Ten Commandments.

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- 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 the days that have not yet dawned then he has not opened his eyes to a true conception of human life.

—President Wilson

Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian Labour Union.

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Printed and Published for the Union by V. V. Giri at the I. L. P. Press, Berhampur. (Ganjam)