

Indian Labor
Fund.

III

12

September, 1926

32
X: 9m2, 523
N26.3.12
193661

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.

Vol. III

September 1926.

No. 12

“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.*

re for
bc

re, realise that you should give preference to Labour Journals,
ur views, fight for your cause and exist to vindicate your rights.

the Indian Labour Journal which wants more readers,

BUSINESS NOTICE.

—:o:—

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.

—:o:—

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.

—:o:—

The attention of the subscribers is drawn to the fact that their subscriptions expire with the September 1925 number. The Indian Labour Journal commences its third year from October 1925. Present as well as all other intending subscribers are therefore requested to send by money order Rs. 2 as subscription for the year ended September 1926 to the General Secretary B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union, Khargpur. Present subscribers wishing to discontinue the Journal should at once intimate the 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.

September 1926.

The B. N. Ry. Penal System

ONE of the most difficult problems engaging the serious attention of the B. N. Ry. Indian Labour Union is to obtain justice for the innumerable employees who are punished unheard and unjustly. Until the Railway Administration becomes fully alive to the fact that the employees should be given proper facilities to prove their innocence before they are punished for any fault, the serious cases of arbitrary dismissal, suspension, reduction in pay grade or both, fines and etc. that are being daily complained of by the employees, would prove a fertile cause for a very serious discontentment, bittering the happy relations between the employer and the employee thereby getting at the very roots of the efficiency of the Railway administration.

Therefore it is of utmost importance to see that in the interests of justice no right cause for discontentment exists among the employees with regard to the system adopted in dealing out punishments.

In this connection we cannot do better than quote the following extract from the news letter of the International Transport Workers Federation revealing to us the system prevailing in the Railways of Czechoslovakia in this respect.

"Penalties vary according to the degree of the offence. A breach of duty ranks as a disciplinary offence; if however it merely arises from negligence and relates to duties of minor importance, it is classified as a Lapse.

"Disciplinary offences are classified as major or minor according to the reasons for their commission and the nature of the duty they violate.

"An employee guilty of Lapse is reprimanded by the chief of his department or his immediate superior. In case of recurrence he is simply fined. Such fines may not exceed 10 crowns.

"Minor disciplinary offences are punishable by written reprimand or a fine not exceeding 40 Crowns. Major disciplinary offences incur the following liabilities.

- (a) Fine not exceeding 4% of the annual salary without loss of seniority;
- (b) Reprimand;
- (c) Fine not exceeding 4% of annual salary;
- (d) ~~Transfer~~ with or without change of grade or rank;
- (e) Reduction of salary not exceeding 2 steps;
- (f) Placing on retired list with reduced pension (In the case of men with 20 years service or more the reduction may not exceed 25%);
- (g) Dismissal.

Punishments b, c, d, & e involve loss of one year's seniority.

"Men accused have the right to defend themselves. They are judged not from the purely legal stand point, the nature of their occupation and circumstances being taken into consideration. Appeal is possible except in the case of fines, for Lapses. Written notification of the penalty inflicted, giving the reason for its infliction, the nature of the offence and the particular rule broken, is handed to the employee concerned. This document must be accompanied with a description of the procedure for appeal. The proceeds of fines, for minor disciplinary offences are paid into the pension fund. Sentences of the disciplinary tribunal are subject to confirmation by the minister for railways who may diminish the penalty.

"In the case of the decisions of the disciplinary chambers the faculty of reducing the penalty lies with the Directors of the State Railways.

"It should be noted that disciplinary action is based on modern principles of Penal Law. The accused has the right to have some body to act as advocate both in the first and second instance, and conditional penalties are permitted the application being deferred for not less than two or more than five years".

From a perusal of the above extract it will be noticed that the B. N. Ry. has (see the 2)th page)

Side-lights regarding Administration of the Electrical Branch of the B. N. Ry.

TRAIN LIGHTING IN DARK.

The Train Lighting Section of the Electrical Branch of the B. N. Ry., though is of recent origin and development yet it cannot claim the fore-sight and thoroughness which are the fruits of experience and which are with great advantage employed in modern organisations.

The main depot for this section is situated at Santragachi which is the greatest coaching centre for the B. N. Ry. This depot no doubt has been steadily developing but not with the attention it deserves. The facilities afforded for working are by no means adequate when compared with the standard and results expected by the Electrical Superintendent.

Though a Foreman has been sanctioned for the depot yet only Charge-Hands have been so far placed in charge of the section at Santragachi. The following men were tried in the place but almost all of them were condemned on some ground or other.

- Mr. Uption—Left on his own accord.
- Mr. Goboli—Replaced by a better paid man.
- Mr. D'souza—Transferred due to bad management.
- Mr. Hinton—Transferred to shops for unsatisfactory work and complaints.

Mr. Baston—Served with notice for bad work.

Mr. Paul—Reduced from Operator Inspector.

Mr. Martin—Increment stopped and promotion to 1st grade Charge-Hand denied.

Mr. Kalappa—Transferred for bad supervision.

Mr. Sharling—Promotion to Asst. Foreman over looked for want of control over his staff.

Mr. Mannual—Transferred from the Train lighting section in Shops to another Section for bad management.

It may be remarked here that at one time or other every one of these men was considered to be useful and suitable man. Some of them were given rapid lifts by way of increments and promotions. Yet within a short period after such encouragements they are condemned all on a sudden. Something must be wrong somewhere.

ROLLING LIKE A FOOT-BALL

The officers of the Train Lighting Section have been Changing too frequently that improvements conceived by a certain officer could not be given effect to before the section was transferred from his hands. The same difficulty stands in understanding and

shuffling the coaches, i.e. all discharged coaches were put on fast trains, whether or not they agreed with the type of coaches on the rakes, with the help of the Traffic.

SLOWLY PREJUDICED.

While the work was thus being managed Mr. Walton, Electrical Superintendent, after his return from leave was some how getting slowly prejudiced against the staff of the Train Lighting Section. His prejudice began on finding insufficient quantity of grease in the bearings of dynamos sent for repair to shops.

The second point was that a R. T. 5 section was found in a R. T. 9 cell box.

The third irregularity was that one or two Turbo's, bearings were found dry.

The fourth irregularity noticed was that a Kent coupling was short and did not make contact, in the opinion of the Electrical Superintendent.

NOT A SINGLE INSPECTION.

In spite of getting prejudiced the Electrical Superintendent found no time to pay even a single visit to Santragachi, and see things personally and go into the various circumstances.

OFFICE ORDER.

On one fine morning with a single stroke of his pen he dismissed three

operators and one fitter and transferred the Carriage Lighting Inspector with a severe censure.

We reserve our comments on this Office Order as the cases are under representation.

OTHER ASPECTS

But let us go into all other aspects of the question. As already contended by us almost all the Train Lighting officials enumerated by us were punished on the reports or findings of petty officials sent out to Santragachi, either for supervision or in charge of the depot. Every subordinate official when he was given some indulgence by superior officers to inspect the depot, or report, lost his head and conscience and tried to carve a higher position for himself, by exaggerated or false reports. Partly it being the policy of the administration to rely and place confidence in such officials the reports were taken as gospel truth and the concerned men were punished. The victims only worsened their cases if they appealed or protested. It will only be a cry in wilderness. This is not to insinuate that the administration has been callously indifferent. Perhaps a good administration requires some stiffness; and the Electrical Branch over carried the maxim.

We indeed respect and admire Mr. Walton's strictness and anxiety to maintain a high standard of working.

But we only wish that he endeavoured to appreciate the victims point of view before finding fault with any work and consider for a moment what he himself would have done, if he were placed in their positions under similar circumstances. Having the experience of this country he should not place so much reliance on petty officials. Above all he should not lose sight of justice which warrants patient investigation and consideration. It must be a matter of pride for him that unlike other branches, he has comparatively greater number of educated and trained men working under him. The remuneration paid to these men on average is by no means enviable; nor even commensurate with their status compared with those of other departments. The only attraction for service therefore, would be fair treatment and ensured justice. Even if these are denied, naturally good men will be repelled and the efficiency lowered.

Now, turning to the Question of some irregularities noticed in Train Lighting Section, we understand that at Santragachi When sections of cells are out of stock and when damages occur to cells and sections, smaller sections were used in larger cell boxes to meet the emergency. But unfortunately Mr. Sharling who was aware of this practice was not bold enough to explain this and admit the practice under the said circumstances.

It is true that one or two bearings were dry but what is it, when compared with the number of Generators in service. Further it is not at all a safe criterion to judge the work of the whole train lighting section from the condition of the machines sent to shops. It is rather idealistic. The worst part of it is to dismiss the men for a stray case of dry bearing. Are train Examiners and Locomotive Drivers dismissed for every hot axle case? Why then should the staff of the Electrical Branch alone be treated so severely in spite of their working under most trying and adverse circumstances?

As for the short Kent Coupling personally seen by the Electrical Superintendent, it is very unfortunate that the personality of the Superintendent defied truth. The coupling was short, being reduced in size during repair, which had to be done as there was no cable wire in stock. But the coupling did make contact, and it was tested both by Operator Naik and the Electrical Foreman Sharling who passed it. The test was carried through Magnet switches. And the coach was on run with that coupling for about two trips between Madras and Howrah and if it was too short it should have snapped off at some sharp curve in the course of such a long run. So it was not even a case of want of sufficient play. Here again Mr. Sharling had no courage to explain these facts to Mr. Walton who would have certainly appreciated it.

CONCLUSION.

We ventured to discuss about the Train Lighting Section at some length to convey to the Electrical Superintendent the aforesaid facts which his staff hesitate to represent under some imaginary fear or other. We understand Mr. Walton better. His interest in the Branch especially in Train Lighting Section is unquestionable. If our information is correct, he is said

to have contributed much for the improvement of Train lighting and some of the patents of Messrs J. Stone & Co. are laid to his credit. Evincing such interest he cannot fail to redress the grievances of his employees if they are only represented.

After going to the Press we understand that Mr. Tilson has returned from Argada & taken charge of the Bilaspur District.

LABOUR CONFERENCE AT GENEVA.

Lalaji's Bold Stand for Labour.

The following speech was delivered by Lala Lajpat Rai at the 8th Session of the International Labour Conference of the League of Nations at Geneva where he had gone to represent the case of Indian labour.

Lalaji said:—The point I would like to emphasise is the importance which in my judgement, the international Labour Office should attach to investigating conditions of labour in the Orient and in the coloured world of Africa and America. As matters at present stand it is unfortunate that about one thousand millions, or even more members of the human race, should be represented at this Conference by less than a dozen people. I mean the two delegates from India and the delegates of Japan. We all know that the population of Asia and Africa far

exceeds that of Europe, and I wonder if the white workers of Europe and America properly realise the significance of the problem which faces them. After a hard struggle, extending over several years, they have secured certain privileges in the conditions of their labour from their employers and from their Governments and unless they take care to improve the conditions of labour in Asia and Africa I am afraid that the privileges they have secured and the advantages they have gained may be lost altogether, by their employers transferring their activities to Asia and Africa and taking advantage of the conditions of labour that prevail in those countries.

Governments Hostility

The Governments are not, of course, very enthusiastic about legislation to

improve the conditions of labour, because you know that the Govts. have a particular knack of being adverse to changes—changes, particularly, which take away a certain part of their authority and power of their chief clients, the capitalists or employers. Therefore sometimes the Governments are in the habit of opposing legislation to improve labour conditions by the hackneyed phrase or plea of backward conditions and a backward educational situation. No doubt sometimes special circumstances and special industries do require consideration; but the consideration of humanity and the considerations of the welfare of the workers must supersede the considerations of power which may be gained by injustice. We therefore require the full sympathy and the full co-operation of the workers of the West in the struggle that we have to carry on in the East, to improve conditions of labour in Eastern countries.

Rouse public opinion exert moral pressure

We are attempting in this Conference to create an international atmosphere, bringing facts to light, and letting the moral conscience of the world bring about what moral pressure it can on those countries where the conditions of labour are neither good nor desirable nor proper. The object of this conference is to bring together, in a friendly spirit the peoples of the world and the representatives of the different

countries and different peoples on this platform, so that they can exchange their thoughts in private and in public and thereby create a public opinion which will afterwards have its effect upon the peoples throughout the different parts of the world. That is all we are meeting here to do and let there be no misunderstanding about it. If there is anyone who wants to point out the particular facts and conditions which exist in a particular country, it is not from any desire on his part to discredit the Government or the State to which he is referring, but it is simply done to illustrate what he means; he is simply pointing out the difficulties in which he or his nation is placed. It is necessary that international public opinion should know what is going on in those countries. The conditions of labour in certain parts of the British Empire, for instance in Fiji, in Kenya and in South Africa, require publicity. I bring no accusation against them. All I am aiming at, at present is that the international Labour Office should collect all the information that is possible to collect with regard to the conditions of labour in those countries and that it should place that information in its reports, so that the rest of the world may know what the conditions of labour in those countries are.

South African bills against Natives and Asiatics.

We have lately heard of certain

Bills having been introduced into the Parliament of South Africa. One of these bills affects Asiatics and another affects both the native population of South Africa and the Asiatics. Now I do not want to say at this stage a word about those Bills or that legislation because at the moment there are certain negotiations going on between Govts. of India and the Government of the Union of South Africa and there is a hope of a satisfactory settlement of the Indian question being reached. For that reason I do not want to say a word which might in any way embarrass those Governments or those who are negotiating. But so far as the Colour Bill is concerned there are different reports about it. The other day I read in the "Daily Mail" that about 5½ million people, natives of that country, had been debarred from joining certain industries and from becoming skilled artisans. That article was published in last Saturday's edition of the "Daily Mail," and I do not want to do anything further than to call your attention to the facts which are therein set out. I have not made a study of the Bill and I take no responsibility for those statements. All I do say is that the conditions require investigation, and that is all that I am asking the International Labour Office to do.

Conditions in India

Now coming to the conditions in India which I know more intimately, I want

to inform all those present here that we in India are not proceeding with the improvement of the conditions of labour, or with legislation to that end, with that rapidity which we should like the Government of India to adopt. But we are determined that the Govt. of India should adopt a greater speed, and we will do all that is in our power to force the Government of India to legislate in such a way as to improve the conditions of labour in India more rapidly than it is doing at present. In that connection we might say that so far as the competition between India and Japan is concerned the labour people find themselves in a great difficulty on account of Japan's failure to ratify the Washington Convention of 1919 because the champions of labour improvement cannot put forward their claims so forcibly as they could otherwise do, in face of the fact that the most progressive Asiatic Nation still sticks to old conditions. I would appeal to Japan, not so much in the interests of its industries, (because it has every right to look after its industries, but more for humanity.

Save the Mother. Appeal to Japan

A very large number of people in India put forward the interests of women and the mothers of the race on a higher level than the interests of industries. Future generations in India and Japan and in every other country

are dependent upon the mothers, and if we force the mothers to work at night or to work underground, we are certainly not improving the future prospects of the race. Therefore in India we are trying to prohibit women and children working underground at all. As you were told yesterday, the Government has already prevented women and children working at night, but we propose to go a step further and to put an absolute stop to the working of women and children underground. I think that will be a great step forward; but we shall be greatly handicapped in taking that step unless Japan takes a similar step in her own country, and they can speak for themselves. But there is one more ground upon which I want to base my appeal to Japan. After all, what is done in India more or less goes to the credit of the British Government. India is not a self-governing country, & the Indian Executive Government is not responsible to Indian legislature. Therefore the credit of labour legislation belongs to the British people and the British Government. Japan is the only progressive Asiatic country in the Orient which can vindicate the honour of the East and the Orient. I appeal to Japan not to lag behind other countries in this respect and to show that in their desire to make money out of their industries, they have not forgotten their own ideals.

Forced labour in India.

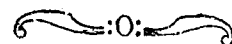
Having disposed of that, I just want to say a few words about the conditions of forced labour in India. We are not prepared to conceal the skeleton in our own cupboard. India is divided into two parts British India and native, comprised in what are known as the Native States which are governed by native rulers. Now conditions of forced labour exist in both parts, in British India as well as in Native India. Of course, they are not universal. In British India they have no legal sanction behind them except for certain purpose or on certain occasions, but there is a trend of pseudo legal sanction behind them, and sometimes Government officials take shelter behind them and sometimes Govt. officials take shelter behind what is known as customary sanction. I should be unfair to the British Government if I omitted to say that certain provincial Governments have tried to abolish the custom altogether by certain orders; but those orders have not been obeyed in some cases and for very good reasons. The practice is very useful and handy for officials. Therefore I cannot accept the plea that the Government cannot force their hands and make them comply with its rules. If it can enforce its other laws, orders and regulations, it can certainly enforce these also if it is enthusiastic about it and I hope it will do so.

because public opinion is expressing itself very forcibly.

With regards to the conditions of forced labour in Native India governed by native rulers, I may say that there also it is not universal, although it prevails to a greater extent and over a larger area. The obligations of the Government of India are not so well defined as in their own territory; but there are certain ways in which the Government of India and also the League of Nations can bring pressure to bear upon the native rulers of India to abolish forced labour, which is after all only a form of slavery. Every year representative of the native rulers of India comes here to attend the meeting of the League of Nations and I think that just a hit from the officials of the League of Nations would suffice to point out to him that he should take the first step to prevail

upon his fellow Princes to abolish this kind of labour in their territories.

I do not want to take up any more of your time, but I just want to say one word in conclusion. The workers of the East look to you for co-operation and sympathy. They offer to you their friendship and cooperation and sympathy. It is for you to accept their offer in the spirit in which it is made; but I also wish to say that, if you leave entirely neglected the interests of the coloured populations of India and Africa, you are creating a situation, the eventual consequences of which I shudder to think of. You must carry the whole world with you, as far as it is possible to do so, and not leave any part of it or conditions of labour anywhere unregulated and unlooked after. That is my last word to you, and I say it in all friendliness and goodwill and sympathy.



RAILWAY LABOUR IN INDIA BY H. W. LEE.

The article we print below is borrowed from the Railway Review the Journal of the British National Union of Railwaymen. We have already (in the News letter for January 1925) dealt in some detail with the wages paid to Railwaymen in British India.

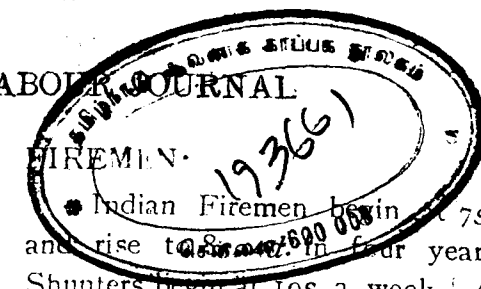
There are some 37,000 miles of railways in India. Of this mileage about 20,000 miles are those of State owned railways, half of which are worked by State managements and half by Company management. The tendency in India is towards State management, as well as State ownership, and this tendency is increasing as self-government slowly extends. The East Indian Railways passed from

Company to State management in 1924 and the Great Indian Peninsula followed suit last year.

The conditions of the service for the service for the mass of employees on the Indian railways, however, leave much to be desired. Let us take wages. Wages in India are generally paid monthly in the majority of industries and that custom obtains universally on the railways. For the purposes of easier comparison we will give there equivalents in weekly rates and British currency.

STATION MASTERS.

Railway wages are usually based on scale pay, that is every employee in each department has a maximum pay for the grade in which he is working. After reaching the maximum pay in that particular grade he has often to wait indefinitely for promotion to a higher grade. An Assistant Station Master for instance, put in charges of a small station will begin at 10s 4d. a week. If within five years he passes the necessary examinations he will rise to a higher grade at 17s 4d. a week with a maximum of 26s 4d. Having reached that position he may remain there for ten years or more when he will become Station Master at that grade, though here and there some may rise to the "C" class of Station Masters with a salary equal to 59s. a week. On the Bengal Nagpur Railway which is State owned but company managed, the scales of pay appear to be slightly higher than those given.



Indian Firemen begin at 7s. a week and rise to 8s. 6d. in four years. Asst. Shunters begin at 10s. a week. A station porter has constantly to be in attendance at his station doing all kinds of work day and night and his pay ranges from 3s 8d. to 5s. 3d. a week. He does not, of course work the whole 24 hours round, but his working day is often long and irregular. Station coolies (labourers) receive from 5s. 3d. to 6s. a week.

SHOPMEN.

Rates of pay in workshops vary with different districts on the East Indian Railway, for instance the rates at Mizapur range from 6s. to 14s. a week. While at Cawnpore and Delhi they average 9s. and 10s. and for unskilled labour 3s. 1d., 3s. 8d., and 5s. 4d. a week in respective towns. In the North Western workshops at Lahore fitters receive 24 s., carpenters 14s. and unskilled labourers 6 s. a week, Head Fitters may rise to 45 s. a week. In the workshops of the Madras & Southern Maharatta Railway the labour employed is divided in ten grades. The seven lower grades are filled by Indian Labour, and the pay ranges from 4 s. a week for coolie labour to 23 s. 6 d. a week for skilled labour.

These wages will appear frightfully low to the British railway employee. They are low, there is no doubt whatever about that. But they are not so low as they

appear in comparison with what the figures given would signify in this country. If they were, not even Indians could live upon them. A computation made by the Bombay Labour Office some three years ago put the very lowest figure at which an Indian labourer's average family could exist at 10s. a week and that represents a standard of living in regard to food, housing, and general condition that would be considered downright poverty in Western Europe. It is therefore clear that there are at least some few thousands of railway workers in India who are existing below the Indian poverty line.

HIGHER GRADES.

The wages of some classes of Railway labour in India have been reserved for purposes of comparison in regard to something that is causing grave dissatisfaction among Indian Railway employees a dissatisfaction that is growing and extending as the knowledge of it becomes more wide spread that something is the reservation of certain of the higher grades in railway service for Europeans and Anglo-Indians (Eurasians) and the exclusion from those grades of all Indian employees. The official view is that these higher grades cannot be staffed by Indians. Their want of general education and technical knowledge renders it impossible. That is certainly true today. Unfortunately, Primary education in India, under British rule has been so grossly neglected on grounds of "economy" that we can take credit to ourselves that the

millions of Indian people under our domination are among the most illiterate, if not the most illiterate, in the world. Education is improving, but very slowly.

The official view that the higher grades of the Indian railway service cannot at present be efficiently staffed by Indians being correct, why be so stupid as to make what is a question of efficiency one of racial discrimination and that discrimination against the natives of the territory we rule? Why not at least allow those Indians who are efficient and capable to enter the higher grades? And why, also, in those grades open to Indians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans alike, keep the wages and salaries of Indians at about one-fourth of what is paid to Anglo-Indians and Europeans for the same or similar work or service?

ENGINE DRIVERS.

A few examples of this "preferential treatment" for Anglo-Indians and Europeans will serve to expose this flagrant injustice. Engine drivers, are divided, generally into two classes, fast passenger and mail express drivers being a class unto themselves. On the Bengal Nagpur Railway Indian drivers of the second class begin at 14 s. 6 d. a week and rise to 20 s. in five years. Indian drivers of first class begin at 22 s. 6 d. a week and rise to 30 s. in five years. But European and Anglo-Indian drivers of the second class begin at 57 s. a week and rise to 73 s. in four

years, while the European and Anglo-Indian drivers receive 97 s. Indians are excluded from driving Express, & Mail trains, and their European & Anglo-Indian drivers are paid at the rate of five guineas a week. That salary means a social status in India.

The Bengal Nagpur Railway makes a similar discrimination between Indians and Anglo-Indians and Europeans in respect of its Station Masters. The Railway has six grades of Assistant Station Masters, the three lowest being Indians. The next highest is composed mostly of Europeans and Anglo-Indians, while the two highest are filled exclusively by them. In these two classes the pay begins at 62 s. 6 d. a week and rises to 86 s. 9 d. and at 79 s. 6 d. and rises to 110 s. 9 d. The highest pay to which an Indian Assistant Station Master can hope to rise is about 40 s. a week.

SALARIES.

There are eight grades of Station Masters on the Bengal Nagpur Railway. Indians are permitted in the five lowest grades, but the three upper grades are reserved for Europeans and Anglo-Indians. Salaries in the three lowest grades are from 18 s. to 28 s., 20 s. 9 d. to 34 s. 6 d. and 29 s. 6 d. to 41 s. 6 d. An Indian Station Master usually takes eight years to go through these grades. Salaries for the next two grades are from 34 s. to 55 s. 6 d. and from 43 s. 6 d. to 69 s. 3 d.

per week. The salaries of the three highest grades from which Indians are excluded are 79 s. 6 d. to 110 s. 9 d., 104 s. to 121 s. and 114 s. to 138 s. 6 d. a week. The highest posts are those of station Superintendents and Chief Station Masters, and salaries would work out at from 138 s. 6 d. to 175 s. a week.

That this racial discrimination is not confined to the Bengal Nagpur Railway is clear from the fact, it exists also on other railways.

TWENTY FIVE UNIONS

As I have said, the Indian people are among the most illiterate people in the world. But Indian Railway Workers on the whole are not in the lowest depths of illiteracy. Probably that is why the Indian Railway Workers are better organized than most other groups of workers though very far off the 100 percent figure indeed. There are about 100,000 of them organized in 25 Trade Unions and they account for about two-fifths of the membership of Indian Trade Unions. There is an All-Indian Railways Union Federation at Calcutta of which Mr. Mukundalal Sircar is the Secretary. Not all the Unions, however, are affiliated to the Federation. The vast distances between important railway centres and workshops render the work of Central organisation exceedingly difficult, and what is of great and grave importance to Indian Trade Unionism costly.

we discussed two points in particular. I won't go into any particular detail about them now because I have told Mr. Giri that whatever I said to him there, he can tell you about, but the result of the whole thing was that having discussed both sides of the question we have come to (I will call it) a perfect understanding. I now know exactly what Mr. Giri and the members of the Council want, and I have told Mr. Giri exactly what I think of the questions at issue; so now all of us know about it. Mr. Giri will tell you about them, and I am perfectly prepared to accept his versions of both.

"The result of one of them will be that it would bring the officers of the B. N. Railway-the Loco Department at any rate-into a considerably closer contact with the Labour Union affairs, and I think that will be to the mutual benefit. My main reason for doing so is because I think a great deal can be settled between District Officers and Works Managers direct with the Labour Union because the things can be settled and there is no occasion to refer the matter any further than the officers directly concerned.

"I really do not think I can say anything else except to assure you that Mr. Giri said is quite correct and that is that I am out to help the Labour Union as long as it is constitutional, and I hope every assistance will be

given me by the Labour Union to enable me to get everything that is possible; and from my experience of the Labour Union ever since it was started I have no doubt but that such would be the case. It is more or less a question of each of us getting to know the other's point of view and then to work out. I do not think there is anything more I can say."

After the Chief Mechanical Engineer had concluded his speech which was listened to with rapt attention, the President rose and said:-

"Gentlemen", on your behalf I beg to tender our heart-felt thanks to Mr. Bluett for having come over here after a discussion of practically 2½ hours in his office, and we are really very grateful to him for the act of sympathy which prompted him to come this afternoon after his hard labours and give out what he felt about the matters.

"The Vice President, Mr. Kashinath Muttu, and other members think that I should also state the gist of what has occurred about other matters. The other matter that was discussed was about the Station Committee the dis-entitlement of the members. Of course the member for the Ward thought he had a right to put before the Station Committee his view about the matter regarding the bustee. As you know

the Agent is the ultimate authority on matters relating to the Station Committee, and he has also the power of veto according to the rules which we have discussed at length. I, at any rate, found that the rules are not very cut and dry, and perhaps an alteration or revision of the rules would be necessary. After all, you are Railway Employees. You may be elected members of the Station Committee, and you may bring resolutions and speak on them, but the Administration thinks, as it is the case with the Councils, Legislative Assemblies or other Municipal Councils in other parts that whatever you have to put up in the form of resolutions, that those resolutions may be sent in advance to the President and if necessary, the President, if he feels any doubt as regards putting those resolutions before the Station Committee might have a discussion with the member that has proposed those resolutions. That is really a good idea, and I may assure you also that Mr. Bluett, as President of the Station Committee, would be very cordial to receive them. A member, whatever his duties and status may be is elected by a certain constituency and is entitled to give his views about any matter. Mr. Bluett, I am sure will never do things in an arbitrary fashion but after a good deal of discussion.

That is the gist of the discussion, and it is difficult to get it in correct detail.

"About the other matter I appealed to him to consider some of the cases in respect to the New Wagon Shop. Of course, he did not give any undertaking or anything of the kind, but he assured me he would go deeply into the matter and see if he could do anything in the matter.

"As regards the dismantling of the bustee, Mr. Venkatrailu appealed to him, if possible, to do anything, he would consider possible in deserving cases. Mr. Bluett said he would try to see what could be done.

"We are very thankful to Mr. Bluett for the kind consideration he has shown us".

"Mr. Bluett before rising to depart, said, I would only add to what Mr. Giri has said with regard to resolutions being put up for my approval before they are put before the Station Committee, and that is that if I should have to disallow any question before the Station Committee, I shall always explain exactly why giving the correct reasons for them, so that there won't be any misunderstanding".

At the request of the President Pandit Kashinath Muttu the Vice

President translated into Hindi the speeches of Mr. Bluett and the President for the information of non-english knowing members of the Committee and gave them brief details of what transpired at the interview that afternoon in respect of the speech delivered by Mr. P. Ramachandra Rao and the resolutions moved by him in the Station Committee on

dismantling of the bustee and the powers and responsibilities of the Station Committee members.

With a vote of thanks proposed by Mr. Giri and heartily seconded by all those present, the meeting was declared to have been closed.

P. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
GENERAL SECRETARY.

(2nd page cont.)
got much to learn and to reform with regard to its ways of dealing out punishments to the railway subordinate employees.

Many cases have occurred wherein employees have been served with month's notices discharging their services for no apparent reasons whatsoever and on appealing they have been curtly told that their services are no longer required and that due notice has been given as per the terms of agreement accepted on entering the service-

Were there a system something akin to the one obtaining in law courts where cases are heard impartially from the accused so as to determine whether an employee has been guilty of any dereliction of his duties and at the same time if the present penal clause in the terms of service agreement be so modified as not to render it easy for an employer to discharge a man from service without

any justifiable reason, there would be no room for many of the present irregularities, alarmingly observed, in punishing the employees for their alleged faults real and imaginary.

The Agent of the B. N. Ry. has been also approached to favourably consider the proposal of giving the employees charge sheets before they are punished for any offence and we hope that the administration will give full facilities to the employees to represent their case fully.

It is better late than never and we hope that the B.N Railway administration will take immediate steps to see that a uniform system consistent with principles of equity and justice is observed throughout whenever employees are about to be punished for their faults by giving them adequate opportunities to prove their innocence as done in Courts of Law.

193661