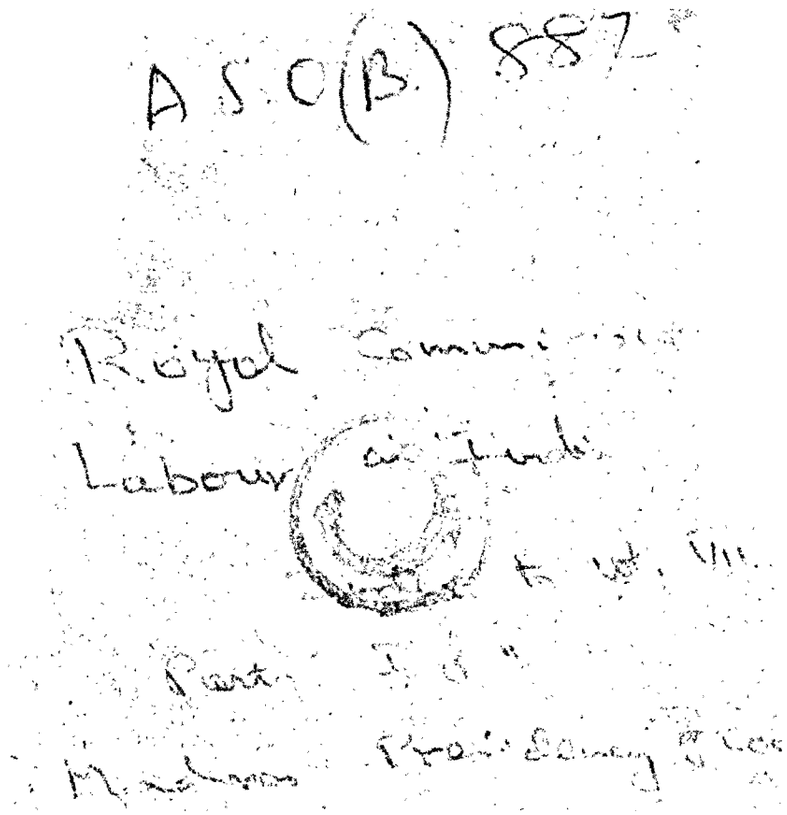
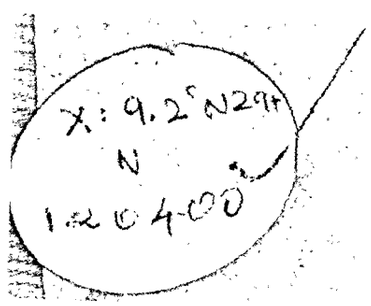

A.S.O(B) 587
Royal Commission
Labour
Part
Memorandum


X: 9.2°N29
N
1:20400

ROYAL COMMISSION
ON
LABOUR IN INDIA.

INDEX
TO
Volume VII., Parts I and II.

MADRAS PRESIDENCY AND COORG.

A 50 (B) 661

செப்பனிடுவதற்காக எடுத்துக்
கொள்ளப்பட்ட
மாதம் வருடம்
செப்பனிட்டு முடித்த
மாதம் வருடம்
ஆராய்ச்சி உதவியாளரின்
கையொப்பம்.

126400.

II Organisation.

(10) *Details of organisation, administrative and departmental.*

(11) *Selection of managing staff.*

(12) *Recruitment and training of supervising staff, superior and subordinate.*
- (i) Methods in force.
- (ii) Facilities for training and promotion of workmen.

(13) *Relations between staff and rank and file.*
- (i) Relations generally.
- (ii) Value and defects of system of employing jobbers.
- (iii) Works Committees: their constitution, extent and achievements.
- (iv) Works Councils and Industrial Councils.

(14) *Timekeeping, piecework, contract and attendance registers.*
- (i) How and by whom kept and checked.
- (ii) How and by whom wages actually paid to workers.

(15) *Contractors as intermediaries.*
- (i) Extent and character of work given on contract.
- (ii) Extent of sub-contracting.
- (iii) Control exercised over working conditions.
- (iv) Effects.

III. Housing.

(16) *Extent to which housing is provided.*
- (i) By employers.
- (ii) By Government or other public agency.
- (iii) By private landlords.
- (iv) By workers themselves.

(17) *Facilities for acquisition of land for workers' houses.*

(18) *Nature of accommodation provided in each class.*
- (i) In relation to workers' demands.
- (ii) In relation to best type from health point of view.
- (iii) Provision made for lighting, conservancy and water supply.

(19) *Utilisation by workers of accommodation available.*

(20) *Rent-rates in various classes.*

(21) *Special problems arising in connection with various classes of housing.*
e.g. Subletting;
Occupation of employers' houses by tenants in other employ;
Eviction.

(22) *Moral effect on worker of industrial housing conditions. Improvements tried and suggested.*

IV. Health.

(23) *General health conditions of workers.*
- (i) Figures of mortality.
- (ii) Birth rate and infant mortality.
Methods of registration.

(iii) Working conditions—
  (*a*) at work places;
  (*b*) at home.
(iv) Dietary.
(v) Physique.
(vi) Effects of disturbance of sex ratio in industrial cities.
(vii) Relation between housing and mortality.

(24) *Extent of medical facilities provided.*
(i) By employers.
(ii) By Government.
(iii) By other agencies.
(iv) Provision for women doctors, trained midwives or dais.

(25) *Extent to which medical facilities are utilised.*
(i) Generally.
(ii) By women.

(26) *Sanitary arrangements,* (a) *at work places,* (b) *at home.*
(i) Latrines.
(ii) Drinking water.
(iii) Bathing and washing.

(27) *Extent and nature of official supervision.*
(i) Work of Boards of Health in special areas.
(ii) Inspection of plantations.
(iii) In mill and other industrial areas.

(28) *Suitability of existing Factories and Mines Acts and Rules*
(i) Control of temperature in factories.
(ii) Control of humidification in cotton mills.
  (*a*) Nature of action taken by Local Governments.
  (*b*) Results.

(29) *Disease.*
(i) Prevalence of industrial diseases.
(ii) Prevalence of cholera, malaria, hookworm and other tropical diseases.

(30) *Sickness insurance.*
(i) Suitability of International Labour Convention.
(ii) Possibility of introducing other systems.
(iii) How to meet difficulties arising from non-acceptability of Western medicine, paucity of medical men, migration of labour, finance.

(31) *Maternity benefits.*
(i) Extent and working of existing schemes (including allowances given before and after childbirth).
(ii) History of central and provincial Bills.
(iii) Possibility of legislation.

12600

3

V. Welfare (other than **Health** and **Housing**, but including **Education**).

(32) *Extent of welfare work.*
(i) By employers.
(ii) By other agencies.
(33) *Employment of Welfare Officers and workers.*
(34) *Nature of other Welfare activities,* (a) *by employers* (b) *by other agencies.*
(i) Provision for refreshments, shelters and crèches.
(ii) Provision for physical culture, recreation and amusements.
(iii) Other activities.
(35) *Results achieved.*
(36) *Provision of educational facilities by employers—*
(i) For adult workers.
(ii) For half-time workers.
(iii) For workers' children.
(iv) Extent to which used.
(37) *Desirability and possibility of provision for old age and premature retirement.*
(38) *Co-operation.*
(39) *Possibility and desirability of a Statutory Miners' Welfare Fund.*

VI. Education.

(40) *Facilities for general education in industrial areas.*
(i) Of children not in employment.
(ii) Of children employed in factories.
(iii) Of adults.
(41) *Facilities for industrial and vocational training.*
(42) *Effect of education on standard of living and industrial efficiency of workers.*

VII. Safety.

(43) *Existing regulations in factories, mines, railways and docks.*
(44) *Incidence of accidents in factories, mines, railways and docks.*
(45) *Causes.*
(46) *Accident prevention* (including "Safety First" propaganda).
(47) *Accidents in non-regulated establishments.*
(48) *First-aid and medical relief.*
(49) *Stringency of inspection and enforcement of regulations.*
(i) In industry generally.
(ii) In seasonal industries.
(50) *Effect upon safety of hours, health, light and working conditions generally.*

VIII. Workmen's Compensation.

(51) *Workmen's Compensation Act.*
(i) Extent of use.
(ii) Comparison with extent of possible claims.

(iii) Effects on industry.
(iv) Availability and use of insurance facilities and value from workers' point of view.
(v) Desirability of compulsory insurance by employers.

(52) *Desirability of extending Act to other occupations.*
Possibility of providing against insolvency of employers who might be so covered.

(53) *Suitability of provisions relating to—*
(i) Scales of compensation.
(ii) Conditions governing grant of compensation.
(iii) Industrial diseases.
(iv) Machinery of administration.
(v) Other matters.

(54) *Desirability of legislation on lines of Employers' Liability Act,* 1880.

IX. Hours.

A. Factories.

(55) *Hours worked per week and per day.*
(i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
(ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
(iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.

(56) *Days worked per week.*

(57) *Effect of 60 hours restriction—*
(i) On workers.
(ii) On industry.

(58) *Effect of daily limit.*

(59) *Possibility of reduction in maxima.*

(60) *Intervals.*
(i) Existing practice—
(*a*) In relation to fatigue.
(*b*) In relation to workers' meal times.
(ii) Suitability of the law.
(iii) Suitability of hours during which factory is working.
(iv) Number of holidays given.

(61) *Day of rest.*
(i) Existing practice.
(ii) Suitability of the law.

(62) *Exempting provisions and the use made of them.*

B. Mines.

(63) *Hours worked per day and per week.*
(i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
(ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
(iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.

(64) *Days worked per week.*

(65) *Effect of restriction of hours.*
(i) On workers.
(ii) On industry.

(66) *Possibility of reducing maxima.*

(67) *Suitability of the law relating to shifts.*

(68) *Possibility of introducing an effective daily limitation.*

(69) *Intervals.*
(i) In relation to fatigue.
(ii) In relation to workers' meal times.
(iii) Number of holidays given.

(70) *Day of rest.*

(71) *Adequacy of existing provisions.*

(72) *Exempting provisions and use made of them.*

C. Railways.

(73) *Hours worked per week and per day.*
(i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
(ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
(iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.

(74) *Days worked per week.*

(75) *Extent of application of International Labour Conventions relating to—*
(i) Hours.
(ii) Rest days.

(76) *Intervals.*
(i) In relation to fatigue.
(ii) In relation to workers' meal times.
(iii) Number of holidays given.

(77) *Possibility of regulation.*

D. Other Establishments.

(*a*) Plantations.
(*b*) Docks.
(*c*) Other industrial establishments.

(78) *Hours worked per week and per day.*
(i) Normal, i.e. as determined by custom or agreement.
(ii) Actual, i.e. including overtime.
(iii) Spreadover, i.e. relation between hours worked and hours during which worker is on call.

(79) *Days worked per week.*

(80) *Desirability of regulation.*

X. Special Questions relating to Women, Young Adults and Children.

A. Factories.

(81) *Effect of* 1922 *Act on employment.*

(82) *Admission of infants to factories.*

(83) *Suitability of regulations for women's work.*

(84) *Suitability of regulations affecting children.*

(i) Hours and intervals.
(ii) Minimum and maximum ages.

(85) *Double employment of children* (i.e. *in more than one establishment in same day*).

(86) *Work and training of young adults.*

Facilities for apprenticeship.

(87) *Extent of "blind alley" employment* (i.e. *extent to which children are dismissed on reaching full age*).

(88) *Comparative merits of double and single shift systems as affecting health of women, young adults and children.*

(89) *Work of women and children in factories not subject to Act.*

(i) Use by local Governments of section 2 (3) (*b*).
(ii) Advisability of extended application.

B. Mines.

(90) *Effect of Act of* 1923.

Suitability of certification provisions.

(91) *Exclusion of women.*

(i) Suitability of regulations.
(ii) Probable effect on industry.
(iii) Economic effect on workers.
(iv) Speed of withdrawal.

C. Other Establishments.

(92) *Need for regulation.*

XI. Special Questions relating to Seamen and Workers in Inland Navigation.

(93) *Hours of work.*

(94) *Rations and accommodation, articles of agreement, &c.*

(95) *Indian Merchant Shipping Act.*

(i) Existing provisions.
(ii) Need of revision.

XII. Wages.

(96) *Prevailing rates of wages (time and piece) and average earnings.*

(i) In industry.
(ii) In surrounding agricultural areas.
(iii) Difference between money wages and money value of all earnings.

(97) *Movements in recent years.*

(i) Increases and decreases.
(ii) Reasons for variation.
(iii) Relation to prices and cost of living (pre-war and post-war).
(iv) Relation to profits.

(98) *Amounts sent to villages.*

(99) *Payment in kind and allied problems.*

(100) *Extent and effect of payment through contractors, sub-contractors or headmen.*

(101) *Method of fixing wages.*

(i) By negotiated agreements.
(ii) Other means.

(102) *Basis of payment for overtime and Sunday work.*

(103) *Extent of standardisation.*

(104) *Effect of wage-changes on labour supply.*

(105) *Minimum wages.*

Advisability and possibility of statutory establishment.

(106) *Deductions.*

(i) Extent of fining.
(ii) Other deductions.
(iii) Utilisation of fines.
(iv) Desirability of legislation.

(107) *Periods of wage-payment* (*day, week or month*).

(i) Periods for which wages paid.
(ii) Periods elapsing before payment.
(iii) Desirability of legislation—
(*a*) to regulate periods;
(*b*) to prevent delay in payment.
(iv) Treatment of unclaimed wages.

(108) *Indebtedness.*

(i) In village.
(ii) In industrial area.

(109) *Bonus and profit sharing schemes.*

(i) Nature and effect of schemes which are or have been in operation.
(ii) Basis of schemes, whether production or profits.

(110) *Annual or other leave.*

(i) Extent to which taken by workers.
(ii) Extent to which countenanced and/or assisted by employers.
(iii) Extent of consequential loss to worker of back-lying wages.

(111) *Desirability of Fair Wages Clause in public contracts.*

XIII. Industrial Efficiency of Workers.

(112) *Comparative changes in efficiency of Indian workers in recent years.*

(113) *Comparative efficiency of Indian and foreign workers.*

(114) *Extent to which comparisons are affected by—*

(i) Migration of workers.
(ii) Use of machinery.
(iii) Comparative efficiency of plant.
(iv) Comparative efficiency of management.
(v) Physique.
(vi) Health.
(vii) Education.
(viii) Standards of living.
(ix) Climate.

(115) *Effect on production of—*

(i) Changes in working hours.
(ii) Changes in other working conditions.
(iii) Expenditure on health and sanitation.
(iv) Housing.
(v) Alterations in methods of remuneration.
(vi) Movements in wage levels.
(vii) Legislative enactments.
(viii) Dietary.
(ix) Alcohol and drugs.
(x) Industrial fatigue.

(116) *Possible methods of securing increased efficiency.*

XIV. Trade Combinations.

(117) *Extent of organisation of—*

(i) Employers.
(ii) Employed.

(118) *Effect of organisations on—*

(i) Industry.
(ii) Conditions of workers generally.

(119) *Nature of Trade Union activities.*

(i) Mutual aid benefit schemes: unemployment: sickness: old age: strike pay.
(ii) Other activities.

(120) *Individual Trade Unions.*

(i) History.
(ii) Attitude of workers and extent of their control.
(iii) Attitude of employers and relations with them.

(121) *Trade Unions Act*, 1926.

(i) Extent to which utilised.
(ii) Effects.
(iii) Possible amendments.

(122) *Miscellaneous questions regarding Trade Unions.*

(i) Methods of negotiation between employers and employed.
(ii) Results of attempts at co-operation between employers and employed to increase efficiency of production.
(iii) Position of employees in State industrial concerns in relation to general Trade Union movement.

XV. Industrial Disputes.

(123) *Extent of strikes and lock-outs.*

(i) Causes.
(ii) Duration and character.
(iii) Nature and methods of settlement.
(iv) Loss to industry and workers.

(124) *Conciliation and arbitration machinery.*

(i) Results of previous investigations.
(ii) Part played by official or non-official conciliators in settling disputes.
(iii) Use (if any) made of Employers' and Workmen's Disputes Act, 1860.
(iv) Joint standing machinery for regulation of relations between employers and workpeople.
(v) Opportunity afforded to workpeople of making representations.
(vi) Applicability to Indian conditions of Industrial Court, Trade Boards, Joint Industrial Councils.

(125) *Trades Disputes Act.*

(126) *Attitude of Government—*

(i) Towards trade combinations.
(ii) In connection with industrial disputes.

XVI. Law of Master and Servant.

(127) *Effect of repeal of Workmen's Breach of Contract Act.*

(128) *Types of contract commonly in use.*

(129) *Extent to which* (i) *Civil*, (ii) *Criminal law is available and used for enforcement.*

(130) *Madras Planters Labour Act*, 1903.

(131) *Coorg Labour Act.*

(132) *Employers' and Workmen's Disputes Act*: Is it used?

XVII. Administration.

(133) *Central and Provincial Legislatures.*

Action and attitude on labour questions.

(134) *International Labour Organisation.*

(i) Ratification of Conventions and action taken.
(ii) Its effect on legislation, &c.

(135) *Relations between Central and Local Governments.*

(136) *Administrative authorities in various Governments.*
Work of special labour offices or officers.
(137) *Effect of differences in law or administration in Indian States and British India.*
(138) *Acquaintance of workpeople with factory legislation.*
(139) *Factory inspection.*
(i) Adequacy of staff.
(ii) Uniformity of administration in different Provinces.
(iii) Rigour and efficiency of administration.
(iv) Prosecutions and their result.
(140) *Mines inspection.*
(i) Adequacy of staff.
(ii) Rigour and efficiency of administration.
(iii) Prosecutions and their result.
(141) *Railways (State and Company).*
Administration of questions affecting personnel.
(142) *Plantations, docks and other industrial establishments.*
Extent and nature of inspection.

XVIII. Intelligence.

(143) *Existing statistics.*
(i) Extent and use.
(ii) Method of collection.
(iii) Degree of accuracy.
(144) *Possibility of improvement in statistics.*
(145) *Nature of special investigations conducted.*
(i) Cost of living enquiries.
(ii) Results achieved.
(146) *Future developments necessary.*

M15RCL—9-2-31—25,584—GIPS

VOLUME VII.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

			Pages.
Terms of reference and list of subjects			i to xii.

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
1	Mr. T. Austin, I.C.S.	District Magistrate, Ganjam.	75—76	1—14, G.-1.
2	Sriman Sree Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya	Vizagapatam. ..	76—77	14—20, G.-157.
3	Captain F. R. Steele	Local Agents of the Tea Districts Labour Association, Calcutta.	77—81	21—33, G.-241.
4	Mr. L. S. Driver ..			
5	Mr. G. T. H. Bracken, I.C.S.	District Magistrate and Agent to the Governor, Vizagapatam.	81—82	33—44, G.-382.
6	Abdur Rahman ..	Storeman, Vizagapatam Harbour Works.	..	45, G.-517a.
7	Noor Muhammad ..	Khalasi working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.	..	45, G.-517b.
8	Abdul Nabi ..	Tindal working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.	..	45—46, G.-517c.
9	Kaki Gurrappa ..	Worker at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.	..	46, G.-517d.
10	Sukanna Ukkanna	Do. ..	..	46, G.-517e.
11	Fazul Rahman ..	Oilman working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.	..	47, G.-517f.
12	Annapathrakimma	Woman coal carrier working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works	..	47, G.-517g.
13	Appallam ..	Woman coal carrier working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.	..	47, G.-517h.
14	Mr. W. C. Ash ..	Engineer-in-Chief, Harbour Works, Vizagapatam.	82—88	47—58, G.-518.
15	Mr. C. J. Smith ..	Mechanical Superintendent Harbour Works, Vizagapatam.		
16	Major F. J. Anderson, I.M.S.	Principal, Medical College, Vizagapatam and Chief Medical Officer.		
17	Mr. P. A. M. Welchman	Office Superintendent, Harbour Works, Vizagapatam.		
18	Dr. K. Satyanarayana	Medical Officer, Vizagapatam.		

M27RCL

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
19	Subbammal ..	Women workers (with two other women workers) of the Madura Mills.	..	59—60, G.-637.
20	Kandallammal ..			
21	Muthammal ..			
22	Kaliammal ..			
23	Sadyan ..	Men workers of the Madura Mills.	..	61—62, G.-642.
24	Suppiah ..			
25	Vyrahvan ..			
26	Muniandi ..			
27	Mr. J. P. Rodriguez	Representatives of the Tuticorin Labour Union.	88—90	63—69, G.-647.
28	Mr. Sankaranaraina Pillai			
29	Mr. Kandaswami Pillai			
30	Mr. S. R. Varadarajulu Naidu	Representative of the Papanasam Union.	90—93	70—80, G.-764.
31	Mr. E. B. Cobbald, I.C.S.	District Magistrate, Madura.	..	80—85, G.-943.
32	Dr. P. J. Thomas, M.A., Ph.D.	Professor of Economics, University of Madras.	93—94	86—93, G.-1006.
33	Mr. V. T. Arasu ..	Chairman, The 1929 Madras Youth League, Madras.	94—97	93—100, G.-1085
34	Mr. K. V. Sesha Ayyangar	Chairman, Madras Panel of Lawyers.	97—101	100—108, G.-1166.
35	Mr. P. A. Krishnaswamy	Representatives of the Madras Representative Christian Council.	101—104	108—116, G.-1232.
36	Rev. P. Ramaseshan			
37	Mr. S. P. Y. Surendranath Voegeli-Arya	Representing the Madras Electric Tramway and Supply Corporation Employees' Union.	104—107	117—122, G.-1290.
38	Mr. Koppaswamy Mudaliar			
39	Mr. Kanagasabai Mudaliar			

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
40	Mr. C. Gopal Menon	Representatives of the Southern India Chamber of Commerce, Madras.	108—111	123—131, G.-1366.
41	Mr. P. Raghavan Nair			
42	Dr. Ahmad Mukhtar, M.A., Ph.D.	Professor of Economics, Anamalai University, Chidambaram.	111—121	131—140, G.-1454.
43	Miss M. Azariah ..	District Secretary, Y. W. C. A., Madras.	121—124	140—145, G.-1548.
44	Mrs. Cousins ..	Women social workers, Madras.	..	
45	Mrs. Bhagirathi Sri Ram			
46	Mr. V. M. Ramaswamy Mudaliar.	Representatives of the Kerosene Oil Workers' Union, Madras.	124—128	145—157, G.-1592.
47	Mr. T. M. Parthasmatty Mudaliar			
48	Mr. T. Muthuswamy Pillai.			
49	Mr. R. Ketari Muthu Chetty			
50	Mr. M. S. Kotiswaran	Representative of the Madras Port Trust and Harbour Workers' Union, Messrs. Richardson Cruddas & Co.'s Workers' Union and the Western India Match Factory Workers' Union, Madras.	128—131	157—162, G.-1727.
51	Mr. Sivashanmugam Pillai	Patron, the Chingleput District Labour Guild, Kodambakam.	131—132	162—165, G.-1775.
52	Mr. J. Hargreaves	Manager, Carnatic Mill, Madras.	132—154	166—190, G.-1820.
53	Mr. W. E. Bentley	Manager, Buckingham Mill, Madras.		
54	Dr. G. P. Raghaviah	Medical Officer, Carnatic Mill.		
55	Miss M. Sage, M.A.	Joint Principal, The Buckingham and Carnatic School, Madras		
56	Mr. K. O. Anthoni..	Secretary, The Buckingham & Carnatic Mills Workpeople Welfare Committee.		

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
57	Mr. V. Subramani Aiyar	Manager, Choolai Mills, Madras.	..	191—192, G.-2138.
58	Sir Fairless Barber	Representatives of the United Planters' Association of Southern India.	154—164	193—218, G.-2149.
59	Mr. H. L. Pinches ..			
60	Mr. C. R. T. Congreve			
61	Lt.-Col. C. H. Brock			
62	Mr. F. E. James ..			
63	Mr. B. Shiva Rao ..	Representatives of the Madras Labour Union.	164—187, 187—203 Mr. Shiva Rao's Memo.	218—241, G.-2438.
64	Mr. Ramanujulu Naidu			
65	Mr. Selvapathy Chetty			
66	Mr. A. G. Leach, I.C.S.	Secretary to the Government of Madras, Labour and Public Works Department.	3—36	242—280, G.-2650.
67	Mr. J. Gray, O.B.E., I.C.S.	Commissioner of Labour, Madras.	37—56	
68a	Mr. S. A. Cartledge	Chief Inspector of Factories, Madras.	56—60	
68b	M. R. Ry. M. Krishnaswami Ayyar Avargal (not examined orally)	Offg. Chief Inspector of Factories, Madras.	60—68	
69	Capt. N. R. Ubhaya, I.M.S.	Director of Public Health, Madras.	68—74	
70	Mr. W. E. Smith, M.A., I.E.S.	Offg. Director of Public Instruction, Madras.	74—75	280—282, G.-3071.
71	Mr. W. M. Browning	Representatives of the Employees in the Burma Shell Oil Storage and Distributing Co. of India, Ltd.	203—211	283—296, G.-3088.
72	Mr. C. E. Wood, M.L.C.	of Messrs. Parry & Co., Ltd.		
73	Mr. F. G. Luker ..	of Messrs. Addison & Co., Ltd.		

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
74	Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah	Representative of the Buckingham & Carnatic Mills Employees Union, Madras (with other representatives).	211—224	296—301, G.-3223.
75	Col. R. McCarrison, C.I.E.; I.M.S.	Director, Nutritional Research, Pasteur Institute, Coonoor.	225—238	302—307, G.-3305.
76	Lousia	Woman worker, Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor.	..	308—309, G.-3342.
77	Jebakanti ..	Do. ..	..	309, G.-3347.
78	Lazarus ..	Mistri, Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor.	..	309—310, G.-3348.
79	Palaniappan ..	Pruner, Do. ..	..	310, G.-3353.
80	Angappan ..	Worker, Do. ..	..	310—311, G.-3357.
81	Lt.-Col. L. L. Porter, O.B.E., V.D.	Managing Director, Nonesuch Tea Estates Co., Coonoor.	..	311—317, G.-3360.
82	Lt. Commander L. G. Elkington, R.N. (retd.)	Manager, Ibex Lodge Estate, Coonoor.		
83	Mr. L. A. Hawke ..	Manager, Singara Tea Estate, Coonoor.	..	317—322, G.-3445.
84	Rayappan ..	Mistri, Do. ..	..	322, G.-3514.
85	Mr. E. Holden ..	Manager, Kaleeswar Mills, Coimbatore.	..	323—327, G.-3516.
86	Valliammal ..	Woman worker, Coimbatore Spg. & Wvg. Mills.	..	327, G.-3579.
87	Rangammal ..	Do. ..	..	327, G.-3580.
88	Luthmari ..	Do. ..	..	327—328, G.-3581.
89	Gnanaprakasam ..	Man worker, Do. ..	..	328, G.-3584.
90	Mr. W. E. Winter ..	Managing Director, Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills.	238—239	328—332, G.-3585.
91	Mr. J. F. Cheshire ..	Mill Manager.		
92	Mr. F. Howard ..	Weaving Manager.		
93	Thangamani ..	Woman worker, Pachamalai Estate (Anamalai Hills).	..	333—334, G.-3638.

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
94	Chinnammal ..	Woman worker, Pachamalai Estate (Anamalai Hills).	..	334—335, G.-3648.
95	Chinnathambi ..	Mistri, Do. ..	..	335—337, G.-3655.
96	Savari Mutthu ..	Worker, Do. ..	..	337, G.-3673.
97	Maranney ..	Do. ..	..	337—338, G.-3676.
98	Mr. J. E. Sampson	Manager, Pachamalai Estate, Valparai, (Anamalai Hills).	..	338—351, G.-3680.
99	Mr. J. H. Ireland Jones	Representatives of the Anamalai Planters' Association.	..	351—373, G.-3869.
100	Mr. W. H. Martin ..			
101	Mr. J. E. Sampson			
102	Mr. E. Johnson ..			
103	Mr. A. W. F. Mills ..			
104	Dr. J. E. Measham			
105	Mr. G. B. Reade ..			
106	Chinnammal ..	Woman worker, Thaimudi Estate (Anamala Hills).	..	374—375, G.-4128.
107	Palani Ammal ..	Do. ..	..	375—376, G.-4135.
108	Chengamalan ..	Worker, Do. ..	..	376—377, G.-4142.
109	Chinnaswami ..	Do. ..	..	377—378, G.-4152 and 380, G.-4166.
110	Pattakaran ..	Mistri, Do. ..	..	378—380, G.-4160.
111	Mr. F. L. Schwinde	Manager, Do. ..	..	380—384, G.-4167.
112	Mr. Eric Johnson ..	Group Manager, Mudis Group of Estates.		
113	Sir Fairless Barber	General Manager, Lower Parvalai Estate (Anamalai Hills).	..	384—396, G.-4215.
114	Mr. J. C. Blackham	Group Manager		
115	Mr. A. Foote	Manager		

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
116	Mr. N. S. Ramaswamy Ayyangar	President, Labour Union, Coimbatore.	239—255	397—414, G.-4353.
117	Mr. E. F. Thomas ..	Collector and District Magistrate, Coimbatore.	..	414—421, G.-4535.
118	P. Audiah Naidu ..	Late Tahsildar of Parlakimedi (Madras).	255—256	....
119	Mr. E. G. Powell ..	President, The Cordite Factory Labour Union, Aruvankadu, Nilgiris, South India.	256—260	....
120	Mr. A. C. Woodhouse, I.C.S.	Collector of Nellore ..	260—262	....
121	Mr. A. G. Green ..	Superintendent, Government Press, Madras.	262—269	....
122	M. R. Ry. Diwan Bahadur A. Appadurai Pillai Avargal, M.A.	Director of Industries, Madras.	270—271	....
123	Rev. A. Anderson ..	Gunupur, Madras ..	271—272	....
124	Cochin Chamber of Commerce	Cochin	272—273	....
125	Rev. H. Staecker ..	Jeypore, Viza ..	273—274	....
126	Mr. G. G. Armstrong, O.B.E., M.C., V.D., M. Inst. T.	Chairman Madras Port T—	274—278	....
127	The Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co., Ltd.	Madras	278—281	....
128	Mr. H. M. Hood, I.C.S.	Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Madras.	281—283	....
129	The Madras Aluminium Labour Union	Madras	283—287	....
130	Rao Sahib V. Krishna Menon	Secretary, Malabar District Co-operative Bank, Ltd., Calicut.	287—288	....
131	Mr. C. Basudev, B.A., B.L.	President of the Madras Government Press Labour Union.	288—295	....
132	Mr. C. Sundarsana Raju	Eti Koppaka, Vizagapatam Distt.	295—296	....

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
133	Mr. Rajaiah . . D. Paul, M.A.	Deputy Collector on special duty as Forest Panchayat Officer, Madras.	297—306	....
134	Miss Muliyil Janaki	Representing the Women's Educational League, Calicut.	306—307	....
135	Mr. R. Suryanarayana	Member, Servants of India Society, Calicut.	308—321	....
136	Mr. J. A. Saldanha, M.L.C.	Belmoral, Kankanadi, South Kanara.	321—322	....
137	Prof. N. G. Ranga, B. Litt. (Oxon)	Pachaiyappa's College, Madras.	322—328	....
138	P. W. D. Workers' Union	Madras	328—334	....
139	The Corporation Workshop Labour Union	Madras	334—335	....
140	Mr. Nadirshaw jee Wadia	Manager, the New Cotton Gin & Press Factory, Tiruppur, Distt. Coimbatore.	335—337	....
141	Mr. George S. Isaac, B.A., L.T.	[illegible] Voorgaon and the Secretary and the Adult & Mass Education Society, Vellore, North Arcot.	337—339	....
142	Mr. R. Subapathi Mudaliar	President, The Madras Printers' Labour Union.	339	....
		II.—COORG.		
143	Kati Chattu ..	Worker, Hallori Coffee Estate, Santhaghurry, (Mercara), Coorg.	..	422, G.-4614.
144	Chikka Mataliga (with his wife)	Workers, Do. ..	..	423—424, G.-4619.
145	Muddathappa ..	Worker, Do. ..	..	424, G.-4628.
146	Girria ..	Mistri, Do. ..	..	424—425, G.-4632.
147	Mr. J. H. Sprott ..	Manager of the Hallori & Santaghurry Coffee Estate, Coorg.	..	425—431, G.-4639.

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Part I (Written evidence pages.	Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
148	Mr. J. S. H. Morgan	Representatives of the Coorg Planters' Association, Mercara.	341—343	431—436, G.-4736.
149	Mr. P. J. Tipping ..			
150	Col. H. Murland ..			
151	Mr. J. H. Sprott ..			
152	Mr. A. B. Chengappa M.L.C.	Planter, Coorg ..	343—345	437—441, G.-4797.
153	Rao Bahadur K. Subbayya	Do.	351—353	442—444, G.-4863.
154	Honee Jen Kurumba	Woman worker, Pollibetta Coffee Plantations.	..	445—446, G.-4901.
155	Bhimla, (Lambani caste)	Worker, Do. ..	..	446, G.-4908.
156	Ramdu, Do ..	Mistri, Do. ..	..	446—447, G.-4911.
157	Mr. H. B. M. Babington	Manager, Do. ..	..	447—449, G.-4920.
158	Mr. A. B. Madapa	Owner, Heroor Coffee Plantation, Sidapur, Coorg.	..	449—452, G.-4967.
159	Subu (Konkani) ..	Woman worker, Kasbur Coffee Estate, Coorg.	..	453, G.-5008.
160	Sibi Konkani ..	Do. Do. ..	..	453, G.-5009.
161	Jaori (Balgai) ..	Do. Do. ..	..	454, G.-5014.
162	Mr. N. K. Ganapaiah	Manager, Do. ..	..	454—457, G.-5020.
163	Mr. G. W. Priestly, I.C.S.	Commissioner } Representatives of the Coorg Administration	340—341	458—486, G.-5087.
164	Major F. R. Thornton, I.M.S.	Civil Surgeon		
165	Rao Bahadur K. Chengappa	District Magistrate		
166	Mr. P. R. Thimmayya Punja, M.L.C.	Planter, Coorg	346—351	....

The evidence (written or oral or both) of the following witnesses belonging to this Presidency is printed in Volume VIII, Parts I (written) and II (Oral)-Railways.

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.		Vol. VIII Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Vol. VIII Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
1	Mr. A. Gopal ..	Workers in the Golden Rock Workshops of the South Indian Railway Company.		..	488—490, K.-4937.
2	Mr. S. Joseph ..				
3	Mr. Mutu Krishnan				
4	Mr. S. Ramaswami				
5	Mr. F. B. Wathen ..	Agent	The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway	1—358	491—521, K.-4943.
6	Mr. C. C. Fink ..	Chief Auditor & Accountant.			
7	Mr. H. D. Sinclair	Chief Transportation Superintendent and Traffic Manager.			
8	Mr. R. D. Thompson	Chief Mechanical Engineer.			
9	Mr. J. A. Cruickshank	Chief Medical Officer.			
10	Mr. G. Charlton ..	Deputy Agent.			
11	Mr. W. E. Marsh ..	Press Superintendent.			
12	Mr. N. Grayson ..	Architect.			
13	Mr. Syed Madhar ..	Representatives of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union.		549—561	522—536, K.-5292.
14	Mr. A. S. Fernandez				
15	Mr. S. M. Sundrachari				
16	Mr. K. Veerasami ..				
17	Mr. Thoman ..				
18	Mr. G. Krishnamurti				
19	Mr. Lakshminarayana				
20	Mr. P. R. K. Sarma				

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.		Vol. VIII Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Vol. VIII Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
21	Mr. P. Rothera ..	Agent.	The South Indian Railway	1—358	537—560, K.-5446.
22	Mr. A. H. Smyth ..	Chief Transportation Superintendent.			
23	Mr. H. A. Reid ..	Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer.			
24	Dr. C. E. R. Norman	Chief Medical Officer.			
25	Mr. A. Srinivasa Iyer.	Assistant Auditor.			
26	Mr. P. Govindaraj	Assistant Secretary to the Agent.			
27	Mr. T. V. K. Naidu	Representatives of the South Indian Railway Labour Union, Trichinopoly.		564—569, 582—588	560—564, K.-5736.
28	Mr. S. Mohan Swarna.				
29	Mr. Mudalamuthu Mudaliar				
30	Mr. S. V. Aiyar ..	President, M. S. M. Rly. Non-Workshop Employees' Union, Madras.		569—582	....
31	Mr. Ernest Kirk ..	Representatives of the South Indian Railway Labour Union, Coimbatore.		583—590	565—571, K.-5819.
32	Mr. A. Ekambaram				
33	Mr. P. S. Krishnaswamy Iyer				
34	Mr. A. Sundramurthy				
35	Mr. R. R. Birmamuthano				
36	Dr. R. V. N. Nayudu	*Ex*-President, South Indian Railway Employees' Central Association, Dhanushkodi.		590—601	....
37	Lieut.-Col. H. A. J. Gidney, M.L.A. I.M.S. (Retd.)	On behalf of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Railway Employees.		602—618	....

Serial No.	Name.	Designation and/or address of witness.	Vol. VIII Part I (Written evidence) pages.	Vol. VIII Part II (Oral evidence) pages and Nos. of the first questions of the series.
38	Mr. R. W. Suares ..	Of the Madras and Southern Maharatta Railway. Representatives of the Anglo-Indian Employees of the Madras & Southern Maharatta Railway and the South Indian Railway.	618—634	571—578, K.-5891.
39	Mr. Dias ..			
40	Mr. Thomman ..			
41	Mr. S. Hoskins ..	Of the South Indian Railway		
42	Mr. Freeman ..			
43	Mr. French ..			
44	Mr. S. Guruswami	Assistant Secretary, All-India Railwaymen's Federation, Berhampore.	634—652	579—592, K.-5995.

M27RCL—3,054—10-3-31—GIPS

Minutes of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Labour in India.

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Eighty-Fourth Meeting.

VIZAGAPATAM.

Wednesday, 26th February 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. Dr. (Miss) LAZARUS (*Lady Assessor*).

Mr. A. DIBDIN (*Joint Secretary*).

Mr. T. C. AUSTIN, I.C.S., District Magistrate, Ganjam.

G-1. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What has been your experience as an officer, and as regards labour, both before and after your connection with the Assam Labour Board ?—I had no experience as regards labour before I joined the Board, because I was in Travancore for 2½ years and in Bangalore for 2 or 3 years.

G-2. When you were in the Travancore area were you connected with the recruiting to Ceylon ?—No.

G-3. Since you have left the Assam Labour Board where have you been stationed ?—Ganjam, where I have been since July last year.

G-4. In your memorandum you make a reference to the fact that coolies benefit by going to Assam. What do you actually mean by that ?—They benefit both financially and by the wider outlook they obtain. They get more independent and more sophisticated. Most of the coolies who go from this district are from *Jungli* tribes, and are very simple people. They go to Assam, get into contact with other people, and get a wider knowledge of the world.

G-5. Why does a labourer here seek to leave the district and go elsewhere ? Is it due to economic pressure or to special circumstances in his own country, or is it due to the attractions of Assam as painted by the recruiters who come down here ?—A good deal of it is due to the pictures painted by the recruiters, but it is mainly due to economic factors.

G-6. Sir George Paddison in his memorandum states that wages given in different districts vary a great deal, and that in the agency tracts of Ganjam and Visiz the average for an ordinary unskilled labourer is only about 2 annas a day. Is that the case?—Generally. Wages are going up to a certain extent.

G-7. This was written in 1926. He goes on to say that it is difficult to get at what the actual wages are in view of perquisites and other things, and he makes the statement: "Without vouching for the absolute accuracy of the figures it may be taken that an ordinary labourer gets between 5 and 6 annas, ploughmen between 6 and 7 annas, and those engaged in reaping and harvesting about 7 annas". Would you like to express any opinion as to that?—Is that dealing with the agency tracts?

G-8. That is Madras generally. What would you say are the wages in the agency tracts?—Recently there has been a D. P. W. Division opened in the agency, and they have been engaging the coolies on higher wages than Government used to do. In Ganjam there is a system called "*vetti*" labour. The people pay no assessments, in return for which they must be prepared to do work for Government, such as road work. The general system is to pay a certain sum either per house or per village. It works out at 2 or 3 annas a head.

G-9. The *vetti* system applies to Government work. Is not here another system adopted as far as private employment is concerned, called the "*goti*" system?—I do not know anything about that.

G-10. Sir George Paddison says the only way of escaping from the forms of servitude such as the *vetti*, the *goti* and other systems, is emigration. Do you think that this tied system of labour induces any flow of emigration?—To a certain extent the word "servitude" applies more to the treatment by the headmen of the villages to their own people than it does to Government. If a certain length of road is given to a certain village, the villagers make a kind of gala of it; they enjoy it. But they have a lot of work to do for their headmen which is more in the nature of servitude.

G-11. Does the attraction of steady employment all the year round, instead of more or less casual employment, weigh with the workers in going to Assam or Burma?—Probably. Thousands go in a famine year.

G-12 That would show that economic reasons do weigh considerably?—There is no doubt about that at all.

G-13. Sir George Paddison also makes a reference about the benefits that could be obtained if there was improved water supply, sanitation, housing and other things of that description. I think he is speaking of Madras itself, but do you think the people who come back from the tea gardens return with any improved ideas as regards standards of living or standards of comfort?—I cannot say I have noticed it.

G-14. In your memorandum you say "I can think of nothing than the present system" of recruitment. What do you mean by that?—I mean that the coolie should be recruited by somebody who knows the conditions in the garden to which the coolie is going.

G-15. Would you like to express an opinion as to the relative merits of *sardari* recruiting as against any other form of recruiting?—I think the *sardari* is the best system, but *sardari* recruitment cannot be of any use in opening up new districts.

G-16. What do you suggest should be done in that connection?—The employer should be allowed to engage recruiters who are men of substance, or respectable men—preferably men who have some knowledge of the gardens.

G-17. You can get local agents, men of substance, who would know the conditions obtaining locally; but would you attach importance to the necessity for having, in the case of those recruiters, also knowledge of the conditions in the gardens in order that he might give a fair statement of the position?—I think it is very important.

G-18. For how long were you attached to the Assam Labour Board?—I was Chairman from 1924 to 1928.

G-19. Did you follow up the labour after it got to the gardens?—Yes. I very often went to Assam and stayed on the gardens, and the managers showed me how their labour was treated.

G-20. But that was not part of the administration?—No.

G-21. You did that because you wanted to have a correct understanding of the position in the tea gardens?—So that, when I went to the recruiting countries, I could state that I had been up to Assam and could tell the people of the conditions there.

G-22. One of the objections taken to the present system is that it is too costly. The Indian Tea Association also want more freedom in recruitment. It has been suggested that the recruiting operations of the *sardars* are hampered by the restrictions which have been placed on them in the way of propaganda and in other directions?—I think that is true. The Madras Government will not let any planter go outside the depots without a permit. The Bihar Government are very strict in interpreting the word "assist". They think "assist" goes much further than other people think it does. A missionary who suggested to his congregation that they should go to Assam was held to "assist".

G-23. As a result of your four years' experience, what would you suggest in connection with assistance and propaganda?—I think it should be very much more liberally interpreted, as long as there is nothing underhand; and that can easily be found out by the local agent.

G-24. What is your view with regard to voluntary emigration?—If a man wants to go I do not see why he should be stopped. If a man comes in, and is willing to go, and brings his wife and family, there seems no objection. I do not see why the local agent himself should not recruit and send him up in that case.

G-25. It has been suggested that the Assam Labour Board should be abolished. Mr. King suggests that the Tea Districts Labour Association is too much of a monopoly, and that they have got into their own hands practically all the recruitment to Assam and also to the Dooars?—That is true.

G-26. When you were Chairman of the Assam Labour Board did you have applications from other agencies to be allowed to recruit alongside of, if not in

competition with, the Tea Districts Labour Association ? Can you recall any instances where you turned down applications ?—I have a general impression that we did turn down such applications.

G-27. For what reason ?—Because we thought that the Tea Districts Labour Association was the best recruiting agency and that it was better it should be in their hands than in the hands of an agent working by himself.

G-28. Mr. King also took objection to the Assam Labour Board. He said it was too large, and that there was too much of the planter or tea industry element on it ?—I agree with that.

G-29. You have suggested that there should be representatives from the recruiting districts on the Board. What is your actual suggestion in that connection ?—I have not worked it out. It would probably make it too unwieldy to have one representative from each district.

G-30. It has been suggested that labour ought to be represented ?—I looked upon myself as representing labour on the Board as far as possible. I cannot imagine a labourer on the Board. I do not think anybody could be found with sufficient experience.

G-31. Mr. King objected to the local agent serving two masters ; that is to say, the local agent represents the Tea District Labour Association and also the interests of the Assam Labour Board, and the Government as far as registration is concerned. What is your opinion about that ?—I have always found it work all right, but it might depend on the personality of the local agent.

G-32. Mr. King was prepared to accept the suggestion that the Assam Labour Board might be abolished, but he said that they would have to entrust the registration of the coolies to a staff of registering officers under the Central Government, with a Controller of Supervisers. What is your opinion on that proposal ?—I should not like it very much. I would rather have something like the Board continued. This would be an entirely Government affair.

G-33. He makes provision for the Tea Districts Labour Association or other organization continuing the actual recruiting and forwarding. He merely thinks that the functions of the organization he proposes should be the registration. In other words, that the registration should be taken out of the hands of local agents and put into the hands of a Government organization. What is your view on that proposal ?—I should not like it. It would make it too impersonal. I would like something in the nature of the Assam Labour Board, which is representative of all the different interests, but a smaller body. I do not see the objection to the present system whereby the local agent serves two masters.

G-34. The main objection to the present system is the expense of recruiting. Do you think that the pooling of the recruiting expenses would help to reduce the expenses in any way ? Would it help to reduce the competition between tea gardens ?—I doubt if that will ever be done away with.

G-35. Did you, as Chairman, Assam Labour Board, attempt to control the amount that was paid to the recruiting *sardar* when he arrived in the district, or the bonus that was paid to him when he landed on the garden ?—It did not come within my province at all. I did notice the differences.

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G-36. Can you make a suggestion as to how the expenses of recruitment can be reduced ?—I can only suggest that it is a matter in which the industry should combine and agree.

G-37. Have you any views on the question as to how soon a tea garden labourer can become suitable as a *sardar* ?—I think a year at least, but I have found cases in which men have been sent down after three days.

G-38. We have had it suggested that a lot of these men who come back so very quickly as *sardars* are in collusion with other recruiting *sardars* ; that the bonus which is paid in respect of a man when he gets to the garden is considerable, and that it pays the recruiter and somebody else to enter into collusion to be recruited for several gardens. Did you come in contact with that at all ?—I remember one or two cases like that.

G-39. If it were made a standing order that people should not come back as *sardars* inside of a year, would that help to do away with the abuse ? Certainly.

G-40. You said, as one of the reasons for supporting the *sardari* system, that the labourer when he gets to the garden works alongside his *sardar*, and therefore the *sardar* cannot paint the picture of the conditions too rosy ?—That is not my statement, but I quite agree with it.

G-41. As to the merits of short-term as against long-term recruitment, have you any opinion to express ?—I think it is a matter for the industry.

G-42. It has been suggested that many labourers going to tea gardens do not know that the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act (Act XIII of 1859) has been repealed, and still think that there is an agreement in existence. Does your experience bear that out ?—I have not made enquiries about that.

G-43. It would be interesting if you would find out whether the average coolie going up to Assam knows anything about the matter. It has also been suggested that if a tea garden labourer had the right of free repatriation at the end of a particular period it would help to make recruiting easier ?—I agree with that.

G-44. What is your view as to the period within which a labourer might wish to be repatriated ?—I think three years would be a suitable period.

G-45. Have you any views on the question of employment agencies ?—I do not like them. I think they would be too impersonal.

G-46. Can you express any view, as the result of your experience here, about the freedom that is given to labour to go to Burma, and the restrictions which are placed upon labour to go to Assam ?—Burma labour is entirely free. There are no restrictions.

G-47. Are the conditions in Burma any more favourable than they are in Assam ?—They are scarcely comparable. Only men go to Burma. They go for the season and come back after a year or in less than a year.

G-48. You do not think that a comparison can usefully be drawn ?—No.

G-49. *Mr. Clow* : You suggest that greater elasticity is needed in legislation. In what direction, apart from the suggestion you made about allowing

the local agents more liberty, would you suggest greater elasticity ?—I mentioned just now about the missionaries helping people, giving assistance, and so on.

G-50. When it comes to legislation, what change would you suggest ? Would you give the local Government power to license recruiters who had no previous experience of the gardens ?—I would give the District Magistrate power.

G-51. To license persons whom he thought suitable ?—Yes a person who is suggested by the manager. The manager gives him a good chit, and if he has got a good reputation in the district I would allow the District Magistrate to license him.

G-52. *Prima facie* it would seem that, on the whole, it would be safer to work with recruiters known to the district authorities, rather than with persons who are not under control and who come from Assam ?—Yes, but they have come from the district originally.

G-53. We are told that the licensing of recruiters who do not come from Assam would open the door to grave abuses ?—Yes, if it were done without proper care.

G-54. Men in the district over whom the district authorities have a certain measure of control could be more easily controlled than men who simply come from Assam, collect the coolies, and disappear ?—A *sardar*, you mean ?

G-55. Yes ?—Yes, that is the present system.

G-56. Do you agree that on the whole men in the district can be effectively controlled ?—I agree, as long as he is put up for a certificate by the District Magistrate to start with. He would make enquiries in order to make sure that he is a proper person.

G-57. The recruitment for the Dooars is entirely uncontrolled. Are there any abuses or difficulties in connection with that system ?—I have not come across any since I have been here. When I was on the Board there was an occasional complaint about the Dooars recruitment.

G-58. How would you explain the fact that the Dooars have always seemed to be able to get along without control, when most authorities have agreed that control is necessary in the case of Assam ?—The Dooars being so much nearer, people can get back quicker. That is the main reason.

G-59. You do not think the fact that there have never been penal contracts in the Dooars has anything to do with it ?—Possibly.

G-60. You would agree that the ideal to be aimed at is a system of free recruiting to Assam ?—Yes.

G-61. Do you think it is possible now to take any steps in that direction ?—Only by making more elasticity in the recruiting methods.

G-62. It would not be feasible to allow relaxation of control in the case of those who go for a very short term ?—No. I would not relax for one and not for the other.

G-63. Suppose the system suggested to you, of having the right of repatriation after three years, was introduced how would you enforce that in Assam itself ? We were satisfied that in an occasional garden the labourers were not entirely free to leave the garden. Would not there be a danger of a man being kept on after three years ?—Yes, unless it was checked by the local magistrate. If there were a register kept of the coolies as they came up, and the local magistrate checked the register when he inspected the garden (he inspects the garden once every year from the health point of view) then he could see if people had been there for more than three years, and he could ask them whether they had been given the choice of returning or not.

G-64. Supposing every one of them had this right of repatriation after three years, would it be exercised even by those who had gone with every intention of settling down in Assam ?—I doubt it.

G-65. You do not think they would take the opportunity of a free holiday?—Not if they had taken their families up, and collected their cattle, and so on. I know of cases where people have gone up, and have left nobody in their own country, so that there is no desire to come back.

G-66. We have had memoranda which complain to us of various scandals in connection with free recruiting, of wives absconding from husbands they did not like. I suppose that that is an inevitable concomitant of all emigration?—There seems to be a certain amount, but it is generally discovered.

G-67. How do you account for the fact that emigrants are willing to go from these and other districts, without any great assistance, to places like Burma and Calcutta, while apparently special machinery is necessary in order to induce them to go to Assam ? Is that due to the existence of Act VI ?—I think it is partly due to the abuses of the past. Assam had a bad name for a long time, and still has a bad name in certain parts of the districts. People say that when their sons go to Assam they do not expect to see them again.

G-68. Do you think that is a question entirely of past history ?—I do not think it is justified now.

G-69. Has emigration had any noticeable effect in pushing up wages in your district ?—I cannot say.

G-70. *Mr. Joshi* : With regard to this *vetti* system, if the people are not willing to work how are they made to work ?—They are willing to work.

G-71. But suppose there are some people who are not willing to work what do you do ?—I have not come across any such cases.

G-72. In every day life we find people who are not willing to discharge their obligations. How do you put pressure upon these people ?—Some of them hold land and have certain posts. I suppose they would be deprived of those, but I cannot say, as I have not come across any cases.

G-73. Is pressure put upon them by the headman ?—The headman is supposed to produce the men.

G-74. Do you not think there will be some cases of people refusing to do the work ?—Certainly.

G-75. There must be somebody putting on pressure ?—I believe there are enough to do the work without counting in the recalcitrant people.

G-76. Is there any limit to the extent of the work that is put upon these people ?—It is laid down generally as "Government work".

G-77. How many days in a year ?—When they are called upon they are supposed to come out. It does not amount to much in the end. It does not interfere with their harvest, for instance.

G-78. It all depends upon the individual officer ? One officer may take 10 days' work, and another officer may take a month's work ?—I do not think there is an unlimited amount of work to be done. There are no rules.

G-79. What other kind of work is taken from them ?—Civil works, buildings and roads, thatching bungalows and porterage.

G-80. And digging of tanks and canals ?—No.

G-81. Is there any register kept of the work done by these people ?—Yes. The sub-collector pays these people personally.

G-82. How much do they earn ?—It depends on the amount of work they do.

G-83. This *vetti* work is not all free ?—The road work is paid for.

G-84. At what rate are they paid ?—I cannot say offhand.

G-85. Does the Government fix the rate ?—It works out to 2 or 3 annas a man in the end. I think the rate is fixed by the sub-divisional officer.

G-86. What are the rates obtaining in your areas ? Will you find out and let us know. I want the rates for *vetti* labour in the agency ?—Yes.

G-87. I have estimated that it costs about Rs. 150 to recruit a coolie. That means Rs. 12-8 per month. If that money was allocated to increasing the wages in Assam, would not that be a sufficient inducement to labour to go to Assam free ?

Sir Alexander Murray: There would be the transit expenses, but taking off a certain amount for expenses of transit there would still remain a margin. If that margin went towards increasing the wages, would it make recruitment more attractive ?—One cannot say until the experiment is tried.

G.-88. *Mr. Joshi*: With regard to repatriation, suppose you gave to each person sent to Assam a return ticket in his pocket, so that if he finds the conditions are not good he may return. If he finds he is getting good wages he will stop there; if he does not he may return. The total expenditure would not come to as high as Rs. 150 per person. Would that induce people to go there ?—I think they are told they can come back. I do not think a planter would keep a coolie who did not like the conditions.

G-89. Under the present law the planter does not give the coolie a return ticket ?—No, but as a matter of fact it is scarcely business to keep a man who is unwilling to work and who is dissatisfied with the conditions.

G-90. But the present difficulty is that when the coolie finds he does not like the conditions he has not the means to return ?—You would give him the ticket in his hand ?

17

G-91. Yes ? The whole labour force might walk off one day then.

G-92. Why should they, when in their own district the wages are 2 annas a day and in Assam they are 6 annas a day. Why should they walk off ?—They might not like the climate.

G-93. For a good reason they might walk off, but not otherwise. Would my suggestion enable free recruiting being introduced ?—I do not think it would work.

G-94. When a *sardar* is sent back to his village, his wife is kept back in many cases as a sort of surety for the man's return. Suppose a rule were made that if a *sardar* chooses to take his wife she must be sent with him : would that work a great hardship on the planter ?—I do not think so.

G-95. When the present Act is abolished, and a new Act for recruitment only is enacted, what will there remain for regulating the inspection of plantations ?—There is nothing about that in the present Act.

G-96. The Recruitment Bill proposed by the Government of India does not provide for any inspection ?—The Act itself does not either.

G-97. The Act provides for a certain kind of inspection, of unhealthy gardens for instance. Do you think that some kind of legislation for regular inspection is necessary ?—I think there should be regular inspection, but I do not know that legislation is necessary.

G-98. There is a Factories Act providing for a certain kind of inspection. In the case of plantations the conditions will not be the same, but should not there be some law providing for inspection and other matters, such as water supply, and such things ?—I think the planters have discovered that it is up to them to provide those things. Otherwise they will not get the coolies.

G-99. Laws are generally necessary for those people who take advantage of the reputation of the good planters. If there is a definite law then the bad planters will have to keep their conditions up to the standard of that law ?—I do not see any harm in it.

G-100. As regards labour representation on the Board, you say that the Chairman, or an officer of the Government, represents labour. Would there be any objection to a man from the labour movement in Madras being appointed on the Board as labour representative ? I see the difficulty that at present you have not got a man who knows the conditions either in Assam or in the recruiting area; but at the same time when you get a district magistrate here, newly transferred from the South of Madras to Vizagapatam, he too may not know the conditions. He learns. All officers of Government learn these things after they are appointed. If you got a good man from Madras in the labour movement, and he is appointed, he will learn the conditions here and in the recruiting area, and, if he is a conscientious man, he will go to Assam to see the conditions. Have you any objection to such a proposal ?—Not if he is willing to learn the conditions in both parts.

G-101. *Mr. Ahmed*: Is there any objection to a public recruiting agency ?—I think it would be too impersonal. You want the personal element in dealing with these people, a local agent who can talk the language. You do not want anything too official.

G-102. But are not the people already familiar with the conditions, having been employed on the gardens for generation after generation ?—The Madras people are certainly not familiar with Assam.

G-103. Is not the present system whereby the *sardars* get commission by taking the coolies to the gardens, a vicious system ?—It is an expensive system.

G-104. Is it not to the advantage of the *sardar* to paint the conditions as being very attractive ?—Yes, but the *sardar* has to give a true picture, because he will be found out otherwise.

G-105. But he paints a very bad picture according to some of the memoranda we have here ?—Some *sardars* do, but I do not think the majority do.

G-106. It is to the advantage of a *sardar* to paint the conditions good because then he gets recruits ?—Yes, they are sent down for that purpose.

G-107. Since that is so would it not be better to get rid of that system, and get a popular system of recruiting coolies ?—No. I think this system is the best.

G-108. But you yourself admit that it is to the advantage of some *sardars* to make misrepresentations, because they get commission. Would you not like to get rid of that system ?—I do not agree.

G-109. Why ?—I think the bad *sardars* are in a minority. There are a certain number who misrepresent the facts, but they will be found out in course of time, and they will be punished.

G-110. If there is a system which makes it to the interest of people to make misrepresentations, would you not like to get rid of that system ?—I still think the present system is the best.

G-111. Is it not one of the reasons of migration to Assam that the debtors see no other way of getting rid of their debts than simply run away to Assam ?—It may be a reason in some cases.

G-112. Family quarrels also may be another reason ?—Yes, may be.

G-113. There are also some culprits who leave the country and go to Assam in order to avoid punishment. Is that not also another reason for migration to Assam ?—Yes, that may be another reason in some cases.

G-114. Does not the *sardar* often misrepresent the state of things in Assam and induce the people to go there ?—He might do that sometimes.

G-115. Why then should this vicious system not be abolished and a Public Recruitment Agency be established in its place ?—I do not think it would be feasible.

G-116. In spite of all these defects you would stick to the present system ?—Yes.

G-117. In the case of the short-term coolies who go to Assam for 6, 9, or 12 months the employer repatriates them at the expense of the garden after the period of engagement is over. Are you in favour of a system under which all coolies will have the right of repatriation at the garden's expense after one or two years ?—I think they ought to be given the right of repatriation after a certain period.

G-118. They may be given the right even after one year ?—Yes.

G-119. It has been stated by several witnesses that the coolies who go and work in Assam do not get enough for them to live upon and therefore get into debt. They cannot save enough money to pay their return fares even if they want to return home. Have you any idea of the extent of indebtedness of the people who go to Assam and work there ?—From what I have seen of Assam a lot of people save a lot of money.

G-120. Only the *sardars* ?—Not only the *sardars* but many others also. The *sardar* only starts as a coolie.

G-121. Many people come back here after working in Assam but do not like to return to the gardens and stay here. Have you any figures to show the percentage of people who stay away like this ?—I cannot ; Captain Steele probably could.

G-122. Do you think that the wages in Assam,—As. 6 and As. 8—are sufficient for the labourers and their families ?—They seem to live on it. They get fuel free, rice at concession rates, free medical attendance and things like that.

G-123. What is the cost of living of a family consisting of a man, his wife and two children ?—I have no idea.

G-124. Do you think that As. 6 a day for a man is sufficient ?—I do not know.

G-125. Have you any provision to bring back people who have been taken to Assam under misrepresentation and false promises ?—If they have been taken under misrepresentation, certainly yes. Only last week I sent for two boys who had gone up without the permission of the guardians. Captain Steele wrote to the Manager of the garden to send them back. The law provides for that.

G-126. Some of these culprits and men of bad living who are convicted here and bound over to keep the peace escape to Assam. Do you take any steps to bring them back ?—Yes, if they are traced ; but it is sometimes very difficult to trace them ; they go under false names.

G-127. Do you keep full information about these people ?—The Police do that.

G-128. Is it not in the interests of the coolies that the particulars of each and every coolie who goes there should be maintained in order that he can be traced if necessary ?—The local agent keeps a register of all coolies sent for each garden. I think this question of persons of bad livelihood arose when I was Chairman of the Assam Labour Board and the Police arranged to send them back.

G-129. *Miss Lazarus* : In your memorandum you say that greater attention needs to be paid to medical needs. Can you suggest any improvements ?—I have seen some hospitals which are not housed in *pucca* buildings. There should be better buildings and more of equipment.

G-130. Is there any provision there for maternity benefit for women labourers ?—On most gardens I think they give maternity leave both before and after child-birth.

G-131. Do they make any distinction between women who actually work and those who do not in the matter of giving maternity benefits ?—I should imagine they make no distinction whatever ; they give the benefit to all women on the estate.

G-132. Some of the men leave their women behind them in the earlier stages of their pregnancy and go to Assam. Could not some arrangement be made by which the man may make some allotment to his wife which will be helpful to her during her confinement ?—It would have to be a matter of arrangement with each garden. But I see no reason why the man should not send the money by money order.

G-133. But do they send the money ?—I do not think they do, at any rate not to the extent to which they send from Burma.

G-134. To what extent is there a disturbance of family life on account of migration to Assam ?—There is a certain amount, but not a great deal. The gardens encourage as far as possible family groups ; they discourage single men and women migrating to Assam.

G-135. Is there any provision for the control of morality with regard to single men and women who migrate to Assam ?—None whatever.

G-136. Is there any sort of *panchayat* to control the moral and social aspect of the coolies who live in Assam ?—None that I know of. In matters like that the coolies look to the manager of the garden for advice.

G-137. Do you know of many cases in which the managers have given such advice ?—None have come to my notice.

G-138. You say that the coolies have benefited by going to Assam ? I did not say, morally, but I would say, physically.

G-139. Have you heard of cases of husbands returning diseased and communicating their disease to their wives ?—No.

Miss Lazarus : I have met some cases like that.

G-140. Suppose a family migrates to Assam and the man dies there leaving his wife and two children. Do you know of any provision to help them under the circumstances ? It depends on the manager. It is a personal matter really for the manager to look into and make some arrangement.

G-141. Has any such case come to your notice when you were Chairman of the Assam Labour Board ?—I do not remember the matter ever cropped up.

G-142. I say this because such cases of disturbance of family life have come to my notice ?—I think the manager is always ready to do as much as he can under such circumstances.

G-143. Have you any suggestion to make to put an end to misrepresentation by the *sardar* ?—The only thing is if a *sardar* is caught he will be punished. There is provision for that in the Act. He will not be sent down as a *sardar* again.

G-144. How many years do you think a coolie should be on a garden before he should be allowed to come down as a *sardar* ?—I think he should be there at least for one year.

G-145. Is it not better if he is allowed to go as a *sardar* only after three years ?—I think one year will do to give him a good idea of the conditions of life and work in Assam. If he is there for 3 years he will of course have a much better idea.

G-146. Are there any women recruiters ?—Yes.

G-147. Are there any women who interview the new women recruits before they go to Assam ?—None that I know of. I do not think it is necessary. The Local Agent sees to it all right.

G-148. Do you think that a certificate from the police as to the name and place from which the recruit is coming is sufficient for identification, especially in view of the fact that several people have the same name and come from the same place. Do you think that a photograph attached to a passport would be of help ?—It is not a feasible proposition to do that for every coolie.

G-149. Would not that do away with the difficulty of tracing the men if they are wanted ?—There are very few who need to be traced. Very rarely do we fail to trace them. I cannot remember more than half a dozen cases like that.

G-150. Is child labour allowed under the *vetti* system ?—There are no rules prohibiting child labour under the *vetti* system. I have not seen children work.

G-151. I have seen children work on the roads ?—They are there with their parents, I think.

G-152. Would it not be a good thing if we had on the Assam Labour Board representatives from the recruiting areas such as missionaries and social workers who know the people well ?—The difficulty is for men to have experience both of the recruiting areas and the plantations. It would be a very good thing if we had men of that experience on the Board.

G-153. Have you come across cases of kidnapping of both sexes ?—Cases do occur occasionally and the culprits are punished under the Indian Penal Code.

G-154. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In answer to Dr. Lazarus you said that anyone connected with recruitment to Assam should have a knowledge of the conditions in Assam as well as of the local recruiting areas. Which do you think is more important for a local agent ?—It is difficult to say.

G-155. Suppose there is a local recruiter who commands the confidence of the District Magistrate but on the other hand has no knowledge of the conditions in Assam. Would he be in any way a better recruiter than a *sardar* sent down by a garden who has a good knowledge of the conditions in Assam but who does not command the confidence of the District Magistrate to the same extent as the local recruiter does ?—I think it is important that the recruit should be told about the conditions in Assam. On the other hand if the *sardar* is not controlled he is liable to misrepresent things. He has got a temptation to do that. It is well that the local recruiter should have some knowledge of the conditions in Assam as well. It is rather difficult to say which is more necessary. For satisfactory recruiting both should go together.

G-156. Mr. Joshi put to you the idea of sending each recruit to Assam with a return ticket in his pocket so that if he was dissatisfied with the conditions in Assam he might return home without any difficulty. I understand that in the case of recruits to the tea gardens in Southern India the railway fare of the recruit is treated as an advance to be recovered from him. But in Assam that is not the case. If a man had a return ticket in his pocket and was under no obligation either to work on the garden or return the money would it not put a premium on free rides to Assam by people who have no intention of going there for work ?—I think it would be objectionable from the employer's point of view.

(The witness withdrew.)

SRIMAN SREE VIKRAMA DEO VARMA MAHASAYA of Vizagapatam.

G-157. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Will you tell us what your connection with labour has been ?—I am the uncle of the present Maharaja of Jeypore.

G-158. Do you yourself own land, or do you come in contact with labour in any way ?—I have got a village near Madugula. For the most part I live in Jeypore and as such I know something about emigration of labour to Assam and Rangoon. I am a family member of the Maharaja of Jeypore.

G-159. You are really representing the point of view of *zamindars* like the Maharaja of Jeypore ?—Yes.

G-160. We have been told that there are three systems of labour in this part of the country, namely, *khambari* system, *vetti* system and *goti* system. Will you tell us what the *vetti* system actually is ?—Formerly the people of the village were given some lands for their use in return for which they had to serve the *zamindar*, the Rajah or the Maharaja of the estate.

G-161. Do they pay rent for the lands ?—Yes, a nominal rent.

G-162. What wages do the *zamindars* pay to these people in return for the services ?—Generally nothing.

G-163. Can you tell us about the *goti* system ?—The *goties* can be employed by any inhabitant of the Agency. If I want a *goti* I will have to pay him an advance according to his requirements, and he and his family will then come to my house. He will be provided with a house and will be paid in kind for the services he would render. If he wants to leave the service he should return the advance taken.

G-164. Do you charge any interest on the advance ?—No.

G-165. Suppose you give a man, say, Rs. 50, and there is no interest charged. How do you measure the extent of the services rendered by the man and his family in order that it may be set off against the Rs. 50 advance ?—He cannot leave the service unless he pays back the Rs. 50.

G-166. Is the position then that unless the man is able to pay Rs. 50 he and his family are bound to you for all time ?—If he wants to leave my service he should seek another master from whom he can get that Rs. 50; he can pay that money and go to some other master.

G-167. Can you tell us what the *khambari* system means ?—*Khambari* means a servant. It is the same as the *goti* system. Generally, the *khambaries* are not paid any advance.

G-168. There was an Agricultural Commission which went round the country a year or two ago. Did you meet that Commission at all ?—No.

G-169. They recommended that freedom of movement ought to be given as soon as possible to all agricultural and other workers. Do you feel that the labour that work under these systems have got complete freedom of movement ?—Yes ; there is no restriction placed on them.

G-170. Then why do you object to the Agency labour going to Madras tea gardens, or to the Burma rice fields, or to the Assam tea gardens ?—I object to the people from Jeypore Agency going to the Assam tea plantations because they are duped by the *sardars* who come to recruit them. These labourers being very illiterate and simple are carried away by the alluring promises held out by the recruiters. These *sardars* tell them that if they go to Assam they can wear lace turbans ; in the case of women labour they tell them that they can get gold bangles and so on. If one goes the others follow him like sheep.

G-171. Are you speaking of *Souras* in particular ?—Yes, and *Porjas*.

G-172. Thousands of them go every year to Assam. Do you suggest that they ought not to be allowed to go to Assam ?—Yes.

G.-173. You have said that these people are simple and ignorant. Do you not think it will do them a lot of good if they go and see what is happening in some other part of the world ?—If they go with the idea of learning something new I would not have any objection. But I am told by people who have returned from Assam—and I fully believe what they have told me—that these people go and die due to heavy work and after their death their flesh and bones are used as manure.

G-174. We have seen the conditions ourselves and we have seen the particular types of labour to which you refer. Supposing the *sardars* do not come to recruit and tell these people about the conditions in Assam, how will these people who are simple and ignorant ever know what to do in order to improve their conditions ?—They may know where to go.

G-175. How are they to know where they can go in order to improve their living conditions unless the *sardars* or somebody else come and tell them about the conditions obtaining elsewhere ?—If the *sardars* speak the truth then it will be a different thing, but the fact is that they do not speak the truth.

G-176. You yourself have never been to Assam ?—No.

G-177. And you cannot therefore say whether the conditions in Assam as represented by the *sardars* are true or not ?—I have no personal knowledge, because I have not visited Assam.

G-178. You will agree that a *sardar* or somebody el e is quite entitled to come to these *goties* and others and say to them " If you go to Assam you will get better wages and better terms than what you are getting here "?—I have no objection if the things are truly stated.

G-179. If the things are truly stated you would agree that there is no objection to people coming and telling these labourers that there are better conditions elsewhere ?—Yes.

G-180. Do many of these labourers go to Burma ?—Not many from Jeypore Agency.

G-181. Why ?—Because they can live in Jeypore, quite comfortably. There were many famines in Jeypore, and I can assure the Commission that not a single soul died of hunger and starvation. I do not say that our people are taking table rice, but there is no doubt that they can get decent food. I think they are satisfied with what they get; at least formerly they used to be satisfied.

G-182. All of us were satisfied with simple things formerly, but you would agree, do you not, that some raising of the standard of living is necessary for all people ?—Yes, but the difficulty is that they are not educated people. What is the use of these people going to Assam and dying there ? There are many lands lying vacant.

G-183. Are there lands lying vacant in Jeypore consequent on these people going to Assam ?—Yes, there are hundreds of acres of land lying vacant.

G-184. I am not referring to the uncultivated areas. Are there areas that have been cultivated and are lying fallow now due to these people going away to other places ?—Yes.

G-185. Do these *goties* get employment all the year round ?—Yes.

G-186. We can understand their services being used at the seed time and at the harvesting time ; but what do they do during the remaining period ?—They will bring fuel from the forest to their masters ; they will be engaged on grazing the cattle and on doing some household work.

G-187. *Mr. Clow* : You were saying that the labourer is not as contented as he used to be ?—I think he is contented even now. He is a quiet and harmless man, but the thing is he is told by these *sardars* that he could get more money outside.

G-188. Do you not think it would be a good thing if he got more money ?—If he gets more money and becomes rich and comes back to Jeypore, then that would be quite a good thing. But that is not what happens. People are going and dying there, vacating their motherland.

G-189. If you gave them more wages in Jeypore then they would not want to go outside ?—At present they are getting more wages than what they used to get formerly ; they were getting As. 2 to As. 3 before, whereas now they get As. 4. Perhaps in time to come they may get As. 6. The Jeypore *samasthan* is also paying As. 4 now.

G-190. That is a good thing, is it not ? Yes. The Jeypore *samasthan* has increased the daily wages to As. 4, and this was due to the kindness of the Maharaja. The present Dewan is an I. C. S. officer and a good administrator, and looks after the welfare of the people.

G-191. If you increase the wages further, they would not want to go to Assam ?—The *sardars* tell these people that by going to Assam they can earn Rs. 2 a day, and I do not think you would expect the Jeypore *samasthan* or the P. W. D. to pay Rs. 2 wages here.

G-192. There is a lot of men who have come back from Assam ?—There are very few who have come back.

G-193. They do not want to come back ?—They cannot come back, I think.

G-194. *Sir Alexander Murray.* Some of them have come back, have they not ?—I think they are very very few.

G-195. What do those who have come back say ?—They say that they had to work all the day in deep water, and they had great difficulties.

G-196. In spite of their saying this more men are going to Assam ?—Yes. They must have told other people as well, but I cannot say why people still go to Assam.

G-197. *Mr. Clow* : Suppose people are taken to Assam and the employer gives the return fare after three years, would you like that system ?—There is no objection to that, but as a member of the family of the Maharaja of Jeypore I would object to that also, because if the people were to leave their land and go it would affect the income of the *samasthan.*

G-198. If you pay a high wage at Jeypore they would not want to go elsewhere ?—What wages do you want us to give ? If they come to Vizagapatam they can get As. 8, but why should we pay As. 8 in Jeypore which is their own home ; it is much cheaper for them to live at Jeypore than elsewhere.

G-199. Why do you think so many are emigrating ?—As I have already said, the conditions that exist in Assam are overstated to them ; they emigrate to Assam without knowing the exact conditions of labour there and the exact wages they would get.

G-200. Those who come back are better clothed than those who do not go ?—No.

G-201. You do not agree with Mr. Naidu, late tahsildar of Parlakimedi, who in his memorandum says : " The *Savara* in the Agency tracts is very rude and uncivilized and has only pieces of cloth for his loins and for his head. The Assam returned *Savara* wears pants, coats, etc."?—No, I do not agree. Two years ago I saw some people who came back from Assam, and they were in a miserable condition.

G-202. Did you see the condition of any who returned recently ?—No ; I do not know what the present day conditions are, because I saw the people only two years ago.

G-203. In the last three years the figures we have show that 8,000 came back to this local agency ?—I do not know what the exact figures are.

G-204. *Sir Alexander Murray* : As Mr. Clow pointed out, we have figures from Government and other sources which show that 8,000 people came back

here in the past three years in order to take more men up to Assam. You must have seen some thousands of these moving about. Did they not appear to be more contented than others ?—Unfortunately I did not see them.

G-205. *Mr. Clow*: When you say in your memorandum: "Certainly this is nothing short of modern slavery, legalized by modern Acts to enrich the Assam plantations with human manure from the agency tracts," what do you exactly mean by that ?—As I said, I was told that if people died in Assam their flesh and bones are used as manure ; I was told this and I believed it.

G-206. I think we can assure you that that is not true ?—It may be untrue. I was told, and I believed it to be true.

G-207. *Mr. Joshi*: If you say that the *sardars* make misrepresentations and induce people to go to Assam, why you and the Maharaja of Jeypore do not start counter propaganda ?—That, in my opinion, is due to the passiveness of we Hindus. If a counter propaganda is started, I am sure that people will not go to Assam.

G-208. Whenever you find any case of misrepresentation, do you write to the District Magistrate and say that this should not be done ?—We have had several meetings at which we have passed many resolutions. These resolutions have been sent to the Government of India, the Assam Government and the Bengal Government.

G-209. I am not talking of resolutions. If you find a *sardar* misrepresenting a case, why do you not report it to the District Magistrate ? Did you report any such cases ?—No, I did not.

G-210. Why ?—Because these things are well known to the authorities.

G-211. *Sir Alexander Murray*:—If you meet a *sardar* guilty of misrepresentation, why do you not bring it to the notice of Mr. Bracken or some other officer who can make an enquiry and cancel the licence of the *sardar*, thus preventing him from recruiting under misrepresentation ? Have you ever taken steps to do that ?—No.

G-212. Do you not think it would be a good thing to do that ?—No doubt it would be a good thing, but the *sardars* come here without our knowledge.

G-213. Surely hundreds of *sardars* come every year for the purpose of recruiting men for Assam. But the point is, if you find a *sardar* or anybody else guilty of misrepresentation and imposing upon the simple, illiterate cultivators, why do you not go to Mr. Bracken or to any other officer who is in charge of the district and point out the misrepresentation to him, so that he can immediately cancel the licence of the *sardar* ? I take it that if you find any case of misrepresentation in future you will immediately bring it to the notice of the officer concerned ?—As I said, I arranged for a number of meetings at which resolutions were passed. I also got a resolution passed in the Madras Legislative Council in regard to this matter, through our representatives in the Council. In spite of all this the Government did not take any action. I therefore thought that there would be no use in troubling the local officers as they would not be able to take any action.

G-214. If you had come to us and said that any officer had refused to enquire into cases of misrepresentation brought to his notice, we might have been able to do something, but then you cannot point to a single case where you have gone to the officer with a case of misrepresentation ?—No. I thought there would be no use in troubling him.

G-215. *Mr. Ahmed*: I take it that you know of many cases where the *sardars* have come from Assam and have told many things which are not true ? —Yes.

G-216. They tell people that they can earn Rs. 2 a day in Assam, which is not true at all ?—Quite.

G-217. You have said that only a very few return back from Assam. Is it not a fact that the reason why a great majority of them do not come back is that they do not get sufficient money to defray their travelling expenses ?—That is possible. I am told that many people die of difficulties.

G-218. In view of that you think it would be better for them to live in Jeypore where they can be better off rather than go to Assam ?—Yes.

G-219. Your present Diwan is an educated man, I take it ?—Yes ; he is an M.A., B.Sc., I.C.S.

G-220. What is his name ?—Mr. V. Ramakrishna Choudhry.

G-221. Does he know that you are giving evidence before the Commission ? —Yes ; I have also given him a copy of my memorandum.

G-222. Does he agree with what you say in your memorandum ?—Yes.

G-223. You do not think that it is in any way advantageous to the people of Jeypore to go to Assam, and that only on account of misrepresentation by the *sardars* they go there ?—Yes.

G-224. Do you not think that a public employment agency is a better method for recruitment than recruitment by *sardars* who misrepresent things ? —I think so.

G-225. How do you say that flesh and bones of people who die in Assam are used as manure ?—I was told so and I believed it.

G-226. *Miss Lazarus*: In what way is the *goti* system better than emigration to Assam ?—In my opinion, Assam labour is compulsory labour. People go to Burma, earn money and come back ; that is entirely a different matter. When there are so many vacant lands available in their own home, why should, these people go to the tea plantations in Assam ?—If they stay here the lands, I think, can be improved.

G-227. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why do so many people go to Assam in preference to the *goti* system ?—*Goti* system is no doubt a little hard, but there is not much difficulty under this system. People are fed, clothed and housed. But the *sardars* and others tell these people that if they go to Assam they can get more money, they can wear lace turban and so on.

G-228. Under the *goti* system the man is not as free as he is under the Assam labour system ; under this latter system he is allowed to go and come back whenever he chooses ?—Under the *goti* system, if a man wants to leave his master he can do so after getting money from another master.

G-229. Supposing he cannot get another master and has no money in hand, what has he to do ?—He must serve his master till he is in a position to repay the advance; he is not bound to serve legally but only morally. These people are so simple and honest that they will not leave the service of their master unless they return the money back.

G-230. *Miss Lazarus*: Are there cases of persons under the *goti* system having been set free ?—No.

G-231. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How many cases of actual deception by the *sardars* have you seen ?—I cannot say.

G-232. *Miss Lazarus*: Has the Maharaja or his Diwan warned the labourers against the deception of the *sardars* by carrying on anti-recruiting propaganda ?—I do not know.

G-233. Is the Maharaja making his territory more habitable ?—He is trying his best to do that; he is going to construct a railway line of his own.

G-234. Would that make Jeypore more attractive than Assam ?—Certainly. What doubt is there ?

G-235. I would like to know whether, in your opinion, this statement which appears in one of the memoranda submitted to the Commission is true: "It is notorious that the lower classes are given no encouragement by the upper classes and no opportunity for economic or social advancement and for a very good reason—the zamindars and other higher castes find it considerably to their interests to exploit the slave mentality of the lower and labouring classes"? —That is not the system in Jeypore. I do not know whether that system prevails in other zamindaries or not.

G-236. You state in your memorandum that two contractors have brought down labour from Cuttack, Sambulpur and other places to the Rayagada section of the railway. Is it cheaper to get labour from these places than to recruit in Jeypore ?—No; these contractors are paying the labour more. The coolies recruited are mostly *kachies*.

G-237. Is it because that the *kachies* are more hard working than the Agency labour that they have been recruited ?—No doubt the *kachies* are more hard working than the Agency labour, but the reason for recruiting them is due to the scarcity of local labour.

G-238. Do these contractors try to compete with the Assam Labour Association in recruiting ?—No.

G-239. *Sir Alexander Murray*: If these contractors are offering good wages why do not the labourers go to the contractors to work instead of going away to Assam and not coming back ?—These contractors are working near Rayagada, and people are taken from Malkanagiri. They cannot get people from Nawrangpur to this place because there is no railway communication.

G-240. *Miss Lazarus*: Is it not because the labour is emigrating to Assam? —No.

(The witness withdrew.)

Captain F. R. STEELE and Mr. L. S. DRIVER, local agents of the Tea Districts Labour Association.

G-241. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Captain Steele, what is your experience in connection with the tea industry ?—(*Captain Steele*): I joined the Tea Districts Labour Association in October 1923. Before that I was in the Army. I was for three years in the Ceded Districts and three years in Ganjam as local agent of the Association.

G-242. Mr. Driver, what is your experience of the industry ?—(*Mr. Driver*): I have been 20 years in this Association. I was 12 years in Ganjam 4 years in this Agency, and for some time in Sambalpur, Cuttack and Ranchi.

G-243. The statement that you have submitted refers to Ganjam only, is that so ?—(*Captain Steele*): Yes, it refers to Ganjam only.

G-244. You have given certain figures regarding the number of *sardars* sent down by the gardens in Assam and the number of recruits you send up every year. Do those figures include Cachar and Sylhet also ?—They include Cachar and Sylhet also, but exclude the Dooars.

G-245. You say that 5,299 *sardars* came down in 1926-27, 3,202 in 1927-28 and 2,439 in 1928-29. How many of these returned to the gardens ?—The number of *sardars* who returned to the gardens was 2,843 in 1926-27, 1,807 in 1927-28 and 1,418 in 1928-29.

G-246. That shows that during the three years about 11,000 *sardars* have come down and about 6,000 have returned taking with them 8,992 recruits ?—Yes.

G-247. That seems to be rather above the average as regards the number of *sardars* who return and the number of recruits taken with them ?—Yes.

G-248. What became of the other *sardars* who did not return ?—They are still in the district.

G-249. Are you sure that they themselves have not been recruited and sent back ?—I am certain about that.

G-250. Could they not have been recruited as ordinary labourers ?—A very small percentage of them might have been—about 5 per cent.

G-251. Have you had any experience of men who have been recruited here going to Assam, coming back very soon and then being recruited here to another garden, going to Assam and coming again—in other words a sort of professional recruit ?—I have had no experience of such persons. I cannot tell of any case to my knowledge.

G-252. What do you think is a reasonable time for a man to work on a garden before he comes down as a *sardar* ?—One to two years will be a reasonable time. At any rate it should not be under one year.

G-253. Do you think that it is enough for a *Sowra* or anybody else to remain for one year on a garden to learn the conditions of life and work there ?—Yes

G-254. It was the intention of Government that as far as possible the garden *sardars* should be labourers themselves. Is it for that reason that you suggest that the labourer should work for one year before he comes out as a *sardar* ?—Not necessarily that. He should familiarize himself with the conditions of life and work there on the garden.

G-255. Have you had cases of *sardars* misrepresenting the conditions in Assam in order to induce people to migrate ?—There is no doubt that the *sardars* do that. But that does not mean that the people who migrate do so under a misapprehension. When the recruits come to the local agent everything is set right.

G-256. In actual practice you say that any coolie who goes to Assam knows what and where he is going to ?—Yes.

G-257. He knows the conditions of life, work and wages and so on ?—Yes. The *sardar* comes down with a "question sheet" on which the conditions of life and wages on the garden are written.

G-258. What do you give him as an advance ?—The advance varies. So far as the *Sowras* are concerned I give them Rs. 20 as first advance. That applies to *Khonds* also. For Indian States I give Rs. 25 and for the rest I give Rs. 15 as first advance. They go out and look about for coolies and come in and report. If I am satisfied with their report that they have actually arranged for coolies I then give them further advances which in the case of the plains does not exceed Rs. 10.

G-259. In your memorandum you give us statistics of family groups, single males and single females who have emigrated through your Agency for the past three years. What do you do to discourage single males going up ?—During 1926-27 the majority of gardens stopped taking *Soora* single males ; they required family groups only, hence the low percentage of single males for the past three years.

G-260. Take single females. What steps do you take to see that a woman is not a minor and that she has got the consent of the parent or guardian to emigrate to Assam ?—We have a full-time doctor who checks the ages of these people. The age limit is 14 for boys and 16 for girls ; within those ages they are considered to be minors.

G.-261. How long do you detain your recruits here ?—In the case of Agency single females I detain them seven days ; in the case of the plains, 3 days. I send out a peon to the headman of the village to verify the statement made by the recruit. The headman of the village in turn gets hold of the relations of the coolie and finds out whether the girl has gone with the consent of the guardian or not.

G-262. Do you send a written communication to the headman ?—Yes.

G-263. Do you get a written reply ?—Yes.

G-264. Are the headmen always in a position to read and write ?—Not all of them. Some of them are not.

G-265. You consider it is not possible that the peon or the messenger should be in collusion with the recruiter ?—The recruiter is kept with me and

the peon is sent to the village direct. The recruiter does not know whether a certain peon will be sent out or not.

G-266. You think that the safeguards you take are sufficient ?—I do, especially in view of the detention of 7 days which really gives some time to the relations to come in and claim the females. I have had cases of relations coming in and claiming females.

G-267. Could you give us an idea of the number of cases ?—Last year 144 single females were brought in, 127 were sent up and 17 were returned. 105 minor children were brought in, 90 were sent up and 15 were returned. In connection with those 15 returned 5 *sardars* were prosecuted and in the case of the females returned three *sardars* were prosecuted. Their licences were cancelled except in one case where there was a difference of opinion as to the age of a minor between our medical officer and the medical officer of Government.

G-268. Do you examine medically all your recruits here ?—I have a full-time doctor who examines their physical fitness.

G-269. What is the percentage of rejections ?—The total rejections last year for medical and other reasons were 9 per cent. It was 7 per cent. for 1927-28 and 8 per cent. for 1926-27.

G-270. Have you any experience of short term coolies ?—We have just started short term recruiting. Till now I have sent about 30 coolies for one year.

G-271. Have you any idea of the indebtedness of the people who come to you and ask to be sent to Assam ? Do you pay off their debts in all cases ?—We do, but not in all cases. We verify their debts and if we find them to be genuine, we pay them off. My average figures in this connection are Rs. 8-10-0 last year, Rs. 10-6-0 for 1927-28, and Rs. 8-1-0 for 1926-27. Our maximum debt has been Rs. 40.

G-272. Does it represent the average debt of the people you sent ?—This is the average debt of people I recruit in Ganjam, and is mostly confined to the *Khonds*. They have this *Gonti* system of marriage under which the bridegroom pays something to the bride who is betrothed to him. If the bride happens to go to Assam as a member of her family group and if the bridegroom cannot accompany her the bride has to return the money given to her. This happens after the betrothal and before the marriage. They also have provision for divorce. Even then some money has to be returned. It is such debts that we pay.

G-273. Do you pay the debts incurred under the *Khambari* system ?—No.

G-274. What was that Rs. 40 that you paid ?—That was the cost of two buffaloes.

G-275. At any rate when you pass on anybody up to Assam you try as far as possible to pay off his debts ?—We do.

G-276. We have heard it suggested that many people run away to Assam in order to escape their liability for debts. What has been your experience in that connection ?—I have had no such experience.

G-277. Do you think that some people *run away to Assam to escape* criminal liability ?—*I can hardly see how that* can be done.

G-278. Have you many cases *of false names given* to you ?—That invariably happens with the *Sowras*. It is very characteristic with them; they have two or three names; they give one of them.

G-279. Can you trace them if necessary ?—It is very difficult; we can succeed with the help of the village headman.

G-280. Have you ever been asked to trace anyone and failed to get at him ?—No, as a rule we have been able to trace them.

G-281. Do these people who go to Assam know full well that they are not bound under any agreement and *that Act XIII has been repealed* ?—They know that full well. I tell them clearly that they go under no contract whatever. I personally tell them that they are at liberty to return whenever they like paying their own fares back.

G-282. Do you find that there is any clash of interest between your responsibility to the Tea Districts Labour Association as local agent in charge of recruitment and that to the *District Magistrate as a registering officer* under Act VI ? On the one hand you may wish to send up somebody and on the other hand you may have to keep him back ?—I do not send up anybody unless the requirements of the Act are fulfilled. I should like that the Tea Districts Labour Association be allowed to do propaganda and to assist men to migrate to Assam.

G-283. Have you found any difficulties as regards "*assisting*" *sardars* to recruit ?—We are not permitted to do that under the Act. With the *Sowras* for instance the *sardars* should be allowed to obtain the assistance of their relations or friends in the district in recruiting operatives. We should also be permitted to send up *voluntarily* reported coolies.

G-284. Do you find many cases of men voluntarily offering to be sent ?—We had a few cases. We asked them *to get in touch with a sardar*.

G-285. Do you write to the *garden to send down a sardar in order to* recruit those voluntary coolies ?—We do that if we have no *sardar* in the district. Generally the *sardar* in the district recruits these coolies.

G-286. What is it that makes the people migrate to Assam ? Is it the pressure on the soil or is it the attractive picture painted by the *sardars* ?—Undoubtedly it is due to the pressure on the soil. They work here only for part of the year whereas in Assam they can work *all the year round*. Another reason is: the lower castes want to be free from the caste restrictions. The lower caste people when they return from Assam have an entirely different outlook. He is interested in his social welfare and his outlook on life and society has undergone a tremendous change.

G-287. When he comes back to his family after a stay in Assam his bearing and outlook act as a stimulus to others to migrate ?—Undoubtedly it does.

G-288. We have had it stated to us by a gentleman connected with Jeypore this morning that the coolies are enticed by misrepresentation to Assam and that if the truth were told to them they would not go to Assam ?—

(*Mr. Driver*). We have two local agencies in Koraput. Every coolie is thoroughly acquainted with the conditions in Assam before he is forwarded. They question him personally and satisfy themselves that he knows the conditions there.

G-289. We have some statistics regarding Koraput. The number of *sardars* sent down to that place was 2,635 in 1928-29; of these, 1,344 returned taking with them 4,158 souls. What is this due to ?—The amount of money that they can earn in Koraput is not even half of what they can earn in Assam; it is only one third. That is why recruiting in Koraput has been so successful.

G-290. The picture has not been overdrawn ? If it has been overdrawn why did not the people who have returned from Assam stay away here ? They might easily have absconded as 50 per cent. of the *Sowras* have done.—We could not have traced them. Though we can file a civil suit for the recovery of advances only in very rare cases do we ever do that. (*Captain Steele.*) I have not had even one such case in my time. I have been always against that being done.

G-291. *Mr. Clow*: You said you had experience of the Ceded Districts. Was there any substantial recruitment for Assam from there ?—There was. In 1924-25 I sent up 10,000 people. I was in charge of four districts, but now we have closed all of them except Cuddappah. For one thing the labour did not suit us and on account of some political trouble lots of them returned. Managers are not consigning *sardars* to those districts.

G-292. You recruit for the Dooars also?—Yes, so far as Northern Ganjam is concerned.

G-293. Is it the same class of men who go to the Dooars that go to Assam also ?—Yes.

G-294. Do men coming back from Assam wish to be sent to the Dooars ?—Occasionally this happens.

G-295. Do you discourage men changing the Province in that way ?—Certainly. If I discover a Dooars man coming up to me I send him to Mr. Casey who recruits for the Dooars. He has a separate establishment for it.

G-296. But suppose the man wants to go to the Dooars ?—If he wants to go we send him up and adjust the expenses between ourselves.

G-297. Is there any preference for the Dooars as against Assam ?—So far as I am concerned I have noticed a preference for Assam.

G-298. Why is that ?—I cannot say why. The men can earn more in the Dooars but in Assam they get many perquisites and ultimately they are better off there than in the Dooars.

G-299. Are these people whom you recruit sent to any particular part of Assam or are they spread over Assam ?—They are spread over Assam.

G-300. They are not concentrated ?—No.

G-301. Did I understand you to say to the Chairman that you never paid the *Khambari* debts which the man owes to his *zamindar* ?—*I have not* paid any *Khambari* debts. I have paid only the ordinary debts.

G-302. Why did you not pay it ?—I have had no instances of that kind. I do not mean to say that we do not pay it. I have not paid it till now.

G-303. No man who has got a *Khambari* debt has come forward ? No, it is very difficult to get a *Khambari* man.

G-304. We were told by one of the witnesses this morning that one of the reasons why people go to Assam is to escape this bondage ?—As I have explained in my memorandum the *Khambari* system is nothing but slavery. Besides before we paid the debts we would have to verify whether the man was working for so and so and how much he owed him and so on. The *Khambari* zamindar would refuse to accept payment of debts and release the man.

G-305. Why should he refuse to accept payment ? Is it not a recognized thing that if a man wishes to pay off his debt and be free he can do so?—It is an extraordinary thing but these people do not like the *Khambaris* to migrate.

G-306. It is natural, it is not extraordinary ?—Yes.

G-307. One of the memoranda presented to us by a missionary working at Gunupur Taluk states :—

> "Probably the worst is the unauthorized trade in coolies for the tea gardens. As stated above *sardars* sometimes employ others, to assist them, and such helpers after a while start business themselves without the authorization of the Tea Districts Labour Association depots and manage to get the coolies duly accepted through the help of one or other of the clerks in the depots. I have personally had to dismiss a mission worker who had become guilty of such an offence."

Have you had any experience of such things ?—No.

G-308. Are there sufficient safeguards to prevent such things occurring ? —Yes, I think so.

G-309. What would be the effect on recruiting if all those recruited for Assam were given the right of repatriation after three years ?—I think it would denude Assam of its labour force. (*Mr. Driver*) : I do not believe it. If you gave the option of accepting the money or returning home you would find that half the people who had gone there with the intention of settling down would take the money and settle there.

G-310. We are told that one factor which militates against recruitment for Assam is the common belief that once a man goes to Assam he cannot come back ?—(*Captain Steele*). It might have been the case before, but the belief is dying out especially after the introduction of short-term recruitments.

G-311. Have you any suggestion to make for reducing the cost of recruitment ?—If we are permitted to "assist" the *sardar* by propaganda and other means he will be able to get more recruits and the cost per recruit will automatically go down. Of the *sardars* consigned last year only 27 per cent. were successful and the remaining 73 per cent. were unsuccessful ; they did not recruit even a single man.

G-312. I suppose a good many of that 73 per cent. came down without any intention of recruiting at all ?—If we take *Sowras* into consideration it is likely.

G-313. Does the *sardar* usually travel with the men he recruits ?—No, not necessarily. The recruits are sent up through forwarding agencies. We have peons who escort them from point to point till they reach the garden. It sometimes happens that the coolie refuses to go unless the *sardar* goes with him. In such cases the *sardar* accompanies the coolie.

G-314. I suppose a good many *sardars* sent down from the gardens fail to report to you ?—They all report unless they are the "name-cut" people. The *sardars* sent on recruiting licence report to me.

G-315. Even if they do not intend to recruit ?—(*Mr. Driver*). It is to their interest to come and report to us because we give them bus fares to their village and *Khoraki* till they get to their village.

G-316. Do you notice any increase in the number of men presenting themselves voluntarily ?—(*Captain Steele*). Recently there has been an increase.

G-317. Suppose you were given the power of forwarding them, do you think there would be a substantial increase in the number of men presenting themselves voluntarily ?—Yes, I do.

G-318. Is it possible that unknown to you the *sardars* pay the *Khambari* debts ?—Small debts are paid off by the *sardars*. For instance, a *sardar* getting a first advance of Rs. 25 may pay a debt of Rs. 5. The *Khambari* debts generally run into hundreds of rupees.

G-319. You do not think that the *Khambari* coolies are going to Assam at present ?—No.

G-320. There has been an allegation that the coolies are persuaded with the help of intoxicating drinks ?—Not at all.

G-321. *Mr. Joshi* : In your memorandum you have given certain rates of wages. In the non-harvesting season it is As. 6 to As. 8 for males in the district and in the non-plucking season it is As. 6 to As. 8 in Assam. What is the inducement for the labourer to go to Assam ?—Work is not available in the district all through the year whereas it is available in Assam. Moreover there are other perquisites in Assam such as free housing and so on. The man gets a clothing outfit and an advance of Rs. 10—Rs. 5 here and Rs. 5 on the garden.

G-322. You have described the *vetti* system. Suppose a man refuses to do work for Government under the *vetti* system what will the Government do ?—He cannot very well refuse. He will be forced to do it.

G-323. How is he forced ? Is he beaten ?—The *Bissoyis* see to it that the men go to work. There are other ways of turning them out for work without beating them. The *Bissoyi* is the headman of the village and he has various ways of influencing the men.

G-324. Is this *Bissoyi* a Government officer ?—He is paid a certain amount of allowance by Government.

G-315. Even if they do not intend to recruit ?—(*Mr. Driver*). It is to their interest to come and report to us because we give them bus fares to their village and *Khoraki* till they get to their village.

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G-1193. As regards dependents you suggest that dependents should ordinarily be called upon to furnish proof of dependence. Would not that give a loophole to the employers to contest cases to the disadvantage of poor dependents ?—It would, but on the other hand a fairly affluent dependent may take the compensation as against a dependent who would really be helpless without compensation.

G-1194. They might prove dependence against each other but not against the employer ?—Yes ; the Government of India sent a circular letter asking whether it would be advisable to ask dependents to furnish proof of dependence.

G-1195. The present position is this : if any dependent appears the employer has no further right to the money and no proof of dependence is required. The question raised by the Government of India was whether all dependents should not be required to prove that they are actually dependent ?—I think in the present state of the country it will not be very difficult to furnish proof of dependence.

G-1196. In the great majority of cases the compensation goes to the widow or the children where it is superfluous to demand proof ?—In those cases it will be obvious. We demand proof only in the case of rival dependents. We only lay emphasis on the present provision in the Act itself.

G-1197. With regard to the point raised by the Chairman about the Commissioner taking action on his own motion, did you refer to the Commissioner of Labour or the Commissioner under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—I am willing to take it either way.

G-1198. In the majority of provinces there is no Commissioner of Labour. Would you give these powers to the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation ?—If possible I would not.

G-1199. Do you think it is a matter for the trade union to take up ?—Where they are sufficiently organized they can take it up. My object in suggesting these amendments is not that they should be permanent provisions in

traceable except in the medical register of the employer where he happens to have a doctor and a medical register. When the case is taken up before the Commissioner, one hardly knows whether the disability that has ultimately resulted could be directly traced to the accident, trivial or serious as it may have been at the time. We have often had to accept the evidence of the employer's doctor and could not do anything to verify the matter. Labour is not sufficiently organized to have a panel of doctors. I have been feeling that workmen's compensation cases require more a panel of doctors than a panel of lawyers because most of the questions are medical in nature.

G-1182. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Why should not the Panel of Lawyers attach a panel of doctors to themselves ?—We have tried to get some doctors but without success.

G-1183. *Mr. Clow* : In your memorandum you give certain figures regarding the number of accidents. Where are the statistics taken from ?—They were taken from the Labour Commissioner's reports.

G-1184. Do they cover all the accidents in factories and mines, or what are they ?—They do not and they cannot. They represent the accidents with regard to which returns have been sent to the Labour Commissioner under section 16 of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

G-1185. They are cases in which compensation has been paid ?—Yes.

G-1186. There seems to be some mistake ; are you sure of that ?—I believe so ; I am not sure.

G-1187. As regards the amendment to the definition of workman what precisely would be the effect of introducing the amendment ? Would it really go much further than the existing Act ?—The definition of workman in the English Act is practically exhaustive except in a very few cases such as domestic servants, high salaried people, and non-manual labour. It may not be feasible to adopt that definition here and we have been at our wit's end to suggest an expansion. The present definition in the Workmen's Compensation Act was modelled on the definition in the 1897 Act in England. By 1906 the English definition had expanded so as to include practically all workmen with regard to accidents mentioned in the Act. The English Act of 1925 practically adopts the definition of 1906. While we have felt that it may be difficult to go so far in India at the present time we have been unable to find a *via media* between the present Indian and English definitions. We have just indicated our opinion without suggesting any definite draft amendment.

G-1188. As regards paying compensation in instalments you suggest that it should be left to the option of the workman or the dependent to take it in a lump sum or in instalments when the sum does not exceed Rs. 500. Would not that be dangerous in the case of minor dependents ?—Yes, it would be. There was a considerable difference of opinion on this point among the members of the Panel. We realized that there would be some sort of difficulty either way. But we had to suggest some practical scheme and we put forward this suggestion.

G-1189. As regards the waiting period, take the case of a man who was injured for not more than 10 days, say for instance only for 4 days, would it be a feasible proposition to enforce the payment of that amount of compensation

G-344. Because he gets a bonus in proportion to the number of recruits he secures it gives him a greater inducement to recruit more ?—So far as the bonus on the garden is concerned, yes.

G-345. You have recently started the system of short-term recruitment. Do you find that the proportion of women is less under this system than under the old system ?—I have only sent up 30 coolies so far. We started this system only 2 months before. I have not got here the exact number of women who went with those 30 coolies but there were some in the batch.

G-346. Generally speaking, can you say whether the proportion of women is more or less ?—It is a bit below.

G-347. With regard to single women that are recruited, what kind of protection have they in your lines ?—We have separate accommodation for single women.

G-348. Is there any sort of *panchayat* representing heads of different communities who see to their social and moral relationships ?—So far as the recruiting districts are concerned, we have none.

G-349. Do you think it to be necessary ?—We have *chowkidars* on the lines. The detention of a single female, in the case of the Agencies, is 7 days and 3 days in the case of other tracts. Each morning these people come before me and if they have any complaints to make they can always make them to me. Personally I have had no trouble in that respect.

G-350. In tracing a certain number of these recruits from their original villages back to their destination some could not be correctly traced back. Do you think it would help if a photograph were taken of every coolie that was recruited ?—I am afraid not, because we will have thousands of photographs and it will be practically impossible to trace them even in that case.

G-351. Would it not be worth a trial ?—I do not think the cost would justify it.

G-352. The people that you recruit are chiefly of the agricultural types ?—Yes, we want agriculturists for our gardens.

G-353. Do you think this is affecting the local agriculture ?—It tends to put up the price of the local market.

G-354. In one of the memoranda we are told that the labour left behind is not sufficient to carry on because they are taken away chiefly during the agricultural season ?—I think we still leave a sufficient number. So far as the Agency tracts are concerned, it is a matter of opinion ; some of the district officials maintain that we are denuding the tracts while others maintain that there are far more people than the soil can support.

G-355. Any one working in the garden can choose to come back whenever he wishes, can he ?—Yes, he can if he pays his way back.

G-356. You said that if one wants to come back as a *sardar* he has to get round his manager. Is it easy for him or for her to get round the manager ?—As a rule, yes. It may interest you to know the figures of *sardars* who came down last year. Of the *sardars* sent, roughly 150 were on the garden for 6

months, 400 were from 7 to 12 months, 600 from 1 to 2 years, 440 from 2 to 3 years, 300 from 3 to 5 years and 690 for 5 years and above.

G-357. You say in your memorandum that the *Sowra* after a spell on a tea garden returns not only physically improved but also in his bearing and social status ?—Yes.

G-358. What about the family disturbance ?—We want their families to go with them, but the *Sowras* go along in the first instance with a view to coming back as *sardars* to recruit their wives.

G-359. Could I have the proportion of *sardars* that come back with their wives and families ?—I have not got that figure here. I can get that later on.

G-360. I want to know whether it disturbs their family relationship ?—From the figures given in my memorandum you will see that the family groups predominate.

G-361. You think that the Assam Labour Board is superfluous ?—I do.

G-362. The President of the Board tells us that he feels that he is the representative of the labourers on the Board. If the Board is removed, who will represent the labourers ? In what way does he represent the labour ?—I cannot see that he represents the labour in any way.

G-363. I mean their interests ? (*Mr. Driver*) : We do, and not the Board.

G-364. You do with an interest in the plantations. You want the labourers for your own pecuniary gain ?—Naturally.

G-365. *Sir Alexander Murray* : What Miss Lazarus means is this. The *ex*-Chairman of the Labour Board who appeared before us this morning told us that the constitution of the Board is such that excepting the Chairman the other members represent chiefly the tea planting interests. He considered, therefore, that his particular duty was to see that the interests of the labourers were protected ?—(*Captain Steele*) : If the Assam Labour Board can point out any case in which they have championed the cause of labour I would be very grateful to hear of it. I think we champion the cause of labour more than they do.

G-366. *Miss Lazarus* : There is the other side too, the side of the labourer ?—I think that the control of the District Magistrate will meet all that is necessary from that point of view. If the labour did not like Assam they would not go to it.

G-367. You have said that the lower classes emigrate to escape the difficulties put in their way by the high castes. You say : " the labour which emigrates is of the lower classes " and that the caste question and the status of the untouchable in the Madras Presidency has a particular bearing on migration. You also say that the higher castes find it considerably to their interests to exploit the slave mentality of the lower and labouring classes. Which part of the Presidency have you been referring to ?—Mostly in the Sowra Agency tracts, and also to some extent in the southern portions of the Ganjam district.

G-368. Do you find that the relationship between the lower and the higher castes in the Sowra districts to be the same as in the ceded districts or is it more relaxed in the case of the former ?—It is more pronounced if anything in the ceded districts.

G-369. You mean it is more relaxed in the Sowra districts ?—Yes.

G-370. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Do you do any recruiting specially of the criminal tribes ?—(*Mr. Driver*) : I have sent a certain number of *Kondadoras* from this district, who are a criminal tribe. (*Captain Steele*) : Occasionally we get some of them going to the gardens. (*Mr. Driver*) : As a matter of fact, I was offered by a Deputy Superintendent of Police and a former Collector of Vizagapatam to try to get a large number of these *Kondadoras* sent to the tea gardens, but the gardens would not have them.

G-371. Why ?—Because they said that they were afraid to have hundreds of these *Kondadoras* on one or two estates.

G-372. Are they agriculturists ?—Yes, but they are rowdies like the *Moplahs*.

G-373. We have particulars of the number of coolies who emigrated from Vizagapatam and Bimlipatam to Rangoon. Take, for instance, the last year 1928-29. There were 24,438 who went from Vizagapatam to Rangoon and 2,199 from Bimlipatam. These people go to Rangoon without any special recruiting, do they not ?—(*Captain Steele*) : As far as I know, *Kanganies* come across and take them in big batches.

G-374. Can you speak from personal knowledge ?—Yes, I have seen these *Kanganies* accompanying these people. I have given you figures of the number of those shipped from the three ports in the Ganjam district.

G-375. Your figures come to only 20,000 from the three ports whereas from Vizagapatam alone 24,000 went last year ?—I have no information as to the number who went from Vizagapatam.

G-376. Can you give us from your experience any idea as to the relative merits of the system of recruitment for Assam and Rangoon ? How is it that such a large number go to Rangoon while you have such difficulty in recruiting for Assam ?—(*Mr. Driver*) : In Rangoon it is all seasonal work. These people go for 6—9 months chiefly for rice cutting season. The fare to Rangoon is also very cheap. They earn Re. 1 to Rs. 1-8-0 a day for that short period. The majority of the labourers who go are single males.

G-377. It has been put to us repeatedly as to why it should be necessary for the tea gardens in Assam to maintain such an elaborate organization to recruit labour from all corners of India, while the labour from the same area go to Rangoon without any special form of recruitment ? (*Captain Steele*) :—As Mr. Driver pointed out, the work is only seasonal, and the labour that go are single males. (*Mr. Driver*) : A labourer who goes to the rice fields at Rangoon can earn Rs. 1-8-0 a day, while on the tea plantation he cannot ; you can seldom find persons on the tea plantations in Assam working for over 6 hours a day and their average earning for such a short period as 6 months cannot come to Rs. 1-8-0 a day.

G-378. *Mr. Joshi* : So the difference is in the rate of wages paid ?—It does not pay us to take labour to Assam for 6 months in a year, because the time that you require them in Assam is not the time when they will go from their district. (*Captain Steele*) : If we wanted only single males, we can get them in large numbers.

G-379. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Do you mean to say that the time when these people are required in Burma fits in with their seasons ; that is to say, these people have their own seed time and harvesting time which do not clash with the season at Rangoon ?—(*Captain Steele*) : A part of it overlaps, but it is the surplus population that goes to Rangoon.

G-380. Do you have any recruitment for the Southern India tea gardens from these parts ?—(*Mr. Driver*) : None at all. A few years ago they tried it, but it did not pay.

G-381. Do you know the practice that is prevalent there ? As I understand it, when a labourer is recruited for South Indian gardens, the advance money that is given to him is treated as a regular advance and is recovered from his wages ?—I believe it is so. Practically all their labour is recruited round about, and they are not required to meet recruiting expenses to any extent that we have to here. I do not know what our actual recruiting expenses come to, but I think on an average it comes to Rs. 150 to land a coolie from these areas in Assam.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. G. T. H. BRACKEN, I.C.S., District Magistrate and Agent to the Governor, Vizagapatam.

G-382. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Have you had much experience of the recruitment either for Assam or for Rangoon ? Can you tell us anything about the relative attractions of the two places to the people ?—Yes. I have served in Godavari from which there is very great migration. I have also served in Ganjam, and now I am serving in Vizagapatam, which are also centres of emigration.

G-383. Could you explain what are the special attractions of Burma to the cultivator from here and what are the attractions of Assam, if there are any ?—As regards Burma, a man can go over there and keep his land here going with the aid of his family. For the short period that he goes he earns a very high wage. It is all seasonal work there.

G-384. Who comes and recruits these people ? Do they go voluntarily or are they recruited by *mistris* ?—They go voluntarily. This has been going on for a very long time, and it has become so to say an established business. One member of a family goes while the others keep the bits of land going on.

G-385. From the figures you have given us we find that in 1926-27 there were 27,286 people who went from Vizagapatam alone to Rangoon, in 1927-28 there were 27,396 and in 1928-29 there were 24,438. From Bimlipatam the number of people who went to Rangoon in 1927-28 was 1,697 and in 1928-29 it

was 2,199. In addition to these there are many who go from Gopalpur, Baruva, Kalingapatam and Cocanada ?—Yes. The figures for Cocanada, I think, would probably be round about 30,000.

G-386. That is so far as Burma is concerned, but what is it that takes them to Assam ?—It depends to a considerable extent on the different tribes who go, their methods of life and so on. Take, for instance, the *Sowras*. The amount of forest country available for their shifting cultivation is very limited. In the case of these people I made some enquiries when I was Collector and Agent in Ganjam. There is a definite economic pressure, and there is not enough land.

G-387. In one of the memoranda we have received it is stated: "The good results obtained with regard to the *Sowra* migration during the year 1926-27 were due almost entirely to the action of Government during that and the previous year in enforcing their forest protection policy... The new policy was regarded as interference and roused considerable resentment, and the *Sowra* was forced to seek a means of subsistence and migrated to tea which presented itself as a solution of his difficulties." Can you tell us what is the change of policy referred to here ?—Reserving various forest tracts and prohibiting this shifting cultivation.

G-388. This refers to the *Sowras* who are the principal people who emigrate from Ganjam ?—Yes.

G-389. Can you tell us about the conditions in Jeypore ?—There the conditions are very different. There it is mostly open country and very fertile country; there is good rainfall and there is enough land to go round. In fact, the country is crying out for more cultivators.

G-390. According to the figures that have been given to us by the Indian Tea Association we find that in the year 1928-29 there were over 4,500 souls sent up to Assam from Koraput, which I understand is practically in Jeypore. What is the attraction that takes these people to Assam, thus preventing them from staying on their land ?—To my mind there are two or three causes to that. The villagers are very conservative and they would not let in other villagers as a rule; there are separate villages, and they will not encourage emigrants. If the pressure of the population in a village gets too great, there is an economic inducement to go. But I think that is rather a minor cause. The second cause, I think, is the *goti* system.

G-391. We have been told that there are three different systems, and I am not quite sure that we have really caught their implications. Will you, in the first place, explain what is the *vetti* system ? That is purely a Government system ?—It is Government and the Estate as well. According to the tenure of land in Jeypore, and in the other Agencies too, some people hold their land on condition of doing a certain amount of work without any payment. But in recent years the Maharaja of Jeypore has issued an edict that they are to be paid annas 4.

G-392. What has Government done ?—Government also pay annas 4 for doing the work.

G-393. To all male and female adults ?—Yes.

G-394. Do they employ children too?—They work in families. In this district all the Government works are done on definite estimates, and we try to employ piece-workers as far as possible, and families turn up and work.

G-395. We asked your colleague from Ganjam, Mr. Austin, if he would be good enough to tell us when the rates were last revised for the *vetti* system and how often they have been revised. Could you please send us a note for the Vizagapatam area?—This annas 4 rate was introduced by the Estate, I should think, 10 years ago.

G-396. Does that mean that every man gets annas 4?—Yes.

G-397. How much is a woman paid?—Annas 2 or 2½ annas I think.

G-398. And the children?—As. 2 or something of that kind. Each village is called upon to furnish so many people for 10 days at a time as a rule, and they send out so many men from that village and they are supposed to be paid annas 4 a day for those 10 days.

G-399. Have you reasons to believe that they are paid?—It is my constant endeavour to try and see that they are paid.

G-400. Do they work longer than 10 days?—Not generally.

G-401. How often in a year will they be called?—They may be called either for Government work or for State work, and it depends upon the proximity of the village. Some villages are called out more often than other remote villages from which it is not easy to get hold of people.

G-402. Will you explain what the *goti* system is?—Under the *goti* system the average sum that a man borrows is Rs. 30 which is principally for marriage, and he engages to work for the landowner to work that off. Not always but quite frequently he executes a pronote for Rs. 30 or whatever the sum is, and he works for the landlord, receiving certain customary fees every year. The usual thing is he gets 12 measures of paddy which has an estimated value of Rs. 24, and after harvesting he gets another donation of paddy estimated at Rs. 5; one cloth a year estimated at Re. 1 and miscellaneous items estimated at Rs. 5.

G-403. All that is in kind?—Yes.

G-404. Is there any cash paid at all?—Very rarely. It is not customary; the custom is to give it in kind.

G-405. Do they ever repay the advance?—In theory they are supposed to work off in about 5 years.

G-406. Is it your experience that the landowner keeps the man even after 5 years?—Yes, in some cases. There are all sorts of ways in getting the man round. The man may borrow 1 or 2 Rs. occasionally, or if the man does not turn up to work the landlord may fine him annas 2. Somehow or other he keeps the debt going indefinitely.

G-407. Do they add interest?—No, that is not the practice.

G-408. In your memorandum you have given us an extract from the *District Gazetteer*. May I know what is the date of the *Gazetteer*?—It was written by Sir George Paddison about 20 years ago.

G-409. He says: "The rate of interest on loans extorted by these *Sondis* is 100 per cent." ?—If you take the value of the labour that the man puts in, I think it will work out to several 100 per cent.

G-410. The return given in kind by the man against the cash advance that he receives for his marriage works out to more than 100 per cent ?—Yes, if you take the value of the work to be annas 4 a day.

G-411. What about the *khambari* system ?—That is more applicable in the plains. It is a similar system to the *goti* system.

G-412. Do you think that these systems have an influence in causing the people in the Agencies to go away to Assam or Rangoon or somewhere else ?—Practically to Assam or to the Dooars ; they do not go to Rangoon.

G-413. Why ?—Because the conditions in Assam are more similar to what they are used to ; Assam is also a hilly country. There is also no organization for taking them to Burma. If there was some organization, I fancy that a lot of them would eventually go to Burma. They are very simple people and they do not know how to go to Burma.

G-414. Do you find that they are imposed upon to any extent by the *sardars* who recruit on behalf of the Assam tea gardens ?—I think they definitely know what they are in for, and what they are going to earn. They very well know that they cannot earn Rs. 2 a day, and the local agents explain to them the conditions fully before they are sent.

G-415. You say in your memorandum: "Care is taken that, as far as possible, undesirable persons should not act as *sardars*. When any matter against a *sardar* comes to light, steps are taken to have his licence cancelled : but, as already stated, offences are the exception." Have you got any figures to show how often the licences had to be cancelled in recent years for offences ?—I think I have given that in my note.

G-416. Yes, you say: "The Act has worked satisfactorily and there have been very few complaints of illegalities. There were two cases of kidnapping by *sardars* in 1926-27 ; in 1927-28 no offences were reported ; and in 1928-29, one only." Do you think that the system in force is such as to prevent illegal offences ?—I think the local agents try to work the thing honestly, because they know that if illegal practices come in recruiting would be stopped. I think they generally do their best to prevent any illegalities. If they are doubtful about any case they send it on to me for examination and decision. I have had several cases like that. In some cases I have allowed the persons to go and in some cases I have not allowed them. When I examine these people they seem to know exactly what they are going in for in Assam ; I have taken the trouble to find it out. When I tell them that they are not going to get Rs. 2 a day or anything like that, they say: "We know what we will be getting ; we will get As. 6 or something like that."

G-417. The Linlithgow Commission recommended that as soon as possible free movement of labour should be encouraged all over India. I think I gather from your statement that recruitment in the Agency should continue to be most strictly controlled. You think that it would be a mistake to have free recruiting when you have such simple and unsophisticated people ?—I think they would be imposed upon.

G-418. Do you hold any strong views as to the relative merits of *sardari* recruiting, that is, recruiting from the gardens, as against an open system of recruiting under which some person of good character recommended by the magistrate should be allowed to recruit on the spot as a local agent ?—I would not like to have a lot of independent *sardars* working unless they were under the control of some central body which will be a distinct check on them. It is rather difficult to tell the character of these *sardars*. Some of them are of bad character, and I have to cancel the licence occasionally. For instance, the other day we traced a *sardar* who was a known criminal with a lot of previous convictions, and I cancelled his licence straight away. He was a registered member of a criminal tribe.

G-419. We were trying to find out something about the criminal tribes. We understand that the Tea Districts Labour Association do not encourage the recruitment to Assam of that particular class whereas we understood that the police and the local magistrate are encouraged to get them in to Assam ?—There are quite a number of *Doms* who go to Assam. Mr. Driver was referring to *Kondadoras* who live more in the plains. Quite a number of *Doms* have gone to Assam. I had a case only the other day of a man who had committed an offence some 3 or 4 years ago and had run away to Assam. He was eventually traced and brought before me. He had a good certificate from the manager. The case was one of petty theft. He appeared before me and said : "I want to go back to Assam." I said : "Very well", and sentenced him to imprisonment till the rising of the court.

G-420. Do you think they are a suitable type to be sent up to Assam ?—Some of these *Doms* are good workers. They are outcastes in the Agency ; you can call them under-dogs ; they are like pariahs, and they have rather bad times in some cases. They are definitely a criminal tribe and given to thieving and dacoity.

G-421. Will you give us the benefit of your long experience ? Do you find that as a result of going to Assam and coming back as *sardars* or otherwise there is a definite raising in the standard of what you call these under-dogs ?—I think so. I think a good deal of their thieving activities are due to the bad time they get in the Agency. When they go up to the gardens they are well treated. Many of them have become very self-respecting and have been testified by the managers to be of good character.

G-422. To your knowledge many of them come back as *sardars* ?—Some of them come back as *sardars*, but I cannot give you any exact figures.

G-423. *Mr. Clow :* You have heard Captain Steele's evidence ?—Yes.

G-424. Was he correct in stating that the *goti* system is confined to marriage debts ?—The most common way of contracting debts is for marriages.

G-425. It is also applied to this form of agricultural servitude ?—They become agricultural serfs by borrowing money in connection with marriages.

G-426. Captain Steele seemed to be under the impression, or at any rate he gave me the impression, that the *goti* debt was merely the debt due to the bride or to the bride's parents ?—That is the bride price.

G-427. But it covers both kinds of debt ?—It is all in connection with marriages. The customs in different tribes are different. For instance, the marriage custom of *Khonds* is different from that of *Porjas*. But the money is most probably borrowed in connection with marriages either to get married or to compensate the husband.

G-428. It is money due to a zamindar and not to the bride's parents ?—He borrows from the landowner to pay this price.

G-429. Is there any distinction between what you call the *goti* system and what Captain Steele called the *khambari* system ?—There is not any great difference between the two. One term is used more in the plains while the other is used in the Agency.

G-430. Do you know, in actual practice, if those who are bound by these bonds to landlords are actually recruited for Assam ?—I cannot tell you of definite cases, because they do not come to my knowledge. But I know that sometimes they get so fed up with the things that they go away. There is a point when things become so intolerable that they cannot stick to it any longer. Although they are very conservative and do not want to go away, yet seeing that the conditions in their own village are not good enough they think that on the whole it would be better for them to go away.

G-431. Has emigration to Assam or elsewhere had a visible effect in raising the rate of agricultural wages ?—I do not think so, but it has had this effect that people have learned that in other parts better wages can be earned. Of course, the road works done by the Public Works Department are on piece-work and the workers easily earn As. 8 a day.

G-432. Are not the complaints made by some zamindars that recruitment to Assam and other areas should be stopped due to the fact that wages in agricultural areas are rising in consequence thereof ?—Yes, undoubtedly. That applies still more in South India where I had long experience in my early days both in Tinnevelley and Tanjore. The landowners of Tinnevelley wanted to stop all emigration to Ceylon, because the Ceylon emigration definitely raised the wages.

G-433. The same effect, if it has not already arrived, might be anticipated here ?—Yes.

G-434. You do not think it has already had an effect ?—Not on any large scale as to definitely affect, but it has that tendency I would say.

G-435. *Sir Alexander Murray* : The evidence tendered by the uncle of the Maharaja of Jeypore seemed to indicate that families were leaving uncultivated lands in order to go to Assam, and that there was a restriction put on the transfer of land from the present cultivator to somebody. Could you enlighten us on that point ?—There is an Act called the Land Transfer and Interest Act which applies to the Agency only. No member of a hill tribe can transfer his land to a member of the non-hill tribe without the permission of the Agent. That is the position in regard to that.

G-436. You indicated to us that some of them wanted to go away to Assam. Do they go as a family, leaving the land vacant, or do they dispose of their land ?—Probably some members of the family carry on the cultivation, but it is

undoubtedly true that there is a lot of cultivable land which ought to be cultivated, and in my opinion there is undoubtedly a shortage of labour in the Agency.

G-437. *Mr. Clow* : With regard to emigration to Burma, how does the man get his fare to Burma ?—More or less it is a family business. One member of the family comes back and he probably lends to another member of the family.

G-438. Do contractors take any part in this affair ?—I do not think so, because it is an established family business.

G-439. Have you seen the two jute mills in this district ?—Yes, I have seen them.

G-440. Do they recruit their labour entirely locally ?—Practically locally, except skilled labour like fitters.

G-441. Are they more or less permanent, or do they still retain agricultural interests ?—Nearly all of them retain agricultural interests to some extent.

G-442. *Mr. Joshi* : Why do these *Soweras* shift their cultivation ? What is the object ?—Their method of cultivation is to cut down, say, 2 or 3 acres of forest, burn the wood and then grow crops. They grow crops mostly on the slopes of hills, and they go right to the top. They cultivate for 3 years and the land becomes unfertile and they go on to another bit if they like to do cultivation.

G-443. Do you think that people go to Burma without any special recruitment and do not go to Assam, because the wages in Burma are comparatively higher than those in Assam ?—Yes.

G-444. The wages really have an effect in the case of Burma in securing labour, while in the case of Assam there is the difficulty in getting labour ?—The Burma terms of course are much more attractive and fit in with their habits ; the wages are much better undoubtedly.

G-445. *Sir Alexander Murray* : The people who go to Burma are mostly from the plains ; the *Sowras* do not go to Burma.

G-446. *Mr. Joshi* : Those people who go to Burma may go to Assam if they find the same attractive conditions in Assam ?—The plains people find it much easier to go to Burma.

G-447. With regard to the *vetti* system I want to get details. You said that at a time Government take work from the people who are under this system for 10 days. How many times in a year will these people be called in ?—That is rather a difficult thing to say. It depends upon the proximity of the village from the place of work. If a village is nearer to the place the people of that village will be called up more frequently than the people of the village which is farther to the place.

G-448. Who fixes all these ; is there any one who controls it ?—The State arranges, as a rule.

G-449. Does the State mean the British Government ?—No. It means the Maharaja of Jeypore. By the way, I might explain that Mr. Mahasaya was

not representing the views of the Maharaja of Jeypore ; he was representing his own personal views.

G-450. Is he a ruling prince ?—No ; but the land is held from him on condition of labour.

G-451. He is a zamindar ?—Yes. In order to assist in the development of the country he has been arranging for the supply of labour to Government to some extent.

G-452. I want to know whether the Government take this labour through the zamindar or whether they get it direct ?—It is generally arranged through the State.

G-453. What do you mean when you say 'it is arranged through the State' ?—The State officials send messages to the villages and tell them that it is their turn to supply labour.

G-454. When he is not a ruling prince what kind of authority has he to order these people to supply labour ?—These people recognize their liability to do his work. I do not say they like it.

G-455. Do you as a District Magistrate consider that these ignorant people should not be made to work under the wrong impression that they are bound to obey the Maharaja's servants ?—There is no question of their being bound to obey the Maharaja's servants, but the condition of their land tenure is that they should do this work.

G-456. Do the civil courts recognize the debts incurred by a man under the *goti* system ?—Very often it is only a question of custom, but if there is a regular pronote then the landlord can recover his money through the court.

G-457. Suppose a landlord has taken a pronote from a man 50 years ago and the son of the debtor is still paying his debts according to the *goti* system. Suppose the landlord goes to the court for recovering the debt, will the court recognize the debt ?—I think in that case statutory limitations would come in the way.

G-458. Are these pronotes renewed from time to time ?—They sometimes renew them, I suppose.

G-459. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Does the court in recognizing the debt take into consideration the value of the services rendered by the man ?—That is a question that I am just now taking up to see whether these bonds are not contrary to public policy.

G-460. *Mr. Joshi* : Do cases under this system go to courts ?—Not very often. As a rule these people are very honest, and they recognize their liabilities. I know that in quite a number of cases there is no document whatever.

G-461. *Mr. Clow* : Have you ever heard of a single case ?—There have been a few cases.

G-462. *Sir Alexander Murray* : How does the court assess the value of the service given in kind towards the payment ?—That is a question that I am just now taking up. It has never been really raised so far. I have just issued a circular to the court to see whether the question of the service will not infringe the provisions of the Act limiting the interest at 24 per cent.

33

G-463. There is an Act in Madras applied to the Agency that limits the rate of interest to 24 per cent. per annum. I think that would stop a good deal of the debts ?—I think it probably will ; that is my hope.

G-464. *Mr. Joshi* : Who fixes the rates to be paid to these *vetti* labourers ?—It is fixed at As. 4.

G-465. If it is to be changed, who has got the authority to change it ?—Has the District Magistrate the authority ?—I suppose the District Magistrate in his capacity as Agent to the Governor can advise the Maharaja to raise the rate for *vetti* labour.

G-466. Do you think that this system amounts to a forced labour system ?—Of course, in some cases it is inconvenient to the people, but on the other hand they do recognize that this is a condition on which they hold their land.

G-467. I quite admit that people recognize that, but I want to know whether in your judgment, after having seen the working of this system, it is a forced labour system ?—It is rather difficult to define forced labour. I think I have explained the position fully. They are bound, according to the system of land tenure, to provide labour when called upon to do so.

G-468. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Though there is no obligation to pay anything, they are paid now As. 4 a day ?—It is due to the generosity of the Maharaja that they are paid As. 4.

G-469. *Mr. Joshi* : Who pays this As. 4 ?—If it is Public Works Department work the contractors are supposed to pay the labour.

G-470. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You told us that when Government want something to be done in the Public Works Department they apply to the Maharaja who makes the necessary arrangements for the supply of labour. When it comes to a question of payment to these labourers do you pay through the Maharaja ?—No ; it is paid direct by the contractors to the coolies.

G-471. Without the intervention of the Maharaja ?—Yes.

G-472. *Mr. Joshi* : Suppose the man refuses to work, how is he made to work ?—The village headman is responsible to see that the men turn out for work.

G-473. I want to know whether the men use physical force ; otherwise in what way can they compel them to work ?—I have never seen it used. I think it is not inconceivable.

G-474. *Mr. Ahmed* : Have there been any cases of assault of men forced to work for As. 4 a day ?—I do not think there have been any.

G-475. Is it not open to them to go elsewhere if they get higher wages ?—They do not get more than As. 4 from anyone else. Others pay less.

G-476. Therefore it is not the fault of the zamindar or the Public Works Department ?—I would say definitely they are better off than they were 10 years ago when the new rates were introduced.

G-477. In piece-work they can earn much more if they work hard ?—Yes.

G-478. Do they as a matter of fact earn more ?—They like turning up for work late in the morning and going away very early in the evening. They do not earn very much. They can certainly earn As. 8 and even more.

G-479. Is there any tenancy law in this Province governing the relations between landlord and tenant ?—We have the Estates Land Act.

G-480. Is there any law under which this sort of servitude known as the *vetti* system is allowed ?—It is an immemorial custom but it is not recognised by law. It could not be enforced in a court.

G-481. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Is there any difference between the landlord and tenant law applicable to the Presidency and that applicable to the Agency ?—The same Act applies to both.

G-482. *Mr. Ahmed* : Is there any legal basis for the *goti* and the *khambari* systems or are they merely immemorial customs ?—They take the form of a pronote which can be enforced in a court. That is the basis of it at any rate in some cases. They do occasionally sue on it.

G-483. It is an understanding between the people and they stick to it ?—Yes, they are a very honest people as a rule.

G-484. Do they get any educational facilities from Government ?—Yes, Government are opening schools constantly.

G-485. What percentage of them are literate ?—Only a very small per cent. among the hill tribes, certainly not more than 10 per cent. at most. They do not take to education readily.

G-486. They are kept in that condition by Government and the zamindars ?—Government are doing everything to encourage education among them. We have an Agency District Board looking after education of which I am president. The number of schools is increasing every year.

G-487. *Sir Alexander Murray* : We had one of the representatives of the Tea Districts Labour Association this morning and asked him what he did in the case o single women recruits and others who, he thought, might have been kidnapped from the villages. He said that he detained them for a certain number of days—in the case of single women it was 7 days—and sent a peon to the village with a letter to the village headman with a view to ascertaining the family antecedents of the recruits. In your experience have you found the average headman to be literate enough to receive and reply to letters ?—Very few of them are literate. I am very doubtful of it.

G-488. As a District Magistrate has it ever occurred to you to find out the actual machinery which they put into operation in cases of that kind ?—In cases of doubt I have made a practice of sending for the recruit myself and examining him personally.

G-489. *Mr. Ahmed* : You referred to a case where a man who was prosecuted escaped to Assam ; he was brought back by the Police and on his giving an undertaking to go to Assam you sentenced him to imprisonment till the rising of the Court ?—The man said he was earning his honest livelihood in Assam and begged to be allowed to go there. I thought there was no use of standing in his way and sentenced him to imprisonment till the rising of the court and gave him a chance to go to Assam and earn an honest livelihood.

G-490. If he had said that he would not go to Assam would you have sentenced him to three months' imprisonment ?—No.

G-491. What would you have done ?—I would not have done anything. Even now I do not know where he has gone. Probably he may be here.

G-492. Do the Courts help the people in this way to migrate to Assam ?—Certainly not. He was perfectly free to go or not as he chose. What I did was just to give him a chance to earn an honest livelihood.

G-493. You say that the *sardar* does not entice the people. How do you know that he does not ?—I do not think I committed myself to the statement that the *sardar* does not entice the people. I said I had no experience of the *sardar* doing it.

G-494. Is not a *sardar* interested in getting more and more recruits ?—I believe the estate pays him for the recruits he takes with him.

G-495. Does he not get something from the recruits themselves ?—I doubt whether he does ; I do not think so.

G-496. When he comes down to recruit does he not generally leave his family in Assam and come alone ?—Sometimes he comes down with his wife and family. But the majority of them come down alone leaving their families in Assam.

G-497. All this is done in the interests of the tea garden. Instead of this vicious system of *sardari* recruiting why should not a Public Recruiting Agency be established ?—I do not know whether the State should become a recruiter of labour.

G-498. The Labour Department may appoint a recognized recruiting officer ?—The Agency people would not go to a recruiting bureau unless somebody went to their villages and told them clearly of the conditions in Assam.

G-499. You want that somebody should go and misrepresent the conditions in Assam to the people of the Agency so that they might be induced to go there ?—No, certainly not. The responsible agents of the Tea Districts Labour Association who carry on the business of recruiting for the tea gardens do not misrepresent the conditions in Assam.

G-500. But we have had many witnesses before us who said that the *sardari* system was a vicious and costly system and had led to a great deal of corruption ?—The *sardari* system like any other system would be liable to abuse if it was not strictly controlled.

G-501. They say that 40 per cent. of the *sardars* do not return and thereby cause a heavy loss to the gardens which send them down ?—Yes, there is a loss of 40 per cent. of *sardars*.

G-502. Can they recover the amount advanced to the *sardars* ?—They can recover the amount through courts, but they never do it.

G-503. What is the reason ?—I do not know.

G-504. *Miss Lazarus* : Do you agree that the *khamberi* and *vetti* systems are contributing factors for emigration ?—I think the *goti* system is one of the contributing factors.

G-505. What about the *vetti* system ?—I do not think that affects the question.

G-506. Do you have any cases where the employer of a *goti* who has gone away to Assam has brought a case in court for the recovery of the *goti* debt ?—I have never actually seen a case.

G-507. If a man who is under the *vetti* system wants to go to Assam, what does he do ? Is he bound to repay to Government anything before he can go ?—No. The Government do not make any advance to him. He is only paid a daily wage of As. 4.

G-508. Does he or his family forfeit the land ?—No.

G-509. If the whole family migrates to Assam ?—He may lose his land.

G-510. What is the period of absence that makes him liable to lose his land ?—In practice, somebody else would occupy it if the whole family would want to go.

G-511. Do you know of any case where a man has forfeited his land on account of permanent emigration ?—I cannot say that I do know of any case, but the practice, I think, is for the rest of the village to divide the land amongst themselves if one family go away permanently.

G-512. Has no family come back after a lapse of, say, about 5 years to claim the land ?—Cases of that nature have come up.

G-513. Is it difficult for them to get back their land ?—It is not easy. If a man is in possession naturally he would not like to give it up.

G-514. What do they do then ?—We have cases in court about that.

The witness.—I want to make my position clear, if I might, with regard to the recruitment of labour from the Agency. I do think there is a definite shortage of labour both for Public Works and for bringing this extraordinarily fertile country under cultivation. Until the country is better cultivated, we can never tackle the malarial problem. In that respect, I think I should say that I am against the labour being taken away from the Agency. But, on the other hand, from the point of view of the actual labourers, this emigration does raise the standard of living and is an ultimate means of escape against some forms of oppression.

There is one other point, and that is with regard to the Criminal Tribes Act. Under that Act the registered members are put under definite restrictions ; they have got to report themselves to the police on certain days at certain hours, and occasionally in the middle of the night. I suppose there is a distinct inducement to them to go to Assam.

G-515. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Do you encourage them to go ; or do you find that they disappear ?—They disappear very often.

G-516. Much to your satisfaction ?—Yes, if they are bad criminals I will only be too glad to get rid of them. I think there is no doubt that the Criminal Tribes Act has some effect on emigration. The three factors which contribute to emigration are, economic pressure, various forms of oppression of the *gati* system, and the Criminal Tribes Act.

G-517. Practically all the recruitment done in these parts is done through the Tea Districts Labour Association, which appears to have a monopoly. Have you ever had applications from other outside agencies for appointing local agents, and if so, did you turn them down ?—I have never had any application.

(The witness withdrew.)

35

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Eighty-Fifth Meeting.

VIZAGAPATAM.

Thursday, 27th February 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S. | Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A. | Dr. Miss LAZARUS (*Lady Assessor*).

Mr. A. DIBDIN (*Joint Secretary*).

ABDUR RAHMAN, a storeman at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works, examined on board the Dredger Vizagapatam.

G-517*a*. I belong to Chittagong. I came here two months ago. I came *via* Calcutta. The shipping master sent the pass to the *serang* and the *serang* gave it to me. I earn Rs. 35 a month. I draw my pay on the 15th of every month. My work is to mix paints and to look after the lights in the dredger. I come at 6 in the morning, work till 9 and go for meals ; I come back at 10 and work till 1 when I get again 1 hour's rest ; I return at 2 and work till 4-30 P.M. I have left my family behind. I have my wife, my mother and two brothers. I sleep on the dredger.

(The witness withdrew.)

NOOR MUHAMMAD, a khalasi working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.

G-517*b*. I belong to Chittagong. Three of us came together from Chittagong to Calcutta, and from Calcutta to here we came with a railway pass. I am a deck *khalasi*. I came only yesterday. My salary is Rs. 28 per month. I was working as a *khalasi* in one of the British India Steam Navigation Co.'s ships. I was getting Rs. 22 there. I gave nothing to the *serang*. The *serang* and I lived together and belonged to the same village.

(The witness withdrew.)

ABDUL NABI, a tindal working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.

G-517*c*. I come from Chittagong. I came here 1½ years ago as a winchman. I have been a tindal for the last two months. The *serang* gave me the pass, and I came. I was getting Rs. 35 before, and I am getting Rs. 38 now. I did not give anything to the *serang*. I came in the morning at 6 and will work

till 3 P. M. I get 10 minutes off now and again for meals, etc. We have a common mess for 30 of us, and 2 cooks prepare our food. Each of us give Rs. 15 to the *serang* who provides us with food. We do not get anything from the Works for food. I have left my family in my country. I have a wife and 2 children. I was working in a number of vessels belonging to the British India Steam Navigation Co. and also the Peninsular and Oriental Co. I was a deck seaman and was getting Rs. 25 a month. After paying my mess charges of Rs. 15, I send the balance to my family. I did not give any *bakshis* to the *serang* of the British India Steam Navigation Co. or the Peninsular and Oriental Co.

(The witness withdrew.)

KAKI GURRAPPA, a coolie working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.

G-517*d*. I am employed by contractor Rambabu. We have 5 boats belonging to the contractor, and 16 of us work together. We unload the coal from the boats and load it on to the dredger. We are paid Rs. 10 a day. I came to-day at 8 o'clock. Some days I come at 6 in the morning. Generally we finish our work at 4 in the evening, but sometimes we stay till 5 o'clock. We may start work at any time. It does not matter what time we come. If the dredger works regularly, we get Rs. 300 a month; that is, Rs. 18-12-0 for each man. We do not work on Sundays because the dredger does not work on Sundays. Sometimes we do not also work on Saturdays and festival days. I am a *Reddi* by caste, and am a cultivator. I live in Pillakodipalayam, which is 4 miles from here. All the 16 who work in my batch belong to the same place. We can choose a *mistri* amongst ourselves, but we have not chosen any. We do not know what the contractor gets. I did not pay anything to the contractor for getting me the job, nor did I pay anything to anybody. The contractor gives us fruits or anything for any festival. My wife and children live with me in Pillakodipalayam. I go home every night. I have some land which is being looked after by my father and his 4 brothers. I do not know what cess they pay. We are a joint family. I have 10 buffaloes and no cows.

(The witness withdrew.)

SUKANNA UKKANNA, a coolie working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.

G-517*e*. I work with Kaki Gurrappa, and live in Pillakodipalayam. I have a wife and 4 children of whom 2 are boys. The youngest is 2 months old and the eldest 6 years. I go to my home every night. I have 6 acres of land, 20 buffaloes, one bullock cart and two bulls. We sell ghee. I have 6 brothers who look after the land. I earn As. 10 a day. None of us have gone to school. Our children also do not go to school. There is a school which is far away from where I live. We pay an annual cess of Rs. 60 to the harbour authorities. We are a joint family.

(The witness withdrew.)

FAZUL RAHMAN, an oilman working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.

G-517*f*. I have been here for the last 7 months. I belong to Neokali. The Sahib gave the pass to the *serang*, and the *serang* gave it to me. I earn Rs. 30 a month. I was a fireman but now I am an oilman. I work two shifts of 4 hours each, the interval between the shifts being 8 hours. I have 3 children of 1½, 5 and 7 years. I pay Rs. 12 for my meals here, and keep Rs. 4 for other expenses, like soda water during hot weather. I send the balance Rs. 14 to my home by money order. I have no land at home. I have worked on the British India Steam Navigation Co. and Peninsular and Oriental ships. I left my job because I waited for 6 months to get a post but could not get one.

(The witness withdrew.)

ANNAPATHRAKIMMA, a woman coal carrier, working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works examined on the coal stage.

G-517*g*. I am employed by contractor Rambabu. I am a widow, and have two children. One of my daughters is working with me here; the other is 7 years old and is at home. There is no one to look after my 7 years' old daughter at home. I get As. 6 a day, and my daughter also gets the same amount. Our *mistri* is Baralapuswami. The contractor pays the *mistri* in a lump sum and the *mistri* distributes it to us all. I earn Rs. 11-4-0 a month. I come from Malkapur, which is 3 miles from here. I am a shoe-maker by caste. My daughter who works with me is below 12 years of age.

(The witness withdrew.)

APPALLAM, a woman coal carrier, working at the Vizagapatam Harbour Works.

G-517*h*. I am a Golla by caste. I come from Malkapur, which is 3 miles from here. I am a *mistri*. We work in a squad of 32. My husband is also a *mistri* and is working in our squad. I get As. 9 a day, while my husband gets As. 10 a day. A few minutes back somebody came to vaccinate us, and seeing him some who were working in our squad have run away.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. W. C. ASH, Engineer-in-Chief, Harbour Works, Vizagapatam; Mr. C. J. Smith, Mechanical Superintendent; Major F. J. Anderson, Principal, Medical College, Vizagapatam and Chief Medical Officer; Mr. P. A. M. Welchman, Office Superintendent; Dr. K. Satyanarayana, Medical Officer.

G-518. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is your experience in connection with dock work?—I was employed on dock work by the Admiralty at Portsmouth before I came out here. I came out here in 1909 with the Port Commissioners. I was with them when they started the Port extensions in Calcutta before the War. These were continued after the War. King George's Dock was added from 1920 to 1928. I was in charge. In 1928, just as the new Docks were completed there, I was transferred here for three years in connection with the harbour.

G-519. I understand that the work on the harbour has been going on from 1925 and that it is expected to be finished in 1932 ?—Yes.

G.-520. Do you look upon your labour force as permanent or temporary ?—Everybody on the job is temporary. Nobody has any security of tenure at all. Nobody has any guarantee that he will be kept in employment after the construction period is over.

G-521. I understand there are two types of labour on the works, departmental labour and contract labour. The departmental labour is engaged chiefly on the dredging and reclamation work ?—Yes. There are 1,448 departmental workers, and the contract labour amounts to about 1,500, making 3,000 workers employed.

G-522. Do you exercise any control over your contract labour ? Do you see that the contractor pays fair wages, or that he provides suitable housing accommodation for his workers ?—No.

G-523. Outside of the dock area you have no interest in what wages are paid to the contractor's labour ?—No. The only control is an indirect control ; that is to say, we pay certain rates which react on the rates which the contractor must pay for his labour.

G-524. So far as the employment by the contractor of women and children is concerned, you do not concern yourself in any way ?—We do not.

G-525. Do you ever feel justified in saying that no children should be employed in particular jobs ?—Ever since I have been out here I have been in charge of works on which children have been employed. It would raise a very big question for me to take up such an attitude. I do not know to what extent the Government of India would back up such a change of policy. It would react on the rates. I might have to pay more rates. I am not certain as to whether the Government of India would support me in such a step.

G-526. On any of the public works on which you have been engaged have you ever had occasion to differ from the policy of a contractor ? Have you ever had to say to him that he ought not to employ so many women and children ?—No.

G-527. Have you ever had to say to any contractor " You are not paying sufficient wages " ?—No.

G-528. Do you think it is possible to introduce what is called a " fair wages clause " into contracts for public works ?—I see difficulties in the way of doing so. I have not given the matter very great thought except within the last few days. I can see no means of settling the matter except by the intervention of the local Government. It would be no use my putting fair wage clauses into my contracts if everybody else round about could pay what wages they pleased.

G-529. A moment ago you told us that the rate you pay to your departmental workers reacted on the contractor's rates. If it were said, in connection with any contract connected with public works, that certain rates ought to be paid, that might react on public opinion and on public rates ?—

Yes, but that is rather extending the scope of the enquiry. I say that my departmental rates affect the contract rates on my work ; but it is a much bigger thing to say that my rates on a job will affect the whole of the rates in the district.

G-530. You say that the rate at which you are working on the whole job is conditioned by the speed at which your dredger can do the work ; in other words, you could put more men on to the job if you wanted to, and finish the job quicker, but you have to keep in view the speed at which the dredger can complete what is required of it, and therefore you are working accordingly ?—Yes.

G-531. Where do your workers come from ?—The villages within 4 or 5 miles of the harbour supply 420 people. The floating staff, other than that on the big dredger, are largely recruited from among the fishermen and boatmen on the coast. They account for several hundreds. All the lascars on the " Vizagapatam " come from Chittagong or that district. They are recruited from Calcutta, and are mostly from the Eastern Bengal side. The remainder come in from time to time from these villages at distances of from 20 to 30 miles.

G-532. You have not found it necessary to provide dwellings for your labour, except a few houses in Waltair, which are for the superior staff ?—There are a few huts of a temporary nature, which are very intermittently occupied. When I came here 18 months ago I condemned them, and a good number have since been demolished. For the rest of the construction period I should like to carry on as we are, but in the event of our having to house labour I propose to house them on a site on the eastern side of the harbour.

G-533. When the time comes you are going to house your dock labour on the reclaimed land ?—Yes.

G-534. Within easy reach of the dock ?—Yes. The only ground which the harbour had available was at a considerable distance. The experiment of housing certain grades was not by any means very successful, and I think it is a wise policy to wait now until we have more suitable ground, which has to be reclaimed, before embarking on any further scheme of building operations for quarters.

G-535. Have you made up your mind where you propose to house the dock labour eventually ?—Yes. (The witness indicated the spot on a map.)

G-536. Do you think that is the best place from the health point of view ?—I asked the Malaria Advisory Committee, which sits in this place, to discuss this point and to give me advice, and they said " It is at least as healthy as it possibly can be until there is proper control in the town area ". The only healthier site we can get is on the far side of the harbour.

G-537. We understood that that is very malarious ?—It was, but we have put in an anti-malarial drain at the cost of half a lakh, which has completely altered the conditions on that site. Reclamation will be begun this year, and after that the site will be available for quarters.

G-538. How will the people get to and from the town and market ?—That is the trouble. They would have to go backwards and forwards across the ferry. I shall have to take opinions at the time and see what sit ethey prefer.

G-539. We understand that the people on board the "Vizagapatam" sleep on board ship. Is that because of the lack of housing accommodation or because they like it ?—They like to stay there.

G-540. In asking them about their wages, they told us nothing about this Rs. 10 allowance which you say they get. They said they knew nothing about it ?—It is paid in the wage. Probably they do not themselves differentiate between the wage and the allowance.

G-541. Who pays them ?—Mr. Smith, the mechanical superintendent, is always present when the staff are paid. They are paid by the pay clerk.

G-542. Do you pay the *sardar* for a batch of men, or do you pay the men individually ?—Every man is paid individually.

G-543. We were told that the men paid so much for their food to the *sardar* and that he undertook to supply it to them. We wondered whether you paid the *sardar* for a batch of men, or whether you paid the men their wages into their own hands ?—(*Mr. Smith*) : The wages are inclusive of the Rs. 10 allowance. They all mess together, and they usually nominate the *sardar* to look after their mess. They pay so much to him, and he feeds them for the month. Take a man on Rs. 28 ; that would be made up of wages Rs. 18, *plus* the allowance of Rs. 10.

G-544. You talk of a bonus of about 10%. What is this bonus, and how is it arrived at ?—(*Mr. Ash*) : Every fortnight a task figure for the dredger is fixed by me personally. I say to the men "You have got to do so many lakhs of cubic feet of material dredged and deposited before you are eligible for bonus". For every thousand cubic feet that they do in excess of that they are paid Rs. 2. Each man according to his grade gets a certain number of shares varying from 50 downwards. Then this Rs. 2 per thousand cubic feet (which may come to several thousand rupees) is divided up in the ratio of the shares held.

G-545. What does that actually add to the pay of the lascars ?—They benefit to the extent, on the average, of about 10 % of their pay.

G-546. In talking to them this morning they did not tell us that they got anything over and above their pay ?—I can give you every guarantee that they do get it.

G-547. Is it paid to the labourer himself ?—Yes, it is paid to him individually.

G-548. You speak of a provident fund. Evidently it is a non-contributory provident fund. Have you started it ?—It has been in operation since the first.

G-549. There are only 23 subscribers. Why are there so few ?—For one thing it is necessary to certify that they will serve for three years on the work, and one cannot certify that in every case. Further it is optional.

G-550. There does not seem to be much attraction to a man to subscribe. —You do not contribute anything, except interest ?—We do not contribute cent per cent.

38

G-551. Have you thought of doing so ?—It is a matter for the Government of India.

G-552. You say that the basis is Rs. 20 per mensem. On the Bengal-Nagpur Railway we find it is as low as Rs. 15. Why should you have it up to Rs. 20 ?—It has been the rule ever since I have been here.

G-553. Do you ever give anything in the nature of a gratuity ? There are no leaving gratuities.

G-554. You look upon your workers as temporary workers ?—Yes. Under the Government of India rules, a man has to serve 15 years before he is eligible for a gratuity, and that would not apply here.

G-555. How many women have you on the job ?—About 360.

G-556. I see you pay your women from 3 to 4 annas a day. We learn that some of the contractors' women, loading coal, get 6 annas ?—They work longer hours.

G-557. What are the hours of your women workers ?—From 7-30 to 12 and from 1-30 to 5.

G-558. How long do the women loading coal work ?—They usually come on at day-break, about 6 o'clock, and work hard till 12, and then again from 2 to 6 o'clock. There is another circumstance. Many of the contractors have to take them on for intermittent work, and they have to pay a little more.

G-559. It surprised us to find that you were only paying from 3 to 4 annas to your women whereas the contractors were paying 6 annas to their women ?—These rates are mostly distributed among the family. You generally take on a man and his wife and children.

G-560. Can you tell us anything about the working of the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—As far as I can gather, we do not legally come under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The crew of the "Vizagapatam" do not come under it because they are not on a "registered" ship.

G-561. Have you seen the latest notifications from the Government of India in that connection ?—I have seen no recent ones.

G-562. It has been suggested to us that there was a recent notification which covered loading and unloading on board all ships. That would cover the coolies, but whether it would cover the people employed on the ship I do not know. You are not a railway ; you are not a dock, because you are not a dock in being yet ; your vessels are not ships because they are not registered ships. As I read the information which we have in front of us, the coal-loading coolies and other people who load the dredger, would come under the Workmen's Compensation Act, the dredger being a ship, but the people working on the ship would not. Would you have any objection to the law being made applicable to all the types of workers ?—No ; on the contrary when a case comes up to which the Act might apply, but does not, we use discretion as to what recommendation we send up to the Railway Board about it.

G-563. In that connection I notice in your memorandum the figures of 60 or 70 major accidents and over 2,000 minor accidents. In how many of these cases did you think it advisable to write up and recommend that they should

get some compensation ?—Only one compensation has been paid since I have been here, and another one is under recommendation now.

G-564. All these accidents would not come under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—I must refer that question to Major Anderson.

G-565. While the men are off work ill, as the result of these major or minor accidents, do you go on paying their wages ?—In most cases, I think. (*Major Anderson*): If they are injured on duty on account not of their own carelessness.

G-566. You differentiate between what is due to a man's own carelessness and what is due to the carelessness of somebody else ?—Yes.

G-567. Have you seen the figures I have just mentioned, Major Anderson ?—Yes. One reason for the large figure of minor accidents is that if a workman scratches his finger he comes along to have iodine put on, and that is put down as an accident—the same as small bruises and cuts.

G-568. What weighs with you in deciding whether you will do a job departmentally or whether you will do it by contract ?—(*Mr. Ash*): The cost at which it can be executed, and the reliability of the contractor. If a contractor is a reliable man, with a good control of labour, and if the class of work is such that it can conveniently be put out to contract, in 9 cases out of 10 it is preferable to put it out to contract.

G-569. Under the heading of "Workmen" in the dredging division you show that your male coolies get 7 to 8 annas. Under the heading of "Workmen" in the works division you show that your male coolies get from 4 to 8 annas ?—That is a clerical error. It should be from 7 to 8 annas.

G-570. Do you start them at from 7 to 8 annas ?—Yes.

G-571. Do any of them rise beyond 8 annas ?—Not as coolies, but if any of them should qualify for other work, then they go into higher grades on monthly pay.

G-572. Reverting to the question of the provident fund, I see it says: "No employee whose salary is less than Rs. 15 per mensem is allowed to subscribe to the fund. An employee whose emoluments are more than Rs. 15 but less than Rs. 20 is allowed the option of subscribing". The State Provident Fund Rule makes that provision ?—(*Mr. Welchman*): There are two distinct funds. There is the General Provident Fund and the Railway Provident Fund.

G-573. *Mr. Clow*: The schedule supplied to us showing the incidence of sickness relates not merely to employees, but is based on the number of all persons attending the dispensary ?—(*Major Anderson*): Yes.

G-574. You cannot say how many men-days are lost through sickness on the total staff in the year ?—No.

G-575. I notice that the figures rise every year. Is that due to the increasing popularity of the dispensary, or is it due to the increasing unhealthiness of conditions ?—It is due to the increasing popularity of the dispensary. The conditions are better now than they were a few years ago.

39

G-576. *Mr. Joshi*: How many people do you employ on the dredger ?—(*Mr. Ash*): 80 or 90.

G-577. Can you tell me the difference between a dredger and a factory as regards the necessity of having some regulation of the work ?—Of the class of work, do you mean ?

G-578. Everything. There is an Act applying to a factory, because factory work is considered to be somewhat dangerous and requires regulation. A factory is defined as any place where some machinery is used, and where 20 people are employed in any process of manufacturing. In your case there is no actual manufacturing. There is transference of material. You may call it manufacturing or not. But as regards danger, accidents or exhaustion, is not a dredger the same as a factory ? There is machinery there, and there is a number of people working ?—I should think that the chance of accident is far greater in the average factory than with the class of machinery on a dredger.

G-579. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Factory covers manufacturing process and in the Factories Act manufacturing process covers pumping or filtering water. A dredger pumps water. Therefore, according to the definition of "manufacturing", if it were fixed on dry land a dredger would be a factory; but because it happens to be in the water it is not a factory ?—Is a pumping station a factory ?

G-580. Yes ?—I did not know that.

Mr. Joshi: What is necessary, according to the definition, is that there should be power used for a particular object at a particular place, and so many persons employed. Why should not a dredger be regarded as a floating factory ? Why should not the regulations be applied not only to a dredger but to a ship in inland waters ?—A ship when it goes to sea ceases to be within a country, but so long as it is in a harbour or in an inland waterway, in my judgment it should be regarded as a factory—a floating factory, it is true.

G-581. *Sir Alexander Murray*: For the purposes of the Workmen's Compensation Act and for the purposes of the Factories Act, do you see any reasonable difference that would justify us in not including a dredger as a factory ?—There is far less danger to life and limb on a dredger, because such a large proportion of the machinery is protected. The impeller of the pump is not free in the open air like the wheels of a lathe; but I do not see any reason at the moment why the same set of rules should not apply. I agree with you to that extent. I agree that if a man is injured on our dredger, for instance, he should get the same benefit under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

G-582. *Mr. Joshi*: I am thinking not only of compensation, but of other regulations as well ?—I should have to consider them one by one before I could give a full answer to your question.

G-583. As regards housing and leave, I find there is a distinction made between three classes of workers. There is provision made for the superior staff; less provision made for the subordinate staff, and no povision made for the coolies. Is the sympathy of the Railway Board in proportion to the people being superior, subordinate and workers ?—I am afraid you must ask the Railway Board. That is a matter of policy.

G-584. *Mr. Ahmed*: You have said that a considerable number of your coolies come from villages 4 or 5 miles away. That means two long journeys, backwards and forwards, in addition to which the women coolies have to prepare the food for their husbands and children after they have returned from their work. Therefore is not the necessity of providing accommodation for these people far greater than it is in the case of the superior staff ?—I think it is very difficult to compare the necessities of the two.

G-585. This morning we saw two boys in the workshops who appeared to be 10 years old. Do you employ children under 12 years in your works ? —No, we do not.

G-586. One of them said he was getting annas 5 a day ?—(*Mr. Smith*): Some boys are employed outside the works division and they get annas 5 a day. They do not come under the Factories Act. They ply bellows and perhaps carry their own coal but they do not do any heavy manual work.

G-587. You have men working here who have come from Chittagong ? —Yes.

G-588. One of them said this morning that he got Rs. 28 a month ?—He belongs to the trimmer class, the lowest of the ratings. Besides Rs. 28 he gets a bonus of Rs. 2-8-0 or Rs. 3 for four weeks. That brings his total wages to Rs. 31. All the rest get more than this. We give them all free coal and free water supply.

G-589. Out of this Rs. 28—I do not want to take the bonus into consideration because the man did not say he was getting it this morning—he spends Rs. 12 for his food in the mess, Rs. 5 for water and tea on the shore and has only Rs. 11 left ?—We give him free water and free coal and he need not spend anything for water.

G-590. Out of this Rs. 11 if he spends Rs. 4 or 5 for clothing he has only Rs. 7 left. Will Rs. 7 be enough to maintain his wife and two children ?—I do not think Rs. 5 a month is necessary for clothing. If he has got expensive habits it is a matter for himself. I think Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 a year is quite enough.

G-591. It would cost Rs. 5 for a pair of trousers and a coat. How can you say that Rs. 5 is enough for one year ? Can he get on with one coat and trousers all the year round ?—(*Mr. Ash*): All that I can say is that the wages we give compare favourably with the wages given to similar class of men on the Indian merchant ships on the Indian coast.

G-592. Because these lascars are available at these low wages you appoint them ?—They come to us because the terms are attractive to them. Our wages are based on the law of supply and demand.

G-593. Then do you not want to pay fair wages ? Did you not say to the Chairman that fair wage is a living wage ?—No, I did not say anything like that. I only pointed out the difficulties of applying a fair wage clause.

G-594. These men come from Chittagong. They pay their own expenses from Chittagong to Howrah and you only pay them from Howrah to Vizagapatam ?—Yes.

G-595. Their service begins only after reaching this place ?—Yes.

G-596. You do not give them any allowances to meet their food and other expenses during the journey ?—No.

G-597. When he is repatriated do you pay him his travelling expenses ? —He gets a free pass back to Howrah.

G-598. These men and women coolies who come from distances of 4 or 5 miles every day earn only annas 6 a day ?—Yes.

G-599. Can a man getting annas 6 a day maintain himself and his family on that amount ?—He does not maintain himself on that alone. He has got his fields where he works part of the year and gets an additional income.

G-600. Why does he not work all the year round on your works ? Is it because he gets less here than what he gets by working on his fields ? Have you any figures to show the relative incomes ?—No, I have no figures.

G-601. What is the cost of living of a man with his wife and two children ? —I do not know.

G-602. It must be much more than annas 6 or whatever he gets here ; otherwise why should the man bring his wife and children to work here ? —I have no information.

G-603. *Miss Lazarus*: You propose to provide coolie lines later on. Will the coolies construct their own houses or will you construct them for them ? —I have it in view to try the experiment of giving them plots of ground and letting them construct their own houses on the model of the fishermen village near the hospital here. I notice that Professor Geddes commends this system in his report.

G-604. What about drainage ?—Conservancy, sanitation and water supply would be in our charge.

G-605. Is there any provision made for schools for the labourers' children ? —I do not think it is the function of the Port Authorities to provide schools. It is quite different on a railway. It is surely the function of the Municipality to provide schools.

G-606. Is that area under the Municipality ?—No. They have asked to have that included within municipal jurisdiction.

G-607. Do you extend your medical facilities to labour under the control of the contractors ?—Yes.

G-608. Do you grant medical certificates to those people also ?—Yes, we grant medical certificates to everybody.

G-609. Do the contractors pay their men while they are sick ?—I doubt if they do. If the coolies are injured on duty we pay them for days of absence, but we do not pay them for ordinary sickness.

G-610. You give certain figures regarding malaria. Do they include the wives and children of labourers ?—(*Dr. Satyanarayana*): Yes.

G-611. At what age do you employ boy or girl coolies ?—(*Mr. Ash*): The age limit is 12 for boys employed outside the works section. In the case of the factory the doctor gives a certificate regarding age. We have no age limit for contactor's coolies.

G-612. Who allots the work for the boys and girls ?—Their own *sardars* in the coolie gangs.

G-613. With regard to the women and children employed by you who sees to it that they get the work which is suitable to them ?—The work is allotted by the *sardar*, the *maistri* as he is called in this District.

G-614. Is there any officer to see that these women and children are not given work in excess of their capacity ?—We do not exercise any control in the case of contractor's labour. It is a matter for the contractor entirely.

G-615. I refer to people employed by you directly ?—This note will give you an idea of the distribution of work among the labourers. [A note handed in to Dr. (Miss) Lazarus.]

G-616. Are these women and children given smaller baskets to carry ?—No, but they carry smaller loads.

G-617. What are the various bodies concerned in this anti-malarial work ?—The Bengal Nagpur Railway, the Municipality and the District Board. The Municipality do nothing at all. They have a great number of wells many of which are not in use. They are not filled in. They should be.

G-618. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I see from your chart that Kancharipalen is the most malarious area. Are you taking steps to eliminate malaria as far as possible right through every month of the year ?—(*Major Anderson*) : Steps are being taken in that direction. We do a little work and the Bengal Nagpur Railway sanitary staff do a little.

G-619. It is so far away from the dock ?—We have left that out for the moment. When the railway work starts on the new line round the oil depot a portion of that area will be taken under our control.

G-620. The next bad area according to your chart is Malkapuram. With the exception of these particularly bad areas can you say that you have reduced malaria to a minimum ?—We have reduced it considerably. The number of malarial patients has come down greatly.

G-621. So that you may congratulate yourself on having reduced the incidence of malaria to as low as it can be ?—We have reduced it to a very reasonable limit.

G-622. It was stated that the Municipality was not co-operating with you in this anti-malarial work. How can you carry on effective work if you have a Municipality by your side which does not co-operate with you in your anti-malarial measures ?—We have an advisory committee for this anti-malarial work. There is a proposal that the Bengal Nagpur Railway, the Municipality, the District Board and the Harbour should contribute towards the appointment of a full-time malariologist who would take over the existing staff under his control. Then there will be effective supervision and rapid elimination of malaria. We are awaiting the sanction of the Government of India.

G-623. Are the other authorities agreed ?—Yes, more or less. They are all represented on the committee.

G-624. You have sanitary staff under one of the assistant engineers. Do you find it a suitable allocation of work. We have heard differences of opinion as to the advisability of having the sanitary staff under the engineering department or the medical department ?—We have it here under the Construction Engineer so that he may put up the necessary temporary works as the work proceeds from place to place.

G-625. For your purposes you think it better to have it under the engineering department ?—It is quite satisfactory. It was at first under the Medical Officer of the Harbour, but for departmental reasons it was thought advisable to transfer it to the Engineer. This arrangement appears to be working quite well.

G-626. *Miss Lazarus* : You give some statistics regarding "diseases of women and labour and peurperium" ; do they relate to the women labourers or the wives of the clerical staff ?—(*Dr. Satyanarayana*) : They relate to the wives of the clerical staff ; they do not include the labourers.

G-627. Why is the crèche not in use now ?—The women prefer to put their children in their homes under the care of their own relations. For sentimental reasons they do not like to bring their children out here.

G-628. How is it at the beginning it was popular and later on it has not come to be used so much ?—It was attractive to the women in the first year of its existence but later on they did not take to it.

G-629. May it be due to the fact that the crèche was not moved with the works as they progressed from place to place so that it may be very near the works for women to come and go easily, but was left in its original place far away from the works ?—(*Mr. Ash*) : The nature of the works has changed a good deal since the time when the crèche was started. In the early phase it was dangerous to take the children with them and the mothers were glad to leave them in the crèche. But now that phase has passed and the working place is not dangerous at all.

G-630. *Sir Alexander Murray* : With regard to leave rules you say : leave admissible to temporary subordinates is granted "provided that the grant of leave involves no expense to Government". Does this apply to everybody noted against rule I ?—Yes, to everybody noted against that rule.

G-631. All the rules contained in Annexure II to your memorandum are qualified by this proviso ?—Yes, there is no provision to pay a substitute in addition to the leave salary of the person going on leave.

G-632. You say : "As the proviso under Supplementary Rule 285 quoted above puts the superior dredging staff to a considerable loss, it has been proposed to the Railway Board to waive the same in their case only. Sanction is awaited." What is the loss to which you refer ?—I can only pay the man going on leave the difference between his salary and the salary of his substitute. It is more easy to provide a substitute among the numerous low-paid staff than among the superior staff. We do not keep stand-by people in great numbers.

G-633. You have actually applied to the Railway Board for amending that rule ?—We sent that up six months ago ; we have not had a reply.

G-634. Take the question of provident fund. You work under the Railway Board and why have you not been brought under the State Railway Provident Fund scheme which will enable you to include workers drawing down to Rs. 15 a month ?—(*Mr. Welchman*): The State Railway Provident Fund scheme applies only to permanent men on the railways. Our employees here are not permanent. (*Mr. Ash*): All our workers are holding temporary posts as would naturally be the case on construction works.

G-635. Why have you not a contributory provident fund ?—We cannot take any action at all; it is the Government that has to do this.

G-636. You have applied to the Government to modify certain leave rules. Why have you not applied to Government to have a contributory provident fund and include all persons under that scheme ? We applied and they did not agree to it.

Mr. Joshi: How can they do a thing for temporary men which they do not do for even permanent men ?

The witness (*Mr. Welchman*): With regard to casual leave we have to follow the Madras Government rules. With regard to privilege and medical leave for long periods we come under the Fundamental Rules.

Sir Alexander Murray: This is a question to be enquired into.

(The witnesses withdrew and the Commission adjourned to Madras.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Eighty-Seventh Meeting.

MADURA.

Friday, 28th February 1930.

PRESENT:

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. (*Presiding*).

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Lieut.-Colonel A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. B. SHIVA RAO, M.A., *Assistant Commissioner*.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary*.

SUBBAMMAL, woman worker, KANDALLAMMAL, woman worker, MUTHAMMAL, woman worker, KALIAMMAL, woman worker, and two other women workers of the Madura Mills.

G.-637. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You need not be afraid of telling us everything. There is nobody here except ourselves ?—Our payment is not sufficient. (Subbammal): I am 28 years old. I am a widow; I have no children. I make Rs. 3-4-0 or Rs. 3-8-0 a week; that is without commission; we do not get commission. (Kandallammal): I am married and have two children, one aged 6 and one 8. I get the same wages as Subbammal. My children are ill. My husband is a peon in the Court and he earns Rs. 14 a month. (Muthammal): I am a widow, and I have a son 8 years old. (Kalliammal): I am married and have a daughter aged 16. My husband is also working here. He earns Rs. 15 a month; he is in the bundling department.

G-638. *Miss Power*: How did you get your job here ?—Four of us have been here from our childhood. I came here several times and at last the Manager kept me. I wanted work. I did not pay anything for my job. There are tickets for admission; if we lose our ticket we have to pay As. 4 and get another one. We do not pay anything when we come. I have never heard of any one having paid anything. Within the last 18 months to two years the Manager has not allowed us to bring our children into the mills. When a woman who is working in the mill wants to nurse her baby the head clerk of the department gives her a chit to go out. We are allowed to go out at 9 o'clock in the morning and 3 o'clock in the afternoon. We have never been refused. We are given half an hour or 15 minutes. By the time I have given the child a good feed and come back the man here says "why have you been so long over it ?" We all nurse our children under the trees on the road. Some one from the house brings the children to the place. At meal time some of us have to run to our homes and swallow our food and come back lest we should be late, but if the houses are too far away when they come in the morning the women bring a little rice with them; they keep the food in the dyeing

room, but they eat it anywhere. While we are eating our food we are often driven away by the watchmen because the European officer must not see us eating all over the place. There is no shed in which to eat. About a thousand people, men and women, eat here. All of us feed inside. We have no dining shed. When we give birth to a child we have no leave with pay. When we are going to have a baby we are stopped from working at the sixth month and we can start working again when the baby is three months' old. The *mistri* stops us. When the *mistri* sees that the women are obviously pregnant he stops them. We have to sell our property to live; we pawn our vessels. The interest charged is a quarter anna per rupee per week. We do not leave our babies in the Swedish Mission crèche. None of us 6 women have small children. We should very much like to have a crèche at which the women could leave their children and visit them frequently. If we have no one in the house to look after our baby we pay Rs. 2 to a woman to look after the baby while we work here. When we come back to work after having a child we do not pay anything to the headman to get a job, but they keep us hanging about the mill for a month. We do not pay anything to get the job. If we spoil the work we are suspended for a week and sometimes for a month. Even if we are ill and do not produce as much as we do normally we are punished through the head *mistri*, but apparently the extent of the punishment is decided by the management. It is all piece-work. When we are sick we ask the permission of the head writer to go to the dispensary. If the head writer permits us to go to the dispensary then we go to the dispensary. If the head clerk says "you had better go home" we go back home. The medicines do not seem to be effective. The English Doctor never sees us. We do not know that there is an English Doctor. The Doctor does not come to our houses. One of us pays Rs. 3-4-0 rent, another Rs. 4, another Rs. 4-8-0, another Rs. 3, and another Rs. 2-8-0. I have a mother, a sister and a brother and I pay Rs. 3-12-0. We never represent our grievances to anybody. The head *mistri* and head writer come to examine our production and if it has gone down below a certain amount we are sent out. We never go to the Manager.

G-639. You have men *mistris* over you; does the *mistri* show favouritism to certain women or give them easier work or is there any unpleasantness with the foreman at all?—We do not feel that he makes any distinction between one and the other. In case our production goes down he punishes us.

G-640. Is his treatment of you quite decent?—Except when production goes down.

G-641. Is there anything you want to say to us?—We want a crèche and higher wages. When we are given holidays we are not paid; we are not even given wages for Sundays. When we are sick we are not paid. If I take one day's leave and then happen to stay away the next day, on the third day when I come back there is no work for me. When we are sick we do not go to the mill Doctor; we take anything we can. We have to go into the mill and come out of the mill at the same time as the men and it is very hard to get in with the crowd. We are fined one or two annas if we are a little late. Sometimes we are fined As. 3 to As. 4.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

43

SADYAN, SUPPIAH, VYRAHVAN, MUNIANDI, four male workers in the Madura Mills.

Sadyan: I am a side boy. I sometimes look after one side and sometimes two. I get Rs. 11-2-0, and 1¼ to 1½ annas per day.

Suppiah: I work in the blow room. I look after the cotton feeder machine. I get Rs. 16-5-0. I do not get any commission.

Vyrahvan: I look after the machine in the roving room. I get Rs. 16-5-0. I work As. 4 when I work very hard, otherwise I get As. 3 to As. 3½.

Muniandi: I am a doffer and I am a half-timer. I get Rs. 5-10-0 and I get half an anna a week commission.

G-642. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you been ill and stayed off work for a period?—(Vyrahvan). Yes, all three of us have been ill and stayed away. If a man falls ill while at work and tells the *mistri* and says "I want somebody to work for me so that I may go and see the doctor", the *mistri* says "who is to look after your work? If you really feel ill you had better go home." We have all been to the mill doctor. If we are ill and have taken leave then wages are deducted for the actual number of days' absence; but if we have not taken leave we lose two days' wages for one day's absence. and when we return to work, we are not certain of being reinstated. If we report ourselves ill at 6·30, by the time the leave is sanctioned it is about 10 o'clock in the morning; we have to wait till about 7 o'clock. The Doctor comes from 8 to 11 o'clock, but the *mistries* do not let us go to the Doctor. The Doctor never certifies that we are ill; he merely gives us medicine. Men are only paid when they are ill in compensation cases, when there is an accident. We do not get any payment while we are ill if there has not been an accident. If we stay at home one morning and do not send word but come to work the next morning we lose two days' wages for being absent one day. Sometimes when we are ill we just send word by some one else and the *mistri* says "why cannot the man come himself and report that he is sick?" We are never able to go to the Manager. The procedure is this: a man must go to the *mistri*. The *mistri* takes him to the head *mistri* who abuses him and uses bad language. Then the head *mistri* takes the man to the head of the department who fines him As. 8 or suspends him for a week. The man can never go to the Manager direct.

G-643. *Mr. Cliff*: If the *mistri* abuses you why do you not insist on going to the Manager's office?—The head *mistri* will take a man off his job if he does that.

G-644. Do you not want a Trade Union?—We all want a Trade Union.

G-645. Do you know what a Trade Union is? Yes, we know what a Trade Union is.

G-646. Why have you not got a Trade Union to-day?—If there were unity amongst us we should be able to establish a Union. But if we put forward anybody to organize us and speak for us, he is at once dismissed. When we had the big strike in 1921 they removed all the men who were prominent in the Trade Union. (*Muniandi*): I have been working here a year and a half

I have never been to school; I did not go to school because I could not afford to go. I did not work anywhere else before I came to this *mill*. I have not got a half-timer's ticket with me. I work 6 hours, from 6-30 to 12-30 *o'clock*. Half-timers *work from* 6-30 to 12-30 and then go away. I clean the *machine* and then go home at 12-30 and I do *nothing* in the afternoon. I work 6 hours and do not get a break during that time for *meals*. In the course of the morning I sometimes go to the lavatory; that will take me 10 to 15 *minutes*. If I take *longer* than that the *mistri* beats me. (Vyrahvan). If we are prominent in *representing grievances* the *mistri* takes the names of people attending Trade Union meetings.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Eighty-Eighth Meeting.

MADURA.

Saturday, 1st March 1930.

PRESENT:

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. (*Presiding*).

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Lieut.-Colonel A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. B. SHIVA RAO, M.A., *Assistant Commissioner*.

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary*.

MR. J. P. RODRIGUEZ, MR. SANKARANARAINA PILLAI, MR. KANDA SWAMI PILLAI, representing the Tuticorin Labour Union.

G-647. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What are your positions in the Union?—(Mr. Rodriguez) I am the *editor of* a paper at Tuticorin and I am a member of the executive committee of the Union. (*Mr. S. Pillai*). I am Secretary to the committee. (Mr. K. Pillai) I am President of the committee.

G-648. What kind of labour are members of your *Union* ?—(*Mr. Rodriguez*). It is mill labour.

G-649. *How many* members have you?—In all there are about 3,000 workers, *of whom about* 100 have been enrolled as members of the Union.

G-650. Your total membership is 100?—Yes.

G-651. How many members have you in Madura?—I *cannot* say. The Union has only been formed recently, a month ago.

G-652. Are you a labour Union which is purely concerned with improving the *conditions* of labour?—Yes.

G-653. Or are you a Union which has also political aspirations?—We have no political aspirations?

G-654. You say in your memorandum that you consider that wages are extremely low?—Yes.

G-655. Do you think they are *much* lower than the surrounding wages? —That I cannot say.

G-656. You say that most of the members of your Union wish their membership to remain confidential?—Yes. They are *not only afraid of the* employers knowing but also of the police knowing.

G-657. Have you approached the employers?—We passed certain resolutions at our conference and sent them to the employers.

G-658. Are you a registered Union ?—We are about to be registered.

G-659. You have not approached the employers with a view to being recognized by them ?—We only sent the resolutions. I do not think they will receive us.

G-660. Are you going to ask them to do so ?—Yes.

G-661. Why do you say it is scandalous that men and women should work on the same machine in the card room ?—It is not advisable. I do not think wife and husband work on the same machine.

G-662. It is not a usual thing to have women on carding machines ?—No.

G-663. You say you want the mills to provide housing ?—Yes.

G-664. Do you think it is the duty of the employer to provide housing ?—Yes.

G-665. Or do you think it is the duty of the Municipality ?—It is better if the employers will take that responsibility. In case the employers do not do it the municipality must do it.

G-666. Are any of you three gentlemen mill workers ?—No.

G-667. If you were a worker do you think you would prefer to live in a house belonging to your employers or not belonging to your employer if the rent were the same ?—It is better that the municipality should provide housing.

G-668. If the municipality provided housing, you would not be so much under the thumb of the employer ?—No.

G-669. Why do you say it is scandalous that a man and woman should work on the same machine?—There are reasons for thinking scandalous things are going on. I cannot prove that, but I know it for certain. The men and women tell me that. I wrote a petition to Mr. Harvey about that and he made enquiries about it. I do not know what was the result of the enquiries.

G-670. Did the women ask the management that they should not work on the same machine as the men ?—No.

G-671. You were the first people to ask for that ?—Yes.

G-672. *Mr. Cliff*: Are you all three residents of Tuticorin ?—Yes.

G-673. How did you become interested in organizing the people ?—I am a journalist. I have sympathy towards labour and I want to see their grievances redressed and their miserable condition improved.

G-674. Have you had any meetings of work-people employed at the mill ?—Yes, very large meetings.

G-675. Do you get both men and women at the meetings ?—Generally men at the meetings.

G-676. What do the work-people themselves say at these meetings ?—They have told me their wages are very low, that they are not provided with anything that is suitable to them and they say that as far as their children are concerned it is a pitiable condition.

G-677. Are there many children working at this mill ?—Yes, about 25 per cent.

G-678. Are the work-people employed at the mill resident at Tuticorin ?—No, most of them are not resident but live three or four miles away ; they come from the adjoining villages.

G-679. You say they want higher wages and better conditions in the mill ?—Yes.

G-680. Is there anything else they want ?—When we go there at noon it is pitiable to see the way in which they eat their meals. We passed a resolution on this subject and sent it to Mr. Harvey.

G-681. Do you say the people are afraid to join the Union ?—Yes.

G-682. Why are they afraid ?—Because of the pressure of the policeman as well as the *mistries* and employers. Once when the proprietor understood that certain labourers had attended a meeting he warned them that they should not attend the meetings. I remember that a meeting of millworkers was to be held when the mill closed at 5-30, but the proprietors closed the windows and doors of the mill and told all the labourers that they should not attend the meeting. The *mistries* are always working for the favour of the employers and are anxious to do what they think will please their masters.

G-683. What do you mean by " pressure of the police "?—Very often they call at the labourers' houses, put unnecessary questions to them, tell them they should not have anything to do with the Labour Union and frighten them. Some of the labourers have told me that the employers themselves have said that if they joined the Labour Union they would be dismissed.

G-684. Do you say the police call at the houses of the work-people ?—Yes, and tell them not to join the Labour Union.

G-685. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Are you sure of that ?—Yes, I am sure of it but I cannot prove it.

G-686. *Mr. Cliff*: How do you know that ?—The labourers themselves have told me ; the people who were frightened by the police told me. A man told me that a policeman was worrying him and pressing him not to join the Labour Union. I told him to be steady and not to listen to the policeman.

G-687. Are there many such cases ?—Ten or twelve cases.

G-688. Is this with regard to more than one policeman ?—Yes, because the Police Department itself has taken up this position.

G-689. So there are more than one policeman ?—Different policemen.

G-690. Have you or your colleagues, as an executive committee, complained to any one about the police visiting people ?—No, I have not because I have not got any proof.

G-691. Have you discussed this at your meetings and decided to send these allegations to any one ?—No, we did not pass any resolution to that effect in our executive meetings. We discussed what steps should be taken with regard to this and we have come to the conclusion that we should approach the police authorities and ask them not to interfere with the labourers.

G-692. Have you approached any one yet ?—*No, not so far*; only last week we discussed this subject.

G-693. *Miss Power*: Who employs the workers when they come to work in the first instance ?—They go through the timekeeper.

G-694. Are they selected by one of the European officers or are they selected by the *mistries* ?—Most of them are selected by the *mistries*.

G-695. Do they have to pay the *mistries* anything for the job ?—It is not exactly bribing, but once a year or something like that they give presents; I *think* there is some secret understanding about it. Some of the labourers told me they give money to the *mistries*.

G-696. Did they tell you how much ?—No.

G-697. Are you certain that the women are not allowed to nurse their babies even if they go outside the compound ?—That is so.

G-698. How long has that rule been in force ?—Since the mill came into existence, 30 or 40 years.

G-699. We visited a mill yesterday where the babies were not allowed inside the compound, but there was a system by which women were given passes twice a day from the head writer to go outside the compound in order to feed their children. Is this not done at this mill ?—There is no such system in Tuticorin.

G-700. You say in this place they are not even allowed to nurse the children ?—No. The babies are not even brought to the mill. It is a pitiable condition; the babies cry and weep all day.

G-701. Does your demand that women should be supervised by women come from the women themselves ?—Certainly. The women labourers prefer it.

G-702. Do they complain about their treatment ?—Yes. It is better to have women *mistries*.

G-703. But do they openly complain that the men *mistries* abuse them ?—Not openly, but when they put forward their grievances they tell you it is better that they should have women *mistries* because these men (*mistries*) worry them.

G-704. Do the women and the men do the same kind of work in any department ?—Yes.

G-705. In such cases are the men and women paid the same rates ?—No.

G-706. Do they pay the women a lower rate than the men even though they are on the same work ?—Yes.

G-707. Is that piece-rate or time-rate ?—It is time-rate; there are no piece-rates.

G-708. *Col. Russell*: The housing condition of practically the whole population of Tuticorin is pretty bad, is it not ?—Not all.

G-709. Do you think the mill workers are worse housed ?—Yes, because they have to come 4 or 5 miles from their own villages.

G-710. You mean the houses in the villages are worse than those in Tuticorin ?—Yes. The housing conditions in Tuticorin are very bad; the labourers' huts are the worst.

G-711. The Port labourers are better housed ?—They are much better off because they are getting a better wage, and so they can have better houses.

G-712. The Port workers in Tuticorin are not housed by the Port Commissioners ?—They are not.

G-713. They rent houses just as the mill workers do ?—Yes.

G-714. Do you still maintain that the houses occupied by the Port labourers are better than those occupied by the mill workers ?—Yes, because the Port labourers make more money; an ordinary boatman earns from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50. The Port coolies get Re. 1 a day and are better off than the mill coolies.

G-715. Is there any Medical Officer attached to the mill ?—Yes, he has been recently appointed. He is a full time man.

G-716. How many hours a day does he stay in the mill ?—During the working time he is there.

G-717. Has he a dispensary in the mill ?—Yes, there is a Compounder.

G-718. Any one who is sick or injured can go to this Doctor at any time of the day ?—Yes.

G-719. Supposing a man is really sick, does this Doctor go to his house ?—No, he never goes to the houses; he is in the mill.

G-720. Can the worker send a medical certificate to the mill, saying he is ill ?—There is no allowance for that.

G-721. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: They do not get sick leave on full pay ?—No.

G-722. *Col. Russell*: There is no shed or room in the mill where the men can sit and eat their food ?—No, they can only go into the street to take their meals; they can sit on the beach.

G-723. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: They are not allowed to take their food in the mill compound ?—Only a few weeks ago they have arranged in the mill compound an open space but there is no covered roof and there is coal dust and that sort of thing.

G-724. *Col. Russell*: I suppose they get coal dust on the beach too ?—Yes, and they get sand and sea water.

G-725. Would you like the workers to have a private shed in which they could sit ?—Yes.

G-726. Are there any arrangements for the supply of drinking water in the mill ?—(*Mr. S. Pillai*). Yes, there is a shed within the compound for drinking water supplied by the Company.

G-727. Is that reasonably good ?—Yes.

G-728. Are there any latrines in the mills ?—(*Mr. Rodriguez*). They have lavatories; it is the pumping system

G-729. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: When did you first make an attempt to organize a union ?—In the month of November 1929.

G-730. Why do you want to keep your register of members confidential ?—Because the members are afraid of the police, the employers and the *mistries*.

G-731. Have you asked the employer whether he is willing to recognize the Uuion ?—We have not asked the employer, but we passed certain resolutions and sent them.

G-732. Has he taken any notice of those resolutions ?—No; he did not even reply.

G-733. Are you going to register this Union ?—Yes.

G-734. Then when it is registered, are you going to ask the employer if he will recognize the Union ?—Yes.

G-735. Who is the proprietor of this mill ?—Mr. Harvey.

G-736. And he has other mills ?—Yes, at different places.

G-737. You have given the Commission a photograph ?—Yes, that shows the labourers taking their meals on the road side and on the beach at Tuticorin.

G-738. Since that photograph was taken they have altered the system ?—Yes; they have provided an open space in the mill compound.

G-739. Was there a labour conference in Tuticorin in January ?—Yes.

G-740. Were the police at the conference ?—Yes, from the Circle Inspector down to an ordinary policeman they were there.

G-741. When the conference was held in Tuticorin did the employers make any attempt to keep the workers away from that conference ?—Yes, they instructed all the *mistries* and clerks to see that no labourers attended the meeting and they sent their own clerks to see what was taking place in that conference.

G-742. How do you know that *mistries* and clerks were sent to the meeting with that object ?—The labourers themselves represented that, they were warned and instructed not to attend the meeting and not to have anything to do with this labour association.

G-743. What attendance do you get at labour meetings ?—About 4,000 or 5,000 people come to the meetings.

G-744. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You say the employers would not allow the men to go out to attend this meeting ?—Yes.

G-745. But in spite of that you got 5,000 people ?—Not only the mill labourers, but other labourers come.

G-746. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: If the police did not interfere with your activities and the employer did not send *mistries* and clerks to see what you said, do you think the people would like to have a Union ?—Yes; by this time it would have been registered.

G-747. Have you had any strikes in Tuticorin ?—Not recently. Twenty years back there was a strike.

G-748. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What was the date of the last strike that took place in Tuticorin ?—I think it was 1907.

G-749. *Miss Power*: When a woman is pregnant can she leave her work at any time she pleases before the birth of the child or does the *mistries* tell her "I think you had better stop work now" ?—No, he does not.

G-750. She leaves when she wants to ?—Yes; of course without pay she can go away.

G-751. At what month do they generally leave ?—The ninth month. I cannot say exactly. We have represented many things to the Labour Commissioner of Madras but he does not take any interest, and once when we sent some resolutions passed at our meeting he said "This matter should be settled with the employer".

G-752. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Did the policeman come and visit all the workers ?—He picked out certain workers.

G-753. Were they men who had had trouble with the police before ?—No, they had never had any trouble.

G-754. The policeman merely visited them because he understood they were interested in this trade union activity ?—Yes.

G-755. Who are on the executive committee of your Union ?—There are 12 committee members.

G-756. You are an editor, Mr. Rodriguez ?—Yes.

G-757. What is Mr. K. Pillai ?—(*Mr. K. Pillai*). I am a commission agent. (*Mr. S. Pillai*). I am a landlord.

G-758. What are the other 9 members ?—They are working in various departments in the town in the shops.

G-759. Are any of the members of your Committee workers in this particular mill ?—Some of them are workers who were dismissed in the previous strike.

G-760. You have no member of your committee who is a worker in the mill at the present moment ?—(*Mr. Rodrigues*). No.

G-761. At present you have no worker of the mill on your committee ?—No. When we have registered the Union we shall have the labourers themselves as committee members.

G-762. Are all your 100 members mill workers ?—Yes.

G-763. Do you restrict your Union to mill workers ?—No, anybody can join.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. S. R. VARADARAJULU NAIDU, representing the Papanasam Union.

G-764. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : With regard to the Papanasam mill, what is the name of the Union you represent ?—The Papanasam Union, which has been very recently formed for the textile workers of that particular mill.

G-765. It does not take in other workers ?—No. It is merely a Union for the workers in this particular Papanasam mill.

G-766. Is it registered ?—No ; it was formed very recently ; it was formed on the 10th of the last month.

G-767. Have you got a constitution ?—Not yet.

G-768. Have you drafted it ?—Yes, we have a committee ; we are drafting the constitution but it has not yet been passed by the general meeting.

G-769. Was the committee elected by the members ?—Yes.

G-770. How many members have you ?—We cannot give you the exact number because they have not yet signed the application form.

G-771. So that you have no proper list of members ?—Yes.

G-772. Therefore you cannot possibly have had a proper election ?—You have not really got to the stage where you can have a proper Union with proper rules and membership ?—Not yet.

G-773. I suppose the members have not paid anything ?—No.

G-774. It is a Union in the making ?—Yes.

G-775. Shall we call it a strike committee ?—You cannot call it a strike committee because we have elected an executive committee on the Union basis.

G-776. Did you elect your members of your committee after the strike took place or before ?—After the strike took place.

G-777. Do you represent the strikers ?—Yes.

G-778. How many men have you on the committee ?—Twelve members.

G-779. Of these how many are actual workers in the mills ?—Eight are actual workers, and the other four are organizers who come from outside.

G-780. The memorandum which you have supplied us is based on what the workers have told you ?—Yes.

G-781. How long have you been in this district where this mill is ?—I have been there 20 days.

G-782. So that you really have to put down what you have been told and you have had no opportunity of checking it ?—I had an opportunity of checking it.

G-783. Are you quite satisfied that everything in this memorandum is correct ?—Absolutely ; I made myself sure of that. I have been making personal enquiries from a number of workers. In the meeting I questioned them and they cried out that they agreed.

G-784. In that mill was it the custom in the past that the management should be approached in theory by any worker ?—As far as my information goes it is very difficult to approach the Manager ; the Manager told me that everybody could approach him but the workers told me it was not so. I was told that the *mistries* had instructions from the Manager not to allow anybody to see the Manager ; if anybody came to the manager the *mistri* was immediately sent for and asked " why did this person leave his work ? ". The *mistri* took the man to task and said he would dismiss him.

G-785. Who does the dismissals and appointments ?—The Master in charge of the department and at times by the Manager also. Dismissals are sent to the Manager and appointments and promotions are done by the department on the recommendation of the *mistri*.

G-786. Have you seen how they do these appointments ?—I have not seen it.

G-787. You have never been at the gates and seen it ?—No.

G-788. You say the children are put between the reels in the departments itself ?—Yes.

G-789. In the two other mills of the same management no children are allowed in the mills at all, but in this mill you say they are not only allowed in but are put on the machine ?—Yes. I am absolutely certain about that ; the children are brought into the mills and the women told me that as a result of that their babies died very young.

G-790. They do not force them to bring their babies there ?—No.

G-791. The women want to bring them ?—Yes.

G-792. You say it is not a negligible factor that they are exporting a considerable part of their production to the Far East ; do you know that the big trouble in this country is the importation of yarn from China ?—But the yarn produced in the Papanasam mill is of such a fine quality that there is a market for it in China, and quite recently, before the strike took place, they exported it.

G-793. *Mr. Cliff* : What business do you follow ?—Are you a trade union organizer ?—Yes.

G-794. Who are you employed by ?—I am not employed by anybody.

G-795. You are not a salaried trade Union officer ?—No.

G-796. Are you following any other occupation at the moment ?—Yes, I do some journalistic work.

G-797. Are you a journalist by profession ?—Not by profession, but I do contribute some articles.

G-798. Do you follow any other profession ?—No.

G-799. I am told there is a strike at the Papanasam mill ?—Yes.

G-800. Were you there at the time of the strike ?—No.

G-801. Have you ever been there before?—I had been there on the 18th January, the first time, for a few hours to make enquiries as to the conditions of labour.

G-802. When did the strike occur?—It occurred on the 3rd February.

G-803. In what way did you make enquiries?—I went near the mills, met groups of workers, enquired into their conditions, their holidays, and other things; then I went to the Manager himself and enquired of him with regard to other matters. I addressed a meeting that evening and left the same night.

G-804. Did you discuss conditions with the Manager of the mill?—I did.

G-805. Did you put before him any suggestions as to organizing the men into a trade union?—Yes, I did. He said he was guided in these matters by the head office, that he had nothing to say against it or in favour of it.

G-806. Did he tell you the rates of wages and conditions?—Yes, I asked him for that and he furnished it.

G-807. Did he tell you about the conditions in the mill itself, the hours of labour and other matters?—He told me certain general things about the conditions of labour there, but I did not make detailed enquiries.

G-808. *Miss Power*: At the Papanasam mill who employes the workers when they come to the gates for work?—As a rule the *mistri* takes them inside, tells the Master that these men can be employed and then the Master sends for them.

G-809. So that if there are a larger number of workers at the gates than there are jobs for them the *mistri* makes the selection in the first instance?—The selection is not made at the gate but at his house; the men go to his house.

G-810. So that the men who turn up at the gate have already been selected by the *mistri* at his house?—Yes, it is pre-arranged.

G-811. When you talk about bribery and payment for obtaining work, have you got actual evidence of it?—Yes, I have got evidence; the workers tell me that when they were employed they paid such and such a sum to the *mistri*.

G-812. How much do they usually pay?—So far as the Papanasam mill is concerned they pay from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15, and half-timers pay from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5.

G-813. Do they have to pay for promotion as well?—Yes; it is not definite, but they pay between Rs. 5 and Rs. 10.

G-814. Do the women pay as well as the men?—Yes, the women pay Rs. 2 or Rs. 3.

G-815. At this mill have they any way of bringing their grievances before the management if they want to?—No.

G-816. Have they been told that they can go direct to the Manager if they want to put their grievances before him?—They cannot approach the manager except through the *mistries* or the timekeeper.

G-817. *Colonel Russell*: You say there is not even a doctor in the mill?—Yes; there is only a compounder; there is a small dispensary where there are a few medicines for headaches, stomach-aches, and other things. They tell me that when they take medicine there they get another disease in addition to that from which they already suffer, and they say they do not go to the dispensary at all: they say that if they go there for medicine for headache they get stomach-ache in addition so they do not go there at all. In the case of small accidents they go there and the compounder gives them dressings.

G-818. You say the nearest hospital is 6 miles away?—Yes, that is in Ambasamudram, but the ordinary mill worker will not be able to go to the hospital there. Usually they are treated by the Indian doctors.

G-819. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: You say that even a month ago the spinners struck work for alleged beating by the *mistries*. Was that strike before you went to Ambasamudram for the first time?—Yes, it occurred on the 26th December.

G-820. When did the general strike of the workers begin?—It began on the 3rd February.

G-821. When did you go there?—I went there on the 8th February.

G-822. Why did you go there?—I received a telegram from the workers that they had struck work and were asking for my help and advice.

G-823. You went there at the request of the workers after they had gone on strike?—Yes.

G-824. Had you had any experience of trade union work before you went there?—Yes, I have been intimately connected with the Madras Labour Union for 3½ years. I was a member of the executive committee. I have taken a very active part in the work of that Union; I have conducted strikes and negotiations.

G-825. Are you connected with any other Union besides the Madras Labour Union?—I have been President of the Nellikuppam Labour Union of the Sugar Factory of Parry & Co.

G-826. Is that a registered Union?—Yes.

G-827. What membership has that Union?—2,100 members.

G-828. Is that Union recognized by Parry & Company?—Yes.

G-829. Have there been any strikes since that Union was recognized?—No strike at all, because I can make direct representation to the management and there is no difficulty whatever.

G-830. As President of that Union did you come into contact with the employers in that factory?—Yes, every time I go there I make a point of seeing the Manager and explaining the difficulties to him; if I do not go to him he sends for me.

G-831. What are your relations with these employers?—Very cordial.

G-832. There has never been a strike in that factory?—Never. I should like to draw the attention of the Commission to the domestic work which is exacted from the workers by the *mistries* at Papanasam.

G-833. *Miss Power*: Do they get paid for that work ?—No, it is all done free. If they do not do it, they will get secret punishment and will lose their pay. I have taken special care to verify this and I am absolutely certain about it.

G-834. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does your memorandum with regard to the Madura Mills cover all the mills in Madura ?—Yes, it covers all the four mills. There is a slight difference with regard to wages in the Raja Mill.

G-835. Apart from that, does everything you have said here apply to all the four mills ?—Yes.

G-836. You say: "It can be safely said that none can get employment in the mills unless he pays some bribe." Do you mean that every employee at every mill here has paid a bribe to get his position ?—Yes.

G-837. At the Madura Mill yesterday we took evidence from the workers themselves, and there was nobody present except ourselves; we had before us *both* men and women workers; every one of those workers said they had not paid any bribe, but when we went to the Manager he said he was not satisfied that there was no bribery in his mill because he had caught one *mistri* taking a bribe and had dealt with him. He said they are anxious to stop bribery there ?—Yes, Mr. Osborne told me also about it.

G-838. When you said that everybody has paid a bribe are not you exaggerating ?—No, I am not exaggerating. When you asked the workers that question they were afraid to tell you because they thought that paying bribes is a punishable crime.

G-839. How long have you been in Madura ?—I have been in Madura constantly visiting this place. I have an instance where the son of a head constable paid a bribe and got into the mill. Bribery is not so prevalent in Madras as it is here.

G-840. Have you taken account of the mills here ?—Yes, all the four.

G-841. You say a doffer gets Rs. 6 a month ?—He is a half-timer.

G-842. Does the half-timer pay Rs. 15 bribe ?—No, half-timers do not pay so much.

G-843. Does a spinner, who receives Rs. 11 a month, pays Rs. 15 to get a job ?—Yes, something like that, but spinners are not directly recruited; they are originally doffer boys.

G-844. Does a man working in the carding room get Rs. 17 a month ?—Yes.

G-845. And you say he would pay Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 as a bribe ?—Yes, and much more.

G-846. How can he afford to do that ?—He borrows the money; he must get a job.

G-847. This mill in Madura pays higher wages than the one where there was a strike ?—Yes, the wages are higher in Madura than in Papanasam.

G-848. In Papanasam one of the grievances was that they wanted the same wages as in Madura ?—No, they wanted a general increase of wages of 30 per cent. They wanted slightly more wages than are paid in Madura.

G-849. It is said that you came here to bring the men *out on strike*; would that be with regard to their grievances or would it be a sympathetic strike ?—In the first place I have no intention of bringing about a strike in Madura.

G-850. In your public meetings in Papanasam did you ever suggest that you were making arrangements by which the Madura mill here would come out on strike in sympathy with the workers in the Papanasam mill ?—No, I made no statement of that kind that arrangements are being made; I do not think anybody could get such an impression because my speeches did not tend in that direction. Sometime ago, it must be on the 13th, in Papanasam I said that "if this strike is not settled amicably and reasonably, there might be a strike in Madura". I was more or less holding out a threat.

G-851. You consider that the conditions of labour here are bad, but not so bad as in Papanasam ?—Yes.

G-852 When you say you have not come across any case so far where compensation has been paid, are you referring to the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—Yes.

G-853. Do you mean that you do not consider that compensation has been paid under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—Yes. I once made a statement in a public meeting and asked the workers whether any compensation has been paid to any worker. As a matter of fact they did not know that such an Act existed and the workers said "No". I asked them to consider and tell me again, and again they said "No". Then when their statement went to the head office at Tuticorin, Mr. Osborne asked me whether I made any such statement. I said I did. He told me they were paying out some compensation, not the full wages, to workers when they were in the hospital, which I find is correct; but so far as I can see I have not come across any case where a lump sum compensation has been paid.

G-854. Not even in the case of a death ?—That I am not sure of. In the case of the loss of a thumb the worker was not paid any compensation.

G-855. It might be to the interests of the worker not to receive a lump sum under compensation but to be kept on at light work with full wages ?—Yes.

G-856. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you come across a worker who has met with a serious accident and who on the one hand has not obtained compensation and on the other hand has lost his employment ?—No, I have not come across any such case.

G-857. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: It may be the compensation is more than the Act provides for and more suitable for the man ?—I think in certain cases it is so.

G-858. You can hardly bring that up against the employer ?—I have an instance of a man who lost his forearm; he was given some work and paid less than he was previously getting. When the Workmen's Compensation Act came into force in 1926 the workers never knew about it

G-859. Do you think the Act is not functioning in Madura ?—Yes.

G-860. You do not know of any case where a man got no compensation and lost his employment ?—No.

G-861. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you paid a visit to the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation ?—Yes, I have seen him, and I made representations to him that there are cases in Madura, Tuticorin and other places where no compensation has been paid after the Act came into force; he said he could not use his discretion in cases which took place two or three years ago, which it is very hard to prove. The Commissioner deals with all cases in the Presidency. When I asked him whether any cases of workmen's compensation came before him in the Madura mills he said "No".

G-862. You say in the memorandum that roving doffers and some workers in the bundling and carding departments have received an increase from December last. Is this evidence which the workers have given you ?—Yes.

G-863. Does the District Medical Officer attend to any of the work-people in the mill ?—Not in the mill.

G-864. Does he attend them in their homes ?—No. When any patient is admitted to hospital I take it he attends.

G-865. How did you collect the evidence which you give with regard to housing ?—I went round and made enquiries for the purpose of putting this before the Commission.

G-866. Could you send to the Commission those particulars ?—Yes.

G-867. You speak of recognition of a Union in the Meenackshi mill ?—I saw the Secretary of the Managing Committee of that mill; he welcomed the idea of the formation of a Union and said he had absolutely no objection to recognizing the Union.

G-868. Have you been able to represent any grievances to him ?—Yes, I did.

G-869. Have they been adjusted ?—Yes.

G-870. *Miss Power*: You give certain particulars with regard to leave, maternity and so on; do those particulars apply to all the mills in Madura ?—Yes.

G-871. Are the conditions the same in the mills controlled by Mr. Harvey as in the others ?—Yes, just the same, except with one difference which I have stated.

G-872. Is the District Medical Officer responsible in all four mills ?—No that specially refers to the Harvey mills. So far as the District Medical Officer is mentioned that only refers to the Harvey mills.

G-873. Take this instance of the *mistries* using their discretion in sending pregnant women away at the seventh month ?—That applies to all the mills in Madura.

G-874. How long has that been in operation ?—That is the practice; as far as I know it has always been so.

G-875. In the memorandum dealing with the Papanasam mill, you emphasize the question of fining ?—Yes.

G-876. You do not mention anything about fining in the memorandum dealing with the Madura mills. What is the position here ?—Here also they are fined, but not so heavily as in the Papanasam mills.

G-877. The fining in the Madura mills does not constitute a grievance ?—Not a serious grievance.

G-878. Do you know whether all the 50 or 60 children that we saw in the Swedish Mission crèche belonged to the Harvey mills ?—They belonged to the three mills.

G-879. It is not exclusively a Harvey crèche ?—No, any woman can leave her child there. Some of the municipal employees leave their children there.

G-880. Does the system of giving permits to women to feed their children obtain in all the Madura mills ?—Yes, they adopted some system of going out and feeding their babies with permits, but there is a fixed hour when they can go and no slips are issued.

G-881. So far as you know no woman working in the Madura mills is refused permission to go and feed her child ?—She is not refused.

G-882. You say in your memorandum "One important officer of the mill has been carrying on an intense propaganda against the Union. He has been summoning a couple of workers of each department to his office and persuading them from joining any Union or attending its meetings". How long has that been going on ?—It has been going on ever since the Union was formed, but of late, after the Papanasam strike, it took a different turn and very intense propaganda is being carried on at present.

G-883. To which mill are you referring ?—The Madura mill. I have specifically said that it is the Madura mill only.

G-884. Have you ever known of any worker in the Madura mill taking his grievance to the management ?—Yes, when the Manager passes round the department some workers have complained to him and their grievances have been attended to.

G-885. What sort of grievances were they ?—Usually a case against the *mistri* of assault or refusal to grant leave. In the Madura mills they attend to that whereas in Papanasam and Tuticorin they do not.

G-886. Do you know of any case in which a worker has actually been dismissed on account of any action appertaining to the Union ?—No.

G-887. *Colonel Russell*: The services of the District Medical Officer are available for the Madura mills ?—Yes.

G-888. What are the arrangements in the Madura mill ?—There is a compounder who gives medicines to workers and also does the dressings; there is a small dispensary there.

G-889. Is the compounder trained ?—I do not know.

G-890. There is no medical officer attached to the mill ?—No, and the District Medical officer does not attend the mill dispensary at all.

G-891. He is not retained as a consultant ?—Yes, but not in the Maneeckshi mill; the Maneeckshi mill has no doctor and no compounder.

G-892. What are the medical arrangements in the Maneeckshi mill ?—There are no arrangements.

G-893. No dispensary and no compounder ?—No.

G-894. No services at all ?—Nothing.

G-895. How do the men get treatment when they are hurt ?—They go to the hospital.

G-896. What happens if a man breaks his arm or his leg ?—He is put in a cart and sent to the hospital.

G-897. There is no place in the mill where a small dressing can be put on or a wound cleaned up and dressed ?—No.

G-898. There have never been any medical arrangements in the Maneeckshi mill ?—No.

G-899. Does the mill provide any houses for any of its workers ?—No, it does not.

G-900. Are the housing conditions of the workers in that mill just as bad as those in the other parts of Madura ?—Yes.

G-901. They pay the same rents that you quote here—Rs. 2-8-0 to Rs. 4-8-0 a month ?—Yes.

G-902. You say that in the Maneeckshi mill the workers do not get a full hour's rest in the middle of the day ?—They do not get it in practice. I made a representation to the Secretary of the managing committee that the workers complained that they did not get a full rest interval and he said he would have a whistle blown at 11 o'clock and at 12 o'clock. Previously the people did not know when to stop work and when to begin work at the end of the hour. Now when the whistle is blown they know, but I am told that even now the *mistri* asks them why they are late.

G-903. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : How many members have you in the Madura Union ?—About 7,000.

G-904. Have you a list of members ?—Yes.

G-905. Are they all from one mill ?—No, from all the mills together.

G-906. Are they mills in the same industry ?—Yes, the textile industry.

G-907. You say "a regular number of spies, mostly *mistries* and clerks are set to watch and find out the prominent members of the Union". Are you sure of that ?—Absolutely sure. I meet these spies.

G-908. Do they tell you that they have been asked by the management to spy on the workers ?—Yes, they do tell me that.

G-909. Has there been any suggestion of a strike since this Union was formed ?—No, there has been no suggestion of a strike.

G-910. Has there ever been a strike in the Madura mills ?—The last strike was in 1920.

G-911. Was there a Union before this Union was formed ?—There was a Union in 1920, but it faded out of existence after the strike, as some of the officers of the Union had to shift to Madras.

G-912. Do you say there has never been a suggestion of a strike in the Madura mill after this Union was formed ?—There was never a suggestion of the strike except in general terms as a matter of trade union principle ; I may have said that if all our efforts to get at the management failed, a strike is only the last resort ; as a general principle I may have said that it is the inherent right of the workers to go on strike.

G-913. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : These 7,000 are properly registered members of your Union ?—Yes, they are members of the Union inasmuch as they have signed their names.

G-914. What do they pay the Union ?—I have not yet collected any subscription from them.

G-915. Have you a constitution ?—Yes.

G-916. Under that constitution how much will the members have to pay per month ?—Labourers As. 2 per month and *mistries* As. 4 per month.

G-917. When will the first payment become due ?—We wanted to have it this month, in February, but I had to go to Papanasam and so I did not start the collections.

G-918. Have they elected their committee ?—Yes.

G-919. What is the size of the committee ?—The committee consists of 9 members.

G-920. How many of those are actual workers in mills ?—Six of them are actual workers.

G-921. You are the seventh member and what are the other two ?—The President is another and an *ex*-worker.

G-922. So that really there are only two who are not workers or *ex*-workers on the committee ?—Yes.

G-923. Do you maintain that all workers have to go out of the mill to take their midday meal ?—That is so ; they are not permitted to take it inside.

G-924. They have to go out of the mill compound on to the road ?—Yes. They also take their food within the mill premises.

G-925. In some mills they are allowed to take their food in the mill compound ?—Yes.

G-926. Do you have much rain here in Madura ?—We have the north-east monsoon which lasts four months.

G-927. Where do the workers take their meals during the monsoon ?—That is the greatest difficulty ; the management do not rigidly follow that rule and have allowed the workers to take their food within the premises of the mill.

G-928. Do they take their food in the rain ?—They take it somewhere outside under the tiles of the houses.

G-929. Do the workers take food during the working hours ?—Yes, they buy something at the stalls and eat it. If they are found to be eating their food during working hours here they will be punished for it ; in all mills they are stopped from doing that.

G-930. *Mr. Cliff*: Did you come to Madura last November?—Yes, for the first time.

G-931. At different periods have you been addressing meetings in Madura since last November?—Yes.

G-932. What has been the object of those meetings?—Just asking the workers to form themselves into a trade union and suggesting to them the advantages of a trade union.

G-933. Did you confine yourself definitely to trade union propaganda?—Absolutely.

G-934. When did you come to Madura last?—I came on the evening of the 23rd.

G-935. Where did you come from?—I came from Papanasam.

G-936. What was your object in coming here?—I came here to get ready the memorandum to be given to this Commission and to select representatives to appear before the Commission.

G-937. Could you have prepared your memorandum away from Madura?—It would not have been an easy thing. I prefer doing it in consultation with the workers.

G-938. You have put in a memorandum; was that memorandum prepared in consultation with the workers?—Yes, and also from my notes.

G-939. Have you been meeting the workers since you came on the 23rd?—They have been coming to my place.

G-940. Were you served with an order prohibiting you from addressing meetings in Madura?—Yes, as soon as I came out of the train I was served with an order.

G-941. Have you appealed against that order?—Yes.

G-942. What is the result of the appeal?—The appeal has been dismissed.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. E. B. COBBALD, I.C.S., District Magistrate of Madura.

G-943. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You are the Collector of Madura?—Yes.

G-944. If you are asked any question which you would prefer not to answer you are at liberty to refuse to answer it?—Thank you.

G-945. How long have you been Collector in Madura?—I came here on the 24th September 1927. I had been on leave until that date. Before I went on leave I had been in Guntur district, north of Madras.

G-946. Your experience of this district begins with the time you became Collector here?—Yes, practically.

G-947. During the last two or three months the Government here has been rather exercised as to the attitude of labour and possible strikes?—Yes, I may say slightly so, to some extent.

G-948. I take it it must have been so, if it was necessary to prevent meetings there must have been an anticipation of disorder and strikes; otherwise it should not have been necessary under section 144 to have stopped anybody from speaking?—You are referring to the last witness?

G-949. Yes?—We have recently had some information that there might be some unrest or possibility of unrest.

G.-950. What has been your policy during this period of unrest; I am talking particularly of these possible industrial disputes?—I do not know whether I should answer that; my policy is simply that of Government; I cannot initiate any particular policy of my own simply for this district.

G-951. You might know that there was an industrial dispute in the jute area in Calcutta some little time ago and there was also trouble in Jamshedpur Tata Iron and Steel Works; in these cases the Government representative in a semi-official manner was prepared to try to bring the two sides together and to act officially as friendly mediator. In Calcutta the Association would not meet the leaders of the strikes and it was done through the Government. Has that sort of policy appealed to the Government in this district, or did they merely consider that capital and labour should settle their own differences?—I have had no instructions to act as a mediator in any way since I have been here, but it is possible that the Commissioner of Labour has been asked on some occasions to act in some such capacity.

G-952. You would not think it, therefore, part of your official duties to try and act as an intermediary?—No, I should think not.

G-953. But if either party asks you to act, would you be prepared to do so?—If either or both parties ask me to act I should simply report it to Government and take their instructions.

G-954. Suppose one or other side asked you to put their views and requests forward, would you be prepared to do so?—It would depend on the circumstances. If the strike concerned were of some magnitude, in a large industry, I do not think I could take action on my own initiative—certainly not unless I was requested to do so by both parties.

G-955. Of course if both parties wanted, they have their remedy under the Trade Disputes Act?—Yes.

G-956. Who is the Commissioner of the Workmen's Compensation Act here?—I think the Commissioner of Labour does that; I think appeals are sent through me to the Commissioner of Labour.

G-957. Any appeal of a worker would have to go up to Madras?—I think that is so. In some districts they have Labour Officers, but they are not high grade officers.

G-958. They would be the authority to appeal to under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—No, I think not.

G-959. If a workman wants to appeal under the Workmen's Compensation Act, what would be the procedure? Would you write to the Commissioner under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—Yes.

G-960. How would the Commissioner deal with it ?—There is no District Labour Officer here, so that he would send it to me, I take it.

G-961. Up to this time there has been no case under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—I have had cases of accidents in factories reported ; for instance, two men were electrocuted in the municipal electric scheme ; I forwarded that to the Commissioner of Labour. All accidents in factories have to be reported to me as the District Magistrate.

G-962. What has been done here to enable the work-people to know that they have rights under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—I do not think I can say that I have taken any active steps.

G-963. Do you know if any steps have been taken to inform the work-people of their rights under the Act ?—I cannot say that I do.

G-964. So that it is possible that a workman might have an accident and not know that he is entitled to compensation ?—I think it is possible but I fancy most of them will know it.

G-965. When you hear that an accident has taken place, is anything done to follow it up and find out whether compensation has been paid ?—If it were an accident of some seriousness I should call for a report from one of my subordinates in the area, the Sub-Collector or Deputy Collector.

G-966. Would he interview the injured party ?—Yes, and the management of the Factory.

G-967. Would he inform the injured party that he had certain rights under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—He probably would.

G-968. *Mr. Cliff* : When you speak of a serious accident, do you mean the loss of a limb ?—It might be less than that.

G-969. How many cases of workmen's compensation have you dealt with during the two years ?—I do not think I can give you figures, but it must be very few ; I should think less than half a dozen.

G-970. Have you a copy of the Workmen's Compensation Act on your files ?—I think so.

G-971. Do you know whether in fact the Royal Commission on Labour issued a questionnaire ?—I think you issued one some months ago.

G-972. Did you receive one here ?—I think I must have received one, but as far as I know I was not asked to answer anything on it.

G-973. Have you taken any steps to circulate a copy of the questionnaire to employers here in Madura ?—I do not think so.

G-974. Have you taken any steps to circulate a copy of the questionnaire to work-people here ?—No.

G-975. When you speak of unrest, do you mean that a strike is unrest ?—I suppose unrest is a disturbance among the work-people which may lead to a strike.

G-976. Is a strike illegal ?—I do not think so.

G-977. You know whether it is or it is not, do you not ?—I think it is not illegal.

G-978. Can you tell us why the order under section 144 was issued against the last witness on the 23rd or 24th of last month ?—I think I should prefer not to answer that question in any particular manner.

G-979. Have you had any complaint with regard to the speeches that have been made here since last November ?—In what sense do you mean complaint ?

G-980. Complaint against the matter of the speeches ?—I suppose that probably tended in some degree to create unrest.

G-981. When you say "create unrest", your definition of unrest is that which may lead to a strike ?—Unrest which may lead to a breach of the peace or difficulty in preserving law and order.

G-982. A strike may lead to a breach of the peace, but I understand a strike is perfectly legal ?—I suppose a strike is legal, but it may not be desirable.

G-983. That depends on the point of view of course ; but is it any part of your duty to prevent a strike ?—I do not think it is, not a strike as such if one may say so. Of course a strike usually brings with it ulterior consequences and it depends a good deal on the nature of the circumstances.

G-984. I understand you served a certain person with an order prohibiting him from addressing a meeting because you thought his speeches may cause unrest, leading to a strike ; but is it any part of your duty to prevent a strike ?—I suppose in a way that may be so ; so far as the limits of my power go I suppose I might take some action to prevent a strike if it were possible at all.

G-985. What powers would you exercise to prevent a strike ?—The most I could do would be persuasion.

G-986. I understand from the notice which has been served on the last witness that one of the grounds is that it might lead to a strike. Has any attempt been made to approach the employers or the work-people by you ?—No.

G-987. Have any references been sent to the Labour Commissioner that a strike was imminent ?—No, I have not informed the Labour Commissioner that a strike was imminent.

G-988. Is not that one of the ways to prevent a breach of the peace ?—I suppose it might be in some circumstances. I think it depends a good deal on whether the Commissioner can do any useful work in that particular case

G-989. As I understand this official document, it is said that a meeting of the work-people addressed by a certain individual is likely to cause a strike. Has any special report on that been sent to the Government ?—I have reported confidentially about the possibilities of a strike.

G-990. And has no attempt been made to try and deal with the root causes of the strike ?—I do not know if there are any root causes.

G-991. The last witness says he came here for the purpose of helping the work-people to prepare a case to submit to the Whitley Commission ; is there any objection to his doing that, in consultation with the work-people ?—If he strictly adhered to the letter of that there might be none.

G-992. Is that one of the ways in which he would obtain the information for the purposes of his memorandum, by holding a meeting of the work-people ?—But has he authority or legal status or other status for preparing such a statement or consulting the work-people. I might do so myself but I should not consider I had any special ground for consulting with the work-people.

G-993. A public appeal has been made to all people in India to assist the Commission with regard to their terms of reference ; is not the effect of your order to prevent him from consulting with the work-people in a meeting ?—I think the terms of the order were that he should not address any public meeting.

G-994. But if he held a meeting with the work-people would that be a public meeting ?—I think so.

G-995. Is not the effect of your order to prevent him from collaborating with the work-people ?—I should hardly say so ; I think he can do it without addressing public meetings.

G-996. *Miss Power* : In view of the order made against the last witness and the fact that you yourself say that you did not take any action on the questionnaire of the Commission or pass it on, how do you think the workers would be able to put their point of view before the Commission when we came down here, as they are unorganized ?—You think they would have no representative but the gentlemen who gave evidence last ?

G-997. Do you feel that your attitude was helpful to the workers in putting their point of view before a Commission which is sent here for the express purpose of looking into their conditions of work ; do you think you have helped them in any way ?—I cannot say my order forbidding this gentleman to address public meetings was actually helpful to them in puting forward their case ; it was hardly intended as such.

G-998. Then I take it it was intended to be the opposite of helpful ?—No, it was intended to prevent the possibility of disturbance.

G-999. Did you think you had any responsibility in respect of the questionnaire ?—I did not think it very directly concerned me.

G-1000. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : Have you read the provisions of the Trade Union Act passed by the Government of India in 1926 ?—I do not think I have read it very particularly.

G-1001. Are you aware that that Act permits outsiders to be associated with registered Trade Unions ?—I think it does.

G-1002. So that you would not necessarily question the status of an outsider to assist workers to prepare their case for the Royal Commission ?—No, not legally any way.

G-1003. I suppose you are aware that there is a strike at Papanasam ?—I have heard of it.

G-1004. Was an appeal made by the last witness that his only object in coming down to Madura was to assist the workers in placing their case before the Royal Commission ?—I know that an appeal was made by the last witness against the order to which you refer. I have not seen the terms of the appeal ; it was not addressed to me ; it was addressed to the Additional District Magistrate and I have not seen it.

G-1005. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Was that order issued under directions from those higher up than you are or was the order issued by the officer who had the facts before him and used his discretion ?—I am afraid I cannot say that.

(The witness withdrew and the Panel adjourned to Madras.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Eighty-Ninth Meeting.

PANEL NO. II.

MADRAS.

Monday, 3rd March 1930.

Present:

THE RIGHT HON'BLE V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C. H., P. C. (*Presiding*).

SIR VICTOR SASSOON, BART.	MR. K. KAY.	*Assistant Commissioners.*
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.	MR. B. SHIVA RAO, M.A.	
MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.	MRS. VENKATASUBHA RAO, *Lady Assessor.*	

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary.*

Dr. P. J. THOMAS, M.A., B. Litt, Ph. D., Professor of Economics, Madras University.

G-1006. *Mr. Sastri*: How long have you held your present office?—This is the third year.

G-1007. How does your work bring you into contact with labour problems?—As Professor of Economics I am in charge of the course for the Diploma in Economics. That course covers a wide gound in Economics, but its chief purpose is the training of graduates in social and rural reconstruction work. We endeavour to make a thorough study of poverty in this country, particularly in the cities, in the forms in which it exists, as also the methods for its relief. All students have to take a paper on Social Economics, but some specialise in labour problems, and study the labour legislation in different countries, and allied topics.

G-1008. How many such students have you now?—About 60. they are mostly part-time students.

G-1009. Do these students report to you frequently about their work?—Yes. Towards the end of their course they have to submit a thesis upon a problem connected with social or rural economics. Information is being gathered by them week by week by visits to different parts of the town. A student might take one poverty stricken street and study the conditions in it, going from house to house and making investigations of the economic conditions of the different families. Another student might take a small trade, like tailoring, or *bidi*-making in some part of the town and send in his report on it. Personally I cannot claim any very intimate knowledge of factory labour in this country, but I do know first-hand the conditions of workshops which do not come under the Factory Acts.

G-1010. Do you do much work in the way of preparing statistics of labour in the city?—I have not done much in that direction yet. I am now making preparations to collect accurate statistics about wages and cost of living. It is my aim to publish weekly a cost-of-living index as is done elsewhere. Now

that I am going to have a statistician as my assistant, I hope the work will go forward.

G-1011. At present you cannot assist us with much accurate information as to wages or prices or standard of living here?—I can only speak in general for the present.

G-1012. Do you receive any assistance from Government or from municipal bodies in the work you undertake?—As regards municipal bodies, I have not approached them for assistance so far, but as the work grows, I might have to ask for their assistance. As for Government, I feel that the Government has not felt the need for academic enquiries. They are occupied with questions of administration. The question of economic enquiries has not interested them very much, so far as I am aware.

G-1013. When you collect statistics, have you the assistance of officials of the Government, or do you have to work independently?—So far I have worked independently.

G-1014. You say that you are chiefly concerned with the unorganized trades. You mention a few *bidi*-making, embroidery, tailoring, building, tanning and furniture making. Leaving aside *bidi*-making, can you tell us anything as to the numbers employed in the other trades?—I cannot give any figures. The workers often work in their own homes, and it is difficult to give even a rough estimate of the numbers.

G-1015. Would you say that the figure might run into thousands?—I am quite certain about that.

G-1016. Are these trades confined to particular sections of the population, for instance, embroidery?—The Muhammadan population is more engaged in that work than any other section and the same applies to *bidi*-making.

G-1017. You say "and it may very well be on the lines of the sweating legislation existing elsewhere, with, of course, the necessary modifications to suit the peculiar conditions of South India." Do you think such legislation is feasible in this country?—Yes, to a certain extent it is feasible—not probably of the kind in vogue in other countries, but it might be possible to adopt those methods to our own conditions.

G-1018. You do not lose sight of the fact that most of these people are solitary workers in their own homes?—That is a difficulty I agree, but with regard to a good many of them it should be possible to set up trade boards in order to fix wages. I feel that the more pressing problem is that of boys working in small workshops which do not come under the Factory Acts. There I think it is possible and necessary to have restriction and regulation.

G-1019. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How long have you been doing this work?—Only for the last one year.

G-1020. You say that your investigators visit every house in a street. Do they try to find out how the people are living, what their earnings are, and how they are spending their earnings?—Yes. I have had forms printed on which they enter the particulars, and from which family budgets could be constructed.

G-1021. Are you hoping in time to be in a position to class those family budgets under different trades?—That is my aim.

G-1022. Will you let us have a copy of that printed form?—Yes. I will send it.

G-1023. What sort of reception do your students get when they enter the houses?—Most of the people receive them courteously as they think that some good may come out of it. The more experienced are afraid that the students may be agents of the taxing department.

G-1024. Your students have to get over a little suspicion?—Yes. It depends. Sometimes we have a man known to the people, for instance, a teacher, or a social worker known in the street to help us.

G-1025. Have you any ladies among your students?—No.

G-1026. Do you think ladies would get information more easily?—I am almost certain they could.

G-1027. There might be less suspicion of lady workers?—It is quite possible.

G-1028. You say that in these various unorganized trades, such as embroidery, some of the people work in their own homes and some in factories. What percentage of the workers, do you think, work in their own homes?—It is difficult to say. Those who work in their own homes are mostly *purdah* women. These *purdah* women are largely engaged in making *bidis* or embroidery.

G-1029. Would that be a large or a small percentage of the total number of workers engaged in those trades?—A small percentage.

G-1030. At least half of them would be working in their own homes?—Less than half.

G-1031. You say that the workers who work in their own homes get the raw material from the middleman employer, take advances from him, and hand over the finished products, and that in some houses the children are made to work the whole day. What sort of legislation do you visualize to deal with those workers, which comprise half the total number?—I can only look forward to some kind of legislation fixing wages, possibly on the lines of trade boards.

G 1032. This is not a question of wages?—The question of wages does arise. I find that when these embroidery workers are employed by a contractor in his own premises he has to pay nearly double the amount that he pays to workers who work in their own homes.

G-1033. Are you going to say that by legislation you are not allowed to accept from me a price which you are prepared to take for a finished article which you are selling to me? You are not my servant. You are a principal. I see what you want to get, but how can you get it?—If those who work in their own homes feel that the remuneration they are getting is not sufficient, it is up to them to organize themselves, but as they are helpless women, Government intervention by legislation is necessary.

G-1034. Probably you have not thought of what form of legislation is needed?—The same conditions prevailed in England many years ago, and I suppose the trade boards set up according to the Acts of 1908 and 1918, have been able to fix better remuneration for the workers. I don't see why we should not follow that example in certain cases.

G-1035. As far as those who are working in unregulated factories are concerned, you suggest that there should be trade boards to fix minimum wages?—Yes, but even more important are certain other things such as health inspection and compulsory education in the case of children.

G-1036. That would not be restricted merely to boys working in unregulated factories?—Some of these workshops are situated in areas of the city in which the Compulsory Education Act is in force, but even so these boys do not attend school.

G-1037. Your complaint is that compulsory legislation in regard to education is not effective as regards these children. Therefore you want the law to be administered more rigidly. But apart from that you consider this is a sweated industry?—Yes.

G-1038. You consider that there should be a minimum wage in unregulated factories employing these children?—There are difficulties in that, especially in connection with *bidi*-making, because the remuneration is given on a complex basis and because it may not become effective in the present state of the labour market.

G-1039. You can have a minimum wage for piece-work?—Yes, but even more important is the provision of more sanitary workshops and more agreeable work.

G-1040. Are you suggesting that the Government should provide housing merely for small boys and women working in unregulated factories?—Government should insist upon the employer providing proper housing.

G-1041. Are you suggesting that a small employer with very little capital of his own is to provide housing for his employees?—I should think so. I am speaking of workplaces, not dwelling houses.

G-1042. Supposing he said to the Government "Where am I to find the money?" Some of them are making profits, and probably unjustifiably high profits, from these trades.

G-1043. Do you maintain that employers in the *bidi* trade are very rich men? Some of them are getting wealthy.

G-1044. What do you mean by "wealthy." What do they make in a year? Would it be lakhs of rupees?—That may be too much.

G-1045. Have you any figures as to what is paid in these various trades, leaving out *bidi*-making?—The wages vary. The wages for boys are very low from half an anna a day to six or eight annas. The embroidery workers get the highest wages, ranging from Re. 1 to Rs. 2-8-0.

G-1046. Can you send us in any figures particularly for the trades of embroidery, tailoring, tanning, furniture-making, and so on?—Yes. I shall give you a tabulated statement.

G-1047. *Mr. Clow*: I believe that in your department, before you were appointed, some work was being done on the cost of living index?—Yes, more in rural economics.

G-1048. Has that work been continued ?—We are doing such work now.

G-1049. Have you any results ?—Yes. Various questions have been referred to me for opinion. We have worked out the cost-of-living figures and have taken the prices of articles consumed by workmen from 1914 to the present day. Latterly we have started the economic survey of the city.

G-1050. Could you let us have some of those results ?—Yes. I am furnishing the questionnaires used.

G-1051. Are they directed merely to finding out the relative difference in the cost of living between 1914 and now, or are they directed to finding out the actual standard of living ?—So far they have only been directed to finding out the difference between 1914 and now, but henceforward we want to keep regularly figures of prices and wages.

G-1052. Are you in a position to tell us, for an unskilled worker in Madras, what his expenditure is, and the items of which it is composed ?—I can show to you some typical family budgets in that respect.

G-1053. *Miss Power*: You have planned a social course. On what basis have you planned it ? Have you decided to investigate a certain group of industries the conditions of living of the workers in those industries and in their actual places of work, and the remuneration ; or have you decided to take certain sections of the city and make investigations geographically ?—I want to tackle it both ways. First of all I want to have a survey of all the unorganized trades in the city. Side by side with that I want to have certain poor quarters in the city specially studied from the point of view of poverty conditions.

G-1054. Are you making use of all your 60 students in that work ?—Not all. Some of them come here chiefly for the purpose of getting some general knowledge of economics, but a good number will be staying on to take the Diploma.

G-1055. Do you get the assistance of any outside investigators ?—I have my own colleagues in the department, and I have some research students as well.

G-1056. But no interested residents in the city ?—There are persons in the city who are interested and who are giving me help.

G-1057. Are they making investigations alongside your students ?—Not so far, but some may give me help when I want it.

G-1058. Have you published anything yet ?—Not in this line, but our University has published a treatise by my Assistant, Mr. Lokanathan, on "Industrial welfare in India".

G-1059. What do you propose to do in the way of publicity for your studies when you have completed them ?— We have now made provision for an *Economic Bulletin* published by the University. These studies will be colleted, tabulated, edited and published in the Bulletin. Later on, when we have collected together a good number of monographs of this nature, we hope to be able to bring out an economic and social survey of the city of Madras.

G-1060. Are those studies primarily statistical or are they primarily descriptive ?—Only descriptive, but with the addition to my staff of a statistician I hope they will be made more statistical.

G-1061. Is any body trying to arouse the interest of women in this form of social investigation ?—We have an able lady lecturer on Social Economics.

G-1062. You have no women students ?—Not yet. Possibly some might be coming next year. It is a blind alley occupation for them. They prefer to train themselves as teachers as they get a decent salary in that profession, whereas if they get a diploma in economics it leads them nowhere. In reality a diploma of this kind would be an invaluable asset for a teacher.

G-1063. Why is it a blind alley occupation for women and not for men ?—Men can always claim that they have this additional qualification for a post. Suppose they go to the Co-operative Department or to the Agricultural Department, they can say "We also have a diploma in economics, so we have some experience of these things." In the case of women, most of them go to the Educational Department, and this qualification will not be of much value to them there.

G-1064. Is it your idea that students who have taken the two-year course shall be qualified for such posts as welfare workers ?—Yes. The students pursuing studies for the new diploma may be able to do welfare work of the right type.

G-1065. On the question of legislation in respect of wages, is it your idea that in the case of *bidi* factories it would be possible to have something done in the way of wage regulation ?—I think it is possible.

G-1066. How would you suggest that that might be done ?—It could be done only after a careful enquiry into the whole industry,—an enquiry not only into the conditions of the industry, but also into the profits. Such enquiry must be undertaken by responsible persons.

G-1067. You have to take into consideration the capacity of the industry to bear a particular wage ?—Yes.

G-1068. Is it your suggestion that your students should ultimately make detailed investigations into individual trades, for instance, into *bidi* factories which would give the Government some indication as to whether legislation on these lines was practicable ?—Yes. Further they are engaged in it scientifically and not as propagandists.

G-1069. If you consider the possibility of wage regulation, what knowlege have your students in making their investigations of the different forms of minimum wage legislation in operation, so that they can decide for themselves the possibility of inaugurating minimum wage machinery in an industry of this kind ? Have they the necessary intellectual background ?—Yes. They are studying the well-known text books on labour problems, and they have also the best library in economics in the country. I do not think they should be expected to suggest remedies. Their function is to investigate and report. It is for others to go into the question of reorganization.

G-1070. *Mrs. Venkatasubba Rao*: Did I understand you to say that only those students who take the diploma in economics are given training in welfare work ?—I did not say that. I said that the students who pursue the course for a diploma in economics have opportunities of studying welfare work, and will be fit for that subject.

G-1071. So that out of the 60 students you have got, only a few will interest themselves in welfare work ?—I cannot say. Most of them will have to take some interest in the matter, because they have to write for the examination, with a view to taking their diploma, a short thesis connected with the welfare of

workers in the city or the rural population outside. Whether they will continue to take a personal interest in the matter or not I cannot say ; it will depend on what employment they get in future.

G-1072. Would you not think it better if the University made Social Welfare a compulsory subject ?—I do not know if it is practicable but to a certain extent it is necessary for all students to take an interest in these things. I do not think it would be possible for all of them to take a diploma in economics.

G-1073. I am only talking of social welfare work ?—A good number could and ought to take an interest in it.

G-1074. Supposing scholarships were offered to ladies, do you think a greater number would be willing to come ?—I should think so.

G-1075. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : In 1926 some of the University students came to the Madras Labour Union and carried out investigations into the expenditure of the various people in the mills. Do you know what has happened to those investigations ?—I have heard that certain number of family budgets were drawn up but I have not seen them.

G-1076. Have they been worked out to any definite conclusions ?—I cannot say, because it was not done after my becoming Professor. I have not heard of any very startling conclusion.

G-1077. Do you not think the financial difficulty is a real one in carrying out researches of this character ?—It is.

G-1078. It stands in the way of important work being done in these directions ?—Yes. There is also the difficulty of finding sympathy among those in authority and power in the country.

G-1079. Have you considered the question of giving stipends from the University to students who would be willing to carry out such research ?—Yes. The University at present gives two research studentships every year to graduates of distinction. They have taken up various subjects in economics but few have studied labour conditions. Rural economic is the subject most in favour and some useful investigations have been carried out in that subject.

G-1080. Has your department any connection with the Labour Department of the Government ?—None.

G-1081. You said you would like every individual employer to build houses for his workers. Do you think that is possible ?—I do not want employers to employ boys in very unhealthy places unless they can house them properly.

G-1082. Do you not think it would be more desirable for the municipality or State to step in ?—The *bidi* industry is making high profits. Why should the Government step in ?

G-1083. Do you think it is desirable for work-people to live in houses built for them by their employers ?—I was not thinking merely about the housing of the labourers. I was thinking more about the places of work. Not unusually children sleep in the workshop itself.

G-1084. A good deal of work is being carried on on the lines you suggest by the Corporation. The City High Mortality Committee went into the question. Have you considered the question of co-ordinating the work of

these various agencies ?—I think it is necessary to co-ordinate the work of all those agencies.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. V. T. ARASU, President, 1929 Madras Youth League.

G-1085. *Mr. Sastri* : You have given us a very interesting statement as to the conditions of the *bidi* industry. Have you personal knowledge of the facts of which you speak ?—I was one of those in charge of the inquiry. I was chairman of the special committee. We went round the factories and actually saw the conditions. What is stated in the memorandum are facts which we saw personally.

G-1086. You speak of Mussulman women being employed in the occupation of making *bidi*, and you speak of their making "a decent and honest living by the manufacture of *bidis* within doors." By decent living, do you mean that they get sufficient in the shape of wages ?—Yes, comparatively speaking. The average woman is able to make about 1,000 *bidis* a day, for which she gets 12 annas.

G-1087. Do you call that a "decent" living ?—Yes. Otherwise she would be starving. It is a question of something being better than nothing.

G-1088. You say that "the Corporation authorities are not cognizant of this alarming state of affairs." Do you mean that they have not taken official cognizance of it, or do you mean that they do not know of it ?—They are fully aware of the state of affairs, but they have not taken any steps to deal with it.

G-1089. Have you considered the question of what measures it is open to the Corporation to take ?—They can insist upon the proprietors of these factories putting the factories in a sanitary condition, and providing latrines, sitting accommodation, etc.

G-1090. Have you at any time reminded the Corporation of their powers and duties in this behalf ?—In my individual capacity I wrote to the Corporation Commissioner bringing to his notice this state of affairs in the factories, and asking that immediate steps should be taken to put matters right. I received in reply a letter saying that the matter would be attended to. That is all.

G-1091. Have you drawn the attention of the Education authorities to the large numbers of children employed in these occupations who come under the provisions of the Compulsory Elementary Education Act ?—Yes. I happened to be the Chairman of the Attendance Committee of the 24th municipal division. I was in charge of the elementary education scheme of the Corporation. In that capacity I have urged the parents of some of these children to send them to school instead of to the factory but the reply invariably has been that they could not do so, as they had taken advances from the proprietors of these factories which they were not in a position to repay unless they sent their children to the factory. These children make Re. 1 or 2 a week, which helps the family budget.

G-1092. That is the point of view of the parents. What is the point of view of the Education authorities ? As Chairman of the Attendance Committee I had power to prosecute, but I thought that would be carrying things too far.

These children come from poor families, who would not be able to carry on without this addition to the family income.

G-1093. Then how do you propose to carry out compulsory primary education ?—I do not know, unless the Corporation Authorities come forward with funds to provide food and clothing for these boys.

G-1094. You think that compulsion is a little too premature ?—I do not think so, but I feel that the Corporation Authorities must provide these boys with food and clothing. Otherwise compulsion will be a failure and is a failure undoubtedly.

G-1095. It is no use tightening up the provisions of the law, or appointing vigilance officers, unless the Municipality is prepared to take on hand all these children ?—Quite so.

G-1096. Do you think that is practicable, or within their province ?—I have no idea about that. The matter has been thrashed out more than once in the Council, and the answer always has been that there are no funds available.

G-1097. You would throw on the Government and on the Municipality the whole burden of maintaining these children ?—Undoubtedly. It is also a duty on the part of rich men in the locality to come forward with donations. Philanthropists have been anxious to establish universities, and other things, but not to look after the welfare of these poor boys.

G-1098. In countries where compulsory education has been successful, parents have had to forego the benefits of the labour of their children. If as Chairman of the Attendance Committee you are unwilling to coerce the parents to deprive themselves of the benefit of their children's labour, is there any hope for the Compulsory Education Act ?—No, unless Government comes forward and establishes poor houses where these poor families can be fed, or given a dole. In that case we can insist on the parents sending their boys to school.

G-1099. You mention some of the worst features of the treatment to which these boys are submitted, such as being tied up to logs of wood during the time they are at work, and being severely thrashed. Those are conditions which some of us who can look back over 50 years can well remember in the village schools ?—There is a lot of difference between the treatment meted out by the school master and that meted out by the proprietors of these factories. In the former case it is for correction.

G-1100. The conditions have generally improved in our schools, and you want these factories to share in that improvement ?—Yes.

G-1101. Do you find that the parents are consenting parties to this treatment of their children ?—They are.

G-1102. Do you think, from your experience, that if the provisions of the law are tightened up, and a more rigorous watch is kept over the way in which these children are treated, the *bidi* industry will be squeezed out of existence ?—No, I do not believe so. If you insist on the hours of work being limited and the conditions in these factories improved, the cost of production will be sightly increased, and the price will be slightly increased ; but the demand for these *bidis* is so inelastic that I do not think the industry will go out of existence.

G-1103. Would you consider it a calamity to society if this *bidi* industry was squeezed out of existence by more humane provisions being enforced ?—It is the smoke of the poor man.

G-1104. Is it not poisonous stuff ?—Some doctors say that tobacco is poisonous and other doctors say it is not.

G-1105. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Would you call it a vital necessity of life to smoke a *bidi* ?—I do not think the poor labourer can get out of the habit of smoking *bidis*. I would not call it vital but merely a necessity.

G-1106. *Mr. Sastri* : You talk of money transactions, and of the parents pledging their children's labour for a certain period. Are these transactions based upon any documents ? No documents exist. At any rate we were not able to find any in the course of our enquiry.

G-1107. Then how are these contracts enforced ?—They cannot be enforced in a court of law, being opposed to public policy ; but the parents feel they are morally bound to repay. The poorer classes are very conscientious.

G-1108. You justly praise the honesty of the people who are bound by these contracts, but what do you think of those who use their economic position to the disadvantage of these poor people and get their children pledged to them ?—They do it for their own advantage, because it is a means of making money.

G-1109. You have some practical suggestions to make as to the duty of Government in the matter, but you think that the Corporation cannot do very much ?—No, for the reason that these factories do not come under the Factories Act. If the Factories Act were amended, and these factories were brought under its provisions, the whole sanitary conditions would improve and the employment of boys would cease.

G-1110. You put the number of these young *bidi* workers at 35,000. It is an appalling figure for the population of Madras. Do you think that is a figure you would stick to ?—It represents the total number of *bidi*-workers. Of these only about 14,000 are children.

G-1111. Would you conduct us to one of these typical *bidi* factories ?—I should only be too glad to do so. But these are *Ramzan* days and the *bidi* factories will not work for 2 or 3 days more. I will be glad to take the Commission round one or two typical factories by the end of the week.

G-1112. *Mr. Clow* : What is your occupation ? I am a private banker.

G-1113. You have suggested that we should bring these *bidi* factories under the Factories Act. That would have the effect of excluding children under 12 ?—Yes, that is what we want.

G-1114. But you were opposed to excluding young children by compelling them to attend school on economic grounds ?—I was not exactly opposed but simply pointed out the difficulties in that direction. These factories must be brought under the Factories Act for the simple reason that the conditions there are very bad and need to be regulated.

G-1115. What is the age for compulsory education ?—Up to 11 in the case of girls and 12 in the case of boys.

G-1116. The economic effect of applying the Factories Act would be the same as that of applying the Compulsory Education Act. Why do you favour

the one and not the other ?—My object is to save these boys from a state of things which is not conducive to their physical and mental growth.

G.-1117. *Mr. Sastri*: In other words you are prepared to drive these boys out into the street but not into a school. You say that there are 14,000 children employed in these factories. How many of them are below 11 years of age ?—About 5,000 to 6,000. I never suggested that they should not be driven into a school.

G-1118. *Mr. Clow* : Is this an industry carried on entirely by the Moslem community ? The factory owners are practically all Moslems ; and 99 per cent. of the employees are Moslems.

G-1119. *Mr. Sastri* : The consumers of *bidis* are not all Moslems ? —No.

G-1120. *Miss Power* : You told us that *bidis* were sold at one anna per packet of 25. That comes to Rs. 2-8-0 per 1,000 ?—Yes.

G-1121. You said that labour charges for making 1,000 *bidis* came to As. 12. I take it that the man sells direct, does he not ?—No, he sells it wholesale at the rate of Rs. 1-14-0 or Rs. 2 per 1,000.

G-1122. Could you give us an idea of the profit made by the *bidi* makers ?—The labour charges come to about As. 12 per 1,000 *bidis*. The raw materials cost about As. 8 or As. 9, making the total cost of production about Rs. 1-4-0. He sells the *bidis* for Rs. 2 and makes a profit of about As. 10 to As. 12.

G-1123. What percentage of profit does he make ?—I think the man makes about 60 per cent. profit for every turnover.

G-1124. Have you included the rent and overhead charges in your calculation ?—No, we have not gone into the matter thoroughly. Even allowing for rent and overhead charges the *bidi*-maker will make a profit of about 40 per cent. for every turnover.

G-1125. You have not investigated the economies of it carefully. It would have been useful if you has done it because it would throw some light on the earnings of workers in home industries ?—We could not go into the question as thoroughly as we desired on account of lack of funds.

G-1126. In your memorandum you said that a woman could make 1,000 *bidis* a day and earn As. 12. At another place you have stated that "and average adult working by himself for about 15 hours is able to manufacture about 1,500 *bidis* a day." That works out at 100 an hour. Do you suggest that an ordinary woman working in her own home is able to work 12 hours a day without interruption ?—We might allow on the aggregate an hour for cooking and other purposes and take it that she works all the rest of the time making *bidis*.

G-1127. In your memorandum you say that the parents have "in most cases taken small advances from the factory proprietors at times of great need and stress which they will perforce be compelled to repay if they grumble against the treatment meted out to their children." Did you discover whether there was any written contract under which these children were handed over to the proprietors for any specific period ?—There is no written contract ; it is all an oral transaction. The parents pledge their children to whomsoever that pays them the highest amount by way of advances. They can take their children at any time

they like by paying back the money they have borrowed. They feel a sort of moral obligation to let the children work full time.

G-1128. You do not say anything about fines or deductions of any kind. Did your investigators come across any cases of fining of these boys ?—No, the boys are not fined. The work is so simple that the boys do it all right. Occasionally of course for slackness in work they are beaten.

G-1129. You say nothing in your memorandum about the possibility of regulating the wages of *bidi* workers. Do you think that this is a trade where it would be possible to have some form of minimum wage legislation ?—There is no need for a minimum wage legislation so far as the *bidi* factories are concerned. Once these factories are brought under the Factories Act the *bidi* makers can work only 10 hours a day. Even then they would require the same amount of money for their living as they get now by working longer hours. They would therefore demand the same wages for 10 hours work which they now get for 12 to 15 hours work. Thus the wage would adjust itself to the present level.

G-1130. You say that they now get Rs. 1-2-0 per day. Do you think that Rs. 1-2-0 per day is a living wage for an adult man ?—Yes ; most of these people employed in the *bidi* factories are bachelors.

G-1131. Are there then 35,000 bachelors in one occupation alone in Madras ?—Out of the total 35,000 *bidi* makers there will be only about 7,000 to 8,000 men of marriageable age.

G-1132. Do you seriously suggest that all these men have no families to support in a country where the family system largely predominates?—I should think so. In most cases they have no family ties.

G-1133. If you have an industry employing a large number of people where it is customary to pay all the young boys on time-rates graduated according to age, and adults on piece-work that would be an industry where without undue complication you could legislate for minimum wages ?—Yes, I should think so.

G-1134. You think it could be done but it is not necessary that it should be done ?—Yes, it is enough if it is brought under the Factories Act.

G-1135. What action do you expect Government or other responsible bodies to take as a result of your report ?—We have stated our recommendation on pages 12 and 13 of our report.

G-1136. What steps are you taking to get your recommendations carried out ?—We have written to the Government drawing their attention to the state of affairs in the factories and asking them to carry out our recommendations. That is all we could do as an unofficial body. We are also creating public opinion on this matter.

G-1137. Have you in view any scheme by which you could bring out similar publications in respect of other industries ?—We have a scheme to bring out a similar report in respect of hotels and tea clubs in the city.

G-1138. How far are you co-operating with the University of Madras in their investigations under Professor Thomas ?—We have had no co-operation from that quarter. Two members of our league are undergoing training in the University but I am afraid their investigations are more academic than practical. They care more for book knowledge than for actual practical work.

G-1139. Do you think it would be a useful thing if you achieved some measure of co-operation between the different bodies in this Presidency which are conducting investigations of this sort?—We would certainly welcome co-operation and help from other public bodies. But our experience has been disappointing.

G-1140. *Mrs. Venkatasubha Rao*: You have stated that there are 1,000 women employed in making *bidis*. Would they be willing to take up any other occupation if they got one?—They would take any other indoor occupation which gave them the same remuneration.

G-1141. Has your League made any attempts in the direction of finding an alternative occupation for these women?—No, we have not.

G-1142. Would you have any objection to co-operating with other social work organizations in discovering some alternative occupation for these women?—We would be glad to co-operate with any other organization in finding a solution for this problem. For instance, if the Seva Sadan comes forward we are ready to co-operate with them.

G-1143. Do the boys in these *bidi* factories like the work they are made to do?—No, their parents compel them to go and work there.

G-1144. Would not the parents be willing to send the boys to some other occupation if it was available and if it brought to them the same income?—Yes, certainly.

G-1145. Do you think that the unhealthy conditions of work in these *bidi* factories shorten the life of these children?—I should think so.

G-1146. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you consider this document of yours a highly coloured document or a cold dispassionate review?—Our only object in this document has been to set out actual facts as we observed them.

G-1147. You state in your report: "With tears in our eyes, times out of number we stood aghast and wondered within ourselves whether nothing could be done to save these boys from the clutches of that inhuman and brutal task-master?"—That is perfectly true. This happens in a factory which is in the vicinity of our League's office.

G-1148. What have you done as the chairman of the Attendance Committee of your Municipal Division to prevent this?—Nothing, except informally persuading parents to send their Children to School. The corporation authorities were somewhat reluctant to use their powers of prosecuting defaulting parents.

G-1149. If you instituted a few prosecutions this beating of the boys might cease?—I have no such powers. All our persuasive efforts at putting a stop to their cruel practices have been in vain.

G-1151. You might use your powers as chairman of the School Attendance Committee and show the factory owners that if they continued treating the boys badly you would arrange to withdraw them from the factories and send them to school?—The Corporation authorities have instructed us to be lenient in the use of the powers vested in the Attendance Committee. Besides, I cannot possibly arrogate to myself any such powers against factory proprietors.

G-1152. *Mr. Sastri*: As attendance officer you would have to use your powers of prosecution against the parents of the boys?—Yes certainly not against factory proprietors.

G-1153. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: You cannot therefore say that you have done everything in your power to save these boys?—We are trying to do our best and this report of ours is an attempt in that direction.

G-1154. Do the students of Professor Thomas of the Madras University go round making personal investigations in the homes of these workers? You mentioned that these students were more anxious to study the question in books rather than understand it at close quarters?—This investigation of ours was made by a select committee of four members of our League. As regards the students of the University so far as my knowledge goes, they have not studied the question practically.

G-1155. Have you any information as to how often they go round and make close studies of these trades?—I have no information.

G-1156. Your general view is that their preference would lie in reading books rather than in visiting *bidi* factories?—Yes.

G-1157. *Mr. Sastri*: There is a statement in your memorandum that there are children of 5 years of age employed in these factories. Do you really think there are children of 5 years employed in these factories?—Yes. They are not actually employed in rolling *bidis* but they are employed in the subsidiary occupations such as wetting the leaf and so on. They are there the whole day with no time to play about.

G-1158. You say they work 12 hours a day and get As. 2 a week?—Yes.

G-1159. Including Sundays it comes to a quarter anna a day?—Yes, it is given as a sort of *bakshis* and as a bait for the boys to get into the habit of going the factory regularly. These boys are considered to be apprentices learning the art of *bidi* making. Only boys of 8 years are able to roll *bidis*. This *bidi* manufacture is not confined to the City of Madras alone; it exists in mufassal towns like Vellore also and the conditions there are the same.

G-1160. I just want to clear up your position. Are you a student?—No, I am not.

G-1161. Who are the colleagues in your enquiry?—They are young men who have passed out of the University and are training themselves to take an active part in the public life of India and so are all the other members of the League.

G-1162. You are men comparatively without much social influence but bent upon doing humanitarian work. It is not right to expect much from you?—All our members are persons of social status. Only those who have independent means of living (other than by serving Government) are taken in as members.

G-1163. You can bring some influence to bear on the Corporation and the Government?—We have placed the facts before the corporation and the Government. It is for them to act on them. The idea of seeking outside help to make our existence and our efforts felt by the authorities is opposed to the ideals for which league stands. General public opinion is with us.

G-1164. Are you a member of the Municipal Corporation ?—No, I am not. I was the chairman of the Attendance Committee of one of the municipal divisions.

G-1165. You are not an employer of juvenile labour ?—No.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. K. V. SESHA AYYANGAR, Chairman, Madras Panel of lawyers.

G-1166. *Mr. Sastri* : Mr. Sesha Ayyangar, you have given us a very brief and lucid statement of the points upon which you have opinions to offer us. You give us some information with regard to the origin of your panel. I believe you have not come into existence at the instance of Government or any official of Government ?—No.

G-1167. You have not come into existence at the instance of employers of labour ?—No.

G-1168. You say that it was the labour union that came to you with a request ?—Quite so.

G-1169. Is there a panel of lawyers to assist workmen without fees in any other part of India, or are you the only body of the kind ?—There are two free legal aid societies, one in Bombay and one in Calcutta ; but a panel as such doing workmen's compensation cases exists here alone.

G-1170. Have you been personally working these cases of which you have given a synopsis at the end ?—Yes. The first year I did all the cases my self ; then a number of friends joined me and we had a loose constitution on which we worked for two years.

G-1171. In your memorandum you give a statement of the number of cases. Does that include all the cases that ever came up for compensation or only the cases which you assisted to settle ?—There are one or two cases which we had to reject. The list does not exhaust all the cases that came to us.

G-1172. You dealt with more cases than appear here ?—Yes, a few more.

G-1173. You are all lawyers whose practice is intended to help the workmen ?—Quite.

G-1174. How does it happen that on your panel there is a judge of the High Court ?—This Panel is organized under the auspices of the Madras Social Service League. Mr. Justice Venkatasubba Rao is the President of the League.

G-1175. He is not expected to take part in your labours ?—No.

G-1176. Is Mr. Shiva Rao also a lawyer ?—No, he is not a lawyer ; he helps the panel in distributing the work among the lawyers.

G-1177. Do you find that lawyers are willing to help you in this work ?—Yes. We have more and more of them coming forward to take up these cases. I have had offers from Madura and Mayavaram from lawyers willing to organize similar panels there.

G-1178. It is very pleasant to hear these things because this is work which you have undertaken out of public spirit. You have made a number of suggestions for the amendment of the Act. What are those to which you attach more importance than to others ?—In the first place I would insist on the extension of the definition of 'workman.' Secondly, I would desire to emphasize the necessity for restricting the number of days in the waiting period to 3 as in the

1-6400

English Act. Next in importance comes our suggestion regarding the sanction for inforcing compliance with provision as to returns. Without any additional trouble or commitment on the part of the employers it may be feasible to introduce a provision for notification of the occurrence of accidents to the Commissioner of Labour. We have also suggested that the Commissioner may enquire into cases for compensation under one or other of three applications mentioned in our memorandum.

G-1179. That makes the Commissioner a different kind of officer from what he is now if you make him an enquiring officer at his own instance. He would not then be a judicial officer that he now is ?—Vesting in the same officer powers of enquiry and adjudication is not a thing unknown in India though I should be loth to extend the principle further. If it should be felt that it would be prejudicial to the interests of the employer if the enquiring officer was also the deciding tribunal, I would suggest that the functions of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation may be separated from those of the Labour Commissioner. The Labour Commissioner may look after the interests of labour and the Compensation Commissioner may decide cases of workmen's compensation.

Then there is one more point to which we attach importance. We have experienced considerable difficulty sometimes in understanding the conditions under which the machinery works in big factories and how accidents are caused and so forth. Two cases came to our notice and after the case was proceeded with we made an inspection of the factory and discovered that the version of the workman was not correct and that the accident could not have happened in the manner alleged by the workman. We have suggested a provision which if adopted will be to the interests of the employer also, because once the legal adviser goes and sees the working of the machinery he would not come up to the court with useless applications.

We have also felt difficulty in the definition of partial permanent disablement. The present definition is unsatisfactory. I shall deal with it later on.

In this connection I may perhaps state the gist of what we have been feeling as a result of our limited experience of the last few years. For instance, an application came to us from Calicut through Mr. Surya Rao of the Servants of India Society. By the time it came to us it was more than 7 or 8 months. There were no excusing circumstances except the ignorance of the workmen. We come across such cases often. Last week for instance, I had a case where about 8 months have been spent in correspondence between the employer and the workman. All this is largely due to the ignorance of the workman and if some remedy could be devised to work the existing Act more satisfactorily it would be a great help to the workmen.

G-1180. In your memorandum you say that there should be " compulsory medical examination of the injured workmen by a registered medical practitioner as soon as possible after the accident." On whom should it be compulsory ?—On the employer.

G-1181. Do you think it is practicable ?—That is why we have said " *wherever practicable* ". Here is a difficulty for which we have to find a solution. Cases come up before the Commissioner long after the accidents have occurred. The exact extent of the injury at the time of the accident is not

traceable except in the medical register of the employer where he happens to have a doctor and a medical register. When the case is taken up before the Commissioner, one hardly knows whether the disability that has ultimately resulted could be directly traced to the accident, trivial or serious as it may have been at the time. We have often had to accept the evidence of the employer's doctor and could not do anything to verify the matter. Labour is not sufficiently organized to have a panel of doctors. I have been feeling that workmen's compensation cases require more a panel of doctors than a panel of lawyers because most of the questions are medical in nature.

G-1182. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Why should not the Panel of Lawyers attach a panel of doctors to themselves?—We have tried to get some doctors but without success.

G-1183. *Mr. Clow*: In your memorandum you give certain figures regarding the number of accidents. Where are the statistics taken from?—They were taken from the Labour Commissioner's reports.

G-1184. Do they cover all the accidents in factories and mines, or what are they?—They do not and they cannot. They represent the accidents with regard to which returns have been sent to the Labour Commissioner under section 16 of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

G-1185. They are cases in which compensation has been paid?—Yes.

G-1186. There seems to be some mistake; are you sure of that?—I believe so; I am not sure.

G-1187. As regards the amendment to the definition of workman what precisely would be the effect of introducing the amendment? Would it really go much further than the existing Act?—The definition of workman in the English Act is practically exhaustive except in a very few cases such as domestic servants, high salaried people, and non-manual labour. It may not be feasible to adopt that definition here and we have been at our wit's end to suggest an expansion. The present definition in the Workmen's Compensation Act was modelled on the definition in the 1897 Act in England. By 1906 the English definition had expanded so as to include practically all workmen with regard to accidents mentioned in the Act. The English Act of 1925 practically adopts the definition of 1906. While we have felt that it may be difficult to go so far in India at the present time we have been unable to find a *via media* between the present Indian and English definitions. We have just indicated our opinion without suggesting any definite draft amendment.

G-1188. As regards paying compensation in instalments you suggest that it should be left to the option of the workman or the dependent to take it in a lump sum or in instalments when the sum does not exceed Rs. 500. Would not that be dangerous in the case of minor dependents?—Yes, it would be. There was a considerable difference of opinion on this point among the members of the Panel. We realized that there would be some sort of difficulty either way. But we had to suggest some practical scheme and we put forward this suggestion.

G-1189. As regards the waiting period, take the case of a man who was injured for not more than 10 days, say for instance only for 4 days, would it be a feasible proposition to enforce the payment of that amount of compensation

64

in a court?—It may not be but it is far better than the injustice that is done under the present scheme. Sometimes employers deposit very small amounts in cases of small accidents and the workmen have to go all the way to the employer to take them.

G-1190. That has been prevented by an amendment since made?—Yes, I know. But on the question of evolving the principle the experience in England should be a safe guide in India. By 1906 they had introduced a period of 3 days in England. I think we can do that in India now at least.

G-1191. But the wages here are on a much lower scale so that the amount of compensation payable for an injury of 4 days will be so small that even a public-spirited body like yours would hardly think it worth while taking the matter to the Commissioner?—Yes, that would be so. But I was thinking more of cases where injuries last 10 or 15 days. It is bound to lead to some inconvenience in the case of injuries lasting for 4 or 5 days only.

G-1192. But where it exceeds 10 days, the difficulty can be overcome by adopting the principle of dating back?—Yes.

G-1193. As regards dependents you suggest that dependents should ordinarily be called upon to furnish proof of dependence. Would not that give a loophole to the employers to contest cases to the disadvantage of poor dependents?—It would, but on the other hand a fairly affluent dependent may take the compensation as against a dependent who would really be helpless without compensation.

G-1194. They might prove dependence against each other but not against the employer?—Yes; the Government of India sent a circular letter asking whether it would be advisable to ask dependents to furnish proof of dependence.

G-1195. The present position is this: if any dependent appears the employer has no further right to the money and no proof of dependence is required. The question raised by the Government of India was whether all dependents should not be required to prove that they are actually dependent?—I think in the present state of the country it will not be very difficult to furnish proof of dependence.

G-1196. In the great majority of cases the compensation goes to the widow or the children where it is superfluous to demand proof?—In those cases it will be obvious. We demand proof only in the case of rival dependents. We only lay emphasis on the present provision in the Act itself.

G-1197. With regard to the point raised by the Chairman about the Commissioner taking action on his own motion, did you refer to the Commissioner of Labour or the Commissioner under the Workmen's Compensation Act?—I am willing to take it either way.

G-1198. In the majority of provinces there is no Commissioner of Labour. Would you give these powers to the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation?—If possible I would not.

G-1199. Do you think it is a matter for the trade union to take up?—Where they are sufficiently organized they can take it up. My object in suggesting these amendments is not that they should be permanent provisions in

the statute. I am only budgeting for the next 10 years and developments in the next 10 years may make these provisions quite unnecessary and quite a new set of provisions may be necessary when trade unions become organized.

G-1200. With regard to your definition of permanent partial disablement, do you think that your definition is essentially wider than that under the existing Act ?—Yes. The present definition in the Act defines it as a disablement which has reduced the earning capacity of the workman in any and every employment which he was capable of undertaking at that time. I had a case where the workman suffered a non-scheduled injury as a result of which the workman could not engage himself in the employment in which he was engaged at the time. The Commissioner wanted to be satisfied that the injury would reduce the earning capacity of the man in every employment that he was capable of undertaking at the time. He suggested that he could do sweeping, waiting work, carrying errands and so on and wanted to be shown that the salary he could get in any of those occupations would be less than what he would have got but for the injury.

G-1202. The definition you suggest is : "such disablement as reduces his earning capacity in any employment which he was capable of undertaking...." Is not that open to grave objection ?—If the workman is able to show any one employment in which his earning capacity will be lower on account of this defect his injury will come under the definition of partial permanent disablement.

G-1203. Although in actual practice he was able to continue the work on which he was engaged ?—Yes, if the workman is not able to have his full earning capacity in any of the occupations that are open to him, he must come under the definition. In the earlier stages of our work we had cases of workmen who suffered certain injuries and the employer said : "There is no permanent disablement since the man is continuing the same work and we are paying him the same wages." But the Commissioner did not agree to that and said that the fact that the man was earning the same salary was hardly enough to put him out of court if under the definition he was entitled to compensation.

G-1204. But the mere fact that the employer is giving the same salary does not mean that the man is earning the same salary ?—Yes.

G-1205. You suggest that the palm of the hand should be a scheduled injury. What kind of injury do you contemplate ; is it an injury in which the fingers of the palm have gone ?—It is an injury in which the fingers have gone or the hand has become useless.

G-1206. Would not that be covered by the Note to Schedule I ?—It says : "Complete and permanent loss of the use of any limb or member referred to in this Schedule shall be deemed to be the equivalent of the loss of the limb or member." We wanted to mention that specifically. There was nothing more than that it should be a definite item mentioned in the Schedule.

G-1207. My point is that it is already covered by the Note to the Schedule ? —Yes.

G-1208. Surely the injury that you describe would involve the complete and permanent loss of the use of hand and would therefore give 50 or 60 per cent., as the case may be, of the loss of earning capacity ?—It is just possible.

65

G-1209. *Miss Power* : Could you give us an idea as to the extent of a knowledge of the Act among the workers covered by it ?—It is a very difficult question for me to answer, because we are merely a legal body doing the work that comes to us in the compensation cases, but from the little experience we have had we have reasons to believe that the Act is not as widely known as it should be.

G-1210. You deal with the possible methods of propaganda in the last paragraph of your memorandum. You say that "the provisions of the Act should be prominently displayed both in the vernacular language of the workmen and in the shape of pictures, so that the workmen may be apprised of their rights and remedies." Propaganda by pictures would be difficult, but it might be possible to do it. But has any suggestion ever been made for holding mass meetings of the workers in the mills with a view to explain to them the simple points of the Act ?—A year after the panel had begun to function, I believe the Madras Labour Union interested itself in the matter and printed about 10,000 hand-bills explaining briefly the provisions of the Act and distributing them in the principal industrial centres in South India. There is a great difficulty in our doing propaganda. We are a panel of lawyers, bound down by very strict professional ethics and etiquette, and we dare not and cannot do any propaganda about workmen's compensation.

G-1211. I suppose it might be implied if you did so that you were doing propaganda with a view to increasing your professional income ?—Yes.

G-1212. Have you any views, not only with regard to the question of workmen's compensation but generally, as to how to acquaint the Indian worker with the contents of the different industrial laws affecting them. It is a question that has come up before the Commission over and over again, and it is a very difficult question to solve. Have you, from your experience on this panel, any useful suggestions to make to us ?—We have suggested some. I would suggest that at least in the principal industrial cities a definite and a recurring course of instructions in the compensation and the other Acts may be embarked upon at present by the State where non-official bodies are not willing to come forward and do the work.

G-1213. When you say 'non-official bodies are not willing', I take it that you mean that it should be a task undertaken by non-official bodies if they could be persuaded ?—Quite.

G-1214. Has there ever been any effort made to get voluntary bodies to undertake any work of that kind ?—Beyond the work done by the Madras Labour Union I am not aware of any other body having done any work with regard to that.

G-1215. Apart from the unions, do you know of any social service bodies which have done any work of that kind ?—None that I am aware of.

G-1216. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : If you look at the register of cases given at the end of your memorandum you will find that hardly without any exception these cases are from Madras or the immediate neighbourhood. You would suggest therefore that work-people outside Madras are not generally aware of the existence of this Act ?—That is my impression.

G-1217. Have you had any cases from work-people from far away places?—There were two applications, as I mentioned before, which were belated and were therefore useless.

G-1218. I think you suggest that trade unions should take up this work. Do you think it is an easy thing in this country to start trade unions?—It may take some time, but in our opinion trade unions are the bodies which should take up this work. You will see that we have suggested an alternative. Till such time as trade unions are beginning to function vigorously and are discharging their responsibilities in the manner in which they ought to, we have suggested—and we stand by the suggestion—that the State ought to step in and do propaganda work.

G-1219. The Compensation Commissioner in this Presidency is a somewhat over-worked individual, is he not? He has got many departments to look after?—Possibly so.

G-1220. He is also a Labour Commissioner, he is the Registrar of Trade Unions, he is the Protector of the Depressed Classes, and he has one or two other things besides. Would you advocate the appointment of a special commissioner for workmen's compensation?—Speaking personally, my mind has been divided. It has been my belief that by keeping both the functions with the same person, it may lead to a sympathetic administration of the Act, and a bifurcation of the functions may to some extent import the technicalities of judicial administration with which lawyers are very much aware, and while it may be advisable to keep out in cases under the Workmen's Compensation Act. At the same time I have been also distinctly feeling that it will lead considerably to the popularization of the Act and the securing of compensation in all cases to the victims of accidents if the Labour Commissioner were to embark definitely upon the scheme of propaganda outlined, and the Compensation Commissioner merely adjudicated upon the cases that were brought to him.

G-1221. Do you think there is any difficulty in obtaining evidence in workmen's compensation cases?—There ought not to be, but it is within my experience that in some cases we had this fear of the workmen to come and depose lest they may lose their jobs. I do not say it is well-founded or ill-founded, but there was that fear and we had to contend against that.

G-1222. You have actual experience of work-people being afraid of giving evidence?—Quite.

G-1223. Have you found, within your experience, that there is too long a delay in the decision of workmen's compensation cases, because from your register I find that in one or two cases it has almost taken a year after the accident for payment to be made? Take, for instance, item 36 in the register. The accident took place in July 1927 while the compensation was awarded in June 1928. It seems rather a long period?—That is so. But I am not in a position to verify the details of the application; whether the application was delayed and the delay was excused, or whether the case was pending on account of the doctor's certificate and so forth. My belief is that there is not much delay in the decision of compensation cases. But certainly I would welcome a more expeditious disposal.

66

G-1224. Would you recommend that the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner should tour about the Presidency with a view to expedite the matter?—Certainly.

G-1225. This memorandum was drawn up merely following the circular of the Government of India on this subject?—Yes.

G-1226. I suppose you are aware that the Conventions of the International Labour Conference are much wider in scope?—Quite.

G-1227. Supposing this Commission recommended that those Conventions should be ratified, I suppose you would have no objection to that?—No.

G-1228. *Mr. Kay*: The panel of lawyers has been in existence, you say, for three years. Have you at any time during that period experienced any difficulty in placing your representations before the employers? If you have had any occasion to make representations to the employers, have you had any difficulty in getting them listened to?—I believe the cases that are conducted are cases that have passed the preliminary stage of notice and denial of liability. There may be some cases in which liability has been admitted and compensation paid, but they do not figure here in this table.

G-1229. Have you made any representations at any time to the employers and found that they were putting obstacles in the way of your panel for carrying out your work?—If I may understand your question in this light, we have had, I believe, two or three cases where we wanted to inspect the conditions under which the workmen who were alleged to have had accidents worked; but our request was not complied with. I do not say they were unreasonable in not complying with our request; they may have been quite reasonable. We had to go to the Commissioner in those cases and the Commissioner came along with us. I was not there, but two of my young friends were there.

G-1230. Do you think professional etiquette would stand in the way of your panel making representations to employers as to the function of your panel?—Quite. At present we are not recognized by the courts, and we have taken a considerable degree of responsibility in taking up this work. To tell you plainly, we hardly know where we are. We have been permitted to do this work, and at any time we may be asked to explain ourselves. We dare not, not even to an inch, extend beyond this.

G-1231. It seems to me that it might facilitate your work if you could make yourselves better known to employers, because, speaking personally—not in the capacity of an Assistant Commissioner—I might say that I have had no intimation about this panel of lawyers until I had your report in front of me. In another capacity I am very much concerned with some of your activities, and I was naturally interested to know whether you had felt any difficulty in getting into touch with the employers on any occasion. My opinion is that both sides could be of considerable use to each other in connection with the suggestions you have made this afternoon?—The state of affairs is this: A legal aid society for the poor strictly so called will have to function with definite rules and constitutions, and with a status either under the Madras Bar Counsel or under the court. That is what legal aid societies are in England and in Bombay and Calcutta. They will operate on a larger scale and not merely be confined to the compensation cases. I believe when the Compensation Act came into existence, there was a desire on the part of some responsible for the efficient

administration of the Act to interest the professional body as such in the administration of this Act. That did not evoke a response, and some of us who were wearing the label of social workers as such were pounced upon. We could not in fairness to our associations deny the request, and so we started, and taking courage in both the hands we have done this work. We had to keep it very much under the bushel so to say lest it might be misinterpreted either by the public or by the profession. But for the fact that the Government of India's circular was brought to us and in the meantime the Commission had also started its work and we thought that we would be justified in interesting the Commission with our suggestions, we would not have published this report at all. It is very kind of you to suggest as you have done and I have no doubt that the sub-committee that is sitting for extending the work of the panel in larger directions will embody your suggestion and give effect to it as much as possible.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. P. A. KRISHNASWAMY, and Rev. PAUL RAMASESHAN, representatives of the Madras Representative Christian Council.

G.-1232. *Mr. Sastri.* Mr. Krishnaswamy, I understand that you have been deputed by the Madras Representative Christian Council to appear before us ?—(*Mr. Krishnaswamy*) : Yes.

G-1233. Will you be good enough to tell us how you come into contact with labour problems ?—About the year 1925 it was felt by the National Christian Council, to which the Madras Representative Christian Council belongs, that it would be good to go into the labour conditions and problems in India and gather facts and figures, because it was becoming a pressing problem in the country. We were planning to get an expert on industrial problems from England, and to prepare the way for her, the various provincial councils were asked to make preliminary nvestigations into labour conditions.

G-1234. Is that different from the welfare worker that you mention in the course of your memorandum ?—Very different. The National Christian Council and the provincial Christian councils began this inquiry; I have no information about the action taken by the other provincial councils, but the Madras Council took it up very seriously. We had a committee appointed with which I happen to be connected from the very beginning, first as a Secretary of that body and then as convener. Our purpose was mainly to gather material to be placed before the expert from England as well as before the Commission which was associated with that person. That Commission consisting of three people has come and done its work, and I believe Miss Matheson, who was the Chairman of that Commission, has laid her report before this Commission in an un-official way. The Madras Council has continued investigating all through the past five years, and as a result thereof we have laid before you our memorandum. Our work has been kept strictly private for various reasons, and naturally when the Royal Commission came we thought that it will be good for us to appear before you and to lay before you whatever materials we have been able to gather, because all of us share the ideals of a Christian civilization, humanitarian, social and economic.

G-1235. Have you had personal experience of industrial or labour problems in this city ? Have you gone out and seen things for yourself ?—Yes,

67

as far as it was possible for me to do it. My whole time is given up practically to other kinds of work, and I have taken up this subject because I am personally interested in it. As far as I have been able to spare time, I have seen the things for myself, and I can say that most of the information is first-hand.

G-1236. Have you confined your activities only to the Madras City, or have you also gone out to the moffusil ?—Originally we had auxiliary committees appointed in Bangalore, Madura and Coimbatore, but it was very difficult to get suitable men in charge of these committees. We have, therefore, not been able to do very much in the moffusil, but there had been committees functioning off and on though their reports were not published. When Miss Matheson went round she collected all the information together, and I believe it is incorporated in her report.

G-1237. Rev. Ramaseshan, I understand that you will be willing to say something upon the question of *bidi* workers ?—(*Rev. Ramaseshan*) : Yes.

G-1238. How long have you had experience of the work in *bidi* factories ?—Though I have not worked in any *bidi* factory, I have been visiting them for the last 6 years. I was living in the south of Madras, and so my experience is confined to that part of the city. There are a number of small *bidi* shops in the south of Madras and these do not come under the Factory Act because they employ at the most 12 or 15 men ; they do not come under the Factory Act and so the Factory Inspector has no authority over them, and no Government officer can control them or check them. They employ juvenile labour, that is, boys who are under-fed and who though they are said to be 12 years of age hardly look more than 7 or 8 years of age. They go to work at about 7 in the morning and they can be seen very often until 9 o'clock in the night. The boys who work there make inferior kind of *bidis*. They do not give wages according to the number of hours worked, but according to the amount of output. That will mean that a small boy in the course of the whole day may not be able to earn more than As. 3; his work is cleaning the tobacco and cleaning the leaf. The cleaning of tobacco is a very vicious form of work for the infants because it is a kind of inferior tobacco which they import from Northern India, and the tobacco fumes affect them. Most of these boys get bronchial affection. In addition to this they keep these shops in small places where the floor is damp. These boys sit on the damp floor, with both their legs stretched out and with a small basket containing the raw material across the knee. There are also some grown-up men employed in every one of these shops, and they are to manufacture the superior kind of *bidis*. If they work for about 10 hours a day the maximum wage that they are likely to earn is only As. 12 a thousand. A careful and conscientious workman would be able to make up a thousand in the course of the day ; that means the maximum that he can earn is only As. 12 a day. Every grown-up man does not get the maximum, but the maximum earned is As. 12 a day and the minimum is As. 3 a day. The wages vary between these two figures.

G-1239. When you said the South of Madras to be the range of your experience, did you include Triplicane ?—Yes, and part of Royapeta and part of Mylapore, *i.e.*, near the Mylapore market. There is still an organization called the Triplicane Social Brotherhood with which I have been connected for a number of years. In that connection I took up the investigation of *bidi* shops in the first instance.

G-1240. Can you give us any idea of the number of persons employed in these shops ?—The number of figures now is far more than it used to be two years ago, and that is because of the advent of three or four big *bidi* manufacturers in Madras. They manufacture on a large scale, and it is that which has increased the number of workmen. In my opinion, the number would be about 20,000 ; that would be the outside limit for the whole city. Usually, the proprietors of these *bidi* shops are Muhammadans and they employ very few Hindus ; there are less Hindus than Muhammadans in these *bidi* factories.

G-1241. Have you come across any cases where the parents have pledged their children's labour upon a document ?—I do not think documents are executed in that way for the reason that they may not be quite valid, but I know that parents do borrow on the capacity for labour that their children are capable of. They directly pledge their labours, but they have no document as such.

G-1242. Have you any knowledge of cases having come up in law courts of employers requiring the parents to keep their children under them for longer periods ?—Not so far as I know.

G-1243. What do you think of the profits that these *bidi* factory proprietors make ?—I do not know that side of the *bidi* manufacture for the reason that no information is easily forthcoming to an enquirer of my type. The manufacturers do not give out details. A thing like that can be worked out only if we could know the cost of tobacco and the cost of the leaf which they buy in wholesale quantities. We have no information on that, but they must be making a huge profit, as we see them rising up.

G-1244. That is what one wishes to know. Supposing we somehow or other reformed this *bidi* manufacture until it satisfied our modern conditions, do you think that the margin of profit will enable the factories to live or make them close their shops ?—Personally I think they would live all right even if conditions are much improved because they can afford to pay for them.

G-1245. You think the profits are big enough ?—Yes. In this connection I am reminded of an attempt to compete with the *bidi* industry by the Imperial Tobacco Co. They issued cheap cigarettes for the same cost of the *bidis* 4 years ago. They sold in small packets rolled in tissue paper, but they failed in their attempt because the local *bidi* factory people were able to sell their *bidis* even cheaper than that price. That was how the Imperial Tobacco Co. lost its business, and the local people thereby established that they could beat out competition. I believe that is an evidence of what they could do.

G-1246. On the subject of ill-treatment of the boys employed, have you any remarks to offer ?—There is a good deal of ill-treatment in the sense that the boys are compelled to work. In some cases the boys' own parents who also work in the same factory force them to sit at their work, and thus they get sick. The common sickness is rheumatism and bronchial affection ; they are under-fed, and they are also sometimes beaten. I do not know if there is any more ill-treatment. They get a good deal of knocking about.

G-1247. Have you seen many children of about 5 years of age working in these *bidi* factories ?—No, not boys of 5 years of age. Most of these boys say that they are above 12, but one can hardly judge them to be not more than 8.

It may be that they are under-fed or it may be that they are just 8 ; in any case they cannot be judged to be over 10.

G-1248. In your opinion, cannot the Compulsory Education Act be worked so as to release these boys for schooling ?—It has no force in such cases because horoscopes in this country can always be produced to prove that the children are above 11 years of age.

G-1249. Has it been tried ?—It has been. Compulsory Education Act has no force in this matter. Even when we ask them they say that their age is 12, and the Compulsory Education Act cannot therefore have any force.

G-1250. Would you recommend that the Factory Act should be so amended as to bring these *bidi* factories within its scope ?—Yes. The Factory Act would include the places which employ even 10 men. Here is a case that appears in the National Christian Council Review. On page 632 of the October 1926 number of that Review you will find it stated : "In a small room, 25 ft. long and 7 ft. broad, we find two rows of people sitting with their legs stretched out for almost the whole day." An additional fact has to be mentioned and that is that it has got a low thatched roof to make it worse.

G-1251. *Mr. Clow* : Have you ever come across any case of children being fastened to the place where they work ?—They are being kept by a sort of compulsion by the parents, but a thing like fastening is not possible in the city of Madras. My experience is that it has never been done.

G-1252. *Miss Power* : On the subject of compulsory education, you said that it was possible to produce horoscopes to prove that a child was over 11 and therefore he was outside the purview of the law. Is there any reason why there should not be a method of determining the age for the enforcement of compulsory education similar to that used in connection with the administration of the Factory Act ?—That is a matter for the Corporation to consider. If the Corporation could so amend the Act as to require a medical certificate about the age, that may be a different matter, but as things are now the age in this country is determined by the horoscope or by the parent's word.

G-1253. You think it will be a valuable thing to get a child's age for the purpose of the Education Act determined by a medical examination ?—It may be helpful, but I do not know whether it will be practicable. A copy of the extract from the birth and the death record might be demanded, but even then I think the best course would be to insist on the production of an authentic medical report.

G-1254. They do not do it at present ?—No : they take the word of the parent or the horoscope.

G-1255. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : Do you think that the fact that the employers are Muhammadans and the workers are also mostly Muhammadans throws any additional difficulties in the way of getting better methods introduced ?—The type of people who are employed there and who are employing there live a kind of dirty life. I know many Muhammadans who live a clean life, but the Labbey population of Triplicane live a very unclean life. They keep their surroundings very dirty. That is one of our difficulties.

G-1256. Does it make your investigation more difficult where there are women who observe *purdah* ?—Yes, it makes our investigation very difficult,

G.-1257. *Mr. Sastri*: Mr. Krishnaswamy, have you paid particular attention to any industry in this city, such as the *bidi*, embroidery or tailoring, or is it on the general subject of industry that you wish to speak?—(*Mr. Krishnaswamy*): I am afraid I have to speak on the general line. You will notice from my memorandum that I have dealt with the subject in a general way.

G-1258. Do you wish to emphasize any particular points in your memorandum?—There are 5 or 6 points on which I wish to lay stress. In the first place, we feel that there should be a workshop Act in view of the unusually unhealthy labour conditions in certain workshops especially in those where cheap cigars, *bidis*, are manufactured. We think that there should be a workshop Act different from the Factory Act. If I understand the Factory Act rightly, it deals only with those where power is employed. But here in these *bidi* shops and other workshops where various articles are manufactured and conditions are equally bad, no power is employed, and so we would like to have a workshop Act to deal with conditions in these, more or less on the lines of the Factory Act.

G-1259. Would it not be sufficient if the Factory Act were modified to meet your point?—It would, but then the Factory Act, I think, is made applicable where 20 people are employed and where power is used. Even now the local Governments have been given the option to extend the Act where 10 people are employed, but the local Governments have not availed themselves of this power. I think it should be made compulsory throughout India.

G-1260. *Miss Power*: Are you asking for an extension of the Factory Act so as to cover places with or without power, down to a minimum of ten persons?—Yes.

G-1261. You do not wish to distinguish as to the number of persons in respect of places with power and places without power?—No. We feel that the ideal of standard wages should be based upon the ability of the industry to pay rather than on the local agricultural rates which often border on the starvation line. Thirdly, we feel that it would lead to very useful and happy results if it could be enacted that every labourer working in industries using power where the work is of a hazardous nature should wear a uniform during working hours and that the employing body should bear the cost of the same. These people should have a uniform which will protect them, because Indians are very fond of using loose garments. It will help them in many ways if they wear a uniform suited to the various industries in which they are employed. Fourthly, I would like to lay emphasis on welfare work in general. I do not mean that all the employers in various industries do not take care of their labour; some do, but many do not. We feel that welfare work which helps the labourer to combat the drink habit, to escape indebtedness and to avoid over-crowding and insanitary conditions, is a strength to industry. Such work proves that the employer takes an interest in his employees as individual personalities dependent on him for the amenities of life as well as the means of living and not as so many machines to run the actual machines of iron and steel. If the Commission can do anything to induce employers, who have not yet done so, to begin such work, its visit to Madras will not have been in vain. One of the outstanding needs of this city is the provision of cheap sanitary houses for work-people. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Company have provided some lodgings to their workers. I have quoted the instance of

Kurusadicheri where the conditions are very bad. We would like to stress on the importance of making the new factories or even old factories to move out of the city and to have their establishments away from the city instead of crowding themselves at one place.

G-1262. *Mr. Sastri*: If you put them out of the municipal limit, even the slight control you have now would be more difficult; that is your idea?—My idea is that if you can shift these factories outside the city you can have enough room for housing all these labourers. The labourers can then lead a sort of village life which they are used to. This will help them to be free from many of the troubles which they have to put up with when they come into city life. We are of opinion that the Government, the Corporation and the employing bodies should work together wherever possible in making life more worthwhile for the labourer by giving him facilities for cleaner habits, healthier dwellings, etc., and thus help him to develop a better personality and thereby become a better citizen. We feel that the Madras Government Labour Department should do more. We have offered a few suggestions in which they can develop their work. It should officially collect statistics on labour and middle class family budgets and living for important industrial centres like Madras, Madura and Coimbatore and make them available to the public, as the Bombay office has done for the city of Bombay and other centres of Industry. It should also have an information bureau where we could get up-to-date information regarding labour, its problems, strikes, lock-outs, living conditions, conditions of employment in particular industries and establishments. There is need for a special officer preferably an Indian, under the Commissioner of Labour for this, who would be in charge of this department under the guidance of the Commissioner.

G-1263. *Mrs. Venkatasubha Rao*: You say that legislation on maternity benefits should be secured. Do you know in Madras how far maternity benefits have been voluntarily provided by employers?—So far they have been voluntarily provided; as far as my information goes, there is no legislation on that at present. Sometimes it depends upon the charity of the employer who employs them. A woman when she is in an advanced stage of pregnancy, that is when she is in the 6th or the 7th months, she has to go to her home. If she is taken, after she comes back, in the same mill they give her three half months' wages. But very often she is told that her post has been filled up and that she has to wait for another chance. In many cases the employers avoid making any such payment. We want that there should be legislation on this subject. It is only fair that the employer takes care of his women employees. At a time when the women workers want the help most they are in very many cases denied it, and we therefore feel strongly that there should be legislation.

G-1264. *Miss Power*: I see that you ask for a 55-hour week. Would you tell us why you decided on 55 hours?—It was not really we who decided on that; it was decided by the all-India committee on industrial problems which met in Poona. The present hours, I believe, are 11 a day and 60 a week. There are some employers who take the fullest advantage of the present provision of 60 hours a week while others keep to the 10 hours limit a day or 55 hours a week.

G-1265. Could you tell us what the position is more or less generally in this presidency ?—As far as Madras is concerned they work only 10 hours a day, but you have to take into consideration the various factories in outlying villages and through most parts of the Presidency, where the employers take the fullest advantage of the 60-hour week.

G-1266. I was really wanting to find out the reason why you recommended a 55-hour week. As you know, there is a good deal of discussion going on about the Washington 8-hour convention. Has your Council suggested a 55-hour week as a half-way to an 8-hour day, or because you really think that a 55-hour week is suitable to Indian conditions ?—It is the former. We do not at all think that a 60-hour week is more suitable than a 55-hour week.

G-1267. You deal with the need for additional Inspectors and welfare workers. We have had frequent mention made to us of the difficulty of getting suitable people for such posts. Has your Council any views as to whether suitable persons would be available, and whether the proper kind of training would be forthcoming in the Madras Presidency if there were a sudden call for more such people?—I think we can supply both the persons and the training.

G-1268. The modern training of welfare workers is a fairly wide one and on a scientific basis. Do you think such training would be available in the Presidency ?—It could be made available. It does not already exist.

G-1269. You have a University here which inaugurated a 2-years course in social service. Have you experience of the value of that course ?—It is so recent that we have not.

G-1270. You deal with the question of sickness insurance. One of our difficulties is that it is almost impossible to obtain any information as to the actual amount of leave taken by individual workers on account of sickness. Have you any knowledge of any firm in the Presidency which keeps statistics accurately as regards absence due to sickness and absence due to leave ?—No.

G-1271. Have you any knowledge of the ease or difficulty with which a fictitious medical certificate for sickness can be bought by a worker in this Presidency ?—Certificates can be bought.

G-1272. Even if the worker is not sick ?—He must be a little sick. He must look sick.

G-1273. You are in favour of a sickness insurance scheme. Do you suggest that this should be a scheme in which the worker should be asked to pay a share as well as the employer and the State ?—I think all sides should contribute.

G-1274. Do you think the worker, at the present stage of his industrial development, would be prepared for a deduction from his pay if he could not see an immediate return for it ?—From my experience I think he would be.

G-1275. You give us a long list of some of the ways in which you think your body can help on the subject of the problems arising from industrialisation in India. Have any of these been put into effect ? Is your body, as a body, undertaking any definite form of propaganda, or research, or social service in connection with industrialism ?—At the moment we are collecting information about welfare work that is being done already, and investigating the possibilities in which Christian service can be rendered, according to the resolutions passed at the last meeting of the Council. These I will

submit to the August 1930 meeting of our Council, on which they will take action.

G-1276. You say you are wanting workers from the West. You have had in the past from the West mainly people trained as doctors and teachers. Are you now asking for people with specifically industrial welfare training ?—Yes

G-1277. Do you want people who will help to train trade union leaders or welfare workers, or what type of people do you feel you want with Western training ?—Mostly welfare people are wanted. That is what we are interested in. We want them to train people in welfare work out here, as well as to take part in the work themselves and to educate labour in general.

G-1278. You think that is better than having institutions of your own out here, whose standard should be equal to the best standard of the West ?—It will take some time for us to get our own people. It will be necessary for some time to come to get people from the West to help us.

G-1279. You deal with the possibility of an employment agency. If there were such an agency do you think you would be able to induce employers and workers to use it. This is a country where there is a long-standing method of employing people directly at the factory gates, where surplus workers are always available ?—A public employment agency would be of great use for two reasons. Firstly, it would help deserving people to get work. At present there are persons with all the necessary qualifications out of work, and many people get into jobs for which they do not possess the necessary qualifications.

G-1280. You know that the crux of an employment agency is the willingness of the employer and of the worker to use it. Do you think in the present stage of industrial development the bigger employers, who in this country are small in number but who employ the vastly preponderating number of workers, could be persuaded to use such an agency ?—The whole success of an employment agency depends upon the willingness of the employers to give it a chance.

G-1281. Who would run such an agency ?—I say in my memorandum " The governing body might consist of a board of responsible public-spirited men and women, some chosen by the Government and others elected by the various philanthropic and other bodies ".

G-1282. Do you think you would be able to run an essentially business office on those lines ?—A great deal would depend on the personality of those who run it.

G-1283. You say that " the labourers are well off ". What do you mean by that ?—That is only a comparative statement. They are better off than those not employed. It does not mean that they get a living wage.

G-1284. How would you suggest ensuring that they get a living wage ? Are you in favour of minimum wage legislation ?—There are a very large number of schemes for ensuring a minimum wage in different parts of the world evolved to suit different countries. India is a country with many characteristics peculiarly its own. What sort of minimum wage legislation do you suggest would be suitable for inauguration in this country, and to what sorts of trades would you apply it to ?—I am not an expert on these matters. I would suggest getting a minimum wage fixed generally for a man and a woman or for a family consisting of a man, woman and two children.

G-1285. What do you mean by " generally ". Do you mean a national minimum wage for the whole of India ?—I would not say that, because that is not possible. I would suggest a metropolitan and a mofussil minimum wage.

G-1286. Separate for each province ?—Yes.

G-1287. When you have arrived at what you consider to be your standard minimum rate, you then want to bring into consideration, according to your minute, the capacity of the industry to pay. How would you propose to do that ? Suppose you found that what you considered to be the minimum living wage was a good deal higher than many of the industries were capable of paying ?—If an industry was not capable of paying, I do not know how you could make it pay. Such an industry would not come under the Minimum Wage Act. Only those industries capable of paying would be brought under the Act.

G-1288. *Mr. Clow* : You refer to the extremely low wages of coolies who carry ground nuts in Madras Harbour. Do you mean that those who carry ground nuts are paid less than those who carry other things ?—Ground nuts can be carried by anybody, while coal and steel cannot be carried by anybody.

G-1289. There is a lower wage paid for carrying ground nuts than for carrying other articles ?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninetieth Meeting.

PANEL I.

MADRAS.

Tuesday, 4th March 1930.

PRESENT:

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Mr. JOHN CLIFF. | Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. M. S. GREGORY, M.C. } *Railway Assistant Commissioners.*
Mr. R. SREENIVASALU. }

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary.*

Mr. S. P. Y. SURENDRANATH VOEGELI-ARYA, President, Mr. KOPPA-SWAMY MUDALIAR, Secretary, Mr. KANAGASABAI MUDALIAR, representing the Madras Electric Tramway and Supply Corporation Employees' Union.

G-1290. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is your experience on tram lines?—(*Mr. Voegeli-Arya*): I have been connected with the tramway union during the last 9 years; I have been twice president. (*Mr. Kanagasabai Mudaliar*): I have been 8 years in service on the tramway. I am an inspector; I was first a clerk but in the year 1924 I was promoted to an inspector on daily wages. (*Mr. Kappaswamy Mudaliar*): I have been 7 years a conductor on the tramways.

G-1291. Has your union been a live body since it was formed in 1917 *Mr. Voegeli-Arya*): Yes.

G-1292. You have been registered under the Trade Unions Act, you are recognised by the Company and your membership is 1,800?—Yes.

G-1293. How many tram workers are there?—In all about 2,700.

G-1294. Do your members pay subscriptions?—Yes.

G-1295. Have you a copy of your constitution?—Yes, I have submitted it.

G-1296. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you an annual report?—It is in the press.

G-1297. Does that include a statement of your accounts?—Yes.

G-1298. You could send that to the Commission?—Yes.

G-1299. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In what departments are your 1,800 members employed?—Most of the members are of traffic department and the workshop; there are about 450 men in the workshop. We have about 1,332

members in the traffic department including cleaners, office peons, store coolies and that sort of people. Inspectors, drivers, conductors, motormen, and line cleaners alone come to something like 800. Some of our men are connected with the Electric Supply Corporation.

G-1300. Are you members of the Central Labour Board ?—I am the vice-president of the Central Labour Board.

G-1301. Is this association affiliated to it ?—Yes. I am connected with 3 other unions ; I am the vice-president of the Match Factory Union and vice-president of the Port Trust Union and Kerosine Oil Workers' Union.

G-1302. Are you quite sure you are not doing too many things ; are you able to pay sufficient attention to this particular union ? Yes.

G-1303. Are the office-bearers chiefly working on the tramways ?—Yes.

G-1304. In a town like Madras who do you think should provide education for the workers and their children ?—I think the industries which employ these labourers might supply the educational facilities for them.

G-1305. Do you suggest there should be a joint council of employees and employers ?—Yes, to settle disputes as to wages and other things.

G-1306. Who now settles disputes between you ?—Everything is in the hands of the Agent and the Chief Engineer.

G-1307. The Agent recognizes the Union and is quite willing to deal with it ? Yes.

G-1308. *Mr. Cliff* : Were you recognized before 1929 ?—No.

G-1309. Is it only since 1929 that you have been able to meet the Engineer and represent your grievances ?—Yes.

G-1310. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say the hours of labour should be counted from the moment the worker leaves his home. Do you know of any industry in the world in which that is done ?—When I was student in England and America I had an opportunity of hearing many labour leaders putting forward this proposal. The question will be solved when houses are provided near the factory.

G-1311. In a town like Madras, do you think there is any obligation on the employer to provide houses ?—Yes.

G-1312. Do you not think you are interfering with the liberty of the private employer and the workman to get his house where he likes ?—Provided you give him sufficient money I can appreciate the value of freedom in the case of a labourer, but where you do not give him enough money you ask him to live in a house a long way from his place of employment and you say that in the name of freedom.

G-1313. *Mr. Cliff* : You want houses provided rent-free because wages are insufficient ?—Yes.

G-1314. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You talk about a 48 or 50-hour week but you evidently contemplate overtime up to and even beyond 10-hours a day ?—Yes.

G-1315. *Mr. Cliff* : Surely that is overtime on a weekly basis ?—Yes.

G-1316. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say that gazetted holidays should be given to the tramway workers or compensated for ?—Yes.

G-1317. But gazetted holidays are the days on which the trams are most needed ?—Yes, and therefore they must be paid extra.

G-1318. *Mr. Cliff* : You are asking for an additional rate on public holidays ?—Yes.

G-1319. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Have you many women workers ?—Yes, 500 women workers ; they are coolies who work on the permanent way.

G-1320. Do they receive any maternity benefit ?—I do not think so.

G-1321. *Mr. Cliff* : Are you accepting them as members of your union ?—Yes.

G-1322. Have you any women members ?—Yes, quite a number.

G-1323. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Have you a provident fund ?—No.

G-1324. Have you suggested to the Agent that there should be a provident fund ?—Yes, we have asked for it and he has accepted our suggestion but he has not definitely done anything yet.

G-1325. You say that the housing conditions of your labourers are appalling ?—Yes.

G-1326. Does that apply to all Madras labour ?—I think so.

G-1327. You say that wages must not only be minimum living wages but standard living wages. What is the difference ?—Minimum living wages may be wages that supply the animal wants of the people ; by standard living wages I mean that they should be according to a definite standard at which people should live.

G-1328. You do not think it should be a bare subsistence level but something above that ?—Yes.

G-1329. *Mr. Cliff* : Are you demanding immediately a minimum wage and then you are hoping to get a standard wage afterwards ?—Yes ; we are not going to arrive at a standard wage at once ; that must be the ideal.

G-1330. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say that wages of any labour in India must not fall below Rs. 50 a month ? Yes ; as a result of long study in India and in other countries I have been forced to the conclusion that until we pay Rs. 50 a month to the lowest and most unskilled labourers it is not possible for them to maintain the status of human beings.

G-1331. Did you take out any family budgets ?—Yes, about five months ago, I carefully investigated the conditions in about 400 houses of my own tramway friends and 300 or 400 people in mill areas, coolies, porters and workers in the railway department ; I found that those who receive Rs. 60 a month were indebted to money lenders but those who were receiving less than Rs. 60 a month were entirely at the mercy of money lenders, borrowing money to such an extent that they found it impossible to repay.

G-1332. You say that wages must be enhanced and promotions may be made periodically by the joint council of employers and employees. Do you

know of any industry in which promotions are made by joint councils ?—I think there are quite a number in England, for instance, the Transport Union in England.

G-1333. *Mr. Cliff*: I do not think you say in your memorandum that the councils should make the promotions ?—It is not properly worded.

G-1334. *Sir Alexander Murray*:—You mean that the workers should be graded and should be promoted automatically ?—Yes. Unfortunately the tramways have no rules as to promotions; they made appointments and promotions as the industries grew; we demanded again and again that they should give us printed rules.

G-1335. *Mr. Cliff*: What hours do drivers and conductors work ?—The conductors and motormen go to their work at 5 A.M., and work till 1 P.M., *i.e.*, eight hours. Shift conductors and motormen work from 12-30-P.M. to 9 P.M.

G-1336. How many days a week are scheduled ? Seven days.

G-1337. Do you work 14 days a fortnight ?—Yes.

G-1338. Is there a normal working week of 56 hours ?—Yes.

G-1339. But in Madras do not the tram cars run after 9 P.M. ?—Sometimes they run up to 10 or 11 o'clock.

G-1340. What is the overtime worked by drivers and conductors ?—(*Mr. Kanagasabai Mudaliar*): The overtime comes to 2½ days a fortnight.

G-1341. Will you send in a statement of the normal daily duty with the actual overtime worked ?—Yes.

G-1342. What hours do the permanent way men work ?—(*Mr. Voegeli-Arya*): They come at 8-30 in the morning and leave at 5 in the evening with one hour's interval.

G-1343. Will you send us a statement of the rates of wages ?—Yes; women commence at 5 annas 9 pies per day *plus* a grain allowance of 2 annas a day while men are paid Rs. 0-7-9 per day *plus* Re. 0-2-0 grain allowance.

G-1344. Do they always get the grain allowance ?—Yes, but we cannot tell when they are going to stop it.

G-1345. Is overtime paid on a flat rate or an added rate ?—(*Mr. Kanagasabai Mudaliar*): It is calculated on the number of hours at the ordinary flat rate.

G-1346. Have you any annual holidays ?—(*Mr. Voegeli-Arya*): Recently the Agent and Chief Engineer granted us 15 days' privilege leave per annum with pay.

G-1347. Have you to put in any length of service before you get that ?—(*Mr. Kanagasabai Mudaliar*): Any one who has done more than 3 years' service will be given 15 days; that applies to every department.

G-1348. With regard to the daily duty, is there any relief for meals for the traffic staff; when a man starts at 5 A.M. and finishes at 1 P.M. does he get any time for meals ?—(*Mr. Voegeli-Arya*). No, they take their meals while they

are working; again and again I have seen men taking meals in their cars and sometimes inspectors punish them for neglecting their work while they are taking their meals.

G-1349. Do the tramways provide any canteens at the termini ?—No.

G-1350. Is an payment made during sickness ?—No; under the Workmen's Compensation Act they pay us if there is an accident but if a man falls ill without an accident he gets no pay during sickness.

G-1351. Do drivers and conductors have to undergo any medical examination ?—Yes, the company's doctors do that.

G-1352. If a man commences work on the tramways as a conductor, does he have to go through a period of training ?—They undergo training for one month and they get no pay during that time.

G-1353. Is a motorman promoted from a conductor ?—A conductor never becomes a motorman.

G-1354. Do shed men ever become conductors or drivers ?—Yes.

G-1355. What happens with regard to conductors' shortages ?—The first time they are asked to replace the amount and they are warned; if it is repeated they are fined and sometimes dismissed. Most of our conductors are not very well educated and they make mistakes in their calculations.

G-1356. If a conductor or a driver is reported by a passenger or an inspector, what procedure is adopted ?—When an inspector sends a complaint against a conductor or motorman, the Traffic Superintendent sends a letter to this man to appear before him and then he asks him whether or not it is a fact. The first time he is given some slight punishment but the second or third time they are dealt with very severely.

G-1357. If a man feels he has been unjustly dealt with, does he go to the Union ?—Yes.

G-1358. Has the Union an opportunity of taking up those cases ?—We do but in those cases the Agent and Chief Engineer say "it is not our concern and it is purely in the hands of the man".

G-1359. Have you succeeded in getting a punishment altered or getting a man reinstated ?—Not always, but sometimes we have.

G-1360. So that you have facilities for representing the case of the men ?—Yes, we send letters to the Agent but he plainly tells us we must not interfere with such things. A motorman and conductor were fined four annas; we requested the Agent to excuse the men and they were excused.

G-1361. *Mr. Sreenivasalu*: Does your Agent take into consideration all the representations you make ?—Not with regard to the discipline and office administration but whenever we go to him about wages and such things he considers the matter.

G-1362. In how many cases of dismissals have you made representations ?—Nearly fifteen.

G-1363. Is it true to say that not one of those cases have been considered ?—Yes.

G-1364. Generally speaking is the attitude of the Agent cordial ?—He is a very amiable gentleman, and I do not know that I have any complaint to make so far as his courtesy is concerned.

G-1365. But what are his actions ?—There, of course, he differs.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninetieth Meeting.

PANEL II.

MADRAS.

Tuesday, 4th March 1930.

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon'ble V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. (*Presiding*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. JAMAL MAHOMED SAHIB BAHADUR,
Mr. K. KAY,
Mr. B. SHIVA RAO, M.A.
Mr. MUHAMMAD UBAIDULLAH SAHIB.
Assistant Commissioners.

Mrs. VENKATASUBHA RAO, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary.*

Mr. C. GOPAL MENON, assisted by Mr. P. RAGHAVAN NAIR, representing the Southern India Chamber of Commerce.

G-1366. *Mr. Sastri* : What is the standing of the body you represent ?—It is a body composed of industrialists, merchants and bankers in the City and the Presidency. It has 421 members. It has been in existence for 20 years.

G-1367. You suggest that a Labour Commissioner, or some other agency, should disseminate information through village officers as to avenues of employment and conditions of service ?—Village officers can disseminate information with regard to labour conditions, marketting conditions, prices of produce, and so on ; but it would be better if a separate organization were brought into existence, and if the information collected by the village officers were passed on to that organization for checking and dissemination.

G-1368. You know the calibre of village officers generally. Would the information as to vital statistics coming from such village officers be considered as trustworthy ?—That is why I say a separate organization should be brought into existence which could collect and check and disseminate this information.

G-1369. Do you think such an organization would be manageable. It would have to be a very large organization in order to work throughout the Presidency ?—If the villagers are to get more for their produce, something must be done. The difficulty now is that the villager is ignorant of marketting conditions, when to sell, how to sell, and so forth.

G-1370. Throughout your memorandum, wherever there is much organization or much finance required, or much skill of any kind, you throw on the Government the burden of finding it all. I want to ask whether Government should be asked to spend huge sums of money on maintaining an enormous agency merely for the purpose of doing some small service to industry ?—I agree that

the Government cannot invest very large sums of money on that account, but Government should take the initiative and show the way, and bring the matter into working order, with the assistance of popular bodies, because it is for the economic uplift of the masses.

G-1371. Has your Chamber tried to enlist the sympathy of Government in this matter of an organization for the dissemination of information, and so on?—We have had no correspondence with the Government because it is not primarily our lookout; but as a result of various Commissions, such as the Economic Enquiry Committee and the Royal Commission on Agriculture, we hope something will be done.

G-1372. It is just a suggestion on your part that this is a desirable matter to which the attention of Government should be drawn?—Yes. The sooner a move is made in that direction the better.

G-1373. You say "In the city the workmen that spend their nights on foot-paths, verandahs of godowns, and even in the streets, with infants in arms, and all their belongings spread about them, may be not less than 2,000." Are these workmen who have daily occupations but who are unable to house themselves?—They are casual coolie labourers from the mofussil.

G-1374. What do you suggest should be done for such people?—Some provision must be made to accommodate these workers.

G-1375. Your memorandum is drawn up in the interests of the employers. How do the employers justify this state of affairs?—This is a matter for the Corporation to take up.

G-1376. Do you supply the Corporation with statistics as to the number of employees that employers take for whom there is no housing accommodation?—An inquiry has not been conducted for that purpose.

G-1377. The employers directly use this labour, and profit from it. They have nothing to say as to what should be done, except "The Municipality should take action; the Government should take action; charitable people should take action". Everybody else should take action, but they who profit by the labour, and use it, and bring it into the city, have nothing to say. Is that the considered view of the Chamber — that all the employers can do is to pay the labourers a small wage, and send them into the streets?—Housing accommodation should be provided by the local bodies for coolies coming into the city and it is not possible, even if it be the proper thing to do, for the employers to feel such a sense of responsibility for a mainly floating labour population.

G-1378. Do you think the rate-payers of the city should agree to bear the burden of housing these people?—In all important cities such things are done. I understand that the Corporation has already taken up the matter this year and has provided 2½ lakhs for the purpose of housing these people.

G-1379. Will these people be able to pay an economic rent?—A coolie makes at least 12 annas to one rupee and some one rupee eight annas a day, and he must be asked to pay something for his rent.

G-1380. Has the Corporation consulted you about the housing of these people?—No.

G-1381. You make a suggestion about co-operative housing societies. You are a man of large experience in the matter of public movements. You

know how the co-operative movement has gone. These things are started with the object of benefiting the poorer people, but it is the higher-salaried people who generally benefit by them; they do not reach the classes for which they were primarily intended? I agree, but we have to reform the co-operative societies. In several places the movement is gaining ground. One of the ways by which improvement could be effected would be by all people combining and organizing themselves for different purposes on a co-operative basis.

G-1382. In your memorandum under the heading of "Trade Combinations" you have a criticism of "these incipient trade unions", and you do not think that they should have any "outsiders" on their executives?—I mean by that that the labourers themselves should preponderate, with perhaps a few outsiders who could give them the benefit of their experience and knowledge. I want men who have an expert knowledge of their trade to control their own institutions.

G-1383. What is your view as to welfare work, education, and so on?—Employers should voluntarily contribute towards that work.

G-1384. Is your general attitude towards trade unions one of sympathy, or do you deprecate trade unions coming into existence?—Trade unions must come into existence in order to form a check on the vagaries of the employers, but at present they are not well organized.

G-1385. What are the employers of labour doing to place trade unions upon a proper basis?—The labourers themselves organize their unions. The employers are not in any way inimical to unions if the unions are properly constituted.

G-1386. You object to the Trades Disputes Act. Where do you think it is defective?—There is provision made only for a court of inquiry to be instituted in each case as it arises. What we want is a permanent court of inquiry to go into the matter before the workmen actually go on strike, or to interfere before the employers call a lock-out?—Now a court of inquiry is appointed only when the Government hear of a strike. The Government is a cumbersome machinery to initiate proceedings in time of their own accord.

G-1387. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: No, that is not so. A court of inquiry may be instituted in anticipation of a strike?—An attempt must be made at settlement before a strike takes place. Either the employees or the employers should be able to approach a permanent court of inquiry to settle the matter.

G-1388. Do you consider it the duty of industrial organizations to house their own labour, or do you consider it is the duty of the Municipality or Improvement Trust?—In regard to casual labour, it is the duty of the Municipality.

G-1389. In regard to regular labour, do you think it is the duty of industrial organizations to house that labour, or do you think it is the duty of the Municipality?—It is the duty of the big industrial organizations, according to the prosperity of those organizations.

G-1390. You think it is the duty of an industrial organization to house its labour only when it is prosperous?—Unless the profits of their work enable the employer to help them the labour is not worth such help.

G-1391. Do you think it is the duty of the employers, or of the Government, or of the Improvement Trust ?—It is primarily the duty of the Government, and of the Corporation.

G-1392. And not of the employers ?—I would not say that. To some extent it is the duty of the employers also.

G-1393. Do you mean to say that if you ask the Government, the Government should say " It is the duty of the employers ", and if you ask the employers, they should say " It is the duty of the Government " ?—No.

G-1394. On whom do you consider is the responsibility ?—On Government primarily.

G-1395. When you say " Government " you mean, public bodies, municipalities and Improvement Trusts ? Yes.

G-1396. As Government have no funds of their own, it is the duty of the employer, by paying higher taxation or rates, to pay for such housing accommodation ?—Among other taxpayers because the resulting economic and social uplift is to the advantage of all.

G-1397. And in order to provide them they will have to levy rates in order to make up the difference between the economic rent and the actual rent ?—Yes.

G-1398. Is your body prepared to have a rise in rates in order to meet that difference ? We will have to bear our share of the burden.

G-1399. If the Municipality here inaugurate a housing scheme for these work-people, and if they say that the economic rent is so much, and the actual rent which the labour can pay is so much less, and that the difference must be made up out of the rates, are you prepared for an enhancement in the rates in order to meet that charge ?—That is all in theory. In practice it cannot be brought about all of a sudden. Progress will have to be made year by year.

G-1400. In theory you are prepared to have a rise in rates, but in practice you are not ?—It is the duty of every citizen to look after the housing of the poor and the rise in rates should be gradual and evenly distributed.

G-1401. And you think he ought to pay for it ?—To some extent he is paying for it now.

G-1402. You think he ought to pay more for it so that houses can be built for these coolies lying about the streets ? Are you quite sure it should not be done by somebody else ?—It must be brought about in different ways.

G-1403. You are prepared to have all the housing required as long as you do not have to pay for it ?—No, no. We do not say that. It is a matter for the State as well as for the people.

G-1404. How many planters have you in your organization ?—None who are planters by profession but some of our members are also interested plantations.

G-1405. Is that the reason why you suggest no alteration in the hours of work in factories, but a shortening of the hours on plantations ?—That is on account of the hard life on the plantations.

G-1406. Do you consider the life in the open air, picking tea, much harder than the life in a stuffy factory ?— There is malaria and the hookworm on the plantations. The work-people suffer more from living in the hill stations than they

do from living on the plains, because of the rigour of climate, lack of facility for all the needs of life, danger of wild animals, etc.

G-1407. You think they will get less malaria and less hookworm if they work shorter hours on the plantations ?—They will certainly be more efficient to combat the diseases.

G-1408. *Mr. Ahmed*: You are in favour of uplifting and ameliorating the condition of the masses. That being so, you are also in favour of the standard of living of the workers being raised ?—Yes.

G-1409. Better housing accommodation, and the education of the workers and their children, are absolute necessities ?—Yes.

G-1410. You are also in favour of maternity benefit, workmen's compensation, and other amenities of life being given to the workers ?—Yes.

G-1411. You are aware of the International Labour Convention regarding a minimum living wage. Are you in favour of that ?—We think that every recommendation contained in that Convention should not be immediately applied. All these recommendations should be carried out gradually, and not in a hurry. I am for the gradual improvement in standards of life of these labourers, for the better bringing up of their children, for increasing their daily comforts, and diet and social life, for better housing, better clothing and recreations. Both employers and employed should have a mutual understanding on such questions for the benefit of the industry. Protection is the great thing. With increased protection to industries I am sure, without much interference, there will be a better understanding.

G-1412. It is absolutely necessary that a minimum wage should be given to the workers in order to keep them alive ?—Certainly, but it would be difficult to fix by Statute a minimum wage in the present state of things.

G-1413. It is absolutely necessary to give them sufficient in order to enable them to keep body and soul together ?—Yes.

G-1414. A minimum wage is an absolute necessity ?—Yes, but will it be an all-India provision or a provincial provision ?

G-1415. You mean it should be a minimum wage according to the ability of the province to pay ?—Yes, and also districts and industries and trades.

G-1416. You say " There are no profit-sharing or co-partnership schemes in operation ".—Are you in favour of an equitable distribution of the profits among employers and employees ?—I merely say that there are no such schemes in operation now.

G-1417. But if such a principle were adopted do you not think it would be a good thing both for the employers and the employed ?—There is none in existence now. Perhaps it would lead to more contentment of labour.

G-1418. The workers are part and parcel of the concern, and that being so, should not they be given an equitable proportion of the profits. Do you not think that would enhance the efficiency of the workers ?—Yes, to some extent.

G-1419. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are you in favour of profit-sharing ?— Not at the present moment.

G-1420. *Mr. Kay*: You say " Trade Unions are ill-organized and ill-controlled, and the result is that collective bargaining, which is one of the fundamental objects of trade unions, is never achieved, while considerable loss is

caused on either side. Sometimes even the formulation of grievances does not take place before the strike and there is no attempt at all to settle the difference before the workmen go on strike". Do you consider that that applies locally ?—Why I say that trade unions are ill-organized is because a strike takes place, and then after 2 or 3 days the workers return. It is not possible to find out why the strike arose. I want to avoid such things by strengthening the trade unions so that everybody may know what the workers legitimate grievances are.

G-1421. You think it should be practicable for discussions to take place before a strike is declared ?—If you know what the grievances are, it is the duty of the employer to go into them and see in what way he can redress them.

G-1422. And it is partly the duty of the trade union ?—Yes.

G-1423. You have told us your views as to the question of having "outsiders" connected with a Union. Your opinion is that the work-people themselves should have fuller representation ?—A predominant voice should be given to the workmen. In the present condition of labour, one or two outsiders may be in it.

G-1424. Is it your experience that when negotiations are conducted by outsiders misunderstandings are more likely to arise than if the negotiations are conducted directly between employers and employed ?—Outsiders might be present to give their advice, but it is far better that the employers and employed themselves should settle their disputes.

G-1425. On the point of employers showing more sympathy with trade unions, have you found in your experience that any suggestion of active sympathy with a trade union on the part of an employer is very apt to be misinterpreted ?—I do not think it follows. But one or two cases have occurred.

G-1426. *Mr. Sastri*: Are you afraid that too much sympathy on the part of the employer might create suspicion on the part of the workers ?—I do not think that need take place.

G-1427. *Mr. Kay*: You do not think that an employer who might exhibit a certain amount of sympathy with the development of a trade union would be suspect of exercising undue influence and control ?—There might be circumstances leading to such suspicion. I do not think that is a general feature.

G-1428. *Mr. Sastri*: There is that risk ?—I think so.

G-1429. *Mr. Ubaidullah*: You do not want any of the office-bearers of a trade union to be outsiders ?—One or two may be in it in the present condition of labour.

G-1430. What danger do you think there is in having outsiders in a trade union ?—My idea is that the people in the industry itself should run their affairs and take the full responsibility for a fateful decision.

G-1431. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: In your memorandum you speak of the non-applicability of any and every recommendation and Convention of the International Labour Conference. Do you suggest to the Commission that those which have been ratified should be cancelled, or do you give that as a warning in regard to future Conventions ?—Some of these things are not entirely applicable to Indian conditions at the present time. Therefore we have to proceed slowly and not entirely on Western conditions.

G-1432. You say that Government should intervene at a very early stage in all trade disputes. Are you satisfied that the Madras Government is doing that, or has been doing it ?—I do not know whether it is the fault of the Government or the employers that courts of inquiry are not instituted until the strike is on. That is why I suggest a permanent court of inquiry.

G-1433. You say that sometimes even the formulation of grievances does not take place before a strike. Do you seriously suggest that employers do not know about the existence of grievances when strikes have taken place in this Presidency ?—My point is whether the workers have actually approached the employers before they have gone on strike.

G-1434. Are you satisfied that the employers give reasonable facilities to the work-people to make due representations without any risk of dismissal or other forms of punishment ?—In all well-organized industrial concerns the employers are taking notice of the workers' complaints is my information. There may be room for improvement.

G-1435. Can you give a single instance in which a strike has taken place when the work-people have not consented to go back to work as soon as a court of inquiry was established ?—It may be so.

G-1436. On the question of fines you say that they are often utilized for the general benefit of the employees. Are you quite sure that they are utilized in that way ?—That is my information. As we say, fines are very rare, but when they are collected they are utilized either for the general benefit of the employees or for charity. A certain number of our members are tanners, and I understand from them that they utilize the fines in the ways that I have just mentioned. We had occasion to consult other members on this point sometime ago. They all gave the same information.

G-1437. With regard to trade combinations you say "Half the executive of a trade union is now permitted to be persons not employed in the industry. This is mischievous though it gives the advantage of knowledge and experience."—What I meant was this: There are, say, 100 operatives, both men and women, who are hard-working, earnest and loyal. For no fault of theirs they go on strike and return to work after 2 or 3 days. In that way mischief is done to these workmen; I do not know by whom, but the fact remains that these loyal workmen are put to trouble and loss. I want to avoid such things.

G-1438. Do you suggest that because the workmen go back to work after 2 or 3 days of the strike they are convinced that the strike was ill-advised or unjust ?—The circumstances under which they have gone back to work may be attributed to different causes, but my actual experience of the strikes in this city is that great mischief is done to these workers.

G-1439. Have you any experience of outsiders creating difficulty in the settlement of industrial disputes ?—No. I have not been in any such negotiations.

G-1440. *Miss Power*: Dealing with the question of hours, you say: "No reduction of hours is necessary now, nor even practicable under present industrial conditions". With regard to regulations for women's work you say: "For women 8 hours' day and 48 hours' week is unobjectionable". Do you mean that although it is unobjectionable you would not advocate it now, or

that you would advocate *immediate reduction* for women only in spite of your previous remarks ?—They work 8 hours now, and I say that no reduction is necessary. As far as I could see, there are about 300 factories working for 48 hours, 250 factories working for 54 hours and over a thousand factories working for 60 hours according to the contingencies of the work. I have suggested that the present working hours should remain ; but in the case of women an 8 hours day is unobjectionable in itself.

G-1441. Do you want to make the legal maximum hours for women 48 while those for men would remain at the present figure of 60 ?—I have no objection on grounds of humanity.

G-1442. Do you not think that in the textile industry it would be a very difficult thing to combine the work of men and women where women could work only for 48 hours while the men could work for 60 hours ?—Do you think it would be a practicable proposition ?—I think so.

G-1443. Do you not think that you may endanger the livelihood of the women if you put obstacles in the way of their employment, which do not apply to the employment of men, particularly in respect of the hours of work ?—I see there is that risk, but difference in wages, nature of work have also to be considered.

G-1444. You say : " Employment of children in textile mills may be prohibited, if not in others also ". There again, do you advocate that it should be illegal *to employ* children from 12 to 15 years of age in textile factories ?—Yes, because I want that these children should receive education. If they are taken to work they will be denied all the education which they would have got if they had not been taken to work at such an early age in an industry which tells on their health.

G-1445. But under your Compulsory Education Act, 11 years is the age fixed in the case of girls and 12 in the case of boys. The legal employment age of children in textile factories is 12 to 15. If you prohibit them from employment in textile factories, how does it help you in respect of education ? It merely means that you would be driving them into unregulated factories where conditions of labour might be worse than they are in textile factories ?—You can take them as apprentices and send them to technical schools for giving them higher education between the ages of 12 and 15.

G-1446. You realize that in the textile trade you are dealing with a mass of unskilled child workers ?—Even they must know something about the technical aspects of the industry.

G-1447. In your memorandum you say : " employers should be induced to institute provident funds and gratuity funds to which contribution should be made compulsory ". Do you mean that having induced the employer to start a fund it shall be compulsory on the worker to pay his share ?—Yes. These people should be made to contribute a small amount to a gratuity fund just as the Government servants are made to contribute their share.

G-1448. Do you think it is a reasonable thing that the employers should merely be induced, not compelled, to start such funds, but that the workers, as soon as such funds are started, must be compelled to pay their share ?—It is to their benefit.

G-1449. Do you not think there should be either inducement or compulsion on both sides, rather than only inducement on one side but compulsion on the other ?—Several of these men are not well-educated and unless they are made to contribute they will not do so and compulsion on the employer may ruin the industry itself on which both depend.

G-1450. That applies equally to the employers. Let us be clear as to whether you desire that there should be merely inducement on the part of the employer but compulsion on the part of the worker ?—Yes for mutual benefit the interests of the trade or industry should be paramount.

G-1451. *Mr. Clow* : Have you any members in your Chamber who own textile mills ?—Yes.

G-1452. Which mills ?—The Choolai mills, the Sri Ranga Vilas Spinning and Weaving Mills, and the Kaleeswar Mills at Coimbatore.

G-1453. They are in favour of exclusion of all children under 15 ?—I cannot definitely commit myself to that.

(The witness withdrew.)

Dr. AHMAD MUKHTAR, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Economics, Anamalai University, Chidambaram.

G-1454. *Mr. Sastri* : You come from the Anamalai University, Chidambaram ?—Yes.

G-1455. You are quite new to these parts ?—Absolutely. I have only been here for the last 8 months.

G-1456. Before that had you any experience as Professor ?—Yes. I was University Lecturer in Economics in the Aligarh University from November 1921 to July 1928. In the Gordon College at Rawalpindi I worked from October 1920 to September 1921. I was Industrial Investigator to the Punjab Government in 1920.

G-1457. How long did you hold the office of the Industrial Investigator ?—For about 7 or 8 months.

G-1458. Besides being generally interested in these questions you have not yourself been engaged in any industry ?—No, not directly.

G-1459. Would you mind telling us generally about the way in which you like the higher education given in Universities to be brought to bear upon these questions ? I understand it is upon that that you would like to speak more than upon anything else ?—If I may say so, I can speak on things directly connected with the factory labour, because I have investigated into that matter. I submitted a thesis on the matter to the London University, and a copy of that has been sent to your office.

G-1460. All that will have no practical relation to the problems in this presidency, because your experience here is very slight ?—Yes.

G-1461. I think, here ore, t would be helpful to the Commission if you confined your evidence to the very general points upon which we have not got much evidence, as to the assistance that Universities and other learned bodies may render to this subject and the way in which, for instance, accurate statistics may be collected ?—In my memorandum I have recommended that provincial labour departments should be started in every province. It will be

certainly possible for Universitites to help these departments by first-hand industrial investigations. The Punjab Government started a Board of Economic Enquiry in 1919, and some investigators have already submitted their reports on industrial conditions relating to the Punjab. These investigations were carried on by people connected with Universities, that is, those who had passed the M. A. examination in economics.

G-1462. Taking one of the more promising investigators who investigated under your instructions, can you give us some idea as to the line on which he conducted the enquiry and its results?—None investigated under my instructions so far. I was an investigator myself.

G-1463. Give us your experience then. The investigations must have proceeded on certain lines. Take any one investigation and tell us the results?—In my industrial investigations in the Punjab, I framed a questionnaire which was approved by the Board of Economic Enquiry. That questionnaire forms an Appendix to my book on Factory labour. It was divided into a number of parts. The first part related to the family. I wanted to know exactly from what particular part the industrial labourer came, what caste he belonged to, the number of dependents on him and so on. The second part related to the family income, *i.e.*, his average monthly income. The third part related to housing. The fourth part related to food. What particular diet he was accustomed to? How much of milk, how much of sugar, and how much of other things did he take from month to month? The fifth part related to lighting arrangements. Was his house lighted by a kerosine oil lamp or by electricity or by any other thing? The sixth part related to servants. Was the industrial labourer accustomed to servants or whether all the domestic duties were performed by him and the other members of his family? The seventh part related to clothing. What particular clothing he was accustomed to, and how many pairs of trousers, shirts, or turbans and shoes did he have from time to time. The eighth part related to education. Did he have any education before he actually entered the factory as a labourer and so on? The ninth part related to medical attendance: whether at the time of illness he consulted any doctor well versed in the *unani* or *ayurvedic* systems of medicine or a physician trained in the western systems of medicine? The tenth part related to ceremonies. How much money did he generally spend on marriages, pilgrimages and so on. The eleventh part related to amusements. Did he have access to cinema shows, to theatres and other things? The 12th part related to the entertainment of guests. How many guests did he have in a year, and how much money did he spend on those guests? The 13th part related to charities or presents. Was he very religious in his views; if so, how much money did he spend on charities? The 14th part related to savings. Was he able to make any savings after meeting all his expenses. The 15th part related to expenditure on sundries, like stationery, soap and other things. The last part related to indebtedness. Was he in debt; if so, to what extent?—This was the questionnaire that was framed and approved by the Board of Economic Enquiry in the Punjab. I worked according to this plan, and the result of my investigations has been set forth in my memorandum. What I think is that the labourers in India generally are greatly indebted. In the Punjab about 60 to 68 per cent. of the labourers are indebted, and the main items of indebtedness in their case are

marriage, illness and other things. Some of the labourers in the Punjab are not in a position to clear off their debts.

G-1464. I would like to know what became of this very valuable line of investigation when you relinquished your appointment? Has a successor been appointed in your place?—That was probably thrown into the waste paper basket, because Government officials were not at all sympathetic. I know that one gentleman remarked on my report that it was an anti-employer's report, and so it need not be printed.

G-1465. Did they suspect that you brought any political bias into your investigations?—Absolutely not. Since I had disclosed so many points in reference to the Punjab labour, some of the officials of the Punjab Government did not like that it should be published, because the employers' class was in a majority in the Council and they did not like that anything against them should be disclosed.

G-1466. You think that some preliminary education is necessary even to Government and Government's officers in this respect?—What I want is that they should be sympathetic to the needs of the people.

G-1467. Will you kindly tell us, if you know, what efforts have been made by other Universities in order to start enquiries of this nature?—So far as I know, no attempt has been made by any other Indian University in reference to factory labour.

G-1468. Is it your considered opinion that Universities may profitably start enquiries of this kind?—Certainly.

G-1469. Is it also your considered opinion that these advanced students of economics, the researchers, for instance, should be compelled to undergo a certain course in conducting enquiries of this sort?—Certainly, provided the remuneration paid to them is decent enough.

G-1470. I am not thinking of the remuneration. I want to know whether in your judgment the Universities will be legitimately employed in doing this sort of work?—Certainly.

G-1471. But that is not yet recognized, you say, by the managements of Universities?—It has been recognized, but only the research workers are not coming forth for the purpose.

G-1472. Do you think the results of the work of research of these students will be really useful in building up any body of reliable statistics?—Certainly.

G-1473. From the questionnaire that you just now read out, I could gather that there were some questions the answers to which required a certain amount of enlightenment and intelligence on the part of the factory hands from whom the information had to be obtained?—It much depends upon the way in which the investigation is carried on. When I first started my work it was impossible for me to get any accurate information. I was taken as a C. I. D. man by the workers, and at one time I hardly escaped being shoe beaten.

G-1474. There is much chance of error in the beginning at all events?—This enquiry need not be taken up hurriedly and brought to an end hurriedly.

G-1475. When the statistics are collected together by these students, do you think they would need checking by more responsible officers ?—Certainly.

G-1476. In the Annamalai University can you take up this work ?—We are still an infant institution. We are only in the first year of our existence as a University, and it is rather difficult to take up this work now.

G-1477. But it is your intention to start this work later ?—Yes.

G-1478. *Mr. Clow* : Do I understand you to say that you were asked by the Punjab Government to prepare a report ?—Under the light of the questionnaire just now read out by me, I was asked to prepare family budgets, and after I had finished my work I was called upon by Mr. Manoharlal, now Minister of Education in the Punjab, to prepare a report based upon those budgets. I prepared the report, and I was under the impression that it would be published by the Punjab Government. Similar reports had been published by the Punjab Government when the work was done by agricultural experts or by English ladies and gentlemen. For example, under the urban enquiry section only one report has been published by the Punjab Government, and the enquiry was undertaken by Mrs. Caleb.

G-1479. You say that when the report was presented the Board of Economic Enquiry decided not to publish it ?—The information I got was that the confidential remarks of the officer on my report were that the report was anti-employer and so it need not be published.

G-1480. Was the question of publication considered by the Board of Economic Enquiry ?—I should think so. That was the information passed on to me privately by persons connected with the Board.

G-1481. So that you published it afterwards yourself ?—My investigations in the Punjab extended over about 8 years, and it was in 1928 that I published the results of my researches.

G-1482. Did you come to any conclusion as to the standard of living in the Punjab among industrial workers ?—Yes ; I know that it is very low.

G-1483. Is it lower than it is in Madras, for instance ?—I think it is higher than it is in Madras.

G-1484. Did you attempt to form an estimate of what would constitute a living wage in the Punjab ?—No.

G-1485. As you know, at present nearly all the factory population is drawn from the villages and the workers are in the habit of returning to their villages whereas in western countries the factory population is a permanent one. Have you, as a result of your investigations throughout India, formed any conclusion as to the desirability of encouraging or discouraging the growth of a permanent industrial population ?—I think there is certainly a need for encouraging the growth of a permanent factory population in India. We want diversification of the occupation of people. Agriculture as it stands at present is not in a position to feed the entire population.

G-1486. In other words, you want to see the growth of a population divorced from the villages altogether ?—Certainly.

G-1487. Do you not think that the system of retaining some village connection has beneficial effects in the direction of health and other matters ?—It has, but if the factory conditions are improved there is no reason why the labourer should not be divorced from agriculture.

G-1488. But are the industrial centres in India places in which you would like to see a population permanetly retained ?—Yes. Dhariwal in the Punjab for instance, is a fit place, I think.

G-1489. I was thinking of bigger industrial cities ?—There is great congestion in cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Ahmedabad. When more industries are started, some guidance should be given to the industrialists, and they should be called upon to start industries in places which are not already very congested.

G-1490. *Mr. Sastri* : The point is whether you do not think that it is best for the workman still to maintain his village connection ?—I do not think it is necessary for him to maintain his village connection provided the factory conditions are improved. If the factory conditions are bad, it is cetainly desirable that the factory worker should go to his village for the recoupment of his health. Perhaps that is the main reason why factory workers now leave their factories and go to their villages.

G-1491. *Mr. Clow* : In your memorandum you refer to the waiting period in connection with workmen's compensation. I am not quite able to understand your proposal, because you say that the waiting period should be curtailed from 10 days to a week, but later on you say " they must get compensation also for the waiting period " ?—Yes, for those whose illness extends for more than 7 days.

G-1492. You mean it should be dated back ?—What I mean is that no compensation need be paid for all those who suffer only for a period of 7 days.

G-1493. *Miss Power* : In your memorandum you deal with the question of employment bureaux and I gather your suggestion is that surplus labour in one area should be shifted to areas of greater demand. Do you want to use these bureaux primarily for labour transference from one part of the country to another rather than for filling specific vacancies in one definite area ?—For both purposes, I should say.

G-1494. On the question of labour transference, do you think that you would be able to persuade bodies of unskilled workers through the agency of a bureau to move from one part of the country to another ?—It all depends upon how the industrial bureaux are manned. If they are manned by sympathetic persons there is no reason why the labourers should not be persuaded to go from one place to another. Already there is a movement in that direction. Labourers of one province go to another. For example, Punjabis have gone to Straits Settlements and even to England ; many of them are employed there.

G-1495. We were told in Karachi that there were a number of unskilled workers, who had been brought there for work in the Port Trust, who, owing to the shrinkage of the work, were out of employment for over six months, and an endeavour was made to persuade them to transfer to the Sukkur barrage where

there was a great shortage of workers without any success; they would not move ?—Because those leaders could not have commanded confidence among the labourers.

G-1496. You think that the officials of the bureau would be able to command that confidence ?—Provided they are sympathetic; it all depends upon how the labour bureaux are manned.

G-1497. Who would you have for running those bureaux ?—To begin with, I would like to have some Government officials provided they are sympathetic and representatives of the employers and the labourers.

G-1498. Who would you use for the transference of labour ?—Even now it is possible for one single person to transfer hundreds of labourers from one part of the country to another part. After all it is the jobber who does the work.

G-1499. With regard to sickness insurance you say that it should be made compulsory for workers in organized industries. What exactly do you mean by 'organized industries' ? Do you mean industries coming under the Factories Act ?—Yes.

G-1500. You do not mean industries whose workers are organized into trade unions ?—No.

G-1501. Later on you say: "Labour is migratory no doubt, but this cannot stand in our way". Could you give us some idea as to how you think a system of sickness insurance for industries coming under the Factories Act could be worked in this country ?—The only difficulty that has been so far put forward is the paucity of medical men. I hold that there is no paucity of medical men in this country provided by the term 'medical men' we mean people who are well versed in the western or in the oriental systems of medicine. Even now we have got a large number of unemployed medical graduates who work on a miserable pittance; some of them are working even for Rs. 50 and 60. They must have spent thousands of rupees on their education, but after they have finished their studies they are not in a position to make both ends meet. The discussion on this question in the Legislative Assembly showed that the members considered the paucity of medical men to be the main difficulty.

G-1502. Probably the members of the Legislative Assembly had not thought about it as closely as you have. How do you think you would get over the difficulty of distinguishing between absence due to genuine sickness and absence for the purpose of returning to the village for agricultural or domestic purposes ?—The help of the factory doctors could certainly be secured.

G-1503. You think that the present migratory habits of the industrial worker would not invalidate any system of sickness insurance ? I do not think so.

G-1504. In fact, you do not see any great difficulty ?—No.

G-1505. In your memorandum you deal with the question of the pooling system in cotton ginning factories. I do not quite understand what you mean by it ?—In some districts in the Punjab—and probably in the Madras Presidency too—all the ginning factories are not at work. Some ginning factories work, and they try to fleece the labourers as best as they possibly can. The

ginning factories at work lay by a certain fund which is in proportion to the number of gins worked by them and that fund is distributed amongst all the ginning factory employers in proportion to the number of gins in each factory.

G-1506. *Mr. Clow*: In fact, there have been cases of factories being erected with, no intention of working, merely for the sake of sharing in the pool ?—Yes, that is all due to the pooling system.

G-1507. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you refer to the mortgaging of labour with special reference to the carpet factories. Are adults also mortgaged, or are only children mortgaged ?—Adults and minors both. The adults are the master-weavers and the minors are the children working in those factories under the supervision of master-weavers. The master-weavers get Rs. 200 or 300 as advance money and they cannot shirk off the responsibility by the payment of that money at any time afterwards. They must carry on their work unless they are in the course of time in a position to liberate themselves from the clutches of the employer. There are minors who are mortgaged for As. 1½ per day; some of them get only As. 1. I have got in my book photos of some of the minors working in carpet factories. Those will show you how very pathetic the condition of these workers is.

G-1508. You say: "Very few of the illiterate workers know all about the labour laws". That point has been brought out in a number of places. Have you got any useful suggestions to make to us as to how the existence of industrial laws for the protection of the worker can be brought home to him ?—It may be brought home to him through the employers, through the Government and through the skilled workers. The Government and the labour unions can both help the workers by distributing leaflets amongst the educated people and these in turn can explain them to the illiterate workers.

G-1509. Do you know if any endeavour has been made to do this ?—Not in the Punjab, United Provinces, the Bengal Presidency, Bihar and Orissa and a few other provinces. Some attempt in this direction has been made in the Bombay Presidency and I hear in the Madras Presidency too.

G-1510. Did you come across any workers, for instance, who did not even know what the legal working day was ?—There are workers who do not know anything about their position as such, not to speak of these provisions.

G-1511. You say: "Some workers, for example, children working in several factories are greatly under-paid. Trade Boards should be set up in such industries". What industries do you refer to ?—Sports works in Sialkot, for instance, and carpet factories in the Punjab and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

G-1512. Do you suggest that the regulation should be only in respect of children ?—Children and adults both.

G-1513. And you would like to start such legislation first in unregulated factories ?—Certainly.

G-1514. Do you not think it would be a little complicated to begin with the regulation of wages before even the regulation of hours, sanitary conditions and so on ?—Yes, but we can take this up in some industries for the present and the attempt can be extended in course of time.

G-1515. *Mrs. Venkatasubha Rao*: You suggest legislation for compulsory maternity benefits. Have you thought whether it would not have any reaction on the employment of women ?—The Bombay Government has led the way in that direction, and the other provinces may follow suit.

G-1516. Do you not think that many of the women will be without employment as a result of legislation ?—The maternity benefit scheme will keep that in view.

G-1517. My point is will it not have the tendency of making the employers not to employ women at all ? If you make it difficult for them to employ women they would cease to employ them ?—As an immediate effect that may happen, but I do not think that will happen in the long run.

G-1518. Why ?—Because women are certainly cheaper to the employers than men.

G-1519. Have you thought of any other employment, by way of supplementing their husbands ' wages, for women who will be sent out and who will not find any job ?—No.

G-1520. You say : " A welfare worker is a necessary adjunct of a wise and successful industrial organism ". Do you suggest that the worker should be an honorary worker or a paid worker ?—A paid worker.

G-1521. Paid by whom ?—By the employer. In some factories the employer can take upon himself the duties of a welfare worker : in others, there must be a paid whole-time welfare worker. That is done in English factories. It was attempted even in the Tata Mills ; I think they have got a welfare worker now ; I think he is Mr. Naoroji.

G-1522. Do you want to make it compulsory, or would you leave it to the good-will of the employer ?—That is a thing which will grow by itself, and that is a thing which ought to grow by itself ; it must not be forced.

G-1523. There are teachers and doctors in every town and supposing they are asked to do this kind of welfare work ?—I do not think it would be possible for the industries to pay them highly. I know of industries which offer their doctors Rs. 5, and the result is that no doctor goes there.

G-1524. Do you not think it is the duty of the Taluk Board, or the District Board or the Municipality to employ such workers ?—Certainly it would be advisable for any of these local bodies to employ such persons.

G-1525. Instead of having a separate worker for each district or town, would it not be economical to make use of the services of the teachers and doctors residing in that district or town and make them undergo a course of training in welfare work along with their University education ?—In that case, perhaps education may suffer, because, much of their time will be devoted to this work.

G-1526. But you admit that welfare work is quite essential. Supposing the teachers who are employed by the District Boards are made to do this work ?—I think education, which is their primary duty, will suffer. The Local Boards, or the District Boards or the Municipality can have a whole-time welfare worker for certain areas

G-1527. Would you make the industries contribute a part of the salary of such workers ?—Yes.

G-1528. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah*: You say : " The factory labourer is sunk deep in poverty and it is difficult for him to pay for the services of lawyers in anticipation of the realization of compensation money. It is also difficult for him to prove his case by direct evidence. His colleagues, who may otherwise have helped him, are afraid of losing their jobs and desert him at the hour of need in dread of the employer ". You mean that the employers will dismiss their men who will tell the truth ?—I know of several cases in which the workers have been victimized.

G-1529. You say : " According to the Trade Union Act, as it stands, not less than one-half of the total officers of a registered trade union shall be persons ' actually engaged ' or employed in an industry with which the trade union is concerned '. I suggest that one-half should be changed to one-third ". Why do you think that the workers would not come forward in sufficient numbers to conduct their unions themselves ?—I know of cases where workers wanted unions but they could not start them because they could not get one-half of the total office bearers from their ranks. It is for this reason that I have recommended a change from one-half to one-third.

G-1530. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In your memorandum you say that if you curtail the waiting period of 10 days to a week, the workmen may be induced to follow the instructions of the employers, as also of the medical practitioners, more vigilantly and carefully. What makes you to consider that a curtailment of three days in the waiting period would so alter the workman as to make him follow the instructions of the employers and the medical practitioners ?—It is as a result of my conversation with the employees and the employers that I have made this suggestion.

G-1531. Do you mean to say that the workman does not follow the instructions either of the employers or of the medical practitioners because he has got to wait for 10 days whereas he would follow the instructions if he were made to wait only for 7 days ?—There will certainly be a great difference.

G-1532. You think that 3 days will make all this difference ?—The period could be curtailed still further.

G-1533. In your memorandum you deal with the law of master and servant. Have you any knowledge whether the Breach of Contract Act deals with this matter ?—No, not in its legal aspects.

G-1534. You do not know that that is not enforcible ? I know that it is enforced in several parts of India in practice.

G-1535. Not legally ; you mean morally ?—Yes.

G-1536. Morally these workers pay back these sums ?—Not only morally; they are bound down.

G-1537. Legally those contracts cannot be enforced ?—The employers are able to secure the help of policemen.

G-1538. Do you know of any case where legal action has been taken ?—Not in a court of law.

G-1539. Therefore it is the lack of knowledge of the worker that is responsible for this ?—Yes, and his helplessness too.

G-1540. You advocate that there should be one physician for every 200 labourers ?—50 to 200.

G-1541. 200 is the maximum that you give. Do you know of any part in the world where this holds good ?—No. I had a talk with several medical practitioners in India, and it was upon their advice that I fixed the number.

G-1542. Do you know in western countries whether it is a statutory obligation on the part of the employer to keep one full-time physician for every 200 workmen ?—The employers in western countries are more enlightened than the employers in India. They do keep full-time physicians.

G-1543. One physician for every 200 workmen ?—I do not know the number.

G-1544. Do you know the number of workers employed by Messrs. Binny and Co., in this city ?—No.

G-1545. You may take it that the number is something like 10,000. Would you suggest, therefore, that they should keep 50 full-time medical men for that one firm ?—Certainly, if the number is so great as 10,000.

G-1546. You should remember that 10,000 represents the number of employees and not the number of sick persons ?—All the workers are sick; they are not healthy; nobody knows what they are suffering from.

G-1547. Do you know what the population in this city is ?—The conditions of this city are decidedly better than the conditions in factories.

(The witness withdrew.)

Miss AZARIAH, District Secretary, Young Women's Christian Association, Madras, Mrs. COUSINS, and Mrs. BHAGIRATHI SRI RAM, women social workers.

G-1548. *Mr. Sastri*: Miss Azariah, your memorandum relates to the Telugu districts ?—(*Miss Azariah*): Yes.

G-1549. How long have you been engaged in this work ?—For the past 20 years. I have lived in the Telugu Area and have made two visits personally to these towns to investigate the conditions of labour in the mills.

G-1550. Have you any reason to think that the conditions in the Tamil districts are different ?—I cannot say.

G-1551. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you refer to the clerk or paymaster taking a commission of 3 pies per rupee from the labourers. How wide is that practice and in what types of mill does it exist ?—In these seasonal factories the labourers pay it as a sort of *mamool* or commission. They do not consider it as a bribe at all.

G-1552. Do they have to pay a lump sum down to the paymaster in order to be taken on at the seasonal factory in addition to paying 3 pies in the rupee of their salaries ?—I cannot tell you whether they do or not.

83

G-1553. I take it that the tanneries to which you refer are outside the scope of the Factories Act ?—Yes.

G-1554. Would you tell us about the number of persons employed and the conditions under which they are employed ?—I visited several tanneries in Guntur and Bezwada each employing about 50 persons. There are a number of women and boys also employed in these places. The men do the actual work of tanning while the women carry the refuse outside the factory and do miscellaneous work. The sanitary conditions both inside and outside the works are very bad.

G-1555. Are there other factories besides tanneries which do not yet come under the Factories Act of which you have had any experience ?—There are some rice and flour mills. There also the conditions are unsatisfactory. But I have not studied them closely.

G-1556. Have you any view as to extending the Factories Act to cover such places which are not at present covered by the Factories Act ?—(*Mrs. Cousins*): There are a number of private industries such as weaving concerns, brass melting trades, *bidi* making and pottery works in many places employing 20 to 40 persons in each. These factories come under no inspection or regulation with regard to hours of work, ventilation, wages and so on. They should be brought under the Factories Act or at least an enquiry should be made into the conditions of these factories.

G-1557. Do you want regulation simply on the question of sanitation and hours of work or do you want to extend it to wages as well ?—I should start with sanitation and hours of work before proceeding to regulate wages.

G-1558. In your memorandum you say that the wages in the factories are the same as in the surrounding agricultural areas. In that event what induces these people to work in these factories ? Is it simply a question of working in a factory during a period when people have not got much to do on their lands ?—Yes. During harvest time the factory owners pay an anna more in order to induce them to stay on; at other times the wages are the same.

G-1559. In your memorandum you deal with the visits of the Health Officer to these factories. Is there any co-operation between the Health Officer and the Inspector of Factories ?—I do not know whether there is co-operation or not. But I heard that certain women workers were employed at night in jute mills last year and that the manager told them that it was illegal to do it this year and that they would not be so employed hereafter. The Health Officers have no executive power but only that of advisers.

G-1560. Do you feel that the amount of inspection that can be done with the existing number of inspectors is adequate ?—No; at least not in the parts which I have seen.

G-1561. Have you any view as to the appointment of women factory inspectors ?—(*Mrs. Cousins*): It is necessary that women factory inspectors should be appointed to look after the welfare of the large number of women and children. The All-India Women's Conference on Education and Social Reform has passed a resolution recommending the appointment of an adequate number of women factory inspectors to look after the welfare of the large number of women and children employed in large industrial centres.

G-1562. I believe you have no woman factory inspector here ?—No.

G-1563. You refer to the prevalence of beri beri as a result of polished rice. Is it a practice which could be easily given up ? Would it even be more economical for the worker to do that ?—(*Miss Azariah*) : Polished rice is white and fine and people have a fancy for it. It is not much food value.

G-1564. *Mr. Sastri* : Is it more profitable to the man to polish the rice and sell it ?—No. In a certain jail here the doctor has ordered that the rice should not be polished more than three times. What has been done for the jail must be done for the general population also. Polishing rice over much should be prevented by law.

G-1565. *Miss Power* : The gist of a large part of your memorandum is the unpreparedness of the average small town for the growth of industry as a result of which factory workers are ill housed and sanitary arrangements are bad. How do you think the difficulty could be met ? Do you think that the prime responsibility should fall on the employer who sets up a mill in a rural area or on the Municipality ?—The employer and the Municipality must co-operate in providing proper housing for them. In Bezwada and Guntur, there are good schemes for town planning and drainage respectively, but they could not be carried out for want of funds. (*Mrs. Cousins*) : This involves a large question of public health and it is curious that only 1 per cent. of the total revenues is devoted to public health.

G-1566. Is there compulsory education in any of the smaller cities in which you have made your investigation ?—(*Miss Azariah*) : No.

G-1567. If there is compulsory education in Madras city how is it possible for these unregulated factories like the *bidi* shops to employ a large number of children of school age ?—(*Mrs. Cousins*) : I do not know about the *bidi* factories but the children employed in the weaving factories are older than the primary school age.

G-1568. Where is the hitch in administration which allows these children not to be sent to school although they are of school age ?—I should think the Attendance Committees are not doing their duties ; in some places they have not even been formed.

G-1569. What powers are there to compel parents to send their children to school ?—We can fine the parent ; it has been done in many cases, in Vellore for instance.

G-1570. Are there variations in different wards in the city ?—I should think that would be so, but I am not certain. (*Mrs. Sri Ram*) : With regard to compulsory education I find that in some places like Chingleput there are not a sufficient number of schools for all children. Government has to open more schools before they can compel all children to attend school. Unless more schools are opened the Compulsory Education Act cannot be put into force effectively.

G-1571. Going back to the question of women factory inspectors who might for instance specialize in questions affecting women and children, do you think there would be any difficulty in getting a woman of the right type to fill such posts ?—(*Mrs. Cousins*) : I feel sure that the right type of women will come

forward if there is a demand. She should be given a stipend and trained for the work. She should also have the certainty of being appointed to a post afterwards.

G-1572. *Mrs. Venkatasubba Rao* : You say that the condition of industrial workers is most appalling. Do you think that the employers do nothing to improve the lot of the workmen ?—(*Miss Azariah*) : Most of these factories are making small profits. They spend some money on other charities. I suggested to some of them to utilize this money for the welfare of their own workers. They say that it is their private charity and that it is the duty of the Municipality or Government to do welfare work for the poor workmen. (*Mrs. Cousins*) : This is not confined to small concerns alone. In one of the large mills in Madras which I visited there was neither a crèche nor a rest room for the women to go in and feed their babies. The women have to go outside to feed their babies and there was no room outside also. Although there was a dispensary there was no lady doctor. All these things should have been done by the Mill which was making large profits.

G-1573. *Miss Power* : Do you think that the crèche should be run by the employer or the Municipality ?—It should be run by the employer in the big industries. But in the case of small concerns which cannot afford to bear the cost of welfare work the municipality and the employer should bear the cost. The work should be done through the agency of paid servants and a visiting board of workers of philanthropic societies.

G-1574. Do you find that the women employed in factories and workshops are ready to leave their children in crèches ?—Not in the beginning but after it has been in existence for some time. The same was the case with baby welcomes also.

G-1575. Do you think that maternity benefits should be compulsory on the employer ?—The Maternity Benefit Act should be applied to the Madras Presidency just as in the Bombay Presidency.

G-1576. In the Bombay Presidency it is limited to one industry. Do you think that it is right that it should be limited to one industry or would you like to extend it to all employers of female labour ?—The Act must be applied to all industries which employ women. It may be the textile industry in one Province and some other industry in another Province.

G-1577. Would you have it non-contributory as in the case of Bombay, that is to say, paid entirely by the employer, or would you have it partly by the State and partly by the employer and the woman worker ?—The women get low wages and they should not be asked to contribute anything. The Government and the employers should bear the burden evenly.

G-1578. *Mrs. Venkatasubba Rao* : Do the Madras Mills give any maternity benefit ?—(*Mrs. Sri Ram*) : They give 3 months' leave on one-third wages but in actual practice it works out to Rs. 3 or Rs. 4 only because they take the average for the whole year.

G-1579. *Miss Power* : Would you have the payment of the benefit made in cash or partly in the form of medical benefits ?—(*Mrs. Cousins*) : I would have it paid in cash.

G-1580. Some of the women witnesses in Bombay were adamant against the system of payment in cash, for they were afraid that the cash might be spent on the male members of the family and there was no guarantee that it would be properly spent on the women ?—I think that the women would take good care about it.

G-1581. *Mrs. Venkatasubha Rao* : Have you come across cases of women who have been sent away by the employers in order to avoid payment of maternity benefits ? (*Mrs. Sri Ram*): In 1926 we made an investigation in the Choolai Mills here into the conditions of women working there. We found that many of them were dismissed in the 6th or 7th month of their pregnancy and they found it difficult to be taken into the Mill again. But at that time there was no maternity benefit scheme.

G-1582. What is the extent of maternity benefit that you would recommend ?—Leave on full wages for six weeks before and six weeks after confinement.

G-1583. *Miss Power* : You said that you made an investigation a few years ago into the economic conditions of women working in one of the Mills here. Are the conditions now the same as they were at that time ?—They are more or less the same.

G-1584. What were the outstanding points that came up as a result of your investigation?—The women got low wages and most of them were in debt. We examined 23 women in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills and 172 in the Choolai Mills. Of the former only one out of the 23 was out of debt. Of the 22 others 5 had borrowed at 25 per cent. interest, 9 at 75 per cent. and 8 at 150 per cent. In the Choolai Mill only 5 out of the 172 women were out of debt. Out of the remaining 167, three paid an interest of 36 per cent., 59 paid an interest of 75 per cent. and 100 paid an interest of 150 per cent. The general conditions were unsatisfactory. The places were insanitary. The women had no private sanitary arrangements. They had no rest house or separate room to feed their children.

G-1585. Were the babies allowed into the Mill for the purpose of being fed ?—No, the mothers had to go out into the street to feed their children. They were allowed 10 or 15 minutes for this purpose and if they came late the *mistri* took them to task.

G-1586. Did you come across cases of bribery of the *mistries* by the women ?—Quite a number of them. I said that the women were dismissed when they were expecting a baby. If they wanted to be taken back afterwards they had to pay Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 to the *mistri*. They had to be constantly bribing him in order that they may not incur his displeasure.

G-1587. What publicity is attached to your investigations ? What steps do you take to see that the recommendations you make are carried out ?—We wanted to publish the results of our investigation but the women were afraid that they would be dismissed. Many of the women who gave evidence before us were threatened with dismissal if they continued to be members of any union. (*Mrs. Cousins*) : The women from the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills were dismissed for having given evidence before us. We held a public meeting in the Gokhale Hall to protest against this victimization and they

were afterwards restored. Since then they have not been able to join any union and it is almost impossible for us to make any investigations regarding the conditions of their life in the Mills.

G-1588. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is there any organization here for training health visitors?—At present there is only one institute which trains health visitors. Municipalities which require the services of health visitors send their women for training here. But that is not enough.

G-1589. If an employer wanted a health visitor he would have to put himself on the waiting list ?—He can get her from Delhi.

G-1590. But there is the difficulty of language ?—Some women from this Presidency have gone to Delhi for training.

G-1591. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : Do the women find it difficult to work under men *mistries* ?—Yes, they do. The Women Graduates Union made an investigation of this question and they found that the women found it very difficult and inconvenient to work under men *mistries*.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. V. M. RAMASWAMY MUDALIAR, Mr. T. M. PARTHASMATTY MUDALIAR, Mr. T. MUTHUSWAMY PILLAI, and Mr. R. KETARI MUTHU CHETTY, representing the Kerosene Oil Workers' Union.

G-1592. *Mr. Sastri* : What is the strength of your Union, and when was it formed ?—There used to be three different Companies carrying on business in kerosene oil in Madras—the Burma Oil Company, the Asiatic Petroleum Company and the Standard Oil Company of New York. Last year there was a merger between the first two Companies, and the firm is now called the Burma Shell Distributing Company. They have two installations, one at the mouth of the harbour and another at Tondiarpet. At the former installation there are about 300 workers, all of whom are members of our Union. As regards the latter installation, there are 900 workmen working there, out of whom 800 are members of our Union. With regard to the Standard Oil Company, they carry on business at Royapuram and employ 500 men, out of whom 100 have joined the Union, and 400 are holding back for the reason that the Supervisor is victimizing persons who are joining the Union.

G-1593. Is there any other Union in this trade ?—I do not know of any.

G-1594. What is the kind of work in which your members are engaged ?—Pumping petrol and kerosene oil from tankers into storage tanks, and from there into distributing tins and cans. Also cutting tin sheets into shape for the making of oil cans and receptacles.

G-1595. Do you include any clerical staff in your Union ?—No, so far only those engaged in physical or manual labour.

G-1596. You say that the present practice prevalent among some of the firms to institute rival bodies to existing trade unions must be put an end to. Is that a general observation, or have you suffered from that kind of thing ?—We have not suffered from it. That is a general observation.

G-1597. You have had no opposition on that score from your employers?—No, for the good reason that our employers have not recognized our Union.

G-1598. You are a registered body?—Yes. In justice to the employers I may state that our Union was registered only 2 or 3 months ago, although we have been in existence since 1919.

G-1599. You ask to have access to official records pertaining to the misbehaviour of particular workmen, or the orders passed upon them. Do you think that is possible?—We hear all sorts of grievances from the workmen, and we want access to the records to see whether these grievances are genuine or not. It would be much better for both sides, before the Union took any action, for us to see the records to find out whether the grievance is a genuine one or not.

G-1600. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is there any reason why you should not go up to the executive and have an unofficial talk, and find out these things before the Union acted officially?—Our policy has been to approach the employers as far as possible unofficially in order to get our grievances remedied. It is only when we do not get redress that we may have to take steps through the Union. If problems are approached in the proper spirit both by the employers and our members I think they can be settled. So far as we are concerned we are prepared to take all reasonable steps.

G-1601. *Mr. Sastri*: You ask for access to official records in order to eliminate irrelevant grievances?—Yes.

G-1602. Are you not afraid that if records are open to inspection by the Union, those records would be prepared in a certain manner?—If the employers want to evade the spirit of the rule they can very well do it.

G-1603. You must make everybody's work easy. You want your work made easy, but the employer's work must also be made easy?—It is making the work of both sides easy if frivolous complaints are weeded out.

G-1604. All the prescriptions which you have laid down in your memorandum read more or less like desirable regulations. We have no means of finding out which of these press most hardly upon you. You have given us a set of moral rules upon which these concerns should be built up?—We have four or five important grievances which we would press upon the attention of the Commission. First of all there is the way in which the services of workmen are dispensed with. That calls for very urgent remedy. Workmen who have been engaged in these installations for 17 and 20 years have been dismissed without notice.

G-1605. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Does that depend on the amount of work which the company has?—No. We contend that it is victimization. They are people who have taken an interest in our union.

G-1606. *Mr. Sastri*: Such people may be within the clause of permanent workmen?—There are no permanent workmen. The whole of the staff is on temporary tenure. In 1927 the services of 120 men were dispensed with.

G-1607. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Surely not because they were members of the Union?—Not merely that, but one of the inducing causes that must have passed through the minds of the employers was that these people had taken

an active part in the Union. A month ago 12 men who had been in the service from 17 to 20 years were suddenly dismissed.

G-1608. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Which of your office bearers are actually workers?—The Treasurer and all the Committee members.

G-1609. How many of those members have had their services terminated?—None, but all these office bearers were only elected on the 4th January of this year. The Union has been in existence since 1919, and at various stages members who have been connected with the Committee have been victimized.

G-1610. How many of these new members of Committee were on past Committees?—Two.

G-1611. What has happened to the others?—Their services have been dispensed with.

G-1612. What is your subscription?—Two annas from a worker and four annas from a *mistri* monthly.

G-1613. How many of your members have paid their subscriptions up to date?—1,300.

G-1614. What is your next important grievance?—The question of salary.

G-1615. You want a rise. Every Union wants that?—Perhaps you would like to have statistics of the wages paid?

G-1616. Will you send that in to the Commission?—Yes. I would like to point out that the last increase we had was in the year 1920.

G-1617. That was the time when the cost of living went up, and most wages throughout the country were raised then. Since 1921 the cost of living has not gone up; it has fallen?—But along with the fall in prices there has been a general rise in the standard of living.

G-1618. Your point is that although the real wages have increased since 1921, they have not increased commensurate with the rise in the standard of living of these particular workers?—And commensurate with the necessities of the case, and not merely the standard of living.

G-1619. But a workman can buy more foodstuffs to-day with the same money than he could in 1921?—But other things have not fallen in price—house rents, for instance.

G-1620. Have house rents gone up?—Yes.

G-1621. Would you say that kerosene oil workers are paying higher rents to-day than they were in 1921?—Yes.

G-1622. Are any of these workers housed by the companies?—Not one.

G-1623. Can you give us any evidence as to the rise in rents to-day for the same class of accommodation, as compared with 1921?—Yes.

G-1624. What is your next main grievance?—As stated in our memorandum. "Defective vision or any ailment of occupational character should be compensated for as accident caused while on duty."

G-1625. What work do they do which is a strain on the eyes?—Some of them are engaged in filling petrol or kerosine oil into cans and while filling it from the pumps as they are called the petrol or oil is thrown about the floor on which they have to walk.

G-1626. Have they not got an automatic filling machine here as they have in Calcutta?—I understand that they have one here as well.

G-1627. If that is so, do you still maintain that the filling process affects their eyes?—Yes. Not only do the fumes come out when the cans are filled, but the oil is thrown about the floor. After the cans are filled they have to take these cans from the place where they are filled to the godown; some cans being leaky the oil escapes.

G-1628. That is done by machine carriers, is it not?—They have to carry the cans to some distance, and then machines are used for taking the cans to the storage.

G-1629. Have you consulted any doctors to know whether the ordinary petrol fumes would affect the eye-sight?—One of my advisers present here is in charge of that department, and he is a living example of his eyes having been affected.

G-1630. His eye-sight might have been affected by something else?—If his case is a solitary case, I can very well understand the force of the contention, but there are scores of cases of people who have worked in the kerosene oil department and who complain of headaches and defective vision and who feel nervously broken down after some length of service.

G-1631. What other occupational ailment do you get from this work?—I have referred to nervous ailments. They say that after a certain number of years' service they feel that they have not strength enough in their legs to stand upon because they have to keep on treading upon kerosene oil. There is one thing which you may perhaps not be aware of and that is that these people do not use any shoes or boots. The use of any covering for the feet will not be of much avail because the soles of the shoes will get soaked in oil.

G-1632. Do you maintain that you are going to get nervous debility because the feet come into contact with the floor on which kerosene has been spilt?—Yes.

G-1633. What is your next main grievance?—It is what is known as piece-work system. We have referred to this in our memorandum. We want that piece-work should be properly remunerated. The work that an average workman is capable of turning out per day must be made the basis upon which piece-work ought to be paid.

G-1634. It is a task *plus* premium?—As it actually happens, it is a task less the wages to which they are rightly entitled.

G-1635. *Miss Power*: Is it a piece-rate, or time-rate or bonus on production?—For instance, take the can manufacturing department. They say: "You better manufacture so many cans, and we will give you a certain amount." The sum that is fixed is inadequate to the amount of work that is involved in making the number of cans.

G-1636. Do they get any bonus if they manufacture more than the fixed number of cans?—No. If they make 1,000 cans they get a certain fixed remuneration. Our contention is that the remuneration fixed per so many cans is very low. For instance, we have got in Tondiarpet installation about 60 men and they produce 4,000 cans whereas in the Beach installation 70 men are working and they produce 6,000 cans. Though it takes a longer time for these 70 men to produce 6,000 cans than it takes for the 60 men to produce 4,000 cans yet they get less than what the 60 men get.

G-1637. They work in a team?—Yes.

G-1638. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: What is your next main grievance?—At present they work from 8 to 12 and from 1 to 5 with an interval of one hour between 12 and 1. We would like to have the interval either extended or we would like to have two breaks; for example, the working hours may be from 7-30 to 11, from 12 to 3 and from 4 to 5.

G-1639. You are prepared to work the 8-hour day but you want two breaks in the middle?—We are not prepared to work 8 hours. We want shorter hours.

G-1640. You want extra free time to be given at the expense of the working hours; in other words, you want a shorter working day?—Yes.

G-1641. Have you anything else to say?—Yes, about the leave. At present we are having 7 days' off in a year other than Sundays. On Sundays the workshop is closed, and we do not get any pay for Sunday, because we do not work. The company leaves it to the workmen to decide the 7 days on which they require holidays. This the workmen decide at a meeting.

G-1642. Are those 7 days paid for?—Yes. Even for the King Emperor's birthday, when the work is closed, we do not get pay.

G-1643. You want more days of privilege leave?—Yes.

G-1644. Anything else?—There is one more minor thing, and that is the question of a tiffin shed. The present tiffin shed is ill-ventilated and unsuitable. We have one long shed of corrugated zinc sheets of 80′ by 8′. Even that is not left to the entire use of the workers. One portion of it is screened off for the doctor's room, one for the timekeeper; and there are three partitions of 8′ × 8′ each, one for Christians, one for Muhammadans and one for the clerical staff.

G-1645. *Mr. Sastri*: It is somewhat better than the streets?—If they can provide accommodation in the open space I would much prefer it; in fact, open space is more used by the workmen than a shed of this nature.

G-1646. *Mr. Ahmed*: I suppose the working population in this country observe more than seven festivals in a year and therefore the 7 holidays given are not sufficient?—That is so.

G-1647. In Government offices the peons and others get more than 7 holidays?—They get about a month.

G-1648. You want that the same number of holidays that are allowed in Government offices should also be allowed to these working class people?—Yes, they should be allowed the same number of holidays with pay.

G-1649. Do the workmen who put in a number of years' service in your company get any pension or gratuity ?—No.

G-1650. Is there no provident fund system ?—They have introduced a system of provident fund only from the last month.

G-1651. In your memorandum you say: "To start with, the organizers of the union have great initial obstacles to surmount. Trade unionism in India is of recent growth and workers have not yet fully come to appreciate either the benefits or the necessity of trade union. Another great obstacle in the way of proper organization is the illiteracy prevalent especially in the labouring classes. We may state that these two defects have been fully exploited by the employers as is borne out from their disinclination to recognize trade unions and in their reluctance to accede to the demand of a minimum wage to the workmen." If they are educated I suppose they will avail themselves of all the amenities they are entitled to get ?—Certainly.

G-1652. If they are educated they cannot be deceived ?—Quite.

G-1653. It is therefore essential that primary education should be given to them ?—Yes.

G-1654. Do you think that the cost of education should be borne by the employer or by the State ?—Partly by the employer and partly by the State. That problem will not face us so far as the city of Madras is concerned because in so far as boys and girls of a certain age are concerned there is the Compulsory Primary Education. We are mainly concerned with the present generation of adult workers. The adult workers must be given facilities to know the three R's, and I think that private social organizations are doing some part of the work by having night schools but it is also the duty of the employer to do something in his direction.

G-1655. Do you have any co-operative credit societies in your companies ?—No.

G-1656. Have you any idea of the indebtedness of the workers ? Are they able to save anything from their wages ?—When they are not able to keep their body and soul together, how can they save anything ?

G-1657. You think that low pay is one of the reasons why they are in debt ?—Yes.

G-1658. Are they heavily indebted ?—Most of them are.

G-1659. You would advocate that a living minimum wage should be given to them ?—Yes ; I think between Rs. 40 and 50 per month must be assured to the workers. On account of the heavy manual work that they have to do, they require greater nourishment than that required by intellectual workers.

G-1660. You have already said that no pension or gratuity is given by the company for persons who have put in a long service in the company ?—They sometimes give gratuities, but that is not a rule. They call it *ex-gratia* payments ; nobody is entitled to it as a matter of right. There have been several cases where men who had put in 17 or 18 years' service were sent away without giving them any gratuity.

G-1661. In answer to one of the questions you said that of the members of your present executive committee only two were on the previous committee.

What became of the other members ?—Most of them have been victimized for their activities.

G-1662. I take it you would advocate that in the terms of employment it should be clearly set out that without justification no worker should be dismissed ?—Yes ; we have suggested that at least two appeals must be provided for a workman whose services are dispensed with.

G-1663. This is a private company and not a Government office.—Yes, but some sort of security of tenure must be given to us, and arbitrary dispensation of services must be put an end to ; and that is one of the legitimate objects of a trade union.

G-1664. Whenever the workers demand an increased wage, I take it that they become an eye-sore to the employer ?—Yes, they have taken up this question through the union, but the moment the union springs up into activity there is wholesale victimization.

G-1665. What course would you suggest to get over this difficulty, so that the workers and the employers may get on peacefully with good relationship?—In the first place, I would suggest that any union registered under the Trade Union Act of 1926 and of which a certain percentage of workers are members must be recognized by the employers. Any grievance must, first of all, be discussed between the representatives of the trade union and the employer. If a solution cannot be arrived at, then a third body should be provided for to which the dispute might be referred.

G-1666. When you say a third body, do you mean a board of arbitrators ?—Yes, it must be a body representative of both the employers and the employees, and their decision must be binding on both the parties. It may be of some interest to you to know that our employers are a very rich firm and are perhaps the biggest combination of oil extractors in the world.

G-1667. Do they make much profit ?—I should think so. Only a few months ago we had a rate war in the east. There was competition between the Standard Oil Co., which was alleged to have purchased the Russian oil and the Burma-Shell group ; in that competition they cut down the prices of the kerosene oil, and I am informed—I speak subject to correction—that so far as India and the East were concerned, the companies together lost £5 million sterling. If only a small portion of that had gone to the relief of the workers it would have been a great boon to us.

G-1668. *Mr. Kay*: How long have you been the President of this union ?—For the last three months, after it was registered.

G-1669. Could you offer any explanation as to why it was only registered in January of this year though it was formed in 1919 ?—As I told you, it has been in existence from 1919, but after the strike of 1920 its funds and also its members became depleted. It is only for the last one year that it has been put on a firmer basis, and after the matter was brought to my notice I suggested the desirability of getting it registered under the Trade Union Act of 1926.

G-1670. If I remember aright, the Act came into operation in Madras in June 1927. May I know who preceded you in office ?—Mr. Chakkarai Chettiyar, who is the municipal councillor, was the president of this union for several years.

G-1671. If you could register it in 1930, it seems to me that it would have been as easy in 1927 as it is now for you to have got it registered ?—One of their reasons for that is this : We had before us the example of the Madras Labour Union which got itself registered in 1927. As you know, it has not even to this day been recognized by the employers. Unless there was some compulsion made we did not very much appreciate the benefit of getting our union registered.

G-1672. You refer to the difficulties you had after 1920. Am I correct in believing that you had also difficulties in 1927 ?—Yes ; as I told you, in 1927 there was the victimization of 120 men.

G-1673. Was not there also a very big disturbance and riot in the city ?—The strike of 1927 was not, either in intensiveness or in extent, anything like the strike of 1920.

G-1674. I happened to be away on both those occasions, but I understand that in 1927 a very large police force had to be brought out to restore order ?—I have been taking some interest in this union almost from its inception in 1919. I think the 1920 strike was not a single strike but it was a series of strikes ; I think there were three in number.

G-1675. I thought that the 1927 strike was a serious one and possibly those conditions had something to do with your subsequent difficulties that you refer to ?—The strike of 1927 was due to 120 men being dismissed without any reason being assigned ; and the whole lot went out of work.

G-1676. In your memorandum you say : "The present practice prevalent among some of the firms of instituting rival bodies to the existing trade unions, for example, starting bodies like staff committees, etc., in opposition to unions must be put an end to." Have you any particular example in mind of that ?

Mr. Sastri : This body had no personal experience of that.

G-1677. *Mr. Kay* : Would you object on principle to staff committees being appointed to go into grievances and to form a means of inter-communication between the workers and the employers, apart from a union ?—If a trade union has already come into being and has been registered under the Trade Union Act, I think the scope for mischief of the staff committees would far outweigh the advantages which may be derived from them.

G-1678. In what way do you think the staff committees could do mischief ?—If there is a trade union which is properly working and properly organized, I think the staff committees are like a third person intervening between the union and the employers. I would have no objection if staff committees were constituted of representatives of the union and of the employers.

G-1679. Do you not think that a joint body comprising representatives of all sections can very often deal with matters which a union need not necessarily take up ?—I agree with the first part of the proposition that a discussion among the representatives of all sections of interests such as the employer and the employed would be very satisfactory ; but I disagree with the method by which it is worked. If a trade union has been formed and has been registered under the Trade Union Act, the proper method in which that joint consultation should take place is between the representatives of the trade union

and the representatives of the employer. In fact, one advantage which I can explain is this : "The workmen would more frankly express their grievances to the officers of the union rather than to the employers, because the moment the employer comes to know that a certain workman is trying to be vociferous and in a mood to agitate for his rights he will naturally look upon that workman with a certain amount of distaste.

G-1680. You are not speaking from your own experience ?—No ; I am not an actual workman.

G-1681. You would also, I take it, exclude from works committees any workmen who do not choose to join the union ?—Certainly.

G-1682. You say "A right of appeal to at least two higher authorities should be allowed to the employee." What precisely do you mean by that ?—Generally the fine or the punishment is imposed upon by a superior officer on the spot. We would like to have an appeal against his decision to a higher officer in the firm of the employers ; and, if necessary, we would like to appeal against the decision of the higher officer to a joint board consisting of representatives of the union and the employers.

G-1683. You mean that at present there is no possibility of representing grievances in connection with fines ?—The man on the spot carries it entirely, and the higher authorities state "we have no reason to interfere with the decision of the man on the spot".

G-1684. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed.* : You said that you have 7 holidays in a year given to you with pay. Do you get pay for Sundays ?—No.

G-1685. You spoke of security of tenure of service and the employers giving notice to a workman before dismissing him.—Would you agree that in the case of strikes you should give a similar notice to the employers ?—Yes. I think even before a strike is resorted to, the employer must have an opportunity of knowing our intention to strike.

G-1686. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah* : You say that there are 2,000 workers in the various oil companies carrying on business in the city of Madras. Would you say that all these 2,000 men are permanent men ?—There is no question of permanency at all. Everybody is a daily worker and is not entitled to any more notice than one day's notice given by the timekeeper.

G-1687. All are temporary workers, are they ?—Temporary in the sense that the company thinks that we are not entitled to any more notice than that given to the daily workers even though we may have put in 15 or 20 years' service.

G-1688. In your memorandum you speak of the staff who are on the daily rate system and on the temporary system. Are there separate men who are on the temporary system ?—Yes ; people whose service is below 2 years and people who have been taken on extra work for a certain period are on the temporary system.

G-1689. And those whose service is above 2 years ?—They are said to be on the daily-rate system. I should think that it is a distinction without any reason.

G-1690. You say that a provident fund and gratuity should be brought into being ?—Yes. We are thankful to the company inasmuch as they have given us the benefit of the provident fund just now.

G-1691. You said that you are not given pay for Sunday. There is no work on Sunday and yet you want some pay to be given ?—Yes, because we think we are entitled to some rest ; it is a rest day.

G-1692. Could you tell us whether any other firm or factory in India pays for Sundays even though the workers do not work ?—We have been thinking of the workers in Government offices, such a *chobdars* and other workers who are paid for Sundays.

G-1693. They are said to be monthly paid men ; they are not daily paid men ?—No.

G-1694. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : You have got a total membership of about 1,400 ?—Yes.

G-1695. In answer to the Chairman you said that all of them except 100, are from the Burma-Shell Company ?—Yes.

G-1696. You explained that the men of the Standard Oil Company were afraid to join because they might be victimized. Have the people from the Burma-Shell any guarantee or assurance that they would not be victimized ? What is the reason for that difference ?—The difference so far as I could gather from my secretary and the treasurer is that in the Standard Oil Co. there is a supervisor by the name of Raja Mudaliar who has been holding out threats of intimidation to the workers that if they joined this union, they would be sacked. That is the reason why only about 20 per cent. of the workers in the Standard Oil Co. have joined the union.

G-1697. But there has been no difficulty so far as the workers in the Burma Shell Co. are concerned ?—No, because both the *mistries* and the workmen have joined this union.

G-1698. Have you any reason to think that recognition would be withheld from the union now that it is registered ?—I think it is too soon to express an opinion on that. I do not think there would be much difficulty, but from the way in which one or two unions in this city have been treated, I cannot be sure of the minds of the employers.

G-1699. You said that a provident fund has just been instituted. There was a strike 10 years ago just for this very reason ?—That was one of the reasons for the strike in 1920.

G-1700. The employers have just granted a provident fund. That is an indication of a new spirit ?—I hope so.

G.-1701. You were asked by Mr. Kay as to why you did not apply for registration in 1927. Do you think there has been much encouragement on the part of the employers towards registration of unions ?—I do not think so. I think I told him that a registered union fared no better than an unregistered union so far as the question of any relief at the hands of the employers was concerned.

G-1702. Did the wholesale dismissal of women workers as well as men workers for joining unions have any deterrent effect on organizations ?—At least temporarily it had some deterrent effect upon men joining our union.

G-1703. *Mrs. Venkatasubba Rao* : With referencee to Workmen's Compensation you say that you would like the employees to have the right of appeal to independent competent medical opinion. Why do you use the word 'independent' ?—Because we are afraid that the medical officers engaged by the company may be biassed against us in favour of their employers.

G-1704. Have you any instances to support that ?—We have had several instances in connection with accidents. Where relief was claimed by the workmen the medical officer siding with the employers would not give them sufficient rest, nor would they recommend for payment of compensation.

G-1705. Are the panel of lawyers helping you to get compensation ?—Yes. We have referred to them even recently one or two cases, where workmen were injured ; we have asked them to get the necessary forms filled up and apply for compensation.

G-1706. Do the workers in the oil companies here get more pay than the people in other factories ?—I do not think so, because there are only two grades of As. 8 and Re. 0-12-4 for workers.

G-1707. In spite of the nature of the work that they have to do they do not get higher wages than people in other factories ?—No, except the *mistries* who are placed on a slightly different footing.

G-1708. Who sends away the employees ? Are the *mistries* responsible for this, or are the employers themselves responsible for this ?—The employers mainly ; they sometimes make use of persons with easy conscience among the *mistries* to help them. But now that contingency does not arise, because almost all the *mistries* are members of our union.

G-1709. Are there any women employed by these companies ?—Yes ; there are about 60 women engaged in painting the cans in the Tondiarpet installation.

G-1710. Does that work affect their health ?—It does not involve much manual labour, but it requires constant attendance at the work.

G-1711. *Miss Power* : You say : "Compulsory retirement should be confined only to cases of criminal misconduct, wilful disobedience, medical unfitness, superannuation age and proved inefficiency". What do you mean by compulsory retirement ?—When we used the term 'compulsory retirement' we were contemplating a case where from the point of view of the employer it was much better to retire a worker from the factory rather than to keep him on and pay him. For instance, if a worker is medically unfit or has become too old and feeble, there is no good in keeping him.

G-1712. You are not referring to dismissals ?—No.

G-1713. You admit the right of the employer to dismiss workers if, for instance, he has not enough work for them ?—Yes, he has the right to send them away if there is no work for them and after reasonable notice.

G-1714. Do you mean that no employee may be dismissed by the employer except for the following causes, namely, criminal misconduct, wilful disobedience, etc. ?—I would not say dismissal, because that would connote some moral turpitude. His services may be dispensed with for misconduct, wilful disobedience, etc.

G-1715. You say: "There should be a guarantee for continuous employment on piece-work jobs." Do you mean by that that a worker should be paid for waiting time, or do you mean that a man who is on piece-work should be given some other work if he cannot be engaged continuously on piece-work ?—What actually happens in these factories is this: a certain number of workers are taken in and put on for the purpose of doing a certain fixed quantity of work. When they are not having piece-work their services are dispensed with, and at the same time fresh labour is recruited. That is what we object to; these people should have the opportunity of being employed in other labour if they have no piece-work.

G-1716. You say: "All wages or salaries should be paid on a fixed date every month." I take it from that that your union has no objection to monthly payment ?—In fact, we are paid on a fixed date, and we have no grievance on that score.

G-1717. Do you prefer monthly payment to any other form of payment ?—We would prefer fortnightly payments.

G-1718. You say: "Workmen should be put on a graded system and if the maximum of the grade has been reached within 3 years of that period a personal increment at least ought to be given if there is no higher grade. You not only want regular increments for a certain period, but after the final incremental stage for the particular job is reached you want something to be given as a personal increment ?—If the maximum salary is drawn for a period of three years and there is no higher grade to which a worker can jump, some sort of personal allowance should be given to him.

G-1719. Do you think it is possible to run ordinary industrial undertakings where the system of work is predominently time work on an incremental basis ? Do you not think that there would be a lot of discontent amongst workers on the same job if you had different persons qualifying for different stages of increments as well as different amounts of what you call "personal" increments ?—If the increase in wages is to depend upon the length of service I do not think there would be any discontent.

G-1720. For instance, you do not think that A and B will be discontented, because C and D are getting much higher wages for doing the same work ?—If C and D are longer in service than A and B, I do not think there will be discontent if C and D get a higher wage for doing the same work as A and B.

G-1721. That has not been our experience in industry in England. Can industry be run on the same basis as the professions ?—If in India we have the system of the workers sharing in the profits of the undertakings, as, we understand, they have in some factories in America, we would much prefer it to any graded system. It is because we have not got that system here we are asking for a graded increase in wages.

G-1722. In your memorandum you say that the employers should provide suitable quarters for the employees. In another place you ask the company to start a welfare fund to run welfare institutions, such as, common reading room, night schools, co-operative stores, sanitation committees, sports, cinema shows, etc. Further on you ask the employers to provide maternity homes, child welfare centres, recreation grounds and so forth. I am not expressing any opinion as to the reasonableness of your suggestions but I want to know from you where you think the employer's responsibility stops in respect of the provision of amenities for his employees ?—If any limit has to be fixed, I would say that the employer's responsibility will stop where his funds or profits will not permit him to go further. If his funds could permit him, I think he ought to do all these things.

G-1723. Do you think that all these should be done entirely by the employer rather than by the municipality or by the community ?—The responsibility of the municipality will come in, for instance, where education is concerned; the municipality is responsible for establishing primary schools at various centres. But in the case of workers, I think there is a moral responsibility upon the employer to give his workers certain special amenities, apart from that provided by the State or the municipality.

G-1724. *Mr. Clow*: How often does your Union meet ?—Sometimes once a week, and sometimes once a month according to the nature of the work that has to be transacted.

G-1725. How many meetings have you had this year ?—From January onwards we have had 7 or 8 committee meetings, and weekly gatherings of workers at Tondiarpet and also of workers at the Beach installation.

G-1726. How many attend meetings ?—Almost all the members of the Union attend meetings.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. M. S. KOTISWARAN, B.A., L. T., representative of the Madras Port Trust and Harbour Workers' Union, Messrs. Richardson, Cruddas and Company's Workers' Union, and the Western India Match Factory Workers' Union.

G-1727. *Mr. Sastri*: You represent three unions. What is the organic connection between the three ?—The workers work more or less in the same locality except in the case of the Western India Match Factory which is situated at Thiruvattiur. The office bearers also are more or less the same for all the three unions.

G-1728. How does it happen that you represent all the three unions and that you have bound all the three memoranda in one volume ? Is it for the convenience of the Commission ?—Yes, it is for the convenience of the Commission.

G-1729. You say that there is a rule that workers who are absent on Friday are not allowed to work on Saturday. What is the reason for it ?—We do not know.

G-1730. Why is Friday so sacred that absence on that day is penalized ? Suppose a man is absent on Tuesday, is he not allowed to work on Wednesday ?—There is no such rule as that. We cannot understand why the management of the Port Trust should penalize absence on Fridays alone.

G-1731. Dealing with the recruitment of Port Trust Railwaymen you say that there is a disgraceful system of bribery in this department. But speaking of the Western India Match Factory you say that the men have no complaints to make regarding bribery. To what do you attribute this difference ?—There is direct recruitment in the latter case.

G-1732. *Mr. Clow*: What are the numbers employed in these three shops ?—There are about 3,000 employed in the Port Trust and Harbour Works and 400 of them have become members of our Union. Messrs. Richardson, Cruddas and Company employ abont 700 people including coolies and nearly 200 of them have become members of our Union. The Match Factory employs about 1,000 men and 50 women. Almost all of them have become members of our Union. The Unions have been started only recently.

G-1733. Do you have the people referred to as coolies as your members ?—Yes, they are also members of our Union.

G-1734. What is the subscription ?—As. 2 a month.

G-1735. Do all the members pay their subscription ?—Yes, they do.

G-1736. How often do you meet ?—Once a week.

G-1737. On the premises ?—Just opposite to the premises.

G-1738. *Miss Power*: In connection with the Match Factory are the women supervised by men or women ?—By men. Besides every woman has to undergo a thorough medical examination before she is taken into the factory. There are no lady doctors there and the women feel it a hardship to be examined by men doctors.

G-1739. Is there adequate sanitary accommodation for these women ?—Not at present. I understand that the management have some plans ready and that they will be constructed hereafter.

G-1740. What are the wages of the women ?—In the beginning they are paid As. 8 a day ; afterwards they are put on piece-work.

G-1741. You have given a list of grievances in your memorandum and I take it that they refer to women as well as men. You say that a system of monthly wages should be introduced in preference to the piece-work system. What is your objection to piece-work ?—Under the piece-work system a number of people get no work for some days in the month. They are kept waiting on the premises but do not get any payment for waiting time.

G-1742. Suppose you had payment for waiting time would you prefer piece-work to monthly wages ?—Yes.

G-1743. You have no objection to piece-work as such ?—No.

G-1744. Dealing with the match factory you say that the workers are fined half a rupee for a day's absence without leave in addition to the loss of the day's wages. Is that universal for men and women ?—Yes.

G-1745. Normally can a worker get leave if he asks for it ?—It is very difficult to get leave.

G-1746. Have the women asked for a separate entrance ?—Yes. At present they have to get mixed up with men workers. Otherwise they have to wait for half an hour after the closing of the factory.

G-1747. I suggest that you might ask the employers to let the women go out 10 minutes before the men. That would probably be easier than putting up a separate entrance ?—Yes, I shall do that. But I have seen the building myself and there is no difficulty whatever in putting up a separate entrance.

G-1748. Dealing with the traffic section of the Port Trust and Harbour Works you say that the contractors charge the Port Trust at the rate of Rs. 1-4-0 per ton of goods handled but pay the coolies only As. 4 as wages and take the rest as their profit. Is there any difference between the wages paid to a coolie employed direct by the Port Trust and that paid to the coolie employed by a contractor ?—More or less both the coolies earn the same every day. There seems to be an understanding between the contractors and the Port Trust that the wages should be exactly the same as far as possible. I understand there was a proposal to raise the wages of the Port Trust coolies but it was dropped because the contractors objected that they would be handicapped by such a step.

G-1749. With regard to the tally clerks do you suggest that they are working 12 hours continuously without any break ?—They get an hour's rest during day but not even that during night.

G-1750. Do they take any food during night ?—Yes, some light food.

G-1751. *Mrs. Venkatasubha Rao*: How many women coolies are working in the Harbour ?—I do not know. There are none in my Union. The contractors have got some women workers but I do not think the Port Trust employs any of them direct.

G-1752. Are these workers in the Harbour given any housing accommodation ?—There seems to be some provision for the Binny and Company's barge workers. But the other workers, most of them, live in Kasimode in their own huts. Many coolies have no houses at all and they sleep in the open spaces, on the footpaths and on the sands. They undergo a great deal of hardship during summer.

G-1753. Have you made any attempts to provide them with houses ?—We have started our Union only two months ago.

G-1754. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: You represent three unions. Are you getting these unions registered ?—We have applied to the Commissioner of Labour for registration.

G-1755. Have the Port Trust workers any opportunity of making direct representations to the Chairman of the Port Trust or other authorities of the Port Trust ?—Sometime back the workers had the custom of waiting in deputation on the Chief Engineer on the *Ayudha Puja* day, garlanding him and submitting a memorandum of their grievances. But nothing came out of their representations and the workers have abandoned it since.

G-1756. What are the main difficulties of your workers ?—The workers want to be paid 26 days' wages every month whatever may be the number of holidays. With regard to hours of work in the traffic section they work 11 hours a day. The hours should be reduced to 8½ a day all round. We have given a list of all the other grievances in the memorandum.

G-1757. In your memorandum you say that when workers are disabled by accidents no compensation is paid. You give also two instances to illustrate your statement. But I have been told that so far as the Port Trust is concerned they have a scale of compensation which is sometimes more liberal than that laid down in the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—The instances I have quoted will prove the truth of my contention.

G-1758. In your memorandum you say that the strike in the Western India Match Factory fizzled out partly because of undue pressure put upon the strikers by the local police. You also say that "the police have been asking them not to join the Union".—Yes, when there was a strike in the factory the Sub-Inspector of Police of Tiruvottiyur seems to have pressed the workers to go and join the factory and the workers joined work. When I held a meeting in order to organize a union the Sub-inspector sent four constables to the meeting. He posted two constables as guards for Mr. Shiva Rao's motor cycle. Mr Shiva Rao sent a note to the "Hindu" about the interference of the police and thereafter the Sub-Inspector did not interfere with our union meeting.

G-1759. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah*: In your memorandum dealing with the Harbour and Port Trust workers you say that the workers should have a minimum wage of Re. 1 a day. What is the minimum wage that they now get ?—They get As. 10. Some coolies get As. 6 only. But I have not included them in the category of workers who should be given a minimum wage of Re. 1 a day. I refer only to the dock workers.

G-1760. Have you ever communicated the grievances set forth in your memorandum to the employers ?—We sent a letter to the Manager of the Port Trust and after one month got a reply stating that the letter was received. What use will it be to make representations to such employers ?

G-1761. And they paid no attention at all to your greivances ?—None at all.

G-1762. You have set forth certain grievances of the Western India Match Factory workers one of which is with regard to their tiffin shed. Did you make representations to the manager in this respect ?—Mr. Shiva Rao wrote a letter to the manager regarding the grievances of the Match Factory workers. But they were not attended to.

G-1763. *Mr. Kay*: Are you an employee of the Port Trust ?—No.

G-1764. Most of the information that you have given is not from your experience but mere hearsay ?—I collected it from actual workers.

G-1765. You said that the only occasion for making representations to the Chairman of the Port Trust was on the *Ayudha Puja* day when the workers were permitted to garland him and submit a memorandum of their grievances. Do you mean to suggest that the Chairman of the Port Trust

lives in such seclusion that he never comes in contact with his workers except on the *Ayudha Puja* day ? Is it not a fact that the Chairman of the Port Trust is out on the Trust premises from 6-30 or 7 o'clock in the morning till about 12 o'clock and goes round the various parts of the premises so that it is easy for any workman with a grievance to approach him and make representations ?—It may be, but an ordinary labourer has not the courage to approach the Chairman of the Port Trust.

G-1766. I am afraid I cannot understand it. I see no difficulty. Even assuming that it is the case is it not possible for any employee to put his grievances in writing and post it to the Chairman ?—They made representations for two years during the *Puja* day.

G-1767. But that was only once a year ?—When they represented only once a year they did not get any redress. How would they be better off if they made representations every day ?

G-1768. The Board of the Port Trust meets once a fortnight and I see no reason why you could not make representations to the Board more often than once a year. I do not propose to go into this matter in detail.

In your memorandum you say that most of the work is done by contractors who charge the Port Trust Rs. 1-4-0 per ton of goods handled but pay only As. 4 to the coolies as wages and pocket the difference of Re. 1 per ton. But the Chairman of the Port Trust says that payment is made direct to the coolies and not through contractors or sub-contractors. Therefore your information does not seem to be correct ?—The coolies employed by the contractors are paid by the contractors whereas only the coolies employed by the Port Trust are paid direct by the Port Trust.

G-1769. Are the contractor's coolies members of your Union ? No, they are not.

G-1770. There is another point which you have not brought out in your report; and that is that a great deal of this work is contingent on there being ships in the harbour for the people to work on. Unfortunately for Madras the harbour is not always so full of ships that people should be working day and night. There are many days when there are no ships working and on these days the tally clerks and bargemen do not work at all. You suggest that there should be uniformity in the work. Do you suggest that ships in the harbour should be regulated so that you can only have not more than two ships a day ?—I would suggest that the work of tally clerks and others be evenly spread out.

G-1771. You cannot arrange the work in a harbour in the same way as in factory ?—I will be satisfied if arrangements are made for the comfort and convenience of the workers while they are at work.

G-1772. Is it not a fact that the tally clerks are allowed to take their food three times at night ?—As far as my knowledge goes they are not.

G-1773. You say that the barge workers have no interval to take their food. Do not these men as a matter of fact take their food with them and prefer to eat it on the barge itself rather than go on the shore ?—They are forced to do it.

G-1774. In connection with the workshop you said that there was no provident fund. Would you be surprised to learn that there is a provident fund and that 80 per cent. of the staff are already members of the fund ?—I do not know. But the daily-paid workers have no provident fund.

(The witness withdrew.)

MR. SIVASHANMUGAM PILLAI, Patron, The Chingleput District Labour Guild, Kodambakam.

G-1775. *Mr. Sastri*: Does your Guild cover all the labourers in Chingleput ?—Our Guild covers only the tannery workers at Chingleput.

G-1776. How many workers are there in all and how many do you represent ?—There are about 3,000 workers in all the tanneries in the Chingleput District. Only about 300 of them have become members of our Union. The majority of the rest are illiterate.

G-1777. How many tanneries are there ?—About 55 in Pallavaram and 10 in Kodambakam. There are some more in other parts of Chingleput.

G-1778. Are these tanneries proprietary concerns ?—Yes, they are all of them proprietary concerns. Except 4 tanneries the rest do not come under the Factories Act.

G-1779. Do the workmen in these tanneries belong to one particular community ?—They all belong to what is known as the depressed classes with hardly a few exceptions.

G-1780. Do they employ women in these tanneries ?—Only a few.

G-1781. Out of these 3,000 labourers how many will be Christians ?—Some of them are Christians.

G-1782. Do you yourself belong to that community ?—I am a member of the Adi Dravida community.

G-1783. Are you a labourer ?—I am not a labourer. I am a graduate of the University, a rare specimen in my community. I work for the betterment of my people. I am a landlord and not seeking any employment elsewhere for my living.

G-1784. In your memorandum you say that the rooms given to these tannery workers are very bad. Have you any idea as to how they compare with the rooms given to labourers in other factories and mills ?—The rooms given in other places are far better than those given to the tannery workers.

G-1785. Then you say "evicted at any time by the proprietor." Do you mean that the proprietor assigns no cause whatever ?—No, there must be some cause.

G-1786. What do you mean by "Figures of mortality—normal". Do you mean that it is normal to the community ?—The figures here are more or less the same as for the city of Madras.

G-1787. You speak of well water for drinking purposes both at home and at work. Are you allowed to draw water from these wells ?—These wells are set apart by the proprietors for our use. No other community uses these wells.

G-1788. You have no complaints to make about lack of drinking water ?—We have none. But there are no facilities for bathing and washing.

G-1789. Have you anything more to say in particular to the Commission ?—Besides what I have mentioned in my memorandum I wish to mention this. These tanneries are making large profits and a portion of that at least should be utilized to increase the wages of the labourers. They should all be brought under the Factories Act as far as possible so that the condition of these labourers may be improved. Section 10 of the Workmen's Compensation Act places a limit of 6 months within which the workmen should report an accident to the Commissioner. As most of the workers are ignorant of the provisions of the Act this time limit should be removed.

G-1790. *Miss Power*: In these unregulated tanneries do they employ boys from 12 to 15. ?—Yes; some of them are below 12 and as young as 8 years.

G-1791. Do these children of 8 work the same hours as adults ?—Yes, they do. Sometimes they have to work longer even. They have to do "gratis work" such as sweeping, removing water from one tub to another and so on. It is a sort of preliminary work connected with the tannery for which they will have to go to the tannery as early as 5 in the morning sometimes. They are not paid anything for this work but they are given 2 *dhoties* a year costing about Rs. 2.

G-1792. Has everybody got to do this work ?—Yes, nearly all. The money value of that work I have estimated to be As. 2 a day.

G-1793. You do not mention in your memorandum anything about fines or bribes. Are not the workers in these tanneries subjected to any form of fines ?—The labourers tell me that they are fined for bad work or disobedience. As regards bribes they need not bribe anybody to be taken for work.

G-1794. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed*: Have you any direct experience of the tannery ?—I have visited many of these tanneries and learnt about their conditions first-hand.

G-1795. Are you familiar with the internal management and the actual working of a tannery ?—I am not a proprietor of a tannery nor an actual labourer. In that sense I may not have any experience.

G-1796. When was your Union started ?—In 1920.

G-1797. Has it been registered ?—All the labourers belong to one community; there are no rival unions and we had not thought it necessary to register our union.

G-1798. Are there no Muhammadans among these tannery labourers ?—There are some but the vast bulk of them belong to our community.

G-1799. Do the proprietors object to labourers of other communities ?—The proprietors do not object but this kind of work is not liked by the people of other communities.

G-1800. You said that only four tanneries came under the Factories Act and they were all situated in Chingleput. Are there not only three tanneries in Chingleput which come under the Factories Act ?—Yes, and the fourth is in Trichinopoly.

G-1801. Do they use machinery ?—Yes.

G-1802. Do the other tanneries use machinery ?—No.

G-1803. How then can they come under the Factories Act ?—I think the definition is wide enough to include them also. Anyhow they must be included under the Factories Act in order that the conditions of labourers may be improved.

G-1804. Do you remember there was a strike at the tannery at Thangal ?—Yes, there was one on 10th November 1928.

G-1805. Did not workers take advantage of the presence of a large quantity of skins and hides in the factory which needed immediate attention and go on strike there by spoiling all the skins and putting the proprietors to heavy losses ?—I do not know.

G-1806. Did not these same people ask the proprietors to re open the factories which had been closed down on account of heavy losses ?—I have a pamphlet here which gives an account of the strike at Thangal. It has been published by the labourers themselves.

G-1807. As regards these boys is it not a fact that they are sons or relations of workers in tanneries who get themselves trained in this way for skilled work later on ?—I cannot call it *training*.

G-1808. Does anybody compel them to come and work; do they not come and work for their own benefit ?—They are not compelled to work, of course.

G-1809. Therefore how can you call it gratis work ?—It is not gratis work in the sense they are not compelled to work.

G-1810. *Mr. Ahmed*: Are these tanneries as a rule owned by Muhammadans ?—Yes, with one or two exceptions they are all owned by Muhammadans.

G-1811. Why do not other communities take to this industry ?—Other communities here, for instance the Brahmans, do not like to handle hides and skins.

G-1812. With regard to the boys employed in the tanneries do they not learn the trade by working in these factories ? Just as boys pay their school fees for learning something should they not also pay something to the management for learning the trade ?—These boys do their work while they learn and the proprietor pays them only for their work.

G-1813. *Mr. Clow*: Is your Guild a guild of actual labourers or people interested in the labourers ?—It is called a guild of labourers.

G-1814. Not of educated people ?—No.

G-1815. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed*: Have you any idea of the relative salaries of these tannery workers now and 10 years ago ? Has it not nearly doubled ?—It may be; I have no idea

G-1816. Suppose a man's salary is Rs. 15 a month and he is expected to do a minimum of 50 skins a day. Can he not easily do 100 skins and earn nearly double the salary ?—It is not possible to do it easily.

G-1817. But do they not generally do it and earn that amount ? Will you consult your workers sitting with you and let us know ?—They may do it for a day or two but not every day.

G-1818. During the last few years have there not been increases in wages in Coimbatore, Dindigul, Trichinopoly and other places ?—Yes, there have been.

G-1819. Were those increases given after a strike or voluntarily by the employers themselves ?—They were not given after a strike.

(The witness withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninety-First Meeting.

MADRAS.

Wednesday, 5th March 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. (*Presiding*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
MR. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
MR. JOHN CLIFF.
MR. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.
LT.-COL. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

MR. K. KAY.
MR. JAMAL MAHOMED Sahib Bahadur.
MR. B. SHIVA RAO, M.A.,
MR. MUHAMMAD UBAIDULLAH Sahib.
} Assistant Commissioners.

MR. S. LALL, I.C.S.
MR. A. DIBDIN.
} Joint Secretaries.

Mr. J. HARGREAVES, Manager of the Carnatic Mill, Mr. W. E. BENTLEY, Manager of the Buckingham Mill, Dr. G. P. RAGHAVIAH, Medical Officer, Carnatic Mill, Miss M. SAGE, M.A., Joint Principal, The Buckingham and Carnatic School, Mr. K. O. ANTHONI, Secretary, The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Work-people Welfare Committee.

G-1820. *Mr. Sastri* : How long have you been in charge of the Buckingham Mill, Mr. Bentley ?—Ten years.

G-1821. How long have you been with the Carnatic Mill, Mr. Hargreaves ? For twenty years, and I have been in charge as manager for the last eleven years.

G-1822. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : May we take it that the facts contained in the memorandum are common to both mills ?—Yes.

G-1823. *Mr. Cliff* : Are the figures also common to both mills ?—Yes.

G-1824. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : I want to put a general question as to the policy of your firms as regards their labour. You have two methods by which your labour is able to come into close contact with the management, one by means of the Welfare Committee and the other by means of the Union, which,

I understand, consists entirely of the employees of your firms. How do you divide up the activities of those two organizations ?—(Mr. Hargreaves) : To a certain extent these two bodies overlap. The Welfare Committee deals with all questions of departmental complaints. It deals with practically everything except wages and hours of work.

G-1825. Questions dealing with wages and hours of work are taken up direct with the management by the Union ?—Yes.

G-1826. Questions affecting an individual workman, even if it may be with regard to his pay, are brought before the Welfare Committee. All questions covering the mills generally are dealt with by the Union. Individual questions are dealt with either by the Welfare Committee, or by the management direct if the workers prefer that ?—Yes.

G-1827. Is every employee automatically in touch with the Welfare Committee ?—Yes.

G-1828. He does not have to pay ?—No.

G-1829. Does he have to pay in order to belong to the Union ? We presume so.

G-1830. He need not necessarily be a member of the Union ?—No.

G-1831. If he is not a member of the Union he can either go direct to the manager or to the Welfare Committee ?—Yes.

G-1832. If it is a general question of wages or hours concerning the whole group, you cannot discuss it with any individual ; that would have to come from the Union ?—Yes.

G-1833. No individual can discuss general terms of wages or hours with you, but only those who are members of the Union and who are working through the Union ?—A deputation from the Union would bring it to our notice.

G-1834. Have you any restrictions on your Union ?—None whatever.

G-1835. Can anybody be a member of the Union ?—Yes.

G-1836. Can anybody outside be a member of the Union ?—No, It is only for our employees.

G-1837. Would you have any objection to the committee of your Union having outside advice ?—No. At present they have an advisory board.

G 1838. Who are members of that advisory board ?—Mr. Gnanapragasam, a lawyer, and Dr. Asirvatham, and one or two others.

G-1839. Do you allow your Union a free hand in appointing Members to that advisory board ?—We have nothing whatever to do with it.

G-1840. If they chose to appoint Mr. Shiva Rao as a member, you would have no objection ?—It is up to them.

G-1841. Can they bring members of the advisory board with themselves when dealing with the management ?—Yes.

G-1842. *Mr. Cliff* : I think it can be taken that you have a stable and permanent labour force ?—Yes.

G-1843. What is the total number ?—9,178.

G-1844. Have you a live register of applicants ?—Yes.

G-1845. How many people have you on your register ?—At present 200 or 300. They are sons of workers under 18 years of age.

G-1846. Dealing with the questions of the works committees, do you keep records of the individual representations made (1) by the work-people to the manager, and (2) by the Welfare Committee representative to the manager ?—No, only those that crop up at the meeting.

G-1847. Will you send us in a list of those cases in which the decision of a foreman has been reversed by the Welfare Superintendent or by the Welfare Committee, and also the number of times in which the Superintendent's or Committee's decision has been upheld or reversed by the management ?—Yes.

G-1848. Can you tell us the number of dismissals which took place in 1929 ?—(Mr. Bentley) : 328 from the Buckingham Mill and 423 from the Carnatic Mill.

G-1849. Are the reasons for dismissal given ?—Yes.

G-1850. Would it be possible for you to hand a copy in to the Commission ?—Yes.

G-1851. I see that you have 459 houses, and that you hope soon to have another 200. How are those houses allotted to the work-people ?—(Mr. Hargreaves) : By length of service, by the distance the man lives from the mill, and also by his pay. We usually allot them to the men who are in most urgent need of them and who are on the lowest rate of pay.

G-1852. *Mr. Sastri* : In cases of vacancies, does not priority of application count ?—Yes, we keep a list of applications.

G-1853. *Mr. Cliff* : Taking the figure with regard to medical leave, 9,850, does that represent the actual sickness which occurs in your mills ?—Medical leave granted in days.

G-1854. It comes to rather more than two days for six months. Does that mean that, as far as your mills are concerned, the workers' health is so good that the sickness does not average more than two days ?—Yes.

G-1855. Does it mean that, on this basis, you give approximately one day's pay per six months for sickness per employee ?—Does it mean a cost of rather more than 2 days pay per annum ?—You can take that as a good average, per person.

G-1856. You say " Our wages are not fixed by any system of negotiated agreement ". Has the Union made any representation with regard to alteration in the rates of wages or hours of labour ?—Not in the hours o labour ; in wages.

G-1857. Has there been no agreement reached between your company and the Union respecting wages ?—The Union made application about two months ago.

G-1858. Was that the first application made by the Union ?—For a general increase of wages.

G-1859. Your company has received no other application than that ?—No.

G-1860. Has your company received any application from the Union for an alteration in the hours of labour ?—No.

G-1861. *Colonel Russell* : What proportion of your employees are actually housed in the mill houses ?—About 9 per cent.

G-1862. Might we have a plan of a typical house showing the sizes of the verandah, living rooms and kitchen ?—Yes.

G-1863. And also a plan of the latest type ?—Yes.

G-1864. Do you prevent the admission of cattle belonging to your workers in your villages ?—Yes. That is a definite rule.

G-1865. You say that the physique of your work-people is probably a little better than that of the average workman in Madras. On what do you base that statement ?—Probably better working conditions for one thing. The mills are well lighted and airy. Our work-people are well-paid and are better fed than most people.

G-1866. Does the mill give the Corporation's child welfare centres any subscription or subsidy ?—I am not sure what our agents do.

G-1867. You say that medical leave is granted whenever necessary, and an allowance of approximately half-pay is paid for such leave. What is the limit of medical leave ?—(*Mr. Bentley*) : The average is 20 days, but there is no restriction on it, according to the sickness of the man and the individual himself. It is extended many times to three months. It all depends on the nature of the sickness. Each case is considered on its merits.

G-1868. If a man gets 3 or 4 months sick leave, does he still get his half pay ?—Yes, up to the day he starts work again.

G-1869. You state that you are of opinion that the standard of living has improved, especially when such subjects as health and hygiene are taught. Do the children get lessons in hygiene ?—(*Miss Sage*) : Yes, we consider that a very important item in our curriculum.

G-1870. Even half-timers ?—Yes, and the children of the work-people.

G-1871. What time in your ordinary curriculum do you give to lessons in hygiene ?—They are always having practical lessons in hygiene. If any child has anything the matter with him he must come to the dispensary and be medically attended to. In addition to that, they have half an-hour once a week, perhaps twice a week, during which they are taught the prevention and cure of the prevailing diseases, such as small-pox, cholera, tuberculosis, and so on.

G-1872. Are the courses given by you in this connection approved of by the Department of Public Instruction ?—Ours is a special school, and we are

allowed special subjects of instruction. No one has ever taken any objection to our lessons in hygiene ; in fact they are pleased with them.

G-1873. That part of the curriculum is accepted by the Department of Public Instruction ?—Yes.

G-1874. And you get the usual Government grant ?—Yes.

G-1875. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed* : Have you work for all your 9,000 workmen ?—Yes.

G-1876. You say that " migration among our work-people has declined steadily, particularly during the past 7 or 8 years ". Can you give us any reason for that ?—(Mr. Hargreaves) Migration has declined, in my opinion, owing to good working conditions, regular employment, good wages and prospects.

G-1877. The workmen are more contented now ?—Exactly.

G-1878. Where do you get your labour from ?—It is local labour.

G-1879. Do you get any from the agricultural classes ?—A few.

G-1880. I see you say that when a man retires from work he usually goes to his village. Does he go there because he wants to take up a piece of land ?—Yes. I think it is because most of our labour was originally agricultural.

G-1881. What attracts them from the land ?—A better rate of payment in the cities.

G-1882. You say: " That there is extensive unemployment in Madras seems to be evident from the large numbers who come to the mills looking for work." You get more applications for work than you can provide for ?—Yes.

G-1883. Do you think there is an unemployment problem here in Madras ?—Not amongst textile workers.

G-1884. *Mr. Ahmed* : We saw many people standing at your mill gates ?—They were not textile labourers. It was casual labour.

G-1885. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed* : You say : " The work-people receive their wages slip the day previous to pay day, and this interval allows time to adjust any mistakes that may arise ". Does this system work satisfactorily ?—Yes.

G-1886. Do you get many complaints ?—Very few.

G-1887. Can you give us some idea as to the cost of one of your work-people's houses ?—The old ones cost about Rs. 1,000 not including the ground. The new type of house may cost a little more.

G-1889. You say : " Government have done very little in the way of providing houses for work-people. We understand that a certain number of houses have been built by Government to house labourers in Madras, but not specially for textile workers ". For what sort of labour does the Government provide houses ?—General labour.

G-1890. You say : " A few years ago the houses provided by the Company became unpopular ". What was the reason for that ?—(Mr. Bentley) : The

little restrictions we enforced from the health point of view, did not appeal to the people, but now they are learning the benefits of these restrictions.

G-1891. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah* : You say : " As employers we have never any difficulty in finding labour to fill vacancies ". Have you any system whereby *maistris* bring in new hands, or do you select the men yourselves ?—(Mr. Hargreaves) : We have no system of recruitment by *maistris* or by anyone who has any responsible position in the mill. We think that form of recruiting leads to a lot of dishonesty. All the recruitment is done by the management itself through the labour supply from the mill schools, and we find that the best source of supply.

G-1892. I mean the new men you take from outside and not from the school. You do not allow jobbers or *maistris* in the mill to bring new men to you ?—No. Any new labour taken on in the mill is taken from relatives of work-people, and we can always get more than we want from that source.

G-1893. You say that the relations between the staff and rank and file are generally quite friendly. Do you give opportunities to your workmen to represent their grievances direct to you, or through *maistris* or anybody else ?—Both.

G-1894. Have you had any complaints from your workers that they are not kindly treated ?—(Mr. Bentley) ; Not to my knowledge.

G-1895. You say : " In addition to the elected representatives of the work-people, four representatives of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union (two from each Mill) nominated by the Union, also attend the meetings of the Committee ". If a resolution is passed in the Welfare Committee with which the Union do not agree, have they a right to approach the management direct ?—Yes.

G-1896. *Mr. Cliff* : Are those four representatives members of the Committee ?—No.

G-1897. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah* : The Union is quite independent in that case, is it ?—Yes.

G-1898. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : But they attend the meetings ?—Yes, for their own information.

G-1899. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah* : You say : " The work-people receive their wages slip the day previous to pay day, and this interval allows time to adjust any mistake that may arise ". Suppose there is a mistake. Say a man only receives Rs. 35 instead of Rs. 40 : is there any arrangement made to pay him the difference immediately ?—Yes.

G-1900. You state that there is a full-time qualified medical officer in the dispensary at each mill, and that all workers and their families are given free medical attention and medicines. Do you think the people working in the carding department suffer from lung diseases ?—(Dr. Raghaviah) : The carding department is a bad department for people who have any lung disease, but I do not say that they develop the disease there. (Mr. Bentley) : A man is examined by the medical officer before he is employed. If he goes into the carding department he is examined from time to time by the medical officer.

If there is any doubt about him, the man is transferred to another department. Many such transfers have taken place to more congenial departments.

G-1901. Is the medical officer free to recommend an operative for sick leave, or is there any interference by the management in that respect ?—(Dr. Raghaviah) : There is no interference.

G-1902. You say that about 90% of your work-people make use of the Stores. What was the amount of stuff purchased at the beginning ?—(Mr. Bentley) : About Rs. 25,000 worth, and now it has risen to one lakh and 25,000.

G-1903. What is the reason of that increase ? Is it owing to the cheapness of the goods ?—Yes. The people buy their things at cost price ; they get full measure, and there is not the same trickery that goes on in the bazaar.

G-1904. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : You said just now, doctor, that there is no interference from the management in the matter of sick leave. I have here a doctor's certificate from the Buckingham Mill in respect of a patient who had a temperature of 103·2, and who was recommended 2½ days' leave. The 2½ days are cancelled ; it is initialled by the manager of the mill, and only half a day's leave is recommended. Is that an exceptional case, or is it the general rule ?—(Mr. Bentley) : The half day is given pending the condition of the man the next morning. It may have been intermittent fever.

G-1905. You think you are a better judge as to how much leave a man should get than the doctor ?—Sometimes, yes.

G-1906. Mr. Anthoni, will you tell the Commission what you were before you joined the service of the company as Superintendent of the Welfare Committee ?—I was in the Police Department.

G-1907. Were you a Sub-Inspector of Police attached to the C. I. D. ?—No. I was Sub-Inspector of Police.

G-1908. Did your work in connection with the police bring you into connection with the Madras Labour Union ?—I was reporting about the labour situation in the city, and in that capacity I used to be present at the meetings of the Union.

G-1909. How did your capacities come to the notice of Binny and Co. that they should have chosen you as Superintendent of the Welfare Committee ?—I do not know how my capacities came to the notice of Binny and Co. I applied for and got the job.

G-1910. Do you think that the work-people of these two Mills would be justified in feeling a certain amount of suspicion about the Superintendent of the Welfare Committee who, in their opinion rightly or wrongly, was very prominently connected in putting down strikes and various disputes which took place between 1918 and 1921 ?—I had absolutely no share in it. I am not responsible for any impression they may have formed about me.

G-1911. You have communal representation in your elections to the Executive of the Welfare Committee ?—Yes.

G-1912. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is that in all departments ?—No.

G-1913. *Mr. Cliff* : I am puzzled about this. You say : "The weaving department, having a large number of employees, necessitates a system of

communal voting for three candidates". Later on you say : "The labour representatives are elected annually by the work-people of the different departments by secret ballot on a basis of communal representation". Can you explain that to us ?

Mr. Sastri : Perhaps that applies only to the weaving department ?—(Mr. Bentley) : Yes. As far as the other departments are concerned, the two major communities working in the mills, the Hindus and *Adi-dravidas*, are given equal representation.

G-1914. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : How do you get equal representation ?—There is only one representative in the department ?—If one department of one mill is represented by one caste, the same department of the other mill is represented by the other caste.

G-1915. *Mr. Cliff* : Does this declaration here—" elected annually by the work-people of the different departments by secret ballot on a basis of communal representation "—represent the two communities you have just referred to ?—Yes.

G-1916. Is the ballot limited to each community ?—The ballot is open to all the work-people, but the candidate standing for that department is limited to that community.

Mr. Cliff : It is nomination and not election.

G-1917. *Mr. Sastri* : You decide beforehand that that department in the Buckingham Mill should have a Mohammedan representative or an *Adi-dravida* representative, but that in the other mill it should be another ?—Yes, that is decided before.

G-1918. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : Have the work-people objected to the retention of communal representation ?—Yes. The *Adi-dravidas*, generally speaking, have asked for communal representation.

G-1919. *Miss Power* : What percentage are they of the weaving department ?—Generally throughout the mill the percentage of *Adi-dravidas* is about 39, Hindus 46, Christians 8 and Mohammedans 5.

G-1920. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : You state that there was cent per cent. polling at the election of 1929. Do you suggest that it was because of the universal appreciation of the work of the Welfare Committee that there was such polling ?—That is the only construction that I can put upon it.

G-1921. Was it voluntary polling, or do you think there was any resort to the practice that obtains in some countries, of penalizing those who abstain from voting ?—I can say with absolute certainty that there is no force brought upon any worker in the matter of using his vote.

G-1922. Voting takes place inside the department while the men are at work, does it not ?—Yes.

G-1923. And the voting has to take place in the presence of the head of the department ?—Yes.

G-1924. So no workman would dare to object to voting ?—There have been objections in the earlier years but not at present.

G-1925. You say, Mr. Bentley, that your objection to the Madras Labour Union was that those who started the Union had politics as their primary object. Will you admit that when the Union was first started in 1918 or 1919 there were several charges of assault against some of your European assistants which were taken to the police court ?—Not to my knowledge.

G-1926. Did Mr. Hargreaves figure in the police court on more than one occasion ?—(Mr. Hargreaves): Yes, but not in connection with the trade union.

G-1927. In connection with assaults on the work-people ? Yes.

G-1928. Was one of your European assistants fined Rs. 35 for branding a worker with a red-hot iron ?—I do not remember.

G-1929. *Mr. Cliff*: If a worker was branded with a red-hot iron, you would not forget that, surely ?—I do not remember the case. It is going back 12 years, which is rather a long time, is it not ?—(Mr. Bentley): The man may have been touched with an instrument. To say he was branded is absolutely out of all reason.

G-1930. The question is, did it occur ?—Not to my knowledge.

G-1931. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: Supposing I produce the record before the Commission, would you be prepared to admit it ?—(Mr. Hargreaves): Certainly. I am prepared to admit anything that is true.

G-1932. Did Mr. Wadia, when he first started the Union, go round the mills with Mr. Symonds in May 1918 ?—I could not say.

G-1933. Did Mr. Symonds admit in the High Court in the following year that he was not aware of the fact that during the second lock-out in 1918 as a result of an assault on the manager by some of the work-people, Mr. Wadia moved a resolution in the Madras Labour Union disapproving of it, and saying that the Union must co-operate with the Mill authorities in tracing the culprits ?—I have no knowledge.

G-1934. *Miss Power*: Have you been successful in eliminating bribery in both your Mills ?—(Mr. Hargreaves): I do not think we have absolutely eliminated it.

G-1935. Where does it still linger ?—It lingers in every department.

G-1936. I take it it does not exist in respect of the employment of fresh workers ?—No.

G-1937. It is between the workers and the *mistris* ?—Yes.

G-1938. What would it be in respect of ?—Promotions.

G-1939. Does the matter ever come up before the Welfare Committee ?—Yes.

G-1940. You feel that in respect of your 9,000 workers, bribery is a comparatively small thing ?—(Mr. Bentley): Yes.

G-1941. What are the matters which are normally discussed between the Company and the Company's Union, in view of the wide activities of the Welfare Committee ?—(Mr. Hargreaves): The general well-being of the mill, and questions appertaining to departments.

G-1942. Those are all things which could be dealt with by the Welfare Committee ?—Yes. The two bodies overlap to a certain extent.

G-1943. Why has the Union, which has been in existence for some years, only once raised the question of wages ?—The only conclusion to come to is that they must think the wages are all right.

G-1944. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Are your wages higher than the wages in similar factories ?—I should say they are the highest wages in India taking all allowances into consideration as well, *i.e.*, Bonus, Gratuity Funds, etc.

G-1945. *Miss Power*: You say: "A period of three months' leave is granted with allowances during pregnancy". Is the three months' leave obligatory or optional ?—(Mr. Bentley): It is obligatory.

G-1946. What is the allowance given ?—Half pay.

G-1947. You say "In all establishments where female labour is employed, we consider that legislation should be adopted to ensure adequate leave and allowances during pregnancy." Would you be in favour of all-India legislation in this respect, or provincial legislation ?—We do not mind which it is so long as they get it.

G-1948. Do you think it should cover not one trade as in the Bombay Presidency or all trades ?—All trades.

G-1949. Have you any reason to think from your experience of half-timers that the jump at the age of 15 from 6 to 11 hours is excessive ?—(Mr. Hargreaves): The jump is from 5 to 10 hours in our case.

G-1950. Have you reason to think that that sudden increase is too much ?—(Mr. Bentley): No.

G-1951. No harm results ?—No.

G-1952. Have you ever gone into the question of the degree of indebtedness amongst the different group of workers in your Mills ?—(Mr. Hargreaves): No.

G-1953. Has the question ever been discussed at the Welfare Committee ?—No.

G-1954. We have been told more than once that the difficulty of workers overstaying leave would be overcome if there was a system of privilege leave with pay. You have that system. What effect has it had since it has been in operation in reducing the amount of overstayed leave?—(Mr. Bentley): It has reduced unauthorized absenteeism. This has been reduced from 7 or 8 per cent. down to below 1 per cent.

G-1955. Do you put that down entirely to the adoption of the system of privilege leave with pay ?—No. I put it down to all our conditions generally—wages, amenities and health.

G-1956. Are your workers at liberty to join the Madras Labour Union if they want to ?—Yes.

G-1957. Are any of them members of both Unions ?—We could not say.

G-1958. Have you some members of the other Union in your employ ?—(Mr. Hargreaves): Yes.

G-1959. Who are not members of your Union ?—(Mr. Bentley): We do not know that.

G-1960. If they are members of the Madras Labour Union, are they precluded from being members of your Union ?—(Mr. Hargreaves): Not that we are aware of. We have no information about the activities of the two Unions.

G-1961. With regard to reduction in hours, you say: "A reduction of the maximum might be possible, but we do not see any necessity for it." Later on you say that if there were a reduction some increase in efficiency might be expected. Is it your view that the number of hours that it is at present possible to work under the Factories Act is not excessive for the Indian worker ?—For many years we have worked less hours than the number laid down in the Factories Act.

G-1962. I am looking at the matter in the large. Do you feel there should be any reduction in the present maximum hours allowable under the Factories Act ?—Do you feel for instance that the time has come for the inauguration of a working week somewhere between the existing 60 hours and the Washington 8-hours Convention ?—(Mr. Bentley): I should say 55 hours personally. (Mr. Hargreaves): I think we ought to fall in line with Western countries. I should say 55.

G-1963. Have you any figures to show what percentage of saving can be effected on a family budget as a result of dealing at your store rather than in the open market ?—About 10%.

G-1964. Have you, in your different forms of education, ever attempted to give any lectures on an improved dietary ?—(Miss Sage): No.

G-1965. *Mr. Joshi*: What is your precise objection to any outsider who is not an employee of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills to be an officer of a union ?—(Mr. Bentley): So far, I do not think the Madras Labour Union has helped the textile workers of Madras.

G-1966. *Mr. Sastri*:—Mr. Joshi's question is general: He wants to know what is your objection to a desirable outsider being an office-bearer of a union?—(Mr. Hargreaves): It is really a question for the unions themselves to decide, but personally I should say that because they have got men who are sufficiently intelligent to carry on the work themselves they do not want any outsiders.

G-1967. *Mr. Joshi*: They are clever enough no doubt, but supposing they want outsiders ?—If they are clever enough the question hardly arises.

G-1968. If they are willing to have an outsider, then it is not for an employer to say that a union should not have an outsider as secretary or president?—It is a question for the union rather than for the mill management.

G-1969. Then what is your objection to the recognition of the Madras Labour Union, if you do not object to outsiders being officers of a union ?—

Mr. Sastri: They have already answered that their objection to the Madras Labour Union is because it includes people of other mills. They want their union to consist solely of their employees.

The witness: (Mr. Hargreaves): The objection to the Madras Labour Union, I think, is that from the President downwards all the officers have no connection whatever with the textile trade; and that is the reason why the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees Union was started, so far as I know.

Mr. Cliff: In answer to Sir Victor Sassoon I think the witness said that there was no objection to people assisting in negotiations even though they were outsiders.

G-1970. *Mr. Joshi*: I think what you mean is that you do not object to outsiders being advisers but you object to outsiders being officers of unions ?—Yes.

G-1971. I want you to tell me what is your reason for that. Why do you want to dictate to your people whom they should appoint as their secretary or president ?—Simply because the outsiders have absolutely no knowledge of the industry.

G-1972. If they have no knowledge the workers themselves will find that out. You have already said that the workers are intelligent enough. If they are intelligent enough they will certainly find out that a particular officer is of no use to them and they will not appoint him ?—Then why appoint him if the men are intelligent enough to fill the places themselves.

G-1973. It is your admission that the men are intelligent. If the men are intelligent and if they find particular officers to be useful, why do you as an employer object ?—We have never objected to any outsider in an advisory capacity.

G-1974. Why do you object to an outsider being an officer of a union ?—Simply because the men are capable of looking after the work themselves.

G-1975. *Mr. Sastri*: You said twice over that it was a matter for the union, and yet now you say to Mr. Joshi "These men are good enough themselves; why should they take an outsider" ?—It is a question for the union and not for me.

G-1976. *Mr. Joshi*: Why do you not recognize the union when your men want a particular man as an office-bearer whether he is an outsider or whether he is an employee of your mills ?—The reason why the union was never recognized by our work-people, so far as I know, is that from 1918 onwards the work-people derived absolutely no benefits from the union, and that is why they started a union of their own.

G-1977. Do you really think that when a union is started, it is the business of the employer to decide whether the men have received benefit or not, or it is for the men to decide whether they have received any benefit or not ?—Certainly for the men. We have nothing whatever to do either with the Madras Labour Union or with the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Union.

G-1978. What is the total number of workers in your mill ?—Roughly 9,000 for both the mills.

G-1979. What is the number of members of the Madras Labour Union ?—We have absolutely no knowledge.

G-1980. What is the number of members of the union that has been recognized by you ?—We have no information at all.

G-1981. You said that your men have no confidence in the Madras Labour Union and they do not recognize it. Suppose after investigation by an impartial judge, say, by an officer of Government or by this Royal Commission, it is stated authoritatively that the union has got a membership of 2,500 of your employees, will you recognize that union as having been desired by your work-people ?—That is a question for the managing agents to decide.

G-1982. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : You said that your union does not allow anybody who is not an employee in your firm to join the union. Is that a restriction of the union, or is that a restriction put on the union by the employer ?—(*Mr. Bentley*) : It was the decision of the union.

G-1983. *Mr. Joshi* : I want your opinion. If it is found by this Royal Commission or by an officer of Government that 2,500 of your employees are paying subscriptions regularly to a union, should it be refused recognition by the employers ?—If it was officered by the same officers as they have got now, personally I would not recognize it in view of what has happened in past years.

G-1984. So you object to certain persons ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*) : Exactly. We should object to any outsiders being officers of the union.

G-1985. Sometimes you say that you object to particular individuals, sometimes you say that you object to outsiders ?—I myself was a trade unionist.

G-1986. *Mr. Sastri* : You should answer the question not as a trade unionist but as the manager of a mill. The question is, if you find 2,500 of your employees are members of a union would you still not recognize the union for the simple reason that some of its officers are outsiders or people who do not command your confidence ?—They do not command the confidence of our work-people.

G-1987. *Mr. Joshi* : How do you know that they do not command the work-people's confidence ?—Because they left that union and started their own.

G-1988. If you were to tell me that 5,000 out of 9,000 are members of the other union, then I can understand your saying that the majority of your workmen want that union and therefore you do not propose to recognize another union. But I ask you if 2,500 of your workmen are proved to be members of a particular union and have confidence in a particular set of officers why you should refuse to recognize that union ?—I can only repeat what I have told you before that we have no confidence in the present constitution of the union. If it was officered by the mill people themselves, yes.

G-1989. In your memorandum you make a statement that the Madras Labour Union is managed and controlled entirely by outsiders and is in no way representative of any responsible section of your work-people. Will you tell us why you say it is not representative of any responsible section of your work-people ?—(*Mr. Bentley*) : Because from the President downwards, and all the members of the Committee, there are none of our work-people.

G-1990. You have made a statement that the union is in no way representative of any responsible section of your work-people. You said that you do not know how many of your employees are members of that union, although I am prepared to say that 2,500 of your employees are members of that union. I know it as a matter of fact, but if you have knowledge you can contradict me. If there are 2,500 members, do you not think it is an irresponsible statement to make that the union is not representative of any responsible section of your work-people ?—What becomes of the other 7,000 ?

G-1991. You have admitted that you have no knowledge of the membership of the union. If you have no knowledge of its membership, I tell you that you as a responsible member of the staff of this mill should not have made that statement ?—You have enlightened us about the 2,500 men ; what about the 7,000 then ?

G-1992. If you are prepared to accept my figure of 2,500, then why do you call these 2,500 people as irresponsible people. I want to find out from you whether your attitude towards your men is really a reasonable one ?—Our attitude towards our men is reasonable, and we accept them ; but we do not accept the executive.

G-1993. I am not talking of officers now. You are accusing your own men as being irresponsible ?—If these 2,500 people wish to form a committee amongst themselves and to approach the management, we shall give them every opportunity to approach us.

G-1994. Why do you call them an irresponsible section of your people ?—We call them irresponsible through the committee.

G-1995. *Mr. Clow* : Is your objection to the Madras Labour Union based on the personality of certain of its officers, or would you object equally strongly if it was officered by certain other outsiders who had no previous history ?—There are possibilies in that.

G-1996. As regards the applicants who come before you for jobs, do you find that many of them have had previous training in textile mills, or are they fresh applicants ?—Taking our history for the last 50 years, I should say that many people who come to us have had training in different textile mills. Of the applicants, there is a small section of our own men who were treated as absentees ; we know their qualifications, and we appoint them when necessary.

G-1997. Suppose a man goes away and does not come back, you do not enter him as an absentee ?—He is marked absent for 8 days.

G-1998. Supposing he goes away and does not return at all ?—We mark him absent only for the first 8 days, and if he does not return we consider him to have left our service.

G-1999. He is not included in 1·07 per cent. of your absentees ?—No. 1·07 per cent. refers to our movable labour as it stands in our records.

G-2000. In other words, it refers to the people who come back and not to the people who do not come back ?—Yes.

G-2001. When did you introduce automatic looms ?—In 1914, but we actually began working them on a larger scale from 1920.

G-2002. What effect has the introduction of these looms had on the wages; do you think it has enabled you to pay higher wages?—Yes as is proved by our records.

G-2003. You mentioned that the young men who have been educated in your schools proved better workmen than the uneducated men. There is no reluctance on the part of these educated men to enter the mill?—No.

G-2004. You do not find a demand that they should all become clerks, for instance?—No.

G-2005. They are quite ready to take up any manual occupation?—Yes.

G-2006. Do you allow your workers to take unauthorized intervals during the day?—No.

G-2007. They are not allowed to take meals, for instance?—Certainly they are allowed. Where a man comes to the mills without food and some one brings it for him later, he is allowed to take the meal.

G-2008. In your time or in the specified interval?—In our time he does it.

G-2009. Do you provide *badlis* to take his place when he is out?—No.

G-2010. Then how is his work carried on?—Perhaps by his assistant or his next friend.

G-2011. In other words you keep a certain percentage of spare men who will not be necessary if the men were actually working 10 hours a day?—We allow a surplus of about 10 per cent. for leave.

G-2012. So, generally speaking, out of the 10 hours a day a man puts in 9 hours a day?—He puts in 10 hours a day—5 in the morning and 5 in the afternoon.

G-2013. How can he put in 10 hours if he is out for some time?—From that point of view, he does not put in 10 hours. I might say that for taking a meal he may take about 10 minutes.

G-2014. You keep 10 per cent. surplus; that will enable him to go out for 10 per cent. of the time?—The surplus of 10 per cent. is to cover the privilege leave and other amenities that we give to our people.

G-2015. Then you do not take any extra men every morning to make up for the absentees?—No.

G-2016. What percentage of your new employees are children or relatives of the old ones?—More or less all of them.

G-2017. Have you any trouble between communities in the mills at all?—No.

G-2018. You had, I think, at the time of one of the big strikes?—No; we had no trouble between communities as such.

G-2019. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You said that during 1928 the number of persons who left the two mills, or who were discharged or dismissed from the mills, was 751. But in your memorandum, dealing with one mill only, you say that 768 people left during that year. How do you reconcile these two statements?—768 represents the people who left the mill on their own account and did not come back.

G-2020. Does that include the 751 hands?—Yes.

G-2021. If a man goes away and does not return, for what period do you mark him absent, and after what period do you consider him as a dismissed hand?—We mark him absent for 8 days, but if we find that his over-stay was due to sickness or any other legitimate cause, we generally take him back after his return.

G-2022. What procedure do you follow in the Garnatic Mills?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): If a man is continuously absent for 8 days, he is presumed to have left our employ.

G-2023. If he comes back do you take him as a new employee?—It is very rarely that he comes back. But if he returns and he is a good servant, we take him in.

G-2024. You have said in your memorandum that you do not use jobbers as recruiters. Will you tell us if a labourer comes to you, who tests him to see whether he is suitable for employment or not?—(*Mr. Bentley*): The head of the department.

G-2025. Suppose you have 10 weavers waiting outside the door and you have only one vacancy. Who decides which of the 10 has to get employment?—The weaving master himself.

G-2026. Does he himself go to the gate?—The manager sends him a few of the applicants.

G-2027. What would be the number?—He may send him half a dozen.

G-2028. When he gets half a dozen, what does he do?—He actually tests them on the loom.

G-2029. The selection is made by the weaving master personally, and it is not left to the jobber?—The jobber has absolutely no hand in the selection.

G-2030. Supposing later on the weaver is not giving satisfaction to the jobber, does the jobber go and tell the weaving master that he does not approve of the weaver?—The fact whether he is giving satisfaction or not can be verified from the production book.

G-2031. You have eliminated the jobbers so far as recruitment is concerned?—Quite.

G-2032. When we were going through the Buckingham mill this morning, I came across a few intelligent half-timers. They told me that they were working for 5 hours in the mill; they went out for two hours for meals; then went for another two hours to the primary school; and again in the evening they went for 1½ hours to the evening classes. The evening classes, I understand, are only for full-timers?—(*Miss Sage*): We have a night school for adult workers. We had a number of small boys, half-timers and children of the work-people who used to attend that night school. The adults objected. So we turned these boys out. They came to us and said: "Please do not turn us out of the night school; we have no other place to go; we have nothing to do." So, we said "very well, you must not go into the same classes as the adults, but we will have some classes for you yourselves, and you can come there".

We have some 116 children on our rolls who come to what we call the night club. It is not under inspection, and they have no regular lessons in these classes. They have a book or a slate and they do anything they like for the first period. For the second period the teacher tells them a story from history or moral story or anything like that. The attendance at the school is purely voluntary, but many children come regularly because they find it much pleasanter to sit in a room with electric lights rather than play about in the streets and in the dark cherries.

G-2033. As regards the half-timers going to the primary school in the afternoon, you make that more or less compulsory, do you not ?—Yes.

G-2034. You do it with a view to eliminate the possibility of the Buckingham mill boys going to the Carnatic mill or *vice versa* ?—It does prevent that but it was not done with that view. There are far more boys in Madras than the mills can accommodate. There is no need for any boy to work in more than one mill. As far as I can remember, we have had no trouble with any boy trying to work in two mills.

G-2035. *Mr. Cliff*: It was done purely for educational purposes ?—Yes. The Managing Director said that no boy attends the mill should come and say "Because I was a half-timer, therefore, I never learned to read and write". On the other hand, he should come and say "Because I was a half-timer, therefore I had a chance to learn reading and writing".

G-2036. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In your memorandum you refer to the working hours which are from 6-30 A.M. till 5-30 P.M. with a break of one hour between 11-30 and 12-30. Do you think that one hour in the middle of the day is long enough ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): Not long ago it was only 20 minutes; then it was raised to 30 minutes, I think, and now it is one hour. If you watch a man taking food you will find that he takes it perhaps within 15 minutes; the rest of the time he spends playing about. I think one hour is quite ample.

G-2037. Do not some of them go home to take food ?—Some who live near the mills do.

G-2038. Dealing with the question of indebtedness you say that the company has refused to accept attachment arrests. Can you do this ?—Yes, so far as the daily-paid labour is concerned.

G-2039. A great bulk of your hands are monthly paid ?—They are daily-rated but paid monthly.

G-2040. Take, for instance, the weavers ?—We cannot attach a weaver's pay. (*Mr. Bentley*): He is paid on piece-work, and his pay is reckoned daily.

G-2041. Do you mean to tell me that none of your weavers' pay can be attached for a debt ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): It cannot be attached. The Courts used to attach it, but they have now stopped it.

G-2042. You do not pay your weavers daily; they are actually monthly servants, paid monthly ?—They are paid monthly, but the monthly wages are calculated on the daily earnings. For instance, he may earn Rs. 1-2-0 to-day while Rs. 1-8-0 to-morrow.

104

G-2043. That does not prevent him from being called a monthly servant ?—So far as I know, we cannot call him a monthly servant, because his wages are reckoned daily.

G-2044. Suppose you want to dismiss a weaver, what notice do you give him ?—(*Mr. Bentley*): One month's notice.

G-2045. That makes him a monthly servant ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): Monthly servants are those whose pay is fixed, say, Rs. 50 or 60 a month.

G-2046. As regards the question of welfare committees and the union, what do you think that a union can do for the men which your welfare committees are not doing for them ?—If we give permission for our welfare people to deal with wages and hours of work, then there is no need for a union, in my opinion, because everything would be done by the welfare people.

G-2047. How is your welfare committee constituted ?—36 according to the altered constitution. Of these, 32 are actual workers.

G-2048. Who are elected by ballot ?—Yes.

G-2049. And the other four, what are they ?—(*Mr. Bentley*): One represents the *mistri* class and the other the writer class, from each of the two mills.

G-2050. You have the feeling yourself, have you not, that if you were to give the right to interfere in wage disputes or in hours disputes between the workers and the employers, your committee, as at present constituted, would serve that purpose as well as any union ?—Taking the progress that has been made since the introduction of the welfare committee we feel that it will serve the purpose.

G-2051. *Mr. Sastri*: On the question of your attitude towards the labour union, I am afraid your answers have left the commission in a state of mystification. I would give you one more opportunity for clearing up the position by putting you a few straight questions, and I would beg you, in answering them, to forget that you have given any previous answers, if possible. Do you object to recognize a union in which there are members not belonging to your establishments ?—(*Mr. Bentley*): Do you mean on the executive or among the workers ?

G-2052. Among the workers ?—Yes.

G-2053. Do you object to outsiders altogether in an executive capacity on the union that you are willing to recognize, or do you object to certain outsiders whom you think you should object to for other reasons ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): We have objected up to the present to outsiders being in the executive of the union, because we do not think it can be run properly with outsiders as executive members as they have no knowledge of the conditions of the trade. That is our only objection.

G-2054. It does not depend upon the personality of the outsider but upon the fact that he is an outsider ?—Yes.

G-2055. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Supposing the outsider was a worker in another mill and therefore having the technical knowledge, would you object to him ?—I do not see any reason why we should object to a case like that.

G.-2056. *Mr. Kay*: On the question of outsiders, you would not object, I think to outsiders being on an advisory body such as I believe is the case with the union that has already got recognition ?—No, we would not object at all.

G-2057. *Mr. Cliff*: Are the men on the advisory board technical men ?—I am not quite sure ; I do not think they are.

G-2058. Are you quite sure ?—I know that at least one is a doctor and another is a lawyer.

G-2059. Does this advisory board ever come into actual contact with the managing agents of the mills when questions affecting the workers are being discussed ?—Yes.

G-2060. The board has the right to assist the work-people in their negotiations ?—Exactly.

G-2061. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: For those work-people who do not live near the mills, there is a tiffin-shed, I understand. Is a tiffin-shed, very expensive ?—I should say that the present tiffin-shed that we have put up has cost us Rs. 1-12-0 to Rs. 2 per square ft., that includes roof, sides and foundation ; it does not include the cost of the ground.

G-2062. The workers at present have a break of one hour between 11-30 and 12-30. Do you think that they would be more efficient if instead of one break during the day they had two breaks ?—(*Mr. Bentley*): No.

G-2063. You do not think that the question of fatigue comes in ?—No.

G-2064. You pay your work-people monthly. Have they expressed any desire to be paid, say, fortnightly ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): The question has been discussed, but not directly.

G-2065. They have never approached you ?—No.

G-2066. Would you have any objection to pay them fortnightly, if they prefer it ?—It would be rather a difficult proposition ; it would mean exactly double the work that we are doing now.

G-2067. You might make your actual payment for each department and on a different day ?—That would rather complicate the thing.

G-2068. If the question is brought forward you would consider it favourably ?— *Mr. Bentley*): There are so many deductions to be made from the man's wages. There is a workmen's stores from which a man takes his food-stuffs and we have the co-operative society for which deductions are to be made. It is not an ordinary wage where you calculate the earnings for the number of days he worked, and then pay him. There are so many deductions and calculations to be made before he can be paid.

G-2069. As far as you are concerned you think it would be difficult to change your present system of monthly payment ?—Yes.

G-2070. If the hours of work were to be reduced in western countries, you consider that that would be a good argument for reducing them in India. Would you, in considering the question of reduction of hours of work, consider the concentration of effort of the workmen put in the hours of work : might it not be preferable from the workers' point of view to work an hour or two longer

105

in a day with less concentrated effort than to work a shorter time with more concentrated effort ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): The modern tendency is for shorter day.

G-2071. Do you think that in this climate the workmen may not prefer to have less concentrated effort spread over a slightly longer period than to work very hard for a shorter period ?—From our conversation with our own work-people we find that they would prefer a shorter day.

G-2072. They would give the same production by extra effort in that short period ?—That point has not been discussed.

G-2073. *Mr. Ahmed*: Is it not a fact that your interest is adverse to the interests of the workers who may demand increment of wages and more welfare work to be carried out ?—There is no question of our interest being adverse to the interest of the workers. You cannot go on indefinitely increasing the wages. We must refuse at times.

G-2074. From that point of view your interest is adverse to the interest of the workers ?—Yes.

G-2075. The workers find it very difficult to fight with the managers under whom they serve, and independent persons who are outsiders are therefore the fittest persons to decide these questions ?—It is a matter of opinion. (*Mr. Bentley*): They cannot discuss the individual processes of a department as we can, because they have no knowledge.

G-2076. Then is a judge or a lawyer a fit person to decide when there is a fight between you and the workers as a result of which a board of enquiry or a conciliation board is constituted ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): We have never had occasion to fight on the question of wages.

G-2077. What is the wage that you pay to your unskilled labourer ? (*Mr. Bentley*): His starting wage is As. 12-6.

G-2078. Is that a fair wage for the maintenance of himself, his wife and two children ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): Comparatively it is, as far as local conditions go.

G-2079. Can a workman, his wife and two children maintain themselves on that wage ?—Evidently they can.

G-2080. *Mr. Cliff*: Dealing with the wages you say in your memorandum that these wages are gradually advanced by annual increments. Would you tell us the amount of the increment ?—Take the first item—coolies in all departments. The minimum is Rs. 0-12-6, and he gets an increment of 6 pies every year.

G-2081. Taking these grades, have you got a standard list of increments ?—We have.

G-2082. You say that the average wage of all the men on time work is about Rs. 26 per month. How did you arrive at that average ?—(*Mr. Bentley*): The total amount of wages earned divided by the total number of people employed on the daily rate.

G-2083. It is a simple division ?—Yes.

G-2084. Does that apply also to the piece-workers ?—Yes.

G-2085. Will you tell us how the piece-rates are fixed ? Are they fixed by negotiation between the welfare committee and the management ?—No.

G-2086. There has been no negotiation on the part of your workers and the management with regard to fixing piece-rates ?—No.

G-2087. Is there likely to be any negotiation ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*) : Yes, in the future.

G-2088. Is this a new policy to be pursued by the welfare committee, namely, to negotiate piece-rates ?—(*Mr. Bentley*) : It has not really been decided at the moment ; it is in the hands of the managing agents at present.

G-2089. Has the trade union been consulted on that at all ?—Yes, our trade union has been consulted.

G-2090. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees Union in their memorandum say : " Penalty is levied for absence. Every man who absents himself from work without leave has not only to forfeit his wages for the day but to pay a penalty at a fixed rate, *i.e.*, at the same rate at which allowance is paid for medical leave ". Is that so ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*) : Yes.

G-2091. Does that mean that if a man is absent for one day or for 8 days he pays a penalty for each of those days ?—Yes.

G-2092. How do you justify that ?—The amount has been gradually reduced from time to time.

G-2093. Was it once considerably more ?—Yes. We hope to bring it down still further ; but, of course, it rests with the workman himself.

G-2094. If a man is absent for two or three days, is the penalty deducted in one amount from his pay ?—(*Mr. Bentley*) : Yes.

G-2095. In your memorandum dealing with the reduction of hours, you make a declaration. Then under climate, you say, " Climate has a great effect on the comparison, as it is not possible to do the same amount of work in a hot climate as in a cool one. The worker's capacity to resist fatigue is lowered, and continuous application to routine work in a hot climate tends to slackness and inattention ". I see your work-people are demanding a 50-hour week. Would you oppose the demand of your work-people for a 50-hour week in view of this declaration ?—I think a drop from 60 to 50 is too great a jump at one time.

G-2096. You are working only 58½ hours now ?—Yes, but still we are entitled to work 60 hours.

G-2097. *Mr. Sastri* : You agreed to 55 hours a week ?—Personally I would agree to 55.

106

G-2098. *Mr. Cliff* : Could you tell us what is the cost to your company of welfare work per head per annum ?—I could not give that off-hand.

G-2099. Could that be given to us later on ?—I dare say I can, but I have no authority for saying that.

Mr. Cliff : Would you make a request and see if you could supply us ? I think we are interested in your welfare work, and it would be of much assistance to us if we could know what it costs you.

Sir Alexander Murray : I think you could give us the total capital cost of welfare work and also the recurring expenditure.

The witness : (*Mr. Bentley*) : I have taken a note of that.

G-2100. *Colonel Russell* : If you get a serious accident case in the mills what do you do ?—After giving first-aid we send the case direct to the General Hospital.

G-2101. Have you got any conveyance ?—Yes, motor ambulance.

G-2102. Have you found difficulty in gaining admission for serious accident cases ?—No.

G-2103. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed* : In answer to previous questions you said that you have employment for all your men. But I see from the statement given in your memorandum that in 1926 there were 9,553 employees while in 1929 there were only 9,178 employees. Although you have plenty of work and although you have plenty of men applying for work, how is it that the number of employees has gone on decreasing from 1926 ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*) : I think it is due to two causes ; firstly, to the introduction ot automatic machinery, and secondly to better attendance of work-people.

G-2104. From the same statement I see that two deaths have taken place in your mills. Did you pay any compensation to the heirs of these two deceased employees ?—Yes, we paid compensation according to the Act.

G-2105. You work 58½ hours a week, and you give one hour interval during midday. Do you think that one hour interval is sufficient ?—As far as we can judge, it appears to be sufficient ; we had no complaints about it.

G-2106. You work the mills for 5 hours in the morning and 5 in the afternoon. Five hours in the morning may be all right, but do you not think that 5 hours in the afternoon is rather too much. You have already replied that personally you will be in favour of a 55-hour week. I think if you can give an interval of 1½ hours instead of an hour it would not only be advantageous to the workers but it would also fit in with your suggestion for a 55-hour week ? —If the mills work till 6 o'clock the men would strongly object to it.

G-2107. I am not suggesting that the mills should work till 6 o'clock. I am suggesting that instead of 1 hour rest you should give them 1½ hours rest ?—You want to reduce the hours of labour ?

G-2108. Yes ?—That is a different point.

G-2109. You might consider it ?—Yes, that is a point that could be considered.

G-2110. In your memorandum you deal with the basis of payment for overtime and Sunday work. You call Sundays as holidays ?—Yes.

G-2111. If the workers are absent on Sundays, you do not pay them ?—No.

G-2112. You call Sunday a holiday because they do not come to work ? (*Mr. Bentley*): That is right.

Q. They do not have a holiday with payment ?—Not on Sunday. There is no manufacturing process done on Sunday.

G-2113. If you have work and you want the workmen to come to work on Sunday you pay them a time and a quarter ?—If any occasion arises for any one to work on a Sunday, which would be only repair work, he will get a time and a quarter.

G-2114. What do you pay for overtime on week days ?—A time and a half.

G-2115. What do you pay for night work ?—A time and a half.

G-2116. You call Sunday a holiday simply because the workers do not work on that day ?—There is no manufacturing process done on that day. (*Mr. Hargreaves*): We say Sunday is a holiday, because in some parts of India cotton mills work on Sundays ; they give holiday on some other day in the week.

G-2117. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: You said, Mr. Bentley, that one objection to the Madras Labour Union was that it had not done an iota of good for the work-people. Supposing I were to produce a statement by some one to the effect that representations from the Madras Labour Union have been helpful, would you regard that as being based on imperfect knowledge of conditions ?—I am not prepared to answer that question.

G-2118. Suppose I produce a statement from Mr. Symonds in the High Court, in which he admitted that representations from the Madras Labour Union were helpful, would you be prepared to reconsider your answer ? There was a suggestion in July 1918 from the work-people that there should be a strike. Mr. Wadia said "Now that the war is on you must help Binny & Co., because they are doing war work. We must have no strike." Was that helpful or otherwise ?—I have no knowledge of it.

G-2119. Again, in October you decided to open your mills at 6 A.M., and Mr. Wadia said "Yesterday the order was that you should go there at 6 in the morning. My answer to you to-day is that if you want to be true to your principles, be there at 6 o'clock. If to-morrow the order is that you shall be there at 5-30 please see to it that you go there at 5-30." Is that helpful or otherwise ?—I have no knowledge.

G-2120. In 1920 representations were made by the Union as a result of which there was an increase of 10 per cent. to those who drew 1 rupee and above;

107

15 per cent. to those who drew between nine annas and one rupee, and 20 per cent. to those who drew less than nine annas ; two annas per rupee rice allowance to those who drew between Rs. 25 and 75, and three annas for those who drew up to Rs. 25. Gazetted holidays, and 15 days' privilege leave with wages ; increase in bonus to 10 per cent. Do you think that was a benefit conferred upon the people by the Union ?—That emanated, I think, from the management.

G-2121. As a result of representations from the Union ?—No, I do not think so.

G-2122. The Union was dissatisfied with those conditions, and there would have been a strike. Mr. Arundale made an appeal to the Labour Commissioner, and there was a court of inquiry, and these concessions were increased to 4 annas rice allowance, an increase of 20, 25 and 30 per cent. in wages, full pay for gazetted holidays, a minimum wage of not less than 9 annas 7 pice a day, a fortnight's privilege leave after five years' service, and the establishment of a provident fund, insurance and gratuity. Do you think that was a disservice to the worker ?—I have no knowledge of it as emanating from the Union.

G-2123. *Miss Power*: You say "That there is extensive unemployment in Madras seems to be evident from the large number who come to the mills looking for work." Are these men those who have had experience in textile mills ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): They are mostly agricultural labourers coming from up-country.

G-2124. *Mr. Joshi*: You say "Any such thing would mean that a contribution would be levied from both employer and worker, and any attempt to deduct amounts from work-people's pay for this purpose would, we think, be strongly opposed." If the employees did not oppose any payment of contribution, may I take it that you would not oppose the establishment of unemployment insurance ?—We would not oppose it. If it can be done satisfactorily, why should we oppose it ?

G-2125. May I take it that similarly you would not oppose a sickness insurance scheme, if the workers do not oppose contributions being levied against them ?—(*Mr. Bentley*): No.

G-2126. *Mr. Clow*: You refer to those work-people who still keep in contact with their villages. Can you give us any indication of what percentage that is to your total labour force ?—It is difficult to say.

G-2127. Do you think the majority have still some village connections ?—(*Mr. Hargreaves*): They appear to have. (*Mr. Bentley*): But not direct, from the family point of view.

G-2128. Is there a substantial number who have no home place to look to, except Madras ?—(*Mr. Anthoni*): There is a considerable number who are still in touch with the villages.

G-2129. *Sir Alexander Murray*: In the Welfare Committee's annual report mention is made of a rule which gives a man who has worked two years

in the mill six months' leave so that he may return to his home ?—(*Mr. Bentley*): That is an old rule.

G-2130. The fact that it is being talked about would seem to imply that a lot of the work-people still want to go back to their homes for long periods ?—We have had no applications.

G-2131. But you say that hardly a year passes without such applications ?—They are extremely rare.

G-2132. *Mr. Sastri*: You say "The only method we can think of to increase production by altering methods of remuneration is by instituting piece-work rates of pay in all producing departments." Are piece-work rates of pay now in force in any producing department ?—Some departments are all on piece-work.

G-2133. Are piece-work rates of pay popular amongst work-people ?—Yes. They are more popular than daily-rates.

G-2134. If you did make a change there would not be a serious objection on the part of the employees ?—No. It would be better for them.

G-2135. Would you increase the hours of work ?—No.

G-2136. The Madras Labour Union is not an illegal body. It has a right to exist. It has existed for many years, and it will continue to exist. Friendly relations have not existed between you and the Madras Labour Union. Would it not be desirable, seeing that it is going to exist, to get into contact with it and see that that institution is made somewhat useful to your work-people ?—There were approaches made at one time, but the committee of our work-people said no, because, from what I can gather, there was nothing in common between the two Unions. That was about two years ago. (*Mr. Hargreaves*): As far as I can remember, I think the whole thing hinged on the question of executive officers of the Union. I think if the Madras Labour Union had given way at that time and had agreed to have the executive composed of men from the mills, and who were interested in the trade themselves, there would have been some kind of fusion between the two. But I suppose the door is always open for negotiations. That rests between the Unions themselves.

G-2137. Do you think it is good for work-people, upon the whole, that their allegiance should be divided between an institution recognized by you and an institution not recognized by you, but from which apparently they do seem to derive some good or it would not have a membership of 2,500 ?—I should say it would certainly be better if all the mill work-people were members of one Union.

Mr. Sastri: I only make an appeal to you, because this is the last I shall see of you. You will not mistake me when I say that better relations would be productive of all-round good to your work-people. I do not believe anything but good will come of some understanding.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

MADRAS.

Wednesday, the 5th March 1930.

At the Choolai Mills.

PRESENT:

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.

MISS B. M. LE POER POWER.

MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

MR. SHIVA RAO. } *Assistant Commissioners.*

MR. JAMAL MAHOMED SAHIB BAHADUR. }

MR. S. LALL, *Joint Secretary.*

Statement made by Mr. V. SUBRAMANI AIYAR, Manager, Choolai Mills.

G-2138. I have been the Works Manager of this mill for 8 months. Before this I was a weaving master in the Morarjee Goculdas Mills, Bombay, for 6½ years. I have six assistants under me and the total number of employees in the mills is about 2,300, of whom 170 are women employed as waste-pickers and reelers.

G-2139. We employ no half-timers. The women waste-pickers are paid Rs. 9 to Rs. 10 a month consisting of 25 working days. They work 9 hours a day for five days in the week and on Saturdays 8 hours. The men work 10 hours a day except on Saturdays when they work 8½ hours only.

G-2140. Formerly we had 430 looms but we have now increased the number to 774 and, as a result of this, we use up our own yarn and there is therefore less left to be reeled. We used to employ 100 women reelers, and though we have less work, we have not reduced their number, because the women reelers asked us not to do. It is the fear of a strike which prevents me from effecting a reduction in the number of women reelers. This applies also to the other departments. I could reduce the number of men and women in most of the departments, but I dare not do so, as I am sure there will be trouble.

G-2141. I have here with me the daily attendance register of the women reelers for the month of January. There are 113 names in this register and you will find that the women who are paid on piece-work are given, in addition to their piece-rate earnings, an allowance of 50 per cent. and another of 25 per cent. as well as a bonus and holiday and overtime wages. The mill worked for 24½ days in January but the attendance of the reelers varied from 24½ days down to 13 and 10 days. One woman reeler working 24½ days drew Rs. 12-13-3 less a fine of six pies, *i.e.*, Rs. 12-12-9 net. Another woman reeler working for only 10 days drew Rs. 3-10-6. Of the 113 women reelers on the register 8 have been marked absent throughout the month of January and they will not

be re-engaged, as it is the policy of the management to reduce the number of women reelers to 60. Since 8 months not a single woman reeler has been engaged by the management.

G-2142. The ordinary method of recruitment of all workers is by selection of candidates at the mill gates. The manager or one of his Assistants makes the selection.

G-2143. I admit clerical mistakes occur in the calculation of wages. Unlike Bombay we have to pay our men their wages on the second Saturday of the month following the one for which wages are due. This means that sometimes wages have to be calculated and paid on the 8th or 9th of the following month. I have asked the Agent to give me two additional clerks from Bombay who are well versed in accounts and who will be employed to audit the wage payments. Similar mistakes do not occur in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills because our system of working is quite different. The pay-slips are given to the operatives 24 hours before payment, so that, if there are any mistakes, they can bring them to the notice of the management.

G-2144. We have two doctors, one is an L. M. P. and the other L. M. & S. The former attends from 7 A.M. to 10-30 A.M. and again from 1-30 P.M. to 5 P.M. The latter attends the mill from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. and sees only to the important cases.

G-2145. We pay maternity benefits to our women employees. Before January we used to allow them one-third of their wages for a total period of three months. We have now raised this allowance to half wages for a total period of three months, but we have not yet had a case in which we have paid maternity benefits at the higher rate.

G-2146. We provide no facilities for the nursing of children, nor do we allow children to enter the mill.

G-2147. We have had instances in which our workers have refused to listen to the advice of their leaders. On one occasion when the mill was stopped for two hours for the clearing of machinery the men in the roving department refused to clean the machines. We sent for the Secretary of the Madras Labour Union who told the men that they must clean the machinery. In spite of this they refused to do so. There have, however, also been instances in which the men have agreed to refer the points in dispute to a Committee of enquiry before going on strike.

G-2148. Out of the 774 looms in our mill 74 are being worked as single looms by 74 weavers and of the remainder 392 are double looms worked by 196 weavers. There are 308 new looms which are worked by 154 weavers. From the wages register for January it will be seen that the weavers working on a single loom for the whole month earned about Rs. 30, whereas the weavers on the double looms working for the whole month earned between Rs. 40 and Rs. 50, and sometimes even as much as Rs. 56 and Rs. 57. In the month of January we had to employ about 182 substitute weavers (*badlis*) owing to absenteeism.

109

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninety-Second Meeting.

MADRAS.

Thursday, 6th March 1930.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON'BLE V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. (*Presiding*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. K. KAY.
Mr. JAMAL MAHOMED SAHIB BAHADUR.
Mr. MUHAMMAD UBAIDULLAH SAHIB.
Mr. B. SHIVA RAO, M.A.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Mrs. VENKATASUBHA RAO, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary.*

Sir FAIRLESS BARBER, Mr. H. L. PINCHES, Mr. C. R. T. CONGREVE Lt.-Col. C. H. BROCK, and Mr. F. E. JAMES, representatives of the United Planters' Association of Southern India.

G-2149. *Mr. Sastri*: What is your experience of plantations in Southern India?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*). My experience is nearly 38 years. (*Mr. Pinches*): I have had 38 years experience. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): I have also had about 33 years experience.

G-2150. Do you represent different plantation areas?—(*Mr. Pinches*): I represent Travancore which is outside the jurisdiction of the Commission and part of Anamalais and a small portion of Nelliampathies. (*Sir Fairless Barber*). I represent the Anamalais and Wyanad. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): I have had experience of plantations in the Nilgiris and the Anamalais. For the last 10 years I have been working in the Labour Department of the United Planters' Association. (*Mr. Congreve*): My experience lies chiefly in the Anamalais and to some extent in Mysore, Wyanad and the Nilgiris.

G-2151. I see from your memorandum that nearly all your labour comes from British India whether it is for British India or Indian States. Is there

any racial causes at the bottom of it. Are the populations nearly homogeneous ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): Labour suitable for plantations is not available in the Indian States. (*Sir Fairless Barber*): A certain amount of labour does come from Mysore for example. But the best recruiting districts are the wet districts of the Madras Presidency where the labourer has no land of his own. In the drier district that is not the case; the labourer works for the most part on his own land. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): We have plantations in Travancore and the best recruiting districts for those plantations are those lying inland, rather than those situated right down along the west coast where rains practically never fail.

G-2152. We observe the same thing with regard to the Mills in Mysore and Bangalore; most of the mills get their labour from British India. Has it anything to do with the fact that population in Indian States is very thin and people have got some bit of land of their own ?—As far as Mysore is concerned the population is thin. But in Travancore the population is particularly dense. It would not apply there.

G-2153. In your memorandum you say that a scheme is under consideration for giving some higher education to the children of labourers. How far has that scheme gone ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): It has gone no further at present. I think the scheme will materialize soon.

G-2154. Do you anticipate that a slight percentage of people receiving higher education will really make labour on the plantations more attractive ?—(*Mr. Congreve*): My idea is not so much that. We think it is time that these labourers who are working on our plantations had representatives of their own class to represent them in District Boards, Municipal Councils and other bodies. These educated men besides doing this will also be of great help in general welfare work among the labourers.

G-2155. Is there sufficient provision for primary education of children on your estates ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): Yes, on the estates.

G-2156. Is it a half school or full school that these children attend ?—There are both schools—(*Mr. Congreve*): I have a half school on my estate.

G-2157. What do the children do for the rest of the time ?—There are three standards. The lowest standard attends school till 12 o'clock in the morning. They do not come back to school in the afternoon. The second and third standards work in the morning and attend school in the afternoon. We give them free meals. They are half a day at school and half a day on the gardens.

G-2158. Does that include girls as well as boys ?—Yes.

G-2159. Speaking of legislation regarding labour on plantations you say that nearly all the restrictive laws have now been repealed. Is there a desire on the part of the planters that some at least of these laws should be revived ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): None at all.

G-2160. There will be no movement in that direction ?—No. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): Even when the penal laws existed only some districts were using them and others did not resort to them at all.

110

G-2161. You give certain forms of contract at the end of your memorandum; are they prescribed by law ?—These forms were in use when the penal Acts were in force. As they are equally valid under the Indian Civil Contract Act we continue to use them. The form given in Appendix G is applicable to Coorg alone where there is a special Act called the Coorg Labour Act which expires in 1931.

G-2162. Do I understand that cases of complaint against managers of gardens for ill treatment of labourers have now become infrequent ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): Yes, very infrequent indeed. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): They very seldom happen. The Labour Department invariably hears these complaints and settles them. It was only last year that a *mistri* lodged a complaint against a manager. I got hold of the manager and the *mistri* who made the complaint and persuaded them to make friends again. They went back to work perfectly happy. That was the only complaint I have had for years.

G-2163. I only refer to cases before courts complaining about ill treatment of labourers ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): We have had no serious complaints for the last 30 years. (*Mr. Congreve*): I cannot think of any myself.

G-2164. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I gather from your reply to the Chairman and from your remarks in your memorandum that the repeal of the labour legislation has on the whole been satisfactory so far as you are concerned ?—Yes, quite.

G-2165. But the Government of Madras in their memorandum say: "It was recently brought to notice that *mistris* on some of the estates there complain that the repeal of the Act has hit them hard by making it difficult to recover advances and that many cases occur in which advances are taken from two *mistris* with no intention of working under either." (*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): It is quite true. It is due to careless methods in recruiting on the part of the *mistri*. If the *mistri* recruits only people who are close to his village and whom he knows, he can get hold of the defaulters. But if he gets hold of casual people in his desire to recruit more men or as seldom happens if he takes over coolies from professional recruiters, which we try and put down as far as possible because we consider it is a most iniquitous system, then of course he is bound to be let down. But as regards the labourer taking two advances from two different *mistris* it is a difficult matter because we cannot get away from the advance system. But a careful *mistri* who knows his business will not advance money to a labourer unless he thoroughly knows him.

G-2166. In your memorandum you give two forms of contract one between the labour supplier and the planter and the other between the labourer and the labour supplier. When were these forms introduced ?—They have been in use for several years except for a few minor alterations in the wording which we made under legal advice. Since the penal laws were repealed we cut out the attestation clause. The new forms as printed in the memorandum have been in use for the past four or five years.

G-2167. In the form printed as appendix D you contract with the labour supplier for the supply of a certain number of labourers. Is that the customary practice ?—In the past when the penal law existed it was almost a universal

practice to use this contract. But the penal law has now been done away with and there is now no written contract. It is generally verbal; a pronote is taken for the advance. This contract is not used as much as it used to be.

G-2168. Is the supplier tied down to a particular estate; can he supply to more than one estate?—As a rule each supplier supplies only to one particular estate. But there are a few cases of very big suppliers who are able to supply for more than one estate.

G-2169. But under this contract he cannot supply to more than one estate. You use the words "and not be indebted in respect of any labour contract for work on any other estate subscribing to the United Planters' Association of Southern India"?—That refers only to the labourers, not the suppliers.

G-2170. In other words a supplier may be supplying to lots of estates but a labourer is not free to go from one estate to another estate?—He can do that only if there is a mutual agreement between the estates themselves. As a rule we do not like any supplier to take advances from two estates except by mutual agreement.

G-2171. How many suppliers have you got in your Association?—We have got over 20,000 names on the register; some of them we have lost sight of. There are probably 17,000 suppliers and sub-suppliers actually in existence now.

G-2172. What is the number of suppliers for an estate of average size?—On an average we have one supplier for 15 to 20 men; sometimes it is less. As a rule there is a head *mistri* who might contract with us for 100 labourers. He has probably got anything from 3 to 6 or even more sub-suppliers under him very often his own relations who bring a family or two.

G-2173. What form of contract is there between the supplier and the sub-supplier?—Usually nothing except a pronote. It is generally a verbal contract.

G-2174. Where have you provided for the sub-suppliers in the contract deed?—They are not in the contract deed. The estate contracts with the head supplier for the supply of a certain number of labourers and the head supplier employs the sub-supplier to help him to carry out his contract.

G-2175. The advances are made by the estates to the contractors. Who keeps the labourers' note book of advances and wages?—(*Mr. Congreve*). The superintendent of the estate keeps the note book in which he enters the advances the labourer admits to have received from the *mistri*. At the end of the period the advance which he admits to have received is deducted from his earnings and the balance is paid direct by the estate manager to the labourer in the presence of the *mistri*.

G-2176 There is no provision in the contract for the payment being made direct by the estate manager to the labourer?—Not in the contract, no; but it is a universal custom.

G-2177. You say there has been an increase in the number of civil cases since the criminal law has been repealed. How much has it increased?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): We always had a certain number of cases of defaulters. They are not increasing to any great extent; there is only a slight

increase. It is the necessary outcome of the penal laws having been withdrawn and the advance system having to continue. We can only use the civil laws now where we were formerly using the criminal law. Out of thousands of labourers handled by us I do not think I have more than 200 civil cases pending. Some of them have been pending for a long time.

G-2178. *Mr. Cliff*: Do I understand that the witness desires to modify his statement made in his memorandum regarding the increase in the number of civil cases?—No, certainly not. I say they are increasing but the increase is negligible at present. It is only a consequence of the repeal of the penal law.

G-2179. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Your contract is with the supplier. Do you proceed against the supplier under the contract?—If the supplier fails we proceed against him. In no case do we proceed against the worker. The worker makes an agreement with the supplier and if he fails the supplier proceeds against the worker.

G-2180. Is there an increase in the number of cases in which the supplier proceeds against the worker?—Cases are only very few; there has been a slight increase. It is all done through our department.

G-2181. What percentage of labour is supplied under these contracts?—All labour.

G.-2182. What for do you proceed against the supplier?—If he fails to supply labour or repay the advance.

G-2183. There are two things. If you made a contract with him for the supply of 100 coolies and if he did not do it, would you proceed against him for breach of contract?—No; generally for the recovery of the money. The two things run together. If he does not supply the coolies he cannot repay the money. Eventually things get boiled down to money. We proceed against him for the money when we proceed against him for anything.

G-2184. Does the *mistri* or the contractor proceed against the workmen in order to pay you the money?—If a *mistri* so badly fails he generally is not capable of getting any money out of his labourers either. But in the case of suppliers who are carrying on their work satisfactorily, occasionally they are let down by labourers who default and we help them to get back their money from the defaulters.

G-2185. What is the minimum amount proceeded for in these civil cases?—It is about Rs. 50 in the case of labourers and anything from Rs. 50 to 200 in cases where we have to proceed against *mistris*. In the case of labourers they always admit the debt and it is recovered through the influence of the village people.

G-2186. What is the period for which these coolies are generally contracted?—It varies on different estates; it is generally from 9 to 10 months.

G-2187. How many of the contracts are not fulfilled by the *mistris*?—(*Mr. Pinches*): There are quite a large number of cases where the contractors do not bring the full number of coolies they contracted to bring. But provided he can account for the money we have advanced, we do not worry.

G-2188. Do you let the coolies go at the end of 9 or 10 months ?—Yes.

G-2189. Suppose there is an unadjusted balance between you and the contractor at the end of this period ?—We simply let him carry on in the hope of recovering the amount during the next season.

G-2190. Have you any list showing the outstandings against the contractors ?—Each estate has got a separate advance book which will show the outstandings against the several contractors. The average outstanding in my area would be about Rs. 10 per labourer. (*Mr. Congreve*): It will be about Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 and even Rs. 25 in my area.

G-2191. The coolies are allowed to go home at the end of 9 months. How does he square up with his contractors ?—He is squared up with the contractor but the contractor possibly has not squared up with us. Each estate maintains a book of advances which shows the amounts advanced by the estate to the supplier and by the supplier to the labourers.

G-2192. Is there a contract in the form printed in the memorandum between the *mistri* and the labourer ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): Nowadays the *mistri* very seldom uses this contract. He only takes a pronote for the advances in the form shown in the appendix to our memorandum.

G-2193. For what period does the *mistri* contract with the labourers ?—For the same period, 9 or 10 months for which he contracts with the estate.

G-2194. How do you intervene between the contractor and the labourer ?—We have no legal right to intervene but we always try and protect the labourer from the possibility of being imposed on at times. We plan out everything for his protection.

G-2195. Does the labourer know that the penal law has been repealed ?—Certainly ; he has been told so by the *mistri* and by everybody in the village. When the penal law was in force they had to go before the attesting officer ; now they do not have to do it. I tell them invariably that they need not have to sign a contract now.

G-2196. But still he puts a thumb mark on the pronote. Does he not look upon it as binding on him to serve for a particular period ?—He looks upon it as binding upon him for the money he has received. He knows perfectly well that the penal clauses have gone once for all.

G-2197. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you any objection to the abolition of the agreement ?—Absolutely none. It is equally valid whether it is written or oral.

G-2198. *Mr. Clow*: Is there any penal law in force in Mysore ?—Yes. The Mysore Regulation corresponding to Act XIII of 1859 is still in force there.

G-2199. Is there any question of repeal ?—I believe there is a question of repeal ; I cannot say how far it has gone.

G-2200. Do difficulties arise because you have a penal legislation in Mysore and none in Madras ?—It is purely a local legislation applicable to people recruited in Mysore and working in Mysore and does not affect people recruited in British India and working in Mysore.

G-2201. Apart from the existence of the Coorg Labour Act is there any essential difference between conditions in Coorg and conditions in Madras so far

as labour is concerned ? Can you say that the conditions in one are fairly well reproduced in the other ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): Coorg is perhaps behind the times as compared with other places. The coffee estates in Coorg have not got the money which we have in the tea estates, especially in the Anamalais High Range, the Nilgiris and Wyanad. On the whole I should say that conditions in Coorg are not as good.

G-2202. Is the industry an expanding one ?—Yes, it is.

G-2203. Has there been a change from one crop to another ?—There has not been much of change ; for one thing, coffee has ceased to develop, while tea continues to develop more and more.

G-2204. Are we to take it that for a certain period of the year, 2 or 3 months, there is practically no labour left on plantations ?—In the case of coffee there is a distinct period when the labour force goes down to a very low figure but in the case of tea we maintain a fairly big labour force all the year round.

G-2205. Does it mean that for a month or two nobody works on coffee ?—Only a very few.

G-2206. How do you maintain a fairly constant labour force—by giving them leave in different periods ?—Yes.

G-2207. Do some *mistris* serve you year by year or do they serve one planter first then another and so on ?—It depends on the estate. With a good estate the labour force is permanently settled. The general tendency is for the *mistri* to stay on with the same estate.

G-2208. Is there any enticement of labour from one garden to another ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): There is a certain amount of enticement on the part of the suppliers ; it is not done so much in the garden as in the villages. The supplier gets hold of a coolie who is already advanced by another supplier, re-advances him and tries to get him to his estate.

G-2209. Does not a planter wait till labour is on his neighbour's estate and attempt to entice it to his own ?—Practically none of that kind.

G-2210. I think you spoke of the *mistri* suing the labourer through your department. What do you mean by "through your department" ? What part do you play in the suit ?—If a supplier has a defaulting labourer he generally forwards the particulars of the default to us. The supplier is probably on the estate and cannot sue the labourer easily. We take the case, go and look for the defaulter and ask him to go to the estate. If he does not go back to the estate we ask him to repay the money. In a very large number of cases the labourer either goes back to the estate or repays the money. If he does neither very often the *mistri* endorses the pronote to the labour department of our Association and we take action in the munsiff's court. But very seldom the case goes as far as that. Most of the labourers' debts are under Rs. 50 and we settle the matter in the *panchayat* court.

G-2211. Are there cases of labourers running away from the estate while they are in debt to the *mistri* ?—Such cases are fairly common.

G-2212. Who bears the loss ?—We help him to recover the money with the help of the village influence. We are in full touch with these people in the recruiting villages right through their plantation life.

G-2213. When the labourer arrives, apart from his debt to you, is he not in debt in the village ?—He pays his village debt from the advance he gets from the supplier.

G-2214. Is he not in debt to the money-lender ?—Sometimes he is. But the village headman will not allow a man to leave the village unless he clears his debt in the village. That is village influence.

G-2215. After the labourer reaches the plantation how long does it take ordinarily for him to get to the credit side of the account ?—(*Mr. Congreve*) : It varies with different estates and different labourers. I should say four months.

G-2216. By that time he has paid off his advances and his savings begin to accumulate ?—I can show the actual figures when you visit the gardens.

G-2217. *Sir Alexander Murray* : On the question of indebtedness, the memorandum of the Government of Madras says that the indebtedness of the worker is heavy especially in plantations and that 75 per cent. of the wages are taken away by the money-lenders on pay days. Is that correct ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : It is not true.

G-2218. How is it possible for you to adjust the advances you have given if 75 per cent. of the wages is taken away by the money-lender on pay days ?

Mr. Clow : But actually these men do not get paid on pay days ; they are only given an allowance for food and so on.

The witness (*Mr. Pinches*) : That is what they call the pay day. From my experience I can say that it is not in the least true. The coolies go away with the money and they are quite happy.

G-2219. *Mr. Clow* : Do you pay the coolies individually ?— We pay the money into the coolie's hand.

G-2220. Perhaps you are not conscious of the money-lender waiting round ? —No, no. I have the accounts with me of all the coolies ; they always return to their villages with large sums in hand.

G-2221. Suppose a labourer falls ill and leaves for his village, who bears the loss ?—(*Mr. Congreve*) : As a rule if there is a debt he comes back when he is well.

G-2222. Take the case of a man who dies ?—In large estates it falls on the supplier. (*Mr. Pinches*) : We write it off against the estate.

G-2223. Are the labourers given any lands to cultivate ?—We have no lands to provide for them. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : It is done in a few cases.

G-2224. Has it had any effect in building up a permanent labour force ?— It has been on such a small scale that it is hardly worth considering.

G-2225. *Mr. Joshi* : The Madras Planters Labour Act had been repealed and at present there is no legislation regulating the conditions on plantations ?— (*Mr. Pinches*) : No.

113

G-2226. Would you have any objection if Government introduced some legislation to regulate certain conditions such as hours of work, housing and so on on these plantations as they have done with regard to factories ?—We do not think it is necessary ; the housing conditions are satisfactory.

G-2227. Factory owners also say that conditions on their factories are satisfactory, but still there are the Government regulations. Have you any other objection ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : We presume that no Government department could do these things as efficiently as we do ourselves. It is to our interest to keep our labour force contented ; and any interference by Government between master and man will upset the paternal relations that exist between them at present.

G-2228. I grant that you are a kind people and that you understand your interests also. More than that would there be any difficulty in enforcing legislation of that kind ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : I think that Sir Fairless Barber has given the reason why there should be no Government interference between master and man.

G-2229. You have the Factories Act now ; has it upset the paternal relations between master and man ?—But the Factories Act has no application to plantations. There is only a very small proportion of labour employed in the plantation factories. The chief use of the Factories Act is to see that the Factory is safe. It does not affect the coolie labour.

G-2230. It interferes with the hours of work, the weekly rest day and so on ?—On that point I should say that the restriction of hours of factory work is very unpopular with our coolies. They dislike it intensely.

G-2231. We have had no representation from any kind of factory workers that the Factory Act should be repealed because it is prejudicial to their interest ?—The workers in our tea factories do not like this restriction of hours. It is a very easy work and they like to do more of it. We have stated it in our memorandum.

G-2232. Is there any agreement among the members of your Association that labourers recruited for one garden should not be employed by another garden ?—There is no agreement not to employ labour in that way. These are the rules dealing with labourers and labour suppliers. (Rules handed in).

G-2233. You advance money to the suppliers free of interest ; does the supplier advance it to the labourer free of interest ?—Yes.

G-2234. In your memorandum you say that "the general increase of wages in recent years has tended to increase the amount of absenteeism." Is that effect permanent or temporary ?—I should say it is *permanent*. The labourer is less inclined to do a full week's work now than he was sometime back.

G-2235. Your wages have increased during the last 20 years by 80 per cent. Has the absenteeism doubled ?—No, I would not say that.

G-2236. Does not that show that the absenteeism is only temporary ?— The labourer is content if he can earn his living by easier work ; he wants no more.

G-2237. But the standard of living does not go up immediately ; the adjustment takes some time and during the period there will be temporary absenteeism. Otherwise your absenteeism must have doubled when your wages were doubled which you yourself admit has not been the case ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : I may say that if wages increase 100 per cent. absenteeism will increase 50 per cent.. without being accurate in regard to either figure.

G-2238. You were giving certain benefits to your sick coolies. Why do you say that the International Labour Convention regarding sickness insurance is considered to be inapplicable to these rural communities ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*) : What has been done by the estates is infinitely more than the minimum prescribed under the Planters Labour Act. Legislation is quite unnecessary.

G-2239. It may not be necessary in your view ; would there be any difficulty in applying a legislation of that kind to your industry ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : Is not that a good reason that it is unnecessary ? (*Mr. Congreve*) : If there is legislation the tendency for the estates will be to give only the minimum prescribed by the Act. But actually we are giving more.

G-2240. You are giving more ; you were giving more even when the Planters' Labour Act was in force. That tendency did not operate then. Why not continue to give more than the minimum even if there is a legislation ?

G-2241. With regard to minimum wage legislation would there be any difficulty apart from your taking the attitude that it is unnecessary ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : We have a minimum wage now, not under the law but as a working arrangement. I think it stands to reason that we need not introduce unnecessary legislation.

G-2242. *Miss Power* : You have, I believe, a number of markets on your gardens. Is there any arrangement for regulating the prices ?—The manager fixes the price on a level with the price prevailing in the bazaar of the nearest town.

G-2243. Is the standard of living on the garden appreciably higher than that in the ordinary village from which these workers are drawn ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*) : There is an amazing difference between the two.

G-2244. Is the cost of living the same ?—Necessarily it must be slightly more on the estate because they live better for one reason, and the transport of food makes it a little more expensive although the expensiveness is reduced as far as possible by the estates arranging for co-operative buying.

G-2245. What will be the cost of a normal family budget in the village as compared with that on the plantations ?—When they are in the village they have no work and do not eat much. On the plantation they get work and eat much ; they have a higher standard of life.

G-2246. Do these labourers go back to their villages in the harvest and planting seasons ?—They generally go in the hot weather, in the marriage season which is more important to them.

G-2247. Are the children who work on the gardens paid separately, or are they paid through their parents ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : They are paid separately. They are on piece-work at the same rates as their parents.

G-2248. Have you any regulation as to the age at which you allow children to work on the garden ?—No. They generally work on the garden when they are 8 years.

G-2249. *Sir Alexander Murray* : But the contract mentions 10 years ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*) : In actual practice it is not the case. It is simply intended to prevent the contractor from bringing in very tiny children.

G-2250. *Miss Power* : As far as you are concerned a child, whether male or female, begins work at the age of 8 ?—Yes.

G-2251. With regard to the education of these children if you do not run your own school will there be a Government or municipal school on the garden ?—Certainly not.

G-2252. Then what is your educational cess for ; is it a payment for the education of somebody else's children ?—That is so.

G-2253. Are there a large number of gardens where education is not available to the children in any form ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : I should think there is a considerable number. On the High Range there is one school on every estate and some of them have two or three. But it is not the same everywhere.

G-2254. Would it be difficult for you to give us figures regarding the number of children of School going age on these estates , the number of schools available for them, and the number of them who actually attend school ?—Yes, it could be done.

G-2255. If you have a school on the estate and you find that it is the habit of a parent to take his child to work instead of sending it to the school, do you exercise any pressure on the parent ?—No. In practice, the child goes to school until it is 8 or 9 years of age when it can go to work.

G-2256. There is really no continuous education as yet ?—No.

G-2257. In your memorandum you refer also to night schools. Is there, in your view, say in the last 25 years, any growth in the desire for education among the adult coolies ?—25 years ago they had no opportunity at all. Now they have the opportunity of going to a night school, but I cannot say it is taken advantage of to any extent.

G-2258. Has the Association any policy which it advocates to its members to assist in the education of the adult coolie ?—No. The Association is a federation of associations, and it is probably outside its jurisdiction to take that action.

G-2259. Dealing with maternity benefits you say that the amount of leave granted varies. Could you tell us approximately what length of time the woman remains off ? Is it from 2 to 3 months, or from 1 to 3 months ?—I should probably estimate the time to be 6 weeks.

G-2260. Six weeks is the average ?—I am talking for my own estate.

G-2261. Is there any arrangement for part payment of wages to the mother during that time, or is only a bonus given for the child and medical attendance for the mother ?—Free feeding is given.

G-2262. You do not make any part payment of wages ?—No.

G-2263. Have you ever considerd that as an Association ?—No, not as an Association.

G-2264. It is a widespread practice in Assam, and I wondered whether in this area you had yet considered it ?—I think it might be considered certainly. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*) : The benefits that are given are based on what we found it elsewhere ; and the Geneva Conference of 1921 agreed that all that was necessary was maintenance.

G-2265. Can you give us any idea of the percentage of women who return to their villages for child-birth and of those who remain on the estate ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : I think most of them remain on the estate.

G-2266. Is it because they get better facilities on the estate ?—I would not say that. I think there are better facilities on the estate, but whether they take that into consideration I am not sure.

G-2267. Is the number of women doctors and of trained midwives being employed on the increase ?—There is a trained midwife on every estate that I have anything to do with, but there are no women doctors.

G-2268. Here also I suppose your Association as an Association, has no policy in that regard ?—No.

G-2269. In your memorandum you deal with the question of Sunday work. I want to know the extent and the degree of compulsion attached to working on Sunday ?—There is no compulsion at all.

G-2270. Even if you are in the height of your plucking season, the workers can exercise their discretion as to whether they should work or not ?—Compulsion is not necessary, because a coolie is glad to work for cash on Sunday.

G-2271. Apart from that belief of yours, how could you be sure that no compulsion was exercised by the *mistri* on a coolie who did not want to work on a Sunday ?—We could not be sure, but I think in that case we would get complaints.

G-2272. If you want a particular job to be done and the *mistri* benefits by getting it done, do you think that a coolie can remain at home, if he or she wants to, say, during the plucking season ?—Certainly. The *mistri* has not got a great deal of power with the coolie.

G-2273. Are you quite sure about that ?—Yes.

G-2274. Dealing with the question of hours you say : " very few labourers work a full number of days in the week " ; and you tell us that the hours of work are from 7-30 A.M. to 4-30 with a midday interval. Could you tell us what system you have of making the workers turn out to work ; do they come and go as they please, or do they keep to regular hours ?—They have to keep to regular hours.

G-2275. You have a gong ?—Yes.

G-2276. What happens if they do not turn out ?—The *mistris* would turn them out ; if there is a serious shortage, the assistant manager would go and see to it.

G-2277. *Mr. Joshi* : How does he see that the workers turn out ?—He sees the muster ; if they are not there, he would enquire the reason, and if necessary go to the lines to see them.

G-2278. *Miss Power* : You have a roll call ?—Yes.

G-2279. So that, practically speaking, the estate is run on a factory system. If the workers have to turn out at all they have to turn out at the right hours ?—Yes.

G-2280. You say that there is a muster and yet you say that very few labourers work a full number of days in the week. How do you distinguish between the coolie who merely wants to go to work late on any day and the coolie who does not want to go to work at all on that day ?—If he is too late he would not be allowed to work.

G-2281. Supposing a coolie has made up his mind on a particular day that he is not going to work, what happens to him when the *mistri* calls on him ?—He does not turn up ; that is all.

G-2282. It is just sufficient to say that he is not going to work ?—Yes, provided he does not too often stop from work. Usually they take one or two holidays in a week.

G-2283. That is the limit to the amount of days off work that a man can voluntarily take ?—Yes.

G-2284. What would you say is the ordinary number of hours of work which is expected of a coolie in the course of the week ?—About 45 hours.

G-2285. That is accepted as a reasonable limit ?—Yes. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : Where the work is done on contract, they very often finish it by 1 or 2 o'clock.

G-2286. Do you find the same remarkable thirst to put in extra hours among the garden coolies that you cite among the factory coolies ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : Yes, I should think so.

G-2287. Do you see them turning out to work before the time ?—I have seen many doing that when there is a fine crop. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : I know of cases where men have turned out the night before.

G-2288. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : With regard to wages you say that the wages of a woman plucker would be about 5 to 6 annas a day. I have heard it stated that over 90 per cent. of the women pluckers do not make more than As. $2\frac{1}{2}$ a day, and I see it is more or less borne out by the estimates of the Labour Department. Have you any views on that ? Do you think this also is inaccurate as the other statement of the Madras Government ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : I think it is inaccurate. I think our figure is about the right one.

G-2289. As. 2 to 3 is very much of an under-estimate, in your opinion ?—Yes. When you come to our gardens you will see that for yourself.

G-2290. Is it true that a man is given 7 measures of rice and As. 4 for buying other things, and a woman 5 measures of rice per week ?—If you want we could give the figures in tolas.

G-2291. Do you think that As. 4 a week for buying other things is adequate ?—I do. They grow their own vegetables for which seeds are supplied by us.

G-2292. You said that on the whole prices are higher on the estates than on the plains ?—Yes, slightly higher.

G-2293. On the question of public employment agencies, you merely remark that there are no such agencies in Madras. Have you any views on that subject ?—We do not see any object in having a public employment agency. We have already got more coolies than we can find work for.

G-2294. *Mr. Joshi* : If you have got more coolies than you require, why do you make contracts and bind down your suppliers ?—Our supplier very often brings more coolies than he is directed to supply, and we do not want to turn them away.

G-2295. Why make contracts at all when coolies are available ?—Coolies are available but they will not come without these suppliers.

G-2296. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : You said that you use the *panchayats* a good deal for the settlement of liabilities. Have you considered the question of utilizing village *panchayats* as agencies for recruitment of labour and eliminating *mistris* as far as possible ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*) : Not the village *panchayats*, because the village *panchayats* have developed in this presidency only within the last few years. But I made four efforts to start labour co-operative societies in the villages, and I am sorry to say that every one of them proved a hopeless failure.

G-2297. *Mr. Joshi* : Labour co-operative societies for what purpose ?—The purpose was to loan the coolies as much money as they wanted instead of their taking advance from the *mistris*. The idea was that instead of giving advances to the suppliers the estates were to give advances to the labour co-operative societies, and instead of giving the supplier a commission the labour co-operative society was to get a commission so as to make profits. The societies were also to charge a small interest to the labourers on the loans to the labourers which would take the place of the advance given to them by the supplier. Four of these have been tried in different places at different times ; three of them were actually registered ; one functioned in a very moribund state for about four years, and it no longer exists.

G-2298. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : What is the cause of the failure ?—I really could not tell you ; partly due to the apathy of the people who were subscribing to it. I rather fancy that there was a little bit of suspicion on the part of the labourers, who are accustomed to the existing system which has gone on for the last, I do not know, how many years.

G-2299. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : Supposing the Government starts a public employment agency, would you be willing to contribute for the maintenance of that agency ?—I have got this objection to the public employment agency. We have always found that the happiest labourers are those who work with the people who recruit them. If you are going to start a public employment agency, it is bound, in a way, to be of the nature of professional recruiting which we have always been dead against and which, I am thankful to say, we have practically stamped out. It is a case of actually getting the people and handing them over to somebody else to work, which is not what the labourer likes.

It will break down the intimate relations we have with the coolie. It is unnecessary too, because on the whole especially during the past few years, there is more labour available for work than we can actually find work for.

G-2300. I gather from your memorandum and also from your answers given this morning that you are averse to all legislation ; for example, you do not want legislation for minimum wage or for sickness insurance ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : Quite so ; we do not want legislation.

G-2301. Because you want the paternal relationship to go on unhampered by any restriction ?—I should make it clear that we are not against any welfare work or anything of that sort. We are of opinion that there is no necessity for legislation.

G-2302. Even in this country children are in the habit of growing up, and some day your people may want to have trade unions. Have you any objection to trade unions being established ?—Yes, I have.

G-2303. Have the work-people any means of making direct representations to you ?—They certainly have ; they have their own *panchayat* on the estate. (*Mr. Congreve*) : Every labourer on the estate has an absolute right to go direct to the manager with any grievance he may have. Then the manager forms a *panchayat*—in most cases it already exists—to go into the complaint. As a rule, the manager abides by the decision of the *panchayat* which is formed of labourers and *mistris* on the estate itself.

G-2304. You think that trade unions also are unnecessary on the estate ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : Yes. I think they would be harmful.

G-2305. Therefore you approve of the action of the Collector of Coimbatore in applying section 144 the other day to a person who wanted to collect information from the estates for the Whitley Commission ?—I have no information on that point.

G-2306. I do not want you to misunderstand this question, but I have heard it stated to me that when a workman reaches an advanced stage of any disease and is perhaps beyond hope of recovery, he is asked to leave the place, so as to keep down the rate of mortality ?—You have been misinformed.

G-2307. *Mr. Kay* : On the question of labour turnover you say in your memorandum : "The average duration of employment is ten months on tea and rubber estates and six to ten months on coffee estates." But I understand from what Mr. Pinches said that there is really very little actual change over of labour, although there may be nominal periods in which they change over. Do you have many cases of the same families coming back to the same estates each season ?—Yes, that is the general custom.

G-2308. So that really you could say that a large proportion of your labour on each estate was practically permanent although there are periods of interruption ?—I think that is quite right. The coolie is a conservative person and he likes to come back to the same estate ; that is, if he is made comfortable.

G-2309. Can you give us any idea of the number of years a family may remain coming back to the same estate time after time ?—(*Mr. Congreve*) : I have several families who have been over 20 years on one estate. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : I have some families who are on the estate for over 30 years.

G-2310. We can therefore take it that generally all the families practically settle down on the estate ?—(*Mr. Congreve*) : If they like the estate, yes.

G-2311. On the whole, we may conclude that the labour is satisfied with its conditions and is content ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : Yes ; the fact that we get labour so easily proves it.

G-2312. In your memorandum you give the details of staff organization. You give a table showing the various grades. I take it that in the case of the company-owned estates it starts with the group manager, while in the case of private estates it starts with the estate manager, and finishes with the field labour, contractors' labour and factory coolies ?—Yes.

G-2313. I also take it that though the intermediate grades that you have given exist, the owners of the estates or the group managers, as the case may be, keep up direct contact with their factory coolies, field labour and contractors' labour ; they are in constant personal touch with them, apart from these intermediate grades ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : You can take it that through his assistants the estate manager comes in contact with every individual on the estate. He knows them all by name.

G-2314. The estate manager is so frequently among them that we may say that he is really in constant personal contact with his labour ?—Yes.

G-2315. On the question of recruitment and training of supervising staff you say : " In the case of the managing staff, the assistant goes ' through the mill ' in the ordinary way...." By that, I take it, you mean that an assistant more or less starts from the bottom and he has to thoroughly familiarize himself with the conditions on the estate, so to say, from top to bottom ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : He has to get up in the morning and attend to the muster roll of the coolies.

G-2316. We can take it that practically every group on the estate is thoroughly intimate and familiar with every other group ?—Yes.

G-2317. So there is no possibility of misrepresentation going on without somebody coming to know of it ?—It is bound to come to somebody before long.

G-2318. Dealing with wages you say : " It is impossible to estimate accurately the difference between money wages and the money value of all earnings. It is necessary to add to the actual cash wages received, items such as cheap rice supplied by estates, free fuel, free housing and so on...." Although you cannot estimate the actual figure, I think we may take it that a very substantial increase in the wages is derived from these indirect benefits ?—Most certainly.

G-2319. It is a substantial figure although you might not be able to state it actually in figures ?—Yes. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : I can give the figures to the Commission if they want in regard to the estates I am concerned with, worked out every year.

G-2320. We can take it from the particulars given that it is really a substantial addition to their wages ?—Yes.

117

G-2321. You were asked one or two questions about legislation for sickness insurance, compensation and so forth, and I gather that you are not particularly in favour of it. I would like to put before you a case in the same connection that cropped up in respect of local labour in order to find out whether your feelings are the same as they were here. In Madras when the Workmen's Compensation Act was introduced, there were certain places in which the scale of compensation already in force was higher than that laid down in the Act. I gather you anticipate that your arrangements for sickness and compensation now are probably on a more liberal scale than they would be if it were compulsory ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : Yes.

G-2322. When the Workmen's Compensation Act was introduced here there were certain cases in which employers of labour who had already their scales of compensation and were paying on those scales, which were higher than the scale in the Act, were charged with evading their liabilities under the Act ; certain specific cases occurred in which charges were made that particular firms were evading their liabilities under the Act, although actually certain of those firms had for many years before the introduction of the Act were paying at a higher scale ?—How could those charges be substantiated ?

G-2323. I do not think they were ever substantiated, but the effect of those charges was that the employers who had those charges brought against them found it necessary in their own self-defence to reduce their scales of compensation to the exact limits prescribed under the Act ?—You think that might happen to us too if legislation were introduced ?

G-2324. It was pointed out that this procedure had resulted in a certain amount of hardship to labour, and I rather gathered from your remarks that you anticipated that a very similar situation might arise in regard to planting labour ; is that so ?—It would happen in a different way. We certainly anticipate it. I think we said that the reduction would be voluntary, whereas you explain it was practically compulsory.

Mr. Kay : Yes, it was practically compulsory, in order to safeguard the employers against the charge that they were not paying in accordance with the Act.

G-2325. *Mr. Cliff* : Can you tell us what is the actual monthly value of the sickness provision which you make ?—The sickness provision comes to Rs. 8-2-0 a coolie a year.

G-2326. *Mr. Kay* : I take it that in all these questions of legislation your objections are not in the least to the provisions that such legislation might be designed to provide but that you already have those provisions and that you prefer to try to maintain the atmosphere of informal friendliness with your labour rather than to be rigidly bound by definite legislative restrictions ?—That is quite right.

G-2327. The actual provision of the relief already forms part of your programme, but making it restricted by legislation is what you dislike ?—Yes. We do not like legislation ; we are quite willing to develop on welfare lines without legislation. If anything is suggested on welfare lines we should be quite ready to fall in with it.

G-2328. Do you think that legislation is rather calculated in a way to affect your relations with labour in that it comes in between you and your labour in not always a very desirable manner ?—Certainly. You yourself have given an illustration of the adverse effect that legislation can have; it has just the opposite effect of what was expected of it.

G-2329. My experience is based on industrial factories, and I was wondering whether in planting labour you would anticipate similar difficulties ?—I think it is reasonable to expect that we would have the same difficulties.

G-2330. *Colonel Russell*: Have you got any standard type plans for workers' houses on tea estates ?—All the big companies have, but I would not say that every private planter has.

G-2331. How would you suggest that the more backward estates might be raised to the standard of the higher ones ?—I should say by welfare committees, or something of that sort.

G-2332. How should these welfare committees be constituted ?—So far as we are concerned we should like that we are adequately represented on them. I should think the employee has also got to be represented in some way. (*Sir Fairless Barber*): I think we can have perfectly satisfactory welfare committees created among ourselves; we have got our medical staff to advise us.

G-2333. Do you get any advice from the Public Health Department ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): I never had.

G-2334. Is that the general experience ? Perhaps you have never asked for it ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*): I think the Public Health Department advised us with regard to hookworm. (*Mr. Pinches*): We have our own doctors who advise us on all these things.

G-2335. You do not think it necessary to take advice from an official of the Public Health Department who may be better qualified to express views on this subject than the medical officers you employ ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*): It is rather difficult for a man living in another district to be better qualified in regard to the conditions of living on an estate than a qualified medical man serving on an estate.

G-2336. I think it is your policy to gradually improve the conditions of your houses ?—Yes.

G-2337. That has been done during the last few years, has it not ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): Very much.

G-2338. In your memorandum under housing, you refer to the accommodation provided. Is that the minimum accommodation provided ?—No. I should think that is the average on a well-conducted estate.

G-2339. On the question of health you say that most of the large companies maintain and equip central hospitals. But there are considerable areas where you have no central hospitals ?—Yes, in the planting districts of South India.

G-2340. Do you think it would be possible to so organize groups of gardens as to have a central hospital for each group in the area ?—I think it might be done.

G-2341. I take it that having put this remark in the memorandum the Association is in favour of the system of having a large and well-equipped central hospital instead of having a number of smaller and less-equipped hospitals in individual estates ?—In our group we have both a central hospital and a smaller hospital.

G-2342. The point I was making is, is it not better to have a large institution, well-equipped and well-staffed, than a series of smaller and perhaps poorly equipped hospitals scattered over an area ?—If we have one big hospital we can send our major cases and also maternity cases, which now go into the smaller hospitals.

G-2343. A central hospital is obviously meant only for serious cases ?—Where would maternity cases be accommodated ?

G-2344. You would have maternity wards in every estate; you must have small hospitals ?—We do have them.

G-2345. Supposing you had a system of central hospitals in working order all over the area, how would you get serious cases transferred from individual estates to the central hospital ?—In our case they are generally carried by coolies. (*Sir Fairless Barber*): Very bad cases are taken in a car.

G-2346. You say that you have central hospitals under European medical officers. How many European medical officers do you employ in Anamalais, for instance ?—(*Mr. Congreve*): Three.

G-2347. For how many gardens ?—For an area of 26,000 acres.

G-2348. You say: "Latrines are being increasingly providedroj in cooly lines, though labourers are not inclined to use them". Is that the general experience ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): That is the experience on the larger groups of estates; but they are gradually using them.

G-2349. Is that due to the work of this officer whom you call the Rural Health Officer, or is it due to any other cause ?—It is due to the medical staff, the manager and his assistants on the estate.

G-2350 They are doing health propaganda work ?—Yes. (*Sir Fairless Barber*): As you know, it originated with the Rockefeller doctor.

G-2351. And you are continuing it ?—Yes.

G-2352. And you propose to continue that system ?—Yes.

G-2353. We have heard in different planting areas in India of the formation of what are called Boards of Health. I want to put this to you as an actual case. Anamalais is part of the Coimbatore district and the planters in the Anamalais have on different occasions found it difficult to deal with public health and matters of that kind because they are part of a large district. Would it be of advantage if, for instance, the Anamalais area was separated and made a separate district, say, under a Board of Health ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): I should say, certainly. (*Mr. Congreve*): An application in this connection has already gone to the *taluk* board.

G-2354. Have you got any suggestions to make as to how you would constitute the Board of Health, for instance ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*): I should have three doctors who are up there, three managers and a chairman.

G-2355. Would not the medical officers be better employed as executive officers of the Board of Health than as actual members of the Board of Health ?—I think they would have to advise us laymen.

G-2356. But they could advise you without being actual members, that is they should not have a vote ?—That would probably be good for discipline.

G-2357. In connection with malaria, you would agree that a Board of Health would be able to adopt a definite policy in connection with anti-malarial work, for instance ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) Certainly.

G-2358. You say in your memorandum that malaria is decreasing owing to the efforts made by estates to minimize its effects. That, I take it, at present is simply the efforts of individual officers ?—Yes.

G-2359. There is no definite combined policy such as you would get if you had a Board of Health ?—There is combined policy on individual groups ; the district is divided into three groups, each group being under a medical officer.

G-2360. Would it not be better to have a combined policy for the whole area ?—I think very possibly it would.

G-2361. If that is so, then would it not be advisable to employ a malariologist to carry out the whole of your anti-malarial work in that area ? I think you will agree that the ordinary medical officer who is employed in a group of estates is a pretty busy man, and he has not very much time to spend on such things like anti-malarial work. Would you oppose the appointment of a malarialogist ?—I do not think another doctor is necessary in the Anamalais. I think he can take the place of any one of the present doctors.

G-2362. You think the principle of appointing an officer for whole-time work is one that you might accept ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : I am getting one from Home for anti-malarial work.

G-2363. For what area ?—For Wyanad.

G-2364. For a group of gardens ?—Yes.

G-2365. You have accepted the principle then of having a specialist for anti-malarial work ?—He is a doctor who went Home to study this subject.

G-2366. *Mr. Cliff* : What remuneration do you pay a labour supplier ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : We pay him 10 to 15 per cent. on the coolies' earnings.

G-2367. Do all the estates pay from 10 to 15 per cent ?—Yes.

G-2368. The labour supplier acts as a *mistri* ?—Yes.

G-2369. What remuneration does he get as a *mistri* ?—(*Mr. Congreve*) : He gets his daily pay like any other coolie.

G-2370. In the case of a labour supplier who by arrangement supplies labour to more than one garden, does he get the same rate of pay and the commission on the labourers' earnings ?—Yes. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : The form of contract provides for both a rate pay and a commission.

G-2371. If by arrangement a labour supplier supplies for more than one estate, I could not see how he could be present at the muster on more than one estate ; and therefore I take it that a man of that standard does not actually work ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : He probably would not work at all.

119

G-2372. Are these large labour suppliers rising or are they diminishing ?—I would not say one way or the other. The position remains about the same. There are a certain number of big suppliers. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*) : —I know only of two cases.

G-2373. You say that there are two large suppliers of labour ?—(*Mr. Pinches*) : There are quite a large number of big suppliers of labour, but there are only two or three who supply for more than one estate.

G-2374. In going through your memorandum, I see that there has been an improvement on many estates. For instance, I notice that in certain cases you say that most estates have hospitals, many estates have drinking water provided, most estates pay maternity benefits, generally free food is provided, some have schools and so on. With regard to the compilation of statistics you say that it varies from garden to garden. I want to ask you whether your Association can within its constitution indicate amongst the different estates the standard that shall be adopted ?—No.

G-2375. Is any individual estate free to pursue its own policy ?—Yes.

G-2376. I see from your memorandum that there are a number of gardens, some belonging to European proprietors and some to Indian proprietors. Is there any difference in the provision of welfare between these two sets of proprietors ?—I think there is little doubt that the European proprietors attend far more to welfare work than the Indan proprietors.

G-2377. I see that there are a number of proprietors who are not within your Association. Have you, as an Association, any knowledge of the conditions obtaining on those gardens ?—No, we have no knowledge as an Association.

G 2378. Have you, as individuals, any knowledge of the conditions ?—Yes, certainly.

G-2379. What are your views about the conditions obtaining on those gardens ?—They vary ; but it does not mean that a garden which is not a member of the Association is worse than one that is a member.

G-2380. May we take it that they conform to the general average ?—Yes.

G-2381. Is it part of the policy of your Association, as an Association, to see that the standards obtaining on most of the gardens are followed by all the gardens ?—We have no power to do that.

G-2382. I take it that the improvements which have been effected, in the view of those people who have effected them, should be common to all gardens ? —Yes.

G-2383. I notice that your Association is represented on different Legislative Councils. May I ask whether your Association made any proposals for provision of welfare and other health matters to any of these bodies ?—No.

G-2384. How do you propose that the standards which are obtaining on many of the gardens should in effect obtain in all the gardens ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : When we set a pace there is bound to be competition ; the others are bound to come into line gradually. We cannot force them into a line, and many

private owners would not be able to face the expense which some of the larger companies would be able to face all at once. They can only be gradual, and gradual improvement is noticed right through the whole of the planting industry.

G-2385. Would you have any objection to a public health and welfare board, on which the tea industry was well represented, that had statutory powers ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): No.

G-2386. Can you say that on behalf of the Association ?—Yes.

G-2387. You say: "Most labourers liquidate their accounts and are able to return to their villages after their first season, with a balance of pay to their credit. This balance is generally augmented by a fresh advance received from the supplier for a new season's work". Does your Association think that that system is a good system ?—It is a system which is impossible to get away from. We would rather not give advance but we have to.

G-2388. You mean that you cannot obtain your labour without that labour obtaining advance for a new season and pledging its labour ?—No, we cannot. Even if a coolie stays on the estate without going away, as he often does, he still demands an advance which we give him on the estate.

G-2389. With regard to the conservatism of the Indian worker of which you have spoken, have you got proposals for changing that ?—You mean obtaining advance for a new season's work ?

G-2390. Yes ?—We have tried from time to time to get labour without advance, but we found it impossible.

G-2391. I was struck by the remark contained in your memorandum where you say: "There have been many changes in regard to the availability of labour in recent years, but it is generally agreed that, inspite of the demand for labour on tea and rubber estates in Ceylon and on rubber plantations in the Straits Settlements, the supply in Southern India is easier than it was 20 years ago". If it is easier than it was 20 years ago, is it not possible on the part of the tea planters to try to put a stop to the system of advance ?—We have tried but without success.

G-2392. With regard to the system of payment, is there any objection on the part of the Association to paying wages regularly instead of settling it at the end of the 10 months' period ?—I do not think there will be objection to paying wages regularly after the advance is recovered, but the labour would object to a regular payment; they would prefer to take it at the end of the period. If they want cash at any time they can always get it provided their credit balance permits their demand.

G-2393. I notice that in the form of promissory notes provision is made for interest. Does that actually obtain in practice ?—No.

G-2394. Then why do you retain this on your promissory note ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): It was retained on a special request of the suppliers, because they said that if the coolie defaults they should get some compensation by way of interest; but as a matter of fact we have never charged them any interest.

G-2395. Has your policy got to be determined by the contractors in the matter of interest ? You said that you retained it in the form—though in practice it is not enforced—because the labour contractors demanded that it should be retained ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): We have no objection to cutting it out as far as we are concerned.

G-2396. You say: "The prevailing rates of wages are, men 7 annas a day, women 5 annas a day, children 3 to 4 annas a day." May I ask whether there are rates in existence that are less than those stated ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): I do not think so.

G-2397. You say that wages are generally fixed by district agreements. That seems to me to declare that you agree to a rate in each district. Are there any districts in which rates are less than the prevailing rates ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): Yes. There are certain coffee districts where local labour is easily available for a wage of one anna less.

G-2398. With regard to the fixing of rates by district agreements, does that mean that an estate cannot pay more than the rate agreed upon ?—(*Mr. Pinches*): If you look into our rules, you will see that any estate can raise the rates but it has to give us two months' notice. There is no agreement. We have agreed to give two months' notice if we want to raise the rates.

G-2399. It can, after the expiry of two months, raise the rates ?—Yes.

G-2400. You say that you have 98 agencies under your Labour Department. Can you tell me the number of people employed and the character of the people employed ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Brock*): There are 98 agents, and each one of them has one or two peons to help him in his tours. Each divisional officer has got a staff of clerks; there are six divisional officers. Altogether we employ 250 Indians.

G-2401. What work do the agents do ?—They do all sorts of things. They go round and see what the labour suppliers are doing in the way of recruiting their coolies. When the suppliers bring the labourers along, these agents pay them their railway fares, bus fares and so on; they distribute the labour to the different estates according to the demand.

G-2402. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Are they forwarding agents on behalf of the estates ?—Yes. That is only part of their work. If the coolies are late in coming, these agents go to the village to see what the matter is and report if the coolies are sick. If a man who has taken advance refuses to come to work, these agents take steps to recover the money.

G-2403. *Mr. Cliff*.—Can we take that each agent has two peons ?—Most of them have only one. In bigger agencies they have two peons; it all depends upon the amount of work.

G-2404. What salary are they paid ?—They start on Rs. 30 and rise to Rs. 60; and they get travelling allowance as well. We also have a provident fund for all our Indian staff who draw more than Rs. 20 a month.

G-2405. Amongst the duties of these agencies, you state that they are to minimize the risk of loss in making advances to suppliers. How do you do that ?—That is chiefly done under our registration system; that is to say, no

estate may settle with a new supplier without referring to us. When we get intimation we refer to our register and find out whether this man has defaulted. As long as he does not owe any dues, we give him a clean bill and he is permitted to receive an advance.

G-2406. Then you say "to persuade defaulters to return to the estates or to refund their dues". Can you tell me about this persuasion; how does it operate?—The supplier is given money under a civil contract that he will do work. If, however, he says "I am not going to work", there is an end of it. We say "Repay us our money".

G-2407. If he does not give you money, what happens then?—Some of it is not recovered. You cannot persuade an unwilling man to go to work.

G-2408. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You have stated that the total amount of debts was Rs. 85,000. How much did you write off?—(*Mr. Pinches*): I wrote off Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000 for a labour strength of about 25,000.

G-2409. *Mr. Cliff*: Is that the average figure?—At one time it was very high. But I have introduced a system whereby the labour supplier gets 15 per cent. commission if he is out of debt and only 10 per cent. if he is in debt. Ever since the introduction of this system the amount of loan given is extraordinarily a small figure from what it was; it varies from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000.

G-2410. *Mr. Ahmed*: As a large number of coolies are available whenever you want to engage them, do you not find the necessity for a public employment agency?—(*Mr. Pinches*): No.

G-2411. When you take on a man you always have to give him an advance before he accepts service?—Yes.

G-2412. I take it it is a necessity to the man to have that advance, he being a needy person?—I do not know about the necessity. It has been the custom of these people to take advances, and they get them.

G-2413. If you want a thousand labourers you can get them?—Yes.

G-2414. Does not that show that there is unemployment?—There is no unemployment on the tea estates.

G-2415. But it shows that there is unemployment in the localities from which you get these men?—It does not follow that there is unemployment because we get more men than we want. It merely means that the conditions of the tea estates are better than the conditions in the man's own country. Employment on a tea estate is regular, whereas agricultural work is temporary.

G-2416. Did you take any steps to inform your work-people of the repeal of the Labour Act?—They were informed on the estates.

G-2417. You did not engage anybody to explain to them in their own vernaculars that their conditions of labour had been changed?—It was not necessary.

G-2418. You do not think it is necessary to have a Union to look after the interests of your labourers?—No, we do not.

G-2419. The managers are paid by you; therefore is it not more to the interests of the managers to look after the interests of the plantations than to look after the interests of the workers?—No. The managers' first business is to see that their labourers are well paid and well looked after.

G-2420. The Trade Disputes Act recognizes the principle that where parties cannot agree the intervention of disinterested persons is legitimate and is to be welcomed by both parties. Where there is a dispute between a planter and his labourers, would not you recognize that the intervention of a body of trade unionists was similarly legitimate and to be welcomed?—We consider that a trade union movement amongst our very illiterate labour would do more harm than good.

G-2421. *Mr. Sastri*: You said that you favour the idea of the establishment of Boards of Health and Housing in your plantations. That answer applies, by implication, to British India. I suppose you contemplate the extension of those Boards to your plantations in so far as they lie within the area of Indian States?—Yes.

G-2422. Do you apprehend any difficulty in getting that extension?—No.

G-2423. You would not object to it on your part?—No.

G-2424. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What is the cost of your recruiting?—It costs us our subscription to the Labour Department of the United Planters' Association, and the cost of the coolies' travelling to the estate.

G-2425. What is the figure per head, adding capital expenses and advances?—I should say the cost is from Rs. 6 to 10.

G-2426. Is that adding something for the amount of your unrecovered advances?—Yes.

G-2427. Then you have to add the share of the expenses of maintaining the recruiting establishment?—That is very small per head.

G-2428. I want to know what the cost of your recruiting expenses are per acre or per labourer?—It is different for the different products. The labour department costs tea Rs. 2-10-0 per acre.

G-2429. What is the average number of employees per acre?—About $1\frac{1}{4}$ in tea.

G-2430. How soon does a labourer become a supplier?—Lots of them never do. Very often a good labourer will become a sub-supplier in his second year, and he might become a head supplier in 4 or 5 years, but there is no regularity about it.

G-2431. You divide Southern India into recruiting areas?—Yes.

G-2432. You do not allow a garden in one area to poach in another area?—Any estate can recruit in any area it likes. The only restriction is that outside estates shall not recruit in a planting area itself.

G-2433. *Mr. Cliff*: I take it that the estimated figure for the cost or recruitment which is to be sent to us will include the commission paid to the contractors?—I would not call that a recruiting expense, but a working expense.

G-2434. I would like the figure ?—It is 15% of the total pay of the labourer.

G-2435. *Sir Alexander Murray*: That goes on to your recruiting expenses ?—No.

G-2436. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: You say "It is estimated that over eight lakhs are spent by the United Planters' Association annually on medical facilities for sick labourers." Does that include what you spend on the European planters and their families ?—No. That is the amount spent on the coolies. That figure is two years old, and it is much larger now.

G-2437. The Madras Government has made seriously inaccurate statements in regard to one or two points. In order to protect themselves against making such mistakes in future, do you not think it would be better for all concerned if they were to appoint a special officer or a special department to publish statistics periodically ?—No. We can supply the statistics.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. B. SHIVA RAO, Mr. RAMANUJULU NAIDU, and Mr. SELVAPATHY CHETTY, representatives of the Madras Labour Union.

G-2438. *Mr. Sastri*: Mr. Shiva Rao, you appear on behalf of the Madras Labour Union ?—(*Mr. Shiva Rao*): I do.

G-2439. Are you its President ?—I am the President, and my friends on either side are the Joint Secretaries of the Union.

G-2440. How long have you been the President of this Union ?—Since 1926.

G-2441. Will you tell us how many members there are now ?—In January 1930, we had 1,116 members from the Buckingham Mill who had actually paid subscriptions, 1,216 from the Carnatic Mill and 1,838 from the Choolai Mill; in other words, we had a total membership of 4,170, who had all paid their subscriptions.

G-2442. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: How many workers are there in the Choolai Mills ?—Just over 2,000, I think. I must inform you that it is not every member who pays his subscription regularly every month; that is to say, some people pay in one month, some of them drop out and others pay in some other month. On the 18th of June 1928, we had on the rolls of the Union 7,380 members, of whom 3,028 were from the Buckingham, 2,928 from the Carnatic Mills and 1,424 from the Choolai Mill. But, as I have said, it is not every one who pays his subscription every month.

G-2443. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I see that the return by the Commissioner of Labour shows that on the 31st March 1929 you had only 4,035 members ?—Yes, those who were actually paying the subscription. They vary as you will see from the list I have given.

G-2444. *Mr. Ahmed*: Is it because you cannot collect subscriptions through the mill manager ?—I do not believe in it. In the Choolai Mill there is no objection on the part of the management to departmental members of the committee of the union collecting subscriptions in the mill.

127

G-2445. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: In the mill ?—I do not know where they collect it, but we get it. So far as the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills are concerned, they sometimes send the subscriptions surreptitiously through other people on condition that their names will not be given out.

G-2446. *Mr. Sastri*: Just for the sake of comparison, do you happen to know the numerical strength of the union recognized by the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills ?—I am willing to answer it, but it may be taken as biassed evidence. Some of our members have been to meetings of that union, and they have told me that the attendance was 75 or 80 or sometimes 100.

G-2447. But the figure they have given in their memorandum is 2,000 ?—I could not answer how they arrived at that figure.

G-2448. Even assuming it was 2,000, your union seems to be a bigger body in Madras ?—That has always been our claim.

G-2449. Throughout your memorandum you make a great many suggestions to remove the hardships and difficulties under which labourers in Madras suffer. I will take the housing difficulties as somewhat typical. You say that it is not possible for the industry itself to build all the houses that it would need for its labour and that Government would have to come to its help and make this an important charge, if not the first charge, on their resources. You think that the Corporation may find it beyond its resources, but you have an opinion clearly expressed that the Government must somehow or other find the necessary money out of its resources. Have you considered what proportion of this cost might be legitimately thrown on the industry itself, and has your Labour Union any definite view on the subject ?—My friend, Mr. Selvapathy Chetty, is a representative in the Madras Corporation from the Perambur Division. It was on his initiative that the question was raised of housing the poor in some of the worst *cheries* in the mills area. Now there are 140 *cheries* in Madras City, and only this year the Madras Government has given to the Corporation Rs. 2½ lakhs for making a beginning in one portion of one of these 140 *cheries*. So, it will be some generations before the question is tackled, if only the Madras Government had to do it on its present resources. Our suggestion is that there should be a big subsidy from the Government of India every year to the Local Governments which may distribute them amongst the various municipal corporations. The burden should fall equally on the Corporation and on the employer, with, of course, the contribution made through the Local Government by the Government of India.

G-2450. You visited with us the Perambur barracks where a new type of building has been erected by the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. We were told that the rent for that would scarcely be more than Rs. 1-8-0 and that the rent charged now on the houses in the old villages there is also Rs. 1-8-0 ?—I wish you had also seen the *chery* called Bogi Palayam, which is outside Binny and Co.'s place. A workman rents out a piece of ground for As. 6, 8 or As. 12 and puts up a little hut for himself.

G-2451. The houses built by Binny and Co. are much above the average, and they take a monthly rent of about Rs. 1-8-0, which is, by all calculations, a little under the economic rent ?—Yes. I should think that for such a house in that area one should pay at least Rs. 4.

G-2452. It is a good deal below the economic rent?—Much below the economic rent.

G-2453. If the economic rent were charged on those buildings you would find them beyond the paying capacity of most of the workers?—Yes, of a great many of the lower paid workmen. In that case you would have sub-letting.

G-2454. On a scale which you cannot prevent?—I know of a case where 20 families live in a house.

G-2455. Where a certain amount of freedom is given to our people to build their own houses by giving pieces of land, you find them of a type which is very much inferior to the type that we saw yesterday and absolutely unlikely to be passed by any health board that we could conceive of, however lenient it might be?—Quite.

G-2456. Do you think, considering the wages of our workmen in the average, that they will ever be able to pay the economic rent of buildings that would be passed by any health organization?—No.

G-2457. So this housing business is going to be largely a subsidized industry?—It will have to be.

G-2458. Are you quite clear that it will be possible for the work-people themselves, even upon a greater increase in the scale of wages, to come and take their fair share of this burden? Do you conceive of their living perhaps in a somewhat inferior type of housing to paying a good economic rent? This has been my difficulty from the beginning of the labours of this Commission. We are all recognizing that housing is very bad throughout India, but we do not seem to have come to any definite decision as to where the burden of housing should be laid. We shift it sometimes to Government, sometimes to the industry and sometimes to the corporation; but we have no clear idea. I should like some opinion which is duly formulated as to this point. Is the body of work-people themselves prepared to bear a part of what after all is their own burden? Will they pay the economic rent?—It would be very difficult for the vast majority of the work-people, reckoning wages as they are, to pay any economic rent on houses which would be considered adequate for themselves and their families.

G-2459. It is clear then, as a general proposition, that the industry, if it is to look after itself, will be unable to bear this primary burden, and that it must be a burden on the general taxpayer and the rate-payer of large cities?—I look at it in this way. In the first place, as the Government of India has set aside crores of rupees on the recommendations of the Tariff Board, for the protection of industries, I see no inherent objection to large sums of money being set apart by the Government of India for housing industrial labour.

G-2460. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is there not a constitutional difficulty? I understand that the constitution would not allow the Government of India to spend these amounts directly on anything that is provincial?—There may be contributions from the Government of India to the provinces, and the provinces may set apart the amount. I think adequate housing of labour is going to pay the industrialist. In my mind, it is at the bottom of all the troubles of industrial labour. If you give a workman a decent house and satisfactory conditions

123

of living, many of the troubles with which industry is faced to-day, I think, would be on their way towards elimination.

G-2461. *Mr. Sastri*: We are having many schemes before us of taxing the taxpayer of this country for the support of the languishing industries of Bombay and elsewhere in various ways, which will increase the price of the products. Are we justified in increasing this burden, so that housing also should fall on him?—I think it is going to pay back in increased efficiency.

G-2462. So you would as a public financier support the proposition that in India, as in other countries, housing might be a part of the burden resting on the general taxpayer of the country?—Yes, a part. Before any one else cross-examines me, I should like to hand in a statement with regard to a certain document which was circulated to the Members of the Commission yesterday by Messrs. Binny and Co.

Sir Victor Sassoon: I think our task is to try and see what can be done in the future. I think, therefore, it would be advisable if we did not deal with any of those matters which took place in the past. I do not see how it could be helpful for the future, and I feel that we ought to try and see whether we could not elicit constructive suggestions as to what might be done in the future. I appeal to you all to forget all that took place in the past. Obviously, there is a great deal of bitterness on both sides on this question.

Mr. Sastri: Since Messrs. Binny and Co. have withdrawn their note, there is no necessity for you to hand in your statement.

G-2463. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Did you say that your colleague, Mr. Selvapathy Chetty, was a member of the Corporation?—He is still an elected member of the Corporation.

G-2464. Has the Corporation done anything under the Municipal Act to bring home to owners of congested areas that they ought to make improvements?—It has not done anything, because many of these *cheries* in Madras belong to private land-owners, and it is not possible for the Corporation to insist upon improvements being carried out.

G-2465. Why?—There have been prosecutions, but the owners escape with light fines, which have absolutely no effect.

G-2466. But in the Madras Corporation Act, is there any provision made for opening up congested areas at the expense of the owner?—There is a provision for opening up land belonging to the Corporation but not to any private owner.

G-2467. Are you quite sure about that? In other provinces there is a provision made for insanitary *bustis* being opened up; if the owner on being called upon to improve his *busti* does not attend to it the Corporation can improve it at his expense?—My friend tells me that it could be done, but the Corporation does not do it, because it would mean that the landowner would turn out a number of poor people who would have absolutely no accommodation.

G-2468. If the Corporation is guided by that considerate policy, will ever any action be taken?—I have strong views about the Corporation, because the Corporation does not care very much for the poor people.

G-2469. Is there a Town Planning Act here in Madras ?—I understand that they are taking it up now.

G-2470. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What action has been taken under the Town Planning Act for improving congested areas ?—They had a housing scheme just outside Madras for the middle classes ; but nothing has been done so far for the poorer people.

G-2471. Your memorandum seems to take exception to the Binny and Co., having acquired certain military land for the purpose of building houses on that. Had the Corporation not the opportunity of acquiring that land ?—It has a history behind it. That land was originally being used by us for the meetings of the Madras Labour Union. We wanted in that place a small maternity hospital. I interviewed Lord Goschen, when he was the Governor of Madras, and he was sympathetic. The Minister of Public Health was also sympathetic. I was asked to see the Surgeon-General about it, but he refused an interview ; he thought that there was no need for a hospital. When Mr. Selvapathy Chetty got into the Corporation he moved an urgent resolution for the acquisition of the land by the Corporation ; but soon afterwards that ground was acquired by Binny and Co., before the Corporation could take it up. The Corporation always says that it has no funds.

G-2472. So that it was not Binny and Co.'s fault that the Corporation had no funds and did not acquire it ?—We have not suggested that.

G-2473. It is immaterial who builds so long as an effort is made to provide housing accommodation ?—I quite agree ; but I think, in principle, it would be much better if housing was taken up by a public body like the Corporation than by an individual employer, because, for instance, Binny and Co. have a rule that they may evict a workman occupying one of their quarters at 24 hours' notice.

G-2474. You say also that it is impossible to make the owners of private areas realize their responsibility. If that is to be the case, what is the use of leaving it to the Corporation to do anything ?—I quite agree that it is better to have something than nothing at all.

G-2475. In your memorandum you say : "There is a regrettable amount of bribery prevalent in regard to recruitment. Bribes have also to be given for promotions. There is almost a scheduled rate of bribes for first admission into the mill, definite recruitment, promotion, etc. It ranges from about Rs. 10 for a new man who seeks admission into a mill for learning work to Rs. 50 or even Rs. 100 for promotion, such as the position of a jobber". Which is the mill that you are referring to ?—It ought to have been 'mills' ; the reference is to the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. That is our information.

G-2476. When I personally visited the mills I enquired of the managers about this, and they assured me that there was no possibility of such a system obtaining in the mills ?—I should explain, generally, our difficulty in making up this memorandum. Since 1926 when I first took up workmen's compensation cases I found I was led into making a statement that Binny and Co. had avoided payment under the Act. When Mr. Kay asked me for details, I supplied him with 13 cases from the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. He was kind enough to look into the details of each case, and I was satisfied that in 8 out of the 13,

124

the accident had taken place before the Act had come into force ; but in regard to some of the other 5, I think, Binny and Co. contested the claim. I publicly withdrew that statement in a speech, and I said to the men : "We must be very careful not to make statements which are inaccurate". But it has been the misfortune of our Union that we have not been able to establish friendly relations with Binny and Co., and we have to go upon statements made to us without any opportunity of verification ; so that what is in the memorandum is what we have been told by the work-people.

G-2477. You as a union have not been able to verify it ?—We are not in a position to verify for the simple reason that our letters are not even acknowledged.

G-2478. Speaking of the bribes you say : "This is one of the main causes of the indebtedness of the workers." Are mill workers indebted more heavily than other workers ?—I have not instituted a comparison, but certainly a vast majority of the mill workers are indebted.

G-2479. You seem to indicate that the bribery that has to be paid to get into the mills is one of the causes of the indebtedness of the workers. After all there are only 9,000 workers in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. Do you suggest that the indebtedness of these workers is larger than the indebtedness of other industrial workers ?—As I said, I have not instituted a comparison, and I am, therefore, unable to answer that question.

G-2480. You say : "Dismissals take place for various reasons. Some of our workers suspect that the system of paying gratuity, which is in force in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills at the end of 10 years of service, is partly responsible for the dismissal of men who approach the completion of the period." Have you any grounds for making that statement ?—We have had several complaints brought to us by men (two of them are sitting here), who had put in 8 and 9 years' service and who were looking forward to the payment of their first gratuity, that they were sent out for very trivial faults. They also tell me that in some cases they have been re-instated as new workers ; that is their service to begin anew.

Sir Alexander Murray: Will you be good enough to supply us with individual cases, because if persons who had completed their ninth year service had been dismissed for trivial causes and were immediately taken on as new workers, it might bear out this statement ?

Sir Victor Sassoon: Would it not also be necessary to know the number of work-people who have completed their 10 years and who have not been sent out ?—That question I can easily answer. After the reopening of the mills at the end of the long dispute in 1921, every one I was told started as a new worker, so that no one has yet completed his 10 years, except perhaps a few who did not come out during those strikes and lock-outs.

Mr. Kay: I may inform the Commission that the actual amount of gratuity fund that has been paid in cash since it was started is Rs. 10,00,697.

The witness: (*Mr. Shiva Rao*): The statements I have made in the memorandum are made in perfect good faith. I am not trying to accuse the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills of anything ; all that I can say is that we have done our best. If we have not been able to verify our statements, it is not our fault.

G-2481. *Mr. Clow*: In connection with workmen's compensation, you make a novel suggestion that the employer should be criminally punished, I understand, if he does not pay compensation ?—I do not see why employers should not be fined for this when they can be fined for any infringement of the Factories Act.

G-2482. It is not the same thing. This is a civil liability. Who, do you contemplate, would bring the prosecution ?—I would suggest the Labour Department.

G-2483. Suppose an employer said : " My reading of the law is that I have no liability to pay compensation. The Commissioner says I am wrong, but I refused to pay because I thought there was no liability ", do you think that a fine should still be imposed on him ?—I quite see the difficulty.

G-2484. What you want to do, I presume, is to get some means by which workmen who have valid claims are not left in ignorance ?—We did a great deal of propaganda in this province. We translated the Act into simple *Tamil*. A number of cases have gone up to the Panel of Lawyers. But I was amazed only three weeks ago, when just outside the northern toll gate of Madras ; I spoke to the work-people of a factory and asked them if they had been paid compensation in accidents ; they said they did not know what it was.

G-2485. Has your Union pursued cases, or does it leave to the Panel of Lawyers ?—What happens is that all applications for help with regard to compensation cases come first to the Madras Labour Union ; and then we distribute the work amongst the various members of the Panel who take it in rotation.

G-2486. Generally with a fair measure of success ?—I think, roughly, about half the number of cases have been successful.

G-2487. I notice that in your memorandum you say that the only representatives of the Government who attended the Trade Union Congress were policemen ?—I apologize to you personally. I remember you were present when you were in the Government of India. But I think the spirit of the remark remains unaffected.

G-2488. I think there were representatives of the Government of India present at most of the sessions of the Trade Union Congress ?—I do not remember seeing any one at the Nagpur session, nor I think was any one present at Jharia.

G-2489. Certainly, there was at Jharia Mr. Gilchrist who was sent by the Government of India ?—In 1928 when the arrests took place.

G-2490. No, in 1921 ?—May be ; I do not remember.

G-2491. I notice that you pay a tribute to the police in your union memorandum, but in your own personal memorandum you have taken a different attitude ?—I draw a distinction between the Madras city police and the Mofussil.

G-2492. What you state in your own memorandum relates to the Mofussil, does it ?—Yes.

G-2493. You say : " When there is a strike, the police exercise their influence upon shopkeepers to stop the supply of foodstuffs on credit, and the more zealous among them put undue pressure on the workers by threats to resume work " ?—That happened in the Ranipet strike.

125

G-2494. As regards trade disputes, you deal in your own memorandum with the question of labour legislation. I think you are mistaken when you say that 7 years intervened between the introduction of a measure by the Bombay Government and its passage by the Government of India ?—I think the Committee of the Bombay Government reported in 1921, and the Bombay Government brought forward the Bill in 1922.

G-2495. No, it was in 1921 ; but it was never introduced ?—I thought it was in 1922 that the Government of Bombay brought forward the Bill.

G-2496. I do not think it was ever introduced in Bombay ; was it ?—I have not enquired.

G-2497. You refer to the delay in the matter, and you make a suggestion that the intervention of the India Office has been responsible for the slow pace of reform ?—I have said ' possibly '.

G-2498. Have you any grounds for making that suggestion ?—It is a possible explanation. I give credit to the Government of India for good intentions.

G-2499. You have no evidence on which you based that suggestion ?—No.

G-2500. As regards delay, you refer to the consultation of Local Governments by the Government of India. Do you consider that legislation should remain central generally, or that it should be provincial ?—It should be central.

G-2501. Do you not think that there will be great difficulties if the Central Legislature were to legislate without giving rather a long time to ascertain the opinion in the provinces ?—My difficulty is that it takes too long a time. I do not think the Local Governments have a reputation for being liberal in regard to labour.

G-2502. What other method would you suggest for ensuring that representative bodies like the employers' and labour organizations have an opportunity of expressing themselves on measures that affect their interests ?—I should put a time-limit within which the various bodies should send in their replies to the Government of India.

G-2503. That is always done ; there is always a complaint that the time allowed is too short ?—I can only judge from the outside results.

G-2504. You would not be prepared to allow the members of the Assembly to speak entirely for organizations without consultation with the organizations ?—No.

G-2505. You have made a number of interesting experiments but very few of them were successful. Take the matter of recovery of loans ?—We burnt our fingers over that.

G-2506. Why was that ?—There are two difficulties. In the first place, there is a great deal of jealousy ; if you help ten work-people you create discontent amongst a thousand. They all clamour for the same help, and they do not want to see why A or B should have preference over themselves. Secondly, I do not think the office-bearers of the union used the methods which are associated with money-lenders ; they did not stand at the mill gates and take it from their debtors ; it was left to their sense of honour, and it did not work.

G-2507. Did you attempt to get other members of the Union to act as sureties before giving loans ?—I was not directly connected with the union at the time, but my friend who was the Secretary (and who is still the Secretary), tells me that people who borrowed the money disappeared.

G-2508. Were other workers taken as sureties before the loan was given ?—It was done through a bank. The Royapetta Bank started a branch in the Madras Labour Union. In the early stages the Union did not feel responsible for the loans, but when the money was not paid back, then the Bank demanded its refund from the Union.

G-2509. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : The Union was made the surety ?—Yes, but there were no individual sureties.

G-2510. *Mr. Clow* : Would you be in favour of encouraging a system of the employer lending money to pay off the usurious debts and recovering gradually through the wages bill ?—I think the experiment is worth trying. My own feeling is that work-people are so accustomed to be in debt that if you relieve a workman of all his debts, he promptly gets into debt again. That is the real trouble.

G-2511. Whether there is a necessity for it or not ?—Yes. I came across a case two years ago. There was a compensation case in the Choolai Mill. A man died and we got his widow about Rs. 460. I said to her " It is too large a sum for you to handle. We will put it in the post office." She said " I have borrowed Rs. 100 for my husband's funeral, and I have various other debts to pay". The money will disappear as soon as you pay it. These work-people spend extravagantly on funerals, ceremonies and so on.

G-2512. Do you find that the debt is less among the poorer people or more in proportion to the income than among the better-paid class ?—The people who get less are much more in debt than those who get more.

G-2513. *Sir Alexander Murray* : We have found it to be the reverse. The debt is less in the case of a poor man because his credit is less, while the debt is more in the case of a man who is better-paid because he has more credit ?—The man who gets a low wage does not borrow large sums, but he borrows small sums from different people.

G-2514. *Mr. Clow* : It becomes large in the aggregate ?—Yes. I know of men who borrow As. 8 and pay an interest of As. 2 on the As. 8 every week

G-2515. *Miss Power* : Have you got jobbers in your union ?—We have a few. They come to us at night when they are in trouble, but they are not regular members. They become members when they want something out of the union.

G-2516. I was thinking of the reference you make to the connection between the jobber and bribery. I understand your union is the oldest Indian trade union. Have you attempted to do any educational work in respect of that problem ?—We got a few people dismissed in the Choolai Mill where we were able to prove bribery.

G-2517. You have not tackled the problem with the members of your union from an educational point of view ?—We have spoken to the men not to give bribes. There is so much of unemployment now that they are willing to pay bribe and go in.

126

G-2518. You say : " The institution of public employment agencies will certainly effect a great improvement in the present methods of recruitment." Are you referring to Madras ?—I should like to make a beginning in Madras, Madura and industrial centres of that kind ; it should be begun in organized industries.

G-2519. Do you think it will be justifiable to start a public employment agency for the three mills in Madras, for instance ? We are told in evidence that the two biggest mills here, whenever they are in need of hands, recruit the sons of workers who are already in their employment. That is the admitted policy of those two mills. It would practically mean, would it not, that you would be incurring all the expense for the setting up of a public employment agency for the recruitment of workers to one mill employing a couple of thousand workers ?—I quite see the difficulty, but I think the point of having a public employment agency would be determined by the amount of work that is to be done.

G-2520. I take it you would require a guarantee for the big companies that they would recruit them in that way and not directly at the mill gate, because it would take a long time to stop the worker's habit of expecting to be taken on at the mill gate ?—It need not take very long. I think the Indian workman is quickly adaptable.

G-2521. Dealing with welfare you say : " Welfare work, in our opinion, should be undertaken by philanthropic bodies such as social service organizations absolutely independent of the employers." What type of welfare work are you referring to there ? Within the place of employment or outside it ?—I have in mind the kind of work that is done by Binny and Co. to-day.

G-2522. There are two sorts of welfare ; welfare within the works and welfare outside the works. Do you think it is feasible for welfare within the works to be run by an independent body in works of any appreciable size ?—I do not see why it is not feasible.

G-2523. Do you not think it is far better run co-operatively by the worker and the employer ?—Our experience of welfare work is that it is apt to be used as an excuse for keeping back trade unionism ; that is our real difficulty; that was in our mind when we put this forward.

G-2524. But supposing you have a recognized union and a big firm that has really undertaken an appreciable amount of welfare work, you would not ask for an outside agency to run that welfare, would you, if the union and the employer were prepared to co-operate in carrying out welfare schemes ?—Not in that case.

G-2525. Referring to maternity benefits you ask that women workers should be given three months' leave with full wages and free medical attendance. Do you feel that it is necessary at the beginning to extend these facilities to as long a period as three months ?—We put three months, because it is generally the practice, and I think medical testimony supports it.

G-2526. What do you mean when you say ' it is generally the practice ' ? I think in the Choolai Mills, in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills the period allowed is 3 months ; I think in one of the Coimbatore Mills also three months are allowed.

G-2527. You mean that the woman worker is sent off for 3 months ?—Yes, she is sent away when she is generally in her 6th or 7th month.

G-2528. But I take it that in the first instance you would be prepared to support legislation which covered a shorter period as in the case of the Bombay Act involving only 8 weeks ?—I would. I think the benefits should be on a very generous scale. I said to Parry and Co., when we were discussing it with regard to the Nellikuppam Union : " Give them a very good allowance for two months, but make a rule that you will not give it oftener than once in 3 or 4 years." They said " we are not willing to introduce birth-control by the back-door ".

G-2529. You say that the absence of a woman jobber leads to many complications. Do you feel that there is a real basis for that suggestion ?—I have seen certain mills in which there are a large number of women workers, and there is a good deal of undesirable practice.

G-2530. You feel the women would support the demand ?—They want it very much.

G-2531. Have you ever taken a vote of your members as to what period of wage payment they would prefer—weekly, fortnightly or monthly ?—Yes, and we found that quite a number had no real objection to the present system of monthly wages, provided the wages were paid soon after the close of the month, but I think the majority wanted a fortnightly wage.

G-2532. For what reason ?—A month is too long. The work-people get into debt and sometimes they are worried by the money-lender, and they have to borrow towards the middle of the month, often at 150 per cent. interest.

G-2533. Is there any practice amongst the Madras mills of taking ' Subs ' in advance of payment ?—I am not aware of it.

G-2534. You say : " We think it is not only possible and advisable but imperative to pass legislation fixing a minimum wage, and also to standardize rates." You are speaking generally, and not with regard to Madras only ?—Yes.

G-2535. Are you also speaking of the textile industry only ?—I can only speak about the textile industry. We have found that there is a large variation in wages between Madras, Coimbatore, Madura and so on, as you go further south.

G-2536. A minimum wage would not prevent a diversity of rates ?—No.

G-2537. You want both standardization and a minimum wage ?—Yes.

G-2538. What sort of minimum wage machinery are you thinking of as being applicable to Indian conditions and to the textile trade ?—As practically all my time and attention is taken up with helping trade unions, I do not get much time to think of these bigger problems.

G-2539. *Mrs. Venkatasubha Rao* : Are the *mistris* educated people ?—They are a little better educated than the ordinary work-people, but not much.

G-2540. How are they recruited ?—They rise up from lower position,

127

G-2541. Do you think that if the *mistris'* services are dispensed with the trouble will be minimized ?—I think that if the power of a *mistri* were reduced, the trouble would be minimized.

G-2542. Do you think that if educated men were appointed to these posts it would be better ?—If a better class of *mistri* is brought into existence, and if some of our middle class young men are encouraged to take up work of that kind, there would be an improvement in existing conditions.

G-2543. There seems to be a feeling that if the Factories Act is amended it will cause hardship with regard to artisans' children : they would neither go to school nor learn their fathers' trade. Have you anything to say about that ?—I do not see why that difficulty should arise at all.

G-2544. Do you not think that one way of meeting that argument is that at the same time as they are being taught the three R's, artisans' children should also be taught their fathers' trade ?—We do advocate an extensive system of vocational training.

G-2545. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah* : Mr. Shiva Rao, how do you elect the members of your committee ?—We have first of all an informal meeting of fairly prominent members of the Union from all the three mills. Then we ask some of them whether they are willing to serve on the executive committee. We know more or less whether they will be acceptable to the Union at large. If they agree we put the matter before a general meeting of the Union.

G-2546. Why have you not introduced the system of balloting, as in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills ?—Our members have not asked for it.

G-2547. Do you not think it would be a good system ?—We will bear the suggestion in mind.

G-2548. Do you know that there is a feeling among the work-people that you personally are using the Union for your own purposes : that is to say, in order to make your name prominent ?—I can only say that it is a very expensive way of acquiring a reputation. It costs me a good deal of money every month, and I give all my time to the work.

G-2549. *Mr. Cliff* : Are you a salaried officer of the Union ?—No. I have not touched a single pice of the Union's funds since I have been President.

G-2550. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah* : With regard to the method of recruitment, you say that recruitment is done through the head jobbers and jobbers. Can you prove any case where recruitment has taken place through the head jobbers and jobbers in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills ?—I am told that the head jobber or the jobber who takes any new recruits has them first at his own house, and that the bribe is paid to him there. Then the man is taken to the head of the department.

G-2551. As a Union man you must know the rules of the Mill, namely, that those who receive bribes, and those who give bribes, are dismissed ?—Yes.

G-2552. Yet you are of opinion that bribery is going on still ?—It still goes on.

G-2553. You cannot prove it ?—I do not think anyone who gives or receives a bribe is going to be so foolish as to keep the evidence of it.

G-2554. You say that welfare work should be taken up by philanthropic bodies. Is it your opinion that the welfare work which is now in operation in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills does not give any benefit to the work-people? —I do not suggest that. All I suggest is that so long as an employer controls welfare work and shows hostility to trade unionism, his motive is bound to be suspected by the work-people.

G-2555. Is it so in the case of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills ?— I am afraid so.

G-2556. *Mr. Clow* : Was not this welfare work started before there was any question of trade unionism ?—Yes. But it was extended very much in 1922 after the big strikes, and the Welfare Committee has paid the Madras Labour Union a great compliment in this way : in 1926 we took up compensation cases. Within a very few days the Welfare Committee began to take up compensation cases. I know of instances in which members of the Welfare Committee have rushed to the hospital and taken the thumb impressions of victims of accidents so that the Madras Labour Union might not get the credit for that particular compensation case. In 1927 we agitated for a maternity hospital. We found in the following week that the Welfare Committee began to agitate for a maternity hospital.

G-2557. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : That was all for the good of the workers ?—I quite agree.

G-2558. *Mr. Clow* : Is it not a fact that this organization was noted throughout India for its welfare work long before any union was started ?—Yes, I quite agree.

G-2559. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah* : You started a Co-operative Society in 1920, and it did not succeed. How do you account for the fact that the Mill Co-operative Society has now about a thousand members, and has advanced Rs. 35,000 as loans ?—Possibly it is more capable than we are.

G-2560. Is it your opinion that workers do not appreciate the present welfare work of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills ?—I do not say they do not.

G-2561. That means that you think they do appreciate it ?—Probably they do to a certain extent.

G-2562. Is it not a fact that your Union sends out rowdies to throw stones at the work-people and their children who go to enjoy the annual celebrations of the Welfare Committee ?—It is absolutely untrue.

G-2563. I am told that last Tuesday, when you held your annual meeting with Mr. Joshi in the chair, rowdies armed with sticks stopped the work-people who were coming from the works and took them to the meeting of the union. Is that true ?—I have absolutely no knowledge of it having happened.

G-2564. In 1926 some of the employees of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills went over to your meeting and wanted to speak on the platform, but they were not permitted to do so by the Chairman ?—As far as I am aware there has never been any attempt to suppress expression of opinion at our meetings.

G-2565. Was not the result that some of the workers of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills were forced to start a new union ?—I do not know about that, but I do know that one of the secretaries of the other union came to me one night and said "We have got to do this, otherwise we are in fear of losing our jobs."

G.-2566. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed* : From which class does the textile labour mostly come ?—Mainly from the agricultural class.

G.-2567. Are you of opinion that there is a real problem of unemployment in Madras ?—Yes.

G.-2568. What is the reason ? The mill people say " We want less labour, but we cannot dismiss any of our work-people for fear of a strike. In certain cases we could carry on the work with 50 or 60 men, but we are forced to keep employed a hundred men ". That being the case, how do you expect the employers to give satisfactory wages to the whole hundred men ?—I do not see why an employer should keep more people than he wants.

G.-2569. He cannot dismiss them, otherwise there are strikes ?—We would like them gradually to be re-absorbed into other departments.

G.-2570. Supposing an employer who has been employing a hundred men finds that he has only work for sixty, which would you prefer : that the employer should keep on sixty men and pay them decent wages, or keep on the hundred men and pay them, as he would be bound to pay them, less wages ?—It is a difficult question to answer. The Choolai mill introduced the two loom system two years ago, and there was very nearly a strike. It was with considerable difficulty that we persuaded the men not to strike. Ultimately the management promised not to send out any of the superfluous weavers, but to absorb them into the new weaving shed which they were putting up. Now there is discontent because the employer wants to revert back to the single loom system. I think employers should not experiment like that. It means a good deal of discontent among the work-people.

G-2571. The employer is in a dilemma. If he sends away his superfluous men he is threatened with a strike. On the other hand, if he distributes the work of fifty men among a hundred, he cannot afford to pay such wages to the hundred as he might to the fifty. Which alternative would labour prefer ?—I think with greater efficiency on the part of the employer, it should be possible to eliminate these questions.

G-2572. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Efficiency means generally more production and fewer jobs ?—It is a very difficult question I quite agree. On the whole I think it would be better for the employer to have a smaller number of efficient people, and pay them good wages.

G-2573. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed* : You prefer that he should reduce the number of men, rather than keep on the full number and pay less wages to that full number ?—Yes, provided he will make every possible effort to minimize the difficulties. He should make an effort gradually to re-absorb the men into other departments. But I do object to an employer sending out 40 people to-day, and taking back 20 to-morrow under the guise of " retrenchment ".

G-2574. You say "We can only observe from the large numbers of men who collect near the mill gates every morning that there is a *considerable* amount of unemployment. *Much of it is, no doubt, due to* agricultural distress". You have already told me that most of the labour is drawn from agricultural work-people, and now you state that much of the unemployment is due to agricultural distress. Has your union given any attention to the question of improving distress in agriculture ?—No. I think that is a problem more for the State than for an individual union.

G-2575. Is this distress in agriculture recent or of long standing ?—I am not competent to answer questions on agriculture.

G-2576. With regard to housing you say "The Madras Corporation has just made a beginning in this direction with the assistance of a grant of Rs. 2½ lakhs from the Government". Is the Corporation doing the thing directly, or through Messrs. Binny & Co. ?—The Corporation is doing it directly.

G-2577. They are putting up some houses ?—Yes.

G-2578. You refer to a certain housing scheme. Have you any idea of this scheme ?—I was struck with the scheme which they have at Nagpur. The Indian worker appreciates very much the possibility of being the owner of a house, and I learned from Mr. Mott, who is in charge of that housing scheme, that he could see a distinct change for the better in the outlook, and even in the efficiency, of the workers who were living in those houses in a colony near Nagpur. I drew the attention of the Governor here to that scheme, and he said he would consider it.

G.-2579. *Mr. Kay*: I find myself, Sir, in rather an embarrassing position, because I had a certain number of questions which I had intended putting to Mr. Shiva Rao, but after the very earnest appeal which you made at the end of yesterday's sitting, and in view of Sir Victor Sassoon's suggestion this afternoon, I hope Mr. Shiva Rao will not misunderstand me if I refrain from questioning him on various matters. You are aware, Mr. Rao, that in 1918 Messrs. Binny & Co. said they would cordially meet a properly constructed trade union, and that again in February 1926 they said they would willingly recognize a properly constructed trade union. You have probably seen those remarks ? I have.

G-2580. With regard to the difficult question of outsiders in a union, I think Messrs. Binny & Co. made it perfectly clear in 1926 that their work-people were at perfect liberty to appoint outsiders, either as an advisory board or as they liked, up to the extent of half the number of their office bearers. The exact words used were "That under the new act the Union could have as many officers as they wished but that not less than half of those officers must be work-people, and that the work-people could ask responsible people from outside to help and advise them, but that at least half and, if the work-people liked, all the officers of the union must be work-people". Those were the arrangements Messrs. Binny & Co. recognized in 1926, and I should like to say, Sir, that they have not altered that policy in any way since. I do not think the evidence yesterday afternoon was quite as clear as it should have been when you put the question as to the position of outsiders. In your memorandum, Mr. Rao, there is a statement as to certain offers that have been made to bring about some working arrangement. You say offers had been made. Can you tell me to whom those offers were communicated ?—In

1926 we had a small informal meeting in the house of the President of one of the local unions. Three of us from the Madras Labour Union went, and the President of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Union and two of his colleagues also attended that meeting on behalf of that union. The subject discussed at that meeting was whether it would be possible to bring about an amalgamation of those two unions, and, if so, how. We suggested at that time that the exclusion of the Choolai Mill work-people would be rather difficult, because the Madras Labour Union is the oldest union in India, and there was a strong sentimental feeling that the union should not be broken up. Therefore we said "Let the work-people of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills meet by themselves outside the mill premises, with no outsider present. Let them decide who should be their office-bearers. Let them also decide whether they would like to continue to have the Madras Labour Union including the Choolai Mill workers, and we shall proceed on that decision, but there shall be no interference with the work-people of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in their decision as to whether there shall be outsiders on the executive, or whether the work-people from the Chooali Mill shall belong to that union". May I add that it was not just a sentimental consideration ? We have always recognized publicly that there is a tactical advantage in the work-people of the Choolai Mill belonging to the same union as that of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, because our object is to level up the conditions in the Choolai Mill to the standard of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. Unfortunately those negotiations did not end in anything. In December 1926, when the Right Hon'ble Tom Shaw was here as the head of the International Textile Delegation, he spoke to me about the undesirability of there being two unions. He wrote to me, and I believe he wrote the same letter to the President of the other Union, that, without going into the controversy of the past, it would be desirable to make another effort at amalgamation. When I showed him the conditions under which we were prepared to amalgamate in the earlier part of the year, he seemed to express his approval. I went to Calcutta soon after for the All-India Trade Union Congress Executive. When I got back on the 4th January 1927 I wrote to the President of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Union re-affirming those conditions which we had placed before him in May 1926, and he answered on the 8th January 1927 "I quite welcome the suggestion that we should meet together in the first instance. I regret I was not able to meet my committee on the matter. I hope to do so on Monday the 10th instant, and shall let you know when I can meet you". I am sorry to say that there has been no further communication from him.

G-2581. Have you ever forwarded to Messrs. Binny & Co. any definite suggestions from the members of the Madras Labour Union for getting over the present difficulty ?—I think you will remember that I saw you on more than one occasion, appealing to you for harmonious relations between the Madras Labour Union and Messrs. Binny & Co.

G-2582. That is not an answer to my question. Have you ever forwarded to Messrs. Binny & Co. a definite suggestion in writing for getting over the present difficulty ?—No. We have not put forward conditions in writing before you.

G-2583. I infer that the original proposals were allowed to lapse, or were rejected, by the work-people in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Union ?—I am not aware of that.

G-2584. Was it not that you wrote that letter to them and did not get a reply ?—Mr. Ubaidullah said he would place the matter before his committee on the 10th January. I have had no communication from him since that date.

G-2585. You have never, in your capacity as President of the Madras Labour Union, officially forwarded to Messrs. Binny and Co. in the name of the Madras Labour Union the proposals and conditions that you cite in your memorandum ?—No.

G-2586. *Mr. Cliff*: Did I not understand that Messrs. Binny & Co. do not acknowledge letters from this particular trade union ?—That is so.

G-2587. *Mr. Kay*: I think we corresponded considerably in 1926 ?—Yes, but not since June 1928.

G-2588. I do not think we had better re-open questions of that kind. The fact remains that you have never officially formulated any such proposals as are contained in your memorandum to the managing agents of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills ?—No.

G-2589. *Col. Russell*: Is it your opinion that industrial employers should provide houses for the whole of their workers ?—I do not think that is possible. I would prefer that it should be undertaken by the Municipality.

G-2590. It should be the function of a local body ?—Yes.

G-2591. You are aware of a Report that was written in 1926 on the High Mortality in Madras. Has the Madras Corporation ever taken any action on any of the recommendations made in that Report ?—I am afraid they have not.

Mr. Cliff.—Was the report made to the Madras Corporation ?—

Colonel Russell: It was made to Government, and forwarded to the Corporation.

G-2592. *Mr. Cliff*: You say that " Trade Unionism is extremely popular among the workers in Southern India ". On what do you base that statement ?—Everywhere I have been, even those places where there have been no trade unions in existence, I have been astonished how the work-people have come in large numbers to absorb the principles of trade unionism. Take Madura, for instance: I was amazed at the sense of discipline they showed.

G-2593. You say " Among the workers there is also a widespread fear that membership of a trade union would mean loss of employment or some mark of disfavour from the employer ". Is there good ground for that belief in the minds of the work-people ?—I could mention more than one instance in which an employer has penalized prominent members of a trade union.

G-2594. Then you say " Our Union has discouraged the idea of resorting to strikes except as a last resort". Is that in pursuit of a definite policy of your trade union ?—It is absolutely a definite policy. With reference to Messrs. Binny & Co., there were small strikes in 1927. They were unauthorised by the executive of the Union, and, although it meant a certain amount of

130

unpopularity with the workers, we passed resolutions at our public meetings disapproving of these strikes because they had not been sanctioned by the executive. I could mention several instances in which the workers at the Choolai Mill would have gone on strike but for the restraining influence of the Madras Labour Union.

G.-2595. Then you say " Trade unionists may generally be trusted to keep within the law, even when they are on strike ". Have you any experience in connection with that statement ?—Yes. Last April there was a strike in the Choolai Mill which lasted fourteen days, and I think the Commissioner of Police will bear testimony to the fact that there was not the least trace of trouble. He reduced the numbers of police in attendance down to the barest minimum.

G-2596. With your experience, may I ask whether you believe that the work-people in Southern India are competent to act as trade unionists and rule their own affairs ?—Within limits, I should say, yes. They may not be able to take decisions on large issues, but I have practical experience of the men in Choolai mills being able to hold their own before a committee of enquiry without any outside assistance whatsoever; they were quite able to argue their own case with effect.

G-2597. In your memorandum you refer to a dispute and say that your union has prevented strikes even when there was provocation. Then you refer to an enquiry which was held. In finishing that subject you say: "We regret to state, however, that the management has sought various pretexts for putting off the grant of many of these concessions". Do I understand that the Union and the particular company concerned put their case in front of the enquiry committee ?—This is in relation to the introduction of the two-loom system in the Choolai mills. The men waited for about 3 months. We tried in vain to get the Labour Commissioner to intervene. Ultimately the men stopped work but did not come out of the department. Mr. Slater, who was then the Commissioner went out and telephoned me whether I would use my influence to get them back to work if a committee of enquiry was appointed. I believe they must have stopped work only for an hour. A committee was appointed, of three men qualified to report on the question. The men's demand originally was 75 per cent. wages on the second loom. They had already put forward certain complaints about the difficulty of working on two looms under the conditions then existing in the Choolai mill. When the committee reported we found that it justified every statement made by the work-people, and although the original demand was only for 75 per cent. of the wages, the committee recommended 80 per cent. Then the management refused to accept the award of the committee, and then the weavers compromised. They accepted the 75 per cent. on condition that they would be given 15 days' privilege leave on half wages for those who had put in 5 years' service, maternity benefits and various other concessions. The Choolai mill, it is our complaint, has never made any genuine effort to carry out these promises made before the Labour Commissioner in October 1928.

G-2598. Has that been reported to the Labour Commissioner ?—It was reported to the Labour Commissioner. We gave formal notice of a strike. I think we gave them one week; they asked for an extension of the time

we extended it by another three days ; and the men finally struck work, after giving due notice, on 1st April 1929. On the 14th the management agreed to some of the conditions. They put up a notice in English which I did not understand ; and so I telephoned to the manager. He said he could not understand it. He consulted his English weaving master ; he said he could not understand it either. So I was asked to consult the solicitor who had drafted the notice to make out the sense of the notice. I said it was not my business.

G-2599. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you personally think that 80 per cent. of the wages to a weaver on a second loom is a reasonable proportion of the wages ?—We only demanded 75 per cent., but the Committee recommended 80 per cent.

G-2600. I know of no place where 75 per cent. or 80 per cent. is given. Usually, it is under 33 per cent. ; in Bombay it is 50 per cent.?—It depends on what the wage is on the first loom.

G-2601. *Mr. Cliff*: "There is little disposition on the part of the Government to take any action until an industrial dispute has culminated in a strike." That seems to be a very serious statement. Can you substantiate it ?—I have just given the instance of the Choolai Mills.

G-2602. Are there any other instances ?—There was a strike in the Electric Supply Corporation, I think, in June 1920 or 1921. The men were quite prepared for arbitration.

G-2603. Have you no more recent cases in which either of the sides saw the Labour Commissioner in Madras ?—The Labour Commissioner has never been to a single meeting of any labour union, except once last December when Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra was here.

G-2604. My point is not whether he attends the meetings or not; my point is whether trade unions who are in difficulties with employers can approach the Labour Commissioner and whether there is a possibility of his giving assistance ?—We have asked the Labour Commissioner for assistance. I can produce letters which were written to us by the Labour Commissioner. The answer always is "Under what authority can I intervene unless both sides approach me for my assistance."

G-2605. Is he not able to use his good offices, without any statutory powers ?—I do not know whether he uses those powers, or whether he has those powers.

G-2606. In one place you say that the Union feels that the necessity has disappeared for a Labour Commissioner. Later on you say : "There should be a separate officer to deal with the problems of the Depressed Classes." Do I understand that it is your view that there should be a department of labour in Madras or it is not ?—I should like to see a Labour Department which deals with the question of collecting statistics regarding wages and various aspects of work of industrial labour. It should be in the hands of a man trained for that work, and he should not be saddled with all the miscellaneous duties that the Labour Commissioner in Madras now is.

131

G-2607. Would he only be an intelligence and statistical officer, or is there any necessity for mediation at all in industrial disputes or when disputes are apprehended ?—If the Government of Madras is ever going to take action under the Trade Disputes Act, there is no need for any union to approach the Labour Commissioner. For instance, in the last strike at Papanasam, the Labour Commissioner was at Madura. I interviewed both the Member of Government in charge of the subject as well as the Secretary in charge of the subject, and they said to me that the Labour Commissioner could not possibly even visit the place and make enquiries, because he could do so only when he was asked by both sides. We have come to the conclusion that the Labour Commissioner is not really of any use in the prevention or settlement of industrial disputes.

G-2608. You say : "the problems of labour would be more satisfactorily handled by an Indian officer than a European." Can you tell the Commission where the Government might look for the recruiting of Indians who have got special knowledge of labour problems ?—I think there would be men available who have first-hand knowledge of industry.

G-2609. Can you suggest possible sources of recruitment for this particular work ?

Mr. Sastri: Mr. Shiva Rao is not asking for any other sources of recruitment than the existing sources. He merely suggests that instead of a European there should be an Indian.

Mr. Cliff: I understand that. But it would help me personally if I could know the sources from which Mr. Shiva Rao wants to draw men who have special knowledge of labour problems. Anyhow, I will not press it.

G-2610. You say : "A perusal of the list of Labour Commissioners will convince the Commission how lightly the Government has regarded the duties of that officer. There have been Labour Commissioners appointed for a few days or weeks." What suggestions have you got to make for altering that in order that the office may be more permanent ?—In 1926 there were, I think, six Labour Commissioners altogether.

G-2611. Was that an exceptional year ?—There were 4 I think in the previous year : I am speaking from memory. I think that scandal was pointed out by the Madras press. Mr. Slater held the office for about 3 years, and Mr. Gray has been in office for under a year.

G-2612. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What was his previous experience ?—He was the Registrar of Co-operative Societies and Collector of Tanjore.

G-2613. *Mr. Cliff*: You refer in your own memorandum to the question of drink and you talk about *toddy* shops. Have you got any proposals to make for dealing with that problem ?—The work-people themselves admit that as long as these shops are on the way to and from the mills it is impossible to overcome the temptation in view of the fact that they are accustomed to drink. They themselves are quite willing to see the drink shops removed far away from those surroundings.

G-2614. You say that there is a very considerable body of work-people who would really like the temptation to be removed ?—I think they would.

We have put it before the meetings of our union. I should not say that there was great enthusiasm for the proposal but they certainly are willing that it should happen.

G-2615. They are all in favour of it ?—Yes. We tried a small experiment in the union to see whether that would have any effect. We tried a small coffee shop, and we gave them things to eat at cost price. But it did not work, because the men for a few days after the pay day were not able to buy for cash. I think many *toddy* shops give things on credit. We felt it would not be good to encourage credit sales.

G-2616. Have you any knowledge whether the *toddy* shops give drink on credit ?—I have been told so ; the man pays at the end of the month - a great many of them, but not all.

G-2617. It is a proposal not only for restriction but for alternative facilities to be provided ?—I should like to see a workmen's club started where the men could go after mill hours, where they could have a wash, something to eat and some form of amusement which would keep them away from the *toddy* shops. I think that would succeed.

G-2618. I want to ask your opinion with regard to the meal hours given during midday. Have you any suggestion to make as to what the length of the meal hour should be ?—I think 1½ hours would be much better than an hour, because very often they do not get sufficient time for rest after meals ; especially in a hot climate 1½ hours would be much better than an hour.

G-2619. Would 1½ hours be adequate here in South India ?—We are reckoning on an 8-hour day. If it is an 8-hour day, and if men could leave their homes later than they do and get back earlier than they do then 1½ hours, I think, would be enough.

G-2620. *Mr. Ahmed* : Is it a fact that infant mortality is very high in Madras ?—Yes, it is very high in certain parts of the city.

G-2621. Is it one of the reasons that there is insufficiency of milk-supply ?—When we took down the family budgets of 195 women we found that hardly half a dozen had milk included in their budgets.

G-2622. I take it that they cannot use sufficient quantity of milk on account of the poor wages they get ?—Yes. It is also due to the conditions under which they live. The maternity hospital is a couple of miles away, and there is always the feeling in the minds of the poor people that admission into large hospitals is not an easy matter. It may be merely a prejudice, but there it is.

G-2623. I suppose you will agree that the arrangements for welfare work made by the Carnatic and Buckingham mills are quite satisfactory, for instance, the play-ground that I saw is kept very neat and clean ?—That touches only a very small part of the population of that area ; the population of that area is about 30,000.

G-2624. You want more development ?—I should like to see all the slum areas removed altogether and acquired by the Corporation and houses built there.

132

G-2625. In some of the mills we found that the employers were supplying milk to the babies of their workers. I suppose if the mills in Madras follow a similar practice it will be of very great help to the workers ?—But it would touch only a very small portion of the population of that area.

G-2626. I find that Choolai mills, for instance, do not have any provision for education or for welfare work at all ?—No.

G-2627. In the other mills also, I take it, there is no provision ?—No.

G-2628. You are in favour of these mills providing amenities for the work-people ?—Yes.

G-2629. You have stated that the problems of labour would be more satisfactorily handled by an Indian officer than a European. You have made a suggestion that the department of labour should be in charge of a minister responsible to the legislature ?—Yes ; I want a minister of labour.

G-2630. In all the provinces as well as in the Central Government ?—Yes.

G-2631. I suppose that if these persons are responsible to the legislature they will be able to discharge their duties better ?—I want that prominence should be given to the problems relating to labour.

G-2632. If these people are appointed it will be a great asset for the purpose of settling disputes ?—Yes, possibly for preventing disputes.

G-2633. It will also be good for the workers as well as for the employers ?—I would begin with using them for preventing disputes.

G-2634. I think you have referred in your memorandum that the Government of Madras did not take any action in the matter of framing rules under the Trade Disputes Act ?—The Madras Government rules were ready only early in February.

G-2635. You are of opinion that the sooner the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act are given effect to, the better it will be ?—I do not commit myself to the whole of the Trade Disputes Act.

G-2636. To which provisions of the Act would you attach importance ?—I approve of the machinery for arbitration and conciliation.

G-2637. The sooner those are given effect to the better it is ?—Yes.

G-2638. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : A provident fund is a fund to which the workman subscribes and to which also the employer subscribes ?—Yes.

G-2639. You say that the workers would prefer to have a provident fund in place of the gratuity fund which is in vogue in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. The only difference I can see is that under the gratuity fund the workman does not subscribe part of his earnings, whereas under the provident fund he would. Do you think the workman would prefer to subscribe to the present gratuity fund an equal amount from his own wages and derive the benefit of the fund at the time of retirement ?—As far as the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills are concerned, the feeling is that they cannot be certain of the gratuity being given to them. If it is a provident fund, they feel that there is a greater certainty of their being paid the money.

G-2640. You realize that in every provident fund although the worker always gets his own contribution he would only get the empolyer's contribution under certain restrictions. *I do not see much difference between a gratuity fund and a provident fund ?*—There is this difference that in regard to the provident fund there would be no loss of the employer's contribution even if there was a strike.

G-2641. Sometimes that is one of the rules that would break the service. As far as I know, one of the conditions under which the employer's contribution is given is that there should be no break in the service. *I have read the* gratuity fund rules, and I think the workmen will get more under a gratuity fund than under a provident fund. I am wondering whether the workmen would really prefer a provident fund as it exists elsewhere to the present gratuity fund ?—I have not compared the two.

G-2642. I think the Company might agree with you and say : " We will now change the gratuity fund to a provident fund." Whatever may have been the case in the past, am I right in considering that the present policy of your union is to improve the economic lot of the worker ?—Absolutely.

G-2643. It is not the policy of the union to use the power that the committee may get for eventual political purposes ?—No, certainly not.

G-2644. I think you will agree with me that it would be much easier to have a close connection and good feeling between capital and labour in unions of that type than if the unions fall into the hands of those who are trying to further extreme political measures ?—Quite. But we do think that a trade union has the right to put forward a demand, for instance, for the extension of the suffrage or for a better representation of labour in the legislature.

G-2645. That will be for the benefit of the worker ; but primarily your policy is for the improvement of the economic welfare of labour ?—It is because we have that in mind that we have attempted as far as possible to have on the executive of the union members of different political parties so that they may neutralize each other's politics.

G-2646. Then, you will agree that there is a movement in other parts of the country to form bodies representing labour with extreme political views ?—There is a tendency in certain quarters to utilize trade unions for other than trade union purposes.

G-2647. So it would be an advantage, where in a city like this you have two unions whose main views are the same, if you could come to some sort of friendly arrangement and not be competing with each other. I read the constitution of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees Union and I find that the union is in a position to elect, if it chooses, half of its executive from outsiders. Therefore the main difference of opinion is whether the members of that union should consist only of employees of that firm or whether it should include employees of other firms. I also see your point that it might be to the advantage of the workers of the other union if they could be members of a big union in which workers representing bigger concerns were also members ?—Also there is a strong sentiment in favour of keeping the oldest union in India as it is rather than break it up.

G-2648. We live in an age of compromise. Do you think there would be a possibility of something like the following taking place : Allowing the present Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Union to remain, its membership being confined to members of those mills, having another union in which the membership would be confined to the workers in the other mills, and having your union acting as a liaison between the two and giving advice to both. Your union will eventually occupy the position of a Federation ; you can allow the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills union the right to refuse to come out on strike if it did not want to, if the other union found it necessary to do so. I could see that the members of that union might not wish to come out, and if there was one union there might be less safeguard whereas if there were separate unions they might feel greater safeguard on that point ?—I should like to have more time to consider that question.

G-2649. I take it you are prepared to explore various avenues by which some sort of arrangement could be come to for getting away from the present obviously undesirable state of affairs ?—I am prepared to explore all avenues.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninety-Third Meeting.

MADRAS.

Friday, 7th March 1930.

PRESENT:

The Right Honourable V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. (*Presiding*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.

SIR ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

MR. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. K. Kay.
Mr. B. SHIVA RAO, M.A.
Mr. JAMAL MAHOMED SAHIB BAHADUR.
Mr. MUHAMMAD UBAIDULLAH SAHIB.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Mrs. VENKATASUBHA RAO, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. A. G. LEACH, Secretary, Public Works and Labour Department, Mr. J. GRAY, Commissioner of Labour, Mr. S. A. CARTLEDGE, Chief Inspector of Factories, Madras, Captain N. R. UBHAYA, I.M.S., Director of Public Health, representatives of the Madras Government.

G-2650. *Mr. Sastri*: Mr. Leach, you are the Secretary to Government, Public Works and Labour Department. Is your Department under a Minister or Member of Council?—(*Mr. Leach*): My department is under a Member of Council, not a Minister.

G-2651. How long have you held this appointment?—Ten or eleven months.

G-2652. With regard to housing, has any question of policy been settled as to the apportionment of the financial burden between the Central Government, the Provincial Governments, the various Municipal bodies and the industries themselves?—I cannot say off-hand, because housing schemes in municipal towns and the Corporation of Madras are dealt with by the Local Self-Government Department and not the Labour Department. But as regards the depressed classes with whom Mr. Gray particularly deals, the Labour Department provides house sites for houses to be built on and the cost is recovered in instalments from the people who take up these sites. The instalments are usually spread over 10 or 20 years.

134

G-2653. *Mr. Cliff*: Has the Commissioner of Labour got statutory powers with regard to housing the depressed classes? Can he, for instance, acquire lands for this purpose?—He cannot acquire lands within the city of Madras. I think he can do it outside the city of Madras. (*Mr. Gray*). It all depends on whether in the particular area it is customary for Government to provide house sites for depressed classes or not. The question arose in Madras and went up to the High Court where it was decided that it was not customary in Madras City to provide house sites for depressed classes. Practically all the work that the Labour Department does in the way of housing the depressed classes is confined to agricultural labour in the *cheris*.

G-2654. *Mr. Sastri*: Apart from the depressed classes, the question of housing labour in general may be said to be left undecided?—(*Mr. Leach*): As regards labour in general, Yes. (*Mr. Gray*): There is one case in Madras city where we built 200 houses for labourers, whose houses had been burnt down during the time of the troubles in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills ten or eleven years ago. Government built two blocks of houses; for one of the blocks we had to acquire land, while for the other there was already land at the disposal of Government. Government recover from the people monthly instalments ranging from Rs. 1-11-0 to Rs. 3-13-0, so that at the end of 20 years the houses will belong to the labourers themselves.

G-2655. We have been informed that the Corporation of Madras have set apart a considerable sum of money for building houses for labourers. Have you any knowledge of that?—(*Mr. Leach*): I have heard of it, but I have no official knowledge of it.

G-2656. Would that require the sanction of the Government of Madras?—I presume it would; I really cannot say what the financial powers of the Corporation are.

G-2657. Does the Government of Madras give any grant-in-aid in this respect?—I am afraid, I cannot say.

G-2658. *Sir Alexander Murray*: What are the various departments of Government that are concerned in the administration of matters dealing with labour?—The Factories Act is administered by the Development Department and general questions of labour are dealt with in the Public Works and Labour Department. Papers connected with these questions go up to the Home Member who is in charge of these subjects. Anything that local bodies may do in the way of housing and health of the labourers are dealt with by the Local Self-Government Department in charge of the Minister for Local Self-Government.

G-2659. Would you send us a note explaining in detail the various departments which deal directly or indirectly with the administration of labour matters and the Members or Ministers in whose charge they are?—Yes.

G-2660. Has Government any power under the Co-operative Societies Act or any Local Self-Government Act to acquire lands for workmen's houses outside the city of Madras?—With regard to acquisition of lands for building houses I cannot say anything definitely off-hand. I will let you have the information in the note. Every year Government provides a certain sum of money

to be given to Co-operative Building Societies as loans ; the Societies lend the money to their members and the members build their own houses.

G-2661. How many building societies are there ?—I am sorry I cannot say off-hand.

G-2662. Who is in charge of the administration of the Co-operative Societies Act ?—The Registrar of Co-operative Societies who is attached to the Development Department under the Minister for Development.

G-2663. Who deals with the recommendations of the Advisory Board attached to the Labour Commissioner ?—They are dealt with in the Public Works and Labour Department, and eventually go to the Home Member.

G-2664. Does the Madras District Municipalities Act give power in the case of congested areas in towns outside the city of Madras to open them up or to call upon the owners of these slums to open them up and improve them ?—I am afraid I cannot say that.

G-2665. *Mr. Joshi* : What is the policy of the Madras Government with regard to the use of Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code against certain people who take interest in labour matters ?—It is a question of administration of Criminal law dealt with by the Public Department. I am afraid I cannot answer questions connected with law and order. I have nothing whatever to do with the administration of law and order.

G-2666. Will it be possible for the Government of Madras to send a representative so that the Commission might ascertain the views of the Government with regard to the use of Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code against people who take interest in labour matters ?—The use of the Criminal Procedure Code in matters of law and order is made by the District Magistrate and the Magistrates under him. It is not dealt with as a matter between employer and employee ; it is simply a matter of keeping the peace.

G-2667. There must be some policy underlying the use of that section. My impression is that the section is used in the case of certain industries only, and those are the industries where the employers happen to be Europeans. That is my experience and I want to ascertain from the Government whether it is in fact so or not ?—I an afraid I cannot answer that.

G-2668. *Mr. Cliff* : Is a meeting of work-people that may lead to a strike considered illegal ?—I should say, not ; I am not a legal expert.

G-2669. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : Is prevention or settlement of industrial disputes a concern of the Public Department alone or of the Labour Department also ?—It also concerns the Labour Department.

G-2670. When Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code is used in any place, is a reference made to your department ?—No, I do not think so.

G-2671. Take the case of the use of the section against a certain labour leader in Madura ; was a reference made to you before or after the section was used ?—No.

G-2672. Were you never informed that the person upon whom this section was served filed a petition before the Additional District Magistrate saying that his object was merely to collect material to help the Sub-Committee of the

135

Whitley Commission that was visiting Madura ? Do you know that the petition was rejected ?—I am not aware of it.

G-2673. Is action under the Trade Disputes Act taken by your department ?—Yes.

G-2674. Are applications under the Act made to you as Secretary in charge of the department ?—Yes.

G-2675. Did you receive any application from the workers or from any one on behalf of the workers at Papanasam for the appointment of a court of enquiry under section 3 of the Trade Disputes Act ? What action did you take on that application ?—The application was rejected as it did not comply with the requirements of the rules under the Act.

G-2676. Suppose another application was made which was in conformity with the requirements of the Act ?—It would be scrutinized again in the light of all the circumstances then existing.

G-2677. I have a letter from Papanasam forwarding to me a copy of the Government order. After pointing out certain defects in the application, the Government say, " it should not be assumed that they would have taken action had the application been presented in proper form, for upon a consideration of circumstances they are of opinion that no useful purpose would be served by setting up a court of enquiry at the present moment ". Is that information correct ?—Yes.

G-2678. Even if the application is made in proper form Government are not going to take any action in connection with the strike ?—The order was issued on the 27th of February.

G-2679. It is only quite recently. Do you think that circumstances might have altered in the interval which might lead Government to change its opinion ?—It is possible.

G-2680. When there is an industrial dispute or when one is apprehended, how does the Labour Commissioner intervene ? Has he to take orders from you or can he act on his own initiative ?—The Commissioner of Labour is authorized to tender his offices to settle the dispute.

G-2681. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is that on his own initiative without being asked by either party to the dispute ?—I think so, yes.

G-2682. Is that under the original instructions to the Labour Commissioner or the new instructions since the passing of the Trade Disputes Act ?—These instructions were issued in December 1928 ; the Trade Disputes Act was passed in 1929.

G-2683. The Labour Commissioner is alleged to have refused to do anything unless he was asked to do so by both the parties. Has he no discretion to intervene on his own responsibility merely to try to smoothen matters, not necessarily to appoint a court of enquiry, but to get at the facts of the case and talk the matter over with both sides ?—Yes.

G-2684. Even before the strike actually occurs ?—Yes.

G-2685. Was not the Labour Commissioner at Madura when the Papanasam strike had been in progress for some time ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : Yes, he was.

G-2686. Was not an application made direct to the Commissioner of Labour to visit the place and hold an investigation ?—Yes.

G-2687. Did he comply with the request of the strikers ?—No.

G-2688. In your memorandum, dealing with the question of possible amendments to the Trade Unions Act you say that it does not seem expedient to thrust between the employer and the workmen " the irritating intervention of irresponsible outsiders." Do you mean that all outsiders are irresponsible and is it your desire to keep out all outsiders because they are irresponsible ?—(*Mr. Leach*) : I have nothing more to add to what is stated in the Government memorandum. The expression used there is " irresponsible outsiders "; it does not mean that all outsiders are irresponsible.

G-2689. Would an outsider be considered irresponsible for the purposes of the amendment of this Act if he did not agree with the points of view of the employer and the Government ?—No. Lower down in the paragraph, the Government suggest that the number of outsiders should be considerably reduced.

G-2690. Even then you may not be able to keep out irresponsible outsiders. In page 5 of his latest report to Government the Commissioner of Labour points out that one important factor adverse to registration of trade unions is the fact that the employers do not as a rule recognize the unions although they are registered. You have made no reference to that point in your memorandum. Is it because that the Government disagrees with the view of the Labour Commissioner ?—No, the report was received after the memorandum had been printed.

G-2691. *Mr. Cliff* : In the preface to the Government memorandum they say that they consider that without an enquiry into the conditions of agricultural labour it is impossible to obtain an accurate idea of the general labour conditions in the province. Is that meant to declare that this Commission under its terms of reference cannot give an accurate idea of the general labour conditions in industry ?—As the preface goes on to say, Government's intention is to suggest that industrial labour and agricultural labour are so closely interrelated that it is difficult to study the conditions of industrial labour as being apart from the general standard of housing and conditions of life in the country.

G-2692. Has the Madras Government made representations to the Central Government that the Royal Commission on Industrial Labour would be unable to give an accurate report of industrial labour conditions unless the conditions of agricultural labour were also brought within the terms of reference ?—I cannot say off-hand. I do not know what reply the Madras Government gave the Government of India to their reference with regard to the subjects to be dealt with by the Royal Commission. I think the Local Government suggested to the Government of India that it would be useful if the Commission saw something of the conditions in the ordinary villages apart from the conditions in industrial towns.

136

G-2693. Has the Madras Government made an enquiry into agricultural labour conditions ?—Enquiries have been made at different times for different purposes, but not on any large scale.

G-2694. Would you furnish the Commission with the results of your enquiries into agricultural labour conditions which would be of assistance to the Commission ?—Reference has been made to such enquiries in the course of the memorandum. There is nothing more to be furnished.

G-2695. Again the Madras Government say that it is not clear why labour on plantations is regarded differently from other forms of agricultural labour. Is that a representation which has been made to the Central Government ?—I cannot say that.

G-2696. Probably you could tell us after enquiry. What is the objection to the Commission investigating into conditions of plantation labour without at the same time investigating into agricultural labour generally ?—I think the preface and the general sketch of labour and its movement by Sir George Paddison which follows it as an annexure are intended to show that it is difficult to treat industrial labour altogether apart from agricultural labour.

G-2697. Could we take it that the general sketch of labour and its movement by Sir George Paddison which has been included in the preface to the Government memorandum is really intended to put the Commission in possession of the information which the Madras Government thinks it ought to have ?—Yes.

G-2698. Having given this information contained in the annexure, is the Madras Government satisfied that the Commission can go on with its work ?—I cannot say what the opinion of the Madras Government is.

G-2699. Has the Commissioner of Labour got any representative at Madura to deal with matters arising out of the Trade Disputes Act ?—No, not as regards Trade Disputes.

G-2700. I understood that the instructions to the Labour Commissioner were that he could try and use his good offices to help the people to a settlement ?—Yes.

G-2701. The Collector at Madura informed the Commission that he had reported confidentially to Government regarding the possibility of a strike at Madura. How does the Labour Commissioner operate in a case of that kind ? Has any action been taken first of all in the Madura dispute ?—No action has been taken in my department.

We have an officer of the Government at Madura who served a certain person with an order under section 144 preventing them from addressing meetings of work-people employed in the Madura Mills, because he thought there was a possibility of a strike or a breach of peace occurring. That is the reason for the order.

G-2702. In pursuance of the policy that is spelt out in the instructions to the Labour Commissioner, is it possible to tell us what action the Government has taken in that particular case to try and prevent a strike occurring ?—I can only answer what has happened in my department.

G-2703. Is it possible for you to make enquiries and let the Commission know whether the Government did in fact take any action ?—It is a department with which I am not concerned. If a request was made by the Commission for information, I presume Government will supply the same.

G-2704. I would like to have the information as to what action Government took in this particular case to try and prevent a strike occurring.

Mr. Sastri: Do you feel precluded from answering that question, because the Collector's report is confidential ?

Sir Victor Sassoon: It is not a question of the contents of the report; it is a question of the machinery that the Government sets in motion on receipt of the information from the Collector ?—Yes.

G-2705. *Mr. Cliff*: With regard to the questionnaire of the Royal Commission on Labour what was the procedure followed by the Madras Government to circulate it to the employers, the work-people and the various other bodies interested in the question ?—It was published in the local papers and copies were made available to anybody who asked for it.

G-2706. Would a copy be sent to an official like the Collector of Madura ?—Probably not. I do not think he was specifically asked to answer the questions.

G-2707. Would a copy be sent to the employers in the Madura Mills ?—I do not think so.

Sir Victor Sassoon: Was not the Government of Madras asked to supply a list of employers and others to whom the questionnaire might be sent ?—I think so; a list was supplied.

G-2708. Do you not think that the employers and the work-people at Madura should have been added to that list as being the proper people to whom the questionnaire should be sent ?—I do not remember what the method of circulation was; I can ascertain and let you know.

G-2709. I take it that the Collector of Madura sent his note to the Government in the Public Department ?—Yes.

G-2710. I am trying to see exactly the machinery by which your instructions to the Labour Commissioner are carried out. You ask him to do his best to use his good offices to prevent any disputes that are likely to take place. If he does not have any representatives in industrial centres outside Madras and if he does not visit these centres himself how can your orders be carried out ?—That is a difficulty. There is a further order which directs the Collector to give the Commissioner of Labour full intimation about strikes and disputes.

G-2711. But the Collector reports to the Public Department and the Commissioner merely depends upon the Public Department sending on these reports to him ?—Usually in accordance with these instructions, the Collectors do send reports to the Commissioner of Labour.

G-2712. What is the date of these instructions ?—12th June 1929.

G-2713. When we asked this question, the Collector of Madura, as far as I understood him, said that all that he had to do was to send up cases of accidents under the Workmen's Compensation Act and that he had nothing

137

to do with sending up reports about labour disputes to the Commissioner of Labour. He would however, have no objection to ascertain the facts if the Commissioner of Labour, who had no representative of his own at Madura, asked him to do so ?—The instruction is quite clear; it is possible that the Collector was not aware of it.

G-2714. Does the Commissioner of Labour merely rest on that instruction; or does he take any action, does he visit the place himself on getting the news ?—(*Mr. Gray*): If I see in the newspapers or hear from indirect sources that there is a dispute in any place and if the Collector has not reported to me about it, I ask him to report before I visit the place and ascertain the facts myself.

G-2715. You did not hear of a volcano at Madura ?—No. I did not.

G-2716. But everybody was sitting on the edge of a volcano; it was extraordinary that the Commissioner of Labour should know nothing about it. If the Commissioner of Labour, who I take it is supposed to be more qualified to deal with these subjects, does not go down himself or send trained representatives down, are his duties merely confined to the town of Madras in the case of trying to avoid disputes ?—(*Mr. Leach*): No.

G-2717. In other provinces there is no Commissioner of Labour. Therefore, the district officer considers it his duty to do what he can to carry out the instructions which you have given to the Commissioner of Labour. But, here in Madras you have a Commissioner of Labour who apparently does not go down to the districts when trouble is apprehended even when asked to, and the Collector himself seems to consider that it is not his duty to interfere unless he is specifically asked. You therefore seem to fall in between two stools because you have got an additional official which other provinces have not ?—I think you refer to the particular case of Madura.

G-2718. I am taking a case where the Commissioner was asked to come down and make an investigation. How can a Commissioner know what the facts of the case are unless he goes down, or unless he has representatives down there ?—He would receive reports in that case from the District Magistrate.

G-2719. Is the District Magistrate the official who, in addition to his ordinary work, sends for the representatives of labour and tries to find out whether their grievances are more or less just, and who gets into touch with the representatives of employers ?—(*Mr. Gray*): Otherwise he cannot supply the information which, according to Government instructions, he should supply.

G-2720. Has the instruction which has been given to the Commissioner of Labour been passed on to the district magistrates and collectors, namely, to do their best to bring both sides together and act as a lubricant ?—(*Mr. Leach*): Yes.

G-2721. It seems extraordinary that, if he has had that order, this particular Collector should pay he did not consider that it was his business, but that it was merely his duty to forward on any requests he had to Government, and ask for instructions. Do you consider that the machinery, as now administered, is satisfactory from the point of view of averting disputes before they take place ?—(*Mr. Gray*): The difficulty is that in some cases a strike occurs suddenly without any formulation of demands.

G-2722. I am taking cases where a strike has not taken place, but where a dispute is apprehended. Take, for instance, Madura where they say they are sitting on a volcano because a strike is apprehended ?—So far as the Madura case is concerned, I can only say I have no information from the Collector as to the existence of any friction.

G-2723. Do you consider that your machinery for trying to prevent strikes which are apprehended taking place is working satisfactorily ?—I think the answer is that we are talking about a particular case in which apparently the instructions have not been carried out.

G-2724. Have you any method of finding out whether instructions to similar places elsewhere are now carried out ?—Labour disputes always come to my notice eventually, and this is one of the very few cases I can recall in my short experience in which I have not had previous intimation.

G-2725. If you had had proper machinery would you not have known that trouble was brewing, or are you in the position now that you can only know when a strike has occurred when it has taken place ?—It is not correct to say that I am in that position. In many cases I have got information from Collectors of the existence of friction before a strike.

G-2726. But not in all cases ?—The only two places where I have not been informed are Madura and Papanasam.

G-2727. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Have you introduced any legislation of any description dealing with the welfare of labour that has gone through the Legislative Council ?—(*Mr. Leach*): No, I do not think so.

G-2728. Have you submitted to the Government of India any proposals for legislation dealing with labour matters where previous sanction of the Government of India is required ?—Not in my time.

(Mr. Leach, then withdrew).

G-2729. *Mr. Sastri*: Mr. Gray, what experience have you had in your Department; how long have you held the office, and how long has the office itself been in existence ?—(*Mr. Gray*): The office in one form or another has been in existence for about ten years. Originally it started as the Department for the Amelioration of the Depressed Classes. Various other duties were added on, and about 8 or 9 years ago the title was changed to Commissioner of Labour. I have held the office myself since the beginning of May last year.

G-2730. Mr. Cartledge, how long have you been Chief Inspector of Factories ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*): Since 1918.

G-2731. What was your previous office ?—Assistant Engineer in the Corporation of Madras.

G-2732. Dr. Ubhaya, what is your experience ?—(*Dr. Ubhaya*): I have been in my office a year and nine months now. Previously I was Assistant Director of Public Health.

G-2733. What are the qualifications that you possess for this office ?—I possess the Diploma of Public Health (Scotland).

G-2734. Does that require a course of instruction in public health ?—yes.

138

G-2735. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Taking Sir George Paddison's note, it is said that the average wage of an ordinary unskilled labourer in the agency tracts mentioned therein, is only about 2 annas a day. That note was made some years ago. Are there districts where the ordinary average wage of an unskilled labourer is still 2 annas a day ?—(*Mr. Gray*): I have no later information.

G-2736. Have you any reason to think that wages have risen in those agency tracts ?—I cannot say.

G-2737. You are Commissioner under the Workmen's Compensation Act, ?—Yes, for the whole Province.

G-2738. What machinery have you got in the districts ? Supposing a labourer has an accident, who is there before whom he can appear in the district ?—He applies to me under the Act, and in the course of my tours I hear those cases as near as possible to the place where the man comes from.

G-2739. Is an uneducated workman, when he has had an accident, supposed to write to Madras and ask that his case should be considered ?—He has to apply under the Act, yes. As a matter of fact, I have informal arrangements under which, as soon as I hear of an accident—I get accident reports from the Factories staff.

G-2740. However small the accident ?—All fatal and serious accidents, as defined by the Act. A trivial injury is not reported.

G-2741. Do your Assistant Factory Inspectors in the districts inform workers of their rights under the Act ?—In 1927 we drew up a short summary of the Act. That was circulated to factories with the request that it should be posted up. It was prepared in English and translated into the vernacular.

G-2742. If there are workers who cannot read, or who do not appreciate the matter, is anything done by the Assistant Factory Inspectors to inform the workers of their rights ? When an Assistant Factory Inspector gets a report to say that a worker has had a serious accident, does he get into touch with that worker at all ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*): The Inspector gets into touch with the particular workman, and tells him exactly what he is entitled to, how to put in his claim, and everything about it.

G-2743. How soon after an accident would the Factory Inspector hear about it ?—At once, but unless it is a fatal accident, he leaves it to his next tour for investigation.

G-2744. How many times a year does he inspect the factories in his district ?—Perennial factories are inspected twice, and seasonal factories are inspected once, each season.

G-2745. So six months may pass before he investigates an accident ?—Yes. (*Mr. Gray*): When I receive the Factory Inspector's report about an accident I write to the employer concerned and draw his attention to the relevant sections of the Act, and ask him what he proposes to do in the matter. I do that without waiting to receive an application from the workman.

G-2746. Do you feel that the rights of the ignorant worker are protected satisfactorily ? Dou you think that your machinery is efficient ?—All I

can say is that the workmen are getting more and more to know of the existence of the Act, and their rights under it.

G-2747. You are relying on the Chief Inspector of Factories' staff ?—To a certain extent.

G-2748. That is your machinery really ?—Yes. I also keep newspaper cuttings about accidents, and in that case also I write to the employer drawing his attention to the relevant sections of the Act, and asking him what he proposes to do.

G-2749. Do you feel that your machinery as regards incipient disputes is satisfactory ?—I think I may claim that on the whole it is satisfactory.

G-2750. How many cases have there been, in which there has been an incipient dispute, which has come to a satisfactory conclusion through the offices of the local Government representatives ?—My experience of the Department is only since last May. During that time we have had very little labour trouble in Madras Presidency.

G-2751. Have you any case in which the local Government representative has been able, by his good offices, to avoid a dispute, or has tried to do so ?—So far as my own experience is concerned, I cannot at the moment recall any case in which I was called in, or in which my offices were invoked, with regard to the settlement of a dispute, before a strike occurred. I have helped in some cases after a strike has occurred.

G-2752. Have you had no case in which a District Magistrate or Collector has reported a little trouble which he was able to smooth away and where no strike in consequence took place ?—I cannot recall any.

G-2753. Would those reports come to you ?- Yes. I get information from the districts in accordance with the Government order regarding the existence of trade disputes.

G-2754. You have no reason to suspect that Government order has not been read or taken notice of, except in this one case at Madura ?—No other case occurs to me in which the instructions appear to have been neglected.

G-2755. *Mr. Cliff*: Can the Director of Public Health tell us what has been done with regard to an increased provision for water supply ?—(*Dr. Ubhaya*): The Government is encouraging the introduction of water supplies by local bodies by offering grants to the extent of about 50 per cent. of the amounts required by the local bodies.

G-2756. Have you any knowledge of the amount of money that has been spent during the last three years under this head ?—I will send in the figures.

G-2757. What is done with regard to sanitation ?—Grants are made.

G-2758. I would like to know what money has been spent in the last three years under this head also.—Very well.

G-2759. *Colonel Russell*: During the last five years how many additional medical inspectors have been appointed to supervise sanitation ?—About 51 first class sanitary inspectors.

G-2760. Health officers ?—Yes, and about 30 second-class health officers.

139

G-2761. With this increased organization I take it there has been an improvement in sanitation generally ?—Certainly.

G-2762. *Mr. Cliff*: What has been done in regard to housing in the same period ?—It is beyond our province to do anything in regard to housing. We point out the defects in our inspection notes, which are sent to the local bodies through the District Collector.

G-2763. Has the Government no statutory powers in regard to housing ?—I do not think so.

G-2764. How many offices do you hold Mr. Gray ?—(*Mr. Gray*): My duties are rather numerous. When the post was first constituted about ten years ago the main work was the amelioration of the conditions of the depressed classes. The Labour Commissioner is also in general charge of, and has the supervision of, the criminal tribes settlements under the Criminal Tribes Act. He is also in charge of the work of reclamation of Kallars in the Madura and Kalem districts. He is also the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation and the Registrar of Trade Unions. He has also certain duties in connection with industrial troubles and disputes. He is also in charge of the Quinquennial Wages Census, the census of agricultural rural wages and artisans' wages. He is also in general charge of the administration of the Indian Factories Act. He is also in charge of emigration.

G-2765. What is your staff ?—So far as the depressed classes are concerned, I have work going on in nineteen districts. In each of those districts I have separate labour officers, under whom are a number of inspectors working in connection with the question of acquisition of land for housing sites, burial grounds, pathways, and so on, the sinking of wells and the starting of schools. Each of these labour officers has also under him a number of co-operative inspectors lent by the Co-operative Department for the purpose of starting and supervising co-operative societies consisting of members of the depressed classes.

G-2766. Those are not to be confused with labour officers with regard to industrial labour ?—No. So far as the criminal tribes settlements are concerned, I have no staff working directly under me, except when the Police are managing the settlements. Most of these settlements are run by the Salvation Army or other mission bodies. There are three of them run directly by Government, the managers in charge being officers of the Police Department. So far as the Kallars reclamation is concerned, in Madura the work is done by the District Superintendent of Police with a special staff for reclamation work under him. So far as the Workmen's Compensation Act is concerned, I have no staff except my own clerical staff at headquarters, consisting of 25 clerks. So far as Trade Unions are concerned, I have no staff except my clerical staff. With regard to industrial disputes, I have no staff other than clerical. The quinquennial wages census is done through the agency of the ordinary Revenue staff, and the Commissioner of Labour has general control. The administration of factories is conducted through the Chief Inspector of Factories and his staff of inspectors and assistant inspectors.

G-2767. Are all these different subjects under one Minister ?—Different departments.

G-2768. The suggestion has been made that instead of the duties of dealing with industrial labour, and the problems arising therefrom, coming under the present Commissioner, there should be a different Department with a different Departmental Officer. Arising out of your experience, have you any views to express to the Commission on that suggestion ?—My experience is rather short. I do not know that I am prepared to give an expression of opinion at once. It has certain obvious advantages.

G-2769. The statement is made "The Government have come to the conclusion that any scheme of sickness insurance would be impracticable and is not necessary". I would like to ask the Director of Public Health whether, in his opinion, it is not necessary to make some monetary provision during sickness for industrial people ?—(*Dr. Ubhaya*) : I should think so.

G-2770. Are you in disagreement with the Government as to the necessity of it ?—I consider it is necessary.

G-2771. *Colonel Russell* : Mr. Gray, added to your other duties, do you have any connection with the control of the labour on planting estates ? Do you have any control over recruitment or inspection ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : The recruitment of labour for estates within the Presidency is not controlled.

G-2772. The Labour Commissioner has nothing to do with the labour on tea and coffee estates ?—He is interested only to the extent to which the labour is drawn from the depressed classes.

G-2773. I take it that most of the labour on these estates comes from those classes ?—Yes, a large proportion.

G-2774. In that respect you would have a direct interest ?—Yes.

G-2775. Do you, or your officers ever inspect plantations, and the housing on the plantations ?—I have inspected in one or two cases.

G-2776. On a question put to you by Mr. Cliff, you are an advisory officer, Dr. Ubhaya, and not an executive officer ?—(*Dr. Ubhaya*) : I am an advisory officer.

G-2777. When you make recommendations to local bodies with regard to housing, water supply and sanitation, what usually happens to those recommendations ?—They are mostly shelved.

G-2778. Nothing is done ?—Nothing is done.

G-2779. Under the Local Boards Act and the District Municipalities Act of 1921, these local bodies have a very large amount of power ?—Yes.

G-2780. Do you agree that these local bodies have too much power under those Acts ? I am referring particularly to public health, because that is one of the questions over which they have complete control. I want to suggest that there is too much decentralization, and that the Government should have retained more power than they did retain under those Acts ?—I quite agree.

G-2781. You say "The only large undertaking in which Government have provided housing for the labourers is the Mettur Project". That is a large colony of about 12,000 men ?—Yes.

140

G-2782. What has been provided by the Government in that Project in the way of housing ?—They have built houses.

G-2783. According to plans approved by the Public Health Department ?—Yes.

G-2784. They have provided water supplies, purified, and an underground drainage scheme ?—Yes.

G-2785. And they have provided a complete Health staff ?—Yes.

G-2786. What has been the result of all that ?—The area is practically free from epidemics.

G-2787. So that the result has been satisfactory ?—Very.

G-2788. You say "Ample facilities exist for acquisition of land for workers houses". That is in direct opposition to much of the evidence we have had elsewhere. Will you explain where in Madras ample facilities exist ?—There is the case of Buckingham Mills, and there is land at Perambur.

G-2789. You say "There should also be a statutory obligation to be borne by or shared between the employer and the local body and to some extent by the Government in the matter of the provision of housing". You are framing a Public Health Act at present, are you not ?—Yes.

G-2790. Are you suggesting to the Government that in that Bill there should be a statutory obligation to be shared between the employer, the local body and Government ?—Yes.

G-2791. Do you think any employer is going to accept a statutory obligation of that sort ?—"Employers" as used in non-planting areas should mean "local bodies". It is only in connection with planting areas that "employers" mean "planters".

G-2792. It is the local bodies really, and not employers ? Do you think it is the duty of every industrial employer to build houses for the whole of his employees ?—That is the ideal way of doing it.

G-2793. Do you think it is a duty that can be made a statutory obligation—On local bodies.

G-2794. And not on employers ?—Not so much on employers.

G-2795. Referring to the table in your memorandum in which you quote figures for various towns, I take it you are not generally satisfied that the statistics are very accurate ?—No.

G-2796. Would you say that the industries which you mention in column 3 of that table have very much influence on the death rates which you quote in column 5 ?—On account of the comparatively small proportion of labourers in those districts, it is difficult to say what proportion of the death rates in the towns under reference is due to faulty industrial conditions and what proportion is due to general insanitation.

G-2797. Take Madura as an example. The nature of the industry is textile. There are about 9,000 workers engaged in the mills in Madura. Supposing an increased mortality occurring among the textile workers of Madura. Would that influence to any great extent the general death rate of the whole

of Madura town ?—No, considering that the population of Madura town is a lakh and 38,000.

G-2798. You say " In the case of smaller industrial establishments, conditions regarding health and comfort of the labourers are generally defective ". Would you like to see these smaller industrial establishments brought under control, perhaps by an extension of the Factories Act ?—Yes.

G-2799. What do you say, Mr. Cartledge ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*): Most of these smaller industrial establishments should be brought under some kind of control, but I do not think they should be brought directly under the full provisions of the Factories Act. I would suggest that Workshops Inspectors be appointed—men of lesser qualifications than those required in the case of inspectors of factories, because these small establishments have no machinery.

G-2800. *Mr. Cliff*: Could you have a Workshops Act ?—That is what I am suggesting—Workshops Inspectors under a Workshops Act, and the Workshops Inspector should be under the control of the Factory Department of the Chief Inspector of Factories.

G-2801. *Colonel Russell*: We have had evidence from the United Planters' Association of Southern India that they get no assistance from the Public Health Department. Is it not a fact that since June 1927, the Department has supplied to the planting areas a special health officer ?—(*Dr. Ubhaya*): Yes. He has various duties. He treats the labourers for hookworm. He does a routine sanitary inspection in the area possessed by the planter. He shows cinema films, and distributes posters and leaflets.

G-2802. There have been outbreaks of relapsing fever in the planting areas. Has the Public Health Department done anything for that ?—Yes. We have taken every measure against it, and it is practically extinct now.

G-2803. You have a special malarial officer who has been in the planting areas for a considerable number of years ?—Yes.

G-2804. So that the evidence which the Planters' Association gave is wrong ?—I agree with your opinion.

G-2805. *Mr. Cliff*: Do the planters pay any special contribution towards this work ?—No. We charge them a nominal amount for the drugs in connection with the hookworm treatment. All the rest of the expense is borne by the Government.

G-2806. *Mr. Sastri*: Is the hookworm treatment preventive or curative ?—Both.

G-2807. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed*: In the statistics which you give in your memorandum showing the death rate from all causes in industrial cities, Madras, tops the list with a death rate of 45, and an infantile mortality of 271. Can you give any reason why the death rate is so bad in Madras ?—The City High Mortality Report, which was issued some time back, discusses all the phases of that question.

G-2808. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah*: The Government memorandum says "The wearing of tight clothing by persons replacing belts, oilers and drivers, is being enforced". By whom is the tight clothing provided ?—

(*Mr. Cartledge*): Sometimes by the employers and sometimes by the workmen themselves. We do not care who provides it, as long as the workers are wearing it.

G-2809. It is said " Accidents do occur in non-regulated establishmentsts, *i.e.*, in unregistered factories ". Has any attempt been made to bring these small factories under control ?—These particular factories cannot be brought under control.

G-2810. Have you any suggestion to make in the matter ?—I have already suggested that small premises which cannot be brought under the Factories Act should be brought under Section 2 (3) (*b*), and that a staff of workshop inspectors should be appointed.

G-2811. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: Has the first Member of the Board of Revenue been asked in the past to perform the duties which the Commissioner of Labour is now doing ?—(*Mr. Gray*): A Member of the Board of Revenue acted occasionally when Sir George Paddison was away on other duty. But usually it was only for one or two weeks.

G-2812. Until 1926 the Labour Department was part of the Law (General) Department and since then a new department has been created called the Public Works and Labour Department ?—Yes, a separate department has been created in the Secretariat

G-2813. Mr Leach said that the report from the Collector of Madura about a matter which is primarily concerned with your department was not passed on by the Public Department to the Labour Department and thence to the Commissioner of Labour. Do you think that the present arrangement is satisfactory?—I cannot say what the contents of the report were. The Collector did not report to me. Not having seen it, I presume he reported on the law and order aspect of the question. So far as the industrial dispute was concerned, he ought to have reported to me according to the Government order of June last year.

G-2814. Do you think that is a satisfactory arrangement that reports of local officers in regard to labour matters are not passed on to the Labour Department whose primary concern it is ?—I presume the Secretariat department thought that the Collector carried out the instructions issued to him, namely, that he reported to me.

G-2815. How long have you been Commissioner of Labour ?—Since May last year.

G-2816. Do you know whether the Labour Commissioner has ever attended the meeting of a Trade Union ?—I attended one at your request.

G-2817. Was that not on the understanding that no politics would be discussed at that meeting ?—Yes.

G-2818. It was a meeting held in honour of the Member of the Government of India in charge of Labour ?—Yes, but I was not aware when I accepted the invitation that it was so.

G-2819. Except that meeting have you or your predecessors attended any other meeting of a trade union ?—I have not attended any other meeting of a trade union ; I think Sir George Paddison attended one or two several years ago. I cannot be absolutely certain.

Mr. Shiva Rao: I remember these meetings. The Labour Commissioner attends meetings of work-people only after they have downed tools.

G-2820. Do you believe it is good for the work-people to entertain the idea that until they down tools they can not get the Labour Commissioner on the spot?—I do not think it is correct to say that they cannot get the Labour Commissioner on the spot until they down tools. The Labour Commissioner tours throughout the Presidency.

G-2821. If he does not attend meetings of work-people, how does he get reports of meetings of work-people?—I depend on reports sent to me by the district authorities in the various districts; in Madras city I depend on the report from the Commissioner of Police.

G-2822. The reports from the police will naturally be coloured by the fact that they have to deal with the question from the point of view of maintaining law and order?—They are simply reports of what take place in the meetings. I also get information from other indirect sources; I read the accounts given of the meetings of trade unions in the newspapers. I have an elaborate file of newspaper cuttings dealing with the subject.

G-2823. What is your objection to attending trade union meetings?—I have not said that I had any objection. I have never been invited except to one.

G-2824. Did your predecessor accept the invitation to attend the meeting of the Provincial Labour Conference presided over by Mr. Joshi?—I cannot answer what my predecessor did.

G-2825. Has the Commissioner of Labour ever attended a meeting of employers such as the Planters' Association?—Just as I attended one trade union meeting, I also attended a meeting of the Planters' Association last August.

G-2826. Did you make any condition that no politics should be discussed at the meeting of the Planters' Association?—I did not. No politics were discussed when I was there.

G-2827. Have you any records in your office to show whether your predecessors have attended meetings of employers?—I dare say it could be found with a certain amount of time and trouble.

G-2828. Would it be a legitimate inference that the Commissioner of Labour has no objection to attend meetings of employers, but for some reason or other has not so far attended a meeting of labourers except when they are on strike?—In both cases I asked Government for instructions.

G-2829. With regrad to the strike at Papanasam it has been in progress since 3rd February. The men asked for your intervention when you were at Madura at the time?—Yes, sometime after the strike had begun, about the 14th. I was at Madura at the time.

G-2830. Were you aware that Section 144 had been used against certain gentlemen who were helping the strikers?—I think it was sometime after the 14th; it was about the 22nd when I had left Madura and come back to Madras.

G-2831. Did you go to Papanasam when you were invited?—No.

G-2832. You did not think it necessary to do so?—According to my instructions I tendered my good offices to the employers and I was told that they were not required.

G-2833. Did the strikers apply to the Local Government for a court of enquiry?—Mr. Leach has answered that question already. The application goes to Government and not to me.

G-2834. And the application was turned down?—Yes.

G-2835. It is only before the Commission that the statement is made for the first time that if the circumstances altered the application would be reconsidered?—It is implied in the Government order which only says that a court of enquiry will not serve any useful purpose *at the present moment*. That implies that it might possibly be reconsidered if circumstances were changed.

G-2836. Have the circumstances changed?—I cannot say.

G-2837. Apart from the use of Section 144 and launching of prosecution against people interested in labour what other contribution is Government making towards a settlement of this dispute?—So far it has not made any.

G-2838. Is it not going to make any?—I have already explained that Government do not consider that any useful purpose will be served by setting up a court of enquiry *at present*.

G-2839. In your memorandum dealing with a strike in one of the tea estates in Malabar you say that "the dispute was amicably settled on the 16th by the intervention of the local Sub-Inspector of Police". Is the Sub-Inspector of Police authorized to settle industrial disputes?—I do not know whether he had been given any instructions to do so.

G-2840. Did he report to you how exactly the dispute was amicably settled?—I had no reports from him. I had a report from the District Magistrate. I have embodied the details in the memorandum.

G-2841. Dealing with the troubles in the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills you say: "The Commissioner of Labour proceeded to Coimbator and discussed the matter with the management of the mills and with the men. After some further negotiations the men returned to work". Did you go to Coimbatore on your own initiative?—I was not Commissioner of Labour then.

G-2842. Have you any definite policy with regard to intervention in industrial disputes if they occur in the Mofussil? Do you wait for reports from Collectors to decide whether to take action?—As a rule I get the first intimation of the existence of a dispute through reports from the Collectors.

G-2843. Sometimes the Collectors' reports go to the Public Department and lie there for weeks and months and you know nothing about them?—That is a different matter. They are reports about law and order.

G-2844. *Mrs. Venkatasubba Rao*: Do you not think that the number of welfare workers is too small to deal with the large number of labourers?—Yes.

G-2845. Would it be feasible to have a welfare workers' department in the same way as you have a Labour Department which will train welfare workers and employ them on salaries?—I do not think this question has ever been considered. I cannot answer that off-hand.

G-2846. *Miss Power*: In your memorandum you say that the administration of the Indian Factories Act and the rules thereunder is carried out by a staff consisting of a Chief Inspector of Factories, five Factory Inspectors and one Assistant Factory Inspector under the control of the Commissioner of Labour and that matters relating to the administration of the Indian Factories Act are dealt with by the Local Government in the Development Department. Is that through you ?—The Chief Inspector of Factories works under me. He sends his reports to Government through me.

G-2847. In the Government Memorandum it is stated that the Chief Inspector of Factories suggests that the maximum weekly limit may be reduced to 54 hours ; and that the Commissioner of Labour considers that in respect of women an 8-hour day and 48-hour week may be fixed. Is it possible to have different maxima for men and women ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : No. In the majority of factories men and women work together. The work of the one is supplemental to the work of the other. If women stopped work men also should stop work. (*Mr. Gray*) : I have since changed my mind and I withdraw my observations about the weekly limit.

G-2848. It is further stated in the Government Memorandum : " The Commissioner of Labour is of opinion that regulations may be made prohibiting the employment of children in textile mills." I take it if that were done it would mean that the children would have no alternative but to earn their livelihood in places which were not regulated and therefore where the conditions were considerably worse than in the textile mills ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : I have changed my mind on this point also and I wish to withdraw my observation.

G-2849. Mr Cartledge, what qualifications do you demand of an Inspector of Factories ? Do they include an engineering diploma combined with practical experience ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : Here is a copy of the regulations passed by the Public Services Commission with regard to the qualifications of Factory Inspectors to be appointed hereafter. (Copy handed in).

G-2850. The Chief Inspector of Factories at Calcutta made a statement which caused us some surprise. He said that it was very difficult to get Indians with engineering qualifications. Is that your experience in Madras Presidency ?—We had a number of applications from graduates of the University in engineering and science. They no doubt have gone through a course of practical training in workshops. But it is difficult to get people who have had sufficient practical experience in charge of workshops.

G-2851. Is it possible for a man to be recruited direct to the Inspector grade or must he first work as an Assistant Inspector and then be promoted to full Inspector ?—Recently two Inspectors were appointed direct to the Inspector grade. Afterwards two were appointed to work directly under me. I took them with me during my inspections and taught them do inspection. They worked in my office and learnt the administrative side of the work. Hereafter one will have to work as my personal assistant before he is appointed an Inspector. The personal assistant is an officer on a lower grade than that of an Inspector. He gets Rs. 250 a month while the Inspector starts on Rs. 400.

G-2852. Do you find the system of *ex-officio* Inspectors satisfactory ?—Yes, it is satisfactory. They have powers only with regard to health, hours and children ; they have no powers with regard to safety.

G-2853. Are the Health Officers restricted to these ?—Yes.

G-2854. Has the Certifying Surgeon the powers of a Factory Inspector ?—No, he has powers only with regard to certification of children.

G-2855. If he found anything wrong with regard to the employment of children could be institute a prosecution or not ?—All prosecutions must be instituted by the Inspector himself.

G-2856. What is your policy in respect of prosecutions ?—Suppose I visit a newly registered factory, although the factory owner will carry out the provisions of the Act without being told about them, I make detailed orders for everything that should be carried out. I give him some time and go on a second inspection six months after. If I see that he has made some attempt to carry out my orders I do not take action. If he has made no attempt I prosecute him straightaway. But in the case of factories which have been registered for a long time if they allow the conditions to go very bad, if they take off fences or block up ventillators I prosecute them at once.

G-2857. You seem to complain about the inadequacy of fines for violation of factory laws. Have any steps been taken by Government to bring this point to the notice of the magistrates in this Presidency ?—Four or five years ago I wrote to the Commissioner drawing his attention to the inadequacy of the fines in one or two cases ; he did not take any action then. Of late 30 per cent. of my fines are above Rs. 100 ; the average is nearly Rs. 100 for the number of prosecutions. There have been cases where magistrates levied a fine of Rs. 3 or 4 when I had spent nearly Rs. 200 by way of travelling allowance and wasted a lot of time and energy to conduct the cases. In the majority of cases I am not satisfied with the amount of fines.

G-2858. I think it is the acting chief Inspector of Factories who has stated in his report that the use of section 2 (3) (*b*) of the Indian Factories Act is much restricted owing to shortage of staff. Are the conditions such that even without any further extension of the Act, this Section should be much more freely used ?—Yes, these people have the habit of reducing the number of people put on the register.

G-2859. What number of Inspectors do you think would be adequate for the work if this Section was used as freely as is necessary, even without any further extension of the Act ?—There are at present 1630 factories and 7 Inspectors. There should be three more Inspectors so that there may be one at least for 150 factories.

G-2860. The Madras Government in their memorandum say that legislation in respect of maternity benefits may be made by an amendment of the Indian Factories Act rather than by a separate amendment ; I take it you agree with that view ?—Yes. But I am afraid it will only cause trouble because several big employers of female labour have told me that immediately the Act came into force they would dismiss all women from their factories.

G-2861. Does the Commissioner of Labour disagree with the view that the Maternity Act can be administered by the Inspector of Factories ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : We should have to appoint a lady inspector of factories . (*Mr. Cartledge*) : It is only a question of additional staff. The seasonal factories are the factories which employ a large number of women and children and the lady inspector will have to direct her attention to those factories.

G-2862. You say that the workers' knowledge of the regulations covering their work is very slight. Have you any suggestion for getting over that difficulty ?—We have issued a notice which contains about 30 instructions to the work-people. The notice is hung up in all factories in the language of the majority of the operatives of the factory. I intend bringing out a pamphlet which besides containing all these instructions in the vernacular will also contain a number of photographs showing the safety devices necessary in actual practice. I hope the Government will supply them free to practically all labourers.

G-2863. That again presumes literacy ?—It does in a way. But I have noticed that in many of these out of the way factories where the workers are illiterate, whenever a new thing is introduced they congregate in one place and discuss it among themselves. There is generally somebody in the village who is prepared to explain these things to them.

Miss Power : On your own admission a great many of the regulations are still unknown to them. You yourself have not discovered any way of informing them except through the printed word which involves literacy.

Mr. Sastri : Generally a man who knows the instructions tells those who do not know.

The witness (Mr. Cartledge) : That is the way the things spread.

G-2864. *Mr. Joshi* : Dealing with unemployment the Madras Government say in their memorandum that few cases have come to their notice of men adequately equipped for specific industrial employment who remain long out of job. What is meant by ' long out of job ' ?—Would it be six months or 2 years ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : We cannot make it more precise than it is.

G-2865. One of the reasons given by the Madras Government against any scheme of sickness insurance is that the labourers themselves would be unwilling to share the cost of any such scheme. If the labourers held a meeting to-day and expressed a willingness to contribute would the Madras Government be prepared to reconsider their position ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*). I cannot commit the Government but I am prepared to reconsider any opinion given by my predecessors.

G-2866. Do you think that the labourers will be willing or not ?—The statement in the memorandum is based on the results of enquiries made chiefly by the factory inspection staff in the course of their inspections.

G-2867. Dealing with safety the Madras Government say that " most of the accidents are due to carelessness on the part of the operatives." Do you make any enquiry and find out whether it is due to the carelessness of the operative or of the employer ? Do you hear both sides, the workers as well

as the employers ?—Except in very small accidents we invariably hear both sides. If the accident is due to the removal of a fence or a guard being out of position, we invariably prosecute the employers for negligence.

G-2868. If there are any trade unions in the factory do you ask the trade unions as to how the accident was caused and whether it was due to the carelessness of the operative ?—I do not think trade unions have anything to do with accidents. Every accident is reported to me or to my assistants. The Inspector takes this report with him when he next inspects the factory and the case is enquired into. If the man is still employed in the factory he is taken to the place where the accident occurred and asked to explain in detail how it occurred. There is always a detailed enquiry into every accident of any importance.

G-2869. Dealing with hours of work the Madras Government simply quote the opinion of the Chief Inspector of Factories that they may be reduced to 54 a week and 9 a day. Have not the Government themselves any opinion to offer on this question ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : I think, it is a matter for the Government of India.

G-2870. *Mr. Cliff* : Does the Commissioner of Labour prefer to express any opinion ?—I doubt whether my experience has been long enough to express an opinion of any value.

G-2871. *Mr. Joshi* : Dealing with the question of minimum wages the Madras Government say : " An attempt to fix a minimum wage at present would involve impracticable complexities of calculation or by an arbitrary avoidance of such complexities would risk throwing hundreds out of employment." Do you mean that any minimum wage fixing machinery will act so badly that in any event hundreds and thousands of people will be thrown out of employment ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : Estimates that have been made from time to time are so much higher than the actual wages that many people earn and apparently live upon. The difficulty is with regard to giving a statutory recognition to a wage which is less than the cost of living.

G-2872. *Mr. Clow* : Is it necessary that the minimum wage should have any relation to the cost of living ?—I think it should at least cover the cost of living.

G-2873. The standard of living varies very largely. Could not the minimum wage be based on the standard of living of the majority of the employees in any one trade ?—That is a possibility. I have not considered the possibility of fixing a minimum wage without reference to the cost of living.

G-2874. *Miss Power* : Do you think it would be possible to do what was done in England where the question of a living wage was only one of the factors in fixing a minimum wage ?—It would be possible.

G-2875. *Mr. Joshi* : Dealing with the question of legislation for the purpose of preventing undue delay in the payment of wages the Government say there was " a considerable volume of opinion against the proposed legislation on the ground that it was not practicable or desirable." Did the workers ever say that they would oppose any legislation for payment of wages as soon as possible after they fell due ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : No ; they prefer to take

their payments as monthly salaries rather than weekly wages. They think somehow or other, being paid weekly reduces them in *status altogether.*

G-2876. I refer only to the delay in payment ; suppose the wages fell due on the 1st of March, will they object to legislation to the effect that the wages should be paid before the 5th or 10th March ?—No.

Mr. Joshi : Therefore the " volume of opinion " is that of the employers only.

G-2877. In your memorandum you refer to an order of Government dated May 1928 prohibiting Government servants from becoming or continuing to be members of a registered trade union. Is that an order of the Local Government ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : Yes, here is the order. (Copy of the order handed in).

G-2878. What is the definition of a Government servant ?—I think it refers to any employee of Government who holds a civil office other than a menial. They are persons to whom the Government Servants' Conduct Rules apply.

G-2879. It is a vague term. Will the employees in the Government industrial concerns although they do not get a pension come under this definition ?—Yes, some of them will.

G-2880. Will a carpenter employed by Government come under this definition ?—He does not hold a civil office under Government.

G-2881. *Mr. Clow* : As regards this order prohibiting Government servants from becoming members of a trade union are you aware that it goes far beyond anything suggested by the Government of India for the adoption of Local Governments ?—I have no knowledge of the circumstances in which that order was passed. I am not able to give the reasons which led to its adoption.

G-2882. Dealing with the Apprentices Act you refer to the recommendations of a special committee appointed in 1922 and 1924 and say : " The Government of Madras after carefully considering these recommendations came to the conclusion that the time was not ripe for the introduction of legislation on the lines proposed." Are you able to say if the time is now ripe for legislation to be undertaken at least with regard to certain specific trades ?—That information was obtained from the Director of Industries. Personally I do not know anything about it.

G-2883. In your memorandum you refer to the possibility of competition between regulated and unregulated factories. What industries are you thinking of when you say that there is more or less direct competition between registered and unregistered factories ?—All the seasonal factories such as rice mills, groundnut decorticating factories and so on.

G-2884. As regards certification of children I gather from the statistics supplied to us that there are about 6,000 children employed in all the factories in this Presidency. Apparently from other statistics more than 7,000 children are certified every year ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : Many children are certified two or three times. They work in a factory, leave there and lose the certificate. They go along to the doctor, get another certificate and work in another factory.

145

G-2885. This phenomenon is generally associated with children working simultaneously in two factories. Do you not think that it deserves special investigation ?—We have made special enquiries with regard to double employment of children and there has been no such case.

G-2886. If you have 6,000 children employed in factories you should have only about 2,500 children certified every year and not 7,000 ?—We have made special enquiries with regard to the double employment of children. We only found two cases of double employment of men.

G-2887. In his memorandum Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar gives us particulars of the exemptions under the Factories Act. Are the exemptions in this Presidency granted by the Commissioner of Labour or by the Local Government ?—(*Mr. Gray*): The Government have issued various notifications laying down the conditions under which exemptions may be granted. I sanction the exemptions in particular cases. They are referred to in pages 82 to 87 of the Madras Factories Manual.

G-2888. Are you satisfied that this is legal, because section 30 of the Factories Act says that it " must be proved to the satisfaction of the Local Government" ?—I do not myself grant the general exemptions ; I only fix the numbers of persons to whom the exemption will apply.

G-2889. In the list given by Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar there is one factory in which the persons employed in the packing department have been exempted from the provision of a weekly rest day ?—Yes.

G-2890. Is it essential that all the persons employed in the packing department should forego the weekly rest day ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : Not in all cases. That is where the Commissioner of Labour comes in. I always ascertain the number employed in every department and if possible never recommend to the Commissioner more than 5 per cent.

G-2891. Take the tea factories ; apparently they are exempted for more than half the year from the provision of 60 hours' week. Is that so ?—We lay down certain conditions under which these exemptions are granted.

G-2892. In this case you say that overtime shall not be such that the number of hours worked exceeds 12 on any one day and 66 in any one week. That is practically extending the week from 60 to 66 hours for the whole of the factory season. Do you think that it is justified ?—You do not for example specify that extra hands up to 25 per cent. should be employed ?—They are not employed continuously all the time ; they get their rest periods.

G-2893. Yesterday the planters complained to us that 60 hours' week was very unpopular with the workers. You apparently say that 60 hours' week is not in force at all ?—They seldom use the exemptions.

G-2894. Do you think it is necessary to have them exempted all the time ?—They use it only when they require it, perhaps for 3 or 4 days in a month.

G-2895. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Who are the members of your Labour Advisory Board ?—I shall send you the list later on. They are representatives of employers and employees.

G-2896. You have been Registrar of Co-operative Societies ?—Yes, for five years.

G-2897. The Government Memorandum says: "The indebtedness of the worker is heavy especially in the case of plantation labour where it is reported that 75 per cent. of the wages are taken away by money-lenders on pay days." Has it been your experience as Registrar of Co-operative Societies?—It was not my estimate. It was the estimate of the Acting Chief Inspector of Factories. He had been for three years in charge of the plantation areas.

G-2898. If it was the real state of affairs, as Registrar of Co-operative Societies would you not have taken steps to start co-operative societies?—It is impossible to get any precise information on the point.

G-2899. Mr. Cartledge, have you any views on the question?—(*Mr. Cartledge*): I do not deal with the plantation coolies. I have no idea. The number of coolies in plantation factories is very small.

G-2900. Do you suggest that workers should not begin work till 2 hours after sunrise?—(*Mr. Gray*): I have withdrawn my recommendation as to reduction of hours for women owing to the practical difficulties of its operation.

G-2901. In connection with migration both to the plantations and other places we have got statistics with reference to Assam, Malaya and Ceylon but we have no figures with regard to Burma. Could you give us any figures with regard to Burma?—Emigration to Burma is not controlled. We have no figures of emigration. I think it will be about 10,000 per annum.

G-2902. Have you any similar figures in connection with Madras plantations?—That too is not controlled. We have no statistics of any sort.

G-2903. You are in charge of the department dealing with emigration to Ceylon and Malay?—Yes, the Protectors of Emigrants work under me.

G-2904. What are the qualifications for a recruiter?—As regards Ceylon and Malay the recruiter must be a man who has worked on the garden for some time. He must belong to the village from which he is recruiting. The recruiter to Ceylon gets a license from the Controller of Indian Emigrant Labour at Colombo. That license is to be countersigned by the District Magistrate of the district in which he is recruiting.

G-2905. *Mr. Sastri*: I understand you want to clear up one point in the evidence which you gave this morning, Mr. Gray?—We would like to correct a mistake which was made in answer to a question put by Mr. Clow with reference to the exemption from sections 22 and 26 of the Factories Act of persons engaged in packing, bundling, baling, and so on, and receiving and despatching of raw materials and goods. It was said in the case of this exemption that my sanction was necessary in respect of the number of persons who could be exempted. I observe that, although that applies to some of the other sections, it does not apply to this particular section; that is to say, it is a general exemption.

G-2906. *Mr. Clow*: Do you think it necessary that all persons engaged in the packing department should forego a weekly holiday?—(*Mr. Cartledge*): No.

G-2907. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Mr. Cartledge, I see that you recommend that the hours of labour should be reduced to 54, with a maximum of nine hours a day?—(*Mr. Cartledge*): That is Mr. Krishnaswami's suggestion. I agree

146

to the 54 hours, but I should prefer ten hours a day, which would give a short day on Saturday.

G-2908. Do you think that those shorter hours would allow of more intensity of labour, so that the production would not suffer?—It is a question on which I am not competent to speak, but the factory managers seem to think it would.

G-2909. Do you consider it more advisable, if production cannot be increased, that the labourer shall not get a rise in wages; or do you consider it more advisable that the hours be left as they are so that he can earn more money?—I do not think the wages should be increased for less production. I do not think they should draw the same amount of money for nine hours work if they do not do the same amount of work as they did in ten hours.

G-2910. The cost of production, on your suggestion, would not go up?—No.

G-2911. You consider that, with very little extra effort, the workmen would be able to keep up the production?—Yes.

G-2912. It would be very difficult to get labour to agree to taking less wages?—Yes; it could not be done.

G-2913. Therefore your recommendation is subject to the man's production for the shorter time being the same?—Yes.

G-2914. In your view, would the Indian workman prefer to work a longer time with less intensity, or a shorter time with more intensity?—A longer time with less intensity.

G-2915. So he might not like to give the same production in nine hours as he would in ten?—It only means a tenth more.

G-2916. You think he would be prepared to give the extra work?—Not immediately, but later on.

G-2917. *Mr. Ahmed*: You mention the fact that there have been many strikes. For what do the workers strike?—For shorter hours, higher rates of wages, and better conditions of work generally.

G-2918. During these strikes there have been proceedings and prosecutions under various sections of the Act. Why were these men prosecuted?—(*Mr. Gray*): I presume because the authorities responsible for law and order considered it necessary.

G-2919. Because the workmen wanted a rise in wages, shorter hours of work and an amelioration of their conditions, why should they be prosecuted and punished?—The fact that they struck for better wages, or better conditions, has nothing to do with the fact of their being prosecuted. They were prosecuted, presumably, because they had broken the law.

G-2920. Some of them were prosecuted because they were picketting, but picketting is lawful?—The proper persons to answer these questions are the authorities responsible for law and order.

G-2921. I see that the average wages of unskilled labour are 5, 6 and 7½ annas. How can a worker save anything out of that wage after paying for his

food ? What is the cost per day of the necessaries of life ?—I have no statistics.

G-2922. I suggest to you that 5 or 6 annas per head is necessary ?—The cost of living varies from place to place. I cannot answer a general question like that.

G-2923. Is not the amount allowed to Government peons six annas per day ?—A peon gets Rs. 15 a month in Madras city. In the mofussil the pay starts at Rs. 12. The food allowance is four annas a day in his own district. There is an increased rate outside his own district.

G-2924. If four annas is deducted from a worker's salary of 5, 6 and 7½ annas that leaves about 2½ annas. Do you think he can maintain his wife and two children on that remainders ? Kindly say yes ?—It seems unnecessary.

G-2925. Therefore you do not find the proprietors of these factories paying their workers a living wage ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : We do not supervise the payment of wages. It is the factory owners' business, not mine.

G-2926. I take it that if a fair and living wage were paid to the workers, there would not be any trouble over strikes or prosecutions and convictions ?—They strike for other reasons than increases in wages.

G-2927. But if their demands for higher wages and shorter hours were met by the proprietors of the factories, I suppose strikes would not take place ?—I do not know. It is only supposition.

G-2928. *Colonel Russell* : Dr. Ubhaya, have you any further information to give as to what has been done on plantations as regards health ?—(*Dr. Ubhaya*) : Yes. In regard to the statements made by the United Planters' Association of Southern India, I have to say that the plantations in which health work has been carried out are situated in the Nilgiris, Malabar, Madura and Coimbatore. About 200 estates have been visited during the last 2½ years, and nearly 30,000 workers have been treated for hookworm. More than 1,200 bore-hole latrines have been put up on the recommendation of the health officers.

G-2929. Has any diet survey been made in this Presidency ?—No.

G-2930. So that any remarks you make on the matter of the diet of workers are based on mere impressions ?—Yes.

G-2931. You recommend the employment of women doctors for the treatment of female employees in large industries. Do you think that a sufficient number of women doctors would be available ?—It is quite possible.

G-2932. With regard to the question of trained midwives and *dais*, what is being done in Madras for the training of candidates who may come up ?—The School for Health Visitors, which has been working under the auspices of the Indian Red Cross Society provides scope for the training of health visitors. The Government Hospital for Women and Children in Madras, and the Lying-in-Hospital in Royapuram, and several other headquarter hospitals in the districts (about 13 in number) have ample facilities for the training of *dais*. Even as far back as 7 or 8 years ago facilities were given by the Madras Corporation in thier Child Welfare Department for the training of health visitors.

G-2933. So you think there would be women available if employers cared to employ them ?—Yes.

G-2934. In one of the memoranda sent to us it is said " The existing quantity of land and the income therefrom is unable to support the number of people dependent upon it. That the population of this part of the country has been increasing faster than the means of subsistence has long been apparent ". Do you agree with that statement ?—I do.

G-2935. What is your solution ?—Birth control is one. Improved agricultural methods is another, and industrialization is another.

Sir Victor Sassoon : Would you prefer the industrialization for the surplus agricultural labour to take place in large centres, or to be spread over the agricultural districts in small factories ?—It is better that it should be spread out.

G-2936. You would prefer small industrial centres rather than a large industrial centre ?—Yes.

Colonel Russell : You say " The indoor industry seems to have a more deleterious influence on the female than on the male if judged from the greater prevalence of mortality from respiratory affections among women." On what do you base that inference ?—Before they get out to work they probably spend most of their time inside houses.

G-2937. The statement seems to indicate that you have proof that when women are employed in industry they have a higher mortality rate from respiratory diseases than the average population. On what grounds do you draw that conclusion ?—Firstly, circumstantial evidence, and secondly on vital statistics of a few towns.

G-2938. You say " An investigation for determining the comparative mortality among the industrial and non-industrial population of certain towns is being started, and every possible endeavour will be made to complete it before the arrival of the Commission." Have you managed to complete that investigation ?—No.

G-2939. Do you think you are going to get any information out of it which might be of value to the Commission ?—It remains to be seen.

G-2940. Attached to the memorandum there is a letter from the Director of Public Health to the Commissioner of Labour. Have you seen it, Mr. Gray ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : Yes.

G-2941. It says " Greater expeditiousness will be secured if they are authorized to issue notices and take subsequent action." It refers to inspectors. What have you to say about that ?—I do not think I can give a definite answer on the point.

G-2942. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Is the point that these health officers should be additional factory inspectors ?—I am told that the matter was considered and turned down. I should like to see the reasons why it was turned down before I commit myself.

G-2943. *Colonel Russell* : I think Mr. Cartledge admitted this morning that the health officers had been of definite use to him in connection with

health ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : Yes. They inspect factories, and the instructions are that any suggestions as regards improvement that they wish to be made shall be sent to the Inspector, and the Inspector shall serve an executive order.

G.-2944. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : When we were at Madura we understood that the health officer found undesirable practices taking place in factories, but after he had reported the matter and the factory inspector went there, they seemed to know he was coming, and he could never get the proper evidence. Would not that be an additional reason for giving health officers the powers of assistant factory inspectors ?—Hardly. Such officers can always report to the inspector, and the inspector can take action on what they report. If a prosecution is necessary, it is taken up by the inspector, and the health officer gives evidence.

Sir Victor Sassoon : We were told that the factory inspector would not accept the health officer's evidence, and insisted on going round himself, and apparently it leaked out that he was coming, and everything was altered for the purposes of his visit.

G-2945. *Colonel Russell* : I think that is not an isolated instance. It happens in other cases ?—If the inspector has any doubt he should refer the matter to me or to the Commissioner of Labour.

G-2946. Have you given instructions that if a health officer reports a practice which is against the law, the factory inspector is to take action ?—The Commissioner of Labour has given that instruction as head of the Department.

G-2947. The letter also says " Every factory manager should be compelled by law to maintain registers or cards for individual employees, recording therein all illnesses and any other particulars that may be prescribed by the inspector."—We have no power under the Act to prescribe anything like that.

G-2948. It would mean a drastic amendment of the Act ?—Yes.

G-2949. Do you think it would be possible in any case ?—I hardly think so, because in the majority of factories there is no doctor to specify what the illnesses are.

G-2950. Would the same answer apply to the statement " If a factory inspector finds any sick or incapacitated person being employed in any factory, he should be authorized by law to prohibit the factory managers from employing such persons until they are certified as fit " ?—We only have that power in regard to children.

G-2951. *Mr. Muhammad Ubaidullah* : It is stated in the Government memorandum that " No such committees (works committees) are functioning anywhere in this Presidency except in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras, where the Welfare Committee, as it is called, is working very satisfactorily ". May I know who are satisfied ? Is it the Government, or the workers ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : It is satisfactory to all concerned.

G-2952. Then it is stated " Profit sharing schemes are not in operation anywhere in this Presidency ", but no idea is given as to what the Government thinks about this matter. Have you any idea ? If these schemes are brought into force, would they be useful to the workers ?—I cannot express any opinion on behalf of Government in regard to that point.

148

G-2953. *Mr. Shiva Rao* : Assuming that unorganized industries are brought under the Factories Act it will need, I presume, a very considerable addition to your staff, Mr. Cartledge ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*) : Yes.

G-2954. Have you considered the question of having a preventive staff on the lines of the preventive staff in the Excise Department, consisting of people without the technical qualifications which an inspector of factories needs, but who will answer the purpose to a very considerable extent ?—That is what I recommend—workshops inspectors.

G-2955. I understand that factory inspectors go out on regular inspection tours. Do you not think that leads to previous warning being given to employers ?—I have no doubt it does.

G-2956. Supposing it was open to officers of your Department to pay surprise visits, and not necessarily have to go on regularly pre-arranged tours : do you think your work would be more satisfactory ?—If we had more inspectors we could do that. With the present staff it is impossible ; it must be organized so as to get through the work.

G-2957. Have you considered the question of making inspection of factories a central subject instead of a provincial one ?—I have not.

G-2958. Do you think it would lead to improvement ?—I have not considered the point. I hardly think so. I do not see any reason why it should.

G.-2959. Mr. Gray, I have here a copy of your latest report to the local government. I am speaking of the Labour Department. I find that out of a total of 65 pages $4\frac{3}{4}$ pages deal with industrial labour ?—(*Mr. Gray*) : Yes.

G-2960. Does that represent the correct proportion of time and attention which you bestow on problems relating to industrial labour ?—No. It is a good deal more than that.

G-2961. Going back to section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, you have been a Collector of a District, and during that time section 144 was used against Mr. N. M. Joshi by the sub-divisional magistrate. I find that sometimes the order is issued under section 144 directly by the Collector and sometimes it is issued by the sub-divisional officer. When it is issued by the sub-divisional officer, is previous sanction necessary from the District Collector ?—No.

G.-2962. Sometimes it is the District Collector himself who issues the order ?—Yes.

G-2963. I ask you because a few days ago I saw an order under section 144 which was issued against Mr. N. S. Ramaswami Iyanger by the District Collector of Coimbatore, although he had stated in the notice which he issued that his only object of visiting the place was to get from the plantation labourers information that he might be able to place before the sub-committee of this Commission when it visited the plantations. Have you had any notice of that sent to you ?—No. I have seen a copy of it in the newspapers.

G-2964. You have not heard from the Collector of Coimbatore ?—No.

G-2965. Have you, as Labour Commissioner, taken any trouble to see that the case of the worker on the plantations is placed before the sub-committee of the Commission which is visiting the plantations ?—As I thought was explained

this morning, the invitation to give evidence was publicly broadcasted in the Madras newspapers.

G-2966. Do you expect plantation labourers to be regular readers of the Madras newspapers ?—That does not follow.

G-2967. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: Have any steps been taken by you to popularise measures passed by the Government of India. Take the Trade Disputes Act. The application of the strikers of Papanasam has been turned down on the ground that it was not in compliance with the rules made under the Act ?—That was one of the reasons.

G.-2968. The other reason being that, even if it had been in compliance with the rules, the application would not have been considered ?—At that time.

G-2969. Do you expect workers to be familiar with the rules under the various Acts which are passed by the Government of India ?—Certainly not all of them.

G.-2970. Do you think it is part of your duties as Labour Commissioner to see that the work-people are helped to make applications under the various Acts ?—We do help as far as possible. As I explained this morning in connection with the Workmen's Compensation Act, steps were taken to prepare a brief simple summary, and to see that that was brought to the notice of the workers by having copies posted up at every factory on the Register.

G.-2971. Have you considered the question of doing that with regard to the rules under the Trade Disputes Act ?—No ; they have only just recently been published.

G-2972. With regard to the tea plantations, it was said yesterday by the representatives of the Association that the estimate of your Labour Department regarding the wages of women pluckers being 2 to 3 annas a day was absolutely inaccurate ?—I am not aware of any such estimate.

G-2973. It was stated in their memorandum ?—It is not mentioned in the Government memorandum. The only mention we have made regarding plantation wages is 7 annas for a man, 5 annas for a woman, 4 annas for a boy and 3 annas for a girl. Possibly they were referring to their own labour department. They were referring not to the wages paid on the plantations, but to the agricultural wages in the surrounding area. There must be some misunderstanding about it. Certainly it is not my estimate.

G-2974. Since the repeal of the Madras Planaters' Labour Act, have you considered the question of regulating the conditions of labour on the plantations ?—It has not been considered since I took charge in May last.

G-2975. Or by the Government ?—No.

G-2976. What do you think of the idea of having a special officer in the plantations to make periodical reports ?—The point has not been considered.

G-2977. Since the passing of the Trade Disputes Act it is open to Trade Unions, or even to unorganized workers, if there is an industrial dispute, or if one is apprehended, to make application direct to the local government?—Yes.

G-2978. Am I correct in stating that the main reason for the appointment of a Labour Commissioner was that he might intervene at an early stage if possible in order to prevent industrial disputes ?—I have handed in copies of the Government orders explaining the position of the Labour Commissioner with regard to industrial disputes.

G-2979. Do you think that much of the work of the Labour Commissioner, as such, has disappeared with the passing of the Trade Disputes Act, because the Labour Commissioner cannot intervene until he is approached by both sides ?

Sir Alexander Murray: Yes, he can.

G-2980. *Mr. Shiva Rao*: I have a letter in my possession from Mr. Slater. When I asked him to intervene he said "Can you tell me under what authority I am to intervene in this dispute" ?—I have summarized the position in the Government memorandum. "His interference in such disputes is limited to tendering his offices to settle them."

G-2981. It is said there "The settlement of labour disputes and prevention of strikes are important features of his work". That important feature is not particularly obvious in the case of the Papanasam strike ?—I am not prepared to agree to that statement.

G-2982. I think you admitted this morning that, except for the use of section 144, and the launching of prosecutions the Government so far had done nothing ?—We are now talking about the Labour Commissioner. I tendered my offices to the employers, and they were refused.

G.-2983. So that if an employer does not want your intervention you cannot intervene.—I cannot force myself upon either the employer or the employee.

G-2984. Trade Unions would be compelled to make application to the local Government ?—Not necessarily. When there was a dispute last year between the workers and the management of the Choolai Mills, both parties were quite agreeable to my assisting in settling the dispute, and we succeeded.

G.-2985. My trouble is that when it is a European employer there are great difficulties in the way of getting the Labour Commissioner's intervention. I do not put the blame necessarily on the Labour Commissioner ?—I do not think that as supported by past history. In several cases the Labour Commissioner has been successful in settling disputes between European employers and their employees.

G-2986. It is stated in the Government memorandum "For some time before July 1926 the hardships of the women employees of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills were represented in somewhat lurid colours at meetings of the Madras Labour Union." Can you tell me at how many meetings this thing happened ?—No, I cannot. That is taken from the Administration Report, written, I presume, by Sir George Paddison.

G-2987. There was only one meeting. Do you think there was any reference to the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in that speech which I made ?—I have no personal knowledge about this particular matter.

G-2988. I want to suggest it is a very serious matter when an inaccurate statement is made officially by the Madras Government, and for which there is no

foundation. Turning to your own memorandum. you say, in reference to the Ranipet strike, "It is significant that the men did not put forward their grievances and demands through their registered Trade Union". Significant of what? Then you say that only 312 out of 700 in the factory are members of the registered union. Do you know how many of those 700 are temporary coolies?—I cannot tell you.

G-2989. Did you read the report of the anniversary of this Union held a couple of months ago, when the employer expressed appreciation of the cordial relations which had been maintained between the Union and the employer?—I think I must have read it.

G-2990. You do not think it necessary to modify this paragraph in the light of those remarks by the employer himself?—I cannot follow the point. I do not see what necessity there could be.

G-2991. What I suggest is that this paragraph referring to the Ranipet Union implies that that Union does not represent the majority of the workpeople, and that it does not command any influence on those of its members it does represent?—I do not think that that follows from the sentence at all.

G-2992. You say "it is significant". That the Union commands very little influence?—I do not think that follows.

G-2993. *Mr. Joshi*: You are in charge of the Criminal Tribes Settlement work?—Yes.

G-2994. Do you send these people to work in factories?—In the case of the Stuartpuram Settlement, some of the members of the settlement are employed in the Cherala tobacco factory.

G-2995. Is that a small or a big factory?—It is a biggish factory. Several hundreds of them are employed there.

G-2996. Have you any experience of a strike occurring in a factory where these people are employed?—No.

G-2997. Has your Government considered the question at what stage of a dispute they should intervene?—I cannot give any answer on behalf of Government.

G-2998. What is your own opinion? Is it more useful to intervene at a late or early stage of a strike?—It depends on the circumstances.

G-2999. *Mr. Sastri*: What, in your view, should be the circumstances?—I suppose the general principle would be when the appointment of a court of inquiry or a board of conciliation was likely to have a reasonable chance of success.

G-3000. *Mr. Joshi*: I take it that a court of inquiry is useful in enabling public opinion to judge of the issues, and thus influencing the two parties. Do you not think if Government intervention took place earlier it would save some loss both to the employer and to the men?—Yes, as a general rule.

G-3001. If that is so, can you explain why the Madras Government has not considered it necessary to intervene?—I cannot give you the reasons why the Government considered that no useful purpose would be served by setting up a court of inquiry at present in the Papanasam case.

G-3002. *Mr. Sastri*: Do you mean to suggest that that order was passed without your knowledge?—I was consulted.

G-3003. You must know something about the grounds of that order?—I did not see the final discussions in the Secretariat. I was consulted in the earlier stages. I do not know what finally weighed with Government in coming to its decision.

G-3004. *Mr. Joshi*: As regards housing, is it likely that this Province will be industrialized to a much larger extent than it is to-day?—I should not think so.

G-3005. *Mr. Sastri*: In giving that answer do you take into account the new electrical schemes which are afloat?—I do not think there is very much chance of a large industrial expansion in this Province, even taking that fact into account.

G-3006. *Mr. Joshi*: Is it necessary for the present industrialization, and for the industrialization that may take place, to have some policy as regards housing; that is to say, if an area is likely to be industrialized precautions should be taken by applying a Town Planning Act to that area so that slums may not be erected there, or overcrowding take place?—Speaking for myself, I should say that such measures were advisable. A certain amount of work in the matter of housing has been done through co-operative building societies. Government has lent considerable sums of money to these co-operative building societies. Some of these co-operative building societies are industrial centres like Madura. I have here the report of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies for the year ending 30th June 1928, in which he points out that at the end of that year there were 121 co-operative building societies, the paid-up share capital of which amounted to eight and a third lakhs of rupees. The total amount of Government loans outstanding on the last day of the year to those Societies was over 17 lakhs, and it is pointed out that 881 houses had been constructed through these co-operative societies, and that 350 more houses were under construction.

G-3007. Do you insist upon any housing regulations when giving assistance to these co-operative building societies?—They are subject to any regulations which may be in force in the particular municipal area where the societies operate. The societies themselves do not draw up any definite regulations with regard to the houses. The plans have to be approved by the society, but they have not drawn up any regular general rules.

G-3008. Do you not think a useful purpose would be served if, when the Government gave assistance to these co-operative societies, they insisted upon certain housing regulations being observed?—In general I think they invoke the aid of the Director of Town Planning.

G-3009. This Province sends out a large number of labourers to Ceylon, Malaya, Burma and Assam. Does not this show that there is real unemployment in this Province?—It is stated in the Government memorandum "Lack of local employment may be due to the regularly recurring stoppage of agricultural activities between seasons, or to unfavourable seasonal conditions affecting the demand for labour. The labouring classes in this Presidency are ordinarily of a stay-at-home character, and it is only the stimulus of need or the lure of better and more regular employment that induces them to migrate".

G-3010. Your statement about unemployment is confined only to skilled workers ?—Yes.

G-3011. There is unemployment in Madras so far as unskilled or semi-skilled workers are concerned ?—Yes.

G-3012. *Mr. Clow*: As regards the Workmen's Compensation Act, you say: "Compensation is not payable for accidents which are attributable to the fault of the workmen themselves". I think you will agree that that is hardly a complete statement of the law ?—No, it is not.

G-3013. Then you go on to say: "The majority of contested claims and disputes centre around this proviso". To which proviso do you refer ?—That would refer to provisos 2 and 3 under section 3 (1) (*b*), more especially proviso 2.

G-3014. You are in favour of making the law less lenient to employers in this respect ?—Yes.

G-3015. As regards the question of regulating workshops, would it be preferable either to apply only certain sections of the Factories Act or to have a new Act for such establishments ?—(*Mr. Cartledge*): We have all of the regulations of the Factories Act for controlling workshops with regard to health conditions.

G-3016. Do you not think that the provision that children under 12 should not be employed might give rise to some difficulty in workshops ?—Undoubtedly.

G-3017. And that it might be desirable, if you are starting to regulate a large number of these workshops, to begin with a lower age ?—I quite agree.

G-3018. What ages do you suggest ?—There are many children of 5, 6 and 7 employed in these small stores, and it means putting them out if you raise the age to 9. I think medical opinion should be obtained about that.

G-3019. As regards children in regulated factories, do you consider the present age suitable ?—Yes.

G-3020. Do you think it desirable that there should be some system whereby a young person (that is, a person over 15) has to be certified for work as an adult before he is so employed ?—I think it would be preferable.

G-3021. Do you find that the operations of sections 26 and 35 of the Indian Factories Act have given rise to any administrative difficulty ?—It took a lot of perseverance to get them working, but we are satisfied with them now.

G-3022. Have any exemptions been issued under the provisos to section 35 ?—Not under the first proviso, but quite a number under the second proviso.

G-3023. With regard to the standardization of wages, you suggest that there are two industries, textile and printing, which offer a fair scope for the standardization of both work and wages. Is it suggested that this standardization should be undertaken by Government ?—It is not suggested that Government should standardize them. It is merely a pious recommendation.

151

G-3024. Do you think there is a possible scope for the fixation of minimum wages in the small unregulated factories, such as *bidi* factories ?—We could never get at them. We cannot control them in any way. If you register such a factory, it is on one verandah one day, and the next day it is moved.

G-3025. Suppose there was a provision laying it down that so much had to be paid for a batch of so many *bidis* ?—We could not detect any breach of that regulation.

G-3026. You have seen the labourer both in the villages and in the cities, Mr. Gray. Do you consider that, on the whole he is substantially better off as an industrial employee ?—(*Mr. Gray*): No. I think, apart from areas in which there are long periods when there is no agricultural work, he is better off in the rural areas. That is only a general impression.

G-3027. Then why do you think he comes to the towns ?—I am talking of places where the demand for agricultural labour is fairly constant throughout the year. Elsewhere he does improve his condition by moving either to an industrial centre or to a plantation area, or emigrating.

G-3028. To what extent is labour in Madras entirely divorced from the village ?—Scarcely at all. Even the labourers in Madras city itself go back to their own villages from time to time. Very often they own a little piece of land or a house in the village.

G-3029. Do you agree that trade unionism seems to have made rather slow progress in the last ten years ?—It has been slow, but at the present time I have applications from 6 unions pending before me, all of which will be registered in the course of a few days.

G-3030. That is not due to the advent of the Commission ?—I think that has something to do with it.

G-3031. Have you any suggestions to make whereby workmen can be assisted to be put in a somewhat stronger position *vis-a-vis* the employer ?—I can suggest no way except by the formation of trade unions.

G-3032. Have you any suggestions to make as to how a healthy growth of trade unionism could be encouraged ?—I cannot offer any suggestions. I do not know that we have any particular reason to be dissatisfied in this Presidency. I think the growth of trade unions of recent years has been on the whole fairly healthy.

G-3033. As regards indebtedness, you have a long experience of this as Director of Co-operative Societies. Would you agree with the proposition that the amount of indebtedness depends on a man's credit rather than on his poverty; if a man is better paid he tends to be more in debt than if he is poorly paid ?—That is so, unless he is encouraged by the co-operative societies to save.

G-3034. Would it not be an advantage to workmen if the provision by which courts can call on the employer to recover workmen's debts disappeared ?—I do not think so in the long run. It would diminish the man's credit for one thing.

G-3035. Would not that be a good thing ?—It might in many cases where wasteful expenditure was involved. The co-operative societies have

rules about loans made for ceremonial and other non-productive expenditure.

G-3036. In actual practice does a man who is not in a co-operative society generally borrow for an unproductive purpose ?—Very often.

G-3037. Are you satisfied with the present co-operative movement among the industrial classes ?—Its growth has been very rapid. There are something like 15,000 societies in this Presidency.

G-3038. Among the industrial classes ?—I cannot say off-hand what proportion of the membership of those societies is among the industrial classes, but there is a fairly substantial co-operative movement in the towns among the the industrial classes.

G-3039. Do you think this rapid growth has, on the whole, been on sound lines ?—Yes, but it has been so rapid that it has made the supervision and control of the societies somewhat difficult.

G-3040. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say you have collected a lot of information in connection with labour on plantations. May we have a copy of that ?—Certainly.

G-3041. You refer to statistics dealing with strikes. What is "a strike" ? —It is defined in the Trade Disputes Act.

G-3042. When you make your returns of the number of strikes, how many people must cease working in any concern in order to constitute a strike ?— I do not know that we have ever considered it from the point of view of a minimum number.

G-3043. For how many days have the workmen to be out ?—Sometimes it is only one day ; sometimes it is merely an hour.

G-3044. There is a definition on that point ? There is no definition of which I am aware, except the one I have referred to in the Trade Disputes Act.

G-3045. I think you had better institute enquiries and find out what the practice is in that connection ?—I do not think it is defined in any of our instructions.

G-3046. You say under "Part played by official and non-official conciliators in settling disputes", "No remarks" ?—On the other hand we have given a complete history of all the various negotiations in the extracts from the Administration Reports.

G-3047. You meant to refer to that under this head ?— Yes.

G-3048. You say "The passing of the Trade Unions Act gave an impetus to the Trade Union movement of Madras" ?—Yes. That was written in 1926-27 by Sir George Paddison.

G-3049. As Registrar, have you taken any interest in Trade Unions ? What do you do when an application for registration comes to you ?—I see that it conforms to the Act and to the rules under the Act. Sometimes I have a friendly talk with the labour leaders concerned, and I help them to put their application into proper form.

152

G-3050. You say that the annual returns which were due in June and July of last year had not been submitted up to the time of your compiling this memorandum for the Commission. Have you complete returns now ?—They are given in the memorandum.

G-3051. When you do not receive a return from a registered trade union, what do you do ?—What I did in the case of two or three difficult instances was to send round one of my own clerks to get the information.

G-3052. You did not send for the secretary of the union ?—Yes, I did.

G-3053. Do you ever do anything to encourage an unregistered union to register ?—Yes. If they come to me and ask me about registration, I encourage them by telling them how to draft their by-laws, and so on.

G-3054. As the result of your intervention, have you got any unregistered unions to register ?—Two more have been registered since this memorandum was prepared, and of the six that are now pending before me, three or four at least have been functioning for some time as unregistered unions.

G-3055. You refer to your interference being limited, and you refer to Railways. Do I take it you do not interfere in the case of a Railway dispute unless you are requested by both parties ?—I can interfere only if both sides agree, and I must obtain the previous sanction of Government in each case.

G-3056. In practice there is a difference in your Province between disputes on Railways and other disputes ?—Yes. The difference is that I must obtain the previous sanction of Government in each case before attempting to interfere in the case of a Railway dispute.

G-3057. It goes farther than that. I understand that in an ordinary dispute in this Province you can intervene whenever you like, but in a Railway dispute you cannot intervene unless you are requested by both parties to do so, and also unless you obtain the consent of your Government ?—That appears to be the case.

G-3058. What would you do in the case of a Railway dispute ?—In the case of every strike I submit full information to Government. I address the Secretary to the Government of India and the Secretary, Public Works and Labour Department, Government of Madras.

G-3059. As Registrar of Co-operative Societies, you have been brought a good deal into contact with the mofussil. We have been exploring in Bombay the possibility of getting the co-operative societies in the districts to finance workers who wish to go to Bombay or Madras, in order that they can avoid having to borrow during the six weeks that intervene between their arrival and when they get their first lot of pay. Have you, in this Province, considered the possibility of financing people coming from the mofussil so that they might start work in the towns free of debt ?—No, but it would come within the scope of a co-operative society operating in a village from which the people do come to Madras.

G-3060. Will you set in motion machinery for exploring that, so far as Madras is concerned. Will you ascertain what the practice of the Societies is, and the possibility of them acting in that connection ?—Yes.

G-3061. The tea planters stated that they had started one or two co-operative societies in the districts from which their labour is recruited, with a similar object ?—I do not see how they could encourage the starting of a co-operative society in a district a long way off from the estate.

G-3062. You have no knowledge of it ?—No.

G-3063. They also said there was a difference between daily-rated and monthly paid hands so far as the effect of attachments was concerned. They said that a daily-rated man's wages could not be attached, and that the tea garden labour in fact was free from attachments because it was all daily-rated ?—I cannot answer that.

G-3064. Will you make enquiries as to what the position is in Madras Presidency in that connection, and let us know ?—Yes.

G-3065. The Holland Commission in 1918 made certain recommendations that land should be acquired under the Land Acquisition Act for the purpose of housing the industrial classes. Has your Government ever done anything in that connection ?—I can only speak in regard to acquisitions for housing the depressed classes.

G-3066. Under what Act is that ?—Under the Land Acquisition Act, Section 3 (*f*).

G-3067. Is that taken from the All-India Land Acquisition Act ?—Yes.

G-3068. Are there special provisions for Madras in the all-India Land Acquisition Act ?—No.

G-3069. Can you find out for us whether Government has, either in Madras City or in the vicinity, acquired land under the Land Acquisition Act for an industrial purpose, which they considered to be for a public purpose. We find in other provinces that land has been acquired which has been used for industrial purposes apart from housing, and then for housing in addition. Will you make enquiries and let us know ?—For industrial purposes in general ?

G-3070. And in particular for the housing of industrial workers ?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. W. E. SMITH, M.A., I.E.S., Officiating *Director of Public Instruction*, Madras.

G-3071. *Miss Power* : Can you tell us how the large number of children under the age of 11 seen by us in unregulated factories escape the Compulsory Education Act ?—Education is not compulsory over the whole Presidency. It has only been brought into effect where local bodies have levied an educational cess ; that is to say, 25 municipalities and 7 taluk boards.

G-3072. I was speaking of Madras City ?—It was brought into effect in a certain number of wards. In the course of the next two years it will be extended completely over the city.

G-3073. Do you think that within two years the children we have seen in *bidi* factories, and places of that kind, will not be employed because they will be

compelled to attend school ?—If the supervisors do their work properly it should be possible to see that children are not employed in factories.

G-3074. In the wards where the compulsory order has been in operation what do the attendance officers do to locate the children who are not in school ?—Censuses have been made of the children of school-going age in those wards, and those children should be on the rolls of the school.

G-3075. But supposing they are on the rolls but not in the schools ?—It is a difficult matter. You get migration in a city.

G-3076. Do they go over to the wards which have no attendance officers ?—Yes. One of the greatest difficulties with regard to compulsory education is that of determining in any year what is the number of children who should be in the school, owing to migration.

G-3077. Do you consider the present system of employing attendance officers which operates in these particular wards, is a successful one ?—I think you could get more exact information from the Municipality. There are certain Attendance Committees and voluntary workers. They could do very much more if they were active. It is difficult for one attendance officer to ensure the attendance of so many children at school.

G-3078. How many full-time attendance officers are there in these particular wards and how many children are on the school muster ?—I will send in those figures.

G-3079. *Colonel Russell* : Is it the policy of the Department of Public Instruction to include hygiene as part of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools ?—Yes, it forms part of the syllabus, and therefore it finds its way into text books, which are produced by writers and publishers, and are passed by the text-book committee.

G-3080. There is no definite period in the weekly curriculum allotted to the teaching of hygiene ?—No.

Elementary physiology and elementary hygiene ?—In the elementary schools no ; in the secondary schools, yes.

G-3081. *Mr. Cliff* : It is stated in the memorandum "Amongst other things some employers seem to be indifferent or hostile to the provision of educational facilities for any of the three categories referred to in item 36 of the schedule." Does the Department approach employers ?—I believe not.

G-3082. Is it not considered within the province of your Department to approach employers and see what it can do by persuasion ?—A good deal is done by the Department in the matter of adult education, not by approaching employers, but by the Government schools running adult classes.

G-3083. *Sir Alexander Murray* : With reference to the reply you gave to Mr. Cliff, have you seen the memorandum of the Government of Madras ?—No.

G-3084. It says "It may be generally stated that it is possible for the children of all workers in industrial concerns of any size to secure a general elementary education" ?—Yes. I should like that to be in capital letters, because the object of compulsory education in Madras is that every child should go through

the first five standards by the time he is eleven, and if, as I understand, the suggestion is that a child should not go into a factory before he is 12, then he will have received an education of the first five standards before he goes into any kind of work.

G-3085. *Mr. Cliff*: It says "it is possible". To what extent is it being required ?—It is *open* to every child. It is required in those areas where compulsory education has been brought in.

G-3086. Can you give me an idea to what extent it is being required ?—If you get a copy of the Instruction Report for last year, you will find on page 37 the information you want.

G-3087. Perhaps you will send in a copy ?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew).

154

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninety-Fourth Meeting.

MADRAS.

Saturday, 8th March 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Honourable V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. (*Presiding*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, BART.
Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E.
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Mr. K. KAY.
Mr. JAMAL MAHOMED Sahib Bahadur.
Mr. MUHAMMAD UBAIDULLAH Sahib.
} *Assistant Commissioners.*

Mrs. VENKATASUBHA RAO, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S.
Mr. A. DIBDIN.
} *Joint Secretaries.*

Mr. W. M. BROWNING, of the Burmah Shell Oil Storage and Distributing Co., of India Ltd., Mr. C. E. WOOD, M.L.C., of Messrs. Parry & Co. Ltd., and Mr. F. G. LUKER of Messrs. Addison & Co., Ltd., representatives of the Employers' Federation of Southern India, Madras.

G-3088. *Mr. Sastri*: I understand that your Federation has been in existence for about ten years ?—(*Mr. Wood*): Yes.

G-3089. Generally speaking, are your relations with labour fairly pleasant and agreeable ?—Members of the Federation have had different experiences. Generally speaking, at present the relations are quite cordial.

G-3090. I think you are against legislation with regard to insurance either for unemployment or for sickness ?—Yes, because of the difficulties in administration. We are not against the principle.

G-3091. With regard to housing, have you any special suggestions to make to meet the great want ?—No. We have never studied the matter, except to realize that the employers themselves in most places find it impossible to do anything.

G-3092. You mean without assistance ?—They cannot get the land.

G-3093. If they got the land, do you think they would be willing to put up houses ?—No, I do not think the employers would consider it part of their duty to house labour.

G-3094. Do you think the wages of the employees with whom you deal are sufficient to enable them to pay an economic rent even for the lowest type of houses which a Health Board would pass ?—I have not sufficient knowledge on the question of what a Health Board in India would consider adequate housing to answer that question.

G-3095. Have you at any time seen some of the houses in which your employees live ?—Yes. Some of them are very bad.

G-3096. You would like them improved ?—Certainly.

G-3097. No Health Board would pass them as they are ?—I think it very unlikely.

G-3098. You say that wages and prices have about balanced ?—I think we say that wages have increased more than the cost of living.

G-3099. Do you think that a verifiable statement ?—Yes, possibly not definitely verifiable in Madras, because there are no very reliable statistics with regard to the cost of living, but there are fairly reliable statistics in Bombay by which we are guided to some extent. Also we know how the cost of the chief articles compare with what it was ten years ago.

G-3100. With regard to the remarks under the heading " Trade Unions " you object to non-employees coming into the organization as parts of the executive. You are willing to tolerate a few advisers, but you do not want them to be members of the union, or office bearers ?—That is not our evidence.

G-3101. You say you do not object to a few outsiders on the committee of a union " provided they are not well known political agitators " ?—Yes.

G-3102. That proviso really negatives the effect of that well-meant suggestion, because the definition of " well known political agitators " would be left to your decision apparently ?—It is not difficult to define who is a well known political agitator and who is not. Might I add that members actually of the Federation have welcomed outsiders on small unions, and have given their permission to outsiders to form unions and to come on to the executive of the union, and have realized that in some cases it is extremely difficult for the employees to form unions without outsiders.

G-3103. There you are in conformity with the spirit of recent legislation on the subject, which allows fifty per cent. of outsiders ?—Yes, but I think personally that 50 per cent. is a great mistake.

G-3104. You would not go as high as fifty per cent. ?—No. I object to the 50 per cent. ratio. In my own case it has led to complications, because unions have been formed embodying in their constitution this regulation that 50 per cent. of the officials may be outsiders. I have accepted one or two outsiders as guiders of the union, but I have objected to recognise the union unless they would give an undertaking that not more than one or two outsiders would be admitted.

G 3105. To that extent, therefore, you are not carrying out the legislation ?—There is no legislation affecting the employer. The legislation is to the effect that the Union " may ", but there is no obligation on the employer.

135

G-3106. You are not carrying out the spirit of the legislation in that respect. You think it goes too far ?—Yes.

G-3107. Do you not think employees, in their present state of enlightenment, will not be able to hold their own when discussing matters of importance with people like yourselves ? Do you not think they will want a certain amount of outside guidance ?—I think the small unions must have it. In the case of a big union I think necessarily there are in that union very well educated people who are able to guide the rest of the employees, provided they themselves have access to outside advice. There is no reason why that outside advice should be brought into the union.

G-3108. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say that your Federation has not taken part in any industrial dispute, but is prepared in certain circumstances to do so. What have you in mind when you say that ?—If any matter of principle were at stake as to whether Government should intervene, or anything of that sort, the Federation would take an interest in the matter and assist the member of the Federation to take legal advice.

G-3109. You recognise the principle of your Federation taking up individual members' cases in industrial disputes ?—Only if called upon to do so.

G-3110. Similarly if your workmen are members of unions, and the unions think it desirable to intervene on behalf of the workmen, would you be prepared to deal with the union ?—No. That is not what we are for. It is for the employer himself to do that. The Federation is to help the employer if called upon to do so.

G-3111. You speak about holding back unclaimed wages for a period which covers legal liability. Is that the law of limitation ?—Yes.

G-3112. You say wages are paid on a daily basis but are distributed monthly by agreement. Have any of your members experience of attachment by creditors of employees' wages ?—It has been done in the case of the clerical staff, but I do not know personally of any case where a workman's wages have been attached.

G-3113. We were told that because the workmen were daily paid therefore, as the law stands in Madras, they could not have their wages attached ?—If there was a likelihood of attachment the workman would not be so keen on having his wages paid fortnightly or monthly instead of daily. They do not like daily wages.

G-3114. We were told that if they were paid monthly they were liable to attachment. If they were paid daily they were not ?—I cannot speak from experience.

G-3115. Under " minimum wages " you state " employers would in self-defence be obliged to replace all slow working men by others more efficient ". Would not that be a good thing ?—No, because at present circumtances enable an employer to employ somebody who is not up to a full day's pay, say a man who has been connected with the work before and who has gone sick and who is enfeebled. He is very often employed again, but on very much lighter work. If he had to be paid the wages of a strong labourer he probably wou'd not get that employment.

G-3116. Your point of view is that if minimum wages were introduced there would be a tendency for you to dismiss the older and less efficient labourers ?—Yes.

G-3117. *Miss Power*: I take it that supposing you had a minimum wage you would have the same clauses that operate in nearly every minimum wage legislation, which allow of a permit of exemption from the adult rate for the old workers whose disabilities make it impossible for them to earn the standard rate, in which event there would be nothing to preclude you keeping on these workers at their decreased industrial value, would there ?—No, not if that could be administered efficiently. It would be very difficult to administer I think.

G-3118. It is quite easy to administer in England ?—Yes, but here, where there are small factories distributed over enormous areas, there is no such thing as contact with somebody who is going to say what the man's rate should be.

G-3119. You get a permit from the central body, but even if you failed to do so you would not be penalized by being made to pay an adult rate ?—You mean the employer would fix the wage ?

G-3120. The Board would fix it, but even if you failed to get your permit through distance, you would not be penalized by the State in a case where the worker was obviously a person entitled, on account of his diabilities, to a permit ?—It is difficult to say in this country who is obviously entitled to a high wage and who is entitled to a low wage, because some people are very lazy.

Miss Power: It is not a question of high and low rate. It is a question of the minimum rate or below the minimum rate.

G-3121. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Dealing with the possibility of a reduction in maximum hours, you say that it is not advisable to reduce the maximum in the case of smaller industries until experience has been gained in respect of these industries. What do you mean by "smaller industries". Do you want to differentiate between the big industry and the small industry ?—(*Mr. Browning*): The small industries referred to here were tanneries and carpet manufactories.

G-3122. Those concerns are the particular concerns where we find that long hours are being worked by people who are not controlled in any way ?—What we exactly meant by that was that we had not the experience of these long hours being worked, and we suggest that that should be gone into before any alteration in the maximum hours is made.

G-3123. You want the matter dealt with for the good of India as a whole ?—Yes.

G-3124. On the face of it it would appear that in unregulated places, such as tanneries and carpet manufactories long hours are being worked, and small children are employed, and there is no particular control. To what extent would you be in favour of control ?—We would be in favour of control.

G-3125. *Mr. Cow*: You state that lump sum payments of compensation now made to dependents of deceased workmen are almost invariably squandered in the course of a short time. On what is that statement based ?—(*Mr. Wood*): It is based upon the fact that when these lump sums have been given in the past

instead of a small pension, almost invariably the recipient comes back after say one year and says "I have now spent all my money. I have been employed by you for ten years, and it is up to you to support me".

G-3126. The dependent has not got the choice ?—He is generally given the choice.

G-3127. You do not as a rule employ all dependents of deceased workmen, do you ? The sentence refers entirely to dependents ?—I was thinking of people who retire and get a lump sum.

G-3128. The sentence is restricted to dependents ?—The dependents, in exactly the same way, come back and say the money has been spent and will we now support them.

G-3129. You mean they come from their villages ?—Yes.

G-3130. And apply for support ?—Yes.

G-3131. After you have paid the full compensation ?—Yes. It is almost a daily occurrence.

G-3132. Are you in favour of employers being compelled to pay pensions instead of lump sums ?—They cannot possibly do it.

G-3133. Why not ?—Because it might commit them to paying pensions for fifty years.

G-3134. It is an actuarial matter. You could get insurance companies to insure for you ?—If insurance companies would insure this risk, no doubt the employers would consider insurance.

G-3135. If you are not prepared to agree to that, what do you want us to do on this statement ?—We only make the statement that the value of the Act has not been, in our opinion, so great as the framers of it hoped it would be. Presumably they hoped that these lump sum payments would be invested and utilized as income, and not be squandered.

G-3136. I think they took the view that it was administratively very much simpler to pay lump sum payments than to insist on pensions ?—Possibly; but I have explained what our reply means.

G-3137. What remedy do you suggest ?—We do not suggest any remedy. We merely make the statement for the information of the Commission.

G-3138. You are aware that in the case of women and minor dependents the Commissioner can distribute the compensation in instalments ? Is it your experience that that is not done ?—If dependents come and state that they have spent the whole of the money and want to be supported by you, that would seem to indicate that the Commissioner is not doing that. (*Mr. Browning*): I think I am right in saying that these instalments do not go on for ever. They go on till the money is exhausted. It is after that that they come back.

G-3139. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Practically all workmen are in debt, and the families pay off their debts. How do you know the money has been squandered ?—(*Mr. Wood*): Do we make the statement that it is squandered ?

G-3140. Yes. Would it not have been better to have said that the money seems to disappear ?—That would have been a better statement, except that

we are told by the head clerks, and people like that who are in touch with these people, that they have spent the money on marriages and things like that. There is no such thing, in my humble opinion, as keeping a lump sum for any length of time, whether there are debts or not.

G-3141. *Mr. Clow*: It is occasionally spent, in Northern India at any rate, on land. Is not that possible here?—I expect in some cases it is, but the tendency is not to do that.

G-3142. Under "days of rest" you state that the existing practice is one and a half days per week. Can we take it that the Saturday afternoon half holiday is general in the industries which you represent?—Not in the one I represent. They work 9½ hours a day.

G-3143. I mean which your Federation represents?—They vary very considerably indeed. Some of these factories come under Section 30, working day and night. Some work in eight hour shifts.

G-3144. You call this the existing practice. You do not mean to imply that that is at all general?—(*Mr. Browning*): In my own company they get Saturday afternoon and Sunday off.

G-3145. Would you say that is true of the majority of the establishments represented in your Federation?—I cannot say.

G-3146. You say that there is a good deal of undesirable employment of children in workshops. What kind of workshops are you thinking of?—Chiefly *bidi* factories, tanneries and carpet factories.

G-3147. Do you suggest that very young children should be excluded from those industries?—Yes.

G-3148. *Mr. Joshi*: Did I understand you to say that you would like outsiders in trade unions to be advisers rather than office bearers?—(*Mr. Wood*): I did not actually say that, but that is my view.

G-3149. Do you not think the danger of that arrangement would be that the man who gave the advice would escape the responsibility of it?—He would try to do that in any case if it was bad advice.

G-3150. How could he try to do that if he were an officer? If he is President or Secretary he takes the responsibility of his actions, but if he is an outsider he makes others do what he wants and escapes the responsibility?—He certainly throws the responsibility on to the officers of the Union, and I think it is very good for them that they should have that responsibility.

G-3151. If the consequences of an outsider's advice are bad he does not take the responsibility; others have to take it. If strikes are successful the outsider gets the credit?—I hold that they are most definitely responsible in their position of officers of the union. If they like to take the advice of an outsider they must take the consequences of it.

G-3152. You say you do not mind outsiders being in small factory unions. On my way to Madras I visited a sugar factory which belongs to one of your members, Parry & Co. Is that a big factory or a small factory?—It is a small factory, comparatively speaking.

G-3153. I heard complaints that the union there was not recognized because the president happens to be an outsider?—That is not true.

G-3154. Would you have any objection to employees of the different sugar factories in Madras forming themselves into one union?—I think the time is premature to do that, because they have not yet learnt to run their own houses properly, and it is hardly time for them to take part in running other people's houses.

G-3155. It will not be a case of running the houses of other people. It is one industry, and they will all be in one industry. They know the industry?—The conditions in each factory are different.

G-3156. But there will be people on the committee to tell them what the different conditions are?—It may be so.

G-3157. Is there any serious objection to that course being followed, except that the people may not know the conditions?—I think the time is premature. I think it will come in time.

G-3158. The employers have formed a Federation for the protection of their own interests. Similarly the employees also will require protection of their interests by forming a combination?—There is no objection to their forming a combination, provided that that combination does not try to take executive action in individual cases.

G-3159. They will support each other. I find from your memorandum that you have formed your Federation to support each other?—To support one another by giving advice. I would like to put in a copy of our constitution (handing in same).

G-3160. With regard to sickness insurance, you say you think the workmen would be unwilling to pay any contribution. Why should not a workman be willing to pay a contribution if he is told that if he contributes one rupee a year he will get three rupees back?—(*Mr. Browning*): I do not think he will contribute as he would not be certain of obtaining any benefit and would be taking a chance.

G-3161. If the workmen are made to realize their own interests in the matter, would the employers object to a sickness insurance scheme?—I do not think the employers would object.

G-3162. Under the heading "Deductions" you state "An enquiry, made at the time the Government of India called for particulars on this matter, showed that the incidence of fining did not exceed 0·6 per cent. of the wages paid". Suppose this Commission recommends that the amount of fines to be levied should not exceed 0·6, will the employers be inconvenienced?—(*Mr. Wood*): I think it would be impracticable. I do not think the employers would object if it were practicable.

G-3163. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Is this figure of 0·6 the average?—Yes. Some may be more and some may be less.

G-3164. *Mr. Joshi*: The limit will be so fixed that the average will not go beyond 0·6?—It would be impossible to work to such a basis, because one man might commit an offence many times, making him liable to a fine on the

large percentage basis, and another man might commit an offence on the low percentage basis. The latter's average would be very low and the other man's would work out very high.

G-3165. *Miss Power*: In one place in your memorandum you say "Indian labour prefers less work to increased prosperity", but apropos of absenteeism you refer in another place to the "slowly growing wish for luxuries" on the part of the labourer. It is admitted that the luxuries of to-day are the necessities of to-morrow. Would you not say, therefore, that the Indian worker is responding in his standard of living to an increased wage?—I do not say that the two synchronise, but would you not be prepared to admit that the standard of living is steadily rising to meet an increased wage?—Yes, I quite agree with that.

G-3166. That means you really should modify your remark about Indian labour preferring less work to increased prosperity?—That was to the effect that if a piece-worker is given an opportunity of earning a higher wage by turning out more work he does so, but he is liable to miss two or three days in consequence. That was the genesis of that remark; but I quite agree that generally speaking higher wages do lead to better domestic conditions.

G-3167. Would your Federation be in favour of a Maternity Benefit Act which started in the first place with the more organized industries?—Generally speaking, I think the tendency would be for employers not to employ women if there was legislation on that matter. At the same time (it seems rather contradictory to say so), it is a fact that in this Federation more generous terms are usually given in the form of maternity benefit than would be provided under an Act.

G-3168. You express yourselves as being in favour of the Commission considering some method of dealing with the question of the undesirable employment of children in workshops. Has your Federation brought its point of view to the attention of Government?—I regret to say that our Federation has been rather somnolent.

G-3169. That means that you have not done so?—No. I have handed in our constitution showing what we are constituted for.

G-3170. Dealing with the question of monthly payments, you say "Attempts made to introduce more frequent payments have had to be abandoned at the request of the employees". Two days ago the Madras Labour Union told us that the consensus of opinion among their workers was in favour of a fortnightly payment of wages. How have you arrived at the conclusion that the workers prefer a monthly payment?—(*Mr. Browning*): In the case of the oil trade we wanted to bring in a fortnightly system of payment of wages, but the workers would not have it. (*Mr. Wood*): Most factories pay fortnightly. The workmen pledge their wages in advance, and they find it easier to take them in one lump sum and give them to the rice merchant, or whoever it is.

G-3171. Has your Federation ever tried to do anything in respect of the employees' indebtedness?—Not as a Federation. Individual employers do. I had a case the other day where there was very gross indebtedness due to very heavy rates of interest. Steps were taken to see that no employees transacted

business with that particular man. He was warned he would be put in the hands of the police for usurious practices.

G-3172. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed*: You say "The emigration abroad and movement of rural labour to planting districts has increased of recent years". For how many years?—Since larger tracts of land were planted with tea and rubber, which must be about ten years.

G-3173. It has nothing to do with agricultural depression?—No.

G-3174. You state "There is without doubt considerable unemployment among the labouring classes in the sense that without being in actual want there are a great number who would accept work if it could be found". Is this unemployment of long standing, or is it only recent?—It is due to the fact that the population is too large, I suppose, and also to the fact that the development of agriculture is not proceeding sufficiently rapidly. A development of agriculture would help to prevent this unemployment.

G-3175. You go on to say "of recent years there has been continual unemployment in respect to the partially educated student class which has been produced in greater quantity than there is a demand for its services." Do you think it may be due to the want of the provision of technical institutes to train these youths?—I understand the question to be, why is it that the partially educated class is unemployed? I think it is because they do not like manual labour. A fairly-well educated man will not take up manual labour.

G-3176. May it not be due to the fact that while he is being educated no provision is made for also technically training him?—I think more technical education will be required.

G-3177. You say "As regards the manual worker, the chief hope of alleviating and remedying unemployment lies in the development of agriculture". I think you are right. Then you go on to say "which is the main industry of the country, so that the number of labourers fully employed on the land may be greatly increased". Do you not think the present labour troubles are more or less due to the depression in agriculture, or the want of development in agriculture?—That is a very distinct factor.

G-3178. If that is so, whose concern should it be—the State's, the employers' or the people's?—The development of agriculture should be the concern of the State.

G-3179. Do you not think depression in agriculture is also a concern of the State?—Depression in agriculture may be due to outside circumstances. While the development of agriculture might be tackled by the State, a temporary depression in agriculture could not be tackled by the State.

G-3180. Who would deal with it then?—The country has to suffer if there is a temporary depression in agriculture.

G-3181. There is no remedy?—There is no immediate solution. When world prices are low for agricultural produce, there is depression.

G-3182. If there be a large number of men out of employment due to agricultural depression, the industries are not able to cope with the difficulty. Therefore the best way to tackle the unemployment problem is to tackle the

agricultural problem. Do you agree with that ?—I agree that development of agriculture is a matter for Government to attend to.

G-3183. You say " The managing staff of industries supporting the Federation is almost entirely European and imported ". Cannot you train or make use of local men ?—The difficulty is in getting such people to undergo the training. If an educated Indian out here would do the same as a mechanical engineer does in England, namely, go through the workshops as an ordinary workman for five years, he would rise to the top.

G-3184. Is it not more a question of giving him opportunities ?—They are always being given opportunities to my knowledge.

G-3185. My point is this : if there were more Indians on the staff there would be less misunderstanding between the employers and employed, because the Indian officers could enter more into the spirit which animated the work-people ?—It would be an extremely expensive matter to have an Indian staff which did not know its job if it was in control.

G-3186. My point is that if there is misunderstanding between the employers and employed, the Indian staff may be able to smooth it over with the employed, better ?—I do not think a half-trained Indian would be able to do that.

G-3187. I am not referring to half-trained Indians, but to fully trained Indians. They might be able to do it ?—Yes. May I say that I believe that in all European industrial concerns in this country the Indian would be welcomed at the top if he went right through the shops and learned his job from beginning to end.

G-3188. You say " As qualified Indians become available, they are to a certain extent replacing staff imported from other countries ". Can you give us some idea of what proportion of the higher staff are now Indians ?—We have no data.

G-3189. Perhaps you will supply us with the data later on. You say " There are hardly any industrial concerns in Southern India which provide facilities for training of workmen, and in few cases would the standard of education of the labourer provide an adequate foundation for training him for the higher administrative and managing staff ". Do you not think there is a necessity for the State to provide technical institutes for training these men ?—Yes, if the training is given to labourers of the requisite standard of education.

G-3190. You are talking of staff ?—This paragraph deals with the training and promotion of workmen to the staff.

G-3191. With regard to your remarks on the extent to which medical facilities are utilized, with the conditions in India as they are at present, do you not think the employment of lady doctors and midwives would go a long way to make the women workers appreciate, and make use of, the medical facilities available ?—Yes. Where women are employed in any number it would be an excellent thing.

G-3192. Is it being done now ?—I believe it is in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, but I am not sure about it.

159

G-3193. Dealing with hours of work, do you not think in a hot climate like this, sixty hours per week is too much ?—It depends upon the speed at which you work. In the Federation the more usual hours of work are about fifty.

G-3194. Would you have any objection to reducing the number of hours to 54, with a meal interval of at least one and a half hours ?—It would not affect the Federation.

G-3195. You are not against it ?—We are not against it. It would probably lead to a more careful selection of workmen.

G-3196. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Many industries in India cannot exist but for protective tariffs. Therefore if you reduce the hours all round will it not mean more protective tariffs for more industries ?—My answer assured that there is a sufficient amount of good labour. If the labour is of poor quality as it is in most districts, 54 hours is probably not long enough.

G-3197. *Mr. Kay* : In connection with the question of outsiders being on the executives of trade unions, would any of the members of your Federation object to the principle of trade unions having advisory boards composed of persons from outside the industry in order to assist and advise the work-people in industrial matters ?—As long as the advisory board could not take any executive action, I think it would be all right.

G-3198. It has to be recognized that cases must arise where, owing to the nature of the labour involved, and possibly owing to the size of the industry concerned, it might be desirable to have outside advisers assisting in negotiations between the work-people and their employers in the early stages of a dispute, either in the capacity of an advisory board or possibly definitely as the work-people's representatives. Apart from cases like that, may I put it to you that in most well-organized and large industrial concerns, in all ordinary routine and administrative matters, or say in the incipient stages of a dispute, it is possible to settle differences much more quickly and with less chance of misunderstanding with the Union if the work-people and the management establish direct contact together immediately the occasion arises and talk things over personally without outside intervention. Also, the intervention of parties from outside at this stage is very apt to lead to misunderstandings, especially if those third parties are constituted the medium for the exchange of views between each side ?—I think in all disputes it is better for the two disputants to get together and see if they can settle. I do not think the advisory board can come in the initial stages as part of the Union unless it is actually part of the Union. I would not bring any outsider into a dispute until it was absolutely necessary.

G-3199. But the members of your Federation would have no objection, as far as you know, to unions appointing advisory boards, which were recognized by the employers ?—Provided the functions of an advisory board were very definitely laid down, I do not think the members of the Federation could object to its presence, and I do not think they would object to recognize it.

G-3200. You do not object to a union appointing an advisory board to advise its members ?—I agree with that.

G-3201. But one would not preclude the work-people or their union from consulting their advisory board at any stage of the negotiations, either before or during the time they are carrying on negotiations with the employers. Do you consider that in large industrial concerns it is better if outside persons are introduced as interveners between the work-people and the union and the management only when negotiations directed between the management and employees have definitely broken down ?—Yes, I agree with that.

G-3202. *Sir Alexander Murray*: If the employers and the union fall out, do you think that the union's advisory board can settle where the employers and the union cannot settle ?—It is very doubtful I should think, but if the employer and the employees both agreed that thence-forward the employer and the advisory board should talk over the matter, let them do so.

G-3203. *Mr. Kay*: That was the point I wanted to get at, namely, whether the Federation consider that the employer would object to the principle of advisory boards in unions, and whether they consider that the negotiations should first of all take place direct between the work-people and the management, and that the intervention of advisory boards should only come in when negotiations for a settlement have failed. I should like further to suggest that in final negotiations, when an advisory board is introduced, the work-people should continue to negotiate direct, acting on the advise of their board, because we have found in Madras a considerable tendency for the outside influence to take control of the negotiations and not to give the work-people an opportunity of expressing their views fully ?— Yes, in the present undeveloped state of trade unions, I think that the work-people should be kept in the negotiations as long as possible.

G-3204. *Colonel Russell*: You say that one of the principal causes of absenteeism is due to ill-health. To what do you attribute that ill-health ?—It is due to very many causes, one of which is diet. A change of diet, and a better selected diet, would improve the worker's physique.

G-3205. Do you think a welfare officer would be able to do anything in educating the people in that respect ?—There would have to be very definite propaganda from the Government Health Department. Other causes of absenteeism are malaria, venereal disease and hookworm.

G-3206. Have you any figures in this connection ?—No, but we have the evidence of the medical officers in different factories that a very high percentage of these people have suffered from venereal diseases and are by no means cured, and also from hookworm.

G-3207. We have had it in evidence, Mr. Browning that a considerable number of the men in the oil industry suffer from a disease which might be classed as an industrial disease. They say that as a result of the irritation of the oil various diseases and sickness occur ?—(*Mr. Browning*): The acid we used for soldering the tins definitely did irritate their hands, but we promptly stopped that.

G-3208. There is nothing to affect their feet ?—I have had no complaints of their feet.

G-3209. Would you support the statement that the sickness rates are very much higher than they ought to be ?—No, I cannot support it.

160

G-3210. *Sir Victor Sassoon*:—They complain also that their sight goes bad on account of the nature of their work ?—During the last 3 or 4 years we have had two or three cases of eye trouble through paint splashes but not through oil.

G-3211. What do you do to protect them against paint splashes. Do you make them wear goggles ?—No, the cases have been so few. Those cases we have sent with a special chit to the opthalmic hospital.

G-3212. *Mr. Cliff*: Have you any idea of the number of employees employed by the larger Indian employers ?—No.

G-3213. You say " The aims and objects of the Federation are to encourage and promote a better feeling between employers and employed ". Is there any joint standing machinery, or is it proposed that there should be joint standing machinery to achieve that ?—(*Mr. Wood*): No. The idea was not to do so directly, but to bring conditions to a standard which would encourage a better feeling between employers and employed.

G-3214. It is rather to encourage the members of your Federation to do it ?—Yes. The idea is that we should help one another, to act in line, to find out what is a living wage, and that sort of thing.

G-3215. What proportion of the 35,000 to 40,000 employees which members of your Federation employ are paid an allowance during sickness ?—I should say practically all of them. Fourteen days I think is the general allowance, but in special cases considerably more than that is given.

G-3216. *Mr. Ahmed*: Out of these 35,000 to 40,000 employees what are the proportions of skilled and unskilled men ?—At a guess, I should say there are 10 per cent. skilled.

G-3217. You say that the unskilled adult gets from Rs. 13 to Rs. 14 per month. You have said that your Federation's object is to promote and protect the mutual interests of the employers and employees, and to find out what is a living wage. Yesterday we heard from Government witnesses that four annas per day is the cost of an unskilled labourer's food. Is that your view ?—I think it is possibly more than that.

G-3218. Would you put it at about six annas a day ?—It depends very much upon circumstances, I should say it is about Rs. 9 a month for food alone.

G-3219. Then I suppose an unskilled labourer wants about a rupee or eight annas a month for his clothing ?—I should like to submit figures separately for all these things.

G-3220. Then there is Rs. 1/8 for his rent per month. If out of Rs. 13, Rs. 9 are deducted for food and Rs. 2 are deducted for rent and clothing, there are Rs. 2 balance. Is that adequate for the maintenance of a labourer, his wife and two children ?

Sir Alexander Murray: We are talking now of an unmarried man.

G-3221. *Mr. Ahmed*: Since the object of the Federation is to promote and protect the mutual interests of employers and employed, and to safeguard the interests of both. I suppose it is essential and necessary that a living and fair wage should be given to a worker ? You agree with me ? I agree that

Rs. 2 is not sufficient to supply the wants of a wife and family, but in this case there is no wife and family.

G-3222. You say that the whole labour population is heavily in debt. Has your Federation taken any step to alleviate that position?—No.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. MUHAMMAD UBAIDULLAH, with other representatives, of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees Union.

G-3223. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: As regards the Workmen's Compensation Act, you suggest that the Commissioner should be empowered to initiate proceedings. Your work-people having a Union, I take it that that Union would be in a position to initiate those proceedings. You are merely speaking for those industries where the work-people have no unions to look after their interests?—Yes.

G-3224. Where there is a union, it should be the union's business to look after the matter?—Exactly.

G-3225. You say that "*efficiency* has increased at least one and a half times during the last ten years". Do you not think efficiency can be increased to a higher pitch than it is to-day?—There is room for a good deal more efficiency in your own mills on the part of the work-people, is there not?—Yes.

G-3226. *Mr. Cliff*: You say "The relations between the staff and rank and file are somewhat more satisfactory than before, but we wish to see members of the staff respecting the feelings of the work-people still more". Is that a serious complaint?—There has been a change for the better, but we want to see a still better feeling existing between the officers and the work-people.

G-3227. Do you use the activities of the Welfare Committee to try to bring that about?—Yes.

G-3228. You say "We should like to see communal representation abolished, since the object of the Committee is to discuss matters concerning the welfare of all employees, without distinction of caste or creed". What do you mean by that?—At present there is communal representation. Most of our workers do not like it, because the work of the Welfare Committee is for the general good of all workers. It is thought that it is not necessary to have communal representation.

G-3229. Is there a section of your people who demand communal representation?—Yes, the *Adi-Dravidas*.

G-3230. *Sir Alexander Murray*: If you were an *Adi-Dravida* would you agree to dispense with communal representation?—No.

G-3231. *Mr. Cliff*: Has your Union any suggestion to make for safeguarding the rights of those people who desire communal representation?—At present in our Union we select the members on communal representation. This suggestion is merely with regard to the Welfare Committee. That Committee works for the good of the whole. In our Union there are only 2,016 members. We thought of abolishing communal representation later on.

G-3232. I want to ask you if there is a misprint in your memorandum under section 30. It says "After a deep consideration.....we think that

161

the Assembly were not wrong in the view they took". Then it goes on to say "We think that a scheme on a compulsory basis applicable to workers in organized industries should be immediately started". Did you mean to say "We think that the Assembly *were* wrong in the view they took" or that they were *not* wrong.

Mr. Sastri: What is meant is that the organized industries are different from a big national scheme which embraces everything.

G-3233. *Mr. Cliff*: You want a scheme on a compulsory basis applied to workers in organized industries as distinct from a national scheme? Is that it?—Yes.

G-3234. You say you think it is possible to reduce the maximum to 50 hours a week. Is that a demand of your Union?—Yes.

G-3235. Has that demand been made to the employers?—No.

G-3236. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Why not a 48 hours week?—The production must not be too much reduced.

G-3237. Do you think the difference between 48 hours and 50 hours will make a difference?—Yes.

G-3238. *Mr. Cliff*: How many paying members have you in your Union?—1,716 have paid out of 2,016.

G-3239. What is the contribution that your members pay?—At present one anna per month.

G-3240. Dealing with the penalty levied for absence, you say "Every man who absents himself from work without leave has not only to forfeit his wages for the day, but to pay a penalty of a fixed amount". Has your Union made any representations to the employers in this respect?—No, we have not done so yet.

G-3241. *Mr. Kay*: It has been represented that the management have interfered in the conduct of your Union and have tried to control the affairs of your Union; is there any truth in that statement?—No.

G-3242. You have a certain number of outsiders on your Advisory Board?—Yes.

G-3243. Are any of them present to-day?—All of us are workers except Mr. Guana Prakasan.

G-3244. What is your occupation?—(*Mr. Guana Prakasan*): I am a lawyer. I am generally interested in the welfare of the labourers and I am president of several associations. I have been a member of the Advisory Board for the last four or five years ever since the Union was started.

G-3245. Have you ever heard of difficulties being put in the way of your Union in making representations to the management?—No, no difficulty at all.

G-3246. Have you ever accompanied a deputation of your Union to interview the management?—Yes, several times.

G-3247. Were you satisfied?—Yes.

G-3248. Do you elect the officers of your Union?—(*Mr. Ubaidullah*): Yes, we elect our officers by ballot.

G-3249. I understand your Union is represented on the Welfare Committee?—Yes, four members attend at every meeting of the Welfare Committee.

G-3250. Do you stipulate that there should be no interference with your right to meet the management direct as a Union?—Yes; we sit in the Committee but we have a right to approach the management separately when necessary.

G-3251. In fact the Welfare Committee in no way affects the working of your Union?—No.

G-3252. If relations between the management and your Union were not favourable, the management would have no power to call a meeting of your Union?—No, they have no power.

G-3253. They have the power to call a meeting of the Welfare Committee?—Yes.

G-3254. Do you think in these circumstances the Welfare Committee may be able to help towards settling any dispute?—Yes, I think it would be better if outsiders (members of the Advisory Board) were also present at the meeting of the Welfare Committee.

G-3255. Your Union would not object to the Welfare Committee being called together to discuss matters if there was any trouble?—We should not object.

G-3256. *Mr. Jamal Mahomed*: Are you satisfied with the present system of recruitment to the supervisory staff?—Yes; promotions are made from the workers in the mill and we hope officers will be recruited from assistants in the mill.

G-3257. You suggest that the hours of work should be reduced to 50 per week; do you not think 54 or 55 hours a week would be a sufficient decrease?—We have considered this question very deeply and we are not prepared to alter our statement.

G-3258. *Miss Power*: You refer to the inauguration of an employment department in preference to public employment agencies; would you agree that the former is a possible solution of the problem in big employing units, such as the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, but would not solve the problem in smaller factories?—We are not prepared to modify our statement; we think an employment department is best even in small factories.

G-3259. Do you think the worker at his present stage of development would agree to deductions being made from his wages for unemployment and sickness insurance?—Yes, if the benefits are explained to them.

G-3260. Do you think a body such as your Welfare Committee should be permitted to deal with questions of wages and hours contrary to the present position?—Yes.

G-3261. Where you have a welfare committee and a Union, do you think the welfare committee workers should be precluded from dealing with wages

162

and hours, those particular questions being reserved for the Union?—I prefer that the Welfare Committee should deal with wages and hours as well.

G-3262. Do you think the workers object to living in houses owned by employers on the ground that it gives them a feeling of dependance?—The mill workers feel that these houses are quite good enough for them. The houses are not big enough for two or three families living together.

G-3263. Then the workers do not mind living in houses provided by the employers?—No.

G-3264. Does your Union think that the workers would prefer to have complete control of all welfare activities in the mills?—Our Union is in favour of that.

G-3265. Would you like to run your welfare activities without any intervention from the management?—Yes.

G-3266. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Where would you get the money?—The management would give the money.

G-3267. You mean the management would give the money to the Union and leave the Union to do what they liked with it?—No, it is not the Union; it is the welfare department.

G-3268. *Miss Power*: We were not talking about the Union. If the money comes from the management, do you think it is reasonable that the management should have no say in the methods and ways in which the money is disbursed?—No, because if they pay the money of course they will have a say in the matter and they must have representation.

G-3269. You say the working of exemptions under the Factory Act must be carefully scrutinized. Do you know of cases where exemptions have been given which in your view should not have been given?—Yes; in our investigations we have found that in many small factories the exemptions are being abused.

G-3270. Can you give us any specific instance of that?—No.

G-3271. You say you want the local authorities to increase the use of the section of the Factories Act bringing places having less than 20 workers under the Act. Would you not prefer the passing of a Workshops Act rather than the piecemeal application of one section of the Factories Act to certain places?—Yes.

G-3272. *Mr. Joshi*: When men are fined for absenteeism, is the fine sometimes excused?—No.

G-3273. But suppose a man is absent for a very good reason for instance, suppose his mother has just died?—In that case he must produce a death certificate and then leave is granted.

G-3274. Do you think there is any objection to the Government maintaining public employment agencies in order to help workers in finding out whether work can be obtained?—There is no objection to that, but we think that the children of employees should be given preference.

G-3275. Do you think it is a bad thing for Government to help the people to get employment?—No, we do not say that.

G-3276. Is there a rule in your Union that no outsider can be elected ?—No, but outsiders are not to be elected on the executive.

G-3277. Do you know whether other Unions have a rule that outsiders must not be office bearers ?—I do not know anything about other Unions.

G-3278. If the members of a Union want to elect an outsider as President do you see any objection to that ?—No.

G-3279. So that you are not really opposed to an outsider being an office bearer of a Union if all the members want him ?—No, I am not, if all the work people want him.

G-3280. *Mr. Clow*: What do you mean when you say that the money-value of all earnings is about 25 to 30 per cent. more than the money wages ?—Besides wages, a man employed in the mill has other privileges, *e.g.*, purchasing goods from the stores at a cheaper rate, being given cloth at a cheaper rate, buying for As. 4 what would cost As. 8 outside, receiving 4 pounds of cloth every six months, free medical attendance for the man and his family.

G-3281. You mean that taking the value of the various concessions the men are receiving on the whole about 25 per cent. more than their wages ?—Yes.

G-3282. *Sir Alexander Murray*: We were told that before a man can get employment in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills he has to pay Rs. 100 as a bribe and he has to pay more bribes before he can be promoted. What has been your experience in that respect ?—I know these bribes were going on once, but they are absolutely stopped now, since the management has selected the men itself. Unless the manager sees him, the department masters are not allowed to recruit anybody. At one time the masters and assistant jobbers used to bring their men, but it is not allowed now ; it was stopped about 5 or 6 years ago.

G-3283. We were told that the management would dismiss men just before they had completed 10 years service so as to avoid paying the gratuity. Have you ever had a complaint on that head from your workers ?—No, I have never heard of it. The management is paying more than Rs. 10 lakhs in gratuities, and it would not be likely to dismiss a man for the sake of Rs. 100 or 200.

G-3284. Have any of your 2,000 members ever complained to you about that ?—No.

G-3285. You say that the average cost of living for a family consisting of a husband, wife and three children in 1914 was Rs. 12-8-0, whereas to-day it is not less than Rs. 30. If that is so, it means that the cost of living has gone up 140 per cent. ?—Yes.

G-3286. Is that so ?—Yes.

G-3287. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: For the same standard of living ?—Yes.

G-3288. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You say that the average indebtedness is to the extent of 200 per cent. of the monthly wages. The monthly wages are Rs. 22 to Rs. 25, so that apparently the indebtedness would be about Rs. 60 to Rs. 70. What is the average indebtedness of your workers ?—I cannot say.

G-3289. How do you arrive at this figure ?—We got some figures from our men and worked it out.

G-3290. You do not know what the debt of the average worker is ?—We cannot say exactly what the average is.

G-3291. You say that the Labour Commissioner has helped to settle disputes, but that he is saddled with so much other work that he is not able to devote his whole attention and time to labour questions. Have you ever appealed to the Labour Commissioner and found that he has not taken any interest ?—Since our Union has come into existence, there have been no troubles and so we have had no occasion to approach the Labour Commissioner.

G-3292. You evidently have tried to effect an amalgamation with other Unions ?—Yes. (*Mr. Guana Prakasan*): Under the Presidency of Mr. Kirk we tried to make the amalgamation.

G-3293. The Union has changed its policy since 1926 ?—Yes.

G-3294. Do you think it would be possible to effect an amalgamation now ?—Yes.

G-3295. *Mr. Sastri*: You have stores run by the Company from which you buy your articles for household consumption ?—(*Mr. Ubaidullah*): Yes.

G-3296. Are you satisfied with the way those stores are worked ; do they give you good stuff ?—Yes ; there is a committee appointed to see that good quality is supplied. The qualities must be checked by the officers on the committee, and if the committee reject it the goods are not purchased but are sent back.

G-3297. You think it is not only a convenience but a benefit which the Company confers on you by letting it run there ?—Yes.

G-3298. Who are the persons employed ?—There is a committee of workers to purchase the goods.

G-3299. Are there paid men who take in stock and weigh up the material and give it to the purchasers ?—Yes, they are paid by the Company.

G-3300. If you are quite satisfied with the way in which this store is worked why do you wish to put it under a co-operative system ?—The management once tried to have the co-operative system but some of the work-people did not then like it.

G-3301. Then am I to take it that you are not serious in your desire to effect that change ?—(*Mr. Guana Prakasan*): Yes, we are serious about it ; we want it now to be on the co-operative basis.

G-3302. Why do you want that if it is at present working satisfactorily ?—To be sure that it will endure.

G-3303. If it is to be under the co-operative system, the burden of management will be thrown upon you ?—Yes, the burden of management will be thrown on the workers themselves and that is what we desire.

G-3304. And for that you are prepared to risk some change in efficiency ?—Provided there is no loss of efficiency.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninety-Fifth Meeting.

PASTEUR INSTITUTE, COONOOR.

Sunday, 9th March 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding.*)

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, BART.

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor.*)

Miss M. AZARIAH, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary.*

Colonel R. McCARRISON, Director, Nutritional Research, Pasteur Institute, Coonoor.

G-3305. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Colonel McCarrison, you are a member of the Indian Medical Service ?—Yes.

G-3306. How long have you been engaged in this nutritional research ?—I have been employed since 1913 by the Indian Research Fund Association in studying nutritional problems. I was on active service from 1914 till the end of the War. I then came to Coonoor and was working on beri-beri and some other diseases. With the exception of a period (1923-25) when my work was "axed" and period when I was on leave I have been continuously engaged in the scientific study of nutritional problems at the Pasteur Institute, Coonoor.

G-3307. In connection with the relation of diet to the efficiency of Indian workers you refer to Lieutenant-Colonel McCay's conclusions regarding the physical efficiency of the various races in India. What is the relative importance of climate and food as far as difference in physique and capacity for work are concerned ?—Climate, of course, will have an important influence.

G-3308. Will not the worker in the temperate and colder climates of the north apart from his food be more efficient than the worker in the hot plains ?—He will only be so if his food supplies all physiological needs. No climate however good will prevent the effects of a food which is physiologically imperfect.

G-3309. I can understand that as regards the colder climates in the north. But what is the effect of climate on the people of Bengal and Madras, for example ?—I am not in a position to speak authoritatively on the relation of climate to physical efficiency ; my work deals with the relation of faulty food to disease.

164

G-3310. You say that wheat is too heating for use as the sole cereal in the southern and hotter parts of India ; is that not the reason why rice is used as a staple food in Madras and Bengal although it is of less nutritive value than wheat ?—I also say in my memorandum that rice is an excellent food if it is properly supplemented with substances containing suitable protein, and other essentials which rice lacks.

G-3311. In your memorandum you speak of the importance of protein for muscular development, muscular and nervous energy and efficiency and say that at least one-third of the total protein should be drawn from animal sources, the remaining two thirds being drawn from vegetable sources. We find that the industrial workers in Bengal and the workers on the tea gardens in Assam are drawn from the United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa. But we were told at Cawnpore that there was very little fish or milk used by the workers. You say that they should get at least one-third of animal protein, but actually they were getting not even 1/50th. How is it that they appear to be physically fit although they do not get 1/3 of animal protein ?—Do they not get animal protein from other sources ?

G-3312. The vegetarians amongst them naturally do not get it. None of them get fish and they get very little in the way of milk. They get only 0·5 to 1 per cent. whether they are vegetarians or non-vegetarians. Some of them do get *ghee* but it is vegetable *ghee* as a rule and not animal *ghee*. They do get some vegetables and mustard oil. Vitamin A occurs in other food substances besides animal fats, for instance in the growing parts of plants and fresh green vegetables. It is quite possible to get this very important substance from vegetable sources. As for protein the generally accepted view among physiologists is that at least 1/3 should be from animal sources.

G-3313. This vitamin is abundant in milk, butter and *ghee* and the people who form a large proportion of the industrial population in Bengal and Assam do not get much of milk or *ghee* ?—I do not mean that other substances do not hold this vitamin. I only gave some illustrations of the food substances containing this vitamin.

G-3314. You refer to the high nutritional value of *soya bean*. Have you ever asked the Government to try experiments in that connection and make propaganda among the people ?—I understand that the cultivation of *Soya bean* was tried in Assam and various parts of the Madras Presidency, with considerable success in the former locality but not in the latter. It is a matter for the Agricultural Department.

G-3315. Do you think that mal-nutrition is one of the contributory causes of malaria, hookworm, cholera and various other diseases ?—I should prophecy that mal-nutrition was a factor in all these diseases. But until proper epidemiological surveys have been made we cannot say with certainty whether it is so or not. I work here on the scientific side of the problem and the practical aspects of it remain to be done by epidemiologists.

G-3316. Have you any view as to who should take in hand the work connected with the improvement of the health conditions of the work-people ?—As I have stated in my memorandum all Governments in India should take an interest in this matter. I would ask the Commission to take cognizance of my evidence before the Agricultural Commission.

(*Sir A. Murray*): We will do that.

G-3317. For instance, adulteration of foodstuffs is a provincial subject. It is very difficult to get co-ordination between the Provinces and the Central Government. Do you hold any view as regards the responsibility of the Government of India in this connection?—The Government of India should, in my opinion, establish, as the Government of Japan have done, a thoroughly up-to-date institute for the study of nutrition in all its aspects. Investigations relating to the adulteration of foodstuffs would be a part of the work of such an institution.

G-3318. With regard to Japan which is largely a rice eating country like India we understand that the efficiency of the workers there is much greater than the efficiency of the Indian workers; why is it so?—I do not know; I have no experience of Japan. All I do know of Japan is that the Government of Japan have thought it necessary to establish such an institution and they must have regarded the study of nutrition as of very great importance to the people. In the case of India I would be glad to see the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture carried into effect immediately.

G-3319. *Colonel Russell*: You have given us a number of examples of well balanced diets of various classes of workers. Do they correspond exactly with what is eaten normally by the respective classes of people?—No. They are theoretical examples.

G-3320. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is it a daily ration? Are the weights proportionate?—Yes, it is a daily ration for an adult. The weights are proportionate. For instance, in the case of diet (*a*) in my memorandum I have simply shown how a diet of which the principal constituent is unpolished rice can be made to fulfil the physiological needs of the body.

G-3321. *Colonel Russell*: In your memorandum you give an example of a well balanced non-vegetarian rice-eater's diet (Madrassi) in which the number of calories is 2,765. Later on you give another example of a Madras Cooly's diet in which the total number of calories is 3,226. There is a deficiency in the number of calories in the case of the first diet?—Quite.

G-3322. So that you do not seem to lay any stress on the absolute caloric value of the diets?—It is very necessary that the calories be sufficient. In the diets (*a*) and No. 7, the number of calories is sufficient for different grades of work. But whereas the former is a good diet there are grave defects in the latter which I have pointed out in my memorandum.

G-3323. In your memorandum you have given some typical diets of various classes of workers. Are they the actual diets eaten by the several classes of people?—Yes. They are absolutely accurate.

G-3324. How did you carry out your investigations?—These particular diets were investigated and worked out by Mr. Krishnan one of my assistants who has been with me for the past 8 years.

G-3325. How many examples were taken and what was the method adopted?—25 examples were taken for the subject of beri beri. That is budgets Nos. 5, 6 and 7. In the case of budgets Nos. 8 .9, 10 and 11 only one example

165

was taken. Budgets Nos. 1 to 4 were taken from a book called the "Punjab Village Surveys". The method adopted is set out in detail in this note. (Note handed in). It was followed by Dr. Lucy Wills in her very thorough survey of "the anæmia of pregnancy" in Bombay with which this note deals.

G-3326. In connection with the outbreak of any malnutritional disease this note indicates the way in which it ought to be investigated and controlled?—Yes.

G-3327. Would you require a considerable amount of co-operation from other Government departments to do that?—There ought to be a staff of skilled men in charge of this department. You may go on for years doing the theoretical side of the work without finding any practical application of the results. For instance, what was the result of my survey of beri-beri? I found that the average consumption of *dal* in the diets of people suffering from beri-beri was small. They lived mainly on polished rice. From the information I got from a study of their diets I was able to construct a diet consisting of polished rice and *dal* which produced true beri-beri in pigeons. I found that polished rice plus a certain percentage of *dal* will cause beri-beri to develop.

G-3328. Your investigations will be applicable not only to the general agricultural population but you could investigate diseases which might particularly occur among industrial populations in urban areas?—Yes, for instance the "anæmia of pregnancy" is a problem connected with women workers in Bombay.

G-3329. In addition to the dietetic survey you are anxious to investigate the food value of the different foods available in India?—Yes. We ought not to accept the standards and values which are laid down for western countries. We have got to provide our own standards for India. For instance, there is the view that one-third of the protein should be derived from animal sources; this estimate has been arrived at by work done chiefly in western countries. No work on that aspect of nutrition has been done in India. My own belief is that people in this country could probably do with much less animal food than we imagine. This matter requires urgent investigation.

G-3330. In your memorandum you suggest the establishment of an Institute for nutrition to deal with the various problems arising in that connection. What kind of staff would you require to carry out the different lines of investigation?—On various occasions I have submitted to headquarters schemes for putting nutritional investigations on a proper basis. The first and most urgent thing is to recruit someone as an understudy to myself. If for any reason I have to leave this work it will collapse. No one in India has been sufficiently trained to take over. You may put in an officer but it would take him years to learn all that is at present known of the science of nutrition. The great difficulty in this country is that it is not yet realized that we are dealing with the study of a science, not with the study of a single disease. Nutrition has a bearing on practically all the diseases that afflict the people of this country. India provides a very wide scope for such research. The first thing is to get an understudy to myself.

G-3331. What about an epidemiologist?—Yes an epidemiologist is necessary. I have asked for an epidemiologist, a statistician and various

other officers. I will let you have a copy of the note I sent to headquarters on this question.

G-3332. We have been told in many places that many of the workers in India cannot provide themselves with a sufficiency of food from the wages they get. Do you agree with it? Or is it merely a question of providing them with a physiologically balanced diet?—I am only speaking on the scientific aspect of the question.

G-3333. You have stated in your memorandum that the numbers who do not get enough to eat may be counted by the thousand. Do you think that the worker would spend more on food if he got more money?—I have made some observations in my memorandum under the heading of Welfare which will, I think, answer your question fully.

G-3334. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You suggest that the workers where possible should be provided daily as part of their earnings with a properly constituted meal or they should be given part payment in kind in the form of food materials. Some of the tea gardens in Assam give a midday meal to children. They also issue rice from their stores in some places. Were you thinking of facilities of this description when you made this suggestion?—That was in my mind. I do not know what difficulties there may be in doing it.

G-3335. *Colonel Russell*: Assuming for the moment that the expenditure on food is the same and that the problem is to get the population to change over from what might be called an unphysiological to a physiological diet, have you any suggestion to make with regard to propaganda among these people to educate them to change their ways?—I have published a small book called "Food" which will, I hope, be of value in this direction. I have had 20 or 30 applications from Indians living in various parts of India who desire to translate this book into the different vernaculars. Its translation into the vernaculars is regarded by the publishers as unlikely to pay. Some book of this kind should be translated into all the vernaculars at Government expense.

G-3336. Would it be possible to get the local Public Health Department to extend the scope of their propaganda so as to include your work also?—Yes, and it ought to be done. The first thing is to train the public health officers and let them know about this kind of work. The training should begin in the Medical schools. When they have themselves been taught they would then be fitted to undertake propaganda work.

G-3337. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Government have some control over the diets of the population in the jails and hospitals. Would it be a good thing if these experiments were tried in those places? Have you been consulted in that connection at all?—No, I have not been consulted. The work of Colonel McCay was done in jails and has never been bettered. It is one of the outstanding pieces of work on nutrition. I could not possibly do more than I am doing at present because I have not the staff necessary for its extension. The work of the laboratory should be translated into practice and controlled by practical studies in the field.

G-3338. *Mr. Cliff*: You have dealt with the importance of a well balanced physiological diet. What about the question of human taste?—It is

(156)

most important. All diets must be considered from the point of view of their appetising qualities. Sameness must be avoided as far as possible.

G-3339. *Miss Azariah*: I have been working in the eastern districts of the Presidency where beri-beri is prevalent on account of the overpolishing of rice. Would it not be a good thing if these factories were prevented by legislation from overpolishing rice?—I know that the Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine has recommended that this should be done. But as regards legislation to that end I do not feel it is a matter on which I could profitably give an opinion. I do not know what the difficulties are.

G-3340. *Mr. Cliff*: Even so it would be a matter of education?—Yes.

G-3341. *Miss Azariah*: In some of these tea estates the managers give rice to the children once a day. Would it not be better to give them something else which they did not get in their own homes, something which would supplement their diet at home?—It would be a good thing. The planters in the Nilgiris with whom I am acquainted, are glad to accept any suggestions that we may make. It was only with the support of these planters that I was able to publish this little book on "Food". Some of them are doing a great deal for the people both in regard to their food, general health and housing.

Sir Alexander Murray: When we were in Assam we were told that one reason why the planters gave rice alone was to make sure that the children got at least one full meal a day.

(The witness withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninety-Sixth Meeting.

COONOOR.

Monday, 10th March 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart.	Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.	Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Miss M. AZARIAH, *Lady Assessor*.

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary*.

Statement by LOUSIA, a woman coolie, at the Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor.

G-3342. I come from Erode. My husband works on the garden road here. I have three boys and a girl. None of my children died. I have been working on this garden since 6 years. I do plucking all the year round.

G-3343. I am paid 3 pies for a lb. of leaf. I earn from As. 4 to As. 8 a day according to the leaf plucked. Myself and my family go home in the month of April. My husband paid my fare for coming here. I came here of my own accord, and no *mistri* brought me. I am working now under Mutthu *mistri*. I do not give him any *bakshees*. After I came back from the village last time I took an advance of Rs. 45 from the *mistri*. I do not know how much money I still owe him.

G-3344. I am paid monthly. I earned Rs. 8 last month. I take the money in cash. On every Sunday I get Re. 1 for buying rice. I purchase rice from Coonoor where we have a shandy. I got Rs. 8 over and above the rice allowance. I get Rs. 7-4-0 a year in cash for buying cloth. I did not buy cloth last year. I work six days a week.

G-3345. I do not work on Sundays. If I work regularly for 6 days I get an extra As. 4 a week, *i.e.*, As. 12 for rice and As. 4 extra. On the day I absent myself I do not get anything. Even if I go to work only for 3 or 4 days I will be given the food allowance of As. 12, but I will not get the extra As. 4. When there is much work I work on Sunday for which I am paid in cash. The work on Sunday is only optional. I go to work at 7 A.M. when the bell rings and return at 4-30 P.M. Some of us go home to take meals during midday and some do not. We take meals three times a day. I do not pay any interest to the *mistri* on the advance money. I do not know how much I owe to the *mistri*. My husband keeps the account. My husband and I saved Rs. 20 to 30 last year. Ordinarily people save Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 a year, but there are some who save even Rs. 100.

G-3346. I have some land at home ; I have a house and some waste lands ; it may be about 4 acres. No one looks after the land or the house. When my child was born I was working till the date of delivery, and returned to work when the child was 5 months. I was getting As. 12 food allowance a week during this period. If there is any one who can look after the child at home, then the mother may come to work earlier. I was also given As. 6 for the child. No other bonus was given. The children who begin to work on the garden are between 8 and 10 years. One of my children whose age is below 8 is studying in a school at Erode. I am a Christian by caste.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by JEBAKANTI, a woman coolie, at the Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor.

G-3347. I come from Erode. I am a Christian by caste. I came here with my husband after my marriage. I get the same pay as Lousia. I have no children. I was married four years ago. I did not lose any child.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by LAZARUS, mistri at the Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor.

G-3348. I come from Pudupalayam, a village near Erode. My father came to this garden long ago, and I was born here. I began to work in 1924 when I was 18 years. I did not work as an ordinary labourer before I became a *mistri*. I succeeded my father who was a *mistri*.

G-3349. I have 12 men, 15 women and 8 children of whom 3 are boys and 5 are girls working under me. Some of these were working under my father. Last year I went to Pudupalayam and recruited 4 men and 6 women. Last June I took an advance of Rs. 750 from the garden. I paid Rs. 15 for each man and Rs. 10 for each woman. The balance was utilised in giving advance to the remaining 25 workers on the garden. I have my relations in my village and they wrote to me that there were some workers who were in difficulty in the village and who wanted to go to the garden. I therefore went to the village and recruited 10 workers.

G-3350. I get a pay of Rs. 15 a month. I get a commission of As. 8 for 1,000 lbs. of leaf plucked, and 10 per cent. on the gross earnings of the men. I owe to the garden Rs. 100 and odd. I do not pay any interest on the advance taken from the garden. Rs. 200 and odd are due to me from the workers under me. I do not charge them any interest. The advance is deducted from the monthly pay bill. The office keeps accounts for each of the coolies. The people in my gang go to work every day, except when they are sick.

G-3351. If there is much work to do they come at 6 o'clock and go back at 6 in the evening. To-day they came to work at 6-45 A.M. A bell is rung every day. They generally finish the work at 5-30. The workers do not go home for midday meals. I also do not go home ; some one brings my meals here. Some people bring meals with them and some do not. Those who do so take their meals at 2 o'clock when the leaves are weighed. The leaves are weighed

on the garden by the big *mistri*. I have a *mistri* over me and another under me. I have a *cole mistri* for my gang. He is paid Rs. 20 a month; he gets no commission. I do not give him any of my commission.

G-3352. When there is heavy work we work on Sundays; it may be 2 or 3 times a year. Only women come out to work on Sundays. Work on Sundays is purely optional. I tell them that there is work on Sunday, and most of them willingly come to work because they are paid in cash for that day.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by PALANIAPPAN, a pruner at the Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor.

G-3353. I come from Kangayam which is in Coimbatore district. I came here four years ago. I was in Pollachi before I came here. I was in Pollachi for 10 or 12 years. My relations were here, and so I came and stayed with them. I did not come with any *mistri*. My wife is with me on the garden. I have 3 children.

G-3354. I get As. 6 a day. If the plants are hard I have to prune 60, otherwise 80 plants. I get As. 6 for pruning 80 plants. I came at 7 A.M. to-day. To prune 80 plants it will take me till 5 P.M. On some days I have pruned more than 80 plants. If I prune 100 plants I get As. 8. I go home at 12 o'clock for meals and return at 1. I am paid monthly. I get Rs. 4 to 6 a month if I work regularly. I get Rs. 1-4-0 a week as food allowance and As. 4 extra if I work all the 6 days. If I work for only 4 to 5 days I get only Rs. 1-4-0 and not the extra As. 4. I purchase rice from Coonoor market. We get a coat once a year; in case we do not want it we are given Rs. 5 in cash. Last year I took the coat.

G-3355. I had taken an advance of Rs. 25 from the *mistri*, and I have repaid it. I do not owe any sum to any one. During these four years I went to my village once in April; I will be going again next month. I have not saved any money as I have to maintain three children.

G-3356. All my children go to school. I do not pay any fees to the school. I have not bought any jewels for my wife. Neither my wife nor myself go to any night school; only my children go to a day school. When I went home last time I took an advance of Rs. 20, which I utilised for travelling and food expenses.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by ANGAPPAN, a worker, at the Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor.

G-3357. I come from Desur which is in Vellore. I came to this garden 3 years ago. I was not working on any garden before I came here. I came here to earn a living. I was brought by Muniya *mistri*.

G-3358. I was given Rs. 15 advance before I came here, which I repaid to the *mistri* in six months. I again took an advance of Rs. 30 from the *mistri* when I went home last May or June. My wife is here on the garden.

I had a child, but it died. I took my wife with me when I went home last time. I returned back after staying for a month in my village. Out of the Rs. 30 advance I have repaid Rs. 15. I do not keep any accounts; the *mistri* keeps the account. The *mistri* pays me the food allowance every week. The *mistri* paid me the advance. The sahib pays the *mistri* and the *mistri* pays us the amount in the presence of the sahib. The sahib is also present when the *mistri* gives us our food allowance.

G-3359. I have never worked on a Sunday. If I work regularly I earn Rs. 4 to 5 a month excluding the rice allowance. I did not save any money and so I could not take any with me when I went home last time. My father and mother stay in my village, and I send them Rs. 2 a month.

(The witness withdrew.)

Lt.-Col. L. L. PORTER, O.B.E., V.D., Managing Director, Nonesuch Tea Estates Co., Coonoor and Lt. Commander L. G. ELKINGTON, R.N., (Retired) Manager, Ibex Lodge Estate, Coonoor.

G-3360. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Colonel Porter, will you please tell us what your experience of tea has been?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*): I am the Managing Director of the Company. I bought the Nonesuch Tea estate, which is half the estate, in 1897. I have been a planter since 1892.

G-3361. Have you had any experience in Ceylon?—No. The Ibex Lodge estate belonged to the uncle of Mr. Elkington, and he bought it in 1912. The two estates were amalgamated on the first of July 1924 into one company called the Nonesuch Tea Estates Limited.

G-3362. Is it an Indian registered company?—Yes.

G-3363. Have you been in these parts all the time since 1892?—Yes, except for a period of 5 years when I was away in the war.

G-3364. Mr. Elkington, will you please tell us what your experience has been?—(*Lieutenant Commander Elkington*): I came here in 1921 after I retired from the navy, and I have been here ever since.

G-3365. So that you have been here for 9 years and have taken the place of your uncle who was the owner of the Ibex Lodge?—Yes.

G-3366. Will you please tell us the total acreage of the two properties which is under tea?—We have 1,023 acres of which 798 acres are under tea.

G-3367. Will you tell us what the total population on the estate is?—1,500 altogether, and 953 is our working strength.

G-3368. It comes to about 1¼ coolies per acre?—Yes.

G-3369. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Why is it you have only 1¼ coolies per acre while in Assam they have nearly 2 coolies per acre?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*): We do not have the same trouble as they have in Assam where they have got to dig their places over five times a year.

G-3370. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You said that 953 is your working strength. Will you tell us how many of these are men, women and working children?—We have 338 men, 446 women and 169 working children. Male

children are promoted to boy class and draw women's rate of pay. They are classed as men when they can prune 100 trees. Women children when capable of plucking are classed as " women."

G-3371. How many turn out daily on the average ?—3 per cent. are absentees ; it is not more than that.

G-3372. Do you have any casual labour brought in at times of high pressure ?—We bring the hill *budagas* when any new clearing is to be done.

G-3373. How is your labour recruited ?—It is recruited through *mistris*. We have about 25 *mistris*. For example, Mutthu, who is here would bring 90 or 100 coolies, another *mistri* may bring 50 or 60 coolies and some only 20 or 25.

G-3374. I find from a statement submitted by you that the total on your check roll is 953, of whom 454 have worked here for 10 or more years and 81 were born here and have worked here all their lives ; and 56 were born here and have worked more than 10 years. I also see that the total number of children below the working age living in the lines is 428. When do you allow a child to go to work for the first time ?—We leave that more to the parents. We generally go by the appearance of the child. I think that the average would be 9 or 10 years.

G-3375. Not earlier than that ?—I do not think so.

G-3376. *Miss Power* : Do you turn them away if the parents bring children under 9 years ?—As I said, we go by the appearance of the child. If we think that a child is too young to do work we do not take it.

G-3377. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I also see from your memorandum that the daily average attendance at the estate school is 120. Do you work on Sundays as a rule ?—No. The only people who work on Sunday are the factory people ; they work every second Sunday. If they work on Sunday they do not work on Monday. We have to do that because of the leaf.

G-3378. Do your men who are chiefly engaged in hoeing or pruning work at all on Sundays ?—No, unless they want to work over-time.

G-3379. How often will that be ?—(*Lieutenant Commander Elkington*) : If it is easy pruning nearly all of them will turn out for half a day on Sunday voluntarily, but if it is difficult pruning they will not turn out at all because they cannot make enough money.

G-3380. May I ask why you have about 30 per cent. more women than men working on your estate ?—We want more pluckers.

G-3381. Where do you get more women than men ?—Many men have grown-up daughters. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*) : A man, for instance, comes to a *mistri* and says " I have got my wife, I have a daughter and a son, and we want work ". In that case we take the whole batch.

G-3382. But the daughter will want a husband sooner or later and may leave the garden ?—A good many of them are widows. We try to collect widows.

G-3383. What is the average length of your working day ?—From 7 A.M. to 5 P.M. with time off in middle of day for food and rest.

G-3384. We were told by some of your men that they go to work at 6-30 when the first whistle goes ?—The first whistle goes at about 6-30 to rouse them, and the roll call commences at 7-30 ; but actually they do not get to work till 8 or 8-30. In cold weather it may be even later than that.

G-3385. You said that you have 25 *mistris*. How many of them have taken advances from you ?—I should think all of them. For instance Mutthu comes to us and says he wants an advance of Rs. 1,000 or Rs. 1,500. He brings his coolies in front of us, and we see that the money goes into the hands of the coolies. All the advances made to the coolies are shown in the check roll against the coolie, and it is also entered in the *mistri's* account.

G-3386. You keep an advance book in which you show the advances to the *mistris* ?—That is right.

G-3387. You also keep a running account for each individual worker which shows the amount of his advance, the amount of his wages and the balance? —Yes.

G-3388. Could you tell us the total amount of advance you have given to your *mistris* ?—The total advance of the two estates is Rs. 13,137-14-1.

G-3389. What will be the largest amount that any one *mistri* has taken ?—I think Mutthuswamy has taken the largest advance. All these coolies have got interest in the country down below ; they are all agriculturists. They have to pay Government *kisti* and have to buy seeds. A great deal of the money we advance to them is sent straight down to the country. The coolie does not use it here at all. If he is going down to his country he takes it with him and he buys his seed and pays his Government *kisti*. (*Lieutenant Commander Elkington*) : Very often they send it by money order to the headmen of the village.

G-3390. You said that you have advanced Rs. 13,000 to your *mistris*. What percentage of the advance given to the *mistris* goes to the coolies ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*) : At the beginning of the year, I suppose 80 per cent. of it will go to the coolies. Suppose we give a *mistri* 1,000, he will give Rs. 800 to his coolies, keeping the balance Rs. 200 for himself.

G-3391. You have 25 *mistris*, and between them they owe the estate Rs. 13,000. I want to know, if you can tell me, how each *mistri* stands in respect of his advance ?—Take, for instance, Mutthuswamy, who has 150 coolies working under him. He personally owes Rs. 700 to the estate, and his coolies owe Rs. 2,000.

G-3392. Take Mutthu and tell me how much he owes to you ?—He has no personal advance, but the men under him have to the extent of Rs. 800.

G-3393. How much did he get at the beginning of the year ?—Rs. 1,000.

G-3394. What commission do your *mistris* get ?—10 per cent. on the coolies pay.

G-3395. Is it not 15 per cent. ?—No.

G-3396. They draw a certain pay of their own ?—Yes.

G-3397. What will that be ?—(*Lieutenant Commander Elkington*): The head *mistri* gets Rs. 72, in addition to the 10 per cent. on the coolies pay for the month.

G-3398. Can you tell us what the ordinary *mistri* gets ?—As. 6 a day, or roughly Rs. 12 a month. He is a gang *mistri*.

G-3399. We were told that it was Rs. 20 ?—The plucking *mistri* gets extra—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*): There is no fixed rate for a *mistri*. Supposing a *mistri* like Mutthuswamy brings 150 coolies, he gets Rs. 70 a month and 10 per cent. on 150 coolies pay for the month.

G-3400. What is the average earnings of a man, a woman and a child ?—It is very hard to say.

G-3401. *Miss Power*: On the question of payment to the *mistris*, does it vary according to the jobs, that is, whether a *mistri* is a plucking *mistri* or a pruning *mistri*, or does it depend upon the number of coolies a *mistri* brings ?—We have two kinds of *mistris*; we have a *mistri* who brings coolies and a *mistri*, who is called a *cole mistri*, who does not bring coolies; the *cole mistri* is an assistant to the big *mistri* in supervising the work.

G-3402. What pay does a *cole mistri* get ?—Rs. 15 to 20.

G-3403. *Sir Alexander Murray*: It does not matter whether a *mistri* brings 25 or 55 coolies, he gets his usual pay for the work, and there is a difference only in the amount of commission ?—That is right. For instance, this man Mutthuswamy got Rs. 204 in January including his pay and commission. (*Lieutenant Commander Elkington*): He paid Rs. 58 towards income-tax last year.

G-3404. It has been suggested to us that if you dispense with the *mistri* and recruit your labour direct you would have more money left to spend on the individual worker. What do you think of this suggestion ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*): I do not think you can do without him.

G-3405. You feel as practical planters that you cannot dispense with *mistris* ?— They are our foremen. Our *mistris* bring up the labour and supervise them.

G-3406. Your system is different from that followed in Assam where the man who recruits the labour has usually nothing to do with them after he has recruited them; he is only a recruiting *sardar* and not a supervising *sardar* ?—That is so. For instance, Mutthu is our headman on the Droog division; Mutthuswamy is the headman on the Ibex Lodge division; we have another head *mistri* by name Mutthuswamy who is in charge of the Avoca division. Each *mistri* runs a division, and supervises the coolies that he brings and all the coolies that any other *mistris* bring.

G-3407. Have you any paddy lands to give to your workers ?—None.

G-3408. Do you give them fire-wood ?—Yes, they get it free of charge.

G-3409. We have been told that you give them cloth. What cloth is that ?—(*Lieutenant Commander Elkington*): An ordinary *saree*.

G-3410. You do not always give the *saree*, you give the woman the option of taking cash or *saree* —Yes.

170

G-3411. We have found that women in some cases have taken the cash ?—Yes.

G-3412. Is that a good thing ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*): It is better for them to take the cloth. (*Lieutenant Commander Elkington*): If we give them the cloth they say that it is costly and that they could have purchased the same cloth for half the price in the bazaar.

G-3413. We understand that you give a *cumbli* to every man, woman and a working child. Do you make them take it every year ?—Yes.

G-3414. Do you charge any rent for your quarters ?—No.

G-3415. What is the amount of advance you have to write off ?—Nothing at all.

G-3416. *Miss Power*: Are your workers allowed absence with pay for sickness ?—(*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*): If the doctor certifies that a worker is sick we pay him.

G-3417. *Colonel Russell*: For how many days ?—As long as the doctor says he is sick we pay him, but we do not pay him if he stops away on his own account and does not go to the doctor.

G-3418. *Miss Power*: Is that the usual practice on all the estates, or is it peculiar to your own estate ?—We have always done it here; I do not know what others do.

G-3419. When a woman is off work during child-birth how much money does she get in bonus ?—She gets a present of Rs. 5.

G-3420. Does she get any rice money during that time ?—Yes; she gets As. 12 a week. If you take the average birth, I do not suppose a woman is laid up for more than a fortnight. We give her another woman she likes to choose to wait on her and we pay that woman.

G-3421. *Sir Alexander Murray*: How long do you allow the woman with the baby to absent herself from work ?—There is no fixed time. Some may come earlier and some may not.

G-3422. *Miss Power*: The rice money comes out of her own earnings ?—Yes, but if she has no money to her credit it is charged to her husband's account.

G-3423. Do you have a system such as they have in Assam where the women are paid by a garden a part of their wages when they are off work for child-birth ?—No. Supposing a woman has got money to her credit and she wants money we give it to her. If she has none to her credit it may be debited against her husband's earnings.

G-3424. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Do you not pay an anna a day for the child ?—Yes. We pay an anna a day for every non-working child.

G-3425. Some estates feed the children in the middle of the day to ensure that the children get good food. Do you not think it is better to feed them rather than to give one anna a day for each child ?—I think these people look after their children very well.

G-3426. *Miss Power*: Have you got midwives on the estate ?—No. For delivery they always use some old woman on the estate. (*Lieutenant Commander Elkington*): If they are bad the doctors are called in. (*Lieutenant-Colonel Porter*): The mortality of children here I should think is next to nothing.

G-3427. *Mr. Cliff*: I want to know if there is any agreement between the company and the labourers ?—No ; there is only a pro-note.

G-3428. Does it fix the period for which they have promised to work ?—Yes, it fixes 12 months as the period. As a matter of fact, it is worth nothing.

G-3429. Do you pay your wages monthly ?—Yes.

G-3430. Have you found any difficulty in paying your wages monthly ?—No. We like it better ; it is better for the coolie too.

G-3431. I noticed a board on which was written "Government path". Is there a public right-of-way through the estate ?—Yes. There is a Government right-of-way 4 ft. wide up to the place called Tippoo's Droog ; but the cart road on which we drove along is our private property.

G-3432. Is the market here a private market or a public one ?—The merchants in Coonoor bring the grain here and we allow them to sell it in our market, which is outside the gate, on condition that they charge the coolies the Coonoor rates.

G-3433. They must be losing something because of the transport charges ; do you compensate them for the loss ?—No. It is entirely up to the merchants to come or not. I think it pays them because they feed practically all the 950 people on the estate.

G-3434. The memorandum of the United Planters' Association of Southern India says that 60 to 90 per cent. of the coolies paid off at the end of any season return to the same estate again for the next season's work. What will be the percentage for your estate ?—I have already given you figures to show that out of 953 labourers we have nearly 600 who have been on the estate for over 10 years. When the coolies get to like an estate—they may like the water or something else—they keep on coming up to the same estate year after year.

G-3435. *Colonel Russell*: They prefer a healthy estate ?—Yes. The health on our estate is very good.

G-3436. *Mr. Cliff*: From the point of view of earning, is January a good month or a fair month ?—No ; January is a small crop month. The months in which they earn most are March, April and May and September, October and November.

G-3437. What do you say is the average earning in the best month ?—It is very difficult to say. I should think that some women will earn Rs. 25 in March.

G-3438. If you take January which is not a good working month, the average earning, taking all the 463 workers in the Ibex Lodge estate, is Rs. 8-4-0, that is putting everybody in, men, women and children. I notice that the advance paid to them in that month is Rs. 1,085 ?—Yes ; of course, we get busy months and slack months.

171

G-3439. *Sir Alexander Murray*: You said that your busy month is March. Give us the figures for last March ?—The total earnings of 450 coolies in the Ibex Lodge estate were Rs. 5,955 for March last.

G-3440. That would make an average of Rs. 13 a coolie, including the working children ?—Yes.

G-3441. *Sir Alexander Murray*: I find that the Ibex Lodge estate has advanced a sum of Rs. 6,998 to 8 *mistris*, the largest amount due by any *mistri* being Rs. 2,538, which is in the name of Mutthuswamy. The next largest amount due is Rs. 1,197, which is in the name of C. Muthuswamy ?—Yes. We give Mutthuswamy personally a big advance. We have given him Rs. 700 as personal advance.

G-3442. Is that included in the Rs. 2,538 that he is due to the estate ?—Yes.

G-3443. How much do the coolies owe him ?—He says that they owe him nearly Rs. 3,000. He has given some of his own money to the coolies.

G-3444. Does he charge any interest on that ?—He says that he does not charge any interest. He adds that if interest is charged the coolies will run away.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. L. A. HAWKE, Manager, Singara Tea Estate, Coonoor, The Nilgiris.

G-3445. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Is your Company a private company or a public company ?—It is owned by myself and my uncle.

G-3446. What is your experience of the tea industry ?—I was 15 years in Ceylon as an actual planter. I came here in 1919. I have been 11 years on this estate.

G-3447. Have you any other Europeans along with you on this estate ?—No.

G-3448. Where do you recruit your labour from ?—From the Coimbatore district.

G-3449. What is the total acreage of the estate ?—About 500 acres. 250 acres are under tea, 90 under coffee and 60 under rubber. We are not tapping rubber now.

G-3450. What is the total population on the estate ?—I have about 350 labourers.

G-3451. How many on coffee and how many on tea ?—About 50 labourers are engaged on coffee all the year round and 250 on tea. I distribute the labourers according to whichever crop needs more.

G-3452. How many *mistris* have you got on your estate ?—There is one *mistri* who looks after the plucking, another is in charge of the men and a third is in charge of the leaf that comes into the factory.

G-3453. What pay do you give them ?—The man who supervises the leaf gets Rs. 25. The other two *mistris* get Rs. 25 and 20, respectively. They all

get 15 per cent. commission on the earnings of the coolies under them. There are other *mistris* called *Coke Mistris* who get As. 8 a day and a bonus of As. 4 a week. They get no commission.

G-3454. How many days a week do you work ?—Six days a week. Sunday is a holiday.

G-3455. How do you pay the women ?—We pay them four pies for a pound of leaf.

G-3456. How do you pay the men ?—As. 7 a day.

G-3457. Take pruning ; what do you expect a man to do for the As. 7 that you pay him daily ?—It depends on the field. If it is a fairly easy field he will have to do 100 to 150 bushes. Otherwise sometimes he will do only 70 to 80 bushes.

G-3458. What are the hours of work on your garden ?— Between 7-30 and 4-30. They have an interval of an hour at midday for meal. They are supposed to take their food with them to the garden but some people prefer to go home and come back.

G-3459. When a man has finished his task do you allow him any extra work if he asks for it ?—Yes, some men do extra work and earn an extra As. 4 a day.

G-3460. Do you give advances to your *mistris* ?—We were giving advances to the *mistris* before. But now I promised to pay them 15 per cent. commission if they took no advances and only 10 per cent. if they took advances. They have preferred to take no advances.

G-3461. How many *mistris* have you and what do they now owe you ?—I have 13 *mistris* and they all owe about Rs. 1,000.

G-3462. What advances have the *mistris* made to the workmen ?—I do not think much.

G-3463. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Do not the coolies get advances from the *mistris* when they go home or when they come here from their villages ?—It was the practice before, but now most of the coolies have made this their home and do not take any advance either at the beginning or at the end of the year.

G-3464. Why should not the men take advance ; they are not getting the extra five per cent. ?—I do not know. They might have come to an agreement with the *mistris* for a share of the extra five per cent.

G-3465. What advance do you give for a wedding ?—About Rs. 50 and sometimes even more.

G-3466. Do they take away their full wages at the end of the month ?—Not, if they have any debts owing to the estate.

G-3467. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I notice from your books that Choramati (*mistri*) had a balance of Rs. 45 from the previous season. You made him a further advance of Rs. 205 making a total of Rs. 250. In July, September, November and December you have made recoveries of Rs. 126 leaving a balance of Rs. 124 still due by Choramati to the estate ?—Yes, that is so.

172

G-3468. I also notice that the balance due by all the *mistris* to the estate was Rs. 3,920 at the end of July, Rs. 4,064 at the end of August, Rs. 4,064 again at the end of September because no recoveries had been made in September, Rs. 3,919, Rs. 3,759, Rs. 3,612 and Rs. 2,093 at the end of October, November, December and January, respectively.—Yes.

G-3469. Do you yourself make advances to the coolies or do the *mistris* make them ?—The *mistris* make the advances except in cases where they are unreliable and the coolies have no faith in them.

G-3470. The Planters' Association representatives said that all payments were made to the coolies in the presence of the European in charge. You are the only European here. What is the practice on your estate ?—On the agreement day all the *mistris* with their coolies come before me and settle their accounts. But in the case of one or two *mistris* who are thoroughly reliable I asked the coolies whether they want to settle their accounts before me or whether they are quite satisfied with their *mistris*. They said they were quite satisfied with their *mistris*. The *mistri* brings me a list of persons with the amounts advanced to them. I pay him the total amount and ask him to pay each individual coolie himself. The agreements are then filed in the office. This was the practice when the agreement was in existence. But now there is no agreement.

G-3471. Can you show me the agreement file ?—There are no agreements now.

G-3472. Do you take a pro-note from the workers ?—We took a pro-note only for *mistri's* advances not for check roll advances. Now there are neither pro-notes nor agreements. Under the new system we will have nothing, no advances except check roll advances.

G-3473. No document at all in future ?—No.

G-3474. *Mr. Cliff* : When did you start this system ?—Just now.

G-3475. Does it mean that you get your labour without having to advance anything ?—We have plenty of labour.

G-3476. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : You give the women one pie more than in other gardens and the *mistris* five per cent. more than the ordinary rate of commission. That is an encouragement ?—Yes.

G-3477. What did you do between 31st December 1928 when the old agreements were abolished and this year when you have introduced your new system ?—The Act did not affect us at all. Our *mistris* have been here long before I came. I am in the lucky position of being able to give most of my *mistris* Rs. 1,000 without a pro-note.

G-3478. *Mr. Cliff* : How many houses have you on your estate ?—About 95 to 100.

G-3479. You pay your wages monthly ?—Yes. Sometimes they want two months' wages to accummulate with me before they take it. They earmarked the amount for a certain purpose and take it from me whenever they like.

G-3480. But they cannot get their wages earlier than a month ?—No; they can get advances.

G-3481. Do you pay them full at the end of the month ? Do you not have the system of retaining a portion of the wages with you till the expiration of 10 or 12 months ?—No.

G-3482. You square up with the *mistri* at the end of 12 months in June; when do you square up with the workers ?—At the same time, in June.

G-3483. Not at the end of every month ?—They get their pay every month. Under the old system they were paying back a portion of their debt every month. Some months they would take the whole wages without paying anything to clear off the debt. Whatever balance was left was squared up at the end of June. But now they take only check roll advances.

G-3484. At present you give them no other advances except the check roll advance. Will you not still recover anything at the end of the month if the workers so desire ?—Yes.

G-3485. And settle the whole account at the end of June ?—Yes.

G-3486. *Miss Power*: What is the age limit for children working on the garden ?—It is very difficult to say. We generally go by the physical appearance of the childern. We do not generally permit children to work unless they are between 12 and 15. Some little children come and ask me for work and I have refused to give them work because they are very young.

G-3487. We have been told that children of 8, 9 and 10 come along with their mothers for plucking leaves ?—They do not come as young as that.

G-3488. But we have seen some little children of about that age on the garden ?—It is very difficult to tell their age.

G-3489. What is the lowest wage that you give to children ?—Childern between the ages of 12 and 15 get As. 3 to As 4 a day.

G-3490. I see from the registers that there are some children earning As. 2. What age would they be ?—I do not know; they may be about 12 or so.

G-3491. What will they be doing to get As. 2 a day ?—Picking or weeding or anything like that. Little children that come for weeding get As. 2.

G-3492. You say that 12 year old children get As. 4 a day ?—It is not by age that we judge whether a child should get As. 2 or As. 4; it is only by physical appearance.

G-3493. There is no age limit for weeding ?—No.

G-3494. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Children under 12 years are put on weeding and they are paid As. 2 a day ?—Yes.

G-3495. *Miss Power*: Do you give any rice money for children who are not working ?—No, I give a weekly bonus of As. 4 to the men. I do not give any allowance to children below the working age.

G-3496. Do you give any maternity benefit ?—About 3 months before child-birth the women go down to the plains. Very few stay here. We give Rs. 5 to the women who stay here. All medical aid is free. If a woman wants to be sent to any hospital we send her at our cost.

173

G-3497. Do you give her any rice money during her confinement in addition to the Rs. 5 ?—No. We give her anything she wants from her own account.

G-3498. Is there a trained midwife on the estate ?—I believe there is one. Till now we have had very few births on the estate. Most of them go down to the village to their people.

G-3499. Is there any school for children ?—There is no school on the estate. There is one at Coonoor 2 miles from here. If any child wants to go to school we pay the school fees ourselves.

G-3500. What number of children out of those of school-going age attend school ? Is there any zest at all for education ?—No, they do not bother about education. Only four took advantage of my help in the shape of fees; others did not want to go to school.

G-3501. *Colonel Russell*: I notice that your lines are scattered about the estate. Who planned them ?—Most of the lines were here before I came. I have built five sets of new lines with skylights.

G-3502. When you have got your lines scattered all over the estate do you not find it difficult to give a good water supply ?—The water supply is plentiful. The water is good.

G-3503. Have you ever had it examined ?—No. I notice that the general health on the estate is satisfactory. There is no dysentery or things like that. For the last 3 years we have had only 2 deaths on the estate.

G-3504. You have very few latrines ?—We have two for each line; in some small lines we have only one.

G-3505. Do the workers use the latrines ?—Some of them do not. It has been very difficult to make them use the latrines.

G-3506. What are your medical arrangements ?—We have no doctor on the estate. We are only 2 miles from the nearest hospital and we send serious cases down to the hospital. We have a small dispensary on the estate where we keep some iodine, bandages, salts, castor oil and so on. We pay the doctor at the Lawley Hospital Rs. 15 a month so that he may pay special attention to our labourers.

G-3507. *Miss Power*: Do you give any pay during sickness ?—Not for ordinary illness. If for instance the man cuts his finger while he works on the garden we pay him half wages for a few days. For ordinary sickness we do not pay anything. They have to look after themselves. We only give medical aid free.

G-3508. *Sir Alexandar Murray*: Could you let us have a statement showing the number of workers, the total quantity of work done and the total wages earned by them for any two months in the year ? I want to know the average wages earned by a man, woman and a child ?—Yes.

G-3509. *Sir Victor Sassoon*: Do you work on Sundays ?—When we have a rush of work we work on Sundays also. We pay cash at the same rate; that is not included in the check roll. The Sunday work is entirely voluntary

G-3510. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Here is a receipt taken by Rayappan *mistri* for a sum of Rs. 50 which he has advanced to Savarimuthu, a labourer. The interest charged is at the rate of Rs. 2 per hundred per mensem or 24 per cent. per annum. Is that the usual rate of interest for such advances ?—The interest is put in because the promissory note is not legal without it. The labourer never pays interest. In fact the *mistri* is lucky if he gets back the principal.

G-3511. Do you charge interest to the *mistris* ?—No.

G-3512. Will you send us a copy of the promissory note signed by a labourer ?—Yes.

G-3513. I see from the register that Rayappan mistri has advanced the following sums to the labourers in June and July 1929 : Rs. 50, 50, 20, 35, 20, 70, 50, 47 and 66. The total amount is Rs. 408 and the average loan is Rs. 45 ?—Yes, that is correct.

STATEMENT BY RAYAPPAN Mistri.

G-3514. *Rayappan Mistri*: "I have here 9 promissory notes for the advances I have given. The amounts are all still due to me. I took these promissory notes because I lent them these sums. I do not know now how much of these have been repaid. I can only find that out at the end of the year when the accounts will be settled. I have not given any new advances to these labourers. The Manager has stopped giving advances and I have also stopped giving advances to the labourers. All my coolies are old coolies who have been on this estate for a long time. If I want to bring new coolies I have to give advances even though the Manager does not give me any. I have written in the promissory note Rs. 2 interest in one case and only Re. 1 in the other cases because the man whom I have charged Rs. 2 has gone down for a marriage ; all the others are working on the estate. But I will take only Re. 1 interest and not Rs. 2. I may not take any interest at all. One of these promissory notes is not signed because the man is known to me and is working on the estate."

(The *mistri* withdrew.)

G-3515. *Sir Alexander Murray*: Mr. Hawke, are you a member of the Labour Department of the Planters' Association ?—(*Mr. Hawke*): No. I have not signed the Labour agreement.

(The witness withdrew.)

174

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninety-seventh Meeting.

COIMBATORE.

Tuesday, 11th March 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Sir VICTOR SASSOON, Bart. | Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.
Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).
Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Miss M. AZARIAH, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary.*

Mr. E. HOLDEN, Manager, Kalceswar Mills, Coimbatore.

G-3516. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Would you tell us your experience of the textile industry ?—I have been in India for 24 years. Before I came to India I was working in England as a weaver, assistant jobber and a jobber.

G-3517. What has been your experience in India ?—I have been in about nine mills in Bombay side. I have been in this mill for the past four years.

G-3518. Is this a limited liability company ?—Yes, this is a limited liability company. Mr. Sathappa Chettiyar, son of Mr. Somasundaram Chettiyar is the managing agent of this company. There is a board of directors also.

G-3519. How many men, women and children are employed in this mill ?—We have 1,630 workers, of which there are 329 women and no children. Four or five years ago we stopped employing children because there was some trouble about the administration of the Factories Act. I presume that was the reason for stopping the employment of children. I am not sure.

G-3520. When did you start your shift system ?—About August 1928.

G-3521. Was it at that time that you stopped employing children ?—No. Children were stopped even before that.

G-3522. What are the working hours for women ?—Their working hours are from 7 to 12 in the morning and 1 to 6 in the evening ; but we allow them 15 to 20 minutes grace to come in and go out.

G-3523. Would you explain your shift system ?—We have three shifts. A, B and C. A shift works from 7 to 12 in the morning and 1 to 6 in the afternoon. B shift works from 7 to 12 in the morning and 7 to 12 in the night. C shift works from 1 to 6 in the afternoon and 7 to 12 midnight. We change the shifts every fortnight so that the workers may not feel the strain of night work.

G-3524. Do you work on Sundays ?—No.

G-3525. When they have a holiday in the week you still give them the Sunday ?—Yes, we still give them the Sunday making it two days in the week.

G-3526. How many weavers have you ; are all of them men ?—Yes, we have 299 weavers.

G-3527. Have you any daily weavers, assistant weavers or apprentice weavers ?—We have 50 acting weavers who take the place of men who are absent.

G-3528. Have you got spare spinners ?—We do keep a certain number of spare spinners.

G-3529. Where do your workers live ?—Most of them live in villages round about. Some are three miles off. They prefer living out because they have lands of their own and it suits them better. They are more or less agriculturists.

G-3530. You do not provide any houses ?—We provide 25 houses inside the compound.

G-3531. If a workman lives 3 miles off from the mill does he go back home at 12 o'clock and return at 7 o'clock ?—Generally they go home and come back.

G-3532. Similarly does he go home at 12 o'clock at night and come back at 7 o'clock in the morning ?—They have to do this only for a fortnight. The shifts are changed every fortnight. Most of them have relations in the town and they sleep out here.

G-3533. Could we have a return of your wages showing the number of workers, the total amount paid, the highest and the lowest wages and the average for any particular month ?—Yes.

G-3534. Who are all paid on piece-work in this mill ?—The weavers, the reelers, the slubbers and the rovers.

G-3535. *Miss Power* : Do you recruit at the gate ?—Yes.

G-3536. Who makes the selection ?—It depends. Sometimes the manager himself does it ; sometimes the clerk does it. But every recruit has to be passed by me before he is sent to the department.

G-3537. Have you eliminated any prospect of bribery in the securing of jobs by workmen ?—We hope so. I would not say definitely that it has been eliminated. We are very strict ourselves about bribery. If we find any *mistri* is guilty of bribery he is at once turned out. It is rather difficult for the manager to make the selection himself personally every time.

G-3538. You are taking on some workers every day ?—We usually take men on 1st of the month and the day after the pay day. Occasionally we take on men during the week when we are in need of men for the godowns during the season.

G-3539. How do you pay, monthly or fortnightly ?—We pay monthly. Our pay day is the second Saturday in every month. The last pay day was on the 8th of this month.

G-3540. Has there been any expression of opinion by the workers as to whether they prefer fortnightly or monthly payment ?—No, not to my knowledge.

175

G-3541. Are there any deductions from their wages ?—Yes, occasionally we fine them for bad work and breakages due to negligence.

G-3542. Do you fine them for lateness ?—No, I do not think we have ever fined a worker for lateness.

G-3543. To what use are the fines put ?—They go into the firm's account. Fines are levied more or less only for breakages. Very few fines are levied for bad work.

G-3544. Do the workers have to buy spoiled cloth ?—No. We only fine them on rare occasions. We are very lenient in our mills.

G-3545. Dou you give any maternity benefit ?—We have no fixed rule. But if any woman came and asked for it we would give half wages for a month if she had been with us for 2 or 3 years. But generally the women go home and do not come and ask for it.

G-3546. What is the reason for the women not asking for it ?—Is there no publicity given to the existence of this benefit ?—No. I do not understand why they do not ask for it.

G-3547. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Have you ever refused a woman who asked for it ?—No, not to my knowledge.

G-3548. *Miss Power* : What is the percentage of those entitled to it who fail to apply for it ?—I cannot say offhand.

G-3549. Have you got a crèche in the mill ?—No.

G-3550. Do you allow small children to come into the mill ?—No. We give the women passes to go out for half an hour. Here are the passes permitting women to leave the mill for half an hour daily at 10 o'clock or other hours of the day.

G-3551. Who supervises the work of the women ?—We have women *mistris* to supervise the work of women.

G-3552. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Here is the Mill Operatives Wages Abstract Book. It shows many recoveries against wages. There are recoveries against pronotes to the extent of Rs. 5 in some cases ; there are recoveries against advances of sums varying from Rs. 2 to Rs. 11 ; there are recoveries for the Fund of sums varying from As. 2 to Re. 1. There are no recoveries for fines. With regard to the Fund is it simply the workers' money ? Do you not add anything to it ?—No. The Fund has only just been started. The idea is to give them 6 per cent. for the money they put in.

G-3553. At the time of starting the fund did you not tell the workers the percentage of interest that you would allow them ?—They were told that a certain percentage of interest would be allowed to them but the exact rate has not yet been decided upon. It has to be decided by the managing agents.

G-3554. Have they put money in the Fund ?—Yes, they have put small sums into the Fund. We allow them to borrow money from the Fund. They can take back the whole amount to their credit whenever they like. The Fund has not yet been kept going. In some cases the amount to the credit of the workers is so small as As. 2 and so on.

G-3555. Would you kindly send us a note about the Fund giving all the details connected with it ?—Yes.

G-3556. Would you also send us a note about the absentees ?—Yes.

G-3557. *Col. Russell* : You say you have 25 houses inside the compound. How many of them are occupied by the workers ?—About 20 houses are occupied by the workmen ; the rest are occupied by the watchmen and the *mistris*.

G-3558. Do you propose to put up any more houses ?—Not at present. They seem to be quite satisfied to live outside in their own villages.

G-3559. Do you have a water supply in the Mill ?—We get it from our own well supply.

G-3560. Is there any system of cooling drinking water ?—There is no system of cooling water. The water is quite cool and there is no necessity to cool it.

G-3561. In your spinning shed there does not seem to be much ventilation ?—According to the Factories Act we have sufficient ventilation.

G-3562. Have you any system of removing dust by fans ?—We have no fan arrangement at all ; so far it has not been thought necessary.

G-3563. Have you any humidifiers ?—No.

G-3564. What medical facilities do you give to your workers ?—We have a doctor who comes here daily. The workers are informed of his arrival and they go to him for treatment. We have a dispensary also in the Mill and the doctor dispenses medicine to the patients from that dispensary.

G-3565. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I notice from the Loan Ledger that the total outstandings on 31st December 1929 was Rs. 6,427-6-0. Mr. S. R. M. Venkatachalam Chetti, the assistant cashier has an advance of Rs. 415, Carding No. 1 has an advance of Rs. 155, two other members of the staff have advances of Rs. 150 and 155 respectively, and the engineer has an advance of Rs. 800. The average advances excluding these big advances is rather small ?—Yes.

G-3566. With regard to this Fund I see that it has been in force since September 1927, that is to say for 2½ years. What is the object of the Fund ?—The object is to provide the workers with a certain amount of money out of which they can draw whenever they like. If they worked five years we would give them some interest. But the rate of interest has not been decided upon.

G-3567. *Mr. Cliff* : Do you charge interest at 6 per cent. or 12 per cent. on the advances you give to your workers ?—6 per cent. in some cases and 12 per cent. in others. It depends on the circumstances ; it depends on the wage earned by the worker, the necessity for the loan, the number of years he has been with us and so on.

G-3568. At what rate do you recover the principal ?—Every month the worker pays whatever he can.

G-3569. You have got a running shift of 15 hours. What is the object of this running shift of 15 hours ?—To increase production.

G-3570. Do you pay any allowances for night work ?—We pay Re. 1 a month for night work and in addition we pay Rs. 2 a month for regular attendance.

170

G-3571. If a worker is absent for 2 or 3 days there is a proportionate deduction made ?—Yes.

G-3572. Have you had any strike in this Mill ?—Yes, there was one in 1927.

G-3573. Was this shift system introduced after the strike ?—Yes, after the strike.

G-3574. Was there any consultation with the work-people about introducing this shift system ?—We asked them if they had any objection to night work. They said they had none and we carried on.

G-3575. The mill commences at 7 in the morning and finishes at 12 midnight. How did you put it to the men ?—When we want to consult the workers in matters regarding labour we call the *mistris* and explain it to them and then they consult the workers. We also consult some of the workers personally and ask them if they have any objections.

G-3576. Was there no objection to the long spread-over from 7 in the morning till 12 midnight ?—There was no objection. For instance, here is a letter in which a man says that he is willing to work 15 hours.

G-3577. Is there any objection now ?—We have not heard of any. You may satisfy yourself by asking a few workers.

G-3578. The Mill commences work at 7 o'clock on Monday morning and closes at 12 midnight on Saturday ?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

Statement by VALLIAMMAL, a woman worker at the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mill.

G-3579. " I belong to Coimbatore. I am not married. I have been working here for the past 2 years. I get Rs. 9 a month. I am paid monthly wages ; I am not on piece-work, I was brought here by the *mistri*. I paid nothing to the *mistri*. Nobody pays anything to the *mistri* for getting a job. We have got a man foreman to supervise our work. The whistle goes at 6 o'clock and we begin work in the Mill at 7 o'clock. We work till 12 o'clock, go home and then come back at 1 o'clock. Then we work till 6 o'clock and leave the Mill. I live near the Mill."

Statement by RANGAMMAL, a woman worker.

G-3580. " I belong to Coimbatore. I am married. I have no children I have been working here for the past two or three months. My husband is a shoe maker. He is not working here. I get Rs. 10-4-0 a month. I am paid monthly wages. I am not on piece-work. I was brought here by the *mistri*. I paid nothing to the *mistri* for getting this job. Nobody pays anything to the *mistri*. There is a man foreman who supervises our work. There is no crèche in the Mill. Women who have children go out for some time and nurse their children and come back. They have to do it under the tamarind tree outside the Mill."

Statement by LUTHMARI, a woman worker.

G-3581. " I was working in this Mill for 6 years. I then went home for marriage. I have been working in this Mill for the past 6 months now.

My husband is in the village at Satyamangalam. I came here to help my mother during her confinement. I work in the spinning department. I look after one side and get Rs. 14 a month. I work alone on one side.

G-3582. I am paid the same rate as men. I was not in the Mill when the men stopped work during the strike. I went home for marriage and did not return till after the birth of my child. The Mill does not give any maternity benefit. Mothers expecting babies are stopped after the seventh month.

G-3583. We are occasionally fined As. 4 to As. 8 for dropping the thread down instead of putting it on the shoulder as it gives more work to the sweeper. We are warned two or three times and if it is of no use we are fined. When I was a small girl I was working here for half a day and reading in the school for another half a day. Then I was taken to the doctor, my age was determined and I was allowed to work full day. After my marriage the *mistri* took me over here. I am not a member of the Union."

Statement by GNANAPRAKASAM, a man worker.

G-3584. " I have been working here for 6 or 7 years. The *Mistri* took me over here. I paid nothing to him. I was a half-timer in the Mill for some time. I work in the spinning department and get Rs. 14 a month. I work all the days in the month except the holidays. I am occasionally fined as much as Re. 1 if the thread falls down. I have been fined also for late coming. I did not go out at the time of the strike. I was working in the Mill. The weavers went on strike for increase of wages ; then the spinners also went on strike. But they got no increase, on the other hand their wages were reduced still further. I am not a member of the Union. I have not joined the Union because I hear that the *mistri* and the Manager would dismiss people if they joined the Union. If I worked all the days in the month I get a regular attendance bonus of Rs. 2 a month. I get Rs. 14 a month. I look after one side of the frame and get Rs. 12 in addition to the regular attendance bonus."

Mr. W. E. WINTER, Managing Director, Mr. J. F. CHESHIRE, Mill Manager, and Mr. F. HOWARD, Weaving Manager, of the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills.

G-3585. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Mr. Cheshire, what is your experience of the textile industry ?—I was trained in England for five years. Then I was in Russia for 25 years. I came to India 6 years ago. I have been in this Mill all the six years of my stay in India.

G-3586. How many Mills are there in this Company ?—There are four mills of the Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Company. I am the manager of all the four mills.

G-3587. What is the number of men, women and children employed in these mills ?—The total number of workers is 2,175 composed of 1,600 men, 575 women. There are no children.

G-3588. Who does the actual recruiting of the workers in the Mill ?—The recruiting is done at the gate. The Spinning Master or the Carding Master or one of their assistants go to the gate and bring the men in.

177

They are examined by the spinning master before they are sent to the department. Similarly the weaving master tests them personally and sends the weavers to his department.

G-3589. Do you say from your experience that there is no bribery under this system of recruiting ?—Yes, we know there is.

G-3590. Where does the bribery start ?—I am afraid I cannot say. (*Mr. Winter*) : We are strict ourselves. There was a case of one Kuppuswami. He was a weaving supervisor and he practically had power to take men on. He misused that power and was taking bribes to the extent of Rs. 20 and Rs. 30 from different people for giving various jobs and for promotions also. There was some trouble on that account in the Mill. We made an enquiry and the man admitted everything. He has now been reduced to an ordinary clerk.

G-3591. Have you thought of having an employment bureau or office through which the men might be recruited ?—It is unnecessary because we get enough labour coming to the Mill. There is no necessity for a recruiting agency.

G-3592. *Mr. Cliff* : What are your daily working hours ?—In one of the Mills we work from 7 to 12, 1 to 6 and 7 to 12 midnight. In the other mills we work from 7 to 12 and 1 to 6. We have three shifts in one of our mills.

G-3593. What do the women do in the Mill with three shifts ?—We have women reelers who work from 7 to 12 and 1 to 6. We have no women for the third shift.

G-3594. Do you pay any extra wages for night work ?—No. We change the shifts weekly.

G-3595. In the other Mill they make a fixed extra payment for night work. Do you work on Sundays at all ?—No, we do not.

G-3596. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Are most of your weavers on one loom or 2 looms ?—(*Mr. Howard*) : We have got 300 weavers. About 200 of them are on two looms and the rest are on 1½ looms. There are very few on one loom.

G-3597. That is really why your wages are so much better than those in the other Mill. For instance, those getting Rs. 17 will be on 1½ looms and those getting Rs. 11 will be on one loom ?—Yes.

G-3598. *Mr. Cliff* : How long has your shift system been in operation ?—(*Mr. Cheshire*) : 18 months.

G-3599. Were the workers consulted before putting it into operation ?—We put up a notice intimating to them the proposed change and invited objections if any. (*Mr. Winter*) : We first of all called the jobbers to this room and told them what we proposed to do. They consulted the workers and said they had no objection to the change. We carried on.

G-3600. Are you satisfied that the men have adequate rest between 12 and 7 both during day and night ?—(*Mr. Cheshire*) : Yes, we have had no complaints.

G-3601. Have you any system of works committees ?—We have none.

G-3602. Have you got any policy regarding collective representations on the part of the workers ?—(*Mr. Winter*) : We have, in a way. If there is a complaint—I usually deal with these complaints myself—the worker

goes direct to my office and represents the matter to me. I have had as many as 40 persons sitting on the floor of this room and discussing their grievances. We give every facility for any man, woman or child to ventilate their grievances to me.

G-3603. When was the last meeting held ?—In 1927, during the last strike.

G-3604. Has there been no collective complaint on the part of the work-people since then ?—(*Mr. Cheshire*) : No.

G-3605. With regard to your note on absenteeism does it include sick leave ?—It includes everything.

G-3606. You are a member of the Bombay Millowners' Association. Is your attitude to trade unions the same as that of the Bombay Millowners' Association ?—(*Mr. Winter*) : We are in full agreement with their attitude on this question. We want to encourage genuine trade unions and discourage rabid sort of persons interfering with the Mills for their own personal interest and to the disadvantage of the labourers.

G-3607. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You say that you have agreed to recognize the trade union " provided it is representative of the work-people ". What do you mean by saying " representative of the work-people " ?—We wish to have the Union controlled entirely by textile men and men who have the interests of the textile industry at heart. We do not want lawyers or vakils to come along, collect subscriptions and get the thing going.

G-3608. The Chairman of the Millowners' Association in Bombay is a lawyer and the Secretary of the Association is not a textile worker. If the Union turned round and said that they were not going to have anything with the Association for the same reason for which you refuse to have anything with the Union what would be the result ?—We should be having a strike. I do not think it is quite fair to put the thing in that way. I think there is a general idea about Englishmen who come out to India that they are against the Indian. There is no such thing in our minds. Most of us are keenly interested in the Indian and want to help him. But what is the use of having a body of men led by a politician who has no interest in the industry and whose only interest is to have a personal position in the town and possibly get a few more votes for the Legislative Council ?

G-3609. *Mr. Cliff* : Am I right in saying that you want a trade union representative of your own people ?—Of the workers, quite.

G-3610. *Sir Victor Sassoon* : Would you restrict the membership to people working in your own mills or to textile workers generally ?—To textile workers generally. I do not mind workers in other mills.

G-3611. *Mr. Cliff* : You want a union of work-people ?—Emphatically.

G-3612. Have you any objection to their having such assistance as will put them on an equal negotiating basis with yourself ?—If we could get competent men who could mediate we should only be too glad. But we object to having men who have no interest in the trade and who are out for personal interest. We are perfectly willing to negotiate with any man who is interested in the textile industry and who has brains to understand the various problems connected with it. For instance, Mr. Shiva Rao was quite helpful to us during the last strike.

178

G-3613. *Sir Alexander Murray* : But he does not conform to your requirements ?—He does not. But as far as we could we accepted his mediation between the men outside and ourselves. We found him a reasonable man. I should not like to have him as a permanent man.

G-3614. *Mr. Cliff* : You say that the work-people are not entitled to select their own representatives ; is not that your condition ?—We do not say that. We only want that the men should be from the industry itself.

G-3615. Why should you object to the work-people having such trained assistance from outside as they like to have ?—We have really no objection to their having any assistance whatever. But we do object to a certain class of men I have already described.

G-3616. I appreciate it and I think the Commission appreciates it. The point is whether the employer is not really putting up an unreasonable condition in asking for something which he knows is difficult to get ?—If you thought like that you would be misjudging the attitude of the employers.

G-3617. Are you then willing that your work-people should elect their own officers ?—Absolutely, provided they satisfy the conditions I have mentioned which are entirely in the interests of the industry as a whole.

G-3618. Would you welcome the co-operation of the work-people in solving the problems with which you are faced ?—We have ourselves tried to form works committees for our men. But all our efforts have been misrepresented and thwarted by men coming from outside having not the slightest idea of what they are doing. We are perfectly willing to have the co-operation of our men in solving the problems. We are also perfectly willing to allow them to elect their own representatives provided they are men who have an idea of what they are doing and have the interests of the industry at heart. We are not willing to have our workers formed into a Union by politically minded people for their own interest and for the purpose of catching votes.

G-3619. With regard to fines who has the power to fine ?—(*Mr. Cheshire*) : The head of the department. The *mistri* has to report the matter to me and all fines have to be confirmed by the manager.

G-3620. What is the maximum fine ?—The fines are usually 1 anna, As. 2 or As. 4. Very rarely it goes to As. 8 or Re. 1. The fines amount to .3 per cent. of the wages.

G-3621. Do you fine for late attendance ?—We allow 10 minutes' grace. We warn them four or five times ; if it has no effect we fine them.

G-3622. Do you give the men any pay during sickness ?—(*Mr. Winter*) : We always endeavour to meet his needs by paying up all his past wages. We lend him some money in cases of need unless the man happens to be suffering from venereal disease.

G-3623. *Colonel Russell* : Why do you differentiate between venereal disease and other diseases ?—You ought to know.

G-3624. *Mr. Cliff* : Will you send us a note showing the amount you have paid by way of sickness benefit to your workers ?—Yes, we will do it.

G-3625. Is there any difficulty in making provision for sickness ?—In 1917 we started a system by which the men would contribute something

and the Mill also would contribute an equal amount ; on the total amount we promised to allow them 6¼ per cent. interest. This went on for two years. The men got a nice little sum to their credit. The same men whom I have mentioned before heard of this, got hold of the workers, had a meeting over here and told them : " You must stop this provident fund. The management have you under their thumb by having this provident fund. You withdraw this money and pay it to the Union ". In a week all our men withdrew the money and paid it into the union. Whenever we want to do something good to our workers we have to count upon the hostility of men of the description I have mentioned.

G-3626. *Miss Power* : We understood from a woman witness that during pregnancy the women workers are sent away in the 7th month. Is there any general rule of dismissing women in this condition after a certain period ?—(*Mr. Cheshire*) : The women generally go home after a certain period.—They stay away for 9 to 12 months and come back. They are taken on and put on the same job.

G-3627. Do you give any maternity benefit ?—No.

G-3628. Do you give any bonus for child-birth ?—We do not give any bonus.

G-3629. Have you any idea if the women returning to the Mill after child-birth have to bribe the *mistris* in order to be taken on again ?—No. Generally the woman sends in a petition to me. I make enquiries and take her on.

G-3630. Have you got any form of crèche ?—No.

G-3631. What do the nursing mothers do : Have you any system of passes allowing the women to go out for half an hour every half day to nurse their children ?—No. There are a number of widows.

G-3632. *Colonel Russell* : What are the medical arrangements in your Mill ?—We have a doctor, a lady doctor and a compounder. The Doctor attends the Mill between 3 and 5 every day. All serious cases are sent to the hospital.

G-3633. You say that the relative efficiency of the Indian and European workers is 1 to 3. You have been in England, in Russia and India. To what do you attribute the low efficiency of the Indian worker ?—I cannot say. I could run a Mill in Europe with 1,000 men ; for the same Mill I would require 3,000 men in India.

G-3634. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Could you say anything about the indebtedness of the workers either to you or to the money-lenders ?—(*Mr. Winter*) : The workers are not indebted to us to any great extent. The question of indebtedness of the jobbers is a thing that needs going into. They borrow from the money-lenders at exorbitant rates of interest. Our jobbers have borrowed Rs. 2,000 at 28 per cent. interest.

G-3635. But you say the jobbers take bribes ?—Yes, they do, in order to clear off their debts.

G-3636. But very often they take bribes and buy land or build houses for the workers to live in. How do you say that the jobber takes bribes and is still indebted to the extent of Rs. 2,000 ?—Both are possible.

G-3637. Could you give us a note about the indebtedness of your workers ?—Yes.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

179

Ninety-eighth Meeting.

VALPARAI.

Wednesday, 12th March 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Miss M. AZARIAH, *Lady Assessor*.

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary*.

THANGAMANI, a woman coolie, at the Pachamalai Estate (Anamalai Hills).

G-3638. I come from Perumanur which is in Coimbatore district. I am married. My husband is working in a plantation in Tattapallam near Coonoor. I am working on this garden since 5 years. The last time I saw my husband was 2 years ago. Due to domestic differences my husband and myself are not working on the same garden. I did not go home for the last 2 years. I came to this garden of my own accord. I came alone from Perumanur. I have no children.

G-3639. I get 3 pies for a lb. of leaf. I work 6 days a week. I earn as. 5 a day. I do not get any bonus.

G-3640. I live here in one room with my sister. I do not pay any rent.

G-3641. When I came here 5 years ago I signed an agreement and put my thumb mark on it ; I got an advance of Rs. 15. After 10 months' work I had to my credit Rs. 30 of which I paid the *mistri* Rs. 15 being the advance taken. I again took another advance of Rs. 15 and signed another agreement before I went home. I have not signed any agreement or promissory note this year.

G-3642. I took Rs. 6 from the *mistri* for sending it to my father, but I did not sign any note for that. After settling my account I can leave the garden if I want. I get a *cumbli* once a year. I have kept my *cumbli* on the field. When a *cumbli* is given Rs. 4-8-0 is debited to my account, and if I work for 10 months I get a refund of Rs. 2-4-0.

G-3643. I know that I have Rs. 10 to my credit now. Every month the *mistri* is given an account by the manager showing the earnings of each worker, the rice advance given and the balance left. This account is read out to us by the *mistri*. I cannot discover if there is any mistake in the account.

G-3644. I come to work at 7 in the morning and leave at 5 in the evening. I neither take any food nor drink water between this period. If we want water we have to go long way to get it. I get 5 seers of

rice a week and am paid as. 4 for other expenses. They say that the 5 seers of rice is worth as. 12.

G-3645. I think in the club we can get 8 seers of rice for a rupee. I do not save anything from the food allowance I get ; on the other hand, I sometimes taken an advance from the *mistri* for buying provisions. If we owe some money to the *mistri* and leave the estate without any idea of returning back to work, a warrant is sent and the police catch hold of us. We have, in that case, either to repay the advance or to return back to work.

G-3646. I am not aware of any change made in this respect. I can go away now if I want, and no policeman can come after me because I have not signed any agreement this year. If I sign any agreement then the police could come after me. I saw a policeman coming and taking a person 3 years ago.

G-3647. I never saw any other case since then. I do not know that there is a change now and the policeman cannot come any longer whether there is an agreement or no agreement. I never heard any one talking in the bazaar about the change, nor did I hear the sahibs telling us about the change. I guess that you are putting these questions to me because you are officers of Government.

(The witness withdrew.)

CHINNAMMAL, a woman coolie, at the Pachamalai Estate (Anamalai Hills.)

G-3648. I come from Karur which is in Trichinopoly district. I came to this garden 10 months ago and people who came with me have left the place after settling their accounts. Before I came to this garden I was working in Nallathanni plantation which is on the other side of the club. I left that garden because I was alone there ; my mother and other relatives were here and so I also came here. I had no balance left to my credit when I left the other garden. I am a widow and have to support a child.

G-3649. Before coming to this garden I took an advance of Rs. 15 from the *mistri* and signed an agreement. I have cleared up that account and have taken another advance of Rs. 20 for which I have given a fresh document. It took me 10 months to repay the first advance. I have left my child in my village and am staying here alone. I worked regularly during the last 10 months, except when I was sick for a week.

G-3650. During my sickness I went to the doctor and took medicine. I started my new work with Rs. 20 advance in January. According to the account which was read out last month I have Rs. 4 to my credit. The age of my child is 6 or 7 years. I do not get one anna a day for the child.

G-3651. If the child were here on the estate he would have been getting free food from the estate at 12 o'clock every day. I have not sent my child to the school. I cannot leave the estate without paying back the Rs. 20 advance.

G-3652. If the *mistri* gives me permission I can leave the garden, but he would not give permission even if my mother dies or the child dies. I am not aware of any change having taken place in this respect.

180

G-3653. If any one runs away without returning back the advance taken a warrant will be sent and the police will catch hold of that person. They were doing that before and they can do that even now. I have not seen any policeman coming, but I have heard that such things have occurred.

G-3654. I never heard any one talking in the bazaar about the change that the policeman cannot come any longer whether there is an agreement or no agreement, nor did I hear the sahibs telling us about the change. I do not know who you are, nor do I know why you are asking these questions. I do not bring any food with me, and I do not even drink water during the period I am on the garden.

(The witness withdrew.)

CHINNATHAMBI, *mistri*, at the Pachamalai Estate (Anamalai Hills).

G-3655. There are 1,000 coolies working on this estate and there are 30 head *mistris* of whom I am one. Each head *mistri* has 2 or 3 *cole mistris* under him : I have 3 *cole mistris* under me and have 80 workers whom I brought here.

G-3656. I did not work on this garden as an ordinary labourer before I became a *mistri* in 1918. I was attending a school in Perunthary near Erode before I came to the hills in my 15th year. I worked as an ordinary coolie for two years in the Waterfall estate. I was brought by a big *mistri* who gave me an advance of Rs. 15.

G-3657. During the two years I was in the Waterfall estate I signed only one agreement. After working for two years I drew my balance and went away to Tayamudi estate as a *cole mistri*. I was getting as. 7 a day as *cole mistri*, but no bonus or commission. I worked for two years in Tayamudi, *i.e.*, in 1916 and 1917 and came to this garden in 1918. I went direct to the Manager, Mr. Sampson, and asked for an advance of Rs. 200 for bringing coolies. Mr. Sampson wrote to the Labour Department who recommended me as a suitable person for a *mistri*.

G-3658. I was given Rs. 200, and I brought 20 coolies in 1918 when the garden was opened. I have now 80 coolies under me, and I give them every year Rs. 15 or 20 advance as the case may be. Every one of the coolies working under me has taken an advance.

G-3659. All the coolies belong to my place, which is Coimbatore, or round about villages. My coolies consist of men, women and children. When I give my coolies an advance I take a promissory note from them.

G-3660. When I took the advance of Rs. 200 from the manager for the first time I had to sign an agreement. I have now taken an advance of Rs. 1,800 from the garden, and have distributed it among my coolies. I have signed a promissory note for this sum as the practice of signing agreements is no longer in force.

G-3661. It is over 2 years since we have stopped taking agreements. All my coolies only sign pro-notes now ; formerly they were signing agreements and there was the warrant which was being executed through the labour department. I never brought the police here.

G-3662. The labour department used to send the warrant to the police and the police used to arrest the person concerned. There was a

court here at Valparai to enquire into these cases. That court has been stopped two years ago. I was never summoned as a witness in these cases. The coolie who took the advance and ran away had either to repay the advance or to return to work.

G-3663. If a coolie goes away now without squaring up his advance I will file a suit against him in the munsif's court, as I have a pro-note now. I go to the manager who pays my expenses and sends me down for filing a suit. I never had any occasion to go to the munsif's court for the purpose of filing a suit.

G-3664. I said that the manager pays the expenses because I saw him doing so in the case of 2 or 3 other *mistris*. I never had any case of a coolie in my gang running away, because most of my coolies are my relatives. When the law was changed the manager told me ; I also knew about the change because the court which used to sit here did not sit. After the law was changed I tore up all the agreements and took promissory notes from those who owed me money.

G-3665. I told them that as the agreements are no longer in force I am taking promissory notes from them ; I also told them that the warrant has been stopped and the agreement could not be enforced. If you bring down all my 80 coolies and ask them whether they know that there is no warrant now, they will say ' yes '. I can get coolies to come here without giving an advance provided they are men of means.

G-3666. All my coolies who came here took an advance. When a coolie under me works for 10 months I give him an advance for the next year ; he will not come back unless the advance is given. After the end of 10 months' period some of my coolies have a balance of about Rs. 50 to their credit. I cannot say why those who have Rs. 50 to their credit still take an advance of Rs. 15.

G-3667. I give them the advance because I want them to work on the same garden, and unless I give them the advance I will have no hold on them. If I do not give an advance some other *mistri* may give it and ask them to work under him.

G-3668. One of the reasons why I give an advance is that the coolie should come back to my gang instead of going to another *mistri's* gang. Though the customary rate of advance is Rs. 15, I will offer a good coolie more than Rs. 15, because if the coolie works well it pays me well too. My advance to my coolies varies from Rs. 15 to 50. I will be increasing the number of coolies gradually. If the *mistri* is a good *mistri* it is but natural that more coolies will come to him.

G-3669. The Labour Department pays both ways food expenses to the coolies who come up here ; this is given free. All my 80 coolies are working this morning. On some days 2 or 3 may stop coming, but otherwise all of them come pretty regularly. If a coolie is a lazy man and does not want to come to work for more than 2 or 3 days in a week I keep quiet ; I do not force him to come regularly.

G-3670. I do not bring my coolies out on Sundays ; they never come on Sundays. I get 7 seers of rice every week, which is worth one rupee. In the *shandy* we may sometimes get 7 or 7½ seers. The price of rice in the bazaar varies throughout the year ; sometimes they may sell only 6 seers of rice in the market ; sometimes it goes up to 8 seers.

(181)

G-3671. A man coolie gets 7 seers rice a week and 4 as. in cash while a woman coolie gets 5 seers rice a week and 4 as. in cash. I am satisfied with the quality of rice that I get on the estate ; I have never tried the bazaar rice. I write a promissory note for every new advance that I take from the manager.

G-3672. I take an advance every year. I have now given a promissory note for Rs. 1,800. The manager does not charge any interest on the advance given, and I too do not charge any interest to my coolies. No money-lender is allowed to come to the bazaar. I am a member of a co-operative society in my village.

(The witness withdrew.)

SAVARI MUTTHU, a coolie, at the Pachamalai Estate (Anamalai Hills).

G-3673. I have been working on this garden for the last 6 years. My parents are also working on this garden. I do not know what my age is. In the beginning I got 6 as. wages, but now I get as. 7. I came to this garden with my parents.

G-3674. I took an advance of Rs. 20 last month after the accounts were settled. The sahib gave me the money. If I want any money I go to the sahib who gives it to me. I get 7 seers of rice every week and as. 4 in cash. When I took an advance last month I signed an agreement similar to the one I used to sign before.

G-3675. I do not know whether any change has taken place. I can go to another garden if I want to after settling my account and paying back the advance. If I do not settle my account and go to another garden, I will get a warrant. The *mistri* reports to the sahib and the sahib sends a chit to the other garden ; and I must pay back the advance or come back to work. I come from Moganur which is in Trichinopoly district.

(The witness withdrew.)

MARANNEY, a coolie, at the Pachamalai Estate (Anamalai Hills).

G-3676. I come from Gopichetty Palayam, which is in Coimbatore district. I was brought up here by Chinnathambi *mistri* two years ago. Before I came to this garden I was doing garden work in my village. Myself and my wife came together, and we took an advance of Rs. 45 from the *mistri*.

G-3677. The agent paid us our railway fare. It took us 10 months to repay that advance. I had to sign a bond when I took Rs. 45. I have not taken back that bond from the *mistri* though I have repaid the amount. When I fell ill some months ago I went home ; my wife also accompanied me. Each of us took an advance of Rs. 10 from the *mistri*, which we have to pay.

G-3678. If the Sahib gives me permission I can leave the garden ; otherwise not. If I run away without paying back the advance I will get a warrant, that is to say, the *mistri* will inform the agent and the agent will send policemen to bring me back. I have not seen a policeman coming and taking anybody, but I have heard that such things have happened, and I am therefore afraid.

G-3679. I do not know whether any change in the law has taken place. Neither myself nor my wife know how much money is due to us by the

garden. The wages sheet is not shown to us. I cannot read. The *mistri* sometimes tells us what our dues are.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. J. E. SAMPSON, Manager, Pachamalai Estate (Anamalai Hills), Valparai.

G-3680. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Will you tell us how long you have been connected with tea ?—For the last 18½ years.

G-3681. Has that all been here ?—Yes, except for 6 months in the High Range and for a short period during the war.

G-3682. How many assistants have you got ?—I have two European assistants, of whom one is here for the last 9 months and the other for 3 months. Each of these is running a division. They have come here fresh from Home.

G-3683. What staff have these assistants got ?—Each has what we call a writer or a conductor, and each writer has an assistant-writer.

G-3684. What is the experience of the writer or the conductor ?—One of the writers has been with us since 1922 ; prior to that he had experience in the High Range from about 1905. The other writer is a lad and has not more than 6 years' experience.

G-3685. Do you talk the language of your coolies ?—*Tamil* is the principal language and I have learnt sufficient to carry on the estate.

G-3686. What is the total acreage of this estate ?—816 acres represent the cultivated area and 257 acres the uncultivated area.

G-3687. *Mr. Cliff* : You said that your two assistants are fresh from Home. Will you tell us what experience their predecessors had ?—The senior of the two succeeded a youth who had been out for nearly two years and was sent Home with consumption. The other one came to an existing vacancy ; previously there was only one assistant, and the estate required two.

G-3688. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I think you told us that 816 acres were opened between 1917 and 1924 ?—Yes.

G-3689. Who are your managing agents ?—James Finlay & Co., Ltd., of Calcutta.

G-3690. Do they send any representatives to inspect the estate ?—Yes. Mr. Pinches and Mr. Wallace come for inspection.

G-3691. What is the working strength of the estate ?—940 is the average working strength, of which approximately one-third will be men and the remaining two-thirds will be women and children including male children.

G-3692. Will you give us figures showing the number of men, women and children working on your estate ?—Yes ; I will give the figures later on.

G-3693. At what age do children start working ?—Nine years and later.

G-3694. When do they get an adult's pay ?—It depends largely on the opinion of the manager or his assistant if he is the senior assistant. They will come themselves and ask you : " May I not be put on a full man's

pay instead of a child's pay ? " It is a question of their own capabilities in the field. Of course, in the case of female children they work in the plucking field where they are paid the same rate per pound of leaf plucked as is paid to a woman.

G-3695. Who decides whether a child is of sufficient age to work or not ?—The Manager.

G-3696. You said that you have 940 labourers. Where did they come from ?—About 50 per cent. have come from the Coimbatore district, about 20 per cent. from the Trichinopoly district and the remaining from the Tinnevelly district.

G-3697. How many recruiters have you altogether ?—35 approximately.

G-3698. How many of these are classed as head *mistris* ?—All these 35 are classed as head *mistris*.

G-3699. What do you pay these head *mistris* ?—A *mistri* having 100 coolies or more is paid Rs. 25 a month in addition to his commission which varies from 10 to 15 per cent., while a *mistri* having a lesser number of coolies is paid his ordinary daily wages when he chooses to go to work—and, as far as possible, we encourage him to go to work—and gets 10 to 15 per cent. commission.

G-3700. We interviewed a *mistri* to-day and he told us that he had 80 workers under him. On what basis will he be paid ?—He gets his wages when he goes to work, and he will draw 15 per cent. as commission on the gross pay of his coolies.

G-3701. What do you mean when you say that the *mistri* will get his wages if he goes to work ?—By ' work ' we mean superintending the coolies' work.

G-3702. He does not do physical work ?—No.

G-3703. Do you take any agreements from your labour suppliers ?—No. We take only a pro-note now. We stopped taking agreements as soon as the Act was repealed.

G-3704. The United Planters' Association of Southern India in their memorandum have given copies of the forms of agreements ?—These agreement forms are not used at all except in the case of Tinnevelly labour which may be advanced by the Labour Department's own agents in the Tinnevelly district.

G-3705. You seem to have more women than men in your labour force ?—Yes ; it is to our advantage to have more women than men. We want more labour for plucking.

G-3706. *Mr. Cliff* : Are there a good number of women who are widows ?—A certain proportion of them are widows, but I have no actual figures to give you.

G-3707. *Miss Power* : Do you know if there are women with husbands working in another garden ?—The widows would be the mothers of working men or women here now. They continue to stop as a family.

G-3708. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I see that all the promissory notes bear interest. In your experience, has interest been collected ?—No ; it has never been considered.

G-3709. Can you show us the promissory note you have taken from Chinnatambi *mistri* ?—Yes.

(The promissory note was shown.)

G-3710. How is it it has As. 4 stamps affixed on it ?—Because the amount is over Rs. 250.

G-3711. How many such pronotes have you taken ?—One from each *mistri*.

G-3712. And there are 35 *mistris* ?—Yes.

G-3713. From the pro-note given by Chinnatambi I see that he has taken only Rs. 1,500 from you whereas he told us that he had taken Rs. 1,800 ?—He has also drawn Rs. 300 as expenses for the journey, which is not included in the pro-note.

G-3714. How much of the amount that you advance to the *mistri* will go to the coolies ?—Practically the whole amount.

G-3715. Do you attempt to follow the amount as given to the *mistri* and the advance by the *mistri* to his coolies ?—Undoubtedly. When the gang returns to the estate one of the most important things is to get from each individual coolie the amount of advance he happens to admit having received from the *mistri*, and according to those admissions we try to balance the total given by the *mistri* with the total given to the *mistri*.

G-3716. Do you find many cases of disagreement ?—In the case of a large majority of *mistris* we find that they generally have given out more money than they have actually received, because invariably these *mistris* take away credit balances with them at the end of the year which they utilize for getting more coolies.

G-3717. Roughly, what commission does this *mistri* get ?—He has got Rs. 50 and 90 as commission in recent months.

G-3718. When you settled his accounts last time how much balance had this man to his credit ?—This particular man was due to me Rs. 32 and odd annas at the end of last season which was May of last year.

G-3719. How much money did he take from you ?—Rs. 1,500.

G-3720. When he began the season ?—The same figure.

G-3721. You say that he has money of his own to make advances to the coolies ?—I said in a large majority of cases. This particular man was in debt.

G-3722. Give us the instance of a man who has a surplus ?—Yes ; here is a man whose new advance was Rs. 500, but he actually took away Rs 815-14-6 on a gang of approximately 40 coolies.

G-3723. He utilizes his own money to recruit labour ?—Yes, in certain instances.

G-3724. He does not charge any interest ?—I do not think so. In the old days of warrants, before the Act was repealed, I can remember the *mistris* claiming interest on the money advanced, but I do not think they take any interest at the present day.

G-3725. Take the *mistri* who used Rs. 500 of your money and Rs. 300 of his own money to recruit roughly 40 coolies. Why should that man

use Rs. 300 of his own money instead of taking all the Rs. 800 from you? —From my own experience of him I would not have advanced him Rs. 800. He knows that.

G-3726. Why have you that experience of a man who saves Rs. 300 ; you do not suggest that you have a bad impression of him ?—No. I know that he is capable of recruiting 40 coolies and no more.

G-3727. Can you tell us the total advance you gave to your 35 *mistris* when they settled the accounts with you and started afresh, and how they stand at the present moment ?—It will be rather difficult because they are all paid at different times of the year. But I can tell you that the total amount outstanding at present is Rs. 23,368.

G-3728. Leaving aside the supervising establishment, what is the pay roll of this estate ?—In the month of January the total earnings were Rs. 6,199-12-8.

G-3729. You have advanced to the extent of nearly 4 months' earnings ?—That must vary because I have probably about 200 coolies less at the present moment than I had early in January.

G-3730. *Mr. Cliff* : Will Rs. 6,000 be the average for the whole year ? —In the month of November when we had the largest number of coolies on the estate the earnings were Rs. 8,605.

G-3731. Can we take Rs. 7,000 as the average ?—About that.

G-3732. *Sir Alexander Murray* : That means that the advance given is equivalent to 3 months' wages. Is that customary ?—To my knowledge, it is customary.

G-3733. *Mr. Cliff* : There is nothing exceptional about your system of advances ?—No. There is nothing exceptional as far as this district is concerned, and I think I may say as far as the High Range is concerned. I know of no other district.

G-3734. *Sir Alexander Murray* : What prompts you to give advances ? —I must have labour.

G-3735. You think you could not get labour without advances ?—If I individually do not give advances while my neighbours do. I must certainly say not.

G-3736. Do you think it is necessary to give advances to the extent of 3 months' wages ?—It has become the custom to give Rs. 15 a head.

G-3737. How much do you write-off every year as loss on advances ? —In the 12 months ending November 1929 we had to write-off Rs. 2,735.

G-3738. *Mr. Cliff* : Was that exceptional ?—No.

G-3739. *Sir Alexander Murray* : How many *mistris* default in a year out of the 35 ?—These *mistris* will not have defaulted in the year that the money was written-off. The outstanding money is kept on the books as far as this company is concerned, for, say, two years in the hope of getting it back. It is not written-off till it is definitely known that it is irrecoverable.

G-3740. How often do you change your *mistris* ?—As the estate becomes older the number of *mistris* you will lose will be less and less.

G-3741. How many *mistris* did you lose last year ?—In two years I lost 8 *mistris* of varying capabilities. My present amount of bad debt is considerably smaller.

G-3742. *Mr. Cliff* : You said that you had to write off Rs. 2,700 as bad debts ?—Yes ; we do not write off till we learn either from our own experience or through our labour department that there is no prospect of recovering the amount.

G-3743. How many suits have been actually filed by you yourself or on your behalf during the last three years ?—We have filed only one civil suit which is pending at the moment.

G-3744. With regard to commission, can you tell us for a year the amount of commission you have paid to the *mistris* ?—I have the figure which shows the amount of commission per coolie, and it is only a question of multiplying it by 940. The average per coolie is Rs. 11-14-0. To get the average per *mistri* you have to divide the total amount by 35 as we have 35 *mistris*.

G-3745. Can you tell us what is the maximum and the minimum commission that a *mistri* got ?—The biggest commission in the month of November was Rs. 130-3-4 for one *mistri*, and Rs. 5-14-7 was the minimum.

G-3746. With regard to the rate of commission that you give to your *mistris*, how many people are on the 15 per cent. ?—All but three.

G-3747. What is the rate for the other three ?—It would be 10 per cent.

G-3748. What is the reason for making this difference ?—10 per cent. was the original figure. 15 per cent. was promised to men with a certain out-turn of coolies per day or per month in order to induce the coolies to get out. In many circumstances I find that it is not worth taking the trouble of working out the actual outturn of coolies. A large majority of my *mistris* at the moment are worth their 15 per cent. There are only a few petty men with a poor type of labour who are not worth that.

G-3749. *Sir Alexander Murray* : We were told in one garden that the differentiation between 10 and 15 per cent. was made on the basis that if a man was out of debt he was paid at the rate of 15 per cent. but if he had taken advances he was paid at the rate of 10 per cent. ?—That is not the case here.

G-3750. How is it in 2 years you had 8 *mistris* absconding ?—Simply because the coolies decamped. In the majority of cases the coolies default to the *mistri*, and if the defaulters are sufficient in number the *mistri* is absolutely at a loss to know how to recover the money ; and therefore he also decamps. The coolie perhaps for one reason or other may not like the *mistri* or the estate or the writer or the manager, for instance, and he goes away.

G-3751. When you say that 8 *mistris* decamped in two years, does that mean that about 100 coolies have also left the estate ?—Yes, about that number.

G-3752. *Mr. Cliff* : You said that *mistris* if they wanted might go out and work. Did you mean to supervise ?—Yes.

G-3753. Are there *mistris* who do not go and supervise ?—I have one old man here who practically never goes to the field.

G-3754. Is he a labour supplier ?—They are all labour suppliers. He does not go because he is too old ; he used to go up a couple of years ago. He is an old man, and it is a matter of indifference to me whether he goes or not.

G-3755. Have you any younger men who do not go and supervise ?—Their attendance in certain cases might be irregular, but in the majority of cases they go to work. You get an average of a day in six days when the *mistri* will not go to work.

G-3756. Have you got the census of your population including non-workers ?—There is no actual census including non-workers.

G-3757. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Did you not get it for the return given by the United Planters' Association of Southern India ?—Not including the non-workers.

G-3758. *Mr. Cliff* : Can you tell us the number of quarters you have ? —247 are in existence and 10 are being built newly at the moment.

G-3759. I understand that you have prepared a statement giving particulars about wages, etc., of 50 coolies ?—Yes.

G-3760. Is that the whole of the number that were paid off on a given date ?—No. They belong to various gangs, and they were picked out at random. They were paid between the end of December and now.

G-3761. What value can we attach to this statement ; can it be regarded as representative ?—The work was done by myself on Sunday. I took out 50 coolies at random, 2 to 3 from each gang.

G-3762. Was it prepared with a view to proving any point ?—No. It was prepared merely for the information of the Commission ; it gives all particulars up to the settling day.

G-3763. In point of fact, can a worker on the estate draw his pay monthly if he so desires ?—A coolie can always get a certain amount of money on his account and once he has sufficient at his credit to cover the advance originally given he is almost entitled to draw out when he likes.

G-3764. For instance, a man gets Rs. 15 advance. Assuming that he keeps on the credit side, can he draw the whole of the money standing to his credit ?—I see no reason against it, but in a large majority of cases you find that they never wish to draw it.

G-3765. I am just wondering, in point of fact, whether a man can draw the amount ?—I should say he could.

G-3766. Will you tell us whether in fact it is done ?—It is done in a very few cases, but you may take it that 95 per cent. of the coolies will not ask for their balance till payment day ; they are content to leave it there.

G-3767. I want to know whether, in fact, the coolie has the right to draw the amount, or whether the manager considers it right to withhold the whole of the amount standing to the credit of the coolie ?—The coolies in credit are given such credit as they require, but it is very difficult to answer your question for the simple reason that so few coolies come and ask for credit.

G-3768. *Sir Alexander Murray* : When they do come you give it to them ?—Yes.

G-3769. Supposing a man inspired all your coolies to come and ask you each month as it came along for the full amount that was due to them, would you go on paying them their full amount every month ?—It is extremely difficult to answer, because it has never occurred. But I take it that no single manager would probably be paying out the full balance without reference to his neighbours. The occasion has never arisen, and I cannot at the moment see it arising.

G-3770. *Mr. Cliff* : May I take the month of November ? Is your cash balance sufficient to pay all liabilities due as wages, supposing every worker requires to be paid ?—In the safe ?

G-3771. Yes ?—Not necessarily in my safe or in the bank. I have been allotted a certain amount of money per month by the managing agents.

G-3772. Based on averages ?—Based on how much of the current expenditure is going to be incurred in a particular month.

G-3773. *Miss Power* : You said just now that after two years money was written off as irrecoverable. Does that mean that you completely lose sight of the defaulting *mistri* or that you know where he is but regard it as useless to try and recover the money ?—In a few cases we do know where he is. He probably is a mere coolie on some neighbouring estate.

G-3774. Is there any system through the Labour Department of black-balling that man so that he cannot behave towards another tea estate in a similar way ?—He cannot get an advance from any estate belonging to the United Planters' Association of Southern India until he settles his debt.

G-3775. Does he continue under the same name, or does he take another name ?—In some cases he changes his name.

G-3776. On the question of women pluckers, are they plucking all the year round, or do you give the woman a chance to change to other work ?—They are plucking all the year round.

G-3777. If a woman is once a plucker she is always a plucker ?—It is to her own benefit.

G-3778. If you averaged out the earnings of a woman plucker in a good season, could you say what they came to a day ?—I have not got the figures, but I could get them for you.

G-3779. Will it be more than As. 5 ?—It is undoubtedly more than As. 5.

G-3780. *Mr. Cliff* : Taking 255 days as the possible number of days on which they do plucking, would you say that the average earning would be over As. 5 a day ?—Yes, for a good plucker.

G-3781. *Miss Power* : On the subject of child-birth, do the majority of your women go back to their villages or do they stay on the estate ?—The number of women who stay on the estate for confinement is increasing distinctly.

G-3782. Why is that, so ?—Have you altered your medical arrangements for them ?—No, not in recent years. For the last 5 or 6 years I

may say the custom here is to give free food for approximately a month before confinement and one month after confinement. She goes to the hospital and interviews the doctor who gives me a note to the effect that the woman is perhaps in the eighth month of pregnancy.

G-3783. What makes her go to the doctor ?—Is it an understood thing that when she is 8 months pregnant she should go to the doctor ?—Yes. As I said, we give free food one month before and one month after confinement.

G-3784. Does she get any bonus for the child ?—After the child-birth the husband gets a note from the doctor who may or may not have attended the case to the effect that the child is a male or female child and that it is alive. I then pay them Rs. 5.

G-3785. Irrespective of whether the child lives or not ?—Rs. 5 is debited to their account at the moment. If the child is alive and well at the settlement time—and the settlement may vary from 10 days to 9 months later—Rs. 5 is given back as bonus.

G-3786. But supposing through no fault of the woman the child is not alive at settlement time, does she forfeit that bonus ?—Undoubtedly.

G-3787. Although she was still off-work on that account for some time ?—Yes ; that is the practice here. There are a certain number of cases where children die from malnutrition. I had such a case only 10 days ago. My opinion is that certain coolie parents do not worry themselves about their children.

G-3788. Is any person present at the time of the birth of the child ?—In the majority of cases no employee of the estate is present at the time.

G-3789. Is there no midwife ?—I understand from the Chief Medical Officer in charge of the estate that from next season we are going to have a midwife or a nurse on this estate. There is none at the moment. They do not call in the Indian doctor or the compounder, and they do not go to the hospital for their confinement.

G-3790. What is the value of the food that you allow the woman during the month before and after child-birth ?—5 measures of rice per week, which is the normal quantity issued to women.

G-3791. In the case of non-working children do they get any rice money or other allowance or any free meal ?—I have three crèches on the estate situated at convenient spots to which non-working children are brought. They are not compelled to come. There is always a certain percentage of people who decline to send their children in spite of the fact that there is a free meal there in the middle of the day. Each crèche is in charge of an elderly coolie woman, and there is a boy to do the cooking.

G-3792. Are there any bathing arrangements there ?—There are no special bathing arrangements.

G-3793. Is it an open shed ?—In all the three cases they are closed sheds with a door. In the fine weather the sheds are not used much, but in the wet weather they are used.

G-3794. On the subject of education, could you tell us what arrangements you have made ?—I have no school.

G-3795. Is there any school accessible to the children ?—No.

G-3796. You have made no attempt to provide educational facilities ?—There has been an attempt which proved a failure. The failure is, in my opinion, partly due to the coolie himself and perhaps partly due to the difficulty of getting a suitable school master.

G-3797. What is the difficulty about getting a school master here where there is only one language to be taught ? Is it that they do not like the isolation, or is it that the pay is not good ?—I only had one man here, and in due course I discovered that he wanted to get away.

G-3798. What was he being paid ?—Rs. 30.

G-3799. Have you not tried any other educational experiment ?—No, not since then.

G-3800. *Mr. Cliff* : When was your first attempt made ?—Some 4 years ago.

G-3801. *Miss Power* : I take it there is no school for the adult coolie ? —No.

G-3802. Could you tell us about drink ; can the coolies get drink ?—I think there are places in the district where perhaps there is illicit drink available.

G-3803. When you say that illicit drink is available in the district, do you mean on the estate ?—My bazaar contractor may have some, but not to my knowledge. It is against my orders.

G-3804. Would you say that there is excessive drinking going on ?—No ; there is comparatively little drinking, or perhaps I might say none at all, except during *Pongal* which is in the middle of January and on X'mas eve when they might get some drink.

G-3805. On the question of the *shandy* used by your coolies, is it an estate *shandy* ?—It is in an estate building which is hired to the contractor. The rates are not controlled by me. The rates are controlled by the surrounding public bazaars which are within three miles from here.

G-3806. Are the prices in the public bazaars slightly lower than those in the estate bazaars ?—I think it is quite likely ; otherwise a large number of coolies will not think of walking 3 miles every Sunday morning.

G-3807. You think that practice is a question of price ?—Up to a point it is a question of price. The coolie also likes to see his neighbour and he utilizes this opportunity for that. Moreover, the coolie loves to haggle over the price, but the estate bazaar contractor has not got the time for haggling.

G-3808. Can you tell us how much higher the cost of living for a coolie is up here than down in the plains in his own village ?—I cannot give figures.

G-3809. Is it appreciably higher, in your opinion ?—It must be so for the simple reason that transport charges are to be borne here.

G-3810. Could you tell us how often you are visited by the Government health officer for inspection of the estate ?—Never.

186

G-3811. How often are you visited by the Fdctory Inspector for inspection of the factory ?—Approximately twice a year.

G-3812. On the subject of the sick coolie, have you a fixed rule for payment during days of sickness ?—There is no payment for sickness. There is free feeding for in-patients in the hospital.

G-3813. But for a man who is sick in the lines ?—There is no payment.

G-3814. It does not matter how long he may have been working with you, he gets no payment unless he is an in-patient in the hospital ?—That is so.

G-3815. Who determines whether he should go to the hospital or not ? Does it lie with him to decide whether to go or not to go ?—It lies with the doctor.

G-3816. It has been suggested in some of the memoranda submitted to us that one *cumbli* is not sufficient and that during the wet weather a man or woman has to go to bed covered by a soaking garment. What is your view about that ?—If a second *cumbli* is given, I think in a large majority of cases they will probably sell the second *cumbli*. Almost every coolie on our estate has his old *cumbli* before he draws a new one. I think the old *cumbli* would suit him very well for a blanket at night, and the new *cumbli* could be used for day work.

G-3817. I take it that when there is any rush of work you work on Sundays ?—Yes.

G-3818. How can you ensure that a worker is not working on a Sunday against his or her wish and that the *mistri* in fact has not turned the worker out for the benefit of his commission ?—There is no commission for Sunday work. The coolie is paid in cash by one of the European staff of the estate.

G-3819. So that you are pretty sure that the workers come out of their own free will ?—Yes.

G-3820. Can you say what percentage of the labour force is readily available for Sunday work ?—In the case of men perhaps half of them would turn out, but in the case of women all would probably turn out. That again varies from estate to estate.

G-3821. Supposing a worker decides that he or she only wants 2 or 3 days' work in a week, what makes it worth your while to retain that coolie and give him or her wages for the amount of labour done, since there is no contract compelling a worker to work so many hours a day or so many days a week ?—The coolies work more or less as they choose up to a point.

G-3822. You have a muster, have you not ?—Yes.

G-3823. What happens if the coolie is not at the muster ?—Practically nothing. The average number of days on which the coolies work is a trifle under 5.

G-3824. Does it vary very much with the gardens ; is the amount of discipline different from garden to garden ?—I do not think the amount of discipline varies, but there is a difference both in output and in efficiency.

G-3825. *Sir Alexander Murray* : A *mistri* gets an anna a day roughly if one of his men turn out to work ?—Yes, approximately.

G-3826. Is not that an inducement for him to get his men out for work ? —Yes.

G-3827. How does he exercise that inducement ?—I do not go to the lines to see how they are turned out, but I do not think they dislike to turn out reasonably frequently.

G-3828. *Miss Power* : If the coolie regarded himself as being under compulsion, he would be turned out for so many days, if not by the management, by the *mistri*, no matter what the *mistri's* motive for doing that might be ?—The agreement in force before, I think, stated 6 days a week.

G-3829. Do you still consider a coolie bound by that agreement ?—No ; but it has become the custom. He does not work 6 days a week, but he works fairly near it.

G-3830. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In another garden they have found it necessary to give bonus for regular attendance as a sort of encouragement to the men to turn out, apart from the inducement on the part of the *mistri*. You have not found it necessary to give any bonus as a sort of encouragement ?—No.

G-3831. *Colonel Russell* : During the last few years you have been rebuilding practically all your lines, I take it ?—We had 30 rooms built in 1917 and 40 rooms built in 1918, which have all been dismantled.

G-3832. You said that 10 quarters are now under construction. Is it your policy to further improve the type ?—Yes. The lines built in 1919 or perhaps in 1920 will in due course be dismantled. But, as you know, it does not rest with me.

G-3833. Have you received any complaints from your coolies with regard to ventilation ?—There has been no complaint at all.

G-3834. You have moved a number of your lines from low sites to higher up ?—Yes, in a few cases.

G-3835. Have you found that it has improved the health of the coolies to any extent ?—Health has undoubtedly improved in recent years, but it is probably due to a multitude of reasons.

G-3836. What are the reasons ?—The thorough clearing up of the swamps ; spraying them with anti-malarial mixture from February onwards ; and the issue of anti-malarial quinine to coolies as far as this Company is concerned roughly from the middle of March to the break of the monsoon.

G-3837. You register births and deaths, I suppose ?—Yes.

G-3838. Has your death rate been falling as a result of anti-malarial measures ?—Yes, it has undoubtedly fallen.

G-3839. And your sickness rate too ?—Yes.

G-3840. You attribute that as much to the issue of quinine as to other measures ?—Yes to a combination of measures.

G-3841. You said that the District Health Officer has never visited these estates. Have you ever asked him to visit the estates ?—No.

G-3842. Are you aware whether his services will be available if you require them ?—I believe he has visited this district, but not my estate.

G-3843. *Mr. Cliff* : Do I understand that these anti-malarial measures are taken by you yourself ?—Yes.

G-3844. How do you get informed with regard to anti-malarial work ? —These measures are taken by me at the direction of the Chief Medical Officer in charge of this Company's estates.

G-3845. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Take a pruner who is paid As. 7. Will you tell us how much work is expected of him ?—It varies, but ordinarily he is required to prune 150 to 160 bushes. Our estate is a young estate.

G-3846. We have had it stated that in some of the gardens at the present moment they are not given opportunities for extra work to be done over and above the fixed task. How long does your task take a man ? —On pruning you will find that certain coolies finish their work by 12-30 or 1, while some others will finish by 3 or 4.

G-3847. Do you give them opportunities to work more ?—It has been done, but it is not eagerly accepted.

G-3848. Did you offer it ?—It has been offered, in fact, on pruning, less than 9 months ago and was refused.

G-3849. What do you pay when they do extra work ?—At the same rate as the original task.

G-3850. We found in certain gardens that where they pay As. 6 for the first task they pay at the rate of As. 8 for the subsequent task as a sort of encouragement. You do not offer more rate than the rate for the original task ?—No.

(Chinnatambi, *mistri*, produced his advance book showing the advances made to 60 labourers recruited by him. In the advance book was shown, first of all, a column with original advances which varied from Rs. 3 and 5 to Rs. 50, 60, 65 and 73, amounting in all to Rs. 1,576-8-0, or an average of Rs. 26 a coolie. In the next column was shown the amount of railway fares which varied from As. 9 p. 6 to Rs. 5-7-0. In another column was shown the bus fare from Pollachi to Valparai varying from Rs. 1-4-0 to Rs. 2-8-0. He also produced another book with 16 names showing the amount of advances paid on 24th May 1929, varying from Rs. 5 to Rs. 37-0-0, amounting in all to Rs. 269-9-0 or an average of Rs. 17 a coolie. He produced pro-notes which are usually taken from the father or the mother representing the family.)

G-3851. *Miss Power* : Is there any land given to the coolies ?—There is land for vegetable gardens.

G-3852. How much do you give to each coolie ?—It is difficult to say. Roughly speaking, they get as much as they want for growing vegetables. The vegetable seeds are supplied free from the estate.

G-3853. Do you have to induce them to make use of the land or are they anxious to have vegetable gardens ?—Some of them seem to be anxious perhaps because they can make money out of it.

G-3854. Mostly they consume their own vegetables ?—I should think so.

G-3855. Is there any arrangement made for them to have their own cattle ? Is grazing ground available ?—All these swamps have been planted with grass ; and there are cattle in varying numbers belonging to the *mistris* and the coolies.

G-3856. Do they look after their own cattle ?—This particular estate has given one man and one boy to look after the cattle, which may be about 30 in number.

G-3857. Has any attempt been made at any time to organize your people into a union ?—No.

G-3858. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Is there any public right-of-way to your estate ?—There is a Government bridle path passing through this estate which can never be closed.

G-3859. *Miss Power* : If your workers wanted to hold meetings or festivities of their own, have they got any meeting place ?—They hold their festivities on their own estate. At certain times of the year we give them entertainments in the way of cinema, drama or jugglery.

G-3860. Supposing a trade union organizer wanted to come along to talk to them, would you raise any objection ? Would you, for instance, preclude him from coming to your estate on the ground that it was your private property ?—I think we should.

G-3861. But so far such a thing has not arisen ?—No ; but I think we should stop him.

G-3862. Why do you think you should stop him from coming to a public meeting place where your workers were assembled ?—There can be no objection to a union consisting of the labourers provided the labourers themselves run the union, but there is every objection to a union composed of outsiders who are most undoubtedly political agitators.

G-3863. You would raise no objection to a union of coolies and *mistris* on the plantations ?—I can see no great objection to it personally, but it must be a union not controlled by outside influence.

G-3864. Why ?—Because outsiders have no experience whatsoever of the conditions on the garden, and they might create unnecessary trouble. The coolie is presumably happy if he returns year after year.

G-3865. *Sir Alexander Murray* : We interviewed two of your plucking coolies. One of them was Tangamani who said that she had a credit balance of Rs. 10 in your books. Will you please tell us whether this is so and how she knew that it was so ?—That is so as at the end of January. She knows it because every coolie has access to a *Tamil* statement handed to the *mistri* month by month ; that statement is an exact copy of his or her check roll.

G-3866. The other one was Chinnammal. Will you tell us what her credit balance was ?—At the end of January she was in debt to the extent of Rs. 4 being the value of the *cumbli* and rice issued to her when she began work on the estate.

G-3867. I suppose if she works for 10 months she gets the *cumbli* free ? Yes.

G-3868. Suppose she works only for 6 months do you credit her account with at least half the price of the *cumbli* ?—In the majority of cases full credit is given.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. J. H. IRELAND JONES (Chairman), Mr. W. H. MARTIN, Mr. J. E. SAMPSON, Mr. E. JOHNSON, Mr. A. W. F. MILLS, Dr. J. E. MEASHAM, and Mr. G. B. READE (Hony. Secretary), representatives of the Anamalai Planters' Association.

G-3869. *Sir Alexander Murray* : When we were in Madras we had before us the representatives of the United Planters' Association of Southern India. Will you please tell us whether the tea gardens up here are members of that Association ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : Yes.

G-3870. In addition to that, are you also members of another Association called the Anamalai Planters' Association ?—Yes.

G-3871. Is the Anamalai Planters' Association a branch of, or is it affiliated to, the United Planters' Association of Southern India ?—It is affiliated to the United Planters' Association of Southern India.

G-3872. The tea garden people here are members of both the Associations ?—Yes.

G-3873. Is your Association also a member of the United Planters' Association of Southern India ?—We are members of the United Planters' Association of Southern India through our local Association which is affiliated to the United Planters' Association of Southern India.

G-3874. Do you subscribe to the labour branch of the United Planters' Association of Southern India ?—Not as an Association. Some estates do and some do not.

G-3875. It is purely optional ?—Yes.

G-3876. You are members of the Anamalai Planters' Association and as such are members of the United Planters' Association of Southern India, but your Association as an Association has nothing to do with the labour agreement of the United Planters' Association of Southern India ?—That is so.

G-3877. I understand that you are the Chairman of the Association ?—Yes.

G-3878. Have you a committee ?—Yes, we have a committee of management, numbering 7, the Chairman and the Honorary Secretary of the Association being *ex-officio* members of the committee.

G-3879. Will you tell us what your experience of tea has been ?—I have 20 years' experience in these parts and 2 years in Ceylon. (*Mr. Sampson*) : I have 18½ years' experience of which half a year was in the High Range. (*Mr. Martin*) : 10½ years here and in Malabar. (*Mr. Reade*) : 10 years. (*Mr. Johnson*) : 19 years. (*Mr. Mills*) : 19 years.

G-3880. What is the total acreage held by the estates belonging to your Association ? We find from the statement furnished by the United Planters' Association of Southern India that in the Coimbatore district the total acreage under plantation is 27,936 of which the members of the United Planters' Association of Southern India hold 27,255 acres ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : The Association represents 37 estates which comprise an

acreage of 28,106 acres of which 23,080 are under tea, 2,088 are under coffee, 2,751 are under cardamoms and 187 are under cinchona. The total labour force on these 37 estates amounts to 33,282 ; and there are 75 European members of the Association. There are no Indian-owned estates in the Association, or for that matter in the Anamalai hills.

G-3881. Are there any estates which are not members of your Association ?—The Government cinchona estates are not members and the Waverly estate on the other side of the Ghat, which is a privately-owned coffee estate, is not a member either.

G-3882. So that you, gentlemen, amongst you are voicing the opinion held by the planting industry in the Anamalai hills ?—Yes.

G-3883. From Appendix C to the memorandum submitted by the United Planters' Association of Southern India we find that, roughly speaking, 33,000 men, women and children are engaged in the planting industry in the Anamalais, of whom 32,000 have been recruited in British India and 14,000 of that from the district in which the gardens are situated, namely, Coimbatore ?—Yes.

G-3884. How often does the committee of your Association meet for transacting business ?—It varies according to the business on hand. I think, on an average, it meets once a month, but during the last year the average would be twice a month.

G-3885. Do you attempt to regulate in any way the wages ?—We do by mutual agreement.

G-3886. Supposing one of you want to increase or decrease the wages, what do you do ?—He has to give the Association three months' notice of his intention to make a change in the rates.

G-3887. Subject to that any member can change his rates as he chooses ?—Yes.

G-3888. I understand that you gave an increase in wages some years ago. Which year was that ?—The increase came into force from the official year of 1921.

G-3889. When does your official year begin ?—It begins from April.

G-3890. You pay, I think, roughly As. 7 to a man, As. 5 to a woman and As. 2 to 3 to a child. That is based on a task to a certain extent, is it not ?—Yes.

G-3891. What do you expect a man to do as far as pruning is concerned ?—That varies entirely on the type of tea to be dealt with and the type of pruning to be done. I have recently fixed 75 to 85 trees per man for As. 8.

G-3892. Do you pay As. 8 ?—Yes. We give an extra anna for pruning.

G-3893. Is that the custom ?—Yes. Pruning is hard work, and we give one anna extra.

G-3894. For instance, for hoeing or weeding, what do you pay ?—As. 7.

G-3895. How much do you pay the women ?—When they are on daily task we pay As. 5 ; and for plucking 3 pies per lb. of leaf.

G-3896. And for children ?—3 pies per lb. if they are on plucking. In many cases 6 pies per lb. for picking cardamoms. If they are on daily task it varies from As. 2 to 5 according to age.

G-3897. Will you tell us when a child begins working on an estate and how long does it remain a child before it becomes an adult and entitled to adult wages ?—It is very difficult to say definitely because none of them know their ages. I think it is between 8 and 10, and the period when they become entitled to more pay is due really to the physical growth of the child. Well-grown children will probably get the higher rate of pay quicker.

G-3898. You do not call a child a child till it is, say, 15 or 17 years ; you base it entirely on physical development ?—Yes.

G-3899. *Miss Power* : Generally speaking, would you be able to say that there is no child under 8 working on these hills ?—I should not say definitely no.

G-3900. You think that on some gardens they may be working much earlier than that ?—Possibly so.

G-3901. Your branch of the Association has no policy in the matter. It is left to the discretion of the individual manager ?—It is left really to the manager who inspects coolies when he goes to judge the abilities of the children when they arrive to work. Very often persuasion is brought to bear by the *mistri* in question to take on children at an earlier age than one is really agreeable to do so. Actually we would prefer to keep children under 10 off from work.

G-3902. *Sir Alexander Murray* : What is your average working day ?—The coolies start their work actually between 7-30 and 8 and knock off at 4-30 which is the official time of work.

G-3903. Do they not come before 7-30 ?—They go to the muster at quarter to 7, but they do not actually commence work before 7-30.

G-3904. Do they get any break in between ?—We do not actually knock off, but opportunity is given to coolies in the middle of the day to take their meals, etc. It is an unwritten law.

G-3905. We found no uniformity in practice. In some cases people bring their food, in other cases food is brought to them, but in the majority of cases, as far as I know, food is not brought at all ?—Quite a lot of coolies come back to their lines for taking food.

G-3906. *Mr. Cliff* : When we were in Assam certain estates had a number of boys taking out tea at midday to the coolies working on the garden. Is there any such provision on the estates in this area ?—Speaking for my own estate, for pruning, trenching work in new clearings and in all fairly heavy manual work, we supply tea on estate account at midday.

G-3907. With regard to hours of labour, when we were coming along the road yesterday, passing a tea factory, we saw a certain number of women outside the factory with their baskets and their tea leaf on the ground. It was 5-30 P.M. then. Is that normal ?—Yes, I think it is. It varies on different estates ; it varies on different days and the distance the coolies have to come to the factory. In many cases the leaf is weighed in the field and sent into the factory.

G-3908. Will you tell us what is the length of the working day here ?—I have already given the average length, which is from 7-30 to 4-30. The practice varies. In some cases the workers on contract may finish probably at 1 or 2 o'clock.

G-3909. Taking the garden labour, does your Association say that the real working day would be from 7-30 to 4-30 ?—No. The knocking-off bell is at 4-30. I should think it is fair to say that on an average 5 P.M. would be the time by which coolies would have weighed up the tea under varying conditions.

G-3910. When you say that on an average it will be 5, on certain estates it may be more and on certain estates it may be less ?—I think you can take 5 P.M. to be the fair standard.

G-3911. *Sir Alexander Murray* : That is for women. When do men stop work ?—According to the task. In many cases the men finish at 1 or 2 o'clock or even earlier.

G-3912. We have been told that men have opportunities on some estates of earning more by working 7 or 8 hours, as the case may be. Will you tell us when the average working man finishes his task and what is his opportunity for earning over and above the allotted task ?—(*Mr. Johnson*) : I should say that most of them can finish their task by 2-30 and have opportunities to make more money afterwards.

G-3913. How do you pay them for extra work ?—They are paid in cash.

G-3914. Is it on the same basis ?—They are generally given more ; it is 1¼ times the usual rates. (*Mr. Mills*) : I should say very much the same, but the extra pay for over-time work would not amount to more than 1¼ times the ordinary rates. (*Mr. Sampson*) : Opportunity was given to them some 9 months ago, but they appeared not to like it ; and we have stopped it now. Certainly the payment would not be more than 1¼ times the payment for the ordinary task.

G-3915. *Mr. Cliff* : When we were in the last district, we were told that the rate was As. 6 for the task and that if one were to do extra work he would get an additional rate. Have you got a scale of additional rate for overtime work ? Is the task lighter or is the pay increased ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : The pay is increased.

G-3916. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Mr. Mills said that the practice is to give 1¼ times the ordinary rate. Is that the universal practice in this district ? Has the Association as an Association got any policy in regard to this matter ?—No, not in regard to over-time work. The Factory Act does cover it.

G-3917. What do you do in your own estate ?—We do very little over-time work. We have done a lot of clearing work, but it is all given on contract rate.

G-3918. We have seen that about half of your labour comes from Coimbatore or near about Coimbatore and the rest comes as far down from Tinnevelly. Is your recruiting all done by *mistris* ?—Mine is entirely done by the *mistris*.

G-3919. Is that the practice in all the gardens represented here ?—I think it is done with the assistance of the Labour Department sometimes, but the actual work is done by the *mistris*.

G-3920. What is the actual qualification for a *mistri* ?—It is really governed by his ability to bring coolies.

G-3921. What is the qualification you demand of a *mistri* ? Must he have been a coolie working on your estate or on some other estate ? Are you prepared to take any educated or half educated person as a *mistri* ?—Generally speaking, we promote men from amongst the coolies who have proved to be good coolies and possibly have family connections and who we think may be able to bring coolies. Very seldom new *mistris* have been taken in recent years.

G-3922. Before a *mistri* goes down to recruit labour you have to give him a lump sum. We have seen that the amount of advance given varies from Rs. 750 to Rs. 1,500. How do you decide what amount is to be given to a *mistri* ?—It really depends on the standing of the individual. We generally start a man off with quite a small advance, say, Rs. 200.

G-3923. How many coolies would you expect him to bring ?—12 to 15.

G-3924. What is the highest advance you have given on your estate ?—I think I am right in saying that the highest amount given is about 1,200.

G-3925. And how many would you expect him to bring ?—About 80 or 90.

G-3926. For how long do the coolies sign on ?—Generally for 10 months.

G-3927. Do you get them to sign agreements ?—No, only pro-notes.

G-3928. We have a form of agreement that has been given to us by the United Planters' Association of Southern India ; it is a contract with the *mistri*. Do any of you get such a contract signed by the labour supplier ? —I think the general practice is to take pro-notes. None of them have agreements.

G-3929. Do any of the *mistris* working under you have agreements, such as we have here, with the individual coolis ?—There is a *tamil* agreement from which the Labour Department supplies to the estates, if required.

G-3930. Which of the estates have agreements between the *mistri* and the coolie ?—(*Mr. Martin*) : I think occasionally they get hold of these contract forms and use them ; I should not say it would be more than 20.

G-3931. Do practically all the labour sign pro-notes ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : Yes, in varying degrees. You may have a man signing for his family.

G-3932. But the advances are given in respect of every coolie practically ?—I think, generally, if a man has a large family he gets a bigger advance to cover his wife and possibly children going with him.

G-3933. *Mr. Cliff* : When we were in Madras the United Planters' Association of Southern India told us that the practice of signing agreements was abandoned, but they said that there was a verbal agreement. Can you explain to us what is meant by a verbal agreement ?—I have never had anything to do with it, but I have heard that a verbal agreement before a magistrate is binding.

G-3934. So the Secretary of the Association told us ?—I have never had it in practice.

G-3935. I want you or any of your colleagues to tell me whether apart from the pro-note on the estates there is such a thing as a verbal agreement actually obtaining ?—No, nothing in the definite form of a verbal agreement. But as they are accustomed to work 10 months they come up on the understanding that they are to work for 10 months under that promissory note.

G-3936. Is there any understanding between them and the *mistri* ?—10 months is the usual period after long years' practice.

G-3937. Is that settled between them and the *mistri* ?—Yes.

G-3938. May I take it what you mean by a verbal agreement is really a continuance of the old practice wherein there was a signed agreement that the coolie should work for a certain period ?—I should say with this difference that the present coolie does realize that he is not bound by a criminal proceeding.

G-3939. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Have none of you experience of what is called verbal agreements ?—No.

G-3940. The law has been changed and there is no longer the agreement with the penal clause in it. The employers know that ; I gather that the *mistris* know that ; but I personally am not satisfied that the workers know that. Will you please tell us whether the workers are aware of the change ?—I think the average worker does not differentiate between a criminal case and a civil case. A court is a court to him whether it is one or the other.

G-3941. Has your Association or any of the members represented here done any active propaganda to convey to the labour that the law has been changed ?—I cannot say in my own case that I have done any active propaganda.

G-3942. Have you done any propaganda as an Association ?—No.

G-3943. May we therefore take it that if the labourers know that the law has been changed, it is not due to any propaganda done by the employers, but it is due to their having heard it from somebody ?—I think they know the difference, because formerly they were signing an agreement which was on As. 12 stamped Government paper whereas now they sign only on a promissory note.

G-3944. Would you be prepared to suggest that a labourer who merely puts his thumb mark on a piece of paper knows the difference between an agreement with a penal clause in it and a promissory note ?—I think the majority of the coolies who have been on the estate for some time realize that there is a complete difference between old days and now.

G-3945. You are suggesting that they do realize the difference. Have you as an Association or any of the employers done anything actively to convey to the workers that there has been a change in the law ?—I do not think we have.

G-3946. *Mr. Cliff* : You make a statement which seems to me to coincide with what I feel. You say that the labourer does not actually realize the difference between criminal and civil proceedings. Do you say that from practical experience ?—I think the labourers realize that there

191

is very seldom anything to be gained by civil proceedings whereas previously they realized that they could be caught hold of by means of criminal proceedings.

G-3947. In pursuance of that answer what I was wondering was whether you would say, having practical knowledge of the work-people, that they were sufficiently educated or had sufficient knowledge to know the difference between civil and criminal proceedings ?—To the extent of the active results of one case or another. Speaking for my labour, which is probably an older established labour force than the majority in the district, I should say that the majority of them do realize the difference between the two to the extent of the active results.

G-3948. One of the *mistris* told us about a court that used to be held here. Will you explain that ?—Under the old Act, the Sub-Magistrate from Pollachi used to come up here once a month to hear cases coming up under the Labour Act, and he also used to issue warrants to claimants where they were required. He was coming regularly once a month and was holding his court in the travellers' bungalow here, and the *mistris* or the Europeans, as the case may be, were up there to attend to warrants. From the time the Act ceased, and the period that was given after the Act—I think it was a year—to cover cases that were actually pending, the court in this district has never been held.

G-3949. Now you must go to another court for a civil suit ?—Yes, we have to go to Udumalpet.

G-3950. Will you tell us by whom are the rates of wages fixed ?—When I first came to this district the rates for men were As. 5 and for women As. 3. I think I am right in saying that in about 1912 or 1913 they raised the rates to As. 6 and 4, and in 1921 to As. 7 and 5.

G-3951. *Miss Power* : Could you say whether the wages in tea, coffee and rubber are the same, or whether there is any variation ?—In this district the rates are the same. We have no rubber but we have cardamoms.

G-3952. *Mr. Cliff* : Are they fixed by the manager or by the managing agents ?—Such changes of rates as there have been, have been arranged by mutual agreement between the various interests in the district through the Association.

G-3953. That is to say, the managers of different estates in this district have agreed to what in their judgment is a proper rate ?—It has been put up to the managing agents. The matter is discussed and a decision arrived at, but time is allowed to put this up to the managing agents.

G-3954. Can you tell us on what basis the wages were raised to As. 7 and 5 As. in 1921 ?—I cannot give any definite reason. It was due partly to the high cost of living.

G-3955. Does your previous answer mean that there is freedom to either increase or decrease wages subject to confirmation by the managing agents ?—Definitely so. Anybody can alter their rates up here with 3 months' notice to the Association.

G-3956. Has it ever been done ?—Yes, in the case of plucking it was done.

G-3957. *Sir Alexander Murray* : How were the wages put up ?—It came up for discussion, and the Association agreed generally that wages should be increased from a certain date.

G-3958. After having received an application from a particular firm or an individual ?—From an individual ; of course, if his firm had disagreed he could not have put it before the Association.

G-3959. Was the action taken by the Association after one or two particular companies had indicated that there should be an increase in wages ?—Yes, that was so.

G-3960. So, that is a typical instance of the working of the system in practice ?—Yes. The Mudis group, as far as I remember, were the moving spirit in putting up rates in 1921. That was put to the Association and the matter was threshed out and the whole of the estates agreed to it.

G-3961. *Mr. Cliff* : You were saying about the special rate for pruning on your own estate. Is that settled by cooperation and consultation ?—No ; that is done entirely by individual managers who decide what is a fair task for a coolie. For instance, two fields in the same estate may vary. Light pruning or heavy pruning governs the task that is given.

G-3962. When you are dealing with the question of wages as an Association, do you have in front of you the average earnings on the different estates ?—No ; I think each individual deals with the earnings on his estate. We do not have access to the average earnings on other estates for comparison.

G-3963. When we were in Assam they gave us figures of the average earnings of men, women and children per annum. Taking your period as 10 months, could you give us the average earnings of men, women and children, covering the whole of your estates ?—I think it could be worked out and submitted.

G-3964. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You have been good enough to give us a statement for the Stanmore group. Mr. Sampson was also good enough to give us a statement which shows the actual earnings for the last month of men, women and children, taken at random. Are these typical cases ?—I think those cases can be taken as typical cases.

G-3965. *Mr. Cliff* : What I would like to know is whether it would be possible to give, taking the actual wage registers, the average earnings of the three grades of labour covering the whole district ?

Sir Alexander Murray : We have already been supplied with statements with regard to Monica, Pachmalai, Karamalai and Vellamallai estates. May these be taken as representative of the wages earned by men, women and children over the whole area ?—I think it can be.

G-3966 *Mr. Cliff* : We went to a garden this morning and we saw a *mistri* there who had, I think, about 77 coolies whose period of service expires in May. I should very much like if you could take that particular instance and send us a statement showing that particular squad and the position in which they stood month by month, whether on credit or on debit. In order that it may not be regarded as exceptional, it would help us if you would be able to send half a dozen similar statements for periods that have just been completed or maturing ?—Yes, we will try to send you the information required.

G-3967. How are *mistris* paid ?—In my own case the *mistri* receives the ordinary wage of a coolie which is 7 As. a day. Over and above that he draws 15 per cent. commission on the gross earnings of his gang.

G-3968. Is his work supervising work ?—Entirely.

G-3969. May that be taken as pretty uniform ?—I think that is general throughout the district.

G-3970. With regard to hours of labour, what is a week ?—Is it a 6-day week, or is it a 7-day week or is it a 13-day fortnight ?—Generally speaking, it is a 6-day week ; the estate works officially for 6 days a week. During certain heavy cropping seasons it is open to the coolies to turn out on Sunday for cash.

G-3971. With regard to factories, do the factories work on Sundays ?—They work on Sundays and not on Mondays.

G-3972. The rest day follows the day of work ?—The leaf which is brought on Saturday is dealt with on Sunday, and there is no work on Monday.

G-3973. Is that pretty uniform too ?—I think that is general.

G-3974. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In Coonoor we found the practice to differ ; they close their factory on Sunday ?—I think the *shandy* in Coonoor is definitely on Sunday, and probably they arrange manufacturing to suit their conditions.

G-3975. The United Planters' Association of Southern India tell us in their statement that although it is a 6-day week, the actual average number of days worked per week in connection with field work, works out at about 5 ?—I think that can be taken as a fair statement.

G-3976. Do you suggest that your labour force could increase their earnings by 20 per cent. if they worked 6 days instead of 5 days ?—Yes.

G-3977. *Mr. Cliff* : Does that mean that for the present staff there is work available on the sixth day, or you have to reduce your staff by that amount ?—There are certain months of the year when we could always do with more coolies, and there are certain other months in which we are finding work for coolies and it is not therefore remunerative.

G-3978. Taking your busy season, do you get the labour that you want ? Do they work 6 days during that period and in the slack season do they take more relief ? What is your difficulty ? Do they actually turn out for busy season ?—My experience is that they generally turn out and make better pay too.

G-3979. What would you consider as being the average amount of advance in this district ?—Taking the figures generally, I would say that it is between Rs. 15 and 20.

G-3980. Has your Association tried to keep it to a maximum of Rs. 20 ?—We tried to keep it for many years to a maximum of Rs. 10, but for one reason or other it did not work well.

G-3981. Is there competition between managers ?—Not at the present day. That was in the earlier days when labour was not plentiful in the district.

G-3982. Will you tell us as a manager what are the practical difficulties in the way of the abolition of the advance system ? I refer to the system that obtains of a man taking a further advance on his settling day. What are the practical difficulties in the way of abolishing

that, because we were told in Madras that your Association would be glad to see the end of it ?—We should be glad too, as it would simplify matters to a very great extent ; but there should be action in all the districts.

G-3983. At the same time ?—Yes. For instance, if this district alone were to decide that they would stop giving advance, it would affect our labour very seriously, because the coolies would go to the *mistris* from whom they could take advances.

G-3984. I believe we were told that there is no real shortage of labour. May I take it that if this system is to be broken, it must be broken by collective action on the part of all tea estates ?—I think so. Moreover, the fact that labour is being recruited to Ceylon has to be taken into consideration.

G-3985. Assume for the moment that it was decided that the advance system must be broken and that it must be broken by the tea planters acting collectively. Would there be any practical difficulties as far as the managers are concerned ?—I do not think so. (*Mr. Martin*) : But the labour is indebted in the villages.

G-3986. We find that men are, on settling day, receiving a balance of pay and having received the balance of pay at the same time they obtain an advance on the understanding that they will come back and work for a succeeding period ; people are, on settling day, going away with Rs. 40 and even more and they are also obtaining an advance at the same time. With regard to the labour that actually worked on an estate, would there be any difficulty in breaking down the system of giving advance for a further period of service ?—If they do not get an advance they will not come up again. (*Mr. Mills*) : A tremendous lot of advance is carried on. For instance, a coolie has taken Rs. 15 and he gets Rs. 40 or Rs. 45 as balance of pay. Instead of paying back that Rs. 15 he wants it to be carried on for the next year. (*Mr. Johnson*) : Our coolies take advances at the settlement time and then they go home. (*Mr. Sampson*) : Our coolies receive advances on the same day of settlement. They prefer to take advances that day and give a pro-note for which the manager is taken as a witness, because they consider that they get a square deal if the accounts are settled in the presence of the manager. (*Mr. Martin*) : In our case a good deal of the amount is advanced by the *mistri* in his own village when he gets down, but to a certain proportion of labour who live at a distance from the *mistri* he invariably advances them on the spot at settlement time presumably with the idea to save the journey.

G-3987. You think that if the system were to be broken it must be broken by agreement amongst the planters themselves and that recruitment to Ceylon and other places should be taken into consideration ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : Yes.

G-3988. Take the last two years. In your district how many suits have been actually launched on your behalf for recoveries ?—Speaking of my own group, none.

G-3989. You have 37 estates. Will there be 100 suits in two years ?—I doubt it.—(*Mr. Martin*) : As far as I remember, we had only one case which could have been taken to the court, but the *mistri* said that he would rather lose the money than incur the expense of going to court. (*Mr. Jones*) : Speaking of my own group, I cannot remember any civil case

during the last 4 years. (*Mr. Sampson*) : There is only one civil case pending, since the Act was repealed. (*Mr. Mills*) : There was no case between the coolies and the *mistris* for the last 3 years, but there is only one case which is still being carried on between myself and the *mistri*.—(*Mr. Johnson*) : We have two cases between the estate and the *mistris* and none between the coolies and the *mistris*.

G-3990. The United Planters' Association of Southern India told us that the average amount of bad advances outstanding would be one rupee per acre. Is that a fair statement as far as your district is concerned ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : Speaking for myself, it is excessive ; it is considerably less than that.

G-3991. Is there any monetary provision for workers who are sick ?—The sick coolie, if certified sick by the estate doctor, is fed.

G-3992. Does that mean that all the estates have got doctors ?—The majority of estates in this district have got doctors.

G-3993. If you get persons who have been taken ill for a long time and who have actually been rendered unfit, what happens in their case ? Do they get anything beyond the free food allowance ?—I have had cases which I have sent down to hospitals in Coimbatore and Madras. A case occurred the other day where a coolie had tubercular trouble. It was too big a case to deal with in the local hospital and so I made all arrangements for sending him to the Coimbatore hospital. But at the last moment he refused to go and he was taken down by his relations to his village. As long as coolies are on the estate they are given free treatment. If they leave the estate, the matter closes. We transport them to their destination, but we give them no allowance.

G-3994. *Miss Power* : Could you tell us the method by which the Labour Department supervises recruiting in the plains ? Apparently there are 98 agencies working under the Labour Department. How do these agencies keep a hold on the *mistris* ?—Each agency has an agent and these agents have lists of the *mistris* in their area. They receive intimation when the *mistris* go down after payment and when they are due back. They visit the *mistris* periodically and try to keep an eye on the doings of the *mistris*. When the time comes for the *mistris* to return to the estate the agents endeavour to keep them up-to-date in returning.

G-3995. Do they make any advances ?—They pay the coolies the railway fares.

G-3996. Supposing there has been a wrongful inducement made by the *mistri*, is it the duty of the agent to discover that and, if it is so, expose it to the coolie ?—I do not know whether it is so in practice.

G-3997. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Have you had many *mistris* prosecuted under the penal law for forced inducement ?—I have no experience of it.

G-3998. *Miss Power* : Do you ever have cases of coolies who are dissatisfied after coming up here because they were induced to come by false hopes held out by the *mistri* ?—I should say it is very very seldom. It may possibly occur in the case of *Malayalees* and *Moplahs* (on certain estates) coming from the west coast, but among the Tamils it is very unusual.

G-3999. *Sir Alexander Murray* : The bulk of your recruiting is done in Coimbatore. But is there any understanding amongst the members of the United Planters' Association of Southern India that each district should confine its recruiting to certain areas ?—Where there is local labour round the estates the general agreement is that other districts shall not recruit from that local recruiting area.

G-4000. *Miss Power* : Have you got any rules about enticement of labour from one estate to another, or is the practice non-existent up here ?—There are rules governing that.

G-4001. Are they largely theoretical ? Is it something that never actually happens in practice ?—There are cases of coolies occasionally going over to another estate for some reason or another. Generally they are purely local reasons. A coolie may have trouble with the *mistri* or may have trouble with some other coolie, and he goes over to another estate. He can then be claimed under certain rules.

G-4002. We are frequently told that one of the difficulties about the Indian worker is that the more money he gets the less work he does, because his standard of living does not adjust itself sufficiently quickly to his standard of remuneration. Would you say that there has been an appreciable alteration in the standard of living within the last, for instance, 16 years ?—My experience is that the improvement has been tremendous.

G-4003. Taking the war period and after, would you say that there is a great difference in the standard of living among the tea garden workers compared with the pre-war period ?—It has improved more than 100 per cent.

G-4004. So, in your opinion, he does respond to an increased wage ?—Generally speaking, I think the coolie is more self-respecting.

G-4005. Could you say that, within your experience up here, for instance, the luxuries of yesterday have become the necessities of to-day with the coolie ?—I should say, yes.

G-4006. You give a coolie so much rice money and then an additional As. 4 a week. Do you think that As. 4 is a reasonable amount to enable the coolie to continue gradually to increase his standard of living which, I take it, you consider desirable ?—It has been increased. I do not know the actual date when it was increased, but the old rate was one rupee for a man and As. 12 for a woman ; it was then raised to Rs. 1-4-0 for a man and Re. 1 for a woman, including the issue of rice.

G-4007. Is the amount of money over and above the rice money adequate to enable the coolie to live up to a gradually increasing standard of living ?—Are you not putting a brake on this gradual improvement in his standard of living ?—I know that several estates offered to give more, but it was refused.

G-4008. Sometimes we find them refusing things because of their inability to understand what lies behind the offer ?—It would mean shorter pay at settlement time.

G-4009. You find that on the whole they do not want more than As. 4 a week in cash ?—I do not think they want more than that. In certain cases where there are families I have had occasionally been asked for more which was always given.

G-4010. The United Planters' Association of Southern India say in their memorandum that wages are usually standardized according to districts, and on your own showing they are standardized here both as regards time-rates and piece-rates, because piece-rates are based on an hourly yield, are they not ?—Yes.

G-4011. Would you have any objection to the creation of minimum wage machinery for this district ?—The machinery would be used for fixing time or piece-rates based on the work that a diligent man, woman or child could do per day ?—In the case of a minimum wage, who is the judge as to what the task shall be ?

G-4012. It would depend upon the type of machinery. In England the machinery, *i.e.*, the Board for a particular industry is set up by the Government and is composed of employers and workers with a certain number of outside persons. But apart from the question of the particular type of machinery, take your present system of standardizing the wages in a district and the basis on which you fix both your piece and your time-rates ; do you feel that you could say that you would object to a system of minimum wage regulation which had a legal backing ?—It is very difficult to answer without having experience of it.

G-4013. You are practically doing it already, only with a minimum wage board, as it were, consisting entirely of employers. Supposing you had to use the same machinery that you have got now, only with this difference, that instead of a board of employers you had a board of employers and workers' representatives and some knowledgable outside persons, would you raise any objection to that ?—I do not think there would be objection with a fair representation on both sides ; but it is difficult to get a non-biassed outsider.

G-4014. That would have to be done presumably by the Government, as it is done in England. But what I want to know is whether you, as an organised body of men, would raise any objection to the creation of minimum wage machinery on the ground that it would alter somewhat the present system of wage fixing ?—With sufficient safeguards I do not think we will have any objection.

G-4015. On the question of education, could you tell us whether your branch here has a definite educational policy as regards the tea garden coolie ?—Nothing so far has been done by the Association in that direction.

G-4016. Do you feel that the time is ripe for something to be done ?—We have applied to the Government to form a taluk board, and education would definitely come to the fore if we form an official taluk board. As a taluk board we would have official standing which would enable us to insist on education wherever it was required throughout the district.

G-4017. Would that mean that you could also determine the type of education, or would the Government have to do that ?—If the Government pay a grant towards the school they will have some right to say what type of education should be given.

G-4018. Would it be possible for you to give us a return showing the number of schools in your Association and the number of children of school-going age who attend those schools on the estates, taking the maximum age to

be 11 so as to show us what percentage of children between 5 and 11 are actually receiving any sort of elementary education in this district ?—Can we take the average, because it varies tremendously in different areas ?

G-4019. Take the average for the year ?—Yes.

G-4020. If you had a system of that sort, would you be prepared, in order to include not only the child that is admittedly not of working age but also the child that is not regarded as a working child from the tea garden point of view, to allow the latter a certain payment for half-time attendance at school to make up for its failure to earn during that time ?—I think the best thing is to give a free meal.

G-4021. We came across one garden in the other district where the child was paid half time for school and half time for work ?—Speaking for my own interest, I think I would agree.

G-4022. Because otherwise it seems to me that even if you set up machinery for general education you would be unlikely to get any child to attend who was of earning age ?—I think we would insist upon half day's work alone in return for half a day's pay.

G-4023. It has to be remembered that you are dealing with a completely illiterate population. If you set up your machinery are you not going to make it compulsory on the part of parents to see that their children receive education ?—As an Association what inducement do you feel you would be prepared to give to enable your educational machinery, when set up, to be used to its full extent ?—It is a matter that must be settled by individual estates. The Association cannot give a ruling on that point.

G-4024. You would take that into consideration ?—I think if we form into a taluk board, then some system of compulsory education would come in.

G-4025. I suppose you would agree that at the moment you are behind hand as regards education in this district ?—It has been started now.

G-4026. *Mr. Cliff* : What was the date of your application ?—We sent it last September.

G-4027. Have you had a reply ?—We understand that it has gone up to Government. It had to wait for the approval of the local district board in Coimbatore and of the Pollachi Taluk Board. That approval has been given and the application has gone to Government.

G-4028. Are you hopeful ?—Yes ; I think it is only a matter of a few months.

G-4029. *Miss Power* : You are employing women here of child bearing age. Would you be prepared to agree as an Association to compulsory payment of maternity benefit for a certain number of weeks before and after child-birth, based on the average earnings of that woman ? At present you have got a variation in your systems of remuneration. Most of you here, so I understand, give a rice money allowance. We have found that sometimes that is given free to the woman ; at other times it is debited against her credit account ; then we have found that on occasions a bonus of Rs. 5 is given for the child which sometimes is paid, irrespective of whether the child lives or not, at the time of birth, sometimes is not paid till the woman returns to

work, and at other times is cancelled altogether if the woman does not succeed in rearing the child. Would you have any objection to a uniform system whereby a woman was paid for a certain number of weeks, as in the case of the Bombay Maternity Act, before and after child-birth, the amount being based on her own earning capacity ?—There again, it is governed by individual interests. Speaking for my own group, I think they would consider the matter favourably.

G-4030. You cannot speak for the Association ?—No.

G-4031. I would like to know the views of the individual managers present ?—(*Mr. Martin*) : May we know what the Bombay Act is ?

G-4032. The Bombay Act makes provision for payment of As. 8 a day for 8 weeks, that is, 4 weeks before and 4 weeks after child-birth. That amount is based on a woman mill-worker's earnings ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : Is there any other bonus given ?

G-4033. No. The only restriction is that the woman should have been in the employ of the individual millowner for at least 12 months prior to child-birth before she is entitled to the benefit. Payment of any additional bonus is not incorporated in the Bombay Act. That is a matter for you to consider ?—(*Mr. Martin*) : At present we give Rs. 5 and free maintenance until the woman is fit enough to return to work.

G-4034. Who decides the length of the time ?—The medical officer. (*Mr. Jones*) : A few years ago, as it was customary for women to go to their villages for delivery it was almost unknown to have children born here on the estates. But they now stay on the estates, and the local birth rate has been increasing to an enormous extent.

G-4035. I would like to know what your attitude towards a measure of that kind would be ?—Suppose a woman has a child on the estate and leaves the estate within 10 days after delivery and does not come back at all ?

G-4036. You can have a rule as in the Bombay Act that unless she has been in your service for such and such a time, she will not be given any benefit ?—I think it will be considered favourably.

G-4037. You are accustomed to the inspection of factories by a Factory Inspector. I want to know what you would feel about a similar form of regular inspection of your estates by an officer of the health department who would be fully qualified for such work ? Would you have any objection to that ?—Is it not sufficient if the 3 existing European doctors inspect the gardens ?

G-4038. They are in your employ. With the exception of the Factory Inspector, there is nobody who represents the public conscience, who can come here from time to time to see whether you are a band of rascals or whether you are a band of respectable people ! There is no particular reason why there should be a distinction between inspection of a factory and of an estate since both touch equally the worker's welfare. Would you have any objection to a system of periodical Government inspection of tea estates which would be primarily from a health point of view ?—Personally I do not think so, but I would like to know what sort of inspection that would be.

G-4039. It would be effected from the point of view of the safeguard to the worker of an efficient form of inspection of the conditions under

which he lives by an outside person who must presumably be impartial and therefore a Government employee ?—I do not think we will have any objection to an official form of inspection ; but it is very difficult to obtain a competent person.

G-4040. *Colonel Russell* : You know that in every district in Madras there is a district health officer. There will be a health officer for the planting district. Supposing he did health propaganda among your coolies in regard to the use of latrines and the prevention of hookworm, would you object to that ?—We will have no objection to that at all.

G-4041. He will be a district health officer for your new taluk board ?—I think we will agree ; but he should work in consultation with our medical officers.

G-4042. *Miss Power* : He will be a trained and efficient health officer specialized in inspection of tea estates and will safeguard the tea estate worker in the same way as the factory inspector does ?—We have no objection.

G-4043. Could you tell us whether your Association has any policy in regard to regularizing prices in *shandys* that are on private estates, in order to make sure that the worker is not paying more than the market rate ?—Originally there were no public bazaars at all. All the estates were running their own bazaars under contract, that is to say, the supplier had to supply goods at certain rates which were changed periodically according to the conditions of the market. The opinion arrived at by the Association was that by the opening up of public bazaars in different parts of the district and getting outside competition like that, the rates as a general rule would be cheaper. As a result of the opening up of public bazaars the majority of the estate bazaars have almost ceased to exist. Where they do exist they do very little business, and the rates in those bazaars are governed by the prevailing rates in the public bazaars.

G-4044. In Coonoor we were told that the prices charged were always the same as the Coonoor market rates. Does that apply here also ?—I think it can be said that that would apply here also, because if a man charges higher than the prevailing rate he will do no business, and the coolie will go to the public *shandy*.

G-4045. Have you any system of ensuring that people selling at the private bazaars are not selling adulterated goods ?—Not now. Previously when the bazaars were under our control we used to see that they were up to the standard.

G-4046. For instance, what truth is there in the assertion made in a recent pamphlet that there is a growing inclination to take meat among the workers in this area and that the meat supplied is of a dangerous quality ?—In the case of my estates, I do not think any of the meat is brought from the public *shandy*. Individual coolies go down and bring up cows for slaughter for part of the gang or for the whole of the gang. They have their own beef in the low country. In some cases butchers on the estate supply meat under contract to coolies.

G-4047. As far as you know, diseased meat is not coming in for the consumption of the tea estate coolies ?—I should not say diseased meat, but I should say it is of a poor quality.

1016

G-4048. Is it dangerous from the health point of view ?—(*Dr. Measham*) : On the estates to which I am the medical officer, there is a weekly inspection of the *shandy* by the medical officer, and the cattle are slaughtered after inspection by the estate doctor. I may say that the quality of the meat is poor and it is lacking in fat, but during these two years I know of only one case where a carcass was condemned.

G-4049. On the question of drink, could you tell us whether your Association has a policy in respect of the granting of licences on tea estates ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : We strongly resist any introduction of liquor into this district, and there is no licence in this district at the present moment.

G-4050. Is there any illicit brewing by the workers, as far as you are aware ?—Not that I am aware of.

G-4051. In fact, they are practically teetotalers ?—Yes ; if a man wants a drink he has to go down to the plains.

G-4052. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Why should you object to your people having drink ?—We have not encouraged the introduction of it. I think on one or two occasions it was suggested that the coolies had been against it too.

G-4053. *Miss Azariah* : We find it stated in a pamphlet that " a practice has grown up for the planters to get some *arracks* once a year from the plains and to supply it free to the coolies at Christmas and at *Pongal* seasons " ?—That is given once a year on their own account ; it is not supplied free by the estate. Formerly they were being supplied during the *Pongal* festival, but now they are supplied during Xmas. We get special licenses from the Collector to import a certain amount of liquor, which is issued to coolies on their own account.

G-4054. Do Christians drink during Xmas ?—The local clergyman does his best to persuade them not to take liquor.

G-4055. Every week you give a woman coolie rice worth As. 12 and As. 4 in cash. Will they not be satisfied if you give them As. 10 rice and As. 6 in cash ?—No, not in my experience. (*Mr. Martin*) : If it is given to a family probably they do get too much rice, but if it is given to an individual it is not too much.

G-4056. The same pamphlet says : " There is a practice which is growing up to run chits ". I do not know whether you are aware of that, but I know that such a practice is prevalent among the Tinnevelly people ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : I do not think you can find that practice generally amongst the ordinary *Tamil* people, but it is almost a universal practice among the *Malayalees* who come from the west coast.

G-4057. Do you in any way encourage your people to save money ?—I think we encourage them to save money by holding their pay until they want to go.

G-4058. *Colonel Russell* : One of the memoranda sent to us says : " The conditions of housing have improved a little now, but further improvement is still desirable ". Do you agree with that ?—In my opinion, the modern standard of housing is excellent.

G-4059. But the older lines require improvement ?—They require improvement definitely.

G-4060. I suppose the policy of the Association is to carry on definitely a programme of improvements in regard to housing ?—I think we can generally state that throughout the district, buildings are improving steadily.

G-4061. And to provide decent houses for all your workers ?—Speaking for my own estate, I may say that the buildings we have now put up are of an excellent standard.

G-4062. Can you let us know what is the average population per room ?—It varies on different estates. (*Dr. Measham*) : Accommodation is estimated on the basis of 250 *c. ft.* for each person or 10 feet by 10 feet for 4 coolies.

G-4063. I was thinking of over-crowding. Is there any tendency to over-crowding in the lines ?—I am afraid that is the natural tendency of the coolies.

G-4064. Is it the general policy in providing new lines of houses for your coolies to allow them small areas of ground for the cultivation of vegetables ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : On the new lines, I am giving ground for that purpose.

G-4065. Are they keen on cultivating vegetables round about their quarters ?—Spasmodically certain coolies are, while certain coolies are not. I think a certain amount of cultivation is undertaken.

G-4066. You will agree that it would be a good thing to encourage the cultivation of vegetables ?—Yes, that is the reason why we supply the seeds free of charge.

G-4067. Is that an individual case, or is it general ?—It is general.

G-4068. In the same memorandum it says : " most estate labour has to depend upon running streams or shallow pits for drinking water supply ". What have you got to say about that ?—(*Dr. Measham*) : On most of the estates there is a piped water supply.

G-4069. So it is not true that labour has to depend upon shallow pits for drinking water ?—No.

G-4070. The United Planters' Association of Southern India in their memorandum say that as the streams which flow through estates supply all the water that is necessary, it is not generally necessary to provide other supplies ?—We are gradually introducing piped water supply.

G-4071. In order to prevent diseases like dysentery and other water diseases, would it not be definitely to the advantage of the estates to provide a piped water supply ?—Yes.

G-4072. Is it an accepted policy to do so ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : I think in certain areas the cost would be absolutely prohibitive.

G-4073. But in places where it would not be prohibitive ?—I think it is being introduced more and more.

G-4074. On the question of bathing and washing places the United Planters' Association of Southern India say that they are not necessary as

197

the streams which flow through the estates supply all the water that is necessary for bathing and washing. But if bathing and washing take place in the streams and that is the water which they are using for drinking, there must be pollution ?—(*Dr. Measham*) : There are two estates which I work where there is no piped supply provided. Wells have been constructed and so water is not taken direct from the stream.

G-4075. Your wells are properly protected wells, but in other cases the water supply is taken from the stream which is polluted by bathing and washing ?—No, although our wells are constructed by the side of the main supply, they are well protected.

G-4076. *Mr. Cliff* : With regard to cases where a piped supply is prohibitive, is it possible to sink wells ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : In almost all cases it is.

G-4077. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Have you sunk tube wells ?—I do not think we ever attempted it up here, because there is no trouble in getting water.

G-4078. *Colonel Russell* : I understand that there are three chief medical officers for the whole of this area. Do they control the whole of the gardens in this district ?—(*Dr. Measham*) : Yes, with the exception of the Waverley group.

G-4079. How many gardens are under your control ?—13.

G-4080. What is the subordinate staff you have got for assisting you in the control of these 13 gardens ? Perhaps you could send in a short statement showing the subordinate staff that you employ ?—Yes.

G-4081. I think in this district you have got 7 central hospitals ?—As far as our estates are concerned we have one big hospital besides each scattered estate having its own small hospital.*

G-4082. Where you have a central hospital you have also outlying dispensaries ?—Yes.

G-4083. In charge of [illegible] ?—Compounders.

G-4084. Have they medical qualifications ?—They have Government diplomas in dispensing.

G-4085. Where you have a central hospital how do you manage to get your patients into that hospital from an outlying garden ?—They are carried into the hospital if they cannot walk.

G-4086. Is there any motor ambulance or anything of that kind ?—We have stretchers.

G-4087. In your central hospitals how many beds have you got ?—36 to 40.

G-4088. How many female beds have you ?—Approximately half and half.

G-4089. Have you got nurses ?—Yes, we have 3.

G-4090. In the central hospital ?—One in each of the big hospitals.

*Witness subsequently pointed out that this answer was incomplete—*vide* list of hospitals handed in by him to Lt.-Col. Russell.

G-4091. Since when you have these nurses ?—Two of these nurses we have since two years and one since five years.

G-4092. Have you found that, as soon as the appointment of these nurses is made that the females have been more willing to go into the hospitals as in-patients ?—I think there has been a slight increase.

G-4093. You think there is a tendency to increase ?—Yes.

G-4094. Are there any maternity wards or beds ?—There are separate rooms for delivery cases.

G-4095. Are your nurses trained in midwifery work ?—Yes.

G-4096. Are they ever used in maternity cases ?—Occasionally.

G-4097. Have you got any health visitors attached to your medical staff ?—I inspect all the estates personally once a week.

G-4098. Is there any woman health visitor for attending to sick women in the lines ?—The estate doctor visits the lines every day. If he is engaged in any other work, say, in anti-malarial work, then we send out the compounder. In the case of a woman, we send a nurse who is also accompanied by the doctor or the compounder.

G-4099. Would it be possible to make good use of a trained health visitor if you could get one ?—I think that the present staff is adequate.

G-4100. You know just as well as I do the value of health visiting. Would it not be better for a group of gardens such as you have under your control to have a lady health visitor ?—I have no doubt it would be better.

G-4101. Are there trained *dais* on the gardens ?—All these three nurses are trained nurses.

G-4102. They presumably cannot attend to all maternity cases. Would it not be possible to have 1 or 2 *dais* living on the estate ?—I do not know whether they will get work or not. In the majority of cases these women prefer to be attended by their own relations.

G-4103. Do you anticipate any improvement in that connection ?—It is bound to be very slow.

G-4104. You do not think it is worth trying having trained midwife in a couple of estates where you have got a large number of women. I think you will agree that one or two *dais* might be of advantage to the women ?—Yes.

G-4105. I think Mr. Sampson has got three crèches on his garden. Are there any crèches on other gardens in this district ?—Yes.

G-4106. Would it not be advisable to extend the system of crèches definitely to every garden and do a certain amount of child welfare work ?—Yes.

G-4107. This could be one of the duties of the health visitor ?—Yes. In most of the estates the crèches are under the supervision of the estate doctor. It is part of his routine duty to inspect them.

198

G-4108. You know just as well as I do that Indian women do not like the attention of men doctors or compounders and would prefer women attendance. From that point of view, you would have no objection to crèches being under the health visitor and trained *dais* ?—I have no objection.

G-4109. In regard to anti-malarial work, have you got any separate officer doing anti-malarial work for the whole of this district ?—No, not for the whole district. Each Chief Medical Officer does it for his own group.

G-4110. Supposing the whole of this district, as has been suggested, is brought under a separate taluk board or a board of health, would it not be advisable in a district where there is so much malaria and where there is a good deal of hookworm, to have a public health officer doing public health work, including anti-malarial work in the whole area and advising each garden as to what could be done ?—Such a public health officer would be a Government official ?

G-4111. No. He would be appointed by the board of health or by the taluk board responsible for the health of the district. I do not want to suggest that you do not do it, but I take it that the Chief Medical Officer who is in charge of a group of gardens spends most of his time on what might be called general practitioner's work, that is, attending to the sick. You do not have perhaps as much time as you would like to have to attend to public health work ?—A greater part of my time in the administrative control of this small medical department is directed towards anti-malarial and public health work.

G-4112. You prefer to keep it in your own hands ?—Yes, unless we can get anybody to show better results.

G-4113. *Sir Alexander Murray* : The United Planters' Association of Southern India in their memorandum say that on two estates in the Anamalais a bonus is given on outturn. I understand there is no regular attendance bonus on any of the estates ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : No.

G-4114. They say that bonus is given on outturn. What does it mean ?—(*Mr. Sampson*) : Bonus is given to the *mistris* presumably.

G-4115. The *mistris* get 15 per cent. ?—There was a suggestion some years ago that instead of increasing the commission to 15 per cent. we should continue to give 10 per cent. and a bonus on the regular outturn of coolies at work.

G-4116. Can any of you speak with personal knowledge ?—(*Mr. Martin*) : In Wyanad we were paying the *mistri* 10 per cent. on the earnings of his coolies, and if he had 82 per cent. of his possible outturn for the whole period of 10 months he was given 15 per cent.

G-4117. The United Planters' Association of Southern India also say that in the Anamalais expenses are paid one way in the case of labour living close to the estates, and both ways in the case of labour living at a distance. Speaking generally, we have gathered the impression that

travelling allowances are debited to the individual labourer and adjusted in his accounts. Some of you have indicated that you do pay one way while some others pay both ways. Will you tell us what is the actual practice ?—I pay way expenses one way. (*Mr. Jones*) : All way expenses are debited to the *mistri*. When the coolie goes to the Labour Department he is paid by that department one way expenses at the time. (*Mr. Sampson*) : All way expenses are debited to the *mistri* who collects afterwards from his coolies. In the case of coolies who come from a distance they are given credit at the end of the period of their service for two journeys plus *bhatta* at As. 8 per day of travelling, the *bhatta* being given one way. The railway fare is given both ways provided the coolie has put in 10 months ; in some cases he is given even if he were to put in full 7 months. (*Mr. Mills*) : Same as Mr. Sampson. (*Mr. Johnson*) : We give to coolies who live in Trichinopoly or south of it, way expenses both ways ; to coolies who live north of Trichinopoly one way. All the way expenses are paid to them at the time they are paid off.

G-4118. It has been suggested to us that instead of your own recruiting agency, there should be a public recruiting agency maintained by the Government. Have you any opinions to express on that ?—(*Mr. Jones*) : That will introduce the professional recruiter who will have no interest in his coolies whatsoever. We have always been strongly against a professional recruiter, and we think that Government control would bring in professional recruiters.

G-4119. We have been given to us a memorandum by the Labour Union down at Coimbatore. Attached to that memorandum is an order under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code that prohibits for a period of two months the holding of any meeting by a particular gentleman, and a notice which that gentleman issued to the labourers in the Anamalai estates. Can you tell us to what extent you directly or indirectly interested yourselves in the order being issued by the District Magistrate prohibiting the holding of any meeting within 16 miles of Valparai by this particular gentleman for a period of two months from 21st of last month. Can you tell us to what extent you have been drawn into this matter between the District Magistrate and the gentleman in question ?—I do not think that any action that we took had any effect on the order at all, or resulted in the order being issued. We did take certain action more by way of inquiry. The first intimation we received in regard to this gentleman's visit was on the evening of 20th of last month, on which day we had a general meeting of the Association. After the close of the meeting I was told by some members of the Association that the police were outside and they wished to see me. On coming out I found the Inspector of Police from Pollachi and the local Sub-Inspector of Police who produced this *tamil* printed notice. He asked me whether I knew anything about it to which I replied in the negative. He said that the gentleman who had issued the notice was calling a meeting on the following Sunday. We asked the police who the man was and they told us all that they knew about the man. They asked us what action we would be taking, and we said that we could not take any special action. But we actually arranged to send down two members of the Association ; Mr. Martin who is the local honorary justice of the peace was asked by the police to go down and interview

the District Superintendent of Police about the matter and to find out more particulars about the man.

G-4120. Is Pollachi his headquarters ?—No ; his headquarters is Coimbatore. But he was in camp in Udamalpet. They proceeded to Udamalpet and found that he had moved on to Darapuram. When they went to Darapuram they were told that he had left it for Coimbatore. They went to Coimbatore and saw the District Superintendent of Police who said that he could not do anything and suggested seeing the District Magistrate who was in Bhavani. They then proceeded to Bhavani and saw the District Magistrate there. The District Magistrate said definitely that he could do nothing without a report from the police. And so our people had to return back.

G-4121. That was on Friday ?—Yes. At 3 o'clock on Friday afternoon I received a telegram from Mr. Ramaswami Ayyangar reading : "Holding plantation employees meeting 23rd noon Valparai. Sent notices. Wishing interview". On the following day I replied : "Reference your telegram. In view of recent visit and report by Venkataramana Aiyangar and in view of visit of Whitley Commission, consider your proposed visit unnecessary". Mr. Venkataramana Aiyangar had recently been up here, and at the time I understood that he was giving evidence before the Commission with regard to plantation labour. The visit was arranged by Mr. James, and it was thought that Mr. Aiyangar having just been up the Anamalais would be in a position to give evidence in regard to the conditions of labour in this district.

G-4122. There is nothing mentioned in the telegram about the collection of material for the Labour Commission ?—No. On Saturday evening, that is, on 22nd, I received a letter from Mr. Ramaswami Ayyangar, dated the 21st confirming his telegram and adding : "I regret shortness of notice. I request you to give facilities for employees—labourers and staff—to attend the meeting at Valparai on 23rd noon. I have sent my messenger with notice for circulation. I shall call on you when I reach the place".

G-4123. *Mr. Cliff* : Was the honorary magistrate who was here approached by the local police officer ?—He was here at the time and was approached by the local police sub-inspector and the inspector from Pollachi who had come up for that purpose.

G-4124. Has the local honorary magistrate power to issue an order under section 144 ?—No one under the rank of a District Magistrate can issue an order under section 144.

G-4125. *Miss Power* : Has your branch of the Association a policy in regard to the growth of trade unionism among the tea estate coolies ? Are you prepared to allow a union organizer to come to this district and organize your workers if he wished to do so ?—It is a position on which we have no experience so far.

G-4126. You have not discussed it as an Association ?—No.

G-4127. Have your workers themselves made any effort at organization apart from the activities of outsiders ?—I have never heard of any previous suggestion either from outsiders or from labour.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Ninety-ninth Meeting.

VALPARAI.

Thursday, 13th March, 1930

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E., (*Presiding*).

Mr. JOHN CLIFF. | Lt.-Col. A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S. (*Medical Assessor*).

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER. | Miss M. AZARIAH (*Lady Assessor*).

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary*.

Statement by CHINNAMMAL, a woman worker.

At the Thaymudi Estate, Mudis Post Office, The Anamalais.

G-4128. "I come from Trichinopoly. It is 8 months since I came here. I am married. I have two children. My husband and two children are here. One child is 2 years and another is 10 years old. The older child works on the garden and gets As. 3 a day.

G-4129. This is the first garden I came to. I was brought here by the *mistri*. The *mistri* brought my whole family at one time. I had a lot of debt in the village, so I came here. I have lands in my village. My husband's brother looks after the land. The *Kangani* gave an advance of Rs. 60 for all four of us. We had a debt of Rs. 60 and we cleared it off before we came here.

G-4130. My husband signed an agreement. He had not been on a tea garden before this. He signed only one agreement for all four of us. We understood that the agreement was that we should stay and work on the garden for 10 months without running away in the middle. I do not know to read and write. My husband can read.

G-4131. If I ran away before the completion of my term of agreement a warrant would be issued and the Police would come and collect the money. Many people have come to the tea garden from my village and they all say so. I have seen the Police come to the village and take back people. That was one or two years ago. There are still 3 months more to settle our accounts.

G-4132. I do no know how much of the advance of Rs. 60 I still owe the *mistri*. My husband may or may not know it. I get paid according to the amount of leaf I pluck. I get 5 measures of rice and As. 4 a week. I do not know what rate is paid to me now. My husband goes and takes the rice every week on Fridays. Every month a statement is read out by the *Kangani* as to what wages we have earned and how much we owe. The manager is also there. I have not fallen sick since I came here. I work every day except on Sundays. I

200

like the work here. When I finish the 10 months I will go home with my family. We may or may not like to come back.

G-4133. I have many friends here. In addition to the rice I get As. 4, my husband gets As. 4 and my child gets As. 2 every week. I get the rice on Fridays and the cash on Sundays. I buy salt, oil, vegetables, betel and so on with the cash.

G-4134. I have not saved anything out of the cash. As. 10 is sufficient for buying the other necessaries of life. My husband has not drawn any advance from the manager after coming over to the garden. If he wants he can take an advance. I do not know how much I can save at the end of 10 months. We hope to be out of debt by that time. My husband knew the *Kangani* before we came to the estate. No other *Kangani* came and asked us to go to the estate."

Statement by PALANI AMMAL, a woman worker.

G-4135. "I have been here for 8 months. I have not been on a tea garden before this. I came here in order to earn my livelihood. I came here with my husband and three children. I am making a good living here. I like the work. I will remain here for another 2 or 3 months. I have to stay here for a certain number of months. 10 months is the rule.

G-4136. The *mistri* told us that we should remain here for 10 months. He told my husband to come here for 10 months. My husband did not get any money from the *mistri* in the village ; I do not know whether he got anything after coming over here. I have a debt of Rs. 100. I borrowed Rs. 100 because we had nothing to live on.

G-4137. My husband and myself were working in the village before we came here to the garden. Each of us earned As. 4 a day in the village. I do not know how much I earn here every day. I go on working without knowing how much I earn every day.

G-4138. I go out in the morning at dawn. I take my food in the morning before I come here. I do not take any rest during the day. When the manager or some sahib asks us to stop work we stop work. They come every day. We do not get anything to drink in the course of the day. We are not allowed to go anywhere to drink. When the basket is full we go to the factory and have it weighed. I cannot drink water even in the factory.

G-4139. Even if I get very thirsty I cannot go to any spring and drink water. The *mistri* or the assistant manager will scold us if we go. If we get very thirsty in spite of scolding we go and drink water.

G-4140. I get As. 3 to As. 4 for a basket of leaf during the dry season. During the rains the leaf is very wet. Then we are not paid the same rate as now. We can pick more leaves during the rains than now. When I came here the *mistri* taught us to pluck leaf. We can pluck leaf now without anybody scolding us. When I go home in the evening I take another meal. I myself cook it.

G-4141. Two of my children are working and one is not working. The *mistri's* wife is looking after my third child. If I get any wound I go to the hospital. If I do not go to the hospital I will not get rice.

My husband, myself or my children have not been unwell since we came to the garden. I had a wound in my leg some time back. I saw the doctor in the hospital last week. He did not wash it. He put some medicine on it. We work during the rains. Even if it rains very heavily we have to go out to work. Even the children will have to go out and work. They will not be allowed to remain at home. When the blankets get very wet we dry them at home. We do not use them in the night. We get blankets only when we come here. I do not know whether people get blankets every year. If my husband or I wish to go away now we cannot do so. The *mistri* will come in search of us and take us back. He will say that the manager wants us and we will have to come back. We cannot stay back ; they will insist on our coming to the garden and staying there for 10 months."

Statement by CHENGAMALAN, a man worker.

G-4142. " I know that you are all the sahibs of the Company. Yesterday the *mistri* told us that the sahibs would be coming and that we should work properly. I work properly every day. I have been here for 3 years. I came from Trichinopoly. I came with the *mistri* under whom I am working.

G-4143. I came here just to earn a living. I knew about the kind of life in the garden. The work is good but the rice is not sufficient and good. I got an advance of Rs. 40 when I came here. I came here with my wife and children. I was here for 10 months for the first time. I did not go to the village at the end of 10 months.

G-4144. I settled the accounts and remained here. I have not been to the village since I came here. I had no balance at the end of 10 months. I borrowed Rs. 40 and the balance at the end of 10 months was sufficient to pay the debt. Afterwards I took an advance of Rs. 10. I spent it on food because the rice given to me was not sufficient.

G-4145. I signed a document when I took Rs. 10. I did not know what was in the document. I put my thumb impression on the document. There is no interest for the sum I borrowed. I did not spend the Rs. 10 all at once. I kept it in my house and spent it whenever I wanted. If I pay back the Rs. 10 I can go back to my village whenever I want. There is some balance due to me from the estate. It is now 13 months since the last settlement was made.

G-4146. The estate owes me Rs. 40 on account of my wages. It is for myself alone. The accounts should have been settled in January last but it has not been settled till now. I do not know the reason, still I have been working regularly.

G-4147. Every month a list is shown to me of the wages due to me and so on and from that I know that Rs. 40 is still due to me. We cannot ask the manager to settle the accounts ; he will settle it whenever he pleases. I did not go and see the manager because I have to go through the *Kangani*. I am thinking of going back to the village. I have been here three years.

G-4148. This year I want to go back to the village. The village is three days' journey from here by rail and road. The *mistri* paid my train fare for coming here and I have to pay it back to the *mistri*. I

earn As. 7 a day and my wife earns As. 5 a day. Last year I was sick ; I went to the hospital.

G-4149. I did not like the water, so I got fever. I did not go to the big hospital, I only went to the dispensary, took medicine and went back to work. I was cured after some days. My wife and I get rice every week but it is not sufficient for us. The child does not get anything.

G-4150. Besides the rice we get As. 4 each every week. If I do not go to work for a day they will deduct one measure of rice and As. 2. I buy salt, chillies, oil and so on for the cash. The cash is not sufficient for buying the sundries. The *mistri* will not give any more money if I want it. I do some miscellaneous work in the bazaar on Sundays and spend the wages I get there on food.

G-4151. Sometimes I cut firewood and sell it in the bazaar and take the money for food. If I ask for some money out of the balance of Rs. 40 that is due to me, it will not be given to me. The *Kangani* says that if I ask the manager for this money he would not give me. I work under Arumuga *mistri*. Nobody told me in particular that the sahibs were coming. I only heard them talking about the visit of the sahibs to-day. I have sometimes got less than 7 measures of rice. For four weeks I got less this year because I was sick and could not go to work all the days in the week. I always work 6 days in the week unless I am unwell on any day."

Statement by CHINNASWAMI, a man worker.

G-4152. " It is just 2½ months since I came here. I have worked in a tea garden in Travancore before this for one year. I come from Erode near Coimbatore. I wanted to go back to Palghat to the same garden. I had no money with me to pay my fare.

G-4153. When I was at Pollachi on my way to Palghat I met the *mistri* here. He said he would make me a *cole mistri*, paid my fare and brought me over here. But after coming here I was not given the *cole mistri's* job. In Travancore I got Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 at the end of the year. I got As. 7 a day in Travancore and I get the same here also. I do not know the *mistri* whom I met at the Pollachi station. I got Rs. 27 from the *mistri* at Pollachi. I did not sign any agreement.

G-4154. I have not signed any agreement till now. I was taken before the Agent at Pollachi and my name written on a register. My wife is here on the garden. She did not get anything for herself. We were given a blanket each at Pollachi costing Rs. 3-8-0 each. The *mistri* did not go with me. He sent me up and told me to inform the manager that I had taken an advance of Rs. 37 and that he would pay me Rs. 10 when he reached the garden. I told the manager I had taken Rs. 37 from the *mistri*. But the *mistri* has not till now paid me the balance of Rs. 10. The *mistri* said that unless I said I got Rs. 37 my name would not be enrolled on the garden register ; so I told the manager I had taken an advance of Rs. 37. I trusted that the *mistri* would give me Rs. 10 more. But now he says that if I want to go back I may pay the Rs. 27 and go where I like. My account has been debited with the cost of the blankets. I have to pay Rs. 27 *plus* Rs. 7 the cost of the blankets. But the *mistri* would ask me to pay Rs. 37 *plus* the cost of the blankets. I

did not get any food allowance on my way. When I got Rs. 27 from the *mistri* I did not go straight to the garden. I went back to my village. The *mistri* said he had just come down from the garden and could not take me to the garden at once.

G-4155. I lived in my village for some time and spent Rs. 22. I then sent for the *mistri* and went to the estate as I had no work to do in my village. When I left my village for the second time I had about Rs. 5 which I paid for my bus fare from Pollachi to the garden. The bus fare came to Rs. 5 for both of us. I asked the *mistri* why he did not make me a *cole mistri*. He refused to make me a *cole mistri* and told me to go where I liked after paying back my dues. I get As. 7 a day. I work every day. My wife works every day. For the past few days she has not been working because she has a wound in her leg. I do not know how much she gets every day. She goes to the hospital and gets medicine. This week she got 3 measures of rice and As. 4 instead of the usual five measures of rice.

G-4156. If I work regularly 6 days in the week I get 7 measures of rice and As. 4. If I absent myself one day I get 6 measures of rice and As. 2. I have been absent on some days during this month because my child has been unwell. I got less rice all these weeks. My wife also has not been working regularly on account of the illness of my child. She has not been getting full rice.

G-4157. She got only three measures of rice and As. 2 for some weeks. We got 9 measures of rice for the last week. To-day the rice supply has run out. We have come to work on the garden without having taken any food in the morning. To-night I will go and ask some people to lend me some rice. If I do not get any I will have to starve and wait till to-morrow afternoon when I will get my weekly rice. No one reads out the accounts every month.

G-4158. I am given a piece of paper on which something is written. I have kept it at home. I do not know what is written on it. I propose to stay here till the end of 10 months and then go away. For how many days can I starve ?

G-4159. I cannot leave without paying back the money I have borrowed. The *mistri* will take hold of me on my way and beat me. With the help of the police he will bring me back to the estate. I do not like this place better than Travancore. I took Rs. 60 with me when I left Travancore at the end of one year. That was for me alone. I was cutting rubber there. My *mistri's* name is Pattukaran. He promised to make me a *cole mistri* but I did not promise to go home and bring more coolies."

Statement by PATTAKARAN, a *mistri*.

G-4160. "I have been 10 years on this garden. I was a *mistri* at Kallar for 5 years, at Mangulam for one year and at Chokkanad for 3 years. I came to this garden as a coolie. My wife and son died there and I had some losses, so I came over here as a coolie. I thought this place was a better place, so I came here. I came here with Vellia *Mistri*. I worked as a coolie for some time. Then I became a charcoal contractor. I was never a *cole mistri*.

G-4161. I have been a *mistri* here for 4 or 5 years. The last time I went down recruiting was at the end of December. I took with me Rs. 400

which the Manager had given me. I had my own money to the extent of Rs. 100. I took on the whole Rs. 500 with me when I went down recruiting.

G-4162. I met Chinnaswami (coolie) at the Pollachi Railway station. His wife was there. I was counting the money ; Chinnaswami and his wife saw me counting the money and thought that I was a *kangani*. He asked me to what garden I belonged. I said I belonged to Thaymudi. He said he was going to Travancore and had no money with him to go there. He wanted me to take him to Thaymudi. I never asked them to go with me ; I told them that the manager would scold me if I got hold of men on the way. I never asked him of my own accord to go with me to the estate. I told him I was going to my village to collect 10 or more people and that I would send them along with them and that I could not take them at once to the garden because I had just come down from the garden. I promised to pay them their train fare and feed them. I belong to Karnangulam near Tenkasi. I took them to Karnangulam where we lived for 7 or 10 days. I bought some vessels and rice for them. Just then some people from my village were going to Thaymudi. Chinnaswami wanted to go along with them. I asked him to wait for some time till I got some 10 men. But he wanted to go soon. I took them as far as Pollachi, got a *sari* for the woman, a cloth for the man and also got two *cumblis* from the agent at Pollachi. I took their utensils tied them to the bus and went back to the village to collect more men. I took 10 more men with me and then came back to the garden.

G-4163. I spent the following sums on behalf of Chinnaswami and his wife.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Fare from Pollachi to Tenkasi	6	0	0
Fare from Tenkasi to village	6	0	0
Vessels and rice	4	0	0
Saris, jacket, cloths	6	3	0
Bus fare, etc., about	6	0	0

The total expenses came to Rs. 30. It told him about it and he agreed that the total expenses came to Rs. 30. I paid him Rs. 5 for the bus fare for him and his wife and Re. 1 for his expenses. I gave him only Rs. 6 in his hand ; all the rest I spent myself on his behalf. I told him to inform the manager on the garden that he had taken Rs. 30 from me.

G-4164. I have not received a promissory note from him. I was in a hurry and there was no time to take a promissory note. I have got 6 promissory notes for the other 19 coolies under me. I gave advances to families of 3 and 4. It is 30 days since I came here. The coolie is doing good work regularly, so I have not taken a promissory note yet. I took promissory notes from all the other people in the village. I did not ask the manager to make him a *cole mistri*. I asked him to go down as a *kangani* but he refused to go. He did not ask me to make him a *cole mistri*. Even though I have taken no promissory note from him there is God above and he will not make me a loser.

G-4165. If the man runs away I will have to pay back his advance to the Estate. What can I do if the man runs away ? I have got them registered in the presence of the Manager and will the Manager leave them

off ? I have taken a total advance of Rs. 400 from the Company. I have brought coolies to the extent of Rs. 225. I have advanced another Rs. 120 to some more coolies and they have not yet come. I have got a record of the advances given to the coolies.

(The *Mistri* produced a number of post cards in which the amounts advanced by him to the coolies were entered and the post cards signed by the coolies.) I have a register at home in my village in which stamped pronotes are entered. I have not given the promissory notes of the coolies to the office."

Another statement by Coolie CHINNASWAMI after hearing the Mistri's statement.

G-4166. " I have got nothing more to say. Now the *Mistri* denies everything he said to me. He promised to make me a *cole mistri* but now he says he did not promise anything like that. He gave me Rs. 27 but now he says he gave me Rs. 30."

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr. F. L. SCHWINDE, Manager, Thaymudi Estate, Mr. ERIC JOHNSON, Group Manager, Mudis Group of Estates.

G-4167. *Sir Alexander Murray* : To what Company does this Estate belong ? (Mr. Schwinde) ; It belongs to the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation. Messrs. Wallace and Company are the managing agents.

G-4168. What is the total acreage of this estate ? We have a thousand acres out of which 947 are under tea.

G-4169. What is the strength of your labour force ? The full labour force was 1,250 last year ; it has been increased to 1,350 this year.

G-4170. What is the total population living on the estate ? The total number of people living on the estate including artisans, such as carpenters and so on, varies very much from time to time. We have no definite idea of the total population.

G-4171 How many coolies per acre have you got ?—We have 1¼ to 1½ coolies an acre.

G-4172. Do you recruit your workers on a 10 months' agreement ?—Yes, they come and go at different parts of the year after staying for 10 months on the garden.

G-4173. If they come in under a 10 months' agreement how do you have a full complement at one time and a short complement at other times ?—By paying off at different times.

G-4174. Have you any register showing the labour force month by month on the estate ?—I shall send you a list afterwards.

G-4175. How do you recruit your labour ?—I advance money to the *mistris* and send them down to recruit men. I have about 25 *mistris* on my estate. The lowest has about 15 coolies and the highest has about 200 coolies.

G-4176. What is the total advance you have given to your *mistris* ?—The total advance is Rs. 33,900 of which about Rs. 4,000 to 5,000 is irrecoverable because the *mistris* have run away*.

*The witness has since expressed a desire to supplement his answer as follows : " The estate had a Bad Debt Reserve Account amounting to Rs. 10,000 ".

203

G-4177. What is the total wages bill for the labourers every month ?—The total wages vary from month to month. We may take it roughly as Rs. 8,300 per month.

G-4178. Does your advance account bear any relation to the wages bill ?—(Mr. Johnson) : That is the ordinary relation. The total advance amounts to 3 months' wages.

G-4179. What are the qualifications of the *mistri*. Must he have been a coolie himself on the garden ?—[Mr. Schwinde]. Not necessarily. 50 per cent. or more of our *mistris* have worked as ordinary coolies before they have been promoted as *mistris*. They know the conditions on the garden very well.

G-4180. What is the greatest amount of money that you give to a *mistri* who is going down to recruit ?—We give him on the basis of so much per head per coolie.

G-4181. How do you know when he goes down that he would bring a particular number of coolies ?—Old *mistris* bring in almost the same number of coolies every year. Take the case of a man who has got an advance of Rs. 3,000 ; when the labour force is full he will have 250 coolies.

G-4182. You have an average labour force of 900 or 1,000 distributed among 35 *mistris*. How can one *mistri* have 250 coolies ?—Old and long established *mistris* have got the most coolies. Take the case of Kalimuthu ; he has got 150 coolies now. At the rush season he will have about 250 coolies. He has a total advance of Rs. 3,200. He has already advanced many coolies who have not yet come to the garden.

G-4183. Have you got his promissory notes ?—Yes, I have them in my office.

G-4184. We came across a case this morning. One of your *mistris* went down to recruit labour. On his way he met a coolie with his wife at Pollachi Railway station, gave him an advance of Rs. 27 and asked him to go to the garden and tell the Manager that he had taken an advance of Rs. 37. The man accordingly came and told the Manager that he had taken an advance of Rs. 37. Have you reason to believe that this is a common thing happening between the *mistri* and the coolie ?—It is possible that it happens sometimes. But at the time of paying off I pay every coolie personally myself. His advance is read out to him as he gave it in the office when he was registered. If he disputes that advance I find out who is right and who is wrong. If I find that the *mistri* is wrong I punish him.

G-4185. Does it make any difference to you whether the man who has got Rs. 27 says he has got Rs. 27 or Rs. 57 ?—I cannot imagine a fellow saying he got Rs. 57 while he got only Rs. 27.

G-4186. I have got a fellow who has said like that. What profit or loss does it make to you ? You simply debit his account and recover the amount afterwards ?—Yes.

G-4187. *Mr. Cliff* : Suppose there is a dispute between a [illegible] a coolie on the question of the payment of Rs. 10. How can you satisfy yourself which of them is right ?—The coolie would have given some sort of receipt for the amount he took. Take this particular case. The coolie

has received only Rs. 27 and told the Manager that he received Rs. 37. At the time of paying off I will read out to him that he has received Rs. 37. If he has not received Rs. 37 he will dispute my statement.

G-4188. But he himself has told you at the beginning that he has received Rs. 37 ?—Whatever they might have done at the beginning they dispute the amount if they have not received it already. These coolies seldom put their thumb mark on anything unless they have had it translated to them by somebody.

G-4189. But this particular man has not put his thumb mark on anything ?—(Mr. Johnson) : It is only for the first time when a coolie comes up there is any chance of his being deceived like this. But when he comes here next time he knows the system prevailing on the garden and cannot be easily deceived. If a *mistri* cheats a coolie once or twice he will lose his labour very shortly. It will react on him.

G-4190. *Sir Alexander Murray* : What is the actual practice as regards giving rice and cash every week ?—[Mr. Schwinde] : Rice is issued from the rice store every Friday by the European Assistant in charge. The cash of As. 4 is paid on Friday or Saturday.

G-4191. Not on Sunday ?—Either on Saturday or Sunday.

G-4192. A man gets 7 measures of rice and a woman gets 5 measures of rice for 6 days' work. What do you give a coolie if he works five days ?—It depends on what his character is. If he is a lazy fellow and never turns out to work he gets 2 measures cut off. If he has been a steady worker he gets his full quantity. Women are allowed a day off every month. If a coolie stays in the lines and refuses to turn out for work he will have to be punished.

G-4193. Who decides whether the coolie has to get less than 7 measures or 5 measures ?—The European Assistant.

G-4194. How often do you cut the rice like this ?—We avoid cutting rice as far as possible. But many coolies take the advance and come here with no intention of doing work. They are absolute slackers. There must be some means of impressing upon them that they should go and do work.

G-4195. If a coolie does not work all the six days do you give him the cash of As. 4 ?—Usually we give the As. 4, but there are occasions when even that As. 4 also is cut.

G-4196. If a coolie makes it a habit of absenting himself for one or two days in the week you cut his rice advance every time ?—Yes. They often stay away to cut firewood and sell it in the bazaar or do some odd jobs elsewhere.

G-4197. You have not thought of instituting a system of fines instead of cutting the rice ?—(Mr. Johnson) : If the coolie is sick and goes to the apothecary and gets a chit to show that he has attended a dispensary we issue him the full rice. Unless we have some such system it is very difficult to make the coolies turn out for work.

G-4198. Take the case of Chinnaswami. His child has been ill and he and his wife have not been working regularly. He got 6 measures of rice and As. 2 and his wife got only 3 measures of rice. Instead of getting 11 measures of rice and 8 annas they have between them got only 9

measures of rice and As. 2. If you cut their allowances like that how are they to live ?—If the man or woman attends the hospital we give them the full rice advance.

G-4199. In cases like this are you prepared to allow the two people to live in the lines and not earn enough money and not get enough to eat ?—If they need any money the European assistant in charge will give them money.*

G-4200. But the coolie says he cannot go to the European assistant direct ; he has to go through the *mistri* ?—He can go to him and ask him what he wants.

G-4201. Do you give the workers any card in which the wages earned by them month by month are entered ?—(Mr. Schwinde) : We gave them such cards but the workers refused to return them every month. They used them to light the fire in their houses. We now read out the wages earned by them every month when the check roll is closed. February pay will be read out to them in another three or four days. If there is a family of workers the man listens to the wages earned by his wife and children while the women go home to cook their meals.

G-4202. *Mr. Cliff* : One of the workers said that he had a card in his house in which his wages were entered but he could not read it. When did you stop the card system ?—Two or three months ago.

G-4203. *Mr. Cliff* : With regard to the advances given to the *mistris* are they ever cleared of all advances ?—(Mr. Schwinde) : For the last four or five years they have taken Rs. 30,000.

G-4204. Here is a *mistri* who has gone up to Rs. 800. Does it mean that the men are always in state of liability to you ?—They have to pay off the debts.

G-4205. Do they get new advances when they pay off the old ones ?—Yes, they take new advances when they go down recruiting.

G-4206. Take a *mistri* who has 150 to 200 coolies. Does a great majority of the 200 coolies work with him regularly every year ?—Nearly all do it.

G-4207. You give advances to people for coming over here for the first time. What in your view is the necessity of giving advances to people who have worked here for 10 months and settled their accounts ?—We do not do that.

G-4208. You have *mistris* with advances of Rs. 2,500 to 4,500. They have 150 to 200 coolies regularly working under them. What is the purpose of the advance ?—When the coolies are paid off they go back to the village. The *mistri* comes to me and says that he has to go to the village and bring 150 coolies and that he wants an advance of so many rupees. I have to give him the advance in order that he may bring back the coolies. The *mistri* settles the accounts with me at the end of 10 months.

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*The witness has since expressed a desire to supplement his answer as follows : "In this particular case I did not know at the time but have since discovered that the woman had been getting free food daily, while attending at Goup Hospital with her child and that before she went there the European Assistant had personally let her have free milk for her child on his own account".

G-4209. I can understand the *mistri* giving an advance to a new coolie. But what is the necessity for giving an advance to a coolie who is coming up again and again ?—I think they take the advance possibly to get a little bit of land in the villages so that in years to come they may own a decent plot of land. They borrow money from the *mistris* for this purpose.

G-4210. I personally see no need for you to advance money to the coolies if your object is to make them come every year, for they are coming every year. You say that their object is to buy land with the advance they get from the *mistris*. If it was so would it not amount to a money-lending business as between the *mistri* and the labourer, the real security being the fact that the labourer considers himself bound to serve for nine or ten months on the estate ?—This advance system has been going on for so many years now that it is not possible to say exactly for what purpose they take the advances.

G-4211. *Sir Alexander Murray* : The old warrant system has been in existence for many years and now it has been stopped. Is there any objection to stopping the system of giving advances ?—(*Mr. Johnson*) : I do not think it is possible. The coolies will not come up without taking advances.

G-4212. Does the advance system obtain in Assam and elsewhere on other tea gardens ?—In Assam they pay the coolie's debts in the village

G-4213. Once they bring them up there is no question of advance or repayment ?—The labourer gets an advance from somewhere or other.

G-4214. Here is the statement of advances for the 9th month of the season. Kalimuthu *Mistri* has taken an advance of Rs 3,187 from the Company. Another book shows that he has advanced to labour a sum of Rs. 3,473-7-0. He has got under his control about 250 coolies. The ledger shows that Kalimuthu has received the following commissions :—

	Rs.	As.	P.
October 1929	249	11	0
November 1929	252	6	3
December 1929	168	2	0
January 1929	196	0	0
February 1929	175	7	0

—Yes. The *mistri* gets As. 8 a day. In addition to that he gets Rs. 25 for 100 coolies so that he can engage a clerk to keep his accounts.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Sir FAIRLESS BARBER, General Manager, Mr. J. C. BLACKHAM, Group Manager, and Mr. A. FOOTE, Manager, at the Lower Paralai Estate, The Anamalais.

G-4215. *Sir Alexander Murray* : In how many districts have you got your estates ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : We have two groups in the Wyanad and two groups in the Anamalais. We are now on one of the groups in the Anamalais.

G-4216 What is your organization as regards management of these estates ?—I am the General Manager residing at Calicut. I have a group manager for each group. Mr. Blackham is the group manager of this group. Under the group managers we have got estate superintendents.

205

G-4217. What is the total acreage of this estate ?—(*Mr. Foote*) : The total acreage is 444 acres of which 367 acres have been brought under tea ; the remaining 77 acres have been planted but not yet pruned.

G-4218. What is the total strength of your labour force ?—In the busy season we will have about 700 ; at present we have about 220 coolies working.

G-4219. Have you any census of the total population residing on the land for which you are responsible ?—The Medical Officer does that and sends his report monthly. I can send that to you afterwards.

G-4220. Would you send in a statement showing the total population and the number of houses to hold that population ?—Yes.

G-4221. How do you regulate the rise and fall of labour between the busy season and the slack season ? Do you take labourers on a ten months' agreement ?—Yes, we take them for 10 months.

G-4222. Do you bring any workers for 10 months and say at the end of 7 or 8 months that you do not want them as you have no work for them ?—There have been occasions to send them away like this.

G-4223. How many coolies do you want ?—At the rate of 1½ coolies an acre for 367 acres I want about 550 coolies. At present we can do with 220 coolies. Our busiest season is from April to June. We have two big *mistris* and two separate gangs called the cold weather gang and the hot weather gang. I have 13 ordinary *mistris*. One of them has 82 coolies. Some *mistris* have only 9 coolies.

G-4224. What is the total advance you have given to the *mistris* at the present moment ?—I have to look into the accounts.

G-4225. How many men, women and children are there out of your total labour force ?—The men and women are about half and half. It depends on what the *mistri* brings.

G-4226. Do you include young lads as women ?—No, they are counted as children.

G-4227. When do you begin working children ?—It depends on the parents. We do not want young children to work. We do not allow children less than 8 years. We count them as children till they are 16 years. For children 14 years old we pay As. 6 a day. When they reach 16 years we pay them full man's wages, As. 7.

G-4228. *Mr. Cliff* : Am I right that you do not want to take children before eight ?—Not, if we can help it.

G-4229. Are you taking them under pressure from the *mistri* or the parents ?—We have to take them occasionally.

G-4230. Can you get free from the pressure ?—It is very doubtful. The children come up with their parents.

G-4231. Do you give advances to the *mistris* and the *mistris* give advances to the parents in respect of children of 8 and 9 years ?—No, we do not give advances in respect of these children.

G-4232. Do you keep any account of the advances which the *mistris* make to their workmen ?—No, not until the settlement time.

G-4233. Does the *mistri* obtain a pro-note from the workers for the advances he gives to them ?—He is supposed to do it because it is his money that is advanced. He is responsible.

G-4234. Does any condition attach to the pronote ?—The coolie who takes the money knows that he has to pay it back.

G-4235. Have you any knowledge as to whether interest is to be paid ?—Interest is not paid. We settle the accounts ourselves. The coolie has to agree whether he has actually received the advance put down against his name by the *mistri*. This advance is deducted from his wages.

G-4236. With regard to disciplining the labour force I am told that on one estate they fine them and on another when a man is not regular in his attendance they deduct one or two measures of his weekly rice. Where there is a labour force there has to be some form of discipline. How do you discipline your labour force ?—If a coolie absents himself from work for one or two days he is not paid for those days. If he is not sick we will deduct a certain portion of his rice allowance—As. 2 for one day and As. 4 for 2 days and so on. It is never more than As. 4. All cases are looked into before any deduction is made.

G-4237. Who decides whether the rice allowance is to be deducted and how much ?—*(Sir Fairles Barber)* : If a man does not work I have requested the medical people to look into the reason for it. If he is really unfit and if he has not been malingering he will be fed at the hospital. There is no question of making a sick man more sick by cutting his food. You get back into a circle.

G-4238. If a man has absented himself is the fact intimated to the doctor ?—The compounder visits the lines every day.

G-4239. If the coolie does not want to work ?—I think he might not get rice.

G-4240. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Is that the principle that you adopt in all the estates ?—Yes.

G-4241. Is there any fining in addition to that ?—There is no system of fining. I cannot recall of any cases of fining. I know some estates have got fines and they utilize it for helping other people.

G-4242. What are your rates of wages ?—*(Mr. Foote)* : As. 3 to 4 for children, As. 5 for women and As. 7 for men.

G-4243. Do you go down to As. 2 for children ?—No.

G-4244. Do you pay monthly ?—Every week we pay for weekly expenses. The accounts are settled at the end of the period. We give a rice allowance of 7 measures for a man, 5 measures for a woman. In addition to this we give a cash allowance of As. 4 every week.

G-4245. The monetary value of the rice you give every week is Re. 1 in the case of a man ?—Yes, it is Re. 1 in the case of man and ¾ of Re. 1 in the case of a woman.

G-4246. Is it not possible to increase the rice allowance ?—*(Sir Fairless Barber)* : We have offered to do it, but it has been refused.

G-4247. How have you offered to do it ?—The Doctor suggested that we should give an extra cash bonus for 6 days' work if a man attended all the week. We are in partial agreement with the proposal and have offered to let any coolie who works 6 days have an extra advance for weekly expenditure. This offer has not been accepted.

G-4248. If you gave a regular attendance bonus of As. 4 every week the man would draw As. 8 instead of the As. 4 that he now draws as cash

allowance. Have you any objection to the introduction of a system like that ?—I do not think there is any real objection to it.

G-4249. There is a difference between encouraging a man to attend six days by offering him extra money and punishing him by cutting his food for short attendance. Which would you prefer ?—From the business point of view paying extra money for regular attendance is very sound. But in dealing with sick people it does not help at all. It is an advantage given to the people who can work 6 days. If we did anything we should rather help the people who cannot work 6 days on account of illness.

G-4250. *Mr. Cliff* : We have asked the Association to give us a statement showing the monthly wages of certain gangs and how far the men are in credit or debit. Is your method of settling the accounts the same as on other estates ?—*(Mr. Foote)* : At the end of the period the check roll is made up. The *mistri* is called in with the coolies. We deduct the amounts advanced to the coolie and the cost of the blanket from his net pay and hand over the balance to him. If the coolie disputes the advance shown against his name by the *mistri* the *mistri* must produce his pro-note.

G-4251. Do you deduct the cost of the blanket ?—If he had done 10 months' work or if he has been ill for some time and could not work regularly we give him the blanket free.

G-4252. Do you insist on 10 months' full work ?—No.

G-4253. Do you give any way expenses ?—Coolies who have been regular workers on the garden when they go out after completing 10 months' are allowed the way expenses.

G-4254. Do you get a new labour force year by year ?—I am quite new to this estate ; I cannot say. I understand that 90 per cent. of the labour force returns every year to the estate.

G-4255. Does that labour force come under the same *mistris* ?—Every year, yes.

G-4256. Do your *mistri* give advances year by year ?—I think they do.

G-4257. With regard to recruits that are not new recruits and are coming a second year, third year or a fourth year what is the need for giving advances to that class of labour ?—I think it is because one coolie has to support two or three of his relations in the village. Some coolies borrow money from the *mistris* for cultivation expenses and pay it back at settlement time.

G-4258. Would it help them if you paid their wages in full every month ? Could they not make monthly remittances to cover their cultivation expenses ?—The amount would be so small that it would be hardly worthwhile.

G-4259. I can understand your advancing money to new coolies. But in the case of persons who have worked here for 10 months and go home with a balance to stay there for 2 or 3 months and then return to the estate, what is the necessity for advancing money ? Could not that position be met by enabling them to make monthly remittances as they do in other parts of India ?—I have not asked them why they want to take advances.

G-4260. With regard to the *mistris* are they always in a state of liability to you ?—We can recover the amount at any time.

G-4261. Take the case of a *mistri* who takes an advance of Rs. 1,000 from you and goes down to recruit. When do you recover the money from him ?—He certainly takes that money away for 2 or 3 months. He advances the money to the coolies and we settle the *mistri's* accounts at settlement time.

G-4262. He then takes a new advance ?—Yes.

G-4263. So that he is always in debt to you to the extent of his advance ?—Not to the full extent of his advance. Every month we make a check roll recovery on his commission account. We pay him a commission at the rate of 10 to 15 per cent. of the earnings of the coolies under him.

G-4264. Is that commission paid for supervisory work or for supplying labour ?—He is paid both as a supervisor and a supplier of labour. He gets As. 7 a day for his work.

G-4265. If he was not a supplier of labour how much would he get as a *mistri* for supervisory work ?—As. 7 a day.

G-4266. Are you then paying a large commission to him as a labour supplier ?—Yes. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : If we had *mistris* who were mere supervisors of other coolies' work we would have to pay them more than As. 7 a day. At present the *mistris* are suppliers of their own labour and they are paid for both.

G-4267. Is it a practical proposition to divert the 10 or 15 per cent. commission to increase the rates of pay of the coolies ?—It is an ideal. We all like that. We have not made a start as yet.

G-4268. If you have an estate, say three years old, is it not possible to begin to work an arrangement with your staff with a view to breaking down the system of commission to labour suppliers ?—We have got an Estate gang. We have tried it in a way. It is very difficult for a European to get to know these people in the villages. The *Kangani* or the *Mistri* system at its best is probably the best system evolved in the way of labour. It is strictly patriarchal. The men brought only their relations from the village and were responsible for looking after the members of their family. Things have changed now and we find a Tamil *mistri* recruiting a Kanarese coolie or a Telegu coolie in whom he can have no interest. Under the *Kangani* system as originally understood you would have a head *kangani* who is practically the father of the estate.

G-4269. Now you are unable to go back ?—We cannot go back ; can we go forward ?

G-4270. That is the question to which we have to address ourselves. Would it be feasible by collective action on the part of all the estates to break this system of giving advances to labourers who have been working on the estate ?—Very gradually and perhaps only partially. It is worth doing if it can be done. We have got one case which is worth noting. The Bishop of Dornakal sent us some 60 coolies for whom he wanted work. We took those coolies and gave them work. They are now working on the Mango Range. I give half the commission to the coolies themselves and credit the other half to a common welfare fund. Now they have banking

accounts to the extent of Rs. 200. Miss Azariah knows this case. There was a catechist. He felt greedy and wanted to take them away and bring them back so that he may become a *mistri* and get the commission on the earnings of these labourers. (*Mr. Blackham*) : I told some coolies that if they did not take advance from the *mistris* and if they came alone for employment I would give them 10 per cent. of their own earnings as commission and form them into an Estate gang. Some coolies came and I had well over 60 coolies in that gang. But every year some were coming and some were going back to the *mistris* even though they had a commission of 10 per cent. on their earnings. The difficulty is we cannot advance any money to the coolies because we have no guarantee. The coolies go to the *mistri* from whom they get advances of Rs. 20 and Rs. 30. Even the coolies who take Rs. 100 with them at the time of settlement take a loan of Rs. 20 on top of that.

G-4271. How is the labourer made aware of his financial position month by month ?—We keep a check roll account and the *mistris* keep a copy of it. If any coolie wants to know his account he can either go to the manager or the *mistri*.

G-4272. Do you find most of them doing it ?—No, only very few. Only the *mistris* go to us. The coolies make up with the *mistris* once in four months particularly round about settlement time.

G-4273. With regard to allowing opportunities for civilising influences to percolate through to the tea garden workers have you any suggestion to make as regards the standard of life and outlook of the tea garden labourer ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : There has been a tremendous change in the time I have been out here. It is almost unbelievable how much the conditions of life have changed.

G-4274. What in your experience is the most noteworthy advance that has been made ?—Undoubtedly medical attention. There were no doctors here some time back. I lived 20 miles off from the nearest doctor. I was the doctor myself to the coolies. There has been a great improvement in housing.

G-4275. What about the outlook of the worker himself ?—I cannot say that the coolies are any better in their outlook or any happier now than they were before.

G-4276. How would you proceed to try and make them happier now ?—By fair treatment and bringing about general contentment. Anything we could do to better their lot we are quite willing to do. I am not keen on giving them aspirations because it would mean disappointment.

G-4277. Is there anything lacking in their everyday equipment for life ?—Undoubtedly education. I think it is natural that medical attention was given first. We must first try and give them sound bodies before we proceeded to teach them anything. We have still a lot to do to improve their bodies. After all a great many things known to Medical Science now were unknown 20 years ago.

G-4278. What are you doing in the way of education ?—I am afraid we are doing very little. Whenever a Mission comes along we have always been willing to support them to open schools. We have had best results from Roman Catholic schools. The Wesleyans and the Church

Missionary Society are now coming along. The Basel Mission have applied for a piece of land and they are going to have a school.

G-4279. *Miss Power* : From your experience of the tea estate coolie can you say what is the sort of education that best fits his circumstances ?—It is a difficult question to answer. First of all he wants education as a protection against the man who is immediately above him. In order to do that he must know a little of reading, writing and arithmetic.

G-4280. Have you any practical suggestions to make to encourage the coolie to send his son to the school ?—Very often the illiterate people like their children to be educated. That tendency is becoming very general.

G-4281. That applies only up to the earning age ?—Yes, when they are of earning age they want to earn money.

G-4282. Education from 5 to 8 will ultimately be lost if you stop all further education at that early age. What inducement do you think can be held out to the parent to retain his children at school even when they reach earning years ?—I think the system we follow now is to give them a little work in the morning and let them go to the school in the afternoon. We give them a meal ; in fact we pay them for going to school.

G-4283. Do you think that is right ?—Yes, I think that is right. I think it is much better that these children of 4 and 5 go to the school in the morning and to the garden in the evening and do what they call work rather than run about the lines with nobody to care for them.

G-4284. If they attend school for half a day do you think they would do as much work in the half day as they now do in a full day working desultorily ?—We get very little out of these children.

G-4285. Financially the loss to the estate will not be serious ?—No. The estates feed all the children who do not go to work.

G-4286. Is there any difficulty in getting teachers ?—I should say it is difficult to get teachers. Government pays Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 for a teacher. We should probably have to pay Rs. 25. If we paid Rs. 40 to a schoolmaster and put 40 children under him the Government will turn round and say that we must have two classes and two schoolmasters. Our expenses will run up. As far as my Company is concerned we are quite willing to do anything on economic lines to help these people.

G-4287. What is your policy as regards women workers during child-birth ; what allowances do you give and what maternity arrangements have you made for them ?—(*Mr. Foote*) : When the child is born the woman is given Rs. 5. She is also given a woman coolie to look after her for 5 to 7 days. Before child-birth the *mistri* or the compounder reports that the woman is unfit for work and she is given a maintenance allowance.

G-4288. As far as you are aware every woman gets the benefit ?—Unless she goes down to the country. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : In regard to that, going back to old days the women used to work right up to the very last day and turn up for work about a week later. They seemed to be taking it as an ordinary course of events.

G-4289. You would not be able to compare the level of health now with what it was when there were no doctors ?—No.

208

G-4290. Do you give any allowances for children who are successfully reared ?—No.

G-4291. *Col. Russell* : In Assam we came across estates where a woman after the birth of a child got Re. 1 a month for 8 or 9 months so long as the woman brought the child to the hospital. Do you have any system like that ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : We have nothing like that. I understand that the babies have got to be washed and cleaned and reared well.

G-4292 *Miss Power* : Do you agree with the statement made by two estate managers that on the whole the workers showed very little care of their children and that if their families were above a certain number there was a tendency towards deliberate neglect ?—I cannot think of instances like that.

G-4293. Do you make any extra allowance for coolies rearing big families ?—All children below the working age are fed by the estate. The cost is not debited to the coolie's account.

G-4294. Have you got public or private *shandys* on the estates ?—We have an estate bazaar but the coolies mostly go to the public *shandy* 4 or 5 miles from here because they get a variety of things there.

G-4295. Are the prices in the estate bazaar higher than those in the public *shandys* ?—No ; we get the Sholiyar prices here and check the prices on the estate bazaar. The bazaar does not belong to the estate but we control the prices.

G-4296. Do you control the quality as well ?—So far as possible. There are so many bazaars that they do keep the quality up. It is no trouble to the coolie to walk on a Sunday four miles to the bazaar. He does not care where he goes so long as he gets things good and cheap.

G-4297. What is the average amount of money that a coolie takes away with him at the time of settlement ?—It varies very much. A coolie who has worked regularly will take with him about Rs. 40.

G-4298. You say that the amount varies. But you get the same workers returning to your estate season after season. Has your group of estates done anything to persuade the coolies to have a banking account with you, so that little by little they may acquire a decent sum of money ?—It has not been done on this estate. (*Sir Fairless Barber*) : We have done that in another group of estates and found it quite successful. Periodically the coolies want their money and immediately it is handed over to them.

G-4299. Do you not think that it is something which should be extended ?—I think it would be an excellent thing.

G-4300. Do you not think such an arrangement would teach the ordinary uneducated coolie the meaning of saving and the accumulation of interest, in fact the elementary principles of a banking account ?—I do not know that even if we did it for them they would grasp the idea. It is a good thing no doubt.

Mr. Cliff : They know the meaning of interest in one way ; it is the other way of which they do not have any experience.

G-4301. *Miss Power* : These coolies come again and again to the same estate. Have they ever been known to come up without the intervention

of the *mistri* ? Has any coolie arrived on an estate independently without taking an advance from a *mistri* ?—(*Mr. Foote*) : The coolie takes his advance from the *mistri*. It is not essential that the *mistri* should bring him up personally. The coolies go home, find no work to do there and come up here.

G-4302. Do they ever come without advances ?—No, I do not think so, except a few coolies belonging to the estate gang.

G-4303. Have you ever tried to persuade coolies to join an estate gang so that they may go back home and return to the garden without the intervention of the *mistri* and thereby get the percentage of commission that at present goes to the *mistri* ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : It has been tried very often. The coolies often want advances from Rs. 30, 50 to 100 and we cannot give it to them individually, but the *mistri* will give it. He knows them well. They go miles away right to the other end of the Presidency and we cannot trace them.

G-4304. I was considering the possibility of the worker himself coming up without the intervention of any *mistri* ?—I have asked two co-operative officers whether they would try and form societies of labourers in the recruiting districts and nothing has come out of it.

G-4305. You have in fact no co-operative society now ?—We had one here but it had to be wound up with great difficulty.

G-4306. Was it because it was looked upon merely as a loan society ?—It was a stores society ; it went bankrupt as the transactions were not entirely in cash.

G-4307. Have the workers on your estates any vegetable plots ?—Not very much. We have about 8 acres of swamp in which they grow vegetables. It is not so much the coolies as the *mistris*. The coolie grows something when he comes out for the first time. He brings some seeds, plants them and takes the vegetables.

G-4308. Are they encouraged to keep cattle ?—We allow grazing free.

G-4309. Are the cattle increasing ?—I do not think so.

G-4310. *Col. Russell* : I see you have been doing a considerable amount of work in connection with re-housing ?—We had a special grant of £10,000 to improve housing conditions about 3 years ago. We are still spending that money. We could not spend it all at once. We started with the worse estates ; we have been demolishing old houses and building new ones a little higher up. The Medical Officer is supposed to select the sites for these houses.

G-4311. Have you standard types with provision for decent ventilation, lighting and so on ?—Yes. We have some houses with ridge ventilation and some with open tiles. We have the kitchen at the back and a verandah in front.

G-4312. When you build your houses a little higher up will you not have any difficulty of water supply ?—We are putting up water supply pipes ; we lift water by pumps.

G-4313. Will that cost a good deal of money ?—Yes, we are using a small engine and working a pump. It costs Rs. 35 to 45 a month to run a little engine. We provide taps in the lines.

209

G-4314. I suppose the site from which you draw water is more or less protected ?—Yes ; and the water is filtered.

G-4315. Have you any provision for bathing places in addition to the taps you provide in the lines ?—No.

G-4316. I take it that part of this £10,000 grant was meant for improving the health particularly with regard to anti-malarial work. How do you do it ?—We have a scheme of lowering the bed of the river here so as to drain the swamps. We spray the swamps. We do a certain amount of oiling.

G-4317. Do you maintain a permanent staff ?—We have no special staff. The medical staff does it with the aid of coolies. Spraying does not begin till February.

G-4318. How long have you been doing it ?—For the last four years.

G-4319. Is there any improvement in the health of the population ?—Undoubtedly. The hospital register shows that. But that may be partly due to improved housing. We have been doing it at the same time.

G-4320. Generally the expenditure of this money has improved health conditions on the estate ?—It has improved undoubtedly. The improvement is very notable in the Wyanad.

G-4321. I understand that you are likely to get through this scheme of making the whole area into a taluk board. Would it be possible in your opinion for the board to have a special officer who is an expert in anti-malarial work and public health work generally to advise individual managers and supervise public health work on the estates ?—The Companies at present have their own technical men and we should leave it to them.

G-4322. I do not want to criticize your medical officers in any way. My point is : if there is to be a general improvement in the health of the people it has to be in connection with malaria for which you require an officer who is an expert in that branch of the work. Would you have any objection from your point of view to have a whole-time officer for the whole district in that connection ?—Taking malaria as an instance I think it may be dangerous because two doctors might disagree as to the best way it should be done. I have been reading in the papers lately that there is a vehement controversy going on in England between eminent doctors on this question. If they could do that on a large scale in England it would be a horrible thing in a small district like the Anamalais. There would be no co-operation among the various medical officers.

G-4323. With regard to the treatment of women, do you not think that women will take more advantage of the medical facilities if you appoint a lady doctor ?—It is difficult to say. The Tamil women go to the hospital fairly alright. The Kanarese women may go to the hospital if there is a lady doctor or call her in to see them in the lines. In the case of these Kanarese women you do not hear of even bad cases ; they are concealed almost to the point of death.

G-4324. The Commission is very much interested to see that you have a trained *dai* in your hospital ; this is the first case we have come across in this district. Would it not be an advantage if you could get a large number of trained *dais* ?—I think so, possibly some with better qualifications.

G-4325. I understand that she herself was trained in a Government hospital in Madras. I see you have had various changes in the personnel. What is the difficulty ?—The woman coming up alone does not like to stay long.

G-4326. I have a suggestion to make to you. You have said there is difficulty in getting teachers for your schools. Supposing you got, as I know it obtains in other places, a man teacher whose wife is a lady trained in health work, midwifery and so on, would it not get rid of the difficulty ?—It is rather an attractive idea. I could run my school, crèche and the hospital quite easily.

G-4327. *Mr. Cliff* : How many hospitals have you got ?—Each group has a group hospital under a qualified doctor. There are also small dispensaries in the estates.

G-4328. *Col. Russell* : You agree that a group hospital is the best kind of institution that you can have ?—Yes.

G-4329. *Mr. Cliff* : Do you work on Sundays ?—(*Mr. Foote*) : Not often. We work only during the busy season. We make a special cash payment of the wages on the same day.

G-4330. What percentage of the workers turn out for work on a Sunday ?—All the men and women turn out.

G-4331. Is there any provision for drinking water or refreshment during the working hours ?—We give the pluckers and all men doing hard work tea with jaggery. It is taken round by one of the coolies themselves. We allow one coolie for each group of workers.

G-4332. Is it very much appreciated ?—The jaggery is but not the tea. They do not want to drink anything hot during the day. Some take tea, some coffee, but others take the jaggery.

G-4333. Do you supply tea with milk ?—No, we only supply jaggery, not milk.

G-4334. *Col. Russell* : Do they not stop work from 7 in the morning till 4-30 in the afternoon on other estates ?—If they are late in the morning they sometimes bring their meal with them and take it at midday. They are allowed to stop work for that but the *mistris* do not allow them to stop away too long. (*Mr. Blackham*) : If you go to the garden any time between 12 and 1 you will find them stopping for food.

G-4335. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I see from the register that Karuppan *Mistri* has earned the following amounts :—

	Rs.
November	99
December	96
January	59

The biggest amount that he has ever earned for any month is Rs. 136 How many coolies has he got ?—(*Mr. Foote*) : He has 131 coolies. He has only one gang this year. He had two gangs before.

G-4336. Would you give us a statement of the check roll earnings, cash for overtime on Sunday, and cash for plucking ?—We can only furnish the figures for the year previous to this.

210

G-4337. Yes. There has been a good deal of discussion in Simla and elsewhere as to when wages are to be paid, whether they should be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Was your Association consulted in this connection ?—(*Sir Fairless Barber*) : No, I do not think we were consulted.

G-4338. Could you let us have the views of your Association on this question ?—I do not think we could pay wages weekly or fortnightly or monthly. It would amount to changing our system entirely.

G-4339. Suppose the Government of India passed a law that wages should be paid fortnightly or monthly ; how are you going to conform to that law ?—We shall have to pay it on the 15th of the following month, deduct a certain amount for the advance given and hand over the rest.

G-4340. Is it possible ?—It is possible.

G-4341. There is the Truck Act in England under which wages have to be paid in cash and the workers cannot be compelled to take payment of their wages in kind especially of those articles which they do not require. Suppose the Government of India said that the Truck Act should be copied here and that there ought not to be any payment in kind, what would be your attitude ?—We do not really make any payment in kind. We only give them a chit for Re. 1 or As. 12. We do not compel them to buy our rice. We give them rice cheaper than in the bazaar.

G-4342. In all the estates has the worker the option of taking Re. 1 or As. 12 instead of the rice ?—He has the option.

G-4343. *Sir Alexander Murray* : This is the first time that we hear that the worker has the option of taking either the 12 annas or the Re. 1 instead of the rice ?—We will give them Re. 1 rather than rice. We are losing Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 an acre. The estates near the ropeway make a little profit on the rice ; but estates right at the other end are losing.

G-4344. *Col. Russell* : Are any coolies actually taking the money instead of the rice ?—The Malayalee coolies do not take the money ; they prefer polished rice. The Kanarese coolies take the money.

G-4345. *Miss Power* : Suppose there is a grievance among any particular group of coolies ; have they any method of talking it over with the management ?—They come up whenever there is any trouble. They see the Superintendent in the field or in the office If it is a family quarrel the usual thing is to get the *mistris* and the coolies themselves form a *panchayat* and settle the matter.

G-4346. Does every coolie know that there is such a system ?—Every coolie knows that. It is practically imported from the village.

G-4347. In one estate in Assam the manager set apart certain times when he was at home to any coolie who had a grievance to represent. I wondered whether there was any system like that up here ?—They come and see the manager at any time of the day. The managers are at home all the 24 hours of the day.

G-4348. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Mr. Foote, how long have you been here ?—I have been here six months. Before that I was on the Nilgiri Wyanad side in the Mango Range group.

G-4349. Are you sure that your labour force knows that there is no criminal Act in force ?—They must have understood it clearly because they have no agreement to sign now. They only sign a pro-note for the advance taken. We have also spoken to the coolies and the *mistris* about the abolition of the Criminal Act. In addition to that during the last settlement when the agreement had just expired we took particulars of every coolie's advance in order to square up the coolies' and the *mistris'* debts.

G-4350. Are you sure that if I go to a tea garden just now and interview a dozen coolies they would be able to say that there is no longer any criminal Act in force ?—Yes.

G-4351. Mr. Blackham, what is your experience ?—I was in Ceylon for 21 years. I have been in Southern India since 1912.

G-4352. Sir Fairless, what is your experience ?—I have been five years in Ceylon and 33 years in Southern India.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

21

MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

Hundredth Meeting.

COIMBATORE.

Friday, 14th March 1930.

PRESENT :

Sir ALEXANDER MURRAY, Kt., C.B.E. (*Presiding*).

Mr. JOHN CLIFF.

Lt.-Colonel A. J. H. RUSSELL, C.B.E., I.M.S., (*Medical Assessor*).

Miss B. M. LE POER POWER.

Mr. A. DIBDIN, *Joint Secretary*.

Miss M. AZARIAH, *Lady Assessor*.

Mr. N. S. RAMASWAMY AYYANGAR, President, Labour Union, COIMBATORE.

G-4353. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You are an Advocate by profession and at the same time the President of the Labour Union of Coimbatore ?—Yes.

G-4354. Will you tell us what your experience has been in connection with labour matters ?—I have been the President of this Union for the last 10 years. I started it and I have been working ever since. There have been many vicissitudes through which the Labour Union has passed. I have taken up a large number of workmen's compensation cases on behalf of the workers and have taken interest in labour matters in various ways. I have on more than one occasion been prevented by section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code from carrying on my activities, and I had the pleasure of being in jail for some time for my alleged connection with a strike in this place.

G-4355. Coming to the union itself, you say that the union was here in 1920 but for some time there was no union ?—The union continued but its activity was not continuous owing to certain strikes and owing to interference with its activity.

G-4356. When did you revive it actively ?—In 1927. When we wanted to register it under the Trade Unions Act a strike took place. That was in my absence, and as soon as I returned I wanted to terminate the strike. But I was prevented and they started proceedings against me for good behaviour, and one night I was arrested in my house and put in a lock-up which was almost a urinal. That has shattered my health. I was in jail for 7 days. I offered to give bail, but it was refused though I was prepared to give any bond which was the highest the Government could require of me. My imprisonment broke the union for a time, and I have been attempting to revive it for the last one year. But the effect of the strike was that a large number of labourers were dismissed from service. It has struck terror amongst the labourers and they are afraid of the hostility of the employer and the interference of the *mistri*. But inspite of all this, and particularly after we heard of the visit of the Whitley Commission, we passed a resolution for the registration of the union under the Trade Unions

Act and also a resolution that we ought to co-operate with the Commission. When there was a movement that there should be a boycott of the Commission, we were against it and we wanted co-operation. So we issued 3,000 or 4,000 questionnaires to the labourers. One of the questions was what the minimum subscription to the union should be.

G-4357. Has the union been registered now ?—No, it has not been registered, but a resolution has been passed that it ought to be registered.

G-4358. Why have you not registered it ?—We wanted to wait till the Whitley Commission finished its labours in these parts, as we thought it might be said that we were registering the union because the Commission was coming.

G-4359. In that connection you say in your memorandum : " There must be legislative provision for the recognition of the union by the employer and the Government and some liaison must be created between the trade union, the Labour Commissioner and the Co-operative Department." I want you to explain to us what your attitude will be supposing there were 2 or 3 unions formed, say, in Coimbatore ?—I would like to have one union for any particular kind of workmen.

G-4360. Supposing there was to be legislative provision, could you expect Government to make provision against more than one union representing textile workers ?—I do not want that Government should interfere with the number of unions, but I want that Government must give some position to a registered union and the employer must be compelled to recognize the union. As it is, the employer can say : ' I do not care for your union ' as they are doing in Madras and in other places.

G-4361. You think there should be a legislative enactment. Supposing there is a mill called the Coimbatore mill and it has already one union and a section of the workers propose to form another union and yet another section propose to form another union, would you still insist that the employer must recognize as many unions as might be formed ?—Yes, as many unions as are registered. I am sure in the long run all these unions will become one union.

G-4362. Your suggestion is that whatever unions may be formed dealing with a particular body of workmen the employers of these workmen should recognize the unions ?—Provided they are registered under the Trade Unions Act.

G-4363. Assume again that there is a union dealing with textile workers only. I think it will be a reasonable thing, provided the employers were satisfied in their minds, that that union should be recognized. But supposing there is a union representing both textile and non-textile workers, would you still expect the employer to recognize such a union ?—As I said, I would not like to have a union which represents different professions. I want textile unions for textile workers, tannery unions for tanners and so on.

G-4364. Have you been recognized at all by any of the employers ?—We have been recognized only in that they have been uniformly hostile to us. Hostility is one of the methods of recognition.

G-4365. Have you got any constitution for your union ?—We have got a printed constitution.

G-4366. May we have a copy of it ?—It is in Tamil. I can translate it and send it on to you later.

G-4367. Have you got accounts of any description ?—We have been keeping accounts for periods that we have been active. At one time Mr. Ernest Kirk was our Secretary and he was in charge of the accounts.

G-4368. If you register yourself into a union you would have to keep accounts in accordance with the Act ?—Yes, we are bound to.

G-4369. Have you such accounts now ?—Our accounts are not regular ; we have regular accounts only for periods when we have been active.

G-4370. Would you care to send to the Commission a copy of your accounts ?—It will take a long time to copy them out ; if you want, I can send a summary.

G-4371. Will you tell us how many members you have in your union ?—800 to 1,000 have expressed their willingness to become members of the union.

G-4372. They are not paying members ?—300 to 400 are paying members.

G-4373. Are you affiliated to any union or federation ?—We are affiliated to the Indian Trade Union Congress. There is a federation only for railway workers.

G-4374. Did you send any of your representatives to Nagpur where the last meeting of the Congress was held ?—No ; we were asked to send, but we could not send any. Mr. Kirk has represented us on some occasions and I have represented the union several times.

G-4375. Who represent the Committee of your union ?—What is the number of the Committee ?—Originally the number was about 4 to 5 for each mill, but now we have got 20 to 22 members in all.

G-4376. You have not been registered and therefore you are not bound to have a certain number of actual workers on your Committee. But will you tell me how many of the 20 members are actual workers and how many are non-workers ?—Excepting myself and the present acting Secretary—we propose to get a permanent Secretary soon—all the members of the Committee are actual workers.

G-4377. Those members represent how many different interests ?—The textile interest especially.

G-4378. What has the Secretary's experience been ?—The Secretary is a temporary Secretary. The workmen have not recovered from the shock of the strike and the consequent dismissal. Till we get a workman from the textile workers we will be having him for work. He was a railway labourer and has worked in various workshops. Due to retrenchment he had to resign his job 2 years ago.

G-4379. Is he a permanent resident of Coimbatore ?—Yes, he lives very near the mills, and he therefore enjoys no peace.

G-4380. You have given us a memorandum dealing with tea. May I ask if you have any experience of tea yourself ?—The tea memorandum has been prepared in my personal capacity as Ramaswamy Ayyangar. I have had the benefit of the experience of two retired employees of the tea estates and I have also examined a few coolies who have been discharged from the tea plantations. I wanted to go personally to study the conditions

on the spot, but I was prevented by an order under section 144 issued by the local authority of the Government. You would have noticed that along with my memorandum I have sent a copy of this order and also a copy of the notice issued by me to the labourers at the Anamalais.

G-4381. You have been good enough to send us these copies which we have seen. When did you publish this notice ?—I published this about the 20th or so.

G-4382. That you would have a meeting on Sunday the 23rd. It was a very short notice ?—It is, but in this country, unlike England, even 5 minutes' notice is enough to collect 20,000 people.

G-4383. Previous to sending up the notice calling for a public meeting, did you communicate with any of the employers or anybody else ?—Simultaneously with the issue of the notice I sent a wire to the President of the Anamalais Planters' Association saying that I was calling a meeting and requesting him to give me an interview.

G-4384. We have asked him about that on the spot ?—I have personal experience of tea estates because for some time I was a mortgagee of a large number of properties on the Nilgiris, but my acquaintance with the conditions in the Anamalais is based only upon enquiry and investigation.

G-4385. Were you invited by any people in the tea area to go up there ?—There was no specific invitation ; it was purely voluntary. I wanted to help the people who are not able to speak for themselves.

G-4386. You say in the Union memorandum : " Labour problems are occasionally taken up for the purpose of securing support for non-labour activities ". We have heard that as we have gone round, but have you anything more to say in that connection ?—It is very clear. What I meant to say was that labour problems are not very seriously dealt with in this country, and politicians take up labour problems to get the vote.

G-4387. Would I be rude if I were to ask you whether you would say that about the politicians generally ?—Yes, it is universal in this country.

G-4388. May I ask you whether you are a politician ?—I wanted to be a politician but I am more anxious for labour work, and if I get into politics it will be more for bettering the labour than for anything else. I have never stood for any councils or local bodies.

G-4389. You say in your memorandum : " We do not believe in educational facilities by employers". Do you suggest that no obligation lies on an employer to provide education for his workers ?—The State must take charge of education. The employer must not be taxed with any portion of the cost of education.

G-4390. In your memorandum you speak also of the indebtedness in the village and of the indebtedness in industrial areas, and you finish by saying : " If the labourer is disliked in the village he is smashed more summarily than in the factory ". What do you really mean by that ?—If a landlord gets displeased with a labourer he can ruin him, can take hold of his cattle, attach his property and smash him completely.

G-4391. We have been told that if a labourer is treated as a daily-rated worker, although he may be paid weekly or monthly, his wages are not liable to attachment. What is your opinion on that ?—There is no legal provision against attachment ; any man's wages are liable to attachment. But the judges do not attach more than a certain portion. It is entirely in the judge's discretion as to the amount that should be attached.

G-4392. Will you please give us your opinion on pro-notes that are given by the workers on the gardens ?—These pro-notes must be abolished. They are for merchants and traders.

G-4393. In these pro-notes there is an interest clause. Sometimes the interest is 12 per cent. and sometimes it is 24 per cent. We have been told that no interest is really collected and that they are mentioning some figure because a pro-note is not legal unless it contains an interest clause ?—That is wrong ; it is bad law.

G-4394. In your memorandum you speak of a fund collected by the Kaleeswarai mills. Do you know what is done with that fund ?—I learn it is used for the benefit of the workmen in a way ; that is, by lending to them and helping them with cash. I cannot make an authoritative statement on that matter, but that is what I heard from the labourers.

G-4395. Have you found any case of hardship ?—The mere fact that the employers have formed a union and are collecting subscriptions is itself a hardship.

G-4396. We are always told by work-people that there should be provident funds and funds of that description. This is, as I understand it, an imitation of a provident fund. Why should there be hardship about that ?—In a provident fund there is always a certain contribution from the employer. In this case the only contribution to the fund is from the workers. I object to the employers collecting this contribution because it is compulsory, and the workman has no option at all.

G-4397. *Miss Power* : You say it is a " compulsory union ". Why do you call it a union ?—Because there are a number of men in it.

G-4398. You do not mean a trade union ?—No, certainly not. The Kaleeswarai Mills started a union so that our union may not function.

G-4399. *Sir Alexander Murray* : How do you know that ?—When there is an employers' union it always kills the workmen's union.

G-4400. Dealing with industrial disputes you say : " The Trade Disputes Act must be modified so as to provide for compulsory arbitration ". Do you suggest that if there is a dispute between a mill and your union, for instance, there must be compulsory arbitration ?—Yes. There should be legislative provision for compulsory arbitration.

G-4401. Do you suggest then that the workers would accept the arbitration even though it goes against them ?—Certainly they are bound to. In this country arbitration is always respected provided the arbitration committee is satisfactory. I would suggest that the arbitration committee should consist of representatives of the employers and the employees and one senior civil judge of the district.

G-4402. Supposing a mill and its labour have a dispute and they know that there will be compulsory arbitration, will the tendency not be for them not to come to an agreement amongst themselves ? If there is no compulsory arbitration, the employer will say " This is what I can give you " and the labourers will say " This is the minimum we shall accept ". They can then come to a common understanding ?—They will come to a common understanding only if there is compulsory arbitration, because they will

realize that if they have to submit their dispute to arbitration people will scoff at them for not being able to arrive at an amicable settlement among themselves. If there is compulsory arbitration, I think it will lead to less conflicts between capital and labour than otherwise.

G-4403. You said that there should be representatives of capital and representatives of labour on the arbitration committee. I can understand capital putting up representatives capable of stating their case. When you say representatives of labour, do you mean representatives of labour unions ?—Yes, if labour is represented by a union. The employer will say " I suggest these two persons as arbitrators " and the labourers will say " We suggest these two persons as arbitrators ". There will be four representing the employers and the labourers.

G-4404. You said there should be a senior civil judge. Do you not think that there should be only people who have knowledge of the trade ?—They can easily learn it. Do not judges of the Privy Council decide cases many times without having any knowledge of the points raised in those cases.

G-4405. They do not decide facts ; they only decide law ?—There will be advocates for both sides—one for the employers and one for the labourers. It will be some sort of a *panchayat*.

G-4406. Workers are not very fond of having recourse to arbitration ? —They are ; they have every desire for arbitration, or what they call *panchayats*. *Panchayats* are most common and popular in this country.

G-4407. When you are having a *panchayat* it is comprised of one type of men belonging to the same locality ?—Not necessarily. There are poor *panchayats* and rich *panchayats*.

G-4408. Whether they are poor or rich they are of the same type of men, whereas the general impression in this country is that capital is one thing and labour is another thing ?—Yes that is so at present.

G-4409. You cannot have a *panchayat* in the proper sense of the word between capital and labour, can you ?—This arbitration will work out the idea of the *panchayat*.

G-4410. *Miss Power* : You say in your memorandum : " In the plantation areas like the Anamalais and Nilgiris the whole outlook is the estate itself. They have no local interests, no houses, no property and they are in a state of semi-slavery ". Without going into the question as to whether we should agree as to their being in a state of semi-slavery or not, would you tell us what you think are the first essentials for enlarging the horizon of the tea estate coolie ?—He must own his house. He must have a public place to which he can invite any person whom he chooses. As at present, no man can enter into the plantations in the Anamalais without a permit from the estate manager. Thirdly, he must have his own place of worship. Fourthly, he must have his own place of recreation. And, fifthly, he must have his own religious facilities. He does not possess anything now. Beyond Valparai I cannot go to-morrow morning even though my cousin is a plantation labourer. If there is a death in his house I must have a permit from the manager before I can enter his house. There was a case, which came up before the court, of a father who was unable to take his daughter for his father-in-law's funeral, that is, the girl's grandfather's funeral, because the estate manager refused permission. The

214

learned judge delivered a judgment which was not in favour of the applicant. Beyond Valparai post office there is not a single place in the whole of that area where you can go without the permission of the estate manager.

G-4411. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Can you send us a copy of the judgment in that case ?—Yes.

G-4411-*a*. *Miss Power* : On the question of owning houses, do you think it is feasible for the estate coolies to own their own houses when they do not necessarily come back to the same garden season after season ?—We can provide for their becoming owners after they serve the estate for a certain number of years.

G-4412. That is only a proportion of them. Do you suggest that every tea estate coolie should be obliged to buy his own house even though, in the first instance, he comes up, for 10 months only ?—Yes. If he does not want to return back he will transfer his house to some other coolie in the same way as Government servants do under co-operative schemes. For instance, if a man is transferred from Coimbatore to Salem his house is taken by the man who gets into his place. As you suggest, there may be some practical difficulty.

G-4413. Would it not involve paying rent ?—He will pay rent, which will become part of the value of the house.

G-4414. Do you think that the tea estate coolie will be ready to pay rent ?—Yes. He would be perfectly willing to pay for his own house, because the land on which it is built would not be the property of the tea estate owners but of the Government. The Government give land free on *darkhast* to the tea planters. Formerly when they gave lands they did it without knowing that coolies may require houses. They gave the whole area with the result that the house and the site on which it is built belong to the planters. There must be a scheme by which these lands must be acquired and given to the coolies.

G-4415. You mentioned just now 5 things as being of the 1st importance, but you did not mention education. Does that mean that you consider education as only sixth in importance ?—I do not want that the tea manager should have anything to do with education. I want Government to take up education.

G-4416. Do you consider education as one of the essentials to remove the labourer from what you call a state of semi-slavery ?—Certainly. Without education nothing can be done. I have dealt with education in my memorandum.

G-4417. You say : " It is easy to devise some recognized employment bureau with headquarters in the district with subordinate agencies in each taluk to look after the recruitment ". Are you referring there to the recruitment for mills or recruitment for tea estates ?—For all industrial labour including tea estates.

G-4418. Will you tell us what sort of machinery you think would be successful for that purpose ? You regard it as an easy thing, while most people have regarded it as a very difficult thing ?—During the war Government required a number of men, and each taluk was made a unit of recruiting agency. Every district is divided into a number of taluks, and every taluk has got a tahsildar, an officer who works very much with the people. He and certain non-officials may work as a recruiting body by having

printed applications issued in all villages through the village headmen. If there is any demand for labour, say in Coimbatore or in Anamalais, they simply will have to write to the district headquarters who will make enquiries from their agents in the taluks. They will ask them : " We want 1,000 men for such and such occupation ; how many will you be able to provide ". They could maintain registers.

G-4419. But that would be no use for the day-to-day requirements of a mill, would it ?—Not for the day-to-day requirements. It may help us, for instance, when a new mill is started, or when the mill works at a greater pressure during certain times of the year. During the War they were working all the 24 hours, and even now during certain times they work at a pressure ; in the plantations also during some seasons they require more labour. The idea behind the suggestion is that we want to get rid of the jobbers, *mistris* and other recruiting agents.

G-4420. What about the difficulty that we are frequently told about that the worker will not leave his village without an advancement of money ?—Because he is so poor. This advance can be made by the recruiting agency.

G-4421. By the Government recruiting agency ?—The Government will not take an active interest ; it will take only a partial interest.

G-4422. You say " some recognized employment bureau ". I take it you mean a Government employment bureau ?—For example, I am the head of a taluk. Some planter on the Anamalais wants 500 coolies. I write to the plantation manager and say " I am prepared to send 500 coolies. Please send Rs. 2,500 ". Now they give it in the hands of the *mistri*. Instead of giving it in his hands it may be given to the employment agency at the taluk which will make the advance to the workers.

G-4423. Do you think that the absence of the personal touch which the worker at present has through his *mistri* will make him readily use an employment bureau of that kind ?—Yes, because he will have more confidence in his tahsildar.

G-4424. How are you going to compel the employer to use that machinery ?—By legislation. The planter will have to use this machinery because he will have no other option. After all, these planters will be more glad to get their labour through a taluk employment agency than through the *mistri*.

G-4425. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Supposing a tea planter wants 100 men and he sends down Rs. 1,000 to the tahsildar, what will the tahsildar do next ?—The tahsildar will be assisted by 4 non-officials who will be representatives of landlord and other classes. The tahsildar will send notices to the village headmen who will inform the villagers by tom-tom the number of men required.

G-4426. Supposing only 100 men are wanted and there are 500 men anxious to go, who will make the selection ?—The village headman.

G-4427. Supposing I am very anxious to go and he does not select me, will there not be discontent ?—Where the supply is greater than the demand there is bound to be discontent. You can rest assured that the village headman has got a status and he can be trusted to make the selection pretty fairly.

215

G-4428. *Colonel Russell* : Do you think that the tahsildar and the revenue inspector would have time to do that ? The revenue inspectors are collecting officers, are they not ?—Where there is a will there is a way. Did they not collect men for the War ? There is some machinery, for example, in Mettur works. From various places local revenue officers have been helping Government by getting necessary coolies.

G-4429. Most of the labourers employed in Mettur were brought by contractors ?—With the help of local village headmen.

G-4430. They have contractors or *mistris* ?—They have contractors but not for getting labourers.

G-4431. *Miss Power* : You say : " The touch between the bosses and the labourers is slender....There must be in every factory some organization by which the labourers, the supervising staff and directorate are kept in touch ". You do not specify any particular organization. What have you in mind ?—Provided the trade union is recognized by the employer, there will be no need for this because the trade union will be the link between the employer and the employee. If recognition of a trade union is not enforced by legislation, then every mill or factory must have, by legislation, a factory or workmen's council, consisting of 5, 10 or 20 men, and the employer must deal with his workmen not through the *mistris* or the jobbers but through these councils.

G-4432. You want a sort of works committee in every factory ?—Yes, that is my idea.

G-4433. Most of the evidence we have had shows that these Committees have not been successful where they have been in operation ?—Because the employer was not very serious in his treatment of labour.

G-4434. Referring to the provision for inspection of sanitary arrangements you talk about a labour council elected by the labourers. You already have inspection of sanitary arrangements in factories both by the factory inspector and by the health officer acting as *ex-officio* inspector. Do you think it is a wise thing to suggest yet a third body of people ?—The factory inspectors have got too much work to do as they have to visit a very large number of factories.

G-4435. Looking at it from the practical point of view, do you think that it is reasonable that there should be a health officer, a factory inspector and a certain number of untrained labourers sitting as a labour council all with authority to inspect sanitary arrangements ? Do you seriously suggest that as a feasible proposition ?—I seriously suggest that a few labourers chosen from among them should act as helpers to these factory inspectors and health officers and with their help the supervision, I think, will be perfect.

G-4436. Do you think that the education of the ordinary factory labourer in this country in sanitary matters is sufficiently high to entitle him to be put in authority in a thing of this kind ?—Yes. If you go to his house you will find that it is kept quite clean.

G-4437. Many of these labourers are still being taught to use latrines. Do you think these are the people who should advise on sanitary matters ?—Personally I think the labourer can be made to take interest in sanitary matters.

G-4438. You deal also with the highly technical question of safety in factories, and you say : " Over and above the factory inspectorate, there must be provision for the labour council to have their say in the matter ". Here again do you think that the ordinary labourer if elected to such a council, is competent to advise on safety measures in factories ?—Yes. If you give him an opportunity he will show that he is competent enough to advise.

G-4439. Then you deal with the question of insurance ; would you tell us exactly what type of insurance you want ? You refer in one place to sickness insurance while in another you refer to old-age and premature retirement insurance. Do you want some form of comprehensive social insurance ?—Quite so.

G-4440. On what basis ?—You mean with regard to collections ?

G-4441. What is it to cover and who is to contribute towards it ?—It is to cover sickness connected with employment ; it is to cover the age of 50, and it is to cover premature death.

G-4442. Not unemployment ?—No ; it is long way before we can have that.

G-4443 Take insurance for old age. How would you propose contributions should be paid ?—I would suggest that the worker, the employer as well as the State should contribute.

G-4444. In equal shares ?—Yes.

G-4445. Do you think that the worker would have any objection ?—Absolutely none, provided he gets a wage which will leave him an anna to spare for this purpose.

G-4446. You say one anna ?—I quoted merely as an example.

G-4447. You do not mean literally one anna ?—No ; it must be something more. He will be quite happy to contribute and there will be no difficulty in getting his contribution.

G-4448. *Colonel Russell* : Supposing a man gets sick and he goes back to his village, where is he going to get treatment ?—His going to his village may sometimes cure him.

G-4449. But there are diseases which require taking of medicines ?—There are thousand and one hospitals to which he can go.

G-4450. How many villages there are in the Coimbatore district ?—About 700.

G-4451. How many dispensaries are there ?—Quite a few.

G-4452. About 50 ?—May be. But those are English dispensaries. You have a large number of Indian doctors in these villages and the villagers trust them.

G-4453. You would extend the sickness insurance to *bahima* and *raids* and people of that kind ?—I will not enter into details ; I will put it in the hands of specialists like you.

G-4454. We are taking evidence from you and we want to get your ideas. I want to ask you whether you can see no difficulties in providing medical facilities in the villages ?—I do not find any difficulty.

216

G-4455. *Miss Power* : On the subject of hours of work, you say : " To start with 54 hours a week or 9 hours a day may be provided for and in the course of 2 years it should be reduced to 48 hours a week ". Have you gone into the question of output ; is it your view that the worker would maintain his present output on substantially reduced hours ?—I have made this suggestion after getting replies to my question from over 1,200 people. They say they will be able to give immediately the same output in 9 hours as they give in 10, and it is also possible for them to give the same output after 2 years by working only 48 hours a week ; of course, it all depends upon very many other considerations ; everything will turn upon the question of wages.

G-4456. At any rate, I take it you want the ratification of the Washington Convention within the quickest possible time ?—Yes, we want an immediate reduction to 9 hours. As it is, they do not get a single hour of the sunlight ; they leave their home at 5 in the morning and return back at about 7.

G-4457. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Supposing that the men at Home who are working shorter hours are able to produce more than your men are able to produce here, will that not affect the cotton textile industry here ?—They will be more efficient with less hours of work.

G-4458. They will not need to work longer ?—No. It is impossible to give the worker any education or to do any welfare work unless you give him at least one hour of the sunlight to which he is entitled from his very birth.

G-4459. *Miss Power* : Turning to the question of holidays, you say : " Casual leave of 7 days per year with full pay and 15 days per year privilege leave on full pay and 15 days on half pay should be provided for by legislative enactment ? "—There is a mistake there. Instead of 15 days' privilege leave on full pay it must be one month's privilege leave on full pay, and " 15 days on half pay " should be cut out.

G-4460. Would you tell us for what class of worker you suggest this and after what length of employment with one firm ?—After 2 or 3 years' employment. It is a matter that can be settled with the employer. Any worker must have a right for 7 days' casual leave for attending to sickness, funeral, etc., and should have one month's privilege leave for attending to marriages, pilgrimages, festivities and so on. Every Government servant who draws from Rs. 8 gets this privilege.

G-4461. You are practically asking for Government conditions of service as applied to professional workers to be applied to industry generally ?—Yes.

G-4462. *Colonel Russell* : You said that every Government servant who draws from Rs. 8 gets all these privileges. Are you quite sure about that ?—I am sure about the peons, but I am not quite sure about the lowest class of servants.

G-4463. *Miss Power* : You are asking here for something to be effected by legislative enactment in a comparatively newly industrialized country which has not yet been achieved in the highly industrialized countries of the West ?—I want the latest European conditions to be applied here.

G-4464. But this is not " the latest ; " it has not yet been achieved even in Great Britain ?—Then you had better give us what you have in

England ; we will have no objection. Even the holidays which are granted under the Negotiable Instruments Act are not given to these workers.

G-4465. Your memorandum also deals with the conditions in tanneries. I take it that what you really want is the extension of the Factories Act to cover factories at present unregulated ?—Quite so.

G-4466. With regard to the standardization of wages and minimum wages, you say : " It is desirable to have a regular standardization of wages ", do you mean as regards the remuneration in mills under one company or as regards all the mills in one town or area ?—All over the province I would do it with slight changes for particular localities.

G-4467. What you want is that all employers in one industry should get together and standardize their wages ?—Yes.

G-4468. With regard to fixing a minimum wage, do you want to fix a minimum rate for a working class family in respect of a whole province, or do you want to have different minimum rates fixed which should suit different industries ?—I want different minimum rates suited to different industries.

G-4469. You say that fines should be regulated. I take it that what you want is some sort of machinery similar to the Truck Act in England ? —Yes.

G-4470. You say that the fines collected should be paid to the union. Supposing there is no union ?—You may dispose of it in any way you like. I was anxious to get money for the union.

G-4471. What you really want is that the fines should be utilized for the benefit of the workers ?—Yes.

G-4472. That is quite different from paying it over to the workers union ?—You are right.

G-4473. You say " It is desirable that wages should be paid at least every fortnight. " Have you asked the members of your Union whether they prefer fortnightly to monthly payment ?—Yes, almost all our members are in favour of fortnightly payment. In the railway workshops wages are paid fortnightly, and that prevents the workers from getting into debt. They are not in favour of weekly payment, because they think that they may spend the money.

G-4474. The employers told us that the workers did not want fortnightly payments ?—The planters might have told you that, but, as I said, about 700 to 800 of the 1,200 workers who answered my questionnaire are in favour of fortnightly payments.

G-4475. *Colonel Russell* : In your memorandum you make some remarks about absenteeism in the factories, and you say : " There is a certain amount of avoidable absenteeism ". Can you tell us what percentage would that be ?—I cannot tell you what percentage it will be.

G-4476. Could you give us rough figures of absenteeism ?—I have no actual figures of absenteeism, but that is what I am told by the managers.

G-4477. In your memorandum you give various reasons for the absenteeism. Do you think that generally speaking a considerable proportion of absenteeism is due to bad health ?—Yes, I think so.

G-4478. Have you any statistics to show that the men cannot get sufficient food with the wages they get ?—The food eaten by the South Indians is the poorest and even that food the labourer is not able to buy. He gets such low wages that he cannot buy enough food to keep himself fit.

G-4479. I hope you will admit that an industrial labourer gets more than an agricultural labourer ?—Yes.

G-4480. With regard to housing, do you think that the sole responsibility rests with the employers ?—No, the State and the workers should bear a portion of the burden.

G-4481. In England and other western countries housing schemes are carried out by local bodies and municipalities. Would you prefer that municipalities and local bodies in India should be entrusted with the responsibility of housing the workers ?—England is a highly industrialized country. For instance, in a town like Newcastle all the inhabitants have something to do with the industries of the town, but all the inhabitants of Coimbatore, for instance, are not connected with the industries of the town. I would not like to put the responsibility on the local bodies as in England. The State must contribute from the general funds.

G-4482. What do you mean by " Co-operative housing " ?—The State, the employer and the workpeople must all contribute something. There should be some scheme by which the worker should go on paying in instalments for 20 years and at the end of 20 years or any fixed period the house should belong to the worker himself.

G-4483. You say that medical attention is " only nominal both in personnel and stocking of dispensaries ". What do you exactly mean by " nominal " ?—We get only a few L. M. P.'s to look after thousands of workers. We want more qualified men. Moreover there is only one doctor for 2,000 operatives. There should be more than one doctor to look after such a large number of work-people.

G-4484. Even in England you hardly get one doctor for a population of 2,000 ; do you expect to get more in this country ?—If you say we have the same facilities here as in England it is all right. But I do not think so.

G-4485. What do you mean by nominal stocking of dispensaries ?—The equipment of medicine is not complete and up-to-date. There are no sick beds at all.

G-4486. Are you perfectly sure about it ?—That is what the labourers complain about. I have had no opportunity of going into these mills and seeing things for myself.

G-4487. Are you in favour of the appointment of a woman medical officer in any industry in which a large number of women are employed ? —Yes, it would be very useful.

G-4488. Are you in favour of the employment of health visitors and trained *dais* to look after the women in industries where a large number

of women are employed ?—Do you think that the women will make use of them ?—Yes, certainly.

G-4489. What maternity benefit do you suggest should be given to the women workers ?—I shall be glad if full wages are given six weeks before and six weeks after confinement. I understand that in Russia it is given for 8 weeks before and 8 weeks after. I do not insist on any additional bonus being given to the women for child-birth.

G-4490. With regard to sanitary arrangements in the mills you said that the Health Officer rarely ever visited the mill areas ?—Yes, he has got much to do. Moreover all the mills are not inside the municipality ; some are outside the municipality.

G-4491. Take the mills inside the municipality. Do you think it would be useful if an Assistant Health Officer is appointed specially to look after the mill areas ?—Yes, there should be a special health officer to look after the mill areas such as in Coimbatore and Madura where there are 8,000 to 10,000 workers. He should work under the municipality as the employers will not bear the cost of his appointment.

G-4492. Would you agree to have those Health Officers as Factory Inspectors under the Factories Act ?—Yes, in all cases they should be assisted by representatives of labour.

G-4493. What arrangements would you recommend with regard to bathing and washing places ?—There should be 20 to 30 taps for 200 people.

G-4494. *Sir Alexander Murray* : So that if there are 2,000 people there should be 200 taps ?—Yes. It only means that you should have a little more supply of water.

G-4495. *Colonel Russell* : In your memorandum you refer to lung diseases and anæmia as industrial diseases. Have you any figures to show that they are caused by the employment of the operatives ?—At each and every meeting of the work-people I ask them to remove their shirts and examine their body. I find that most of them have not got healthy bodies and they are suffering from lung diseases.

G-4496. Are you a doctor ?—I am not a doctor but I can find out a healthy man and an unhealthy man.

G-4497. What is the price of rice to-day ?—7 to 8 measures a rupees.

G-4498. Do you think that the employers who are supplying rice in payment of a portion of the wages of the work-people are not giving them rice at market rates ? In the Anamalais they only give 7 measures a rupee. Do you think it is a fair price ?—How can it be a fair price when they get 7½ measures even at Valparai market ?

G-4499. *Mr. Cliff* : It is true they supply rice at 7 measures a rupee but they say they sometimes get only 6½ measures and sometimes get 7½ measures. The price at which they supply comes between the two. There is also a difference between the estates near the ropeway and estates farther off ?—I would like that the system of supplying rice by the employers is abandoned. The workers should not be beholden to the employers for the supply of rice. Wherever possible co-operative stores should be opened for the supply of the articles necessary for the workers.

216

G-4500. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Would you abolish the feeding of children by the employers ?—If it is part of the wages of the workers I would not have the employers do it.

G-4501. *Colonel Russell* : Would you be satisfied if the planters gave money instead of the rice that they now supply ?—Yes ; and they should increase the money wages also.

G-4502. Are there no tiffin sheds in the factories of Coimbatore ?—There are a few but they are only apologies for tiffin sheds. I work in the court just opposite to one of the Mills. Every noon I see a lot of workers going out into the road and taking their food in the dust.

G-4503. *Miss Azariah* : Dealing with co-operative banks and stores you say in your memorandum that " Government is afraid of facing this and co-operative banks and stores are not started even when labourers apply for them ". How many applications have been made to Government to start labour co-operative banks and stores ?—I myself made two written applications in 1920 and had no reply. I spoke to some officers of the co-operative Department and they say that Government is afraid that labour co-operative banks may be used for helping strikes. Government, as at present constituted, does not do anything to help the labourers in this direction.

G-4504. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Did any such officer say to you that Government would not encourage co-operative banks because they feared they might be used to help strikes ?—They did say so to me but I cannot give their names.

G-4505. When did they last say this to you ?—They said so in 1920 and again in 1927. I myself started a bank and although I was able to collect Rs. 80,000 to 90,000, I was deceived and I sustained a great loss because I was not accustomed to business. I mean starting another again.

G-4506. *Miss Azariah* : You say that a number of workmen live in the slums inside the city of Coimbatore. What will be the percentage of men living in such slums ?—About 40 per cent. of the workers live in the slums next door to the mills. Some of the workers come from villages 2 or 3 miles off.

G-4507. You say that working at night affects the eye and the general health of the operative. Have you any figures to show the incidence of eye diseases among the mill operatives ?—I have no actual figures. Working under glaring electric lights in the night surely causes a great strain on the eye. Moreover the worker starts at 7 in the evening, works till 12 at night and then walks home 3 miles off. He has again to come back at 7 next morning for work. He cannot have sufficient rest at night. At least for the sake of the efficiency of the worker night work must be abolished. If for any reasons night work is considered necessary arrangements should be made to give him enough rest. Suppose I did five hours' night work to-night, I must be let off till to-morrow night as they are doing on the Railways.

G-4508. *Miss Power* : You said that you would not allow night work at all ?—We would like to avoid it but if the exigencies of the industry require it, we would only have it subject to the conditions I have mentioned.

G-4509. *Mr. Cliff* : Did you get a copy of the questionnaire of the Royal Commission ?—I wrote to the Secretary to the Local Government and got a copy.

G-4510. Was your questionnaire sent to the factory people ?—I printed 5,000 copies and sent them to all the workmen.

G-4511. In your questionnaire did you consult the work-people with regard to the system of working 3 shifts ?—No, I did not ask them.

G-4512. Do you know whether the employers consulted the work-people before putting the shift system into operation ?—They might or might not have consulted.

G-4513. You referred to the Secretary of your union receiving complaints from the work-people. Did he ever get complaints from them regarding the working of the shifts ?—(*Mr. Sunderaraj, Secretary of the Union*) : They have complained to me about the shifts. They live 3 or 4 miles from the Mill. They have to start at 5 A.M. in order to be at the Mill at 7 A.M. They work from 7 to 12 and again in the evening they work from 7 till 12 midnight. Then it takes nearly 2 hours to go home. Then they have to get up at 5 A.M. and be at the mill at 7 o'clock the next morning. They do not get more than 2 to 3 hours sleep in the night.

G-4514. Did they tell you that they complained about it to the employers ?—Yes, they said they complained about it to the employers. We also passed resolutions at our meetings and sent them to the employers.

G-4515. Did the work-people tell you what the employers had told them ?—Yes. The employers told them that they had to work night shifts because they were given double looms. If the night shift was abolished some of them would have to go out of work.

G-4516. In your memorandum you deal with the strike in one of the mills here. I think you told the Chairman that you were absent when the strike commenced ?—(*Mr. Ramaswamy Ayyangar*) : Yes, I was absent on the Nilgiris.

G-4517. How soon after the strike commenced were you here ?—Immediately the strike began my Secretary wired to me. I came to understand that the men refused to go out of the mills owing to a wrong understanding of the principle of *satyagraha*. I came down and went to one of the Mills and told the Police Superintendent there that I would ask the workers to come out of the Mill. The Police refused to allow me to go into the Mill. Afterwards the workers came out of the Mill of their own accord at 10 P.M. Next morning none of the workers went to work. They were all very excited. I held a meeting of the workers at which the minimum demands were formulated and sent to the employers. I told the workers that they should be absolutely non-violent. When I returned from the meeting I was arrested by the police and taken to a lock-up which was worse than a urinal. The next morning I was brought before the Magistrate. I am an advocate of the High Court and I told the Magistrate that he might take a bond for good behaviour from me and leave me off. The application was opposed on behalf of Government and I was then in jail for 7 days. As soon as I came out of the jail they passed an order under section 144 that I must not speak to the labourers or do anything else to further their cause. I appointed my wife as president and she carried on. I thought that at least her sex would secure for her chivalrous treatment.

Mr. Siva Rao came here. The whole thing was mismanaged. The strikers lost heavily. It was in August or September 1927. Many of the workers who were members of the labour union were dismissed.

G-4518. You say that the immediate cause of the strike was petty persecution of a few labourers ?—There was some bad treatment and heavy fines.

G-4519. When was the cut in wages effected ?—I do not remember the actual date ; it was effected in 1926 long before the strike. When the cut was effected the workmen said that they would not receive their wages and would rather die of starvation. The District Magistrate sent for me and the workmen decided to abide by the decision of the District Magistrate and myself. The employers wanted a reduction of 20 per cent. and finally it was agreed to make a reduction of 15 per cent. only. In 1929 again there was a small strike which was not managed by the labour union. The Labour Commissioner came to Coimbatore and settled the matter.

G-4520. In what capacity did the District Magistrate send for you when the employers proposed a reduction of wages ?—As President of the Labour Union here.

G-4521. The proposal was for a reduction of 20 per cent. Was it through the intervention of the District Magistrate that it was reduced to 15 per cent ?—Yes.

G-4522. Was the reduction accepted by the Union ?—I told the Union to accept it because there was a promise to reconsider the matter after three months. But the reconsideration led to a further reduction of wages in 1929.

G-4523. You say there was a small strike. What do you mean by a small strike ?—About 400 weavers in two mills here under the same agency went on strike because they would not agree to a reduction of 5 per cent. of their wages.

G-4524. What was the result of the strike ?—As usual a failure. The men went back to work on still reduced salary.

G-4525. With regard to this order under section 144 have you appealed against it ?—I did not appeal because I thought it was not worth while doing it. As the Commission was coming I was more anxious to collect materials for the Commission than appeal against an order in which I may or may not succeed.

G-4526. With regard to this note you say : " Amongst other things to ascertain the grievances and remedy the same." What do you do to remedy the grievances ?—The note was circulated in Tamil. The correct rendering of the phrase will be " to take steps to remedy the same."

G-4527. What steps will you take to remedy the grievances ?—Pass resolutions and send deputations to Government and carry on propaganda among the workers and so on.

G-4528. Was there any other person in Coimbatore district who had thought of going to the tea gardens in order to collect information to put before the Commission ?—One gentleman from Coimbatore went up to the Anamalais at the invitation of the planters. He has submitted his observations in a memorandum which I have read. His object seems to be to make the workmen better workmen in order that they might bring more profits

to the planters. My idea was not merely to make them better workmen but also make them better citizens. I thought of holding a meeting at Valparai and at the end of the meeting issue a questionnaire to the workers in order to collect information to be placed before the Commission.

G-4529. When was the order served on you ?—The order was served on the 22nd instant while the meeting was announced for the 23rd.

G-4530. Did you try to send anybody else in place of yourself ?—I did not for the simple reason that nobody else had the courage to go when I an advocate of this place was prevented by the order.

G-4531. *Sir Alexander Murray* : You have answered certain questions of Mr. Cliff about the causes of the strike which took place in 1927. But the Madras Government Memorandum, which is written with the help of the Commissioner of Labour, gives an entirely different statement of the causes of the strike. What is the difference due to ?—I am glad you have asked the question. I have seen the Commissioner of Labour only on paper. He always goes by the police reports of such cases. In this country nobody believes in police reports.

G-4532. *Mr. Cliff* : The magistrate does sometimes.—The police and the magistrate go together.

G-4533. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I understand that the Commissioner of Police was present during the last strike and had a talk with the management and settled the strike. Dealing with the strike in 1927 the Government Memorandum says that it arose out of the suspension of three weavers who were charged by the police for assaulting a member of the company's staff ?—It may have been one of the contributory causes.

G-4534. Dealing with the strike in 1929 the Government say that " the cause of the strike was the dissatisfaction on the part of the labourers with the remuneration offered to them for working two looms instead of one as previously."—It amounted to a cut in wages.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. E. F. THOMAS, Collector and District Magistrate, Coimbatore.

G-4535. *Sir Alexander Murray* : Mr. Thomas, how long have you been in the Civil Service ?—I have been 25 years in the Indian Civil Service.

G-4536. How long have you been in industrial centres ?—I have been in Calicut and Palghat which are places of some industrial importance. I have been Director of Industries, Madras, in which capacity I have had something to do with major industries also.

G-4537. Coimbatore is a big district. How many sub-divisional officers have you to help you in the administration of the district ?—Coimbatore is 7,500 square miles. There are five sub-divisional officers, one at each of the following places—Pollachi, Coimbatore, Erode, Gopichettipalaiyam and Kollegal.

G-4538. How many superior Police Officers are there ?—There is one Superintendent of Police and three Deputy Superintendents of Police.

G-4539. Who is there at Pollachi ?—Pollachi is in charge of the District Superintendent of Police of Coimbatore.

G-4540. Where were you in 1929 when the Madras Planters' Act was repealed ?—I was in this district.

220

G-4541. Did you do anything to inform the tea garden workers generally that the old penal Act was no longer in force ?—I have no knowledge that anything like that was done. I do not think there was any publicity.

G-4542. Just before you came here was there not a court sitting at Valparai in connection with the administration of the Criminal Act ?—I cannot say anything about that ; there was no court in my time. I came here in June 1928.

G-4543. When the Madras Planters' Act was in existence I understood that a special magistrate went up to Valparai to dispose of cases under the Act ?—It is quite possible. I have no knowledge of it. A special magistrate might have gone there to serve the convenience of both the parties because there is a long distance between Pollachi and Valparai.

G-4544. If it was advisable to have a court of that description when the old Act was in force is it not still advisable to have a court now also ?—There is nothing to try now.

G-4545. If the workers in the Anamalais want to make any complaint what do they do ?—I think most probably they go down to the court at Pollachi. Pollachi is the nearest place they can come to or they can write to me direct.

G-4546. How are the workers recruited to the Anamalais ? Is it under an agreement or under a promissory note ?—I am afraid I have no knowledge of that.

G-4547. There seems to be some agreement still in existence chiefly through the help of the promissory notes. Do you know anything about the system of promissory notes ?—I do not know in what way the Labour Department of the Planters' Association got over the transfer from the old penal Act to the present stage. When I was a sub-divisional magistrate I can remember trying cases under the old Act.

G-4548. Under the old Act they used to put a thumb mark on the agreement form but now they put their thumb mark on the promissory note. Do you think that the coolie now knows the difference between an agreement and a promissory note ?—No.

G-4549. What is the difference between the old agreement and a promissory note with an undertaking to work for 11 months ?—I am not quite sure about it because I am not a civil lawyer. I take it that it is easier to sue on a promissory note.

G-4550. When a *mistri* in the Anamalais wants to sue a coolie on his promissory note, where can he sue him ?—I think he can be sued in the place he resides. I am not sure. (*Mr. Ramaswami Ayyangar*) : He can be sued in any place having jurisdiction over the man. For instance, he can be sued in Pollachi.

G-4551. Have there been many such cases in the Pollachi court ?—(*Mr. Thomas*) : I have no information about the volume of civil litigation.

G-4552. When a decree is obtained against a man what will be the next step ?—The next step is to apply for execution. You may proceed against his property and in the last resort you can obtain a warrant of arrest from the civil court against the defaulter.

G-4553. We have asked the tea garden coolies what the position is as they understand it to be. They said that if they ran away a warrant of arrest would be issued and they would be put in jail or brought back. It appears to me that a warrant of arrest is in some way connected with the signing of promissory note and the impression in the minds of the coolies. —I have had much to do with litigation in this district and the sums advanced to the coolies are so small that if I were a private citizen I would not consider it worth while to take out a warrant of arrest.

G-4554. Let us assume that a tea garden labourer is arrested for not implementing his promissory note, how long will he be put in jail ?—I think six months.

G-4555. Suppose some money is advanced to a coolie to pay his railway fare and go to the garden but the coolie does not go to the garden or return the money, what action will lie against him ?—I think a charge of criminal misappropriation may be brought against him. If he is found guilty he will be sentenced to imprisonment.

G-4556. *Mr. Cliff* : Would he be given the option of paying back the money ?—No. I am not quite sure.

G-4557. *Sir Alexander Murray* : The *mistris* sometimes take labour up under false pretences. Have you had instances of *mistris* being prosecuted for such matters ?—I have come across cases in connection with recruitment to Ceylon and Straits Settlements but not in connection with recruitment to plantations in India itself.

G-4558. If a coolie in the Anamalais has a complaint to make against somebody under the law do you think he has got sufficient facilities to do it ? Do you think he has sufficient freedom to do it ?—I should say he has more freedom in the plantations than in the plains where there is more or less a great deal of intimidation by wealthy landlords.

G-4559. Have you got anything like the *Vetti* or the *Goti* system which prevails in the northern districts of this Presidency under which the labourers are more or less in lifelong servitude to their masters ?—There is nothing in the law but it exists in practice in one place. I know of one case in the plains where the labourers are expected to do a day's labour in the year for nothing.

G-4560. So far as the tea garden workers are concerned if they have got to complain against somebody or something they have either to write a letter to you or go down to Pollachi ?—Yes. If the case is cognizable by the police they can make a complaint at the police station at the Anamalais.

G-4561. About 30,000 coolies go up to the Anamalais and 30,000 return from the Anamalais every year so that about 50 to 60 thousand pass through Pollachi every year. Is there any depôt or any place where these coolies may rest on their way ?—There is one on the hills half way up.

G-4562. Is there nothing at Pollachi or Coimbatore before they begin to climb up and as soon as they arrive at the railway station ?—I do not think so.

G-4563. There is nothing of that description although 50 to 60 thousand coolies go up and down every year ?—I do not think the number is so large as that. A large percentage of them stay there permanently on the hills.

221

G-4564. Even if you took half the number it comes to 30,000. Should they not have a rest house or a depôt where they can stay before they make the journey up the hill ?—I do not think there is any difficulty now.

G-4565. Do you in any way directly or indirectly when you visit the garden or other areas, hear complaints of any description about the gardens ?—If any complaint came along which I thought ought to be investigated I would certainly go myself or send somebody else. But I have not till now received any complaints.

G-4566. Has your sub-divisional officer at Pollachi got any complaints ?—I do not know.

G-4567. Could you let us have a statement showing the number and nature of the complaints received by the Police officers at Valparai and Pollachi and by the district officers from the tea garden coolies or against the tea garden coolies ?—Certainly.

G-4568. The Royal Commission on Agriculture recommended that the ideal should be free movement of labour from one part of India to another. Keeping that in view do you think that it is necessary to appoint an officer to look after the large mass of labour that goes up and down on the Anamalais in order to see that on their way up they get sufficient water, conservancy and so on and after they have reached the garden they have a man to whom they can make their complaints if any ?—I do not think any officer is necessary. A great number of labourers go up in buses now-a-days.

G-4569. But even now we get a lot of complaints from the coolies. What is the bus fare now ?—About Rs. 2-8-0 or Rs. 2-4-0.

G-4570. Who controls the buses ?—I control them.

G-4571. Who fixes the rates ?—The rates are fixed by me.

G-4572. What are the rates ?—I do not know.

G-4573. We were told that for adults they charge Rs. 2-8-0 and for children Rs. 1-4-0. Up at the other end when there is a crowd of, say, 100 coolies and there is only one bus which can accommodate 20 persons, we have reasons to believe that people auction the seats and that instead of charging Rs. 2-8-0 they charge very much more than the usual rate. Have you ever had complaints ?—I have no doubt that the practice exists, but I have had no complaints.

G-4574. Have you ever done anything to put a stop to the practice ?—No ; it is impossible I think. If I get a complaint that a man has over charged, and if that complaint is substantiated, I would cancel his permit at once.

G-4575. Will you please enquire whether there are any complaints of that description ?—I certainly will.

G-4576. *Mr. Cliff* : If there are more people waiting for a bus than the bus can carry, would the police regard as part of their duty to report to you that the bus was not giving adequate service ?—Yes.

G-4577. Would a policeman stationed up there take any note of this occurrence ?—Yes, he would.

G-4578. Have you heard any reports with regard to the adequacy or the inadequacy of the service ?—No. As a matter of fact, the service on

the ghat is limited by me from the point of view of safeguarding the public. If you have too many buses you have racing, and if you have too few, of course, the prices go up. I have got the whole question of bus regulation in this district under consideration with my Superintendent of Police. I might say it is an extremely difficult problem and it will take a lot of working out.

G-4579. *Sir Alexander Murray* : May I say that in Shillong they have one way traffic, and the control is at the centre ?—I found that, when I first came here and discussed this matter with the people up there, there were very few buses, and I said that I was prepared to increase the number if it were necessary. But you know it is a very difficult ghat road.

G-4580. Will one way traffic solve that problem ?—Except when drivers get a little bit drunk there has been no cause for complaint.

G-4581. *Mr. Cliff* : As regards the repeal of the Madras Planters' Act, how does the administrative machinery operate ?—The machine stops functioning.

G-4582. How are the work-people made aware of that ?—I presume they discover that the Act does not work as far as they are concerned.

G-4583. If it confers any specific benefit on them are they not made aware of the provisions of it ?—These Acts are published in the district gazettes which probably do not reach the labouring classes as they are very largely illiterate. Everything possible is done to publish the repeal of these Acts in the villages where the villagers are concerned.

G-4584. Can it be taken that notices have been issued in the villages from which these people have been recruited ?—I cannot answer definitely, but I can say in all probability, yes.

G-4585. Would the Collector for the district be the officer responsible for doing that ?—Yes : these things are published in the village sheet.

G-4586. Would it be possible for you to look from your records and send us a copy of the notice that was issued in connection with this particular thing ?—I shall look through the records certainly.

G-4587. Will you tell us how many orders you have issued under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code ?—When I was the Collector and District Magistrate in Malabar, I issued quite a fair number at the time of the non-co-operation and khilafat movements.

G-4588. How many have you issued in this district ?—Since I have been here there have been three that I could recollect. One was issued during the railway strike by the Sub-Magistrate of Erode to certain persons who were going to hold a meeting to recommend illegal acts ; one was issued comparatively recently in respect of the construction of a temple which was disputed between two parties and there seemed to be considerable probability that the two parties would fight it out ; and the third one was issued to Mr. Ramaswami Ayyangar in connection with his visit to Anamalais.

G-4589. I want to ask you if you saw the notice which is referred to was apparently issued in the Anamalais ?—I saw that ; to be more correct, I saw a translation of it.

222

G-4590. In the first paragraph of your order it says : " ....The notice further states that the misdeeds generally done by the *mistris* and clerks will be discussed." Is there any mention of that statement in the notice ? —I think the translated statement is slightly ambiguous. The more correct translation would be " the misdeeds done to them or the things they have to complain of ". I was misled by the translation.

G-4591. If you are quoting a notice and the notice is incorrectly quoted, the order is bad in form ?—I am not sure, but I think it is probably, not, because the true translation gives even more support to the order that I passed.

G-4592. In the same paragraph it says " calling a monster meeting". Is there either in tamil or in English any reference to a monster meeting ? —The meeting was intended to be addressed to the planting labour generally, was it not ?

G-4593. I see that it is a notice to the labourers. But my question is is there anything in the notice which says that he was calling a monster meeting ? It is the language and the form of the order that I am concerned with ?—No doubt you are entitled to criticize it, but it seems to me that it is a reasonably accurate description of a notice addressed to the labourers on the Anamalai estates.

G-4594. Let me take the second paragraph where it says : " The notice is obviously provocative ". Can you tell me wherein the notice is obviously provocative ?—It comes from a gentleman who has never, as far as I know, taken any interest in planting labour. He announces that the meeting is to be held at 4 P.M. and says that " from morning 9 he may be interviewed and spoken to by those who wish to do so."

G-4595. What I want to know is whether the gentleman referred to is obviously provocative or the notice is obviously provocative ?—I am not at all sure that I am prepared to discuss this order of mine piecemeal at any rate in public.

G-4596. Kindly turn to the second page of the order where it says : " The report further represents that a considerable proportion of the employees on the plateau are definitely opposed to agitation of this kind." Is there any evidence that you could give to the Commission in regard to that agitation ?—I have a police report to that effect.

G-4597. In the subsequent paragraph it says : " From the police report the substance of which is summarized above...." Have we got a summary of the substance of the police report above ?—Yes.

G-4598. I see a statement, but what I was wondering was whether a considerable body of the employees on the tea gardens had objected to a meeting in order to discuss their grievances ?—I was so informed by the local police.

G-4599. Can you tell me whether the police officer concerned has been moving about among the tea garden labourers on the estates ?—Yes, it is his duty.

G-4600. Can it be said that the tea garden labourers are opposed to taking any steps to ventilate any grievances they may have before the Royal Commission on Labour ? Is that a police report ?—I do not follow you.

G-4601. Take the second paragraph of the notice to the labourers ; it says : " Steps will be taken for ventilating grievances before the Royal

Commission and secure redress." It appears to me that this paragraph which I have just referred to includes that in the agitation, and I was wondering whether a body of work-people in this country had really put to any person that they did not want their grievances ventilated before the Royal Commission. Do you think that is possible ?—No ; nor do I imply it.

G-4602. *Sir Alexander Murray* : I take it that this order was written by you in Bhavani in Camp immediately on receipt of a report by the police which included a copy of this notice issued to the labourers ?—Yes.

G-4603. You proceeded then to draft and write immediately this particular order under section 144 ?—Yes.

G-4604. May I further say that at the time you wrote it you did not expect that it would be submitted to an examination like this ? In your mind there were good grounds for issuing an order under Section 144 and as the District Magistrate of this district you felt it your duty to issue it ?—Yes.

G-4605. *Mr. Cliff* : Is an order issued in this way subject to appeal ?—Not appeal exactly, but revision.

G-4606. Therefore, the form of the notice would be open to challenge ?—Certainly it can be challenged.

G-4607. I want to ask you whether the police or the District Magistrate has taken any steps to assist the tea garden labourers to bring any of their grievances or any matters affecting their conditions of employment before the Royal Commission ?—No.

G-4608. *Colonel Russell* : Mr. Ramaswami Ayyangar said that, in order to put a stop to the recruitment of labour through the *mistris*, he was in favour of Government recruiting agencies being established, and he suggested that, for instance, in the Coimbatore district the tahsildar and the village officers might be employed for the purpose of recruiting labour required for the plantations. As the Collector of Coimbatore, do you think that your tahsildars and the village officers have got the time and the opportunity for doing that work ?—Certainly not.

G-4609. For what reason ?—They have got too much to do already.

G-4610. *Miss Power* : At present the conditions in tea factories are subject to supervision by factory inspectors, but conditions on tea estates are not so subject. Do you think that it would be a good thing if an officer with health qualifications—let us call him for the moment a health officer—were appointed by the Government for the purpose of inspection of tea estates as opposed to factories, to inspect, for instance, the lines, water-supply, sanitary conditions and the health and general, every day conditions of living of the workers employed on the estates ?—Not under present conditions, as regards the Anamalais ; the estates up there have a really well-organized medical branch, which is entirely independent of the managing branch of the industry, to look after the welfare of the coolies. They have three European doctors and a number of civil hospitals maintained for the benefit of the population on the estates.

G-4611. My point is this : Experience has shown all over the world the necessity for inspection by a disinterested authority of the safety and health conditions inside factories. Do you think it is a wise thing that workers who are living on private estates should not be subject to any

form of inspection as regards their conditions of living other than that made by the persons who themselves imposed those conditions ? Are those people the best judges of whether the provisions they are supplying in respect of medical facilities and other amenities are adequate ? Should there not be somebody to represent the community at large to see whether those conditions come up to a certain recognized standard ?—I have no objection whatever to the introduction of an outside agency.

G-4612. *Colonel Russell* : Do you not think that apart from not being objectionable it would be of advantage ?—It might be of advantage.

G-4613. *Sir Alexander Murray* : If you have anything to add, in camera, to what you have said, you can say so ?—Let me say this in public. I do not think it is really fair to take sentences out of the order in the way that Mr. Cliff has done and deal with the order piece-meal. I would like to put before the Commission my point of view. I am the District Magistrate of this district and am responsible to the Government for the public tranquility of the district. Subordinate to me there are sub-divisional magistrates and there are other magistrates who are subordinate to them. All the sub-divisional magistrates are empowered to issue orders under 144, and some second-class magistrates are also empowered to issue orders in the same way. If a magistrate issues an order which I consider to be a bad order I would certainly have it cancelled, or direct the magistrate to cancel the order. But his responsibility is the same as mine, only over a smaller area. But my responsibility is greater, and as District Magistrate I am responsible to the Government for the public tranquility of this district. In this case, I received the police report through the District Superintendent of Police and came to the conclusion partly on that report and partly on my knowledge of the district which I have been acquiring during the last 21 months that it was necessary in the interests of public tranquility and to prevent a breach of the peace—the consequence of which I could not foresee—to pass this order prohibiting Mr. Ramaswami Ayyangar from going to that place and taking the action that he proposed in the notice. I need hardly say that I was not thinking of the Commission at the time, and I should be the last person I hope in this district or in India to try to interfere in any way with the activities of this Commission. This order has been passed by me as a judicial order for which I am responsible. The aggrieved person—and there must be an aggrieved person in such an order in every case—has got remedy in two ways : He can question the legality of the order in the High Court which has wide powers of revision ; he can also petition the Government and say that this order should not have been applied to him in which case the Government would enquire into the matter and would tell me to cancel the order if they thought that I was wrong ; they would also probably pass a censure on me. As I said, there is a remedy for the aggrieved person. After I entered the room I heard the last witness saying that he has not taken any steps to apply that remedy. The law should be entirely impersonal, and so far as my administration of the law goes I can say with complete confidence that my administration of the law is entirely impersonal and has no consideration for any other thing than the criminal law requires me to consider and that is laid down in Section 144. I might say that these orders are not popular things with magistrates who have to issue them ; nobody wants to issue an order under 144 if he can help it.

(The witness withdrew.)

COORG.

One hundred and first Meeting.

MERCARA.

Wednesday, 12th March 1930.

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. (*Presiding*).

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Mr. NICOLLS. } *Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. THIMMAYYA PUNJA. }

Mrs. TIMMAYA, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary.*

AT THE HALLERI COFFEE ESTATE.

Katti Chattu, a male coolie.

G-4614. I get As. 6 a day. I took Rs. 35 advance when I came here and I gave my thumb impression ; that was last March. My *mistri* brought me here ; he is a man of my village. I come from Wallavanwad in Malabar.

G-4615. I spend Rs. 1-4-0 on food every week ; I work 6 days a week. I have no land. I have not sent any money to my village yet. I shall go home and come back again ; there also I shall work on transplantation and ploughing.

G-4616. My accounts are not settled yet. If I pay off the money I have received in advance they will let me go home. I have been working on this estate for the last 7 years. I went home last March, stayed in my country for three weeks and came back to the estate.

G-4617. When I got the advance I gave the money to my mother who is in my country. I am indebted to the extent of Rs. 5 or Rs. 10. I am 25 years old and am a bachelor. I have had no facilities for education here.

G-4618. Four of us live together. I have not worked in any other garden. I do not get any leave with pay. If I am ill and go to hospital I do not get any pay. I have never been in hospital and I have not been ill. Some coolies have fever ; I do not know whether they are paid when they are ill or not.

(The witness withdrew.)

224

Chikka Mataliga, and his wife, coolies.

G-4619. We are husband and wife ; we come from Hindupur in Anantpur district. We have no land. I go to my village ; I went to my country last new year which is about the end of March, and stayed there for three months. There also I was doing coolie work.

G-4620. I have no debts. I took an advance of Rs. 40 ; that was both for myself and my wife. The manager of the estate gave me the money in my village ; I do not pay any interest for it. I have no other debts.

G-4621. I live in the lines here ; I and my wife and my child live in one room. No one else lives in the room. I get As. 6 a day and my wife gets As. 4 a day. Our child is a boy ; he does not come out to work ; he is three years old. I do not repay anything weekly for the advance ; my accounts are looked into once every year. My master keeps the accounts ; I do not keep accounts ; I do not know how much money I shall take back when I go home ; last year I took Rs. 46 home. That was my pay.

G-4622. The medical man comes here and attends to us. I eat both rice and *ragi* twice a day. I take my first meal at 6 A.M. and turn out for work at 6 A.M. I go home for food in the evening at 5 o'clock. I take no rest in the meantime. I work from 6 in the morning to 5 in the evening. I take my second meal at 8 o'clock in the evening. I do not bring any food with me here to the garden.

G-4623. My wife has a sister who looks after our child. My wife's sister lives in another room. She does not come to work. I feed her. She is a young girl. I know the time for coming to work and going home because the sun will be at a certain height when I go out to work. If I do not work all day on any day nothing happens ; no *mistri* comes after me. My *mistri* has engaged an old woman to look after the babies of mothers who have nobody to look after their babies.

G-4624. I was married 6 or 7 years ago. I took a loan in my village for my marriage expenses but I have discharged that debt. It was Rs. 60. I was not working here at that time. I worked for some years before I was married ; then I went to my country and took service in a house in my village. I stayed there for some time and contracted debts for my marriage when I was working in that house. I have discharged those debts.

G-4625. I am paid daily wages. I pick one bushel of seeds a day. If I pick one bushel I get As. 6 ; if I pick anything extra I am paid at the rate of As. 8 a bushel. If I pick 2 bushels I get As. 6 *plus* As. 8, which is As. 14. If I pick ¼ths of a bushel I am paid a proportionate amount. I and my wife pick together. My wife came here after marriage. I have been working here in this estate for the last three years.

G-4626. I do not work all the 6 days of the week ; I sometimes take a rest. Our child was born in my village. My master gives medical aid when a woman gives birth to a child. When I work in my village I get As. 3 or As. 4 a day. I go home because I like to see my country and my people. I have a house there. I do not worship any God. My caste is Madigah, the shoe-maker caste. My father made shoes and my eldest brother is in the village doing that work. He gets very little money for it.

G-4627. I have no complaints to make ; I am very satisfied. If I do not work I am not beaten. I do not pay any money to the *mistri* nor do I give him drink. I myself drink once a week ; I drink one seer of toddy for which I pay As. 2. My wife drinks one anna worth of toddy. I do not make any wine at home ; other people do not make wine at home.

(*The witnesses withdrew.*)

Muddathappa, a male coolie.

G-4628. I come from Mundli village, Panatindul taluk, Anantpur district. I have three-fourths of an acre of land at home which my father cultivates ; the land belongs to my father. It is his own land. I have no brothers.

G-4629. My father has a debt of Rs. 100 on the land on which he pays 12 per cent. interest. I took an advance of Rs. 25 when I came here. The *mistri* gave me the advance in my country and I gave it to my father. I do not pay anything for that advance from the estate.

G-4630. I am not married. I made an agreement for one year for my Rs. 25. I could go home now before the end of the year. If I went away I would come back but if I did not come back I would have to repay the money.

G-4631. I have never been to jail for not fulfilling the agreement. This is the first year I have taken an advance ; I am new here this year. I do not know anybody who has gone to jail for not fulfilling the agreement.

(The witness withdrew.)

Girria, a mistri.

G-4632. I come from Mandya in Mysore State. I was a coolie before I was a *mistri* ; I worked as a coolie for 5 or 6 years. Last year I brought 15 coolies from my village ; it took me about 15 to 20 days to get these 15 coolies

G-4633. I stay in my country 15 days, a month, and sometimes two months. I got two coolies from my own village and the rest I got from Hindupur which is 110 miles from my village ; I paid advances to those coolies and brought them ; I paid off their debts ; I paid Rs. 100 for one coolie. I tell the coolie the exact conditions that prevail here. I did not give them drink ; why should I spend money on drinks ? For each coolie the estate pays me 10 pies per day. I do not take anything from the coolies.

G-4634. My wife and children are here. My wife does not come out to work. When I recruit the coolies I do not tell them to go in families, or couples or singly. It is left to their choice.

G-4635. Every morning I tell the coolies to come along for work. If they do not turn out I cannot do anything. Every day I shout out "come out for work". About 15 or 20 coolies are working under me now.

G-4636. Any *mistri* who attempted to beat a coolie for not going to work would have to be careful because he would get hit back by the coolie. No coolie has beaten a *mistri* here.

G-4637. I have earned about Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000 on this estate. I have celebrated two marriages here of my family.

225

G-4638. The children start work here at about 10 years of age. In my line a husband and wife and family live in one room. Three or four single men live in one room and cook together. I have been 35 years on this estate ; I have bought about 5 acres of land and I built a house in Mandya on which I spent Rs. 600.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. J. H. SPROTT, Manager of the Halleri and Santaghurry Coffee Estate, Santaghurry.

G-4639. *Mr. Sastri* : How long have you been manager ?—Two years.

G-4640. Are you the only European on the staff ?—No, there is a European at Santaghurry.

G-4641. What other establishment have you besides labour and the *mistris* ?—Writers and there is a fitter.

G-4642. Are there any medical people ?—No.

G-4643. What medical assistance do you give ?—We dispense medicines ourselves. I dispense medicines for minor cases that can be treated on the estate ; otherwise they are taken to Mercara or a doctor from Mercara comes here to visit the estate periodically whenever necessary. If it is a very bad case, on his recommendation they are sent to the Civil Hospital at Mercara.

G-4644. *Mr. Joshi* : Do you pay the doctor any monthly remuneration ?—No, he is paid per visit.

G-4645. How long were you here before you became manager ?—About three years.

G-4646. How many people are there working here on the estate ?—There are 240 coolies on the check roll, 2 writers, a fitter and a mason.

G-4647. That includes the people who are working in the factory ?—Yes.

G-4648. What work do you give your labour throughout the year ?—There is a certain amount of shade lopping of the little green shade trees when they first come in in May. Weeding generally commences about June and goes on practically through the year all the time until September or October. Pitting starts in about June, taking out the dead trees or border trees and making a pit preparatory to putting in of new supply. Then these pits have to be filled afterwards, sometimes in June or August, there being very heavy rain in July. We generally do nothing else but weed in July. Then there is handling to do in September. That is light pruning, breaking off any dead sticks there may be or other handling that is necessary. Then comes planting which may take place before the heavy rain in June, or it may take place after the heavy rain in August and September. Picking starts about the end of November or the beginning of December and the picking goes on till now. Then there is the application of manures which are applied in September and October ; in some places manure is applied twice in a year and in other places only once. Harvesting begins about the end of November or the beginning of December.

G-4649. Month by month how does your labour strength vary ?—After their pay has been given them in settlement they go away ; at the end of April or May our strength is generally about 50. At the end of May the coolies that have been paid up start coming in again after having been to their own country. They go on coming in until about the middle or end of June when we have most of our coolies in ; we have probably 200 here then. Then more come in August or September. The reduction in the number at certain seasons suits me to a certain extent because we have not sufficient work for them at that time of the year. If they were here we should give them work.

G-4650. What are your recruiting expenses ?—Last year I went myself to the coolies' village to recruit and I also went in 1925. My own expenditure last year came to about Rs. 140. The *mistri* gets way expenses for his coolies when he brings them in.

G-4651. You do not charge any interest on the advances given ?—No.

G-4652. How do you deduct the advances ?—At the end of the year when they get their pay they are at liberty to pay back a portion or the whole or none of their advance. If they like to pay back the whole lot they can do so.

G-4653. How much do you pay them a week ?—Every week we pay them just their maintenance money, Rs. 1-4-0 or Rs. 1-8-0. Some coolies eat rice more than *ragi* and when they ask for it they get Rs. 1-8-0 instead of Rs. 1-4-0. Sometimes they want extra money to buy clothes and things like that.

G-4654. Do you keep a separate passbook for each coolie ?—I have a big check roll which contains the name of every coolie and an entry as to every day's work.

G-4655. *Mr. Clow* : May we see that book ?—Certainly. (Same handed to Mr. Clow).

G-4656. *Mr. Joshi* : How do you pay for the work other than plucking ?—Each day they have so many trees to weed on contract and when they have finished that number they can go to their lines. Pruning is chiefly done by outside coolies who do it for so many rupees per acre. They are chiefly contractor's coolies. Manuring and pruning is done by the day.

G-4657. You pay the women As. 4 per bushel, the men As. 6 per bushel, and the children As. 2½ for a half bushel ?—Yes.

G-4658. Whom do you call a child ?—Anyone who cannot do a woman's work during the non-plucking season. It is not according to age but according to size and capability. On an average I should say women pick as much as men and sometimes more.

G-4659. How many rooms have you here in the lines ?—I should think nearly 100 rooms.

G-4660. How many days in a week do the people generally work ?—Generally between 150 and 200 days in a year. Sometimes we pluck half a day on Sundays.

2216

G-4661. Are these estates inspected by anybody ?—The Managing Director comes out from England periodically to inspect.

G-4662. Does anybody inspect on behalf of Government ?—No ; during my time the plantation has never been inspected.

G-4663. How many prosecutions did you launch under the Coorg Labour Act last year ?—Very few ; this estate has always had very few defaulters ; perhaps there were a dozen prosecutions.

G-4664. What are the penalties ?—The magistrate generally tells them to return to the estate and work off their debts. They do not often get jailed.

G-4665. You have no system by which a man receives wages while he is sick ?—No.

G-4666. Do you give any bonus at the end of the year apart from the As. 4 you give every week ?—At the end of the year all the coolies make a feast and they are given from the estate so much per head towards that feast.

G-4667. Have you any system of fining people ?—No. If they do very bad work or make some big mistake they are put down as absent for that day and they lose a day's pay ; for instance, if they steal another man's crop they are punished in that way.

G-4668. *Mr. Clow* : This check roll indicates that practically all the labourers have money due to them ?—Yes.

G-4669. There are practically none now with any debt outstanding ?—Yes ; the only ones who owe any money to the estate are the few who bolted and ran away.

G-4670. I see one man has Rs. 2,700 due to him ?—That is money due to a *mistri* and his coolies.

G-4671. Do you pay the *mistri* or the coolie ?—I pay the coolies themselves. This year the settlement will probably be made at the end of April. I have not settled with any coolies yet. Some went away without leave, so to speak, or decamped. When coolies leave like that they often come back for their money. If they do not return the money is paid to their relations sometimes.

G-4672. Have you any substantial amount in the way of unclaimed wages ?—No, none. When coolies decamp they usually do so owing me money.

G-4673. You have a number of men entered as occasionally doing half a day's work ?—That probably means they have only picked half a bushel instead of a full bushel or have had fever and gone back without finishing the day's work.

G-4674. Will you send us a statement as to the amount of money earned by *mistris* ?—Yes.

G-4675. You pay wages on a piece-rate system ?—Yes.

G-4676. But you do not pay the same rates to a woman for the same amount of work as you do to a man ?—Some estates do. It has not been done on this estate this year and it is not as a rule done on this estate. The women have never objected to that because I probably pay more for

extra work. In some cases a man and a woman for their first bushel get As. 6 and both get As. 6 for their extra bushel ; but my system is to pay As. 8 for the second bushel to both man and woman. That is a method of encouraging them to pick more than a single bushel.

G-4677. What does the bonus come to ?—Every one who works 6 days in a week gets As. 4 for the week. Roughly we pay out about Rs. 200 a month by way of bonus.

G-4678. That is an average of nearly a rupee a head ?—Yes.

G-4679. When are most of the advances given ?—In March or April.

G-4680. Are the advances given before they go away ?—In some cases. New coolies generally take money from their *mistris* or the writer in their own country ; the agreement is made out there. The coolies who are on the estate nearly always take an advance from the estate.

G-4681. They sign a fresh agreement for the next year before they leave ?—Yes, in some cases.

G-4682. When do you expect them to return ?—Roughly in about a month ; some only stay for a fortnight.

G-4683. How long does it take to work off an advance ?—For a marriage or something like that they will demand Rs. 100 and it takes them sometime to pay that off. If they have taken a moderate amount and have worked well and regularly they are nearly always in credit at the end of the season.

G-4684. You keep a woman to look after the non-working children ?—Yes.

G-4685. At what age do the children begin to work ?—In picking time at about 7 or 8 years of age but for ordinary work they do not come till 10 or 11 years ; it depends more on their size and capabilities. In picking time the parents get their children out to help them.

G-4686. You do not give any payments in grain ?—No, not here ; we used to give them their bonus in grain but they asked for it in cash and I assented. We grow grain here which they can buy. There is no shop. There are paddy fields owned by the estate which my writer cultivates, pays the expenses, gives the straw to the estate and then sells the paddy to the coolies at a rate less than the bazaar rate. It is only a limited supply.

G-4687. You dwo not allow leave with pay for any worker ?—No. They can have it . it is available, but they do not seem to want it. I do not know why that is so ; probably it is too much trouble to work it. They have lots of time to work it. They have all Sundays and evenings. Some coolies are finished by 2 o'clock.

G-4688. Are you troubled by them drinking here ?—To a certain extent. I have just lodged a complaint about it. The toddy shop down the road sells toddy to them during working hours and I objected to it.

G-4689. What do you think will be the result of the abolition of the system of penal contracts ?—I do not think it will make much difference.

G-4690. You do not anticipate difficulty in getting the labour out ?—No ; we shall have to work on a system of advances ; otherwise they will not come ; the first thing they ask for is an advance.

G-4691. Are you troubled much with malaria ?—Not a great deal. The majority of the children appear to have enlarged spleens but they seem to be quite healthy in spite of that. Sickness is bad during the east winds and this year we had almost an epidemic of pneumonia when the east wind started, there being three deaths.

G-4692. Have any of the estates round here any permanent medical arrangements at all ?—Yes, some of them have ; they have either resident doctors or nurses. I have not attempted to introduce such a system here because up to now I have not found it necessary.

G-4693. What is the population of this estate ?—I do not know exactly. Of my total labour force of 240, about 60 are women and children working. I draw my labour mainly from Hindupur in Anantpur district and Wallavanwad taluk ; a few come from Timkai which is in Mysore State.

G-4694. How many of your 240 coolies would be new ones ?—Nearly 200 were here in the previous year and 40 are new ones.

G-4695. *Mr. Ahmed* : Do you give any maternity benefit to the coolies ?—Yes. I only had 8 births on the estate this year and I paid the equivalent of about Rs. 300 to those eight. I give them something more when the children are a year old ; the total is about Rs. 10 each. Shortly before the birth of a child the women are given light work and do any work they like to do.

G-4696. You do not allow any leave with pay ?—No.

G-4697. You do not allow leave with pay for any worker ?—No. They are given leave with pay for one day, for one festival in the year.

G-4698. There are no educational facilities in the garden ?—No, not on this garden.

G-4699. All the labour comes from outside ?—About half a dozen live within a mile or two of the estate.

G-4700. You do not get the local labour because they are agriculturists and have land ?—That is partly the reason.

G-4701. I take it that the wages they get in agriculture are much higher than the remuneration you give in the garden and that is the reason they are not available ?—They have their own homes and they generally work on whatever is going on nearest their homes.

G-4702. They could live in their own homes and work as well here ?—It is probably 5 or 6 miles to walk.

G-4703. There is no sickness insurance here ?—No.

G-4704. There is no doctor in the garden ?—No.

G-4705. We found on your estate a man whose name was Vilthakan, who lost his leg about a year ago in consequence of a cut which he sustained while working on your estate. He did not get any money or compensation. While he was in the hospital did he get anything ?—No.

G-4706. I am not now speaking of your estate, but is not the large number of prosecutions for offences under the Coorg Labour Act due to the fact that the managers are very hard and there are many false prosecutions ?—I do not think so.

G-4707. Have you any recreation ground ?—Yes, they used to play football there but they are not playing football at present ; we have sports once a year.

G-4708. Is it true to say that the chief cause of migration from the villages to the plantations is the poverty and indebtedness of the labourer and also the activities of the labour recruiter ?—Yes, I should say that is correct.

G-4709. Are you in favour of the establishment of employment agencies ?—I would not like to express an opinion upon that.

G-4710. You pay your men As. 6 per day. If a man is supporting a wife and two children, will not his food and clothing cost more than As. 6 per day ?—No, I should not say so.

G-4711. Is it not true to say that the labourers do not receive a living wage and that is why their women and children work ?—Not at all ; I think their women are very happy working.

G-4712. If the labourer could earn a fair living wage I suppose he would maintain his wife and send his children to school ?—I am sure the labourers on this estate would not.

G-4713. The infantile mortality is very high here, is it not ?—I suppose it is.

G-4714. The children do not get good food, and there would be less infantile mortality if the children had milk and good food ?—When I started giving maternity benefits I suggested to my coolies that they should have Mellins Food, but they said they wanted something else. One cannot get milk ; it is not obtainable.

G-4715. What commission does the *mistri* receive ?—About 12 to 15 per cent. on the coolies' wages ; it is not deducted from the earnings of the coolie.

G-4716. *Mr. Clow* : In this book there is a gang under a man called Balloo ?—He is my writer.

G-4717. There are 53 men here ?—Yes.

G-4718. Some are shown in your book as earning As. 6 and some As. 7. Which of them get As. 7 ?—Those working in the pulp house and at odd jobs who have no opportunity of earning extra money, and for that reason they get a higher daily wage.

G-4719. Those 53 men began the month with a total balance due to them of Rs. 1,581-12-6 ?—Yes.

G-4720. And a balance against them of Rs. 11-11-0 due to you ?—Yes.

G-4721. They earned during the month Rs. 491-5-6 ?—Yes.

G-4722. This was for February, 28 days ; they worked a total number of 1029½ days ; they were given advances during the month amounting to Rs. 223-14-0 ; so at the end of the month the estate owed them Rs. 1,847, and they owed the estate Rs. 9-7-0 ?—That is right.

G-4723. Would that be a typical month ?—It is a typical month during picking time. In the other months they are not earning all this extra money. They may earn a certain amount of money which is not put on

the check roll at all but is paid to them direct. When a cooly has finished his daily work he is at liberty to earn more money on the estate.

G-4724. Are they given a slip at the end of each week to indicate to them how much they have earned ?—No. I think all my coolies understand that at any time they can come and have this explained to them.

G-4725. *Mr. Sastri* : How are advances made to these men ?—Under the Coorg Labour Act when money is advanced and an agreement is made it has to be witnessed by certain people recommended and sanctioned by Government. If the agreements are not witnessed by those people they are not valid.

G-4726. At the time when the accounts are cleared up, is it all done in your presence ?—Yes, it is done by me.

G-4727. The account is settled direct between you and the coolies and the *mistris* do not come into it ?—It is done between me and the coolies. I settle with the *mistris* separately.

G-4728. *Mr. Joshi* : How many *mistris* have you ?—Fourteen.

G-4729. *Mr. Sastri* : Do you know of any quarrel between the *mistris* and the coolies ?—No. I had cases of that kind but I got rid of the writer or recruiter about whom the complaint was made. The *mistris* and coolies who are here now are very friendly. The coolies know that if they make any complaint it will be looked into.

G-4730. I think you talk Canarese and Telugu ?—Yes.

G-4731. Is that so in the case of most of the managers ?—I do not think most of the managers have Telugu coolies.

G-4732. Do you frequently visit the lines ?—Yes, very frequently.

G-4733. Do quarrels occur in the lines owing to drink or arising from sexual matters ?—There is a certain amount of quarrels due to drink, but they are very soon cleared up. We have not had any quarrels about women.

G-4734. *Mr. Clow* : Are the people of whom you speak as writers merely clerks ?—They are overseers to look after the work on the estate. They are really a sort of *mistri* ; they speak English. If I am away I leave them in charge. One of my writers recruits the coolies.

G-4735. Does a coolie ever ask you during the season how his account stands ?—No.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. J. S. H. MORGAN, Mr. P. J. TIPPING, Colonel H. MURLAND, and Mr. J. H. SPROTT, representing the Coorg Planters' Association, Mercara.

G-4736. *Mr. Sastri* : Have you always been affiliated to the United Planters' Association of Southern India ?—(*Mr. Morgan*) : Yes. We were the original body ; they are a later body. Our views in general agree with theirs.

G-4737. What is your opinion about the abolition of the Coorg Labour Act ?—Those areas which have lost their Act have suffered no disadvantage from it and I do not think we shall.

G-4738. Are there any Indian planters who are members of your Association ?—We have one Indian member ; we had a good many Indian members before the subscription rates were raised but now they are not members because they are not prepared to pay the subscription.

G-4739. Is it due to political reasons ?—No, we do not interfere in politics at all.

G-4740. Has it anything to do with racial feeling ?—I do not think so

G-4741. You say the average contract is from June 1st to March 31st, which means ten months. You say the average wage for a man is As. 6 a day, which is Rs. 2-4-0 a week. Therefore at the termination of the contract period each man should get a good deal more than Rs. 100, whereas in fact the average total earning is Rs. 75 for men ; that suggests there are some heavy deductions ?—The man does not work all the days of the 10 months. Then his weekly advance is deducted. Some of them go away for a couple of months in the middle of that period. Some coolies are on the estate 5 months out of the 10 months. (*Colonel Murland*) : They are settled up with twice a year and after each settlement they go away for a month or two. (*Mr. Tipping*) : Those who want it can get their pay weekly but all the Coorg people take it twice a year. The Mysorians only take it once a year ; they will not take it more than once a year if you offer it to them because they say they will waste it if they take it.

G-4742. What period does the maternity benefit cover ?—(*Mr. Morgan*) : Some estates give a cash payment to the women of Rs. 3 or something equivalent to that ; other estates put the women on the check roll as being present before and after the birth, even though they are not working.

G-4743. Do you send them away towards the end of their pregnancy ?—(*Colonel Murland*) : It depends greatly on the individual ; some take a long time while others take a short time.

G-4744. But do you allow them to go to work ?—(*Mr. Morgan*) : No force is used ; they come to work if they wish to ; they are probably given light work to do. (*Mr. Tipping*) : On our estate they are paid Re. 1 a week for three or four weeks and that is quite sufficient to keep them for four weeks. I do not pay it in one lump sum because if I did so the husband might take it and spend it on drink ; we dole it out week by week and pay it on condition that the women do not work.

G-4745. *Mr. Ahmed* : Do the women workers return to their villages before the child is born ?—My experience is the other way. They come to us.

G-4746. What provision is there for medical assistance ?—We have three dispensaries and three sub-assistant surgeons. (*Colonel Murland*) : They are treated in their own houses ; I put another woman to look after the woman who is pregnant.

G-4747. Do you mean a qualified nurse ?—No, she is not qualified in any way except by experience.

G-4748. Is she a woman in your pay ?—No.

G-4749. Are these women specially kept for that purpose ?—No. (*Mr. Morgan*) : It is not the usual thing on estates to keep women as midwives.

G-4750. Are you in favour of starting maternity homes on every plantation ?—Most estates now subscribe to the Government dispensary for medical benefit. Many of the estates in Coorg are small estates and it would be very difficult for such estates to organize their own maternity homes.

G-4751. Could not the plantations join together to make provision for maternity homes ?—(*Mr. Tipping*) : I do not think the women would leave one plantation and go to another. (*Mr. Morgan*) : When this matter was discussed by our Association it was agreed that everybody should give certain benefits for maternity cases. Most plantations give Re. 1 per week for three or four weeks.

G-4752. In some cases I suppose they give nothing ?—Possibly in one or two cases.

G-4753. You say that the average cost of living per person per month is Rs. 4. That comes to about As. 2 per day ?—(*Mr. Tipping*) : The average cost of food is Re. 1 per week. If they have more money they spend it not on food but on other things ; most of it goes to the toddy shop.

G-4754. Do they not spend Rs. 7 a month on necessities ?—No.

G-4755. How much rice do they eat ?—On the average they eat a seer of rice per day.

G-4756. What is the price of rice ?—Paddy is about 16 seers to the rupee while rice is about 8 seers to the rupee.

G-4757. Then the cost of a seer of rice will be As. 2. That being so, how can they pay for vegetables, a little meat, *dal*, oil and spices required for cooking ?—I should think that would cost As. 4 a week. (*Colonel Murland*) : They grow a certain amount of their vegetables. (*Mr. Sprott*) : They buy rice raw, but they do not eat a seer of raw rice a day ; by the time they eat the rice its weight is doubled.

G-4758. Are the workers indebted to people in their villages ?—(*Mr. Tipping*) : I could not say ; they are generally indebted to us. The original idea to give them advances was to enable them to leave money with their people in the villages and go away to work.

G-4759. If you paid the wages every week they could send money to their people in the village ?—No, the money would go astray if it was sent to the villages.

G-4760. I would suggest to you that the people take these advances because they are in difficulties and in debt, that under those circumstances they make the agreement under the Coorg Labour Act and that after that they cannot get out of your clutches until the year has expired ?—They can walk away at any time they like and unfortunately they do so.

G-4761. There are a large number of prosecutions under this Act because these people attempt to escape from the contract. They either have to pay back the money or go to jail ?—(*Mr. Morgan*) : Or go to

work. When a coolie has received an advance he sometimes goes to the next estate and takes an advance from them.

G-4762. Does the majority of your labour come from outside ?—Yes.

G-4763. And the majority of them get advances ?—Yes, they come through a labour supplier.

G-4764. The *maistri* makes a profit out of it ?—His account is credited with commission at a certain percentage on the total coolies' earnings, but it is not deducted from the coolies' earnings.

G-4765. Payments are made through *maistris* ?—(*Colonel Murland*) : Some of the weekly advances are paid through *maistris*.

G-4766. Therefore you do not know what the *maistris* pay the coolies ?—The majority of the coolies are paid *out individually*. (*Mr. Morgan*) : The payments are different from advances. Payments are made to the *maistri* and he hands the money over to the coolie, but the coolie has access to the manager.

G-4767. *Mr. Nicolls* : Do you desire compulsory maternity benefits ?—At the present moment I think every estate gives *maternity benefits* of some sort, but it is not organized on a definite scale. I rather doubt whether compulsory maternity benefit would be welcome. (*Mr. Sprott*) : If maternity benefit were made compulsory by law those estates which are now giving more than the law would compel them to give would probably decrease their payment and give what the law prescribed.

G-4768. Advances of Re. 1 or Rs. 1-4-0 are given per week ; is it a fact that in many cases the coolie will not take more than Rs. 1-4-0 because he does not require more ?—(*Mr. Morgan*) : I think the coolie requires at least As. 12 a week. (*Colonel Murland*) : I have had cases of coolies saying that they only wanted As. 8 a week ; they take as little as they can in order to increase the balance when settlement time comes. (*Mr. Morgan*) : Sometimes they will take as much as you will give them ; they vary.

G-4769. If coolies required more for their food per week, do you not think they would ask for it ?—Yes, of course and they would get it.

G-4770. How are advances made to the coolies ?—The advance is generally handed to the coolie before an agent of the Labour Department. It is paid out in the presence of an attesting officer. (*Colonel Murland*) : Every coolie on the plantation has free access to the manager so that if he has any complaint to make he can get a hearing at once and there will be an enquiry.

G-4771. *Mr. Sastri* : I suppose every manager knows one or two vernaculars spoken by the coolies ?—Yes ; in many cases increments of salary of the managers are dependent upon their understanding the language and being able to talk to the individual coolies.

G-4772. *Mr. Thimmayya Punja* : Are the coolies taking more advances than they used to ?—(*Mr. Tipping*) : They certainly demand more and they get more. Some years ago they received about Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 in advance ; at present they will ask as much as Rs. 50, but I hope nobody gives them as much as that. No interest is charged on these advances and the coolie gives no security for them. If the coolie is tired of work

he just walks away. We have no hold over the coolies. This system of giving advances is a most pernicious system. (*Mr. Morgan*) : We should like to abolish this system of giving advances.

G-4773. *Mr. Sastri* : If the Act goes I suppose the advances will cease ?—No, we shall still have to advance without any security ; we cannot get rid of this system of advances. (*Mr. Tipping*) : I have instructed my managers to reduce advances as much as they can. We lose thousands of rupees every year in that way.

G-4773a. *Mr. Thimmayya Punja* : The amount of advance which is paid is left to the discretion of the manager ?—Yes, if the manager has the interest of his labour at heart he will see that they are taken care of and are comfortable. It is in our interests to look after our labour.

G-4774. Are the coolies willing to go to hospital for treatment ?—No, they do not like to go into hospitals.

G-4775. *Mr. Chew* : Why are the coolies unwilling to stay on tea gardens ?—It may be that the work is harder. Coolies who have returned have told me that the tea estates are exposed to the sun while our coffee is all under shade. The coolies prefer to work in the shade.

G-4776. In coffee there is not the heavy hoeing that is necessary with tea ?—There is a certain amount of it, but we generally get contractors to do that.

G-4777. Where do the contractors get the labour ?—They bring the labour up from the west coast ; the labour comes for a month or so and then goes away ; the contract is to do so many acres, and the contractor takes his labour away as soon as he has finished his contract. The contractors' labourers are generally Moplahs.

G-4778. You say you give a free *cumbli*. What is a *cumbli* ?—A blanket.

G-4779. Do you generally pay the travelling expenses of the labourer both ways ?—I think that is pretty general in these days.

G-4780. How many dispensaries are there on the estates in Coorg, not including Government dispensaries ?—I think there are four or five.

G-4781. Have the anti-malarial measures which you have adopted given any results ?—(*Mr. Morgan*) : Very good results ; the planters spray water streams with an anti-malarial mixture, *Pesterine* ; we spray all running water once a fortnight. That has certainly stopped a good deal of malaria.

G-4782. Has your hookworm work had any result ?—(*Mr. Tipping*) : It has had most beneficial effects as far as I am concerned. Once a year we give all our people a day's holiday with pay and treat them for hookworm. They do not mind the treatment : they have a whole day's holiday and they like it ; the men, women and children all come up for the treatment. I cannot say how general that is, but all my estates do it.

G-4783. Do you regard it as an advantage to have liquor shops near the estates ?—No, distinctly otherwise. (*Colonel Murland*) : If there is no liquor shop near by it only means that a man walks miles to get to a liquor shop.

G-4784. Are you troubled at all by enticement of labour from one estate to another ?—(*Mr. Morgan*) : That is really controlled by the

Rules of the Coorg Planters' Association. A certain number of coolies are constantly going off.

G-4785. Have any cases been brought under Section 19 of the Coorg Labour Act in respect of enticement ?—(*Mr. Tipping*) : We have never enforced it. We are reluctant to enforce it because it would create such a lot of bad feeling. It has been threatened but never put into force to my knowledge.

G-4786. What is the expense of recruitment ?—We subscribe to the United Planters' Association of Southern India on an acreage basis. It works out at Rs. 1-3-0 an acre.

G-4787. *How many* labourers do you regard as necessary for an acre ?—We really want one coolie per acre now. Outside the Labour department there is practically no expense of recruitment ; we do not actually recruit ; the *mistris* bring the men in from their own villages ; the *mistris* get commission and travelling allowance.

G-4788. Are many labourers brought in at the present time without agreement ?—Yes, many.

G-4789. And they are not put under agreement when they come to the estates ?—No. (*Colonel Murland*) : I should say about 75 per cent. of our labourers have agreements. A number of old coolies who are continually on the estate have no advances.

G-4790. Do you recruit any labour directly, not through *mistris* ?—Very rarely. We have a system by which any coolie who likes to work on an estate without an advance, at the end of the season gets 3 pies extra a day for every day the man, woman or child works.

G-4791. Is it at all a common practice for the manager himself to go to the recruiting areas and familiarize himself with the conditions there ?—Occasionally they go, but it is not general.

G-4792. *Mrs. Timmaya* : Do you think there should be visiting nurses for maternity work ?—(*Mr. Morgan*) : That might be organized by the Government dispensaries.

G-4793. By the time they get to the hospital they are dead ?—(*Mr. Sprott*) : To make it really effective a very large personnel of district nurses would have to be available. (*Mr. Tipping*) : I believe there is great difficulty in getting nurses.

G-4794. Do you not think it would be advisable to abolish toddy shops because the workers in some weeks spend all their money on toddy and then have to starve ?—If the toddy shops were closed in the neighbourhood of the coffee plantations it is said that it would be a hardship on other people who are not working on the coffee plantations. (*Mr. Morgan*) : It would not hurt an estate to have no toddy shop. (*Mr. Sprott*) : As long as they do not drink to excess I do not see why they should not drink. (*Mr. Morgan*) : As long as they drink pure toddy I do not think it does any harm.

G-4795. But the toddy which is supplied in the toddy shop is not pure ?—That is so.

G-4796. Do you not think some control might be exercised over toddy shops ?—I think it would be a very good thing.

(The witness withdrew.)

231

Mr. A. B. CHENGAPPA, M.L.C., Planter.

G-4797. *Mr. Sastri* : Have you coffee on your estate ?—Coffee, pepper and paddy.

G-4798. Is there any association to which you belong ?—Yes, there is an association, called the Kodagu Sabha and the Landholders' Association, which is an association of landholders.

G-4799. They have not deputed you to speak for them ?—No, they have not been asked to depute any.

G-4800. Are you in favour of the repeal of the Coorg Labour Act ?—No, not until Government arranges for labour to be imported in some other way into the Province. All of us are entirely dependent on labour imported from outside into Coorg. Unless they are attracted by an advance they will not come here. But as the whole of India appears to be in favour of the repeal of this Act as far as labour is concerned, what I would suggest is that Government should help us in encouraging people to settle in the country by importing them.

G-4801. What is the position with regard to hospitals ?—If a coolie comes from an estate which does not subscribe to the hospital, the hospital assistant refuses to give him medicine, unless the coolie brings a letter from his employer offering to pay for the coolie being attended to.

G-4802. Have you ever complained to Government of this practice ?—No, because I am a subscriber myself.

G-4803. You say that contractors are guilty of breach of faith with their workers ?—Labourers receive better treatment from the *mistris* who are bound over to the estate by advance ; when the labourer is in contact with the employer and is paid direct by the employer this difficulty does not arise, but there is this trouble when contractors employ the labour and payment is made to the contractor by the employer and the contractor pays the labourer.

G-4804. On the estates are labourers summoned to work by means of a signal ?—Yes, a bell is rung on some estates every day at about 6 o'clock and about 7-30. A similar bell is rung at closing time unless the coolies are all on task work in which case they come and go as they like, finishing the task work.

G-4805. You say that wages are paid weekly as a rule ?—Local coolies are paid weekly. Those who get advances from the *mistris* are not paid weekly.

G-4806. *Mr. Clow* : Do you offer land to the labourers on your estate ?—Yes, I have given them some paddy fields free for their cultivation.

G-4807. Do you find them ready to take it up ?—Yes, they have practically become settlers on the land. We give them half an acre or an acre free and they do not go away so often as they otherwise would to their country. They are eager to take up paddy cultivation. We can only give them a little land free ; it is only to give them an inducement.

G-4808. Have you any facts in support of your statement that the labourer is becoming lazier ?—Yes. We can see the work they are doing. They are deteriorating. Before the wages were increased from As. 4 to As. 6 they were working 5 to 6 days a week, but now that the pay has—

been increased they do not work more than three or four days in the week and they are content with what they can get in three days.

G-4809. Do you find that it is now necessary to keep three times the quantity of labour to produce the same amount of coffee as was necessary 20 years ago ?—We have to maintain more labour now than what we had some years ago. They used to come out at 7 o'clock in the morning but now they will not start work till 9 o'clock.

G-4810. Do you think this laziness is due to ill-health ?—No ; it is the local labour who are lazy and they maintain the best of health being quite acclimatized to the country ; there is very little absence among the imported labour ; they are regular in their work simply because they are only here two or three months at a time. They are seasonal people who come now and then and that means they are very healthy ; on the first appearance of fever they go back to their own country.

G-4811. When does the imported labour arrive on your estate ?—The first batch of imported labour comes about the 20th June and they return to their country about the 8th or 10th September. The next set will come in about the middle of November and remain till the end of February, or if the crop is heavy till the 15th March. They come from Malabar, South Canara, and all these places on the West Coast, and we get some coolies from Coimbatore.

G-4812. What do they do when they are in their own country ?—They are all attached to the *jammies* and they are all cultivators on the land. *Jammies* are people who have a large amount of land ; the coolies take small pieces of land from them to cultivate for which they pay rent in kind.

G-4813. They are bound to work for the *jammies*, are they ?—Yes, they are attached to the land of the *jammies* itself, and they cannot go away without permission from the masters.

G-4814. Then do the *jammies* give them permission to come to your estate ?—Yes, in the slack season, but when the coolies get a letter from the *jammies* they will not stay another day ; they are very particular and faithful in that respect. Their fear is great with these labourers, chiefly those of South and North Canara.

G-4815. Is that system legal ?—It is not legal, but the attachment they have to their land and master is more important than the legal aspect of the question.

G-4816. *Mrs. Timmaya* : Is one of the reasons why women do not go to the hospital because there are no women doctors ?—Yes, that is certainly one of the reasons.

G-4817. Are you in favour of some form of legislation with regard to maternity benefits ?—Yes. Coorg cannot boast of a single woman doctor, and I do not think we have enough women trained in midwifery. In child-birth these women attend to themselves.

G-4818. *Mr. Joshi* : What amount of encouragement do you want Government to give labourers in order to induce them to settle in this country ?—There are a lot of forest lands and wet lands and if Government could manage to induce settlers to come and take up that land and remain permanently in the country, it would be a great help as far as the labour problem is concerned. If the settlers are engaged in paddy

cultivation they will be working on the paddy fields from July till the 15th August ; after that date there will be very little work on the paddy fields till December as the paddy crop will not be ready till the end of December ; that means that these people can work on the neighbouring estates during the slack season.

G-4819. Does not the Government at present offer paddy land to any people who want to settle in the district ?—Yes, but there should be propaganda work outside the country where there are lot of emigrant labour without work and land and who prefer to go to places and settle down ; this propaganda work alone will bring in settlers.

G-4820. You want Government to advertise that there is cultivable land available in Coorg ?—That is not enough ; there must be propaganda work in centres where people are suffering from want of employment.

G-4821. Government are at present prepared to give land to people ?—Yes.

G-4822. Do they also say that they will not charge assessment for some years ?—Yes ; 7 years is very common, and in special cases it is 10 years.

G-4823. When you give paddy land to your labourers do they have to pay any tax to Government ?—No, I pay the tax.

G-4824. I suppose the planters would have no objection to the Government appointing inspectors on these plantations to inspect the conditions of work ?—Speaking for myself, I should have no objection if officers of good standing were appointed.

G-4825. I suppose you also would have no objection to regulations being enforced by Government as to hours of work and conditions in the plantations ?—Provided Government helps us in supplying labour because we are entirely at the mercy of the labourers who come from outside Coorg, and unless we treat them properly they will not come.

G-4826. You yourself give your workers one hour's rest at midday, and therefore you would have no objection to a regulation making an hour's rest at midday compulsory ?—I shall have no objection to legislation if it helps both the employer and the employee, but if it is one-sided legislation I think the planters as a whole will object.

G-4827. I understand the current wages are As. 6 for a man, As. 4 for a woman and As. 4 for a boy ?—Yes.

G-4828. What tasks are performed by boys and women ?—Boys are generally engaged in manuring, protecting supplies and work of that light kind.

G-4829. Are they paid so much per bushel ?—Yes. If it is task work it is generally paid according to the crop we have on the estate. At times we pay As. 8 or even Re. 1 a bushel. This year I think some people have paid as much as Rs. 1-4-0 per bushel ; that is what is paid when they are short of labour. I myself am paying different wages on different estates. This year I have paid As. 10 to men, women and boys ; I do not make any distinction between men, women and boys. If a man picks less than a bushel he is paid his daily rate of As. 6.

G-4830. Are there women labourers ?—Women labourers come very rarely ; generally the men do not bring their wives with them ; they go back in 2 or 3 months.

G-4831. The imported coolie takes an advance ?—Yes.

G-4832. And until the advance is repaid he does not get his full wages ?—If he does not take any advance on the estate, he can send back Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 every month. Some of these people come without advances.

G-4833. How many people are there working on your estate ?—I had about 500 coolies, but I have now only 150. All those 150 have taken advances.

G-4834. And they are not paid their full wages every month ?—No, they are not.

G-4835. Therefore they cannot send Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 a month home ?—They have their families with them and they are not sending money home.

G-4836. *Mr. Ahmed* : The workmen get better pay in their own villages and therefore there is not much attraction in Coorg ?—Yes, that is lately so.

G-4837. Also the labourers are afraid of malaria ?—Yes.

G-4838. You speak in your memorandum of the conditions on the paddy fields ?—They are the permanent labourers of the country in Coorg.

G-4839. I suppose if educational facilities are provided that will attract labour ?—They do not as a rule bring their children, and I do not think night schools would be of any use for adults.

G-4840. Educational facilities would be a very good thing for the children who are here ?—Yes.

G-4841. I suppose maternity benefits and the employment of lady doctors would attract labourers to Coorg ?—Yes.

G-4842. Old age pensions and pensions after long service on the estates would attract coolies, would it not ?—Unfortunately no estate can boast of a coolie who has been working on that estate for more than 10 years.

G-4843. If wages were higher they would be attracted ?—Yes, but I have my own doubts.

G-4844. Sanitary conditions would attract them ?—Practically every planter has sanitary accommodation.

G-4845. If these things were given it would attract the coolies to Coorg, would it not ?—No, because they are bound to their *jammies* in the other Provinces and it is only in the slack season that they come to this country.

G-4846. I suppose the planters have taken advantage of the Coorg Labour Act of 1926 ?—Everybody has taken advantage of it.

G-4847. They compel the coolies to work for a year by making an advance to them ?—Yes, but only honest coolies stick to it.

G-4848. Are you in favour of giving more medical facilities to the workers ?—Yes.

238

G-4849. *Mr. Nicolls* : You say you are in favour of the provision of medical facilities. At whose expense ?—Naturally the Government should take it up, but if any help from the planters is required it will be given.

G-4850. Can you prove that coolies who come to the hospital from estates which are not subscribing to the hospital are sent back ?—Yes.

G-4851. If that is the case, do you think the reason for refusing to treat the coolie is because the owner of the estate can well afford to pay the subscription to the hospital ?—Yes, that is the reason.

G-4852. You suggest that land should be given to coolies to induce them to settle in the country, but do you think there is sufficient paddy land available for the number of coolies that are required in Coorg ?—Not for the whole estate, but something can be done in that direction.

G-4853. If sufficient paddy land is not available, do you think the labour, most of which comes from South Canara, would be content to take up dry land ?—Yes ; they can plant oranges and *ragi*. On the coasts there is *kumri* cultivation ; they fell some blocks of land, set fire to it in the hot weather and grow *ragi*. There is also a kind of paddy which grows in dry cultivation.

G-4854. *Mr. Thimmayya Punja* : You say one hour's rest is provided at midday ?—Yes, that is generally so.

G-4855. What percentage of your coolies are cultivating land and settling down ?—I have about 10 coolies to whom I have given small blocks of paddy fields.

G-4856. Is any maternity benefit given ?—There is no occasion for maternity benefit because they do not bring their families with them, but if there is necessity I send for the doctor.

G-4857. Do you give them special pay during the time of child-birth ?—The occasion has not arisen.

G-4858. *Mr. Sastri* : But you have 150 permanent labourers ?—But they live on their own land ; they have their own huts. I give them all facilities that are necessary and they are fed when they are sick. Persons who come for two or three months, go back to their own country on the first appearance of illness.

G-4859. How much do you pay your coolies ?—Men are paid As. 6 a day.

G-4860. If he works for 6 days he gets Rs. 2-4-0 ?—Yes.

G-4861. Of that he takes Rs. 1-8-0 ?—Yes.

G-4862. So that there will be a balance to his credit of As. 12 every week. If he is only saving As. 12 how is he able to send to his village Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 a month ?—Because if he is wise he will keep a little of what he takes per week. But imported labourers are not generally extravagant ; they come here just to earn some money and take it back to their country.

(The witness withdrew.)

Rao Bahadur K. SUBBAYYA.

G-4863. *Mr. Sastri* : Are you a planter ?—Yes. I was Public Prosecutor and Government Pleader in this place for about 17 years.

G-4864. When the Labour Act ceases to operate do you suppose that you will not have to make advances to the workers who come from outside ?—It depends upon the treatment the coolie receives at the hands of his master.

G-4865. Do you expect people to demand advances when the Act is no longer in force ?—Yes.

G-4866. And the employers will have to pay them ?—Yes, if the *mistri* is expected to supply labour he will have to take large advances because he will have to go to his native place and advance money to the coolies, but if each coolie is left to himself he may or may not take an advance.

G-4867. Do you think that Coorg is sufficiently well supplied with schools for the labouring population ?—I believe so.

G-4868. *Mr. Joshi* : We believe there is scarcity of labour in Coorg ?—There is.

G-4869. When the Act ceases to operate will it be necessary to make labour conditions in Coorg more attractive in order to induce labour to come here ?—That is what I wish.

G-4870. Are there any medical facilities ?—Yes, the planters send the coolies to the hospital.

G-4871. What sort of cases are taken to the hospital ?—Serious cases.

G-4872. If a man is suffering from malaria for about a month and cannot go to work he loses his wages. He would be sent to hospital and given free food ?—Yes ; planters contribute something towards the maintenance of the coolies in the hospital.

G-4873. Do you think labour would be attracted if there were a contributory sickness insurance scheme to which labourers, employers and Government contributed ?—At present on the plantations the ladies take great trouble in attending to sickness among the coolies ; of course it is to the planters' interest that the coolies should be well. I do not think sickness prevails to such an extent as to necessitate a scheme such as you suggest ; the coolies only stop here for a few months and then return to their native places.

G-4874. Would you be in favour of legislation providing for the inspection of plantations and regulating conditions of labour on plantations ?—If a case is made out for it then of course it is necessary, but as matters now stand I do not think any case is made out on a large scale. In the absence of provision everything is going on all right. I do not think any planter would take objection to such legislation.

G-4875. Do you think they would object to regulations as to the conditions of labour, for instance, providing for one hour's rest at midday ?—As a rule the workers have it. I do not think the planters would raise any objection to such a regulation.

G-4876. You say there is no necessity for workmen's compensation ?—Because accidents only take place in big factories.

G-4877. If the accidents on plantations are few, then the burden of providing compensation will be small ?—No doubt it appeals to reason that if a coolie meets with an accident while doing his work he should be helped to a certain extent by the employer.

G-4878. On plantations are there any deductions from wages in the form of fines ?—Not on my estate.

G-4879. Do you make advances to your workers ?—Yes.

G-4880. And the men must work ?—Yes.

G-4881. What do you do if a labourer does not turn out for work in the morning ?—If a planter fines people he will have no coolies on his estate at all.

G-4882. *Mr. Ahmed* : When labourers take advances they feel they have got to work or they will be prosecuted ?—Yes.

G-4883. If the Coorg Labour Act of 1926 is repealed the advance system will not be very effective because the labourers will then feel that they are not bound to work ?—Yes.

G-4884. Do you not think night schools would be of advantage for the education of adult workers ?—After working 9 hours in the day I do not think they will want to go to night schools. An experiment might be made and might be successful.

G-4885. Do you think educational facilities would be of advantage to the children ?—Yes.

G-4886. How many of the labourers come here under the advance system under the Coorg Labour Act ?—Most of them.

G-4887. There appear to be a great many prosecutions under the Act ?—That is because coolies after taking advances from one estate go away and take advances from another estate.

G-4888. Is that because there is competition for labour among the employers ?—No, there is no competition ; the Act provides that if a planter employs a coolie knowing that he has taken an advance from another estate, he is liable to be prosecuted. Coolies take advances from a estate, spend the money, and being in need of money take an advance from another estate. The wants of the coolie are very few, but there is a certain amount of drunkenness amongst them.

G-4889. Are you therefore in favour of the abolition of toddy shops ?—Yes

G-4890. You say that there are happy relations between employers nd employees ?—Yes.

G-4891. But the fact that coolies leave a plantation to go to another antation shows that relations are not good ?—What I meant was that ere have been no strikes.

G-4892. The large number of prosecutions under the Coorg Labour ct indicates that there is great dissatisfaction ?—That is not due to rained relations between employers and employees.

G-4893. *Mr. Nicolls* : If schools for children were started on the tates, do you think when the children went to work they would forget all

their learning, and therefore all the money spent on their education would be wasted ?—The parents will be anxious to make money out of the boy as soon as he is old enough to earn something. I do not think full advantage will be taken of the schools.

G-4894. *Mr. Thimmayya Punja* : Is it not a fact that little children are left in the lines to look after babies when the mothers go to work ?—Yes.

G-4895. At what stage are children expected to earn their living ?—10 years.

G-4896. You say the advance system will cease ; do you mean that the necessity of borrowing will cease ?—If the Act is abolished it will be left to the option of the employer to give an advance or not. If the employer finds that his employee is keeping his promise there will be a tendency for him to make an advance. When the coolie knows that there is an Act under which he can take an advance he more or less insists on the master giving an advance.

G-4897. *Mr. Clow* : How many acres have you under cultivation ?—I have 100 acres under coffee and nearly 800 acres under cardamom. Cardamom plantations depend more upon imported labour from South Canara ; the coffee estates are in a better position in regard to labour than the cardamom estates. It is very difficult to get labour for the cardamom plantations. This year a certain portion of my crop was not picked at all for want of labour in spite of my attempts to get labour from the Ghats. That was a great loss to me.

G-4898. Do you pay higher wages for cardamom work ?—Yes, I pay Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 a month besides food. The cardamom plantations are situated in out-of-the-way places here away from the markets. Therefore I collect food in the hot weather and during the working season I give the labourers one seer of rice a day and As. 4 a week to buy provisions such as chillies, salt, betel nut, tobacco and so on. Even then I cannot get coolies.

G-4899. Is the cardamom land very unhealthy ?—No, it is healthy. Those who work on the cardamom plantations are better in health when they return home. They eat more food on the cardamom plantations. The workers want to go to the *shandy* almost every week and they cannot do that on the cardamom plantations, which are perhaps 12 or 15 miles from the nearest village.

G-4900. What is the season for the cardamom work ?—From June till October or November

(The witness withdrew.)

2225

COOEG.

One Hundred and Second Meeting.

MERCARA.

Thursday, 13th March 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. (*Presiding*).

Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

Mr. NICOLLS. } *Assistant Commissioners.*

Mr. THIMMAYYA PUNJA. }

MRS. TIMMAYA, *Lady Assessor.*

Mr. S. LALL, I.C.S., *Joint Secretary.*

HONEE JEN KURUMBA, a woman worker, at the Pollibetta Coffee Plantations.

G-4901. I have worked here for two years ; my husband also is working here ; he is digging on the field. I get As. 4 a day and As. 4 bonus if I work 6 days a week. My husband gets As. 6 a day and As. 4 bonus.

G-4902. I have four children ; they do not work ; they are all small. We live in our own huts about a mile away. We work here all the year ; we have no cultivation. We made the hut ourselves. It took us two weeks to build the hut.

G-4903. We come from Kampta village where we were working on the headman's paddy fields. We like this work ; we only want to fill our stomachs. My husband received an advance of Rs. 10 from the *mistri*. If we do only paddy field work that will not give us enough to eat ; it is only by coming to the coffee estate that we can fill our stomachs.

G-4904. My eldest girl looks after the other children. If the master says we should do so, we shall send our children to school. The women who were here ran away when you came because they were afraid you had come here to inoculate them. The pain of inoculation will make us go to bed and then we shall have nothing to eat. If the plague comes to this place we can run away or die.

G-4905. We Kurumbas do not want to go and stay in the lines ; we want to live in our own huts. We want a house thatched with straw. My leg was hurt by a stick ; the manager told me to go to the hospital, but I did not go to the hospital. I made my own medicine. Only men drink toddy ; we women do not.

G-4906. We received an advance of Rs. 10 but we had a debt in another estate and we used the Rs. 10 to pay off that debt. We have made a bond for the Rs. 10 on the estate and we have to re-pay this amount in instalments.

G-4907. I come to work at 7-30 in the morning and stop work at 4 o'clock. I do not do any more than the ordinary daily task for which I am paid As. 4. I take a loan from the bazaar. Our wages are not sufficient for us to live on. Every week on Sunday morning we get our advance of Rs. 1-4-0 or Rs. 1-8-0.

(The witness withdrew.)

BHIMLA, (Lambani caste), a male coolie, at the Pollibetta Coffee Plantations.

G-4908. I come from Poppargodal to the north of Mysore State. I have never had any land. I came here 7 years ago. Every year I go to my village at the end of March at the time of the *Ugadi* feast. At the new year I stayed at my home for three months.

G-4909. I get As. 2 a day in my village. Here I get As. 6 a day, and if I work extra I get another As. 6. If I work for 6 days continuously they give me As. 2½ a week.

G-4910. I took Rs. 20 advance before I came; I took the advance in my village. I had no debt. I used the money for family purposes. I have a wife but she stays in my village where she works and gets As. 2 a day. We have one child. We have to work to fill our bellies. I do not know anything; do not ask me questions. Our child is three years old. My wife earns her livelihood in the village. That is why I do not bring her here. There are 6 people in the room in which I live.

(The witness withdrew.)

RAMDU, (Lambani caste), a *mistri*, at the Pollibetta Coffee Plantations.

G-4911. I have been 43 years in this garden. I have 50 men under me. I get 12½ per cent. commission on their wages; they all come from my village or the immediate neighbourhood. The workers on the estate change from time to time; sometimes fresh men come.

G-4912. I got Rs. 200 advance from the manager and I advanced about Rs. 1,500 out of my own pocket to the coolies. I am not sure how much is owing to me at the moment from the estate. Rs. 60 is the biggest advance I have given.

G-4913. The plantation gives a bonus of As. 4 a week to those who work a full week; Bhimla made a mistake when he said he only got As. 2½ bonus. All my workers work very well; I have no bad men in my gang. I have never had any trouble with the accounts or with the coolies while I have been here.

G-4914. I pay Rs. 54 land revenue for the land I have. I have one son on this plantation and 6 sons working on my land. Of my 50 men not one has a wife or child with him. This month we shall get our accounts settled, we shall go off and come back after two or three months. Only two or three of my men have any cultivation of their own. When the accounts are settled up at the end of the year I take all that is owing to me. I do not leave any money with the manager.

G-4915. Last year I got Rs. 400 commission and I lost Rs. 100 through people running away. That Rs. 100 comes out of the Rs. 400. The best

236

men will get Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 after working off the advance received when they come here and the advance received every week.

G-4916. Before the present manager came I used to have serious losses, but with the present manager I do not. The people used to run away. Two or three men ran away when the rains were very heavy.

G-4917. Being old I drink for the benefit of my health. Some of the workers occasionally drink a little. It would be to the benefit of all if the toddy shops were abolished. We should be glad if the toddy shops were all abolished, because some people drink and ruin themselves. People would get reconciled to it if there were no shops.

G-4918. Some of the men do not turn up for work, but at the time of coming to work I get hold of them and bring them. New men are recruited and some of the old ones come again. Some of the men run away of their own accord and some of them go home with permission.

G-4919. If I do not take an advance from the estate I get commission at the rate of 15 per cent., but if I take an advance I get commission at the rate of 12½ per cent. The more recruits I get, the more advances are given, and the more profit I can make.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. H. B. M. BABINGTON, Manager, Pollibetta Coffee Estate.

G-4920. *Mr. Sastri*: How long have you been manager?—I have been here nearly three years and I have been manager nearly three years.

G-4921. Have you any European assistants?—No.

G-4922. How many work-people do you deal with?—There are 315 men, women and children on the check roll at the present moment.

G-4923. Does that include those who come and go?—Yes; it does not include contractor's labour. There are 315 permanent coolies about half of whom are women; there are very few children.

G-4924. *Mr. Clow*: How many are local and how many are imported?—The majority are imported and there are about 50 locals.

G-4925. They stay with you all the time?—Yes.

G-4926. Most of the others go away for two or three months in the year?—Yes.

G-4927. They are mostly from Mysore?—Yes.

G-4928. What are the rates of pay?—As. 6 for a man, as. 4 for a woman; if they do 6 days work in the week there is as. 4 bonus; grown up children get as. 3.

G-4929. Are these rates given for doing fixed tasks?—Yes.

G-4930. Is it possible to do extra work after the task is finished?—Yes; some of the men finish their work at 10-30, do extra work and get so much an acre.

G-4931. A substantial number do extra work beyond the daily task?—Yes, most of them do.

G-4932. How much of your work is coffee?—The majority is coffee. There is hardly anything else except pepper. Coffee is the principal crop; pepper is a subsidiary crop; there is very little cardamom.

G-4933. Do both the local and imported labour work under *mistris* ?—Yes.

G-4934. Do you find that the *mistris* bring the same people every year ?—They sometimes bring new coolies and some of the old coolies come back.

G-4935. You have no difficulty in getting an adequate supply of labour ?—No.

G-4936. Do you house all the labour on the estate ?—Yes, except the locals whom we pay to build their own houses. They cut all the materials from our jungles and we pay them the ordinary rates while they are constructing the houses.

G-4937. Do they have to construct the houses every year ?—Not as a rule.

G-4938. Then all your imported labour lives in lines constructed by the estate ?—Yes.

G-4939. You said that you had as many women as men ?—Yes.

G-4940. This morning we interrogated a *mistri* who had a gang of 50 men but no women ?—That is only Limbani men.

G-4941. Where do the women come from ?—Some of the men have two wives and some three ; some of the husbands are dead and the women remain on the estate.

G-4942. In the last 12 months have you instituted any prosecutions under the Coorg Labour Act ?—Yes, I think about 20 ; they are men who took their advances from the *mistri* and failed to turn up.

G-4943. Were they brought from Mysore ?—Yes.

G-4944. Did they agree to work ?—We have not caught most of them yet.

G-4945. Do you anticipate much difficulty when the Act ceases to be in operation ?—A certain amount.

G-4946. Do you think the *mistris* are likely to give similar advances then ?—I cannot say.

G-4947. Have you ever heard of cases being instituted for enticement under the Act ?—Yes.

G-4948. Have you instituted a case against another manager for enticement ?—No.

G-4949. What are the medical arrangements on the estate ?—The local Dresser visits the estate once a week and reports all sick coolies to me. If the case is bad I send it to the hospital. The coolies are treated for hookworm twice a year. (Medicine—carbon tetrachloride and Epsom salts).

G-4950. Have you your own hospital ?—No.

G-4951. You say that a number of estates have a sub-assistant surgeon and two compounders ?—Yes.

G-4952. What are the dressers ?—The sub-assistant surgeon is the dresser.

G-4953. What happens if a man is ill ?—The dresser visits us. If he is very ill I send a note for the dresser and he comes over.

G-4954. Do you find they are ready to accept his administrations ?—The Coorgis and Yarwahs are, but most of the imported coolies are not.

G-4955. Do you have much illness ?—No.

G-4956. Is there a lot of malaria ?—No malaria.

G-4957. Have you been troubled with pneumonia in the cold weather ?—This time we got a few cases of pneumonia.

G-4958. Any deaths ?—No.

G-4959. How many coolies died on the estate last year ?—One.

G-4960. Do you give any maternity benefits ?—Re. 1 a week for a month.

G-4961. Do you give any clothes or anything of that kind ?—Children up to the age of 15 years are given a shirt each once a year *plus* bread and sweets.

G-4962. Are the rates of wages which you have stated general throughout the estates in this part ?—Yes.

G-4963. *Mrs. Timmaya* : Do you give any bonus or commission to the *mistris* ?—Yes, we give 15 per cent. for unadvanced coolies and 12½ per cent. for advanced coolies. A further remission of 12½ per cent. from his original advance is given to a *mistri* to compensate for any losses caused by deaths and absconding coolies.

G-4964. *Mr. Ahmed* : Why are coolies enticed away ?—I could not tell you.

G-4965. If coolies are enticed away, the plantation to which they go pays you back the advance which you have made to the coolie ?—Yes. If they are short of labour they will do anything to get it.

G-4966. Then there is competition among the planters to get coolies ?—Yes, but enticement does not happen in many cases.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. A. B. MADAPA, owner, the Heroor Coffee Plantations, Sidapur.

G-4967. *Mr. Sastri* : What is the extent of your estate ?—220 acres ; it is chiefly coffee, but there are pepper, oranges, and cocoanuts.

G-4968. How many labourers do you employ ?—From 70 to 150.

G-4969. Do you pay the usual rates of as. 6 per bushel to men and as. 4 to women ?—Sometimes we have to pay more. This year I paid as much as as. 8 per bushel.

G-4970. Have you many children employed here ?—There may be about a dozen.

G-4971. What is the proportion as between men, and women ?—About the same number I should say.

G-4972. Do you get your labour from Mysore ?—We have no Mysore about at present ; we have some from Mangalore and we have Yarwahs and Kurwahs, who are local.

when there is necessity I get the doctor at Sidapur to come round a have a look at them ; otherwise I send them round for medicine. I g medicines myself and dispense them in ordinary cases. I think that sufficient as far as my estate is concerned.

G-4974. What educational facilities are there for children ?—N besides those that are provided by the Government ; the nearest school is Sidapur which is 2½ miles away.

G-4975. Are you satisfied that that is sufficient for your labourers ?— Yes.

G-4976. Do you give any maternity benefits ?—I have no occasion to give any ; they are all dependent on themselves.

G-4977. Surely you have had some cases of child-birth ?—Yes, but there has been no occasion to give any maternity benefit. They have never come across to ask for it. Any help that is needed is always given There is no special recognition in that way that if there is a child-bi special help should be given.

G-4978. When a woman gets from as. 4 to as. 7 or as. 8 a day and is deprived of that for several weeks it must go hard with her ?—A fortnight is the most they are out of work, they are at work practically till a day before the birth of the child.

G-4979. Do you not think it is rather hard on the women ?—Well, they find it easier as far as confinement is concerned.

G-4980. *Mr. Clow* : What percentage of your labour is local and imported ?—About 40 per cent. is local at present, but at the height of the season about 50 per cent. is local.

G-4981. Does the imported labour return every year ?—Yes, once a year ; some go away for a month, some for a fortnight, and some for four, five or six weeks, just as they please ; some go away in April and do not come back till the beginning of June.

G-4982. Did you institute any prosecutions under the Coorg Labour Act last year ?—Yes, through my manager. It may be three or four.

G-4983. Do you anticipate any difficulty when the Labour Act ceases to be operative ?—It is very difficult for me to answer that question because I have not had any experience ; I have only been here for the last three or four years.

G-4984. Do you find that many of your labourers take advances and then fail to appear for work ?—Yes, especially the new labourers. Some of the old labourers are more honest.

G-4985. Are the new labourers given advances on your estate or in Mangalore ?—On the estate ; they come here and then disappear aft taking the advance. Sometimes they go to other estates.

G-4986. Do you find difficulty in getting all the labour you require ? Great difficulty. I cannot tell why it is so.

G-4987. You say this is an unhealthy garden ?—It has been known unhealthy years ago, but I myself do not consider it to be as unhealt as it was before ; the jungle has been cleared to a great extent and so has improved conditions.

G-4988. *Mr. Ahmed* : Do the local labourers prefer to work in the paddy fields because they are given clothing, food and other amenities on the paddy field ?—I do not think so.

G-4989. *Mr. Clow* : You have some paddy cultivation of your own, have you not ?—Yes.

G-4990. Who cultivates that for you ?—Both local and outside labour ; some of them have been given little plots to cultivate for themselves.

G-4991. *Mr. Ahmed* : You pay higher wages in the picking season, do you not ?—Yes, because we want the work done quickly and they work longer hours.

G-4992. So that if you pay them a little more wages you can get the work done quickly ?—No, not always ; if we pay more we get less work.

G-4993. If you provided educational facilities for these people it would be a great help to them, would it not ?—I do not think the coolies I have on my estate would take any notice of educational facilities.

G-4994. Do you not think education would be of help to the children on the coffee estates ?—No, I do not think education will help them at all.

G-4995. If a night school is provided for the adult workers will it not make them more intelligent and efficient ?—After working hours they like to go and rest ; if the men here had been desirous of education for their children they would have come to me and said they wanted to send their children to school at Sidapur which is only 2½ miles away. But there seems to be no inclination of that kind.

G-4996. I mean adult education for the workers themselves ?—I do not think they will thank you for it.

G-4997. You have not made an experiment ?—No. When they have finished their work they like to go and enjoy themselves.

G-4998. You mean they are a lazy lot ?—I would not call them lazy, but if education were started it would not be popular among the workers, and probably I should not have any coolies here at all because they would all go away ; they do not want to be bothered with any of those new fangled ideas.

G-4999. As an experienced engineer how do you look at the matter ?—The point of view of the engineer is that if there is more education then the engineer does not get any labour.

G-5000. If you paid them rather higher wages they would be able to save something and spend the money on education ?—If you pay them more you get less work. A bonus of as. 4 for a full week's work does not tempt them at all. They are quite contented with four days' work.

G-5001. Would it not be a good thing to pay them more and put the increase into the savings bank for the benefit of them and their children ?—No. If I got better work from them I should have no objection to paying more. They used to be paid as. 4 or as. 5 and now that we are paying as. 6 we get less work from them. If we pay them still more we shall get still less work, and there will be more to pay, with the result that the owners will go into the bankruptcy court.

5002. *Mr. Nicolls* : If it is a fact that workers in th ddy fields ed thes, and other do you not k that is e er yers have found it o give them e things in

order to get them to work in the paddy fields ?—There is a place near her where they give food in the morning, at midday and perhaps in the busy season at 4 o'clock also. They get work turned out for it, but on this estate the coolies work for a certain number of hours and then clear out.

G-5003. Do you think they could get coolies to do the hard work on the paddy fields unless they gave them these extra benefits ?—No, they would not work otherwise.

G-5004. Is the work on the paddy fields hard ?—It is not hard, but there are longer hours of work and they get extra nourishment.

G-5005. Do you think without that extra nourishment they would be able to persuade the people to work ?—They would not do the same number of hours of work.

G-5006. In a small plantation where the coolies cannot pick a bushel they are given anything from as. 10 to as. 14 a bushel, are they not ?—Yes ; in the beginning of the picking season when the coffee is not all ripe, they bring in half or three-quarters of a bushel, and in order to make up a daily wage we have to pay a rate which is sufficient.

G-5007. If you proposed to your labourers that you have put their surplus cash in the savings bank, do you think they would agree to that ?—I am afraid not.

(The witness withdrew.)

COORG.

One Hundred and third Meeting.

MERCARA.

Friday, 14th March, 1930.

PRESENT :

The Right Hon'ble Mr. SRINIVASA SASTRI, C.H., P.C. (*Presiding*).
Mr. A. G. CLOW, C.I.E., I.C.S.
Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.
Mr. KABIR-UD-DIN AHMED, M.L.A.
Mr. NICOLLS. } *Assistant Commissioners.*
Mr. THIMMAYYA PUNJA. }
Mrs. TIMMAYA (*Lady Assessor*).
Mr. S. LALL, *Joint Secretary.*

SUBU, Konkani, a woman worker at the Kasbur Coffee Estate.

G-5008. I was born here and I live here. I have not left this estate since I was born. I am married but have no children. My husband is a *mistri* on this estate. I work here every day and I get annas 4 a day.

(The witness withdrew.)

SIBI, Konkani, a woman worker at the Kasbur Coffee Estate.

G-5009. I was born in Mangalore. I do not go to my country ; I have been here 6 years ago and I have not gone to my country since that time. I work here on the estate. He is married but have no children. My husband works here on the estate. He gets annas 6 a day ; and get annas 4 a day ; in addition I get a bonus annas 4, and I get extra wages still depending on the amount of work turned out by me after finishing my task work.

G-5010. I live in the upper lines. I saw the *mistri* this morning ; I did not see the big *mistri*, but I saw the *cole mistri*. (*Cole* means a slink). The *cole mistri*'s wife is the wife of the *cole mistri*. The *cole mistri* makes us work here always with us. If we do not work he does not strike us. In the morning the *mistri* comes to the lines and gets us to work. If any one do not wish to work he does not bring us here. We work every day when force is used.

G-5011. We work from 7-30 to 12. Then we have one hour's leisure and work from 2 to 5. There is a school about 4 furlongs from here, but there is no school in the plantation. What is the use of learning when we must make some money ? I had a mind to learn when I was young, but my father and mother died and I have been working since I was six years because there was nobody to maintain me.

G-5012. I was married two years ago. Before I was married my husband was working here.

G-5013. My clothes cost me about Rs. 14 a year. Every week we spend Rs. 1-8-0 on rice and Re. 1 on sundries of every kind. That is for per sons. The Government hospital is near by and medicines, medical attendance necessary to [illegible] in that hospital.

(The witness [illegible]

JAORI (Balgai), a woman worker at the Kasbur Coffee Estate

G-5014. We are paid annas 8 a week, or Rs. 2 a month, when we confined. It is paid after the confinement. That is all we get. This has been in existence for two years. We have the assistance of nurses fr the hospital at the time of confinement ; all the women get that assistan I have been here 8 years.

G-5015. *Mr. Ahmed* : Who was the woman who caught hold of y hand just now ?—She is the *mistri's* wife.

G-5016. Who is that woman who gave you a jerk on your hand now ?—She is the wife of a *mistri*. I put my hand to my face and told me not to put my hand to my face.

The witness : The *mistri's* wife was here before you came. She not tell me that I was to be examined and I had to give evidence. I h another set of clothes besides these I am now wearing.

G-5017. I have one son who is 20 years old. I could not afford to sen him to school. Even if I could save money out of my wages I would no send him to school. I do not want my son to be educated. The boy cou have gone to school if he had wished ; we do not want to force him to d

G-5018. When I came here I received no advance. I go to my ge and come back every year. If we take an advance we enter into a otherwise we do not enter into a bond. When my husband and I came we received Rs. 4 between us for expenses. The *mistri* has not taken advance on our behalf from the estate. I did not enquire whether th *mistri* had taken any advance on our behalf from the estate before w came.

G-5019. My son li with me. My husband is dead. We spend Rs. 2-8-0 per week on food altogether The last time I went home to my village was last March. I stayed there two months then. I have got some land and a house there and I was born there. My husband's relations are there. My son went home with me. My son is married. His wife lives with her mother.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. N. K. GANAPAIAH, Manager of Kasbur Coffee Estate

G-5020. *Mr. Sastri* : How long have you been manage ?—Three Before that I was a writer here for about 6 years.

G-5021. What is the size of this estate ?—360 acres, all under coffe

G-5022. What provision do you make for the coolies when they sick ?—We give them assistance for two or three weeks, and we ca the sub-assistant surgeon from Somwarpet, which is near. While a is sick we give him another coolie to look after him.

G-5023. While a man is sick does he get his usual wage ?—No, but give him his maintenance charge for food. We feed him all the time he sick.

G-5024. What maternity provision do you make ?—We give the woman Rs. 4 for one month ; we send for the nurse and the doctor from the Government hospital ; we give her a coolie to look after her every day for two weeks, to wash her clothes, and so on.

G-5025. *Mr. Ahmed* : What commission do you pay the *mistri* ?—If a *mistri* is advan per cent. commission ; but undermined he is commission.

G-5026. You have no provision in your plantation for the education of the children of the workers ?—No.

G-5027. If you had such a provision it would be to the benefit of the worker ?—Yes.

G-5028. There is no night school for the workers ?—No.

G-5029. If you had a night school it would be of advantage to the worker ?—About 90 per cent. of the coolies do not like to send their children to school at all.

G-5030. But a night school for the benefit of the adult workers would be an advantage ?—Yes, it would.

G-5031. If instead of paying 18 per cent. commission to the *mistris*, you paid it to the workers, it would be to their advantage ?—Yes, but who would bring the coolies then ?

G-5032. If you had the coolies supplied from outside by a Government ageney, would you have any objection ?—No objection at all. I should be very glad to have it.

G-5033. What wages do you pay ?—Annas 6 for male coolies and annas 4 for female coolies.

G-5034. Is annas 6 enough ?—If they use it properly I think it is enough.

G-5035. I suppose you have no personal objection to a fair and living wage being given to the workers ?—No objection at all. In my opinion annas six is a fair and living wage.

G-5036. When the workers receive an advance they have to enter into a bond ; they cannot go until they have worked for that period ?—Yes, they cannot go.

G-5037. Have you any objection to the Coorg Labour Act of 1926 being abolished ?—For another five years that Act should remain until the advances already given are recovered.

G-5038. But you only give advances for 8 or 10 months ?—Yes, that is the contract, but the old balances are not recovered.

G-5039. You mean that some coolies run away without doing the work ?—Yes.

G-5040. How many of them would there be ?—About a hundred.

G-5041. Do you not think you could recover that in a year ?—The warrants will not be served on them in a year.

G 5042. That is because you do not know their whereabouts ?—Yes.

G-5043. Do they run away because they are indebted ?—That may be one reason.

G-5044. Is fear of malaria another reason—That may be another reason.

G-5045. I suppose another reason is that they discover that they will be better off in some other coffee plantation ?—If that is so, it is a false notion.

G-5046. Then why do they run away ?—I have given two reasons : a third reason is that they want to defraud us of the money.

G-5047. What maternity benefit do you pay ?—Annas 8 per week for two months or a rupee per week for one month.

G-5048. One of the female coolies told us in your presence that it has been the rule for the last two years on this plantation to give a maternity benefit of annas 8 per week for one month after the child-birth ?—Yes, but that is not correct.

G-5049. Are you prepared to show that from your books of account ?—Yes (producing account books). It is in Kanarese.

G-5050. *Mr. Clow* : In this check roll book there is a page dealing with 40 workers including the *mistri* ?—Yes, regular workers.

G-5051. They have put in during the year 8,265 days of work, and they have earned Rs. 3,167-5-8 ?—Yes.

G-5052. You paid out during the year for maintenance Rs. 2,498 ; you handed them when they left Rs. 699-3-0, and they were still owing to you on the other side Rs. 29-13-4 ?—Yes.

G-5053. The *mistri* put in 276 days' work and earned Rs. 181-8-8 ?—Yes, at the rate of Rs. 20 per month.

G-5054. You paid him during the year Rs. 206-2-0 ?—Yes.

G-5055. So of the amount owing to you Rs. 24-9-4 represents sums due to you from the *mistri* ?—Yes.

G-5056. Did he get a commission as well ?—Yes.

G-5057. During March you only worked 2 days altogether ?—Yes.

G-5058. Then did all the labour leave after that ?—Not all ; about three-fourths left the place.

G-5059. What do the others do during March ?—They work here on the estate ; we closed the accounts here then and afterwards deal with it in another book.

G-5060. Do you not give any annual advances ?—Yes, we give advances to the *mistris*, but not to the coolies direct.

G-5061. If the *mistri* advances a man Rs. 20 you do not deduct that from the coolies' pay and hand it over to the *mistri* ?—The *mistri* gets it from us ; we deduct it on behalf of the *mistri* from what is due to the man.

G-5062. The first man here during the year earned Rs. 96-6-0, and you paid him for maintenance during the year Rs. 82-8-0 ?—Yes.

G-5063. That will leave Rs. 13-14-0 due to him ?—Yes.

G-5064. How did the *mistri* get his advance out of that ?—If gives Rs. 10 advance he deducts Rs. 10 and gives him Rs. 3-14-0.

G-5065. So that you pay the sums due at the end of the year to the *mistris* and not to the coolies ?—Yes.

G-5066. The *mistri* takes his advance and gives the remainder to the coolie ?—Yes.

G-5067. *Mr. Ahmed* : Since you have been here the plantation has been a prosperous one ?—Yes.

G-5068. The income of the plantation has increased ?—Certainly.

241

G-5069. What percentage of profit did you make last year ?—I cannot say.

G-5070. *Mr. Nicolls* : At this time of the year and during crop time is it a fact that the coolies actually do earn very much more than annas 6 and annas 4 a day ?—Certainly ; they earn very much more.

G-5071. Do you consider that the health of the coolies on this estate is on the whole satisfactory ?—Yes, it is satisfactory this year.

G-5072. Do you think they are satisfied and happy ?—Yes.

G-5073. Do you think that the annas 6 and annas 4. *plus* what they can make during the busy months is a living wage ?—It may not be enough.

G-5074. *Mr. Clow* : Does this book include the extra payments if a man earns more than his daily annas 6 ?—No ; that is shown in the weekly reports.

G-5075. So that the figures you gave us before do not show the full amounts paid during the year ? They only showed the daily annas 6 ?—His wages are annas 6. If he earns extra that will be paid at the end of the week.

G-5076. *Mr. Nicolls* : Do you think that when the coolie has finished his day's work he will be willing to go to a night school ?—He would not.

G-5077. Do you consider that for an estate of this size with enough hospital facilities and nurses as close as Somwarpet, it is necessary to have a hospital here ?—It is not necessary to have a hospital, a patients' ward and one nurse, when there are hospital facilities so close as Somwarpet.

G-5078. *Mrs. Timmaya* : I understand two nurses were sent for training. Have they come back and what are they doing ?—They have been paid and sent for training to Bangalore. They have not come back. When they return they will remain on the estate here and look after the women in confinement and the sick coolies.

G-5079. Is there a lot of hookworm disease here ?—Not much.

G-5080. Do you take any action for the treatment of hookworm ?—Yes, about four months ago we gave anti-hookworm treatment to the whole coolie force. There are three more estates under the same ownership.

G-5081. *Mr. Clow* : The bonus is paid in cash at the end of the week ?—Yes.

G-5082. And it is not shown in the figures you gave at all ?—No.

G-5083. Supposing a man does two days' task in one day ?—That would not be shown in this book ; it is shown in this other account.

G-5084. Apart from the bonus for doing 6 full days' work in a week, do they get extra for doing extra work ?—Yes.

G-6085. Is that a substantial sum ?—Yes. It may be from annas 12 to Re. 1 per week during the crop season and at other seasons of the year they work extra by contract.

G-5086. *Mrs. Timmaya* : Do you pay the *mistris* commission for the extra work the coolies do ?—Yes.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr. G. W. PRIESTLY, I.C.S., Commissioner, Major F. R. THORNTON, I.M.S., Civil Surgeon, Rao Bahadur K. CHENGAPPA, District Magistrate, representing the Coorg Administration.

G-5087. *Mr. Sastri* : You are the three officers empowered under the Coorg Labour Act to inspect plantations and make enquiries ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : Yes.

G-5088. Who is going to do this duty when the Labour Act ceases to be in force ?—No arrangement has been made at all. The Act ceases at the end of March 1931. The Government of India cut down the period of the Act to five years, and being a temporary Act I do not think it has been taken very seriously.

G-5089. Under Section 10 of that Act you have the duty imposed upon you of inspecting and making enquiries as to the conditions of labour ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : During the course of my tours I have inspected several lines, but have not found anything serious to report on. (*Major Thornton*) : Where there has been any reason to inspect an estate because of sickness or infectious disease I have done so. (*Mr. Chengappa*) : In several instances where I have pointed out defects to the managers and employers they have put things right. There has been no regular programme of inspection.

G-5090. Have you taken action under Section 11 ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : No such case has been brought to my notice since I have been here, and no action has been taken under that section. (*Mr. Chengappa*) : Action could have been taken in some cases, but we found it would work extremely hard on the employer if we had suddenly taken action as soon as the Labour Act was passed ; we therefore gave the employers time in which to put the lines right, and in the majority of instances we have found on subsequent inspection that our instructions have been carried out ; so that we did not think it necessary to take action under Section 11.

G-5091. How many cases have been filed against workmen ?—About 3,300 on the average for the last four years. I have made out a statement of the operation of the Act since it came into force in 1926 (same handed in). In most cases the workmen obey the order. During last year within my knowledge there were 8 cases of actual imprisonment.

G-5092. Have any employers to your knowledge asked that the period during which the Act is to be in force should be extended ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : Yes, I had an application only last week from the Kodava Sabha.

G-5093. Have you had to take action under Section 15 against any complainants for frivolous or vexatious prosecutions ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : I have not taken action, but in three instances I have pointed out to subordinate magistrates that they should have taken action ; the explanation they gave me was that as they dismissed the complaints of the employers they thought that would be sufficient and further action was not necessary.

G-5094. From the figures you have supplied it would appear that the Act is used considerably ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : It is used very largely indeed, but imprisonment is not very common. (*Mr. Chengappa*) : The power of punishing these offenders rests only with the District Magistrate it is only in very exceptional cases that I send a man to prison. The man is either sent back to work or is given time in which to pay back the advance.

G-5095. Do you think the workers are well-looked after in respect of medical facilities ?—(*Major Thornton*) : I think on the whole they are.

G-5096. Do the planters do much that the Government does not do ?—In certain cases they do ; there are private dispensaries on some of the estates. Of course planters provide ordinary medicines in their own bungalows, but apart from that certain estates which are isolated have their own dispensaries ; there are qualified sub-assistant surgeons in four places. We have 7 Government dispensaries. The dispensaries are financed by the District Board and the only charge made to the estate is for maintenance. The charge is apportioned on the acreage ; it is paid by some estates, but not all. It is not compulsory. The estate has to pay for the medicines that are supplied at the price we charge the general public. There are rules dealing with this matter. (*Mr. Priestly*) : It is voluntary in a way, but if a coolie is sent in from an estate which does not subscribe a bill is sent to the proprietor for the medicine. The estates can compound at annas 6 an acre. There are not many private practitioners in Coorg, and therefore both rich and poor people get their medicines from the hospital.

G-5097. Do you say to a man : " You come from an estate which does not subscribe ; therefore we cannot treat you ; go back " ?—No, nobody is refused. I have not heard of such a case occurring.

G-5098. If it did occur it would be improper ?—Yes. Coorg is a small Province and I think it not possible that we should not hear complaints if patients were turned away without medicines.

G-5099. *Mr. Clow* : It appears that though wages on the plantations are normally annas 6 a day, annas 12 is given for work outside the plantations on roads and paddy fields ?—The Public Works Department have to pay annas 12 for coolies who do a hard day's work on the roads ; sometimes they have to pay more than that. Our experience last season was that the coolies left the roads and went to the plantations. During the last season we had great labour trouble and we imported a large gang of coolies from Mysore ; but almost at once they seemed to be fading away and going to the plantations, to our great annoyance. I think they find the work on the roads too hard or else the work on the plantations is much lighter and they prefer it.

G-5100. I understand there has never been a case under Section 19 of the Coorg Labour Act ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : There is one case pending ; that is all.

G-5101. Is the contract of employment of the coolies always signed within the Province ?—It is signed outside the Province as well ; the bond has to be signed before an attesting officer ; there are attesting officers appointed outside the Province. In a large number of cases the accused is outside the Province when a case is brought and we send a warrant addressed to the police of that district. It is very difficult to secure these men ; the employer has to send a man to identify the accused. Sending a man down to point out the accused is very expensive ; to effect the arrest of a single coolie I think it costs the employer as much as Rs. 10, while in some cases it costs as much as Rs 30. In my statement, Col. 3 " Brought to trial " includes cases pending from the previous year. I should think about 20 per cent. of the cases failed through failure to secure the accused. You will find a heading " acquitted or discharged ". That includes cases where the accused cannot be traced. I should say 50 per cent. agree to

work while 50 per cent. say they will pay off the advance. They go to another employer and get the money to pay off the advance.

G-5102. I think you are a planter yourself ?—I am a small planter.

G-5103. Other magistrates of the administration are also planters ?—Not all of them ; very few have their own land, although most have an interest in family property.

G-5104. When the Act ceases to be operative do you propose to take any steps to ensure that the workmen are aware of the change ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : I think they will find out quickly enough.

G-5105. Prior to the coming into force of this Act was the Workmen's Breach of Contract Act extensively used ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : Not to the same extent.

G-5106. Do you say the Province is very malarious ?—(*Major Thornton*) : Yes, it has a reputation for malaria.

G 5107. Is hookworm a serious evil ?—The coolies bring it up with them.

G-5108. Do you think that conditions on the plantations are such as to cause the spread of hookworm ?—I think they infect the ground on the plantations and naturally they get re-infected. There are two malarial officers now, malarial sub-assistant surgeons, in Coorg who visit various parts of Coorg. The estate owners are recommended to introduce oiling and take certain measures of that nature and some of them have done so. (*Mr. Priestly*) : A definite report goes up every quarter to the Kasauli Institute as to what is being done. (*Major Thornton*) : Those anti-malarial measures were started 18 months ago.

G-5109. Do you think any of the planters do much in the way of work against hookworm ?—Yes ; mass treatment against hookworm is carried out by some of the planters, but not by all. The sub-assistant surgeon supervises when the treatment is carried out.

G-5110. What is the extent of the Government medical staff of the Province under you ?—There are two provincial hospitals, in each of which there are three sub-assistant surgeons ; these provincial hospitals are at Mercara and Virajpet. There are 7 dispensaries, in each of which there is one sub-assistant surgeon in charge. In addition, there are those two sub-assistant surgeons at the present time who are engaged in anti-malarial work, one in South Coorg and one in North Coorg. Apart from that there are sub-assistant surgeons at four estates. In Pollibetta a group of estates run a South Coorg Medical fund, consisting of one sub-assistant surgeon and two compounders.

G-5111. Taking the official and non-official staff together, do you think the staff is adequate ?—I think it is. We have in view opening two more dispensaries.

G-5112. Taking the Province as a whole, it is rather advanced in the matter of education, is it ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : It is very much so.

G-5113. There is a high percentage of literacy ?—Yes.

G-5114. It seems to have been virtually confined to the upper classes ?—I think that is true on the whole. The Coorgs are very keen on going to school ; it takes a lot to stop them—I mean during heavy rain or floods in the monsoon season. All the existing schools are open to the labouring classes and we have opened one or two special schools which have failed.

We had two schools opened exclusively for the benefit of the depressed classes ; but as soon as we stopped feeding them they stopped coming to school.

G-5115. That would show that the reason for non-attendance is economic ?—That is so ; I do not think it is anything else.

G-5116. Is there any way of overcoming that difficulty ?—It is not obvious to me.

G-5117. Would it be possible to prevent work on plantations below a certain age ?—That means fining the family. Then they might find work outside the plantations, because there is a great demand in the paddy fields also, though perhaps there is no particular demand for small children for work in the paddy fields.

G-5118. *Mrs. Timmaya* : As very much drink is taken by the labouring classes, do you not think it advisable that some propaganda work against drink among labourers should be undertaken by Government ?—It would be a good thing, but I think that is more a matter for non-official agencies, such as temperance societies to deal with.

G-5119. Do you not think it desirable that toddy shops should be located by local option, as enticement of labour takes place in toddy shops ?—I am not aware that enticement of labour takes place in toddy shops.

G-5120. In order to prevent this drunkenness, do you not think it desirable not to locate toddy shops within five miles of an estate ?—That would not prevent them from drinking as far as my knowledge goes. They would make their own drink on the estates ; it is very easy to make drink and the four or five excise officials of the Province cannot prevent them brewing their own liquor in a country like this, if lawful supply is made too difficult. The members of the Commission will have seen the nature of the country.

G-5121. Many women are unwilling to be treated by men doctors but I would come to a hospital when there is a lady doctor. Do you not think it would be a good thing to have a lady doctor appointed in Coorg ?—In the last Council an undertaking was given to try the experiment of a part-time lady doctor, who would be paid some sort of retaining fee by Government and allowed to carry on private work as well.

G-5122. Is there any provision made for the collection of statistics of births and deaths on the estates ?—There is no compulsory Act, but I get certain returns which I do not believe are accurate. I have at present no reliable vital statistics.

G-5123. Are you aware that there is a large infantile mortality on the estates ?—(*Major Thornton*) : Yes, there is a large infantile mortality, but I am inclined to consider that that is mainly due to malaria. The *Patels* are expected to visit the estates and every house in the village, and how far their reports are accurate is a point to be considered. (*Mr. Priestly*) : I am certain they are not accurate.

G-5124. Do you not think it would be a good thing to start a child welfare society, and if you had a lady doctor she could pay special attention to child welfare ?—(*Major Thornton*) : I should think that might be done locally ; the wives of the owners of the estates could do a lot by local effort.

G-5125. How many trained midwives are there in the Coorg hospitals ?—There are two, both in Mercara and Virajpet ; there are others at other places and there are four in the dispensaries at present. There are two vacancies owing to the fact that we cannot get any one to come up to Coorg. I advertised last month for nurses, but did not get a single reply. In addition to that there are municipal nurses in the municipalities. There is now a scheme for training nurses which has been started on a small scale and will probably be extended. The people from Madras will not come here and the only way to overcome the difficulty is to give scholarships.

G-5126. Do women come to the hospitals freely in labour cases ?—I think they do.

G-5127. Are there any calls from estates in maternity cases, and if there are regular calls will the present staff be able to cope with the requirements ?—There are a few calls : in normal cases they do not call on us. I have had no complaints that the staff has not been able to cope with the number of cases.

G-5128. Do you know that the by-law that the sub-assistant surgeons should recover money before issuing medicines has affected the attendance at hospitals ?—I do not know of any by-laws to that effect.

G-5129. Do you not think there should be some sort of legislation for maternity benefits ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : I am sorry, but I cannot give an opinion on this point without notice.

G-5130. *Mr. Thimmayya Punja* : The five schools for the depressed classes which are referred to in the memorandum are outside the planting areas, are they not ?—I do not know. (*Mr. Chengappa*) : There is one at Somwarpet which is a planting area.

G-5131. They do not much affect the education of the labourers in the plantations ?—No.

G-5132. Do you think education of the children of the labourers would work satisfactorily if it were left to the parents or the employers ?—I take it the existing state of things would continue.

G-5133. In future will parents, if they wish to, be able to send their children to school freely ?—If children can get annas 3 a day when they are 6 years old they are not likely to go to school.

G-5134. If the employer provides schools, unless there is compulsion, will the children take to education freely ?—I do not know these people.

G-5135. The co-operative societies referred to in the memorandum, I believe, also exist outside plantations ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : Yes.

G-5136. Have any cases arisen under the Workmen's Compensation Act ?—No.

G-5137. Is there a Factory Inspector appointed ?—I am the Factory Inspector, *ex-officio*.

G-5138. Do you get reports about accidents ?—Yes ; there was a case of an accident the year before last, but it was a minor case. The coolie could not go out to work for three weeks.

G-5139. Labourers in the plantations have to handle engines and pulpers. Do you think some Compensation Act should be introduced for the benefit of the plantation labourer ?—It is difficult to answer that question offhand. I think this has been considered by other people in other

s and it has been found unwise to apply it to plantations. The reason not clear to me but I take it there must be some reason. The only achinery that exists on a coffee plantation is the coffee pulping machinery. There have been no cases of accidents in the coffee pulping places during the last 20 years ; I have not heard of any. All accidental deaths are reported to me.

G-5140. Do you think it is necessary to provide for the possibility of accidents happening ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : Things have gone on for many years and there is no present necessity.

G-5141. Do you think drunkenness among labourers is increasing or decreasing ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : I think it is neither increasing nor decreasing.

G-5142. But the excise revenue is increasing ?—That is due more to competition on the part of bidders. The excise revenue usually goes up when there is a big coffee crop and the coolies are earning more money. For instance, this year we got about Rs. 10,000 more for toddy than last year. When the toddy licensee knows there is a demand for his toddy he puts up the price. He can sell for annas 2 a seer or for one anna a seer.

G-5143. *Mr. Nicolls* : Was not clause 10 of the Labour Act put in, that if there was any special cause of complaint either on the part of labourers or the employer there were officers available to settle the matter —(*Mr. Chengappa*) : Yes, it was in order to enable officers to inspect when complaints were sent.

G-5144. You have no officers appointed with a specific charge to look after the plantations regularly and systematically ; the Section is merely to empower you whenever there is a case ?—Yes.

G-5145. When you have visited estates have the managers ever put difficulties in your way ?—No, they have given me every possible help and shown me everything.

G-5146. *Mr. Ahmed* : I suppose you appreciate your duties with regard to the inspections that you have to make under the Act ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : It says " may make " ; it is permissive ; it does not say you have to make inspections.

G-5147. " May " means must ?—No, I disagree entirely.

G-5148. I suggest you have neglected your duties of inspection under the Act ?—No. I disagree.

G-5149. Will you supply us with statistics as to the number of acquittals and discharges of persons prosecuted under the Act in the year 1928-29 ?—Yes.

G-5150. The figures of prosecutions under the Act indicate, do they not, that the feeling between workers and employers is very strained ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : I certainly do not admit that the feelings between the employers and employees are not cordial. (*Mr. Priestly*) : If a man takes money and runs away with it, naturally the man whose money has been taken is annoyed about it.

G-5151. And therefore you will agree with me that there is ined feeling between the labourers and the employers ?—No. That what is meant. The statement in the memorandum means exactly t it says—no more and no less. (*Mr. Chengappa*) : Under the Act a plaint should be brought within 6 months so that often the employer is pelled to present a complaint immediately to the court.

G-5152. I suggest that there is a strained feeling between the workers the employers with regard to these prosecutions ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) :

G-5153. Why not ?—I only state the fact ; I cannot explain it.

G-5154. The majority of these people run away taking an advance hout completing the contract ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : No ; they do not away from the estate. The fact is that they do not return from their ntry. There are very few cases where the coolies come to the estate then run away ; I do not think that in more than 5 per cent. of these es the coolies have run away from the estates.

G-5155. Do they get better wages elsewhere and therefore run away ? cannot answer that question.

G-5156. You cannot assign any reason for their running away ?—annot give reasons.

G-5157. If this system of giving commission on advances to *mistris* e abolished and the money were paid to the labourer, I suppose the ourers would be greatly benefited ?—Of course the labourer will be efited by any extra money given to him ; that is clear enough.

G-5158. If this system were abolished and a public employment can were started that would be a benefit ?—(*Mr. Priestly*) : If you e to pay the *mistris* you lose them and the estate cannot be worked ; are not paid to make proposals to upset work like that. It is not to benefit of the workers to abolish the estate. If the *mistris* are not paid opinion is they will not work.

G-5159. The workers are compelled to work, are they not ?—I do not e ; the workers are not compelled to work, but if they take money they compelled to give value for the money received.

G-5160. *Mr. Joshi* : You tell us that bills are sent to the estates from hospitals in respect of treatment given to coolies from the estate. Are e any cases in which such managers refuse to pay those bills ?—(*Major rnton*) : No, they generally pay in the end but they sometimes take a ; time. (*Mr. Priestly*) : The estates that do not pay are very few the dues are very small amounts.

G-5161. Have you any power to compel managers to pay ; is it volun- ?—(*Major Thornton*) : It is done under this regulation of the Chief missioner which has been published in the Gazette. (*Mr. Priestly*) : not think we can compel them to pay, but the trouble has never n ; if it does arise I suppose we shall find a way to deal with it.

G-5162. You were telling us of an accident which prevented a coolie working for three weeks. In that case was any claim for compen- n made ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : No. I went to the factory and asked him. He had a bad cut on one of his fingers. The manager told hat the coolie was paid about Rs. 15. I saw the coolie ; he was all and was working there after a month of the accident.

G-5163. Did you sugge[illegible] at he was entitled to get work men's compensation ?—I did [illegible].

G-5164. Was that the only accident reported ?—Yes.

G-5165. Have you any census of these pulping engines on the estates ? —No.

G-5166. Is there any legislation in the province under which a man who keeps an engine of this kind has to take a license ?—No.

G-5167. So that a man can run an engine and employ 10 or 15 men ; there is no inspection ?—There is a limit of 20 coolies under the Factory Act.

G-5168. But if he employed 10 or 15 men no license would be necessary under any Act ?—No.

G-5169. What is the position with regard to boilers ?—There is regis- tration of boilers ; the Madras Boiler Inspector comes here to inspect them.

G-5170. Has this administration any register of boiler or engines ?— Yes, we have.

G-5171. So that you would be able to give us the number of eng on the estates ?—Yes.

G-5172. These small engines have no boilers ?—No, they are Diesel engines. (*Mr. Priestly*) : Practically all the boilers here belong to Gove ment.

G-5173. I saw a factory with a number of people working inside the building ?—They were cleaning the coffee ; they were not working on the engine at all. If what you say is correct, we shall have to ask these people to rail off their engines and make certain they are not factories.

G-5174. We are told that there is a scarcity of labour on these plantations. If there were a Government Inspector to protect the interests of the workers, do you think the workers would come more freely to Coorg ?—I think it is much more a matter of the individual owner of the estate ; I do not know that a man bothering about will do any good. A. Mahut on the Malabar side there is a rubber estate which has had trouble in getting labour. In order to attract labour they are doing all sorts of things, putting up new lines, giving tea and quinine in the morning and so on. If that sort of thing is started it grows and grows. In order to get labour they have got to improve conditions and make things attractive.

G-5175. So that if legislation is passed regulating the conditions of labour on plantations, providing for housing accommodation, midday rest and so on, the employers will not lose but will gain ? But can the estates afford it ?—I cannot answer that question.

G-5176. If the financial burden is not too heavy, the estates may gain —It is possible.

G-5177. Do contractors sometimes withhold the pay of their employe —I have not heard of that in connection with plantation labour.

G-5178. Do you think there would be any difficulty in legislation viding for the prompt payment of wages ?—If wages are not paid coolie goes ; that is the remedy.

G-5179. What happens when [illegible] sick ?—(*Mr. Chengappa*) : has to draw on his reserve if there is anything left. Of course if there is anything standing to his credit the estate will pay him.

G-5180. Is there any practice by which the manager can deduct money every week and then tell the coolie he is malingering and he will not be paid anything although he may have worked during the week ?

Mr. Nicolls : Certainly, if he knows he is malingering it is the only way of dealing with the man. If the man is perfectly fit and well and has no temperature, the manager will say " If you do not come out to work to-morrow you will get no advance." In a case like that the man goes out to work, but the manager would never do that to a sick man.

G-5181. If you give a coolie an advance of Rs. 25, have you power to refuse to pay that man until you get back your Rs. 25 ?

Mr. Nicolls : I should say we have the power to refuse to pay a man until he has paid up his dues.

(The witness withdrew.)

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INDEX.

DUL HAH, tindal, Visagapatam Harbour Works, II, 3176.

DUR RAHMAN, storeman, Visagapatam Harbour Works, II, 3176.

economics of *mistris* and workers, *Sampson*, II, 3741, 3750–1.

enteeism, industries :
Causes, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 205, (*Wood*), II, 3204–6 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211 ; *Stanes and Co.*, I, p. 238 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241, (*V.S.E. Ayyangar*), II, 4475–7 ; *Green*, I, p. 264 ; *Anderson*, I, p. 272 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 281.
Connection with days of holiday, marriage and sowing seasons, etc., *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61.
Effect of harvesting and malarial seasons, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 112.
Extent of, *Government*, I, p. 19 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61 ; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111 ; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 112 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 134, 148 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211 ; *Stanes and Co.*, I, p. 238 ; *Armstrong*, I, p. 274.
Increase with increase in wages, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, pp. 205, 209.
Loss of job if absent for more than few days without leave, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 286.
Loss in production owing to, *Stanes and Co.*, I, p. 238.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 274.
Penalty for, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3240, 3273–3 ; *Hargreaves, Bentley*, II, 2090–4.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 264.
Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329.
Recording of, system and procedure in event of return, *Bentley, Hargreaves*, II, 1997–2000, 2021–3.
Reduction, means of, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61 ; *Bentley*, II, 1954–5.
after Wages day and holidays especially, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 165.

enteeism, plantations :
Causes of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 343.
Extent of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 343 ; *Porter*, II, 3371.
Increase as result of increased wages, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156, (*Pinches, Barber*), II, 2234–7.

ult and Mass Education Society :
Aims and objects of, *Isaac*, I, pp. 336–9.
Evidence on behalf of, *see* Isaac, George S., I, pp. 337–9.

dults, young, employment, certification system desirable, *Corbidge*, II, 3020.

griculture :
Labour :
Classes of, *Paddison*, I, pp. 3–4.
Conditions of life, *Paddison*, I, p. 5.
close inter-relation with industrial labour, *Government*, I, p. 3, (*Leach*), II, 2491–8.
Low caste workers, condition of, and measures for improvement, *Paddison*, I, p. 4–5.
Position of, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, pp. 239–40.
Semi-slavery, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 239.
Statistics, *Paddison*, I, p. 3 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 60.
Predominance of, *Shiva Rao*, I, pp. 202–3.

AYAR, V. Subramani, Manager, Choolai Mills, II, 2193–48.

ll-India Trade Union Congress, affiliation of unions of Government workers with permission desired, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 246 ; *Porter*, I, p. 260.

uminium industry, conditions, *see* **Madras Aluminium Labour Union,** I, pp. 283–7.

Anamalai plantations :
see also subject headings.
General conditions, *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, I, pp. 249, 255.
Planning of estates, *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 249.

Anamalai Planters' Association :
Affiliation to United Planters' Association of Southern India, and relatic between, *Jones*, II, 3869–76.
Committee of management, *Jones*, II, 3878, 3884.
Estates and acreage represented by, and membership of, *Jones*, II, 3880–3
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **JONES, J. H. Ireland,** etc., II, 3869–4127.

ANDERSON, Rev. A., Gunupur : I, pp. 271–2.
Absenteeism, I, p. 272.
Assam, recruitment for, I, pp. 271–2.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 271, 272.
Recruitment, I, p. 271.
Unemployment, I p. 272.

ANDERSON, Major F. J., Principal Medical College, Vizagapatam, and Medical Officer, *see* **ASH, W. C.,** etc., I, pp. 82–88 ; II, 518–636.

ANGAPPAN, worker, Nonesuch Tea Estate, II, 3357–9.

ANNAPATHRAKIMMA, woman coal carrier, Vizagapatam Harbour Works, 5

ANTHONI, K. O., Secretary, Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Work-people Wel Committee, *see* **HARGREAVES, J.,** etc., I, p. 152–54. II, 1820–2137.

APPALLAM, woman coal carrier, Vizagapatam Harbour Works, 517h.

Apprenticeship :
Advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 164.
Binny and Co., scheme, I, p. 145.
Commonwealth Trust Ltd., embroidery department, *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Extent of system, *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 270.
Facilities and increase advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employ Union*, I, p. 218.
Madras Port Trust factories, *Armstrong*, I, p 277.
Racial discrimination, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 113.
Recommendations of committee in 1924 *re* :
Adoption advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109.
and Opinion *re*, *Government*, I, p. 9.
Scheme in course of preparation, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving I Co.*, I, p. 278.
Scope for, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109.

Apprenticeship Act, 1850 :
Application in India, difficulties, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 154.
Consideration by Committee on Technical and Industrial Education, 1922 and recommendations, *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 270.
Value, slight, *Government*, I, pp. 8–9.

ARASU, V. T., President, of 1929 Madras League of Youth, *Bidi* factories, Mad conditions in and proposals for improvement, I, pp. 94–7, II, 1085–1165.

Arbitration, *see under* **Industrial disputes.**

ARMSTRONG, G. G., O.B.E., M.C., V.D., M.Inst.T., Chairman, Madras Port Tru I, pp. 274–8.
Absenteeism, I, p. 274.
Apprenticeship, I, p. 277.
Attendance and time keeping, I, p. 274.
Contract labour, I, p. 275.
Health and medical facilities, I, p. 275.
Hours, I, p. 276.
Housing, I, p. 275.
Industrial disputes, I, p. 277.
Industrial relations, I, p. 278.
Leave and holidays, I, pp. 276, 277.

ARMSTRONG, G. G., O.B.E., M.C., V.D., M.Inst.T., Chairman, Madras Port Trust ; I, pp. 274–8—*continued.*
Provident fund, I, p. 277.
Recruitment, I, p. 274.
Safety, I, p. 275.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, p. 275.
Wages, I, pp. 274, 277.
Welfare, I, p. 278.
Workmen's compensation, I, p. 275.

Aruvankadu Cordite Factory Labour Union, history of, *Gray*, I, pp. 52–3.

ASH, W. C., Engineer in Chief, Harbour Works, Vizagapatam ; **SMITH, C. J.,** Mechanical Superintendent ; **ANDERSON, Major F. J.,** Principal, Medical College, Vizagapatam, and Chief Medical Officer ; **WELCHMAN, F. A. M.,** Office Superintendent ; *and* **SATYANARAYANA, Dr. K.,** Medical Officer : I, pp. 82–8, II, 518–636.
Accidents, I, p. 88, II, 567.
Children, employment of, II, 524–6, 585, 611–6.
Contract work, and employment of labour through contractors, I, pp. 83, 85, II, 521–7, 568, 607–9, 614.
Creche, I, p. 84, II, 627–9.
Education, II, 605–6.
Factories Act, II, 576–82.
Fair Wages Clause, II, 527–9.
no Gratuities on retirement, II, 553–4.
Hours, I, pp. 84, 85, II, 558.
Housing, I, p. 83, 84, 85, II, 532–9, 583–4, 603–4.
Injury, payment during absence owing to, in some cases, II, 565–6, 609.
Leave, I, pp. 83, 86 ; II, 630–3, 636.
anti-Malarial work, I, pp. 84, 87, 537, 617–24.
Medical facilities, I, p. 84 ; II, 607–8
Provident fund, I, p. 83 ; II, 548–52, 572, 634–5.
Railway passes, I, p. 84.
Recruitment, I, p. 84, 85 ; II, 531, 594–602.
Sanitary staff, II, 624–5.
Sickness incidence, I, p. 88 ; II, 573–5, 610, 626.
Supervisory staff, I, pp. 84, 85, 86.
Vizagapatam harbour works, conditions, I, p, 82–8 ; II, 518–636.
Wages, I, pp. 83, 84 ; II, 540–7, 556–9, 569–71, 586–602.
Women, employment, II, 524–6, 555–9, 613–6.
Workmen's Compensation, II, 560–4, 581.

Assam :
Conditions in, differences of opinion heard as to, *A. Anderson*, I, pp. 271–2.
Health, maternity benefits, *Austin*, II, 130–32.
Hospitals, better buildings desirable, *Austin*, II, 129.
Housing, medical needs and education, improvement needed, in some districts, *Austin*, I, p. 76.
Inspection of gardens, regular inspection desirable, but need for legislation doubted but not objected to, *Austin*, II, 95–9.
Labour Board :
Composition, *Austin*, I, p. 76.
Control over working of gardens advocated if not already possessed, *Naidu*, I, p. 256.
Indian members desirable, *Naidu*, I, p. 256.
Labour, representation of, *Austin*, II, 30–1, 100.
Missionaries and social workers, desirable if with experience of recruiting areas and plantations, *Austin*, II, 152.
Representatives from recruiting areas advocated on, *Austin*, I, p. 76 ; II, 29.
Smaller, advocated, *Austin*, I, p. 76 ; II, 28, 33.
Superfluous, *Steele*, I, p. 81 ; II, 361–2 ; *Driver*, II, 563–4, 365–6.
Labour conditions unsatisfactory, *Raju*, I, p. 296.
Recruitment for :
Act VI :
Repeal and exactment of simple measure under consideration of Government of India, *Government*, I, p. 8.
Replacement by short simple enactment advocated, *Austin*, I, p. 76.

Assam ;—*continued.*
Recruitment for :—*continued.*
Age limit and examination by doctor for, *Steele*, II, 260.
from Agency tracts, evils of, and prohibition advocated, *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, I, p. 76–7 ; *II*, 170–240.
Applications for formation of separate agencies :
no Case of, Vizagapatam, *Bracken*, II, 517.
Refusals of, *Austin*, II, 26–7.
Benefits derived by labourers, *Austin*, I, p. 76, II, 4, 138 ; *Steele*, I, p. 78 ; II, 286–7, 357 ; *Bracken*, I, p. 82, II, 514
Causes of, *Steele*, I, p. 78 II, 286, 321 ; *Naidu*, I, pp. 255–6 ; *Anderson*, I, p. 272 ; *Staecker*, I, p. 273 ; *Austin*, II, 5, 11–12, 111–4 ; *Bracken*, II, 386, 390, 412–3, 504–5, 514–6.
from Ceded districts, *Steele*, II, 291.
Certificate to every emigrant from local police station showing name and village, proposal, *Staecker*, I, pp. 273–4.
Clothing outfit and advances, *Steele*, II, 321.
Competition between gardens, doubt as to possibility of abolishing, *Austin*, II, 34.
no Concentration in particular districts in Assam, *Steele*, II, 299–300.
Contact with villages :
Extent and frequency of return, *Naidu*, I, p. 256 ; *Staecker*, I, p. 273.
Keeping back of woman and children when husband goes on leave and *vice versa*, *Staecker*, I, p. 273.
through *Sardar* system, *Steele*, I, p. 79.
Contract, absence of, pointed out to recruits, *Steele*, II, 281.
Control, retention of :
Desirable, *Government*, I, p. 8 ; *Austin*, I, p. 75 ; *Naidu*, I, p. 256 ; *Bracken*, I, p. 82, II, 417, 506 ; *Staecker*, I, p. 274 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 309.
Desirable to certain extent only, *Steele*, I, pp. 80–1.
of Criminal tribes :
Donis, suitability of, and benefit to, *Bracken*, II, 419–22.
Extent of, *Driver*, II, 370–2 ; *Steele*, II, 370.
of Culprits :
Case of one traced and brought back and non-prevention of return, *Bracken*, II, 419, 489–92.
Doubted, *Steele*, II, 277.
Culprits and people of bad character, return of, when traced, and means of tracing, *Austin*, II, 128–9, 148–9.
Debts of recruits, payment of, in some cases, *Steele*, II, 271–6, 301–2, 304–5, 318.
Defects of system, *Austin*, I, p. 76.
no serious Defects or abuses known, *Government*, I, p. 8.
Effect on supply of labour in recruiting districts, *Bracken*, I, p. 82, II, 514 ; *Staecker*, p. 273 ; *Raju*, I, 296 ; *Steele*, II, 352–4.
Expenses, reduction, combination and agreement in industry proposed for, *Austin*, II, 36.
Family groups, single males and single females, from Ganjam, 1926 to 1929, *Steele*, I, p. 80.
Family life, disturbance of :
Extent and effect of, *A. Anderson*, I, p. 272 ; *Austin*, II, 134–6.
None, *Steele*, I, p. 80, II, 358–60 ; *Naidu*, I, p. 256.
Proposal for prevention, *Staecker*, I, p. 274.
Freedom of return, *Steele*, II, 336.
Freedom of, the ideal, and possible steps towards, *Austin*, II, 60–2.
from Ganjam, *Steele*, I, pp. 77–81 ; II, 241–50 ; *Naidu*, pp. 255–6 ; *Raju* I, p. 296.
of Goti workers, *Bracken*, I, p. 82, II, 430.
Illegalities, safeguards against, *Bracken*, II, 416.
Inducement by help of intoxicants, denial, *Steele*, II, 320.
from Jeypore Agency, *Staecker*, I, pp. 273–4.
Journey, *Steele*, II, 313.
no *Khumbari* coolies, *Steele*, II, 303–6, 319.
Kidnapping :
Complaints, three only in 1926 to 1929, *Bracken*, I, p. 81.
Occasional cases, *Austin*, II, 153.

Assam :—*continued.*
Recruitment for :—*continued.*
from Koraput, *Driver*, II, 288–90.
Local Agents :
no Conflict of interest experienced, *Steele*, II, 282.
greater Freedom to, proposal, *Steele*, I, p. 80.
Position, *Austin*, II, 31, 32.
System and functions of, *Steele*, I, p. 79.
System good if right kind of officer, employed, etc., *Austin*, I, p. 75.
Loss of land in own village possible, *Bracken*, II, 508–14.
Medical examination of recruits and percentage of rejections, *Steele*, II, 268–9.
Misrepresentation :
Raju, I, p. 296 ; *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, II, 170, 175–9, 199, 207–16, 223, 227, 231–2.
no Case known, *Steele*, II, 338, 342.
Conditions fully explained by local agents, *Bracken*, II, 414.
no Great amount of, and punishment for, *Austin*, II, 105, 109, 114, 143.
Possible, but would be put right by local agents, *Steele*, II, 255–7.
Safeguard against, at local agencies, *Driver*, II, 288.
from New districts, proposed method, *Austin*, II, 16–7.
Opposition of higher castes to, *Steele*, I, p. 78, II, 367–9.
Origin of labour, *Paddison*, I, p. 6.
no Panchayats in recruiting districts, *Steele*, II, 348.
Persons dying on gardens, use of bones and flesh as manure, *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, II, 173, 205–6.
Preference for, rather than for Dooars, *Steele*, II, 297–8.
Professional recruits, no experience of, *Steele*, II, 251.
Public employment agencies :
Advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 309.
not Advocated, *Steele*, I, p. 80 ; *Naidu*, I, p. 256, II, 332–4, 339, 341 ; *Driver*, II, 333 ; *Bracken*, II, 497–9.
too Impersonal, *Austin*, II, 45, 101–2.
no Objection personally, *Steele*, II, 335.
would be Preferable method, *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, II, 224.
Recruiters, licensing of, by District Magistrates, proposal, *Austin*, II, 50–6, 155.
Registering officers under Central Government, Mr. King's scheme not approved, *Austin*, II, 32–3.
Registration of recruits by magistrate instead of by local agents advocated, *Naidu*, I, p. 256.
Repatriation :
in case of Misrepresentation and false promises, *Austin*, II, 125.
Provision for, advocated, *Staecker*, I, p. 274.
Return tickets, supply to labourers, not desirable or necessary, *Austin*, II, 88–93, 156.
after Three years :
probable Effect, *Steele*, II, 309 ; *Driver*, II, 309.
Enforcement means, *Austin*, II, 63.
Right of, after certain period, advocated, *Austin*, II, 32–4, 117–8.
Right would not be exercised in all cases, *Austin*, II, 64–5 ; *Driver*, II, 309.
Return, freedom, *Steele*, II, 310, 325–6, 355–6.
Sardari system : *Steele*, I, p. 79–80, *P. A. Naidu*, I, p. 256.
Abuse of, *Anderson*, I, p. 272.
Approval of, and change not advocated, *Austin*, I, p. 75, II, 14,15, 40, 103–10, 114–6 ; *Steele*, I, p. 80.
Assistance and propaganda, greater elasticity advocated, *Steele*, I, p. 80 ; II, 282–3, 311–2, 335 ; *Austin*, II, 22–3, 49.
Advances to *Sardars* :
Civil suit for recovery of, possible but very rare, *Driver*, *Steele*, II, 290 ; *Bracken*, II, 502–3.
Systems of, *Steele*, I, p. 79, II, 258, 331.
Bonus per recruit, *Steele*, II, 343–4.
Control of, need for, *Bracken*, II, 418.
Cost per recruit, *Steele*, I, p. 80.
Evils of, and abolition advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 309.

Assam :—*continued.*
Recruitment for :—*continued.*
Sardari system :—*continued.*
Evils of, in some cases, *Stracker*, I, p. 273.
greater Freedom to *sardars*, proposal, *Steele*, I, p. 80.
Illegal assistance, *A. Anderson*, I, p. 272.
Illegal practices, safeguards against, *Bracken*, I, p. 82.
Period of work on garden before being sent as *sardars*, *Austin*, II, 37–9, 144–5.
Reporting to local agents, *Steele*, II, 314 ; *Driver*, II, 315.
non-Return of number of *sardars*, *Steele*, I, p. 79, II, 244–50, 262–4, 312, 314, 237 353, *Bracken*, II, 501.
better Supervision advocated, *Stracker*, I, p. 273.
among Savaras, proposal re, *Naidu*, I, p. 289.
Wives accompanying *sardars* in many cases, *Austin* II, 94 ; *Steele*, II, 328 ; *Driver*, II, 329.
Wives and families of *sardars* left in Assam in some cases, *Steele*, II, 326, 329, 330 ; *Driver*, 327 ; *Bracken*, II, 495.
Women *sardars*, II, 146.
Satisfactory working of, *Bracken* I, pp. 81-2.
Saving of money by Labourers, *Austin*, II, 119–20.
Short term :
Abolition of control not advocated, *Austin*, II, 62.
Proportion of women smaller, *Steele*, II, 315–8.
Single males, discouragement, *Steele*, II, 259.
Single women and minors :
Accommodation at agencies, *Steele*, II, 347.
Cases of return to villages and prosecution of *sardars*, *Steele*, II, 267.
Safeguarding of, *Steele*, I, p. 80, II, 261–7, 349 ; *Bracken*, II, 487–8.
Sowra migration, effect of forest protection policy, *Bracken*, II, 378–8.
Special system necessary owing to abuses in the past, *Austin*, II, 67–8.
Statistics, *Paddison*, I, p 6 ; *Paul*, I, p. 297.
Stopping of, desirable from point of view of development of agency tracts, *Raju*, I, p. 296.
System, *Government*, I, p. 8 ; *Paddison*, I, p. 6 ; *Paul*, I, p. 304.
Tracing of recruits, *Austin*, II, 126–8, 148–9 ; *Steele*, II, 279–80, 350–1.
Unauthorised trade in labourers, no experience of, *Steele*, II, 307–8.
from Vizagapatam agency tract, *Bracken*, I, pp. 81-2, II, 390–517.
Voluntary emigration :
should be Allowed, *Austin*, II, 24 ; *Steele*, II, 283–5, 316–7.
Increase in numbers presenting themselves voluntarily, *Steele*, II, 318.
Wages increase, question of effect, *Austin*, II, 87.
Widows and children, provision for, a matter for manager, *Austin*, II, 140–2.
Women, women official for interviewing, before leaving India, not necessary, *Austin*, II, 147.
Wages :
Adequacy, question of, *Austin*, II, 122–4.
Remissions home, less than from Burma, *Austin*, II, 133.
in Tea gardens and district, women and children, *Steele*, I, p. 77, II, 321.

Attendance registers and time-keeping :
no Definite system, tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132.
Irregular keeping of registers, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 113.
Government Press, *Basudev*, I, p. 290.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 274.
Plantations, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.
Public Works Department, method and grievance re, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 330.
Systems, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 135 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 205 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279.

AUSTIN, T., I.C.S., District Magistrate, Ganjam : I, pp. 75–6, II, 1–156.
Agricultural labourers, wages, II, 6–8.
Assam :
Housing, medical needs and education, I, p. 76, II, 129–32.
Inspection of gardens, II, 95–9.

AUSTIN, T., I.C.S., District Magistrate, Ganjam : I, pp. 75–6, II, 1–156— *continued.*
Assam :—*continued.*
Labour Board, I, p. 76, II, 28–33, 100, 152.
Recruitment for :
Act VI, I, p. 76.
Assistance and propaganda, II, 22–3, 49.
Benefits to coolies, I, p. 76, II, 4, 138.
Causes of, II, 5, 11–12, 111–4.
Competition between gardens, II, 34.
Control, I, p. 75, II, 60–2.
Culprits and people of bad character, II, 113, 126–8, 148–9.
Defects, I, p. 76.
Employment agencies, II, 45, 101–2.
Expenses, reduction, II, 36.
Family life, disturbance, II, 134–9.
Kidnapping, II, 153.
Local agents, I, p. 75, II, 31, 32.
from New districts, II, 16–7.
Recruiters, licensing of, by district magistrate, II, 50–6, 155.
Registering officers, II, 32–3.
Repatriation, II, 32–4, 63–5, 88–9, 117–8, 125, 156.
Sardari system, I, p. 75, II, 14–15, 37–40, 94, 103–10, 114–6, 143–5.
Short term, II, 62.
Special system, need for, II, 67–8.
Voluntary emigration, II, 24.
Widows and children, II, 140–2.
Women, II, 147.
Wages, II, 87, 119–24, 133.
Burma, recruitment, II, 11–12, 46–8.
Dooars, recruitment, II, 57–9.
Indian Tea Districts Association, II, 25–7.
Vetti system, II, 8, 10, 70–86, 150–1.

AYYANGAR, N. K. SESHA, Chairman, Madras Panel of Lawyers : I, pp. 97–101, II, 1166–1231.
Workmen's Compensation Act :
Amendments, proposals, I, pp. 98–101, II, 1178–1231.
Work of Madras Panel of Lawyers, I, pp. 97–8, II, 1166–77, 1228–31.

AYYANGAR, N. S. Ramaswamy, President, Coimbatore Labour Union : I, pp. 239–55 II, 4353–4534.
Absenteeism, I, p. 241, II, 4475–7.
Advances, promissory notes, II, 4550.
Agricultural labourers, I, pp. 239–40.
Bathing and washing places, II, 4493–4.
Coimbatore Labour Union, I, pp. 245–6, II, 4353–8, 4364–79.
Co-operative banks and stores, I, pp. 240, 245, 254, II, 4503–5.
Co-operative Department, I, p. 242.
Cotton mills, I, p. 242.
Criminal Procedure Code, section 144, I, p. 246.
Diseases, I, pp. 242, 249, 252, II, 4495–6.
Drinking, I, p. 240.
Education, I, pp. 242, 253–4, II, 4389, 4415.
Factories Act, II, 4465.
Factory inspection, I, p. 247, II, 4492.
Factory laws, I, p. 247.
Franchise, I, pp. 239, 247.
Handloom weavers, I, p. 247.
Health :
Feeding of children, II, 4500.
Maternity benefit, I, p. 242, II, 4489.
Medical facilities, I, p. 241, II, 4483–91.
Plantations and medical facilities, I, pp. 252, 252–3.
Hours :
Industry, I, pp. 242, 243, II, 2255–8, 4507–8, 4513–5.
Plantations, I, p. 254.

AYYANGAR, N. S. Ramaswamy, President Coimbatore Labour Union; I, pp. 239–55, II, 4363–4534—*continued.*
Housing:
Industrial workers, I, p. 241, II, 4480–2, 4506.
Plantations, I, pp. 249, 250, 252; II, 4410, 4411a–4.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 239, 240, 245, II, 4391, 4473.
Industrial disputes, I, pp. 245, 246, II, 4356, 4400–9, 4516–24, 4531–4.
Intelligence, I, p. 247.
Labour, Government attitude, I, p. 244.
Labour Commissioner, I, pp. 246, 247.
Labour Department, I, p. 247.
Labour questions, neglect of, I, p. 239, II, 4386–8.
Land and cattle, I, p. 254.
Leave:
Industry, I, p. 243, II, 4459–65.
Plantations, I, p. 254.
Legislative Councils, I, p. 246.
Loan fund, I, p. 246, II, 4394–9.
proposed Meeting, Valparai:
and Action *re, Jones*, II, 4119–24.
Notice issued *re, Ayyangar*, I, p. 248, II, 4380–5,4526–8; *E. F. Thomas*, 4589–607.
Order under section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code, *Ayyangar*, I, pp. 247, 248, II, 4380, 4525, 4529–30.
Wording of, and circumstances of issue, *Thomas*, II, 4588–607, 4613.
Old age and premature retirement, insurance, I, pp. 242, 243, II, 4439–47.
Plantations, conditions on, and proposals for improvement, I, pp. 247, 249–55, II, 4410–6.
Recruiting:
Industries, I, pp. 240–1, II, 4417–9.
Plantations, I, pp. 241, 249–51, II, 4393, 4417–30.
Rice supply, I, p. 24, II, 4497–9, 4501.
Safety, I, p. 242, II, 4438.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply:
Industries, I, pp. 241–2, II, 4434–7.
Plantations, I, 252, 253.
Sickness and accident insurance, I, p. 242, II, 4439–41, 4449–54.
Staff:
Organization, plantations, I, p. 252.
Relations with rank and file, I, p. 241.
Tanneries, I, pp. 243, 247, II, 4465.
Trade Unions, I, pp. 246, 254, II, 4359–63, 4431.
Wages, I, pp. 243, 244, 245, 246, 250, 251, 253–4, II, 4466–74, 4478–9, 4519–22.
Welfare, I, pp. 242, 247, II, 4502.
Works Committee, I, p. 241, II, 4431–3.
Workmen's compensation, I, pp. 242–3.

AYYAR AVARGAL, M.R. Ry. M. Krishnaswami, Acting Chief Inspector of Factories: I, pp. 60–8.
Absenteeism, I, p. 61.
Attendance registers, I, p. 61.
Contract work, I, p. 62.
Co-operative societies, I, p. 63.
Factories:
Inspection, I, p. 68.
Temperature, etc., I, p. 62.
Factory Laws, breaches of, I, p. 67.
Health:
General conditions, I, p. 62.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 62.
Medical facilities, I, p. 62.
Hours, I, p. 63.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 64, 65.
Industrial disputes, I, p. 66.
Industrial relations, I, p. 66.
Industrial efficiency of workers, I, p. 65.
Intelligence, I, p. 67.
International Labour Organization, I, p. 67.

AYYAR AVARGAL, M.R. Ry. M. Krishnaswami, Acting Chief Inspector of Factories: I, pp. 60–8—*continued.*
Managing and supervising staff, I, p. 61.
Old age and premature retirement, provision for, I, pp. 62–3.
Recruitment, I, pp. 60–1.
Seasonal factories, I, p. 68.
Unemployment, I, p. 61.
Wages, I, pp. 61–2, 64, 65.
Women and children, I, pp. 63–4.

AZARIAH, Miss M., District Secretary, Young Women's Christian Association, Dornakal, Singa-reni Collieries, Deccan: I, pp. 121–4, II, 1548–1591.
Beri beri, I, pp. 123, 124, II, 1563–4.
Contract work, I, p. 122.
Education, I, p. 123.
Factory inspection, seasonal factories, I, p. 124, II, 1559–60.
Factory inspectors, women, II, 1561.
Health and medical facilities, I, p. 123.
Housing, seasonal factory workers, I, pp. 122, 123, 124, II, 1553–4.
Labour, pledging of service, I, p. 124.
Recruitment, seasonal factories, I, p. 122, II, 1551–2.
Seasonal factories, conditions created by, I, p. 124, II, 1565.
Wages, seasonal factory workers, I, p. 124, II, 1558.
Welfare, seasonal factory workers, I, p. 123.
Women, employment, I, p. 121.

BABINGTON, H. B. M., Manager, Pollibetta Coffee Estate: II, 4920–66.
Coorg Labour Act, II, 4942–5.
Health and medical facilities, II, 4949–62.
Housing, II, 4936–8.
Recruitment, II, 4922–7, 4935, 4947, 4965–6, 4973.
Wages, II, 4928–31, 4962–3.
Women, employment of, II, 4939–41.

BARBER, Sir Fairless; PINCHES, H. L.; CONGREVE, C. R. T; BROCK, Lt.-Col.; C. H., and JAMES, F. E., representing the United Planters' Association of Southern India: I, pp. 154–164; II, 2149–2437.
Absenteeism, I, p. 156, II, 2234–7.
Boards of Health, II, 2353–7, 2421–2.
Children, employment of, II, 2247–50, 2274–6.
Contract work, I, p. 157.
Co-operative credit societies, I, p. 158, II, 2296–8.
Cost of living, II, 2244–5.
Diseases, I, p. 158, II, 2358–65.
Education, I, p. 158, II, 2153–8, 2251–8.
Health:
I, 157; II, 2306.
Births and deaths, I, p. 157, II, 2265–6.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 158, II, 2259–64.
Medical facilities, I, pp. 157, 158, II, 2266–8, 2339–47.
Hours, I, pp. 158–9, II, 2230–1, 2269–73, 2282–7.
Housing, I, p. 157, II, 2330–1, 2336–8.
Indebtedness, I, p. 160, II, 2217–20.
Inspection of plantations, I, p. 160.
Land, provision, II, 2223–4.
Labour Department, Government, I, p. 160.
Markets on gardens, II, 2242.
Master and servant, law of, I, p. 160, II, 2159–60, 2164, 2225–9.
Public Health Department, II, 2333.
Public Health and Welfare Board, II, 2385–6.
Recruitment, I, pp. 155–6, 157, 160–4, II, 2151–2, 2161, 2165–90, 2195–214, 2210, 2232, 2246, 2293–5, 2299, 2307–11, 2372–3, 2400–7, 2414–7, 2424–35.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, pp. 157, 158; II, 2348–52, 2437.
Sickness insurance, II, 2238–40, 2300–1, 2321–9.
Staff:
I, pp. 156–7, II, 2312–4, 2315–7.
Relations with rank and file, II, 2162–3, 2303.

BARBER, Sir Fairless; PINCHES, H. L.; CONGREVE, C. R. T.; BROCK, Lt.-Col. C. H.; and JAMES, F. E., representing the United Planters' Association of Southern India: I. pp. 154–164; II. 2149–2437—*continued.*

Standard of living, II, 2243.
Trade Unions, II, 2302, 2304, 2418–20.
United Planters' Association of Southern India, I, pp. 154, 155, 160. II, 2374–81, 2384.
Wages:
I, pp. 157, 159, 160, II, 2219, 2288–92, 2318–20, 2366–71, 2392–9.
Advances, system, I, pp. 155, 159–50, II, 2175–6, 2190–2, 2195–7, 2213–6, 2221–2, 2233, 2387–91, 2411–2.
Minimum, I, p. 159, II, 2241, 2300–1.
Welfare, I, p. 158, II, 2331–2, 2376.
Work, getting of labourers out to, II, 2274–9.

BARBER, Sir Fairless, General Manager; **BLACKHAM, J. C.,** Group Manager; and **FOOTE, A.,** Manager, Lower Paralai Estate: II, 4215–4352.

Bazaars, II, 4294–6.
Children, employment, II, 4227–31, 4242–3.
Co-operative Society, II, 4205–6.
Education, II, 4278–85, 4326.
Health, II, 4285–93, 4323–8.
Hours, II, 4329–30, 4334–5.
Housing, II, 4210–2.
Land and cattle, II, 4307–8.
anti-Malarial work, II, 4316–22.
Managers, access to, II, 4345–7.
Panchayats, II, 4345–6.
Recruitment, II, 4217–23, 4253–62, 4268–70, 4301–4, 4349–50.
Standard of living, II, 4273–7.
Tea and jaggery for workers, II, 4331–3.
Wages:
II, 4271–2, 4297–300.
Advances system, II, 4232–5, 4259.
Bonus for regular attendance, II, 4246–9.
Maistries, II, 4263–7.
Period of payment, II, 4244, 4337–40.
Rates, II, 4242–3.
Rice and cash allowance, II, 4237–41, 4244–5, 4341–4.
Settlement of accounts, II, 4250–2.
Water supply, II, 4312–5
Women, employment, II, 4225.

BASUDEV, C., B.A., B.L., President of the Madras Government Press Labour Union: I. pp. 288–95.

Attendance and time keeping, I, p. 290.
Co-operative Societies, I, p. 292.
Dismissals and removals, I, pp. 289, 293, 294.
Government Press, conditions in, I, pp. 289–95.
Government Press Labour Union, I, p. 294.
Health, I, pp. 290, 291.
Holidays, I, p. 289,
Hours, I, p. 289.
Housing, I, p. 290.
Indebtedness, I, p. 292.
Leave, I, p. 292.
Madras Government Press Employees Association, I, p. 293–4.
Madras Government Press Labour Union, I, p. 290.
Recruitment, I, p. 289.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, pp. 290–1.
Staff organization, I, pp. 289–90.
Staff, relations with rank and file, I, p. 290.
Strikes, I, pp. 294–5.
Trade combinations, I, p. 293.
Wages, I, pp. 289, 290, 291–2.
Welfare, I, p. 291.

Bazaars:

Coorg Planters' Association, I, p. 342.
Estate, *Sampson*, II, 3805–7; *Jones*, II, 4043–3,
Estate and public, *Barber*, II, 4294–6.
Government control essential at certain times, *Coorg Planters' Association*, I. p. 342.

Beedy, *see* **Bidi.**

BENTLEY, W. E., Manager of Buckingham Mill, *see* **HARGREAVES, J.,** etc., I, p. 132–54, II, 1820–2137.

Beri beri, *see under* **Diseases.**

BHIMLA, worker Pollibetta Coffee Plantations, II, 4908–10.

Bidi factories:

Classes of, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 95.
attempted Competition by Imperial Tobacco Co., *Ramaseshan*, II, 1245.
Conditions in, 1929 *Madras League of Youth*, I, pp. 95–6, (*Arasu*), II, 1085–1165: *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, pp. 101–2, (*Ramaseshan*); II, 1238–51.
Conditions in, and proposals for improvement, *Isaac*, I, pp. 338–9.
Employment, statistics, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 97; *Ramaseshan*, II, 1240.
Hours, no regular hours, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 96.
Owners and employees practically all Moslems, *Arasu*, II, 1118.
Premises, conditions, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 95.
Profits, *Arasu*, II, 1121–5; *Ramaseshan*, II, 1243–5.
Recommendations *re*, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, pp. 96–7.
Sanitary conditions, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, pp. 95–6.
Tightening up of regulations, industry would not go out of existence, and abolition not desirable, *Arasu*, II, 1102–05.
Unsatisfactory working conditions, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, pp. 101–2, (*Ramaseshan*) II, 1238–51.
Wages:
Regulation proposal, *P. J. Thomas*, II, 1065–7, 1082.
Standardisation, impossibility, *Cartledge*, II, 3824–5.

Bidi manufacture, by Mussulman women at home, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 95, (*Arasu*), II, 1086–7, 1126, 1140–2.

Bidis, demand for, and price, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, pp. 94–5, (*Arasu*), II, 1120–1.

BINNY AND CO. (MADRAS), Ltd., Messrs.:

Evidence on behalf of, *see* **HARGREAVES, J,** etc., II, 1820–2137.
Memorandum, I, pp. 132–54.
Workshop department, workers, grievances and claims, I, p. 130.

BLACKHAM, J. C., Group Manager, Lower Paralai Estate, *see* **BARBER, Sir Fairless,** etc., II, 4215–4352.

Boards of Health:

Advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 170.
None, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71.
Plantations:
Extension into Indian States, no difficulty anticipated and no objection to, *Pinches*, II, 2421–3.
would be Useful and proposed constitution, *Pinches, Congreve, Barber*, II, 2353–7.
Proposal, *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253.

BRACKEN, G. T. H., I.C.S., District Magistrate and Agent to the Governor, Vizagapatam: I, pp. 81–2; II, 382–517.

Assam, recruitment for:
Benefits to labourers, I, p. 82 II, 514.
Causes of, II. 386, 390, 412–3, 504–5.
Control, I, p. 82 II, 417, 418, 500.

BRACKEN, G. T. H., I.C.S., District Magistrate and Agent to the Governor, Vizagapatam; I, pp. 81–2; II, 382–517—*continued.*

Assam, recruitment for:—*continued.*

Culprits, II, 419, 489–92.
Effect on labour supply, I, p. 82 II, 514.
Loss of land, II, 508–14.
Misrepresentation and illegalities, extent and safeguards, I, pp. 81, 82; II, 414, 416, 487–8.
Public employment agencies, II, 497–9.
Sardars, II, 496, 501–3.
Satisfactory working of, I, pp. 81–2.
Transfer of land on, position, II, 435–6.
Burma, emigration to, II, 383–5, 413, 427–8, 443–6.
Criminal tribes, II, 419–22.
Education, II, 484–6.
Emigration, effect on agricultural wages, II, 431–4.
Gati system, I, p. 82 II, 402–10, 423–30, 456–63, 482–3, 504, 506, 516.
Jeypore, shortage of cultivators, II, 385, 436–55, 514.
Khanbari system, II, 111, 429, 482–3.
Vetti system, II, 381–401, 447, 464–80, 507.
Vizagapatam Agency, recruitment from, I, pp. 81–2 II, 382–517.

Bribery, *see under* **Promotions** *and* **Recruitment, industrial workers.**

BROCK, Lt.-Col. C. H., U.P.A.S.I., *see* **BARBER, Sir Fairless,** I, p. 154–64, II, 2149–2437.

BROWNING, W. M., Burmah Shell Oil Storage and Distributing Co. of India, Ltd.; **WOOD, C. E., M.L.C.,** Messrs. Parry and Co., Ltd.; and **LUKER, F. G.,** Messrs. Addison and Co., Ltd.; representatives of the Employers' Federation of Southern India: II, 3088–3222.

Absenteeism, I, p. 205; II, 3204–6.
Attendance, checking, I, p. 205.
Children, employment of, I, p. 208.
Diseases, II, 3206–11.
Education, technical, I, p. 207; II, 3176, 3189–90.
Emigration, I, p. 204; II, 3172–3.
Employers' Federation of Southern India, I, pp. 203–4 II, 3089, 3159, 3168–9, 3213–4.
Health, medical facilities, I, p. 206.
Hours, I, p. 208; II, 3121–3, 3193–6.
Housing, I, p. 206; II, 3091–7.
Indebtedness, II, 209 II; 3171.
Industrial disputes, I, p. 210; II, 3168–10.
Industrial efficiency, I, p. 210.
Inspection of plantations, I, p. 206.
Leave, I, pp. 208, 209.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 207; II, 3167.
Pensions and gratuities, I, p. 207.
Recruitment, I, pp. 204–5; II, 3172–3.
Sanitary arrangements, I, p. 206.
Sickness allowances, II, 3215.
Sickness insurance, I, pp. 206–7; II, 3090, 3160–1.
Staff, I, p. 205; II, 3183–91.
Standard of living, II, 3135–6.
Trade Unions, I, pp. 210–11; II, 3100–7, 3148–58, 3197–203.
Unemployment, I, pp. 204–5; II, 3174–82.
Unemployment insurance, I, p. 205; II, 3090.
Unregulated factories, II, 3124.
Wages, I, pp. 205, 208–9; II, 3098–9, 3111–20, 3162–6, 3170, 3216–20.
Welfare, I, pp. 207, 211.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 207; II, 3125–41.

BUCKINGHAM AND CARNATIC MILLS, conditions in, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 132–54; *Shiva Rao, B., etc.*, I, p. 187–203, II, 2438–2639; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211–24, II, 3223–304; *Hargreaves, etc.*, II, 1820–2137.

Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union:

Advisory Board, *Hargreaves*, II, 1837–41.
Outsiders on, *Ubaidullah, Prakasan*, II, 3242–4.
Amalgamation with other Unions, attempts made and might be possible now, *Prakasan*, II, 3392–4.
Communal representation, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3231.
Election of officers by ballot, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3248.
Executive, no outsiders can be elected on, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3276.
History, membership, etc., *Government*, I, p. 20; *Gray*, I, p. 37; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 152, 153; I, pp. 221, 223.
Interference in conduct of, by management, denial, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3241.
Membership, etc., *Hargreaves*, II, 1834–6; *Pentley*, II, 1982.
Memorandum, I, pp. 211–24.
Paying members, number and amount of contribution, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3238–9.
Relations with, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 151, 153, 154.
Relations with employers, I, p. 222.
Representations to management, no difficulties, *Prakasan*, II, 3244–7.
Representative, *see* **UBAIDULLAH, Muhammad,** II, 3223–3304.

Burma:

Conditions in, advantages over those in Assam, *Driver*, II, 376–9; *Steele*, II, 377, 379.
Conditions not comparable with Assam, *Austin*, II, 47–8.
Recruitment for:
from Agency tracts, small amount of, from Jeypore, *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahesaya*, II, 180–1.
Attractions of, *Bracken*, II, 383, 443–6.
Castes emigrating from Ganjam, *Steele*, I, p. 77.
Causes, *Steele*, I, p. 78; *Austin*, II, 11–12.
not Comparable with Assam, *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, II, 226.
Contact with villages, *Ranga*, I, p. 322.
no Control, *Paul*, I, p. 304; *Austin*, II, 46.
from Ganjam, *Steele*, I, p. 77, 78.
would Increase if organization existed, *Bracken*, II, 413.
through *Kanganies*, *Steele*, II, 373–4.
Nature of work, *Steele*, I, p. 78.
Origin of labour, *Paddison*, I, p. 6.
Popularity over Assam, reasons, *Steele*, I, p. 79.
Scope, decrease, *Steele*, I, p. 79.
Statistics, *Paddison*, I, p. 6; *Bracken*, II, 385; *Gray*, II, 2901.
from Vizagapatam, *Bracken*, II, 382–5, 437–8, 443–6.
Voluntary, *Bracken*, II, 384.
Voluntary, and an established family business, *Bracken*, II, 327–8.
Wages and remissions home, *Steele*, I, p. 78.

Calicut, conditions in, *Janaki*, I, pp. 306–7.

Cardamon plantations, Coorg, conditions on, *Subbayya*, II, 4897–900.

Carpet factories, unsatisfactory conditions in, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 121.

CARTLEDGE, S. A., Chief Inspector of Factories: I, pp. 56–60; II, 2650–3070.

Children, employment, I, pp. 58–9; II, 2884–6, 3016–9.
Factories Act, I, p. 59; II, 2810, 2859, 2890–4, 2906, 3021–2.
Factories inspection, I, pp. 57, 58, 60; II, 2849–57, 2913–4, 2950, 2955–8.
Factories, temperature, etc., I, p. 56.
Factory legislation, I, p. 60; II, 2862–3.
Health:
Maternity benefits, I, p. 12; II, 2860–1.
Record keeping, II, 2847–9.
Sickness insurance, I, p. 12; II, 2865–6.
Hours, I, p. 58; II, 2847, 2893–4, 2909–16.
Recruitment, II, 3028.
Rural areas, II, 3036–7.
Safety, accidents:
Prevention, I, pp. 14, 57; II, 2808.
Statistics and causes, I, pp. 56–7; II, 2867–8.

CARTLEDGE, S. A., Chief Inspector of Factories: I, pp. 56–60; II, 2850–3070—*continued.*
Strikes:
Causes, II, 2917, 2925–7.
Proceedings and prosecutions, II, 2918–20.
Wages:
Fines, I, p. 59.
Periods of payment, I, p. 59.
Standardization, I, p. 19; II, 3023–5.
Water supplies, I, p. 56.
Women, employment in factories, I, p. 59.
Workshops inspection, II, 2799–800, 2810, 2853–4.
Young adults, employment, II, 3020.

Cattle, ownership of, by estate workers:
Sampson, II, 3855–6.
Encouragement advocated, *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254.
Free grazing, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342; *Barker*, II, 4303.
not Possible at present, *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254.

Ceded districts, recruitment for Assam from, *Steele*, II, 291.

Central Labour Board, history of, *Gray*, I, p. 52.

Ceylon:
Recruitment:
Contact with villages, *Renga*, I, p. 329.
Family life, effect on, *Paul*, I, pp. 305–6.
Misrepresentation, prosecution for, *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4557.
Origin of labour, *Paddison*, I, p. 6.
Recruiters, qualifications and licensing, *Gray*, II, 2903–4.
Statistics and numbers returning, *Paddison*, I, p. 6; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 60; *Paul*, I, pp. 298, 303.
System and possible improvement, *Paul*, I, pp. 304–6.
Wages on rubber and tea estates, *Paul*, I, p. 302.

CHATTU, Katti, worker, Halleri coffee estate; II, 4614–8.

CHENGAMALAN, worker, Thaymudi Estate, II, 4142–51.

CHENGAPPA, A. B., M.L.C., Planter, Coorg: I, pp. 343–5; II, 4797–4862.
Absenteeism, I, p. 343.
Attendance registers, I, p. 344.
Contractors, I, pp. 344, 345; II, 4803.
Coorg Labour Act, II, 4809.
Diseases, I, p. 344.
Drinking, I, pp. 344, 355.
Education, I, p. 344.
Efficiency, I, p. 345.
Health:
Conditions, I, p. 344.
Medical facilities, I, p. 344; II, 4801–2, 4817, 4848–51.
Hours, I, p. 345; II, 4825–6, 4854.
Housing, I, p. 344.
Indebtedness, I, p. 345.
Inspection of plantations, I, p. 344; II, 4824.
Jammies, II, 4812–5, 4845.
Kodagu Sabha, II, 4798.
Labour department, I, p. 345.
Land, provision for labourers, II, 4806–7, 4855.
Landholders' Association; II, 4798–9.
Recruitment, I, pp. 343–4, 345; II, 4836–7, 4839–45.
Settlers, encouragement of, I, pp. 343, 344, 345; II, 4800, 4818–23, 4852–3.
Wages:
I, pp. 344, 345; II, 4805, 4808–10, 4827, 4829, 4832, 4859–62.
Advances, system, I, p. 343; II, 4831–5, 4846–7.
Work, method of getting labourers out to, II, 4804.

CHENGAPPA, Rao Bahadur K., District Magistrate, Coorg, *see* **PRIESTLY, G. W., I.C.S.,** etc., II, 5087–5181.

CHESHIRE, J. F., Mill Manager, Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mills, *see* **WINTER, W. E.,** etc., II, 3585–3637.

CHETTY, R. Ketari Muthu, *see* **MUDALIAR, V. M. Ramsawamy,** etc., representing the Kerosene Oil Workers' Union, I, pp. 124–8; II, 1592–1726.

CHETTY, Selvapathy, Madras Labour Union, *see* **SHIVA RAO, B.,** etc. p. 164–203; II, 2438–2649.

CHIKKA MATALIGA (and wife), workers, Halleri coffee estate, II, 4619–27.

Children, employment of:
Agricultural casual work, *Ranga*, I, p. 326.
in Bidi factories:
Conditions, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 96, (*Arasu*), II, 1099–101, 1128, 1145–53, 1157–9; *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, pp. 101–2, (*Ramaseshan*), II, 1238, 1246; *Isaac*, I, pp. 338–9.
Cruelty to, *1929 League of Youth*, I, p. 96, (*Arasu*), II, 1099–101, 1147–53; *Ramaseshan*, II, 1246.
Number, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 97, (*Arasu*), II, 1110.
Pledging of labour by parents, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 96, (*Arasu*), II, 1091, 1106–8, 1127, 1143–4; *Ramaseshan*, II, 1241–2, 1251.
Wages, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 97.
Carpet factories and sport works, and unsatisfactory conditions, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 121, II, 1507.
Casual employment, *Ranga*, I, p. 326.
Coffee garbling, under 12, *Government*, I, pp. 17–8; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111.
Coir yarn industry, *Cochin Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 273.
actories:
Act of 1922:
Effect of, *Government*, I, p. 17; *Ayyar Avergal*, I, p. 63.
no Effect, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 145; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218.
Age suitable, *Cartledge*, II, 3019.
no Blind alley employment, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 145.
Certification, grading of employments, proposal, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119.
Conditions, *Cartledge*, I, pp. 58–9; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 145.
Dismissal at 15, no cases known, *Cartledge*, I, p. 59.
Double employment:
no Case detected, *Government*, I, p. 17; *Cartledge*, I, p. 59; II, 2884–6.
not Ended, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119.
None known, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 145, (*Sage*), II, 2034; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218.
Prevention advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 173.
under 11, spread of compulsory education should lead to decrease of, *W. E. Smith*, II, 3071–3.
Five hours should be maximum, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218.
Madura, *Rodriguez*, II, 677.
a Matter of policy, *Ash*, II, 525
Non-employment, Kaleeswar Mills, *Holden*, II, 3519, 3521.
Regulations, suitable, *Cartledge*, I, p. 59; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees Union*, I, p. 218.
Statistics, *Cartledge*, I, p. 59; *Ayyar Avangal*, I, p. 60.
Home work and need for regulations, *P. J. Thomas*, I, pp. 93–4.
no further Legislation necessary, *Employers' Federation of Southern India*, I, p. 208.
Mines:
Certification provision suitable, *Government*, I, p. 33.
Nature of work, *Government*, I, p. 34.
Mundi shops, conditions, *Isaac*, I, pp. 338–9.
in Papanasam Mill, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 93; II, 785–91.

Children, employment of :—*continued.*
on Plantations :
Age of, *worker*, II, 2246 ; *Pinches, Brock*, II, 2248–50 ; *Porter*, II, 2274–6 ; *Hawke*, I, 3486–93 ; *Sampson*, II, 3693–5 ; *Jones*, II, 3897–901 ; *Foote*, II, 4227–31 ; *mistri*, II, 4638 ; *Sprott*, II, 4685 ; *Subbayya*, II, 4895.
12 for boy and 10 for girl advocated, *Saldanha*, I. p. 322.
Earnings, *worker*, II, 4128.
Payment separately on piece rates, *Pinches*, II, 2247.
according to Size and capability, *Sprott*, II, 4658, 4685.
Wages, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, pp. 250, 251 ; *Hawke*, II, 3489–94 ; *Foote*, II, 4227, 4242–3.
Work even during rains, *worker*, II, 4141.
on Roads, only with parents, *Austin*, II, 151.
Sweated industries and need for regulation, *P. J. Thomas*, I, pp. 93–4.
in Tanneries from age of 8, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132 ; *S. Pillai*, II, 1790–2, 1807–9, 1812.
Textile mills, *Government*, I, p. 17 ; *Gray*, II, 2848.
Prohibition advocated, *Southern India Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 111, (*Menon*) II, 1444–6, 1451–3.
in Unregistered factories, conditions, *Government*, I, p. 17 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 64 ; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119.
Vizagapatam Harbour works, *workers*, II, 517g ; *Ash*, II, 524–6, 585, 611–6.
in Workshops :
Age, medical opinion should be consulted, *Cartledge*, II, 3016–8.
need for Restriction and regulation, *P. J. Thomas*, II, 1018, 1035–8.
Sleeping in, *P. J. Thomas*, II, 1083.

Chingleput District Labour Guild, Kodambakam :
Date of formation, etc., *S. Pillai*, II, 1796–8, 1813–4.
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **PILLAI, A. M. AROKIASAMI ;** and **PILLAI Sivashanmugam**, II, 1775–1819 ; I, pp. 131–2.

CHINNAMMAL, woman worker, Pachamalai Estate, II, 3648–54.

CHINNAMMAL, woman worker, Thaymudi Estate, II, 4128–34.

CHINNASWAMI, worker, Thaymudi Estate, II, 4152–9, 4166.

CHINNATHAMBI, *Maistry*, Pachamalai Estate, II, 3655–72.

Chittivalsa Labour Union, history of *Gray*, I, pp. 53–4.

Cholera, *see under* **Diseases.**

Choolai Mills :
Conditions at, *Aiyar*, II, 2138–48.
Evidence *re*, *see* **Shiva Rao, B., etc.**, I, p. 187–203, II, 2438–2649.

Clerical classes, comparison of position with labouring classes, *Wadia*, I, p. 335.

COBBALD, E. B., I.C.S., District Magistrate of Madura : II. 943–1005.
Industrial disputes, Intervention by District magistrate, II, 950–7.
Naid, Mr. V., prohibition of attending meetings, II, 947–9, 975–1005.
Royal Commission on Labour, questionnaire, II, 71–4, 997–9.
Workmen's Compensation Act, II. 958–70.

COCHIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE : I, pp. 272–3.
Coir yarn industry, conditions in, I, p. 272–3.

Coffee plantations, preference of labourers for, rather than tea, *Tipping* 4775.

Coimbatore Labour Union :
Affiliation to Indian Trade Union Congress, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 43.
Attitude of employers towards, I, p. 245 ; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4364.
Committee and Secretary, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4375–9.
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **AYYANGAR, N. S. Ramaswamy,** I, pp. 239–55 ; 4355–4534.
History of, membership, etc., *Gray*, I, p. 54 ; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4353 4365–79.
Memorandum, I, pp. 239–48.

Combatore Spinning and Weaving Mills, conditions in, workers, II, 3579–84, *Porter, Cheshire, Howard*, II, 3585–637.

Coir yarn industry, conditions, *Cochin Chamber of Commerce*, I, pp. 272–3.

Commonwealth Trust, Ltd., Calicut, conditions of labour, *Janaki*, I, pp. 306–7.

Conciliation, *see under* **Industrial disputes.**

CONGREVE, C. R. T., U.P.A.S.I., *see* **BARBER, Sir Fairless,** etc., I, pp. 154–64 ; II, 2149–2437.

Contract work :
Decision as to doing work by, or not, Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, II, 568.
Employment of labour through Contractors :
Cochin Chamber of Commerce, I, p. 272.
no Control over conditions :
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, II, 522–6, 614.
Madras port and harbour, unfairness *re*, wages and abolition of system advocated, *Kotiswaran*, I, p 129, II, 1743, 1768–9.
in Mills, unsatisfactory results, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 113.
None, Binny and Co., I, p. 136.
Public Works Department, system and grievances *re*, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, pp. 330–1, 333.
Seasonal factories, proposed amendment of Factories Act, *Wadia*, I, p. 337.
Subject to regulations under Factories Act, *Government*, I, p. 10 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, I, pp. 83, 85 ; II, 521–7, 607–9 614.
Fair wages to workmen, influence desirable, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333.
Forms of, *Government*, I, p. 10 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Improper payment of labourers, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 345 ; II, 4803 *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.
Labour Co operative societies, *Hood*, I, pp.2 82–3.
None, *Madras Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279.
Plantations :
U.P.A.S.I., I, p. 157 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347 ; *Tipping*, II, 4776–7.
Defrauding of workers, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329.
Salem district, quarrying, system, *Government*, I, p. 31.
Seasonal factories, *Government*, I, p. 10 ; *Azariah*, I, p. 122.
Sub-contracting, usual and need for control over working conditions; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.

Co-operative Department, criticism of, and need for change in view, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242.

Co-operative movement :
Progress, *Gray*, II, 3037–9.
Spread of, advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108.

Co-operative Societies :
for Acquisition on behalf of farm labourers of land covered by houses, *Hood*, I, pp. 281–2.
Advances to persons leaving villages for work in cities, question of, *Gray*, II, 3059–62.
Advocated, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 65 ; *Wadia*, I, p. 335.
Banks and stores :
Advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116.
Discouragement of, by Government, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 240, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4505–6.
Need for, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 240, (*N. S. R Ayyangar*).
Benefit of, to workers, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, I, p. 216.

Co-operative Societies—*continued.*
Building, *Government*, I, p. 14; *Hood*, I, p. 282; *Leach*, II, 2660–1; *Gray*, II, 3006–7.
Advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109, (*C. G. Menon*), II, 1381; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213.
Formation of, but non-success, *Hood*, I, p. 282.
not sufficient Remedy for conditions, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284.
Coorg, attempts to start, but little success, *Commissioner*, I, p. 341.
Credit, *Hood*, I, p. 282.
Binny and Co., I, pp. 139–40.
Need for, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 316; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 331.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 265.
Railway companies, *Hood*, I, p. 282.
Formation advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 73.
Government Press, *Basudev*, I, p. 292.
in Industrial concerns, *Government*, I, p. 14; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Labour contract societies, *Hood*, I, p. 282–3.
None, kerosene oil workers, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1655.
Plantations:
Banks and stores advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254.
Credit, attempts to start and failure, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I p. 158; (*Brock*) II, 2296–8.
Need for, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Public Works Department, to be organised by workers, *P.W.D. Workers Union*, I, p. 331.
Stores, failure of, *Barber*, II, 4305–6.
Weavers, bonus system, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 316.

Co-operative Societies Act, administration by Registrar of Co-operative Societies, *Leach*, II, 2662.

Coorg:
Administration, representatives, *see* **COORG, COMMISSIONER OF**, I, pp. 340–1 *and* **PRIESTLY, G. W., I.C.S.; THORNTON, Major F. R., I.M.S.; and CHENGAPPA, Rao Bahadur K.**, II, 5087–5181.
General conditions in, *Commissioner*, I, p. 340; *Subbayya*, I, p. 351.
Government encouragement of settlers advocated, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, pp. 343, 344, 345; II, 4800, 4818–23, 4852–3.
Labour Act:
Advances system, *see under* Wages, plantations.
Cases against workmen under, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5091.
Continuance for five years advocated until old balances recovered, *Ganapaiah* II, 5037–42.
Demoralizing effect on labourers, *Thimmaya*, I, pp. 350–1.
Extension of period, application received from *Kodava Sabha* for, *Priestly*, II, 5092.
Frivolous or vexatious prosecutions, cases of, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5093.
Imprisonment under, few cases of, *Priestly*, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5094.
Inspection of plantations under, *see that title.*
Prosecutions under:
Sprott II, 4663–4, 4706; *Babington*, II, 4942–4; *Madapa*, II, 49[illegible]
Difficulty of securing defaulters, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5101.
Large number not due to false prosecutions, *Sprott*, II, 4706.
Results, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5101.
Statistics, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 350.
Recruitment system under, *Commissioner of Coorg*, I, p. 340.
Repeal:
in 1931, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 160.
Continuance of advance system after, question of, *Subbayya*, I, p. [illegible] II, 4864–6, 4882–3, 4896.
not Desirable until other arrangements made by Government, *A. Chengappa*, II, 4800.
Desirability of, *Subbayya*, I, p. 353.
some Difficulty anticipated after, *Babington*, II, 4945.
no Difficulty anticipated as result, *Morgan*, II, 4737.
Labour conditions will have to be made more attractive, *Subbayya*, I, p. 353; II, 4869.
Workers will be aware of, *Priestly*, II, 5104.

Coorg:
—*continued.*
Labour Act—*continued.*
Section 11, action under, time given to employers to put lines right and no action taken, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5090.
Section 19, one case pending under, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5100.
Use, extent of, *Priestly*, II, 5094.
Plantations:
Conditions on, *Pinches*, II, 2201–6.
General particulars, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 346.

COORG, COMMISSIONER OF: I, pp. 340–1.
Co-operative societies, I, p. 341.
Depressed classes, I, p. 341.
Education, I, p. 341.
Employers, relations with labourers, I, p. 341.
General conditions, I, p. 340.
Health, I, p. 341.
Housing, I, pp. 340–1.
Malaria, I, p. 340.
Recruitment, I, p. 340.
Wages, I, pp. 340, 341.

Coorg Planters' Association:
Affiliation to United Planters' Association of Southern India, I, p. 341, (*Morgan*), II, 4736.
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **MORGAN, J. S. H.; TIPPING, P. J.; MURLAND, Colonel H.; and SPROTT, J. H.**, II, 4736–96.
Memorandum, I, pp. 341–3.
Particulars, membership, and value of, I, p. 341, (*Morgan*), II, 4736, 4738–40.

Cordite Factory, staff, *Powell*, I, p. 257.

Cordite Factory Labour Union, Aruvankadu:
Activities of, *Powell*, I, p. 259.
Evidence on behalf of, *See* **POWELL, E. G.**, I, pp. 256–60.
Relations with management, *Powell*, I, p. 259.

Cost of living:
Average:
Coimbatore, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244.
Increase since 1914, and comparison with increase in wages, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3285–7.
Decrease, *Ranga*, I, p. 326.
Investigations, extent of, *Government*, I, p. 25.
Madras City, family budgets, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 104.
Madras University inquiry, *P. J. Thomas*, II, 1047–52, 1078–6.
Plantations:
Coorg Planters' Assn., I, p. 342, (*Tipping, etc.*), II, 4703–7; *workers*, II, 5013, 5019.
Comparison with villages, *Brock*, II, 2244–5.
probably Higher than in plains and in own villages, *Sampson*, II, 3808–9.
Increase, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 345.

Cottage industries, development, importance of, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 203.

COUSINS, Mrs, social worker: II, 1518–1591.
Creches, II, 1572–3.
Education, compulsory, II, 1568–9.
Factories Act, II, 1556.
Factory inspectors, women, II, 1571.
Health visitors, II, 1588–90.
Maternity benefit, II, 1575–80.
Welfare, II, 1578.
Women, employment under men mistries, II, 1591.
Young Women's Christian Association, investigations, II, 1567.

Creches, *see under* **Welfare.**

Criminal Procedure Code, section 144 :
Misuse of, *Coimbatore* Labour Union, I, p. 246.
Order *re* Meeting proposed to be held by N. S. R. Ayyangar, I pp. 247, 248, II, 4380, 4525, 4529-30; *E. F. Thomas*, 4588-607, 4613.
Orders under, issue of, *Gray*, II, 2961–4.
Policy of Government *re*, question of, *Leach*, II, 2665–72.

Criminal Tribes :
Employment in Cherala tobacco factory, *Gray*, II, 2993–6.
Recruitment for Assam, *Driver*, II, 370–2 ; *Steele*, II, 370 ; *Bracken*, II, 419–22.
Settlements, *Gray*, II, 2764, 2765.

Criminal Tribes Act, inducement to emigration, *Bracken*, II, 514–6.

Depressed Classes :
Agency to look after, under consideration, *Coorg Commissioner*, I, p. 341.
Emigration, *Steele*, I, p. 78.
Housing of, *Leach*, II, 2652–3 ; *Gray*, II, 2653, 3065–8.
Schools for, *Coorg Commissioner*, I, p. 341 ; II, 5130 ; *K. Chengappa*, II, 5130–1.
Special officer for dealing with, advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 177.
Tannery workers, Chinglepat, conditions, *A. Pillai*, I, pp. 131–2 ; *S. Pillai*, II, 1775–1819.
Work of Labour Commissioner *re*, *Gray*, II, 2764, 2765, 2772–4.

Diocesan Printers' Union, history of, *Gray*, I, p. 52.

Discipline :
Absence or late attendance, black mark system proposed instead of fining, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244.
Plantations, very bad work, etc., loss of day's pay, *Sprott*, II, 4667
Punishments :
See also Deductions under Wages.
Nature of, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107.
Recommendations *re*, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 126.
Right of appeal, proposal, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 126, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1682–3.
Suspension for spoilt work, or less production if ill, *workers*, II, 638.
Tramways, Madras, *Veegeli-Arya*, II, 1355–65.

Diseases :
among Agricultural labour, *Paddison*, I, p. 5.
Beri beri :
Legislation *re* over-polishing of rice suggested, *Azariah*, I, p. 124, II, 156
Polished rice diet as factor, *Azariah*, I, p. 123 ; *McCarrison*, II, 332 3399–41.
Seasonal factory areas, *Azariah*, I, p. 123, II, 1563.
Cholera :
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, I, p. 214.
Rare :
Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, pp. 344 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Nellore, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261.
Seasonal epidemic, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138.
Spread of, cause, *Azariah*, I, p. 123.
Dysentery, common, Coorg, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Dysentery and relapsing fever, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158.
Enlarged spleens and livers, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, p. 344 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347, 348 ; *Sprott*, II, 4691.
Epidemics, measures against spread of, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138.
Fever, mines, *Government*, I, p. 32.
Heart disease, prevalence of, *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Hookworm :
Ankylostomiasis campaign, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342.
Annual treatment, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342, (*Tipping*), II, 478 *Babington*, II, 4949.
Mass treatment against, *Thornton*, II, 5109.

Diseases :—*continued.*
Hookworm :—*continued.*
Difficulty of dealing with, owing to habits of bare footed labourers, *Paddison*, I, p. 5.
Prevalence of, *Paddison*, I, p. 5 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214 ; *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 291 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, 311 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348 ; *Subbayya*, p. 352 ; *Wood*, II, 3206 ; *Thornton*, II, 5108.
Remedial measures, benefit of, *Shiva Roa*, I, p. 189.
Treatment for :
Ganapaiah, II, 5080.
Decrease since, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138.
Government measures and small charge for drugs to planters, *Ubhaya*, II, 2805–6, 2928.
Nellore mica mines, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261.
Widespread but decreasing owing to measures taken, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158.
Industrial :
Lead poisoning, printing trade, *Basudev*, I, p. 291.
no Case known, *Green*, I, p. 264.
Preventive measures advocated, *Basudev*, I, p. 291.
Lung diseases and anæmia, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4495–6.
None, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138.
in Oil industry : *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1625–32.
a few Cases of eye trouble through paint splashes, *Browning*, II, 3210–1.
Soldering, irritating hands and use stopped, *Browning*, II, 3207–8.
Prevalence, no statistics available, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71.
Tanneries, itch and fever, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132.
Tuberculosis, in printing trade, largely due to housing conditions, *Green*, I, p. 264.
Influenza :
Coorg, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Effect of epidemic, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 190.
Kala azar, connection with malnutrition, *McCarrison*, I, p. 231.
Leprosy, connection with malnutrition, *McCarrison*, I, p. 231.
Madras City, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 158–9.
Malaria :
Coorg, *Thornton*, II, 5106 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344.
Malnutrition, connection with, *McCarrison*, I, p. 231.
Mines and preventive measures, *Government*, I, p. 32.
Mortality statistics, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 190.
Plantations, widespread but decreasing owing to measures taken *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158, (*Pinches, Barber*), II, 2358–65.
Prevalence of, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 219 ; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I pp. 249, 252 ; *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261 ; *Janaki* I, p. 307 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 311 ; *Thimmayya*, I, pp. 347, 348 ; *Sprott*, II, 4691 ; *Babington*, II, 4956.
Seasonal factory areas, prevalent, *Azariah*, I, p. 123.
Statistics, *Ash*, I. p. 88 ; *Satyanarayana*, II, 610.
Malarial officers, Coorg, *Thornton*, II, 5108.
anti-Malarial work :
Plantations, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 200 ; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342, (*Morgan*), II, 4781 ; *Ubhaya*, II, 2803 ; *Sampson*, II, 3836–40, 3843–4 ; *Measham*, II, 4109–12 ; *Barber*, II, 4316–20 ; *Thornton, Priestly*, II 5108.
Vizagatapam Harbour works, *Ash*, I, pp. 84, 87 ; II, 537, 617 ; *A. Anderson*, II, 618–24.
Whole time officer for group of gardens, *Barber*, II, 2362–5.
Whole time officer for district doubt as to successful working of, *Barber*, II. 4321–2.
Malnutrition as cause of, *McCarrison*, I, pp. 231–3 ; II, 3315.
Malnutritional, investigation and control, proposals, *McCarrison*, II, 3326–7.
Nature of, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71 ; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 115 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279.
Plague, rare, Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344.
Plantations :
Contagious, rare, *Subbayya*, I, p. 352.
during East winds, *Sprott*, II, 4691.

Diseases :—*continued.*
Plantations—*continued*
Nature of, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71 ; *N. S. R. Aiyangar*, I, p. 252 ; *Jamal*, I, p. 307 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, pp. 310, 311 ; *Thimmayya*, I, pp. 347, 348 ; *Sankayya*, I, p. 352 ; *Sprott*, II, 4691 ; *Bebington*, II, 4986 ; *Gangadhar*, II, 5079.
Pneumonia :
Common, *Coorg, Thimmayya*, I, p. 348
Few cases on plantations, *Bebington*, II, 4957–8.
Relapsing fever :
Coorg, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Planting areas, common formerly and stamping out of, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71 ; II, 2802.
Rheumatism, prevalence of, *Jamal*, I, p. 307.
Small pox, *Azariah*, I, p. 123 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees, Union*, I, p. 214 ; *Wardhouse*, I, p. 261.
Tuberculosis :
Carding and spinning departments, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.
Prevalence of, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169 ; *Shiva Rao* I, p. 188 ; *Jamal*, I, p. 307.
Ulcers, increase, Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344.
Venereal, prevalence, *Wood*, II, 3206.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, I, p. 88.

Dismissals :
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, 1929, *Buntley*, II, 1848–50.
Grievance *re* :
Madras Labour Union I, p. 165, (*Shiva Rao*) II, 2480).
Madras port and harbour, *Kotaswaran*, I, pp. 128, 129.
Method, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 92, II, 785–7.
Responsibility for, kerosene oil industry, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1708.
proposed Safeguards against, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 126. (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1661–3.

Docars, recruitment for, *Steele*, II, 292–8.
no Restriction and few complaints only of abuses, *Austin*, II, 57–9.

Drinking :
Brewing of liquor by workers, difficulty of preventing, *Priestly*, II, 5120.
Encouragement by excise policy and problem of, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 249.
Excessive, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169.
Excise revenue, increase due to increased prices, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5142.
Extent of, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 104 ; *Binny & Co.* I, p. 150 ; *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 192 ; *Ranga*, I, p. 327.
Plantations :
Amount of, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, pp. 344, 345.
Liquor shops under Government licence near to most estates, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342.
no Making of wine at home, *worker*, II, 4627.
Opposition to introduction of liquor into district, but special licence during Christmas, *Jones*, II, 4049–54.
Quarrels owing to, *Sprott*, II, 4733.
Sale of toddy to workers during work hours, complaint lodged, *Sprott* II, 4683.
Small amount, of, but illicit drink possibly available, *Sampson*, II, 5807.
Toddy Shops :
Abolition :
Desirable, *Subbayya*, II, 4889 ; *majority*, II, 4917.
Question of, near plantations, *Tipping, Morgan, Sprott*, II, 4794.
Control, would be advantageous *Morgan*, II, 4794–6.
near Estates, *Tipping, Morland*, II, 4789.
Removal from neighbourhood of estates, drinking would not prevented, *Priestly*, II, 5120.
Prohibition :
Advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 240.
Gradual, active Government policy in industrial areas advocated, *S. I. of Comm.*, I, pp. 108, 110.

Drinking—*continued.*
Propaganda work against, desirable but non-official agencies should deal with, *Priestly*, II, 5118.
Removal of toddy shops from vicinity of residential areas of working classes necessary, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169 ; *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 192. II, 2613–6.
Supply by toddy shops on credit, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2315–6.

DRIVER, L. S., Local agent of Tea Districts' Labour Association : II, 241–351.
Assam Labour Board, II, 363–4.
Assam, recruitment for :
from Koraput, II, 288–99.
Misrepresentation, II, 388.
Repatriation, II, 309.
Sardars, II, 290, 315, 327, 329.
Burma, recruitment, II, 376–9.
Public employment agencies, II, 333.
Southern Indian tea gardens, recruitment, II, 330–1.

Drugs :
Excessive use of, not general, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 150.
Shops, removal from neighbourhood of mills and residential areas advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169.

Dysentery, *see under* **Diseases.**

Economic Inquiries, *see under* **Intelligence.**

Education :
Adult :
Aims and work of Adult and Mass Education Society, *Isaac*, I, p. 338.
Facilities :
Government, I, p. 11 ; *Grieve*, I, p. 75 ; *W. E. Smith*, II, 3082.
Employers should provide, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1654.
Provided by employers, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 140, 142 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 216.
Inadequacy of, *Azariah*, I, p. 123.
Need for, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, pp. 108, 109 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 171.
Attendance, small percentage, *Commissioner of Coorg*, I, p. 341.
non-Attendance, economic reasons and questions of overcoming difficulty, *Priestly*, II, 5114–7 ; *K. Chengappa*, II, 5132–8.
Beneficial results, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 216.
Boarding schools advocated, *Thimmaya*, I, p. 349.
Compulsory :
Employment of children in factories under 11 will decrease, *W. E. Smith*, II, 3071–3.
Enforcement of attendance :
Difficulty of proving age, *Ramaseshan*, II, 1248–9 1252–4.
Inadequate, in some cases, *Cousins*, II, p. 1568.
Means of, *Cousins*, II, 1569.
Measures for, but difficulty, *W. E. Smith*, II, 3074–8.
Extent of, *W. E. Smith*, II, 3071.
Need for, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108.
Object of, *W. E. Smith*, II, 3084.
Parents' financial difficulty and provision of food and clothing by municipality suggested, *Azariah*, II, 1091–8, 1114.
School supply not sufficient in all parts, *Sri Ram*, II, 1570.
Compulsory primary, and greater facilities for secondary and vocational, benefits anticipated from *T.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 332.
Cordite Factory School, Aruvankadu, *Grieve*, I, p. 75.
Cordite factory, Aruvankadu, night school only and need for day school and facilities for adults, *Powell*, I, p. 238.
Corporation and mission schools, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 148.
Depressed classes, schools for, *Coorg Commissioner*, I, p. 341 ; II, 5130 ; *K. Chengappa*, II, 5130–1.
Discouragement of reading, by employers, *Naidu*, I, p. 93.
Effect on industrial efficiency, *T.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 332.
Elementary Education Act, *Government*, I, p. 14.

Education—*continued.*
Employers should contribute voluntarily, *C. G. Menon*, II, 1383.
Expenditure of Government on, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 194.
Expenditure of workers on, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116.
Facilities, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 285; *Coorg, Commissioner*, I, p. 341; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344; *Bracken*, II, 484–6.
Inadequacy, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 171.
Free and compulsory, advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116.
Government Trades School, printing training, *Green*, I, p. 265.
of Half timers, *Sage*, II, 2032–5.
Facilities necessary, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90; *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, pp. 91, 93.
Hygiene, domestic economy and practical citizenship advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108.
Hygiene instruction, *Sage*, II, 1869–73.
Hygiene and physiology as part of curriculum, *W. E. Smith*, II, 3079–80.
Hygiene, sanitation, etc., by magic lantern and cinema advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 171.
Illiteracy, extent of, *Isaac*, I, p. 338.
Importance of, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 105.
Increase, standard of living and efficiency will improve, *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 271.
Industrial, technical and vocational:
Advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 164, 171; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242; *Shiva Rao*, II, 2543–4.
Advocated in mill, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 216.
Engineering and automobile, scope for, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 207.
Facilities, *Government*, I, p. 9; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 134, 140, 142, 143; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 212; *Avargal*, I, pp. 270–1; *W. E. Smith*, II, 3084–6.
increased Facilities advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 285; *Wood*, II, 3176, 3189–90.
Government workshops advocated, *Runga*, I, p. 328.
Institution in connection with Cordite factory, Aruvankadu, advocated, *Powell*, I, p. 258.
Motor mechanics, schools for, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 207.
Organised scheme advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, pp. 193–5.
Statistics, 1926–27, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 194.
Industrial schools, proposal, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116.
Industrial schools and workshops, increase advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109.
Literacy, percentage:
Coorg, *Priestly*, II, 5112–3.
among Hill tribes, *Bracken*, II, 485.
Local cess, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158, (*Brock*), II, 2251–2.
Maintenance of children by State during, advocated, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 349.
Malabar, facilities, *V. K. Menon*, I, p. 288.
Mass, aims and work of Adult and Mass Education Society, *Isaac*, I, p. 338.
Mines, non-supply of schools at most, *Government*, I, p. 33.
Mission schools, printing training, *Green*, I, p. 265.
Night club for children, *Sage*, II, 2032.
Night schools:
Grieve, I, pp. 74, 75.
Advocated, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90.
Mines, *Government*, I, p. 33.
Nandyal, *Azariah*, I, p. 123.
Sunday, half timers, advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116.
Plantations:
Adult:
Advantage not likely to be taken of, *Madapa*, II, 4995–9.
no Facilities, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253.
Anamalai Planters' Association, no action re, *Jones*, II, 4015.
Attendance:
Economic question, *Thimmaya*, I, p. 349.
Means of encouraging, *Barber*, II, 4280–5.
Attitude of labourers, *Hawke*, II, 3500; *Sprott*, II, 4712; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5029.

Education:—*continued.*
Plantations:—*continued.*
not Desired, *worker*, II, 5017.
Facilities:
little Advantage taken of, or likely to be, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344; *Subbayya*, II, 4893; *Madapa*, II, 4993–5.
would be Advantageous, *Subbayya*, II, 4885; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5027, 5030.
Extent of, *Pinches*, II, 2253–6.
Estate schools, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158, (*Pinches, Congreve*), II, 2155–8.
Failure of experiment, *Sampson*, II, 3796–800.
Inadequacy of, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 200.
None in garden, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 349; *Sprott*, II, 4698; *worker*, II, 5011; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5026–30.
None and little purpose would be served by, *Subbayya*, I, p. 352.
Provision of, by employers, *Grieve*, I p, 75.
Government school only, *Madapa*, II, 4974–5.
Higher education for children of labourers, scheme for, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158, (*Pinches, Congreve*), II, 2153–4.
Mission schools, *Saldanha*, I, p. 322; *Barber*, II, 4278.
Night schools, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158, (*Pinches*), 2257.
Doubt as to use of, *Ganapaiah*, II, 5076.
Part time schools, criticism of, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253.
no Policy advocated to members by United Planters' Association of Southern India, *Pinches*, II, 2258.
no School accessible, *Sampson*, II, 3794–801.
School in village and fees paid by employer, *Hawke*, II, 3499–500.
Schools, Government management advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, pp. 253–4.
Taluk Board, formation of, and some system of compulsory education desirable, *Jones*, II, 4016–28.
Teachers:
Man, with wife trained in health work, midwifery etc., would be advantageous, *Barber*, II, 4326.
Supply, *Barber*, II, 4286.
Type required, *Barber*, II, 4279.
Printing trade workers, *Green*, I, p. 265.
Provision of facilities by employers:
Advocated, *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 335; *Veegeli-Arya*, II, 1304.
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills school, particulars of, *Grieve*, I, p. 74; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 140–2; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 216; (*Sage*), II, 1869–74.
Employers not approached by Department re, *W. E. Smith*, II, 3081–2.
Examples of, *Grieve*, I, pp. 74–5.
few cases of, *Grieve*, I, p. 74.
Objection to, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242; (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), 4389, 4415.
Particulars, *Government*, I, pp. 13–4.
Village schools, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 142.
no Provision by employers, tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132.
Provision of facilities by local boards and private agencies, *Grieve*, I, p. 75.
no Provision for, printing trade, *R. S. Mudaliar*, I, p. 339.
Provision in factories and provision of mid-day meal advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 173.
Public Works Department, night school for workers and school for children near workplace desired, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 331.
Railway workers children, facilities, *Government*, I, pp 13–4; *Grieve*, I, p. 75.
Reading room and adult night school to be opened, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electricity Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 105.
Responsibility of municipality, *T. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1729.
Scholarships, provision by employers for labourers' children advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 285.
Schools:
Control of, by various authorities, *Grieve*, I, p. 74.
Maintained by local boards and private agencies, *Government*, I, p. 14.
Seasonal factories, no facilities, *Azariah*, I, p. 125.
Standard of living raised by, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 349.

Education :—*continued.*
State provision advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4389, 4415.
State Technical Scholarship scheme, *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 270.
Type required, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116.
Vizagapatam Harbour works, a matter for municipality, *Ash*, II, 605–6.
Wastage, *Isaac*, I, pp. 338, 339.

ELKINGTON, Lieut.-Commander L. G., Manager, Ibex Lodge Estate, Coonoor, *see* **PORTER, Lieut.-Colonel L. L., O.B.E., V.D.** and **ELKINGTON, Lieut. Commander, L. I.,** II, 3360–3444.

Emigration :
see also **Assam, Burma, Ceylon,** *etc.*
Advantage to labourers, *Paddison*, I, pp. 6–7.
more Beneficial than otherwise, *V. K. Menon*, I, p. 288.
Causes, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204, (*Wood*), II, 3172–3 ; *V. K. Men* I, p. 287 ; *Paul*, I, pp. 298–302.
Certificate from headman of village, proposal, *V. K. Menon*, I, p. 288.
Classes of emigrants, *V. K. Menon*, I, p. 287.
Contact with village, extent, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p 109 ; *V. K. Menon*, p. 287 ; *Paul*, I p. 303.
Effect on rate of agricultural wages in recruiting districts, *Bracken*, II, 431–4
Extent of scope for, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 193.
Family life, disturbance of, extent, *V. K. Menon*, I, p. 288 ; *Paul*, I, pp. 305–
Numbers resident in certain parts outside India, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 192.
Origin of labour, *Paul*, I, pp. 297, 298.
Recruitment systems :
V. K. Menon, I, p. 287 ; *Paul*, I, pp. 304–6.
Improvement, proposals, *Paul*, I, p. 305.
Statistics, *Paddison*, I, p. 6 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 60 ; *Paul*, I, pp. 297, 298.

Employers' Federation of Southern India :
Aims and objects of, I, p. 203, (*Wood*), II, 3159, 3168–9, 3213–4.
Membership, I, pp. 203–4.
Memorandum, I, pp. 203–211.
Relations with labour, *Wood*, II, 3089.
Representatives, *see* **BROWNING, W. M. ; WOOD, C. E. ;** *and* **LUKER, F. G.,** II, 3088–3222.

Employers' and Workmen's Dispute Act, no use known of, *Government*, I, p. 23 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 66 ; *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 160.

Factories Act :
Administration, rigidity of, *Government*, I, p. 24.
Amendment, proposals for, *Uthaya*, I, pp. 73–4 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 253 ; *Wadia*, I, p. 337.
Breaches of :
Naidu, I, p. 92.
Common and proposed measures for prevention, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 67.
Penalties :
Imprisonment should be included, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 92.
Inadequacy of, *Cartledge*, I, p. 60, II, 2857 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 320.
Increase advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 171–2.
Maximum should be imposed, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222.
Dredger, question of inclusion under, *Ash*, II, 576–82.
Enforcement, need for improvement and proposals, *Mukhtar*, I, pp. 117, 121 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 320.
Evasion of, *Cartledge*, I, p. 60 ; *Ranga*, I, pp. 325–6.
Exemptions, conditions and procedure, *Gray*, II, 2887–9 ; *Cartledge*, II, 2890–4, 2905, 2906.
Extension :
to All factories using power irrespective of number of employees, advocated, *Government*, I, p. 17 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 64.
to All places with or without power where ten people employed, advocated, *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1258–61.

Factories Act :—*continued.*
Extension :—*continued.*
to *Bidi* factories advocated, *1929 League of Youth*, I, p. 97, (*Arasu*), II, 1109, 1113–7, 1129, 1134 ; *Ramaeshan*, II, 1259.
to *Mandi* shops and *bidi* factories advocated, *Isaac*, I, p. 339 ;
to Small factories :
Enquiry advocated, *Cousins*, II, 1556.
Proposal, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172.
to all Tanneries advocated, *S. Pillai*, II, 1789, 1800–3.
to Unregulated factories advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4183.
to Workshops where more than 10 persons employed continuously for a year, proposal, *Ranga*, I, p. 328.
Position *re* small factories, Coorg, *K. Chengappa, Priestly*, II, 5165–73.
Prosecutions :
Government, I, p. 14 ; *Cartledge*, I, p. 60.
Increase in, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 320.
Institution of, *Cartledge*, II, 2855.
Policy *re*, *Cartledge*, II, 2856.
Statistics, 1920 to 1928, *Government*, I, p. 24.
Section 2 (3) (b) :
Extension desirable and number of persons employed should not be specified in Act, *Cartledge*, I, p. 59 ; II, 2810.
Free use of, additional staff required, *Cartledge*, II, 2859.
Increased use should be made of, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218.
Notification of *bidi* factories under, proposal, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 97.
Notifications under, *Cartledge*, I, p. 59.
Sections 26 and 35, working of, *Cartledge*, II, 3021–2.
Uniformity of administration in various provinces, means of, *Government*, I, p. 24.
Unregistered factories, competition with registered, possibility of, *Government*, I, p. 17 ; *Gray*, I, II, 2883.

Factories and Mills :
Certifying surgeons, powers of, *Cartledge*, II, 2854.
Conditions, supervision by local authorities and labour council advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242.
Free access to officers of Factories and Health Departments advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 170.
Inspection :
Government, I, p. 12.
1924 to 1928, average number, *Cartledge*, I, p. 60.
Administration, *Cartledge*, I, 57.
All India Inspector, proposal, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 121.
Assistance by Labour Council advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, I, p. 247.
Assistant Inspectors, appointment advocated, *Wadia*, I, p. 337.
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 144.
as Central subject, not considered but improvement doubted, *Cartledge*, II, 2857–8.
by Chief Inspector, *Cartledge*, I, p. 60.
Enforcement of regulations, *Jensen*, I, p. 307.
Extension to smaller establishments advocated, *Green*, I, p. 269.
more Frequent, advocated, *Wadia*, I, p. 337.
by Health Officers, seasonal factories, *Aravind*, I p. 124, II, 1530.
by Health Officers, would be approved if accepted by labour representatives, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4462.
Health visitors as additional inspectors, question of, *Gray*, II, 2942 ; *Cartledge*, II, 2943 4.
Inspectors, *Cartledge*, I, p. 58 ; *K. Chengappa*, II, 5137.
Collection of statistics by, desirable, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 67.
ex-officio, *Cartledge*, II, 2852–3.
Indians with sufficient practical experience of workshops, difficulty of obtaining, *Cartledge*, II, 2859.
Medical qualifications advocated for some, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222.
Qualifications required, *Cartledge*, II, 2849.
Recruitment method, *Cartledge*, II, 2851.

Factories and Mills :—*continued.*
Inspection :—*continued.*
Inspectors :—*continued.*
Women :
Advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I p. 222 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 320.
Need for, in large industrial centres, *Cousins*, II, 1561.
Supply, possibility, *Cousins*, II, 1571.
Printing trade, fairly thorough and complete, *Green*, I, p. 269.
Reports sent to Commissioner of Labour, *Gray*, II, 2847.
Seasonal factories, inadequacy, *Azariah*, I, p. 124 ; II, 1560.
Staff :
Inadequacy of, *Cartledge*, I, p. 60 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mill Employees' Union*, I, p. 222 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 320 ; *Ranga*, I p. 325.
Increase advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172 ; *Ranga*, I, p. 328
Staff and districts, factories and employees in respective circles, *Government*, I, p. 23.
Staff and functions, *Government*, I, p. 23.
Study of methods in other provinces and abroad, proposal, *Ayyar Avargal* I, p. 68.
Surprise visits, increased staff necessary for, *Cartledge*, II, 2955-6.
Rules working fairly satisfactory, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Temperature, humidification, and ventilation :
Control of, *Cartledge*, I, p. 56 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 137, 138.
Control and further control of temperature needed, *Buckingham Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 234.
Control :
Legislation, difficulty, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138.
no Provision for, and difficulty, *Cartledge*, I, p. 56.
Measures re, *Government*, I, p. 12 ; *Cartledge*, I, p. 56 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Rules suitable and measures, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138.
Spinning shed, *Holden*, II, 35, 61–3.
Unregulated, control desirable, *Bowring*, II, 3124.

Factory legislation :
Ignorance of workers, *Cartledge*, I, p. 60 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222.
Information to workers, methods, *Binny & Co.*, I, p. 154 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 319 ; *Cartledge*, II, 2862–3.
Knowledge of, by workers, extent, *Government*, I, p. 23.
on Level of English law advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Pamphlet in vernacular with photographs, distribution to workers desired, *Cartledge*, II, 2862.

Fair Wages Clause in public contracts :
Advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 220 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 286 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 316 ; *Ranga*, I, p. 328.
Difficulties in connection with, *Ash*, II, 527–9.

Famine relief, *Paddison*, I, p. 5.

FAZUL RAHMAN, oilman, Vizagapatam Harbour works, 517f.

FOOTE, A., Manager, Lower Paralai Estate, *see* **BARBER, Sir Fairless,** etc., II, 4215–4352.

Franchise :
Adult, advocated, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, pp. 239, 247 ; *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 335.
Extension advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 178 ; *Siva Rao*, I, p. 198.

Gambling, plantations, Coorg, prevalence of, *Thimmaya*, I, p. 349.

GANAPAIAH, N. K., Manager, Kasbur Coffee Estate: II, 5020–86.
Coorg Labour Act, II, 5037–42.
Education, II, 5026–30, 5076.
Health and medical facilities, II, 5022–4, 5047–8, 5071, 5077–80.
Recruitment, II, 5032, 5036, 5039–46.
Wages, II, 5025, 5033–5, 5050–6, 5061–6, 5073–5, 5081–6.

Ganjam, recruitment from :
for Assam, *Steele*, I, p. 77–81; II. 244–50 ; *P.A. Naidu*, I, p. 255–6 ; *Raju*, p. 296.
for Burma, ports of, and statistics, *Steele*, I, p. 78.

A, *maistry*, Halleri coffee estate, II, 4632–8.

PRAKASAM, worker, Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mill, II, 3584.

stem of labour, *see under* **Labour.**

RNMENT, Memorandum: I, p. 3–36.
bsenteeism, I, p. 19.
pprenticeship, I, p. 8–9.
ssam, recruitment for, I, p. 8.
Children, employment of, I, pp. 17–18, 33, 34.
Contract work, I, pp. 10, 31.
Co-operative societies, I, p. 14.
Education, I, pp. 13–4, 33.
Factories Act, I, pp. 17, 24.
Factories inspection, I. pp. 12, 23.
Factories and mills, temperature, ventilation and humidification, I, p. 12.
Factory legislation, I, p. 23.
Health :
General condition, I, pp. 11, 32.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 12.
Medical facilities, I, pp. 11, 32.
Sickness insurance, I, p. 12.
Hours, I, pp. 16–7, 33, 35–6.
Housing :
Accommodation, nature of, I, pp. 10, 11.
Government cheries in Madras City, I, p. 11.
Legislation, I, pp. 10–11.
Mines, I, pp. 31, 32.
Municipal surveys, I, p. 11.
Provision by employers, I, p. 10, 11.
Provision by Government, I, p. 10.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 19, 34.
Industrial disputes, I, pp. 21–2, 23, 25–30.
Industrial efficiency, I, p. 19.
Inspection of mines, II, p. 33.
Intelligence, I, pp. 24–5.
Labour Commissioner, I, p. 23.
Labour questions, administration, I, p. 23.
Leave, I, p. 19.
Master and servant, law of, I, pp. 22–3.
Mines, conditions in, I, p. 30–4.
Ports, wages and hours, I, pp. 35–6.
Recruitment :
no conspicuous Changes, I, p. 7.
Contact with villages, I, pp. 7, 31.
Duration of employment, I, pp. 8, 31.
Methods, I, pp. 7, 31.
Numbers of labourers, I, p. 7.
Origin of labour, I, pp. 7, 31.
Permanent force, I, pp. 7, 31.
Public employment agencies, I, pp. 7–8.
Seamen, I, p. 9.
Safety, I, p. 14.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, pp. 11, 32.

GOVERNMENT, Memorandum : I, pp. 3–36—*continued.*
Staff :
Managing, I, pp. 9, 31.
Relations with rank and file, Go. I, pp. 10, 22, 31.
Subordinate supervising staff, I, pp. 9–10, 31.
Trade Combinations :
Employed, I, pp 20–21.
Employers, I, p. 20.
Trade Disputes Act, I, p. 22.
Trade Unions Act, 1926, I, p. 21.
Unemployment, I, p. 8.
Wages :
I, pp. 18-19, 31-6.
Deductions, I p. 19.
Fixing, I, p. 19.
Minimum, I, p. 19.
Periods of payment, I, p. 19.
Profit sharing, I, p. 19.
Rates, I, p. 18.
Rice, etc., cheap rates, I, p. 19.
Standardisation, I, p. 19.
Unclaimed, I, p. 19.
Welfare, I, pp. 10, 13, 22.
Women, employment of, I, pp. 17, 33, 34.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, pp. 15–16.

Government Press :
President of Labour Union, *see* **BASUDEV, C., B.A., L.I.,** I, pp. 288–95.
Strength of establishment, expenditure and value of plant and machinery, etc., *Basudev*, I, p. 289.
Superintendent, *see* **GREEN, A. G.,** I, pp. 262-9.

Gratuity system :
Advocated, *Madras Electric Tramways and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107 ; *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 126.
Compulsory establishment advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 312.
Fund :
Particulars of, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 142–3 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 220.
Responsibility for dismissals, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 165, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2480.
Denial, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3283–4.
to Members of deceased workers, delay in payment and proposal re, Madras port and harbour, *Kolisuaran*, I, p. 128.
Retiring :
Advocated, *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 335.
Present position, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 27.
Suryanarayana, I, p. 312.
Visagapatam Harbour works, none, *Ash*, II, 553–4.
no System of, kerosene oil workers, given occasionally, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1649, 1660.
Systems, *Government*, I, p. 13.

GRAY, J., O.B.E., I.C.S., Commissioner of Labour : I, pp. 37–56 ; II, 2650-3070.
Burma, recruitment, II, 2901.
Ceylon, recruitment, II, 2903–4.
Children, employment in factories, I, p. 17 II, 2848.
Co-operative movement, II, 3037–9.
Co-operative societies, II, 3006–7, 3059–62.
Criminal Procedure Code, Orders under, II, 2961–4.
Criminal tribes, II, 2993–6.
Factories Act, II, 2863, 2887–9, 2904.
Factories inspection, II, 2847, 2942.
Hours, II, 2847, 2900.
Housing, II, 2653–4, 3004–8, 3065–8.
Indebtedness, II, 2897–8, 3033–6

GRAY, J., O.B.E., I.C.S., Commissioner of Labour : I, pp. 37–56 ; II, 2650-3070 —*continued.*
Industrial disputes :
Lock-outs, Madras textile workers, I, pp. 39, 40–1.
Reporting of, II, 2714–26.
Strikes :
Achur Tea Estate, Malabar, I, p. 55 ; II, 2839–40.
Chittivalsa Jute Mill, I, p. 54.
Choolai Mills, I, pp. 55–6 ; II, 2884.
Coimbatore cotton mills, I, p. 54 ; II, 2841.
Definition, II, 3041–5.
Diocesan printers, I, p. 52.
Indian Aluminium Company, I, p. 48.
Madras Corporation scavengers, I, p. 51.
Madras Electric Tramways and Supply Corporation, I, pp. 48, 49.
Madras Port Trust, scavengers, I, p. 53.
Madras textile workers, I, pp. 40, 42.
Oil workers, II, p. 50.
Public Works department, Madras, I, p. 43.
Railway, I, p. 44.
Ranipet, Messrs. Parry and Co., I, p. 48.
Labour Advisory Board, II, 2895.
Labour Commissioner :
Attendance at meetings and means of obtaining information, II, 2815–28, 2842–3.
Intervention in labour disputes, II, 2829–38, 2967–71, 2978–85, 2997–3003, 3055–8.
Madura, possible strike, II, 2715, 2722–6, 2813–4.
Malay, recruitment, II, 2904.
Migration, II, 3009.
Papanasam dispute, II, 2685–7.
Ranipet Labour Union, I, pp. 37, 48 ; II, 2988–92.
Recruitment, planting areas, II, 2902.
Royal Commission, II, 2965–6.
Trades Disputes Act, II, 2977.
Trade unionism, progress, II, 3029–32.
Trades Unions Act, II, 3048.
Trade Unions :
Government servants, prohibition of membership, I, p. 21 ; II, 2877–81.
Registered, list, and history of, I, pp. 37–50.
Registration, II, 3049, 3053–4.
Returns, II, 3051–2.
Unregistered, particulars of, I, pp. 50–4.
Unemployment, I, p. 8 ; II, 2864, 3009–11.
Wages :
II, 2871–5, 2921–4, 2972–3.
in Agricultural districts, II, 2735–6.
Welfare Committee, II, 2951.
Workmen's Compensation Act, II, 2970, 3012–4.

GREEN, A. G., Superintendent, Government Press, Madras : I, pp. 262–9.
Absenteeism, I, p. 264.
Co-operative Credit societies, I, p. 265.
Education, I, p. 265.
Health and medical facilities, I, p. 264.
Hours, I, p. 266.
Housing, I, p. 264.
Indebtedness, I, p. 268.
Industrial diseases, I, p. 264.
Industrial disputes, I p. 269.
Industrial efficiency, I, pp. 268–9.
Leave and holidays, I, pp. 266, 268.
Recruitment, I, p. 263.
Safety, I, p. 265.
Sickness insurance, I, p. 264.
Staff organization, I, p. 264.
Trade combinations, I, p. 269.

GREEN, A. C., Superintendent, Government Press, Madras: I, pp. 262–9 —*continued.*
Training, I, pp. 263, 266–7.
Unemployment, I, p. 269.
Wages, I, p. 267.
Welfare, I, p. 265.
Workmen's Compensation, I, pp. 265–6.
Works Committees, I, p. 264.

GRIEVE, R. G., M.A., F.R.G.S., Director of Public Instruction, Madras, I,

Hallen Coffee Estate, Coorg, conditions on, *workers*, II, 4614–38; *Sa* 4639–735.

Handloom weavers :
Coimbatore, conditions of, and need for special inquiry, *Coimbator Union*, I, p. 247.
Telugu Districts, reforms desired by, *Ranga*, I, p. 328.

HARGREAVES, J., Manager of Carnatic Mill; **BENTLEY, W. E.**, Ma Buckingham Mill; **RAGHAVIAH, Dr. G. P.**, Medical Officer, Carnat **SAGE, Miss M., M.A.**, Joint Principal, Buckingham and Carnatic **ANTHONI, K. O.**, Secretary, Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Work-people Wel Committee: I, p. 132–54, II, 1820–2137.
Absenteeism, I, pp. 134, 149; II, 1954–5, 1997–2000, 2021–3, 2090–4.
Apprenticeship, I, pp. 134, 145.
Attendance registers and time-keeping, I, p. 135.
Bribery, II, 1934–40.
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, I, pp. 151, 153, 154; I 1834–41, 1982.
Children, employment of, I, p. 145; II, 2034.
Diseases, I, p. 138.
Dismissals, II, 1848–50.
Education, I, pp. 134, 140–3; II, 1869–74, 2032–5.
Factory inspection, I, p. 144.
Factory legislation, I, p. 154.
Gratuity and Provident Fund, I, pp. 142–3
Health :
Baby welfare centres and dispensaries, I, p. 137; II, 1866.
General conditions, I, p. 137; II, 1853–5, 1865, 1909.
Hygiene instruction, II, 1869–73.
Maternity benefits, I, pp. 137, 138; II, 1915–8.
Medical facilities, I, p. 137.
Medical leave, I, p. 136; II, 1867–8, 1901, 1904–5.
Sickness insurance, I, p. 138; II, 2125.
Health weeks, I, p. 138.
Hours, I, pp. 144–5, 146, 150; II, 1860, 1949–51, 1961–2, 2006–8, 2036–7, 2070–2, 2095–7, 2105–9, 2116.
Housing, I, p. 136; II, 1851–2, 1861, 1864, 1887, 1889–90.
Indebtedness, I, p. 149; II, 2038–45.
Industrial Councils, I, p. 154.
Industrial disputes, I, pp. 151–2, 154; II, 2019–20.
Industrial efficiency, I, pp. 143, 149–51.
International Labour Conventions, I, pp. 133, 138.
Leave, I, pp. 134, 149; II, 1954.
Madras Labour Union, I, pp. 151–2; II, 1925–38, 1956–60, 1969, 1976–81, 1983–95, 1989–95, 2117–22, 2136–7, 2051–60.
Managers, selection, I, p. 134.
Mills, temperature and humidification, I, p. 137.
Peaceful picketing, I, pp. 153–4.
Recruitment, I, pp. 132–3, 136; II, 1842–5, 1876–81, 1891–2, 1996, 2003–5, 2009–18, 2103, 2124–31.
Safety, I, pp. 143–4; II, 2100–2.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, p. 135.
Staff organisation :
Administration system, I, p. 134.
Relations with rank and file, I, pp. 134, 154; II, 1824–41, 1893, 1941–2.

HARGREAVES, J., Manager of Carnatic Mill; **BENTLEY, W. E.**, Manager of Buckingham Mill; **RAGHAVIAH, Dr. G. P.**, Medical Officer, Carnatic Mill; **SAGE, Miss M., M.A.**, Joint Princial, Buckingham and Carnatic School; **ANTHONI, K. O.**, Secretary, Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Work-people Welfare Committee: I. p. 132–54, II, 1820–2137—*continued.*
Standard of living, I, p. 143.
Supervising staff, I, p. 134.
Trade Unions, I, pp. 151, 153, 154; II, 1966–8, 1970–5, 1984, 2051–6, 2073–6.
Trades Disputes Act, I, p. 154.
Unemployment, p. 133; II, 1882–4, 2, 23.
Unemployment insurance, I, p. 133; II, 2124.
Wages:
I, pp. 146–9; II, 1856–9, 1943–4, 2001–2, 2064–9, 2078–9, 2082–9, 2110–3, 2114–5.
Payment method, I, p. 136; II, 1885–6, 1899.
Piece work, II, 2132–5.
Welfare Committee, I, pp. 134, 135; II, 1895–8, 1911–24, 2047–50.
Welfare work, I, pp. 139–40; II, 1902–3, 1906–10, 1963, 2061.
Women, employment, I, p. 145.
Workmen's Compensation, I, p. 144; II, 2104.
Works Committees, II, 1846–7.

HAWKE, L. A., Manager, Singara Tea Estate, Coonoor: II, 3445–3515.
Children, employment of, II, 3486–94.
Education, II, 3499–500.
Health, II, 3486–7, 3496, 3498, 3506–7.
Hours, II, 3454, 3458–9, 3509.
Housing, II, 3478, 3501–3.
Recruitment, II, 3448–51, 3475.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, II, 3502–5.
Wages:
II, 3452–3, 3455–7, 3470, 3479–85.
Advances, II, 3455, 3467–8, 3460–5, 3469–77, 3495, 3510–13.
Women, employment of, II, 3455, 3476.

Health, general, and miscellaneous :
Agricultural labourers :
in Interior and migrating to towns, *V. K. Menon*, I, p. 288.
Maternity benefit, impossibility, *Paddison*, I, p. 5.
Midwives, untrained, danger from, and reluctance of women to employ trained midwives, *Paddison*, I, p. 5.
Ambulance Corps advocated, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107.
Ayurvedic, Unanic and Siddha treatment, proposals re, *Mukhtar*, p. 115; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 285; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 331.
Birth control clinics, establishment and propaganda advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 193.
Births and deaths :
Rates, Madras city, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 168, 169; *Ubhaya*, II, 2807.
Registration, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 69; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284.
no Registration, *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Statistics, not reliable, Coorg, *Priestly*, II, 5122, 5123.
Comparative mortality among industrial and non-industrial population, investigation in progress, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 73; II, 2938–9.
Conditions, *Ranga*, I, p. 328.
Connection with housing, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284; *Basudev*, I, 290; *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Cordite factory, Aruvankadu :
Injurious sections of work, provision for workers whose health impaired, advocated, *Powell*, I, p. 258.
Medical facilities and proposals, *Powell*, I, pp. 257–8.
Dependance on food, *McCarrison*, I, p. 225.
Dietary :
Examples of dietaries of various classes of workers, *McCarrison*, I, pp. 234–7.
Inadequacy of, *McCarrison*, I, p. 225; II, 3332.
Nature of, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70; *Janaki*, I, p. 307.

Health, general, and miscellaneous :—*continued.*
Dietary—*continued.*
Nutrition values, propaganda *re*, proposal, *McCarrison*, II, 3335–7.
Nutritional research, particulars of, and results, *McCarrison*, I, p. 225–31, II, 3310–4, 3319–25.
Sufficiency of, doubted, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70, II, 2329–30.
Diseases, *see that title*.
Dispensaries :
Equipment not complete or up-to-date and no sick beds, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4485–6.
Staff etc., Vizagapatam, *Ash*, I, p. 84.
Full-time doctor advocated for Madras Port Trust and harbour workers, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128.
Government medical staff, Coorg, *Thornton*, II, 5110.
Government Press health centre, *Green*, I, p. 264.
Government Press workers, *Green*, I, p. 264 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 290.
Health campaign, value of, *Shiva Rao*, I, pp. 189–90.
Health officers, number appointed during last five years, *Ubhaya*, II, 2760.
Hospitals and dispensaries :
Coorg :
no By-law re recovery of money before issuing medicines known, *Thornton*, II, 5128.
Improved equipment, etc., need for, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Reluctance to go, and reasons for, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Government and local bodies, *Government*, I, p. 11 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62 ; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70.
Mission, *Government*, I, p. 11 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 296.
Special, for Public Works Department, proposal, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 331.
Indigenous system of medicine, proposals, *Mukhtar* I, p. 115 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 169–70 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284 ; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 331.
Infant mortality :
1928–29 for municipal areas, *Aswish*, I, p. 124.
High rate :
Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344.
Madras and reasons, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2620–2.
Inspection, Nellore mica mines, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261.
Lady doctors :
Coorg, experiment of part-time lady doctor to be tried, *Priestly*, II, 5124 ; Desirable, *Government*, I, p. 11 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62 ; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 115 ; *Ubhaya*, II, 2931 ; *Wood*, II, 3191 ; *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, II, 4487. Increase advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
no Lady doctors or trained midwives, Coorg, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Malnutrition :
as Cause of disease, *McCarrison*, I, p. 231–9.
general Effects of, *McCarrison*, I, pp. 231–2.
Medical facilities :
see also Dispensaries, Hospitals, Lady Doctors *above and* Midwives *below*.
Government Press, non-provision, *Basudev*, I, p. 290.
Government Servants, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241.
Madras Port Trust, free medical service under contemplation, *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Mica mines, Nellore, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261.
Railway servants, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, I, p. 84 ; II, 607–8.
Midwives and *dāis* :
Trained, supply, Coorg, *Thornton*, II, 5125.
Training :
Facilities, and supply, *Ubhaya*, II, 2932–3.
Need for, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 115.

Health, general, and miscellaneous :—*continued.*
Mines :
General condition, *Government*, I, p. 32.
Medical facilities :
Provision, extent of, *Government*, I, p. 32.
Resting accommodation, *Government*, I, p. 32.
Utilisation, extent of, *Government*, I, p. 32.
Mortality, high rate in Madras, no action taken by Corporation on Report in 1926, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2591.
Nutrition, need for extension of research on, and proposal *re*, *McCarrison*, I, p. 233 ; I, 3316–8, 3329–31.
Physical efficiency of different Indian races relative to their food, *McCarrison*, I, pp. 227–8.
Provincial medical service, proposal, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 192.
Public health expenditure of various provinces, 1926–27, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 191.
Railway workshops, dispensaries, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Sick leave with pay advocated, Madras Port trust and harbour workers, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128.
State medical service to be contributed to by employers, scheme, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169.
Visitors, training facilities, *Cousins*, II, 1583–90.
Vital statistics :
Impossibility of obtaining, for judging of health conditions, *Ubhaya*, I, pp. 69–70.
Lack of, *S.I. Chm. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Working conditions, Government Press, *Basudev*, I, p. 290.

Health, industrial workers :
Ayurvedic dispensary, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.
Baby welfare centres and dispensaries, Corporation, *Binny and Co.*, I. p. 137, (*Bentley*), II, 1866.
Bidi factories, *Isaac*, I, p. 339.
Comparison with prisoners, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 120.
Confinements :
Maternity benefits, *see that title below*.
Dismissal in 6th or 7th month and difficulty of obtaining re-employment, Choolai Mills in 1926, unless bribe given to mistri, *Sri Ram*, II, 1581, 1586.
Practice *re* working before, *Rodrigues*, II, 749–51.
Prohibition of work for eight weeks before and eight weeks after, advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 72.
Stopping of women from working at discretion of maistry, *worker*, II, 638.
Women generally go home and return after, no system of bribery known, *Cheshire*, II, 3626–9.
Women sent away and reinstated at maistries' discretion, mostly after bribing, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 91, II, 873–4.
Death rates :
Binney and Co., I, p. 137 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213 ; *A. Pillai*, II, 1786.
Higher in houses of private landlords than in employers' and workers' own houses, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.
Dietary, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 88 ; *Naidu*, I, p. 93 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 141 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214 ; *United Madras Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284.
Diseases, *see that title*.
Effect of inadequate lighting arrangements, *Government*, I, p. 14.
General condition, *Government*, I, p. 11 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62 ; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169 ; *Janaki*, I, p. 307 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279.
special Health Officer for mill areas desirable, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4491.
Health visitors and trained *dais* desirable where large number of women employed *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4488.
Health weeks, organised by Welfare Committee, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138.

Health, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Hospitals :
in City, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137.
Government and Corporation hospitals and dispensaries, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 206; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.
In-patient and lying-in hospital in mill area, need for, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.
Infantile mortality, high rate, cause of, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89.
Maternity benefits: *Government*, I, p. 12; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 137, 138, (*Bentley*), II, 1845–6; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 215; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279; *Sri Ram*, II, 1578.
Advocated and benefits proposed, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89; *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 106; *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 131; *Janaki*, I, p. 307; *Sri Ram*, II, 1582.
Aluminium industry, no provision of, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 285.
by Amendment of Factories Act:
Lady inspector would have to be appointed, *Gray, Cartledge*, II, 2861.
Legislation suggestion, *Government*, I, p. 12.
if Asked for, *Holden*, II, 3545–8.
Buckingham and Carnatic and Choolai mills, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 170–1, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2525–7.
Choolai mills, *Ayyar*, II, 2145.
Commonwealth Trust, Ltd., *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Compulsory, should apply to all industries employing women, *Cousins*, II, 1553.
Cost should be borne by Government and employers, *Janaki*, I, p. 307; *Cousins*, II, 1577.
Inadequacy of schemes, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 311.
no Leave granted, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241.
Legislation:
Advocated, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 72; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116, II, 1515–9; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138, (*Bentley*), II, 1947–8; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 171, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2525–8; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 215; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242, (*N. S. K Ayyangar*), II, 4489; *Powell*, I, p. 258; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 285; *Suryanarayana*, I, pp. 311–2; *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1283; *Cousins*, II, 1575.
not Desirable, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 207.
Difficulty, *Government*, I, p. 12.
possible Effect on employment, *Government*, I, p. 12, (*Cartledge*), 2860; *Wood*, II, 3167.
Undesirability at present, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Non-provision, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132; *workers*, II, 328, 3582; *Cheshire*, 3627–8.
Payment in cash advocated, *Cousins*, II, 1579–80.
Provision by some firms, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 207.
no Scheme known, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71.
Maternity home in mill area, attempt by Union to establish, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 170, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2471.
Maternity and infant welfare, scheme, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 115.
Medical examination:
before Admission to mill or factory and periodical inspections advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 176.
Operatives in carding department, *Bradley*, II, 1909.
Medical facilities:
Government, I, p. 11; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137; *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157, (*Pinches*), II, 2260–6; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279; *Janaki*, I, p. 307; *workers*, II, 638, 642; *Rodriguez*, II, 715–20; *Ayyar*, II, 2144; *Holden*, II, 3804; *Cheshire*, II, 3632.
see also Hospitals *above*, Midwives *below*, *etc.*

Health, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Medical facilities :—*continued.*
Aluminium industry, non-provision, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284.
Compulsory provision advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 72.
Extent to which advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, pp. 115, 116.
Free provision of, or allowance for treatment provided, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89.
Inadequacy of, generally, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241, (*Ayyangar*), II, 4483–6.
Inadequacy of, and particulars in Madura Mills, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, pp. 91, 93, II, 817–8, 863–4, 872, 887–9.
Non-provision in most cases, *Government*, I, p. 11; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70; *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
None, tanneries, Chingleput, with one exception, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132.
One doctor for 50 to 200 workers advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 115; II, 1540–7.
for Printing trade workers, *Green*, I, p. 264.
Printing trade workers, none, *R. S. Mudaliar*, I, p. 339.
Provision by practically all European employers, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 206.
Seasonal factories, *Azariah*, I, p. 123.
Utilisation, extent of, *Government*, I, p. 11; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.* I, p. 206; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241; *Madras Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279.
Medical inspection of factories advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 192.
Medical leave, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137, (*Bentley*), II, 1867–8, 1904–5, (*Raghaviah*), II, 1901.
Medical officer in every factory should be compulsory, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, pp. 284–5.
Medical treatment, deduction of cost from wages, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89.
Mid-day meals, compulsory provision by factories advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284.
Midwifery, and nurseries, provision advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242.
Midwives or *dais*:
Desirability of employment, *Wood*, II, 3191.
Employment, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.
Mortality, tanneries, *S. Pillai*, II, 1786.
Municipal dispensaries, women doctors and midwives, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284.
Payment during sickness:
Extent of, *Winter*, II, 3622–4.
for Injuries only, *worker*, II, 642.
None, *workers*, II, 641, 642.
None, Tramways, Madras, *Voegeli-Arya*, II, 1350.
Vizagapatam Harbour works, for injury not due to carelessness, *Ash*, II, 565, 609; *Anderson*, II, 565–6.
Physique, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214; *Green*, I, p. 264; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284; *Basudev*, I, p. 296.
Printing trade workers, *Green*, I, p. 264.
Record keeping system:
Advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, pp. 73, 74.
no Power at present to prescribe, and doubt as to possibility of carrying out, *Cartledge*, II, 2947–9.
Sex ratios, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70.
Sick and endowment fund, Commonwealth Trust Ltd., *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Sick or incapacitated persons, prohibition of employment if discovered by factory inspector:
Power advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 74.
no Power at present, *Cartledge*, II, 2950.

Health, industrial workers :—*continued.*

Sick Leave :
Certificate by registered medical practitioner should be accepted, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 170.
Certificates, buying of, *Green*, I, p. 264 ; *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1270–2.
no Facilities, *Naidu*, I, p. 91.
Interference by managers with discretion of doctors, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169.
Proposal, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89.
Sickness average, *Bentley*, II, 1853–5.
Sickness allowances, *Wood*, II, 3215.
Sickness incidence, Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, I, p. 88; *Major F. J. Anderson*, II, 573–5 ; *Satyanarayana*, II, 626.
Sickness insurance :
Advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*) II 4439–41, 4448–54 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 285; *Basudev*, I, p. 291 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 311 ; *Ubhaya*, II, 2769–70.
Advocated, with contributions by Government and employers, *P.W.I. Workers' Union*, I, p. 331.
Advocated, with contributions from workers, employers and the State *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1270–4.
Attitude of employers and labour, *Government*, I, p. 12, (*Cartledge*) II, 2865–6.
Compulsory scheme in organized industries advocated rather than national scheme, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214, (*Ubaidullah*) II, 3232–3.
Compulsory for workers in industries under Factories Act proposed, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 115 ; II, 1499–504.
Contribution by employees, wages too low in most cases, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
not Desirable at present, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, pp. 206–7, (*Wood*), II, 3090.
General system, not feasible at present, *Green*, I, p. 264.
Government must bear main cost of, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Impracticable and unnecessary, *Government*, I, p. 12.
International Labour Convention, not suitable for India, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 138.
on Lines of recommendation of International Labour Conference advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 170.
would not be Opposed if workers agreed to contribute, *Bentley*, II, 2125.
Trying of, in selected establishments, proposal, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Workers would contribute, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3259.
Workers would not be willing to contribute, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, pp. 206–7, (*Browning*) II, 3160–1.
Trained nurses in school and village dispensaries, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137.
Western medicine, acceptability of, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 170 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S I.*, I, p. 207.
Working conditions :
Mukhtar, I, p. 114; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137, (*Bentley*), II, 1865; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284.
Mundi shops, *Isaac*, I, pp. 338–9.
Satisfactory generally, except in carding and spinning departments, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.
Working conditions and need for improvement, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 65.

Health, plantations :

Births and deaths :
Death statistics, not reliable, *Priestly*, II, 5122–3.
Deaths, many unreported, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.
Infantile mortality, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 200 ; *Sprott*, II, 4713–4 ; *Thornton*, II, 5123.
Registration :
A. B. Chengappa, I, p. 344; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347; *Thornton*, II, 5123.
Proposal re, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 252 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.
Statistics, variation in system, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157.
no System of, *Barber*, II, 4290–3.
in own Villages usually, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157.

Health, plantations :—*continued.*

Bonus for births on estates, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157.
Bonus for children, *worker*, II, 3346 ; *Porter*, II, 3424–5 ; *Sampson* II, 3784–7.
Child welfare work, local effort desirable, *Thornton*, II, 5124.
Children up to 13, supply of shirt once a year and bread and sweets, *Babington*, II, 4982.
Confinements :
Few take place on estate, *Hawke*, II, 3496, 3498.
Majority of women remain on estates for, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157, (*Pinches*), II, 2265–6.
Maternity benefits, *see that title below.*
Maternity-homes, not considered necessary, *Morgan, Tipping*, II, 4749–51.
Medical assistance, *worker*, II, 3014 ; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5024 ; *Thornton*, II, 5127.
Number of women remaining on estate for, increasing, *Sampson*, II, 3781–2 ; *Jones*, II, 4034.
Sending of all, to hospital, advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Visiting nurses system, question of, *Morgan, Sprott, Tipping*, II, 4792–3.
Women come to estates for, *Tipping*, II, 4745.
Diet, special, for sick labourers, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342.
Dietary : *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253; *worker*, II, 4622 ; *Murland, Sprott*, II, 4757.
Meat, source of supply, and quality of, *Jones, Measham*, II, 4046–8.
Milk unobtainable, *Sprott*, II, 4714.
Diseases, *see that title.*
no Doctor on estate, payment per visit, *Sprott*, II, 4642–4, 4704.
Feeding of children, abolition desirable if part of worker's wages, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4800.
Feeding of non-working children, *N.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158 ; *worker*, II, 3651 ; *Barber*, II, 4285, 4293.
Food supplied during illness, debiting to account, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 250.
General condition, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62 ; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 252 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344 ; *Subbayya*, I, p. 352 ; *Porter*, II, 3436 ; *Babington*, II, 4955–8 ; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5071.
Government hospitals and dispensaries, system of subscription to, by proprietors, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344, II, 4801–2, 4850–1 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348 ; *Subbayya*, I, p. 352 ; *Thornton, Priestly*, II, 5096–8, 5160–1.
Health work, plantations where carried out, *Ubhaya*, II, 2928.
Hospitals :
Central :
System of, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310 ; *Measham*, II, 4082–90.
and Possibility of extension, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158, (*Pinches, Barber, Congreve*), II, 2339–47.
Group, system approved, *Barber*, II, 4328.
Maternity wards, *Measham*, II, 4094–6.
Reluctance of labourers to go into, *Tipping*, II, 4774.
Hospitals and dispensaries :
Establishment by State, with contributions from estates advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 201.
Provision by employers, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 206.
Improvement :
Sampson, II, 3835–40 ; *Barber*, II, 4319–20.
proposed Measures for, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253.
Independent medical service advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 201.
Inspection :
by Boards of health none, but would be beneficial, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
by Civil surgeon, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344.
by Health officer, no objection to, and might be advantageous, *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4610–2.
Medical inspection of lines, *Measham*, II, 4097–100.
Inspection of labourers once a year advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253.
Lady doctors :
Advocated, *Janaki*, I, p. 307 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
None, Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344 ; II, 4817.
Question as to desirability, *Barber*, II, 4323

Health, plantations :—*continued.*
Maternity benefits : *Government*, I, p. 12 ; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71 ; *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158, (*Pinches, Brock*), II, 2259–64 ; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342, (*Morgan, Murland, Tipping*), II, 4033–4, 4742–5, 4751–2, 4767 ; *workers*, II, 3346, 5014 ; *Porter*, II, 3419–23 ; *Hawke*, II, 3496–7 ; *Sampson*, II, 3782–3, 3790 ; *Foote, Barber*, II, 4287–8 ; *Sprott*, II, 4695 ; *Babington*, II, 4960 ; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5024, 5047–8.
not Asked for, *Madapa*, II, 4976–9.
Compulsory :
Doubt as to popularity of, *Morgan*, II, 4767.
Estates now giving more, would probably decrease, *Sprott*, II, 4768.
Legislation :
Advocated and nature of, *Suryanarayana*, I, pp. 311–2 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Opinions *re*, *Jones, Martin*, II, 4029–36.
None, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 311.
no Occasion for, Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, II, 4856–7.
Maternity cases, *see* Confinements *above*.
Medical facilities : *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 200 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310 ; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342,(*Tipping, Murland, Morgan*), II, 4746–51, 4780 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348 ; *Subbayya*, I, p. 352 ; II, 4870–3 ; *Hawke*, II, 3496, 3506–7 ; *Jones*, II, 3991–3 ; *Measham*, II, 4078–96 ; *Barber*, II, 4327–8 ; *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4610 ; *workers*, II, 4622, 4626 5013 ; *Sprott*, II, 4642–4, 4704 ; *Babington*, II, 4949–54 ; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5022, 5077–8 ; *Thornton*, II, 5110–1.
see also Confinements *and* Hospitals *above and* Midwives *below, etc.*
Ayurvedic system, introduction would be welcomed by labourers, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Expenditure on, *Pinches*, II, 2437.
Good, *Government*, I, p. 11 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Improvement, *Commissioner of Coorg*, I, p. 341.
Need for, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 200 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, II, 4848–9.
Proposals for, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Local dispensaries, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342, (*Morgan*), 4750.
Medicines should be prescribed by qualified doctors, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Permanent arrangements on some estates, *Sprott*, II, 4692.
Provision by employers, extent of, *Thornton*, II, 5196.
Satisfactory on the whole, *Thornton*, II, 5095.
Utilisation :
Extent of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158 ; *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 200 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344.
Means of inducing, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Medical inspection of lines, *Measham*, II, 4097–100.
Medical treatment received, *workers*, II, 4141, 4149.
Medicine, free supply, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 250.
Midwife or nurse to be provided, *Sampson*, II, 3789.
Midwives or trained *dais* :
Advocated, *Janaki*, I, p. 307 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Employment in some cases, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
Extension of system desirable, *Barber*, II, 4324.
None, Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344, II, 4817.
None provided, but not necessary, *Porter, Elkington*, II, 3426.
Trained *dai*, case of, *Barber*, II, 4324–5.
Trained, on estates, possibly desirable, *Measham*, II, 4101–4.
Mortality rate, asking of workmen reaching advanced stage of disease to leave place in order to keep down, denial, *Pinches*, II, 2306.
Non-working children, woman kept to look after, *worker*, II, 4623 ; *Sprott*, II, 4684.
Nurses, in big hospitals and increased willingness of women to use owing to, *Measham*, II, 4089–93.
Official supervison, *A.B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344.
Need for, *Suryanarayana*, I, pp. 310–1.
Physique, *U.P.S.S.I.*, I, p. 157 ; *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253 ; *A.B. Chengappa*, I, p. 344 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.
Public Health Department, no advice received from, *Pinches*, II, 2333.
Rural Health Officer, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158.

Health, plantations :—*continued.*
Sex problem and morality, *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253.
Sickness :
Assistance during, *Jones*, II, 3991 ; *Johnson*, II, 4198–9 ; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5022–3.
Maintenance of worker and family during, advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Payment during :
on Doctor's certificate, *Porter*, II, 3415–8.
None, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.
None, but free feeding for hospital in-patients. *Sampson*, II, 3812–5.
System advocated, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.
no System of, *Sprott*, II, 4665, 4703, 4705.
Sickness insurance :
Advocated and proposals *re*, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 311.
International Labour Convention unworkable in rural communities, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158.
Legislation not necessary, owing to provision made, *Brock, Pinches, Congreve*, II, 2238–40, 2300–1, 2321–9.
not Necessary, *Subbayya*, II, 4873.
None, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Special health officer supplied to planting areas and work of, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71 ; II, 2801.
Supervision of plantations, *Subbayya*, I, p. 352.
Women health visitors might be desirable, *Measham*, II, 4099–100.
Work even during rains, *worker*, II, 4141.

Health, Ministry of, establishment advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 191–2.

Heroor Coffee Plantations, conditions on, *Madapa*, II, 4967–5007.

HOLDEN, E., Manager, Kalceswar Mills, Coimbatore : II, 3516–78.
Children, non-employment, II, 3519, 3521.
Health, II, 3561–4
Hours, II, 3520–5, 3531–2, 3569–70, 3572–8.
Housing, II, 3530–1, 3557–8.
Loan Fund, II, 3552–5, 3566–8.
Maternity benefit, II, 3545–8.
Recruitment, II, 3536–8.
Strike, II, 3572–3.
Wages, II, 3534, 3539–44, 3565, 3571.
Water supply, II, 3559–60.
Women, employment, II, 3550–1.

Holidays, *see* **Leave and holidays.**

Home work :
Nature of, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70.
Regulation needed, and possible means of, *P. J. Thomas*, I, pp. 93–94, II, 1014–8, 1031–4.
Unsatisfactory conditions, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70.

HONEE JEN KURUMBA, woman worker, Pollibetta Coffee plantations, II, 4901–7.

HOOD, H. M., I.C.S., Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Madras, I, pp. 281–3.

Hookworm, *see under* **Diseases.**

Hospitals, *see under* **Health.**

Hours :
Agricultural labourers, *Paddison*, I, p. 5 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243 ; *Ranga*, I, p. 325.
Customary, labourers and farm servants, *Ranga*, I, p. 325.
8½ hour day advocated, Madras port and harbour workers, *Kotiswaran*, II, 1756.
Mines :
Government, I, p. 33 ; *Woodhouse*, I, p. 282.
Legislation, Nellore mica mines, unnecessary, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 262.
Oil, recommendations *re*, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, pp. 126–7, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1638–40.

Hours :—*continued.*
Ports, statement of, at various ports, *Government*, I, pp. 35-6.
Railways :
Coimbatore Labour Union, I, p. 243.
Lower paid and menial service, 8 hours' day advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243.

Hours, industrial workers :
Government, I, p. 16 ; *Cartledge*, I, p. 58 ; *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90 ; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110, (*C. G. Menon*), II, 1440 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 144, (*Hargreaves*), II, 1949-51 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 208 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 217 ; *Cochin Chamber of Commerce* I, p. 272 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279 ; *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 334 ; *Aiyar*, II, 2139 ; *worker*, II, 3579 ; *Winter*, II. 3592-5.
Absence on Friday, prohibition of work on Saturday, abolition of rule advocated Madras port and harbour, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128 ; II, 1730.
Aluminium companies, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 285.
no Application from Union, *Bentley*, II, 1860.
Bidi factories, 1929 *Madras League of Youth*, I, p. 96 ; *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 102, (*Rameeshan*), II. 1238.
Cordite Factory, Aravenkadu, and legislation advocated, *Powell*, I, p. 258.
Counting of, from moment worker leaves home advocated, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 106, (*Veegeli-Arya*) II, 1310.
Commonwealth Trust Ltd., *Jenahi*, I, p. 307.
Day of rest, *Government*, I, p. 16 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 145 ; *Green*, I, p. 266 ; *Cochin Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 272 ; *Armstrong*, I, p. 276 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, pp. 285, 286 ; *Hargreaves*, II, 2116.
no Alteration advisable at present, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Recommendations *re*, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243.
Double shifts involving night work undesirable, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 146.
Dry docks, *Government*, I, p. 16-7.
Duty schedules, posting of, proposal, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 106.
Eight hour day :
Advocated, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90 ; *Naidu*, I, p. 91 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242.
Production need not be decreased, *Madras Labour Union*, I p. 172.
Eight hour day and forty-six hour week, Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 332.
Eleven hours, continuous, undesirable, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Eleven hours work and half hour interval advocated, seasonal factories, *Wadia*, I, p. 337.
Eleven hour day and sixty hour week, evils of, *Suryanarayana*, I, pp. 312-3.
Eleven and twelve hours, and reduction advocated, Madras port and harbour, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 129, II, 1749-50, 1756, 1770-4.
Excessive in small factories, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 118.
should not Exceed limits prescribed under English Acts, *Ulhaya*, I, p. 73.
Exemptions :
Government, I, p. 16, (*Cartledge*) II, 58 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 145.
Abuse of, in small factories, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218, (*Ubaidullah*) II, 3269-70
Curtailment not desirable, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 208.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 276.
Fifty-hour week :
Advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3234-7, 3257.
too Great a reduction, *Bentley*, II, 2095-6.
Fifty-four hour week :
Advocated, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63 ; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119 ; *Cartledge* II, 2907-16.
Proposed, *Government*, I, p. 16.
Question of, *Wood*, II, 3193-6.
Wages should not be same unless production kept up, *Cartledge* II, 2909-16.

Hours, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Fifty-five hour week advocated, *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1264-6 ; *Bentley, Hargreaves*, II, 1962, 2070-2, 2097.
Fixing of, for *mundi* shops and *bidi* factories advocated, *Isaac*, I, p. 339.
Forty-eight and fifty advocated as minimum and maximum, *Madras Electric Tramway Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, pp. 105-6,
Forty-two hours week advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, pp. 285-6.
International Labour Conventions, Madras Port Trust railway, *Armstrong*, I, p. 276.
Intervals : *Government*, I, p. 16 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63 ; *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 145, (*Bentley, Hargreaves*) II, 2006-8, 2036-7, 2105-9 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 208 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280 ; *Jenahi*, I, p. 307..
Advocated, *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 334.
no Alteration advisable at present, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Aluminium companies, and increase advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, pp. 285-6.
Coir yarn industry, *Cochin Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 272.
Government Press, *Green*, I, p. 266 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 289.
Increase to one and half hours advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2618-9.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 276.
None, formerly, Meenakshi mill, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 91, II, 902.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 266.
Public Works Department and increase advocated, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 332.
not Satisfactory and proposal *re*, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 313.
Tanneries, no regular time, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132.
Tramways, none, *Veegeli-Arya*, II. 1348.
Vizagapatam Harbour works, *worker*, 517a, 517f.
Madras Port Trust, in various establishments, *Armstrong*, I, pp. 275-6.
Maximum :
Different for men and women not possible, *Cartledge*, II, 2847.
Effect of, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Reduction not desirable at present, *Green*, I, p. 266.
Night work :
Abolition or counting five hours as equal to ten hours by day advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4507-8.
Five hours should be limit, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244.
Six hours should be regarded as equivalent to full working day, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172.
Nine hour day :
Advocated, *Government*, I, p. 16 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Immediately and reduction to eight in two years time advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*) 4455-8.
Nine hour day and fifty hours week advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218, (*Ubaidullah*) II, 3234-7, 3257.
Nine hour day and fifty-four hours week advocated, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Overtime :
no Limit to, *Jenahi*, I, p. 307.
Proposal *re*, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 106.
Overtime and Sunday work and recommendation *re*, Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, pp. 332-333.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 266 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 289 ; *R. S. Mudaliar*, I, p. 339.
Reduction :
Effect on production, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 150 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 221 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills*, I, p. 280 ; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4455.
not Necessary or practicable at present, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Need for, *Suryanarayana*, I, pp. 312-3.
Question, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 145, (*Hargreaves, Bentley*), II, 1961-2.
Rice and ground-nut shelling, 10 and 12 hours, *Ranga*, I, p. 325.
Messrs. Richardson, Cruddas and Company, and reduction advocated, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 130.
7.30 advocated as commencing hour, *Kotiswaran*, I, pp. 128, 130.

Hours, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Shift system : *Winter*, II, 3592–4, 3599 ; *Cheshire*, II, 3598–600.
Coimbatore, complaints received from workers, *Sundaraj*, II, 4513–5.
Kaleeswar Mills, Coimbatore, *Holden*, II, 3520, 3523, 3531–2, 3569–70, 3572–8.
Six-day week : *Government*, I, p. 16 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 144, 145 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 217 ; *Ceylon Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 272.
Advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119.
from 6.30 a.m., *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89.
Sixty hours' restriction, advantageous and out-turn not affected, *Government*, I, p. 16 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Sixty-hour week, *Janaki*, I, p. 307 ; *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1264, 1265.
no Sunday work, *Holden*, II, 3524–8 ; *Winter*, II, 3598
Tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 82 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Tanneries and carpet factories, inquiry advocated before alteration made, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 208, (*Chrestien*, 3121–3.)
Ten hours daily limit, advantageous and out-turn not affected, *Government*, I, p. 16 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 63.
Ten hours' day and 54 hours' week :
Advocated, *Cartlidge*, II, 2907–16.
Wages should not be same unless production kept up, and question *Cartlidge*, II, 2909–35.
Tramways, Madras, *Voegeli-Arya*, II, 1435–42, *K. Mudaliar*, II, 1440–1.
Twelve hours' day for jetty clerks and other menials, Madras Port and Harbour, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 126.
Twelve to 14 hours' day, mundi workers, *Isaac*, I, pp. 338, 339.
Vizagapatam harbour works, *Ash*, I, pp. 84, 85 ; *workers*, 517a, 517c, 517f.
Women : *Winter*, II, 3593.
Eight-hour day and 48-hour week :
Unobjectionable, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110, (*C. G. Menon*), II, 1440–3, and no Work before 7 hours after sunrise, proposal, *Government*, I, p. 17 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, II, p. 63–4.
Kaleeswar Mills, Coimbatore, *Holden*, II, 3522.
Vizagapatam harbour works, *Ash* II, 338.
Working periods, women, young adults and children, *Government*, I, p. 17 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 64.

Hours, plantations :
Peddison, I, p. 6 ; *Government*, I, p. 16 ; *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, pp. 158–9, (*Pinches, Barber*), II, 2282–7 ; *N.S.R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 313 ; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 345 ; *Chinmayya*, I, p. 350 ; *Subbayya*, I, p. 353 ; *workers*, II, 3545, 3551, 3554, 3644, 4022, 4029, 4957, 5011 ; *Porter*, II 3383–4 ; *Hawke*, II, 3459 ; *Jones*, II, 3902–11 ; *Foote*, II, 4334.
Days worked per week : *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 159, (*Pinches*), II, 2282 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 313 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 350 ; *Subbayya*, I, p. 353 ; *workers* II, 3544, 3559, 4151 4015, 4629 ; *Hawke*, II, 3451 ; *Jones*, II, 3970–5 *Foote*, II, 4329 ; *Strutt*, II, 4800.
Freedom to workers, *Sampson*, II, 3821–4.
certain Inducement : *mistri* to get men out, *Sampson*, II, 3825–9.
Eight-hour day, non-provision advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254.
Eight-hours' day and 48-hours' week advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110 (*C. G. Menon*), II, 1404–7.
Exemptions under Factories Act should not be allowed, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 313.
Factories, 60 hours' restriction, and unpopularity of, with workers, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 159, (*Pinches*), II, 2230–1.
Holidays, festivals and feasts, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342.
Intervals : *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 345 ; II, 4854 ; *Porter*, II, 3383 ; *Hawke*, II, 3458 ; *Foote Erskine*, II, 4334 ; *worker*, II, 5011.
Compulsory, advocated, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 350
half-an-hour meals advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254.
Legislation, no objection to, if beneficial to employer and employee *A. B. Chengappa*, II 4828.
None, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254.
Meal opportunity for, *Jones*, II, 3904–5.
Nine-hours' day and 54-hours' week advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 313.

Plantations :—*continued.*
gulations :
no Objection to, *Subbayya*, II, 4874–5.
no Objection to, with Government assistance in supplying labour, *A. B. Chengappa*, II, 4825.
no Rest, *worker*, II, 4138.
Rest day of, *Government*, I, p. 16.
Rest period, compulsory, advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 313.
Sixty-hour week, exemption seldom used, *Cartledge*, II, 2893–4.
Sunday work :
Cash payment for, *worker*, II. 3345 ; *mistri*, II, 3352 ; *Sampson*, II, 3818 ; *Jones*, II, 3970 ; *Hawke*, II, 3509 ; *Foote*, II, 4329.
Factory workers, every second Sunday, *Porter*, II, 3377.
Force available for, *Sampson*, II, 3820 ; *Foote*, II, 4329–30.
Inducement to, by *maistries*, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 313.
no Inducement to *maistries* to use compulsion, *Sampson*, II, 3817–9.
None, *mistri*, II, 3670.
Voluntary, *Pinches*, II, 2269–73 ; *worker*, II, 3345 ; *mistri*, II, 3352 ; *Porter, Elkington*, II, 3378–9 ; *Hawke*, II, 3509 ; *Jones*, II, 3970.
Tasks, prescribing of tables advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 313.

Housing, general and miscellaneous :
Accommodation, nature of, *Government*, I, p. 10.
Acquisition of land for, Government position *re*, *Leach*, II, 2653, 2660 ; *Gray*, 2653.
Agricultural workers, *Paddison*, I, pp. 4–5.
Depressed Classes, work of Labour Department *re*, *Leach*, II, 2652–3 ; *Gray*, II, 2653, 3065–8.
Financing by governments, proposal, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 114.
Garden villages advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 284.
General conditions, *Ranga*, I, p. 328.
Government Press, non-provision, *Basudev*, I, p. 290.
Government, provision by :
Extent of, *Government*, I, p. 10 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 136, (*Hargreaves*), II, 1889 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 206.
for Labourers whose houses burnt down, Madras City, *Gray*, II, 2654.
Mettur Project colony, particulars *re*, and satisfactory results, *Government*, I, p. 10 ; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 69 ; II, 2781–7.
Government no statutory authority *re*, *Ubhaya*, II, 2762–3.
Improvement, *Ranga*, I, p. 328.
Land, acquisition of, for housing of the depressed classes, *Gray*, II, 3065–8.
Legislation, nature of, *Government*, I, p. 10–1.
Madras city :
Cheap sanitary houses for work people, need for, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 102, (*Krishnaswamy*), II, 1261.
Cheries :
Conditions, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 168, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2450.
Difficulty of dealing with, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2463–8.
Particulars of tenements, *Government*, I, p. 11.
Conditions, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107, (*Voegeli-Arya*), II, 1325–6 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 168–9 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, pp. 283–4 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 290 ; *Ranga*, I, pp. 324–5 ; *Wood*, II, 3094–7.
by Corporation, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 167 ; *Shiva Rao*, II, 2576–8.
Factories, moving of, outside city advocated, *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1261–2.
Lack of accommodation for casual coolie labourers from the mofussil and Corporation should deal with, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109, (*C. G. Menon*), II, 1373–80, 1399–403.
Overcrowding, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 165, 167.
Port and harbour workers, *Armstrong*, I, p. 275 ; *Kotiswaran*, II, pp. 1752–3.
Private owners, failure to realise responsibility, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 168, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2164–5.
Profiteering by landlords, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 206.
Purchase of military land by Binny and Co., *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 168, 169 ; (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2471–2.

Housing, general and miscellaneous :—*continued.*
Madras City :—*continued.*
Scheme, need for, and Government assistance of Municipality adv *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 167, 168, 169, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2455-62.
Slum clearance advocated, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2624.
State housing schemes in suburbs, proposal, *Madras Labour Union*, I,
Town planning scheme, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2469-70.
Mines, *Government*, I, pp. 31, 32 ; *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261.
Municipal schemes, dealt with by Local Self Government Department, II, 2652.
Municipal surveys, *Government*, I, p. 11.
Municipalities, extent of attention paid by, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 10
Oil workers, recommendations, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 127.
Overcrowding due to sub-letting and accommodation of relatives, *Emp Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 206.
"Paracheries," *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 136.
Printing trade operatives, *Green*, I, p. 264
Railway workers, *Government*, I, p. 19.
Rural areas, conditions, *Ranga*, I, p. 325.
Statutory obligation to be shared between employer, local body and Gover proposal, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 72, II, 2789-94.
Town planning with view to industrialisation of areas, question of, *Gre* 3004-8.
Vizagapatam harbour works, *Ash*, I, pp. 83, 84, 85, II, 532-9, 583-4, 603-

Housing, industrial workers :
Accommodation, nature of, *Government*, I, p. 11 ; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 69 ; *S. R Naidu* I, p. 91 ; *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132 ; *S. Pillai*, II, 1783-4 ; *Buckingham Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213.
Acquisition of land for :
Difficulty, *Employers' Federation of S.I.*, I, p. 206, (*Wood*) II, 3091-2.
Facilities, *Ubhaya*, II, 2787.
Advocated, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 331.
no Facilities, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 136 ; *Buckingh and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213 ; *Janaki*, I, p. 306.
Calicut, conditions, *Janaki*, I, pp. 306-7.
Building by employees, extent, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 69 ; *Buckingham and Carna Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213.
Coimbatore, unsatisfactory conditions, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 24 (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4506.
Conditions, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 103.
Adverse influence on morals and need for prescribing minimum standar *Ubhaya*, I, p. 69.
Co-operative building societies, *see that title.*
Co-operative housing with contribution by employers and Government an workers advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241, (*N. S. R. Ayyang* II, 4480-2.
Cordite factory, Aruvankadu, conditions and proposals, *Powell*, I, p. 257.
by Corporation preferable to provision by employers, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2473-4.
Employers' villages, conditions in, and improvement in moral life as resul *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213.
Eviction :
Causes of, *Binny and Co*, I, p. 136 ; *Janaki*, I, p. 306.
Notice periods, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213.
in Strike, and prohibition advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 114.
Tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132 ; *S. Pillai*, II, 1785.
Government responsibility primarily, but duty on employers if industries prosperous, *C. G. Menon*, II, 1389-98.
Government subsidy, need for, and provision advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 169, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2449-62.
Madura Mill, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89, (*Rodrigues*), II, 678.
Match factory workers, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 131.
National scheme with contributions from Provincial Government, municipalities and employers advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 193.
Owning of houses by workers :
Desirability, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 168.
Popularity, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2578.

XLVIII Industrial Labour Legislation 959

I Disputes :—*continued.*
kes :—*continued.*
Malabar tea estate, settlement by Sub-Inspector of Police, I, p. 55 ; *Gray*, II, 2839-40.
Massey and Co., I, p. 52.
previous Notice should be given, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1685.
Oil workers, *Gray*, I, p. 50 ; *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, pp. 124-5, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1673-5.
Papanasam, *S. R. V. Naidu*, II, 799-802, 819-24 ; *Lench*, II, 2673-9 ; *Gray*, II, 2685-7, 2829-38, 2967-71, 2981-3, 3000-3.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 269.
Proceedings and prosecutions, *Gray*, II, 2918-20.
Public Works Department, *Gray*, I, p. 43 ; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, pp. 331, 334.
Rampet, *Gray*, I, p. 48 ; *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 202 ; II, 2493 ; *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 271.
Settlement methods, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 66 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222 ; *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 271 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 281.
Tannery workers, *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 271 ; *S. Pillai*, II, 1804-6.
Tramway men, 1919, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 181-2.
Tuticorin, not for over twenty years, *Rodrigues*, II, 747-8.
Western India Match Factory, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 130 ; II, 1758.
Trade Disputes Act, *see that title.*

strial efficiency of workers :
Climatic conditions and, *McCarrison*, II, 3307-9.
Comparison with foreign workers, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 65 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 149-50 ; *Employers' Federation of S.I.*, I, p. 210 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, pp. 220-1 ; *Messrs. Stanes and Co.*, I, p. 238, (*Cheshire*), II, 3633 ; *Green*, I, p. 268 ; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333.
Comparison with other districts, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280.
Dietary, effect on, I, pp. 237-8.
Effect of yearly migration to villages for festivities *Madras United Spi Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 281.
Factors contributing to, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 150-1.
Improvement : *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 143, 149 ; *Buckingham and Carna Employees' Union*, I, p. 220 ; *Stanes and Co.*, I, p. 238 ; *Menon* I, p.
Anticipated with improved conditions, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p.
not Great, *Government*, I, p. 19.
Improvement in working conditions necessary, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 221.
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, I, p
Means of, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 120 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Emplo Union*, I, p. 221.
Means for, and connection with general health, *Shiva Rao*, I, pp. 1 199-1.
Measures taken for, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills C* p. 281.
Scope for, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3225.
Plantations, decrease, *A. B. Chergappa*, I, p. 345.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, pp. 268-9.
Unskilled, no marked increase, but greater knowledge of machinery engineering among skilled, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 210.

dustrial Hygiene, Bureau of, attached to office of Director of Public advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, pp. 71-2, 73.

dustrial legislation :
Government attitude, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222.
Government attitude, and proposals for expediting, *Shiva Rao*, I, pp. 196-7 ; II, 2494-504.
Ignorance of illiterate workers re, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 121 ; II, 1508-10.
information to workers, proposed means of, *N. S. R. Ayyanga* II, 1218, *Mukhtar*, II, 1508-9.

Industrial relations :
see also Relations with rank and file *under* **Staff Organization.**
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, I, p. 222.
Combination of employers against workers, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 129.
Improvement, *means of, Madras United Spinning and Weaving* I p. 281.
and Need for improvement, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 66.
Promotion of, proposals for, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, pp. *M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1665–81.
Representations from employees to Chairman, Madras Port Trust, I, p. 278.
Staff committees, undesirable if trade union already registered unless co of representatives of union and employers, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, I, p. 84.

Industries, general conditions and factors, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108.

Influenza, *see under* **Diseases.**

Inspection of factories, *see under* **Factories.**

Inspection of mines, *Government*, I, p. 33 ; *Woodhouse*, I, p. 262.

Inspection of plantations :
under Coorg Labour Act, *K. Chengappa, Thornton* II, 5089, 5143-8.
by Factory inspector, *Sampson*, II, 3811.
more Frequent and extensive, advocated, *Suryana* ...a, I, p. 321.
by Government health officer, none, *Sampson*, II, ... 3841–2.
Government inspector :
Doubt as to value of, *Priestly*, II, 5174.
no Objection to, if officers of good standing, *A. B. Chengappa*, II, 46
Health Department Officer, no objection to ... to inspection by co *Jones*, II 4037–42.
...te Inspector for plantations ... *...yanarayana*, I, p. 321.
...naging ... England only, *Sproll*, II, 4661–2.
dical and Factory officers, U.P.A.S.I., I, p. 160.
...tion to, Subbayya, II, 4874.
...cers of Health and Factories' Department advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I,
Repeal of Coorg Labour Act, no arrangement made, *Priestly*, II, 50
...cial Health Officer, *Employers' Fed. of S.I.*, I, p. 206.

...gence :
Advisory Boards, proposal should be considered, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 198.
Cost of living inquiries and results, *Ranga*, I, pp. 327–8.
Economic inquiries :
Checking of students' statistics by responsible officers necessary, *Mu* II, 1475.
Co-operation of work of different agencies :
Desirable, *Thomas*, II, 1084.
... would be Welcomed, *Arasu*, II, 1139.
Financial difficulty, *P. J. Thomas*, II, 1077–8.
Punjab :
Official attitude towards, *Mukhtar*, II, 1464–6, 1478–80.
Scope of, *Mukhtar*, II, 1463.
by Universities, desirability of, *Mukhtar*, II, 1468–72.
Workers' attitude towards, *Mukhtar*, II, 1473–4.
Economic Enquiry Boards, proposal, *Ranga*, I, p. 328.
Labour Gazette advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Un* I, p. 222.
Proposal, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108.
Special investigations, nature of, *Government*, I, p. 25.
Statistical Bureaus, establishment, proposal and functions, *Shiva Rao*, I,
Statistics :
Absence of, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Accuracy, degree of, *Government*, I, p. 25 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 67.

Intelligence :—*continued.*
Statistics :—*continued.*
Collection :
by Factory inspectors desirable, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 67.
by Labour Commissioner, proposal, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Method, *Government*, I, pp. 24–5 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 67.
Trained social workers proposed for, *Ranga*, I, p. 327.
Nature of, *Government*, I, pp. 24–5 ; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111.
Wage census and cost of living inquiries, need for, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 121.
Wages, information supplied by managers to Government, and doubt as to ... curacy, *Ranga*, I, p. 327.

...national Labour Conventions :
...on-Applicability of all, to Indian conditions, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, pp. 108, ...9, (*Menon*), II, 1411, 1431.
...iculty of applying, in India, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 133.
...alue of, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 318.

...tional Labour Organization, value of, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 67.

..., George S., B.A., L.T., English Assistant, Voorhees College, Vellore, and ...tary and Treasurer, Adult and Mass Education Society, Vellore : I, pp. 337–9.
Bidi factories, conditions in, and proposals for improvement, I, pp. 338–9.
Education, I, pp. 338, 339.
...Mundi shops, conditions in, and proposals for improvement, I, pp. 338–9.

..., F. E., U.P.A.S.I. — **BARBER, Sir Fairless,** I, pp. 154–64 ; II, 2149–2437.

...mies, system of ...mpulsory work for, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 346 ; *A. B. ...engappa*, II, 4812–5, 4845.

...AKI, Miss Muliyil, representing the Women's Educational League, Calicut : pp. 306–7.
Apprenticeship, I, p. 307.
Diseases, I, p. 307.
Factory inspection, I, p. 307.
Health, I, p. 307.
Hours, I, p. 307.
Housing, I, pp. 306–7.
Pension or sick funds, I, p. 307.
Recruitment, I, p. 306.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, p. 307.
Welfare, I, p. 307.

JAORI, woman worker, Kasbur Coffee Estate, II, 5014–9.

BAKANTI, woman worker, Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor, II, 3347.

...pore Agency :
Recruitment for Assam from, *Staecker*, I, pp. 273–4.
Shortage of cultivators, *Bracken*, II, 389, 436–55, 514.

Jobbers :
Recruitment through, *see under* **Recruitment.**
Supervision of work by, system, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279.

...OHNSON, E., Anamalai Planters' Association, *see* **JONES, J. H. Ireland,** II, 3869–4127.

...OHNSON, E., Group Manager, Mudis Group of Estates, *see* **SCHWINDE, F. L. ;** ...nd **JOHNSON, E.,** II, 4167–4214.

JONES, J. H. Ireland ; MARTIN, W. H. ; SAMPSON, J. E. ; JOHNSON, E. ; MILLS, A. W. F. ; MEASHAM, Dr. J. E. ; *and* **READE, G. E.,** representative of the Anamalai Planters' Association : II, 3869–4127.

Anamalai Planters' Association, II, 3869–76, 3878, 3880-4.
Ayyangar, N. S. Ramaswami, proposed holding of meeting by, and prohibition, II, 4119-24.
Children, *employment of*, II, 3897-901.
Creches, II, 4105–8.
Drink, II, 4049–54.
Education, II, 4015–28.
Health :
Births, II, 4034.
Dietary, II, 4046-8.
Maternity benefit, II, 4029-36.
Medical facilities, II, 3891-3, 4078-96.
Medical inspection of lines, II, 4097–100.
Mid-wives or *dais*, II, 4101-4.
Women health visitors, II, 4099-100.
Hours, II, 3902–11, 3970-5.
Housing, II, 4058–67.
Inspection of plantations, II, 4037-42.
anti-Malarial work, II, 4109-12.
Public Health Officer, II, 4110–2.
Recruiting, II, 3884, 3918-25, 3928-47, 3977-8, 3981, 3991-4001, 4117-8
Standard of living, II, 4002-5.
Trade Unions, II, 4125-7.
Wages, II, 3885-96, 3912-7, 3956–62, 3967-9, 3979-80, 3982-90, 4052-7, 4113-6.
Water supplies, II, 4068-77.
Welfare, II, 3908, 4043-3

Jumma coolies, *see famines.*

KAKI GURRAPPA, worker, Vizagapatam Harbour works, etc., 5174.

Kala azar, *see under* Diseases.

Kaleeswar Mills, Coimbatore, conditions in *Holden*, II, 3516-78.

KALIAMMAL, woman worker, Madura Mills, II, 637–41.

Kallars reclamation, staff for, *Gray*, II, 2764, 2766.

KANDALLAMMAL, woman worker, Madura Mills, II, 637–41.

Kannur Coffee Estate, conditions on, *workers*, II, 5008-19 ; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5020–8.

Kerosene oil industry, Madras, employees, statistics, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 125, (T. M. L. *Madarian*), II, 1538-9.

Khambari system, of labour, *see* Bonded Labour.

Kodagu Sabha, *v. B. Chengappa*, II, 4798.

Koraput, recruitment for Assam from, *Driver*, II, 288-90.

KOTISWARAN, M. S., B.A., L.T., *representative of the Madras Port Trust and Harbour Workers' Union, Messrs. Richardson, Cruddas and Company's Workers' Union and the Western India Match Factory Workers' Union :* I, pp. 128-31, II, 1727-71.

Binny and Co., workshop department grievances and claims, I, p. 130.
Confirmation, I, p. 129 ; II, 1748, 1768–9.
Dismissals, I, pp. 128, 129
Employers, opportunity of making representations to, II, 1755, 1758–9
Gratuities, I, p. 128
Health and medical facilities, I, pp. 128, 131.
Hours, I, pp. 128, 129, 130 ; II, 1730, 1749-50, 1756, 1770-4
Housing, I, p. 131 ; II, 1752-3.

KOTISWARAN, M. S., B.A., L.T., *representative of the Madras Port trust and Harbour Workers' Union, Messrs. Richardson, Cruddas and Company's Workers' Union and the Western India Match Factory Workers' Union :* I, pp. 128-31, II, 1727-74—*continued.*

Madras Port Trust and Harbour *workers, grievances and claims*, I, pp. 128–9.
Madras Port and Harbour Trust Workers' *Union*, II, *1762-7, 1754.*
Leave, I, pp. 128, 130, 131.
Pensions, I, p. 128.
Provident Fund, I, pp. 129, 130, 131 ; II, 1774.
Recruitment, I, pp. 128, 129 ; II, 1731.
Richardson, Cruddas and Co., workers' grievances *and claims*, I, pp. 129–30.
Richardson, Cruddas and Co. Workers' *Union*, II, 1732, 1754.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, pp. 128, 129, 130, 131.
Strike, I, p. 130 ; II, 1758.
Tiffin sheds, I, pp. 128, 130, 131 ; II, 1762.
Trade Unions, *Police attitude*, I, p. 130 ; II, 1758.
Wages, I, p. 128, 129, 130, 131 ; II, 1741–4, 1756, 1759.
Western Indian Match factory *workers*, grievances and claims, I, pp. 130–1.
Western India Match Factory Workers' *Union*, II, 1732, 1754.
Women, employment of, I, p. 131 ; II, 1738–40, 1746–7, 1751.
Workmen's compensation, I, pp. 128–9 ; II, 1757.

KRISHNASWAMY, P. A., *and* **RAMASESHAN, Rev. Paul,** representing the Madras Representative Christian *Council : I*, pp. 101–4, *II*, 1232–1289.

Bidi factories, I, pp. 101–2 ; II, 1238–51.
Cost of living, I, p. 104.
Drinking, I, p. 104.
Factories Act, II, 1258–61.
Hours, I, p. 102 ; II, 1238, 1264–6.
Housing, I, p. 102 ; II, 1261–2.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 103, 104.
Labour Department, I, p. 103 ; II, 1262.
Madras city, population, etc., I, pp. 102–3.
Maternity benefit, II, 1263.
Migration of labour, I, p. 103.
National Christian Council and provisional *Councils, investigations* by, ..., 1233–6, 1275.
Public Employment Agency, I, p. 103 ; II, 1279–82.
Sickness insurance, II, 1270–4.
Standard of living, I, p. 104.
Uniform, I, p. 102 ; II, 1261.
Wages, minimum, I, I, p. 102 ; II, 1261, 1284–9.
Welfare, I, p. 102 ; II, 1261, 1267–9, 1276–8.
Workshop Act, I, p. 101 ; II, 1258.

bour :

Compulsory system owing to advances, *Paddison*, I, p. 4 ; *Anderson*, I, pp. 271, 272.
Goti system : *Bracken*, I, p. 82, II, 402–10, 423–30, 456–..., 32–3, 504, 516 ; *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, II, 163–6, 169, 185–6, 22...–30.
Attitude of civil courts, *Bracken*, II, 456–62.
Case for recovery of debt in court, no known, *Bracken*, II, 506.
Evils of, *Bracken*, I, p. 82.
Recruitment for Assam tending to abolish, *Bracken*, I, p. 82.
Khambari system, *Steele*, I, p. 78 ; II, 303–6 ; *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, II, 167, 169 ; *Bracken*, II, 411, 429, 482–3.
Mortgaging of, carpet factories. *Mukhtar*, I, p. 120, II, 1507.
Pledging of service and that of children in return for loans, *Azariah*, I, p. 124.
Servitude, work for head men of villages in nature of, *Austin*, II, 10.
System of day's labour in year for nothing, *Thomas*, II, 4559.
Vetti system, *Steele*, I, p. 78, II, 322–4 ; *Austin*, II, 8, 10, 70–86, 150–1 ; *Vimrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, II, 160–2, 169 ; *Bracken*, II, 391–401, 447, 464–80, 505, 507.

Labour Commissioner :

Advisory Board, *Leach*, II, 2663 ; *Gray*, II, 2895.
Attendance at trade union meetings and meetings of employers, *Gray*, II, 2815–28.

Labour Commissioner :—*continued.*
Attitude of, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 177.
Attitude of Government, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 177, (*Shiva Rao*, II, 2610–2.
Collection of statistics by, proposal, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
no Direct Relations with trade unions, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 197.
Functions of, *Government*, I, p. 23 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 319 ; *Gray*, II, 2764.
Indian as, advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 177, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2608–9.
Intervention in industrial disputes :
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, I, p. 222 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 281.
Initiation of, *Leach*, II, 2680–4 ; *Gray*, II, 2833.
Papanasam strike, refusal of application, *Leach*, II, 2673–9 ; *Gray*, II 2685–7, 2829–38, 2967–71, 2981–3, 3000–3.
Position *re*, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 177, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2603–2607 ; *Gray*, II, 2978–85.
Railway disputes, position *re*, *Gray*, II, 3055–8.
Stage of, *Gray*, 2997–3000.
Value of work, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 66.
Legal status in industrial disputes advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Means of obtaining information of conditions in districts, *Gray*, II, 2820–2.
Position of, criticism, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Separation of function of Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation from, proposal, *N. K. S. Ayyangar*, II, 1179, 1220.
Special officer, preferably Indian, advocated as, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Staff, *Gray*, II, 2765–6.
Unable to devote sufficient time to labour questions, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222.
Work should be confined to labour questions, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 319.
Work *re* depressed classes, *Gray*, II, 2764, 2765, 2772–4.

ur Department :
under Control of Minister advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Coorg, need for, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 345.
Development of work, proposals for, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 103, (*Krishnaswamy*), II, 1262.
Functions advocated, etc., *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 177–8, (*Shiva Rao*) II, 2606
Information bureau under special officer advocated, *Madras Representat. Christian Council*, I, p. 103 ; *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1262.
no Value to labour in planting areas, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 160.

Labour legislation, *see* **Industrial legislation.**

Labour, Ministry of, establishment, advocated in Central Government and prov *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 198, II, 2629–33.

Labour questions :
Administration, *Government*, I, p. 23, (*Leach*), II, 2658–9.
Government attitude, *Suryanarayana*, I, pp. 318–9.
Neglect of, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 239 ; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 43

Labouring classes, North Coorg, condition, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.

Land :
for Housing, *see under* **Housing.**
Insufficiency of, to support number of people dependant on, and proposed means of remedying, *Ubhaya*, II, 2934–6.
Number of persons supported by 1,000 acres of arable land in certain districts, *Paul*, I, p. 299.
Ownership of holdings by plantation labourers, scheme for, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 252.
Percentage of occupied to available arable land in certain districts, *Paul*, I, pp. 299–300.
Pressure of population on, Malabar, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 308.

Land :—*continued.*
Provision for plantation labourers, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342 ; *Barber*, II, 2223–4, 4307 ; *Sampson*, II, 3851–4 ; *Jones*, II, 4064–7 ; *A. B. Chengappa*, II, 4806–7, 4855.
Advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, Ik p. 254.
None, *Porter*, II, 3407.
Tenure, Malabar, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 308.
Values, increase in, in certain districts, 1910 to 1920, *Paul*, I, p. 299.

Landholders' Association, Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, II, 4798–9.

LAZARUS, Mistri, Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor, II, 3348–52.

LEACH, A. G., Secretary, Public Works and Labour Department : II, 2650–2728.
Agricultural labour, close inter-relation with industrial labour, I, pp. 3; II, 2691–8.
Co-operative Societies, II, 2660–2.
Criminal Procedure Code, Section 1444, II, 2665–72.
Housing, II, 2652–3, 2660–1.
Industrial disputes, II, 2680–4. 2699–704, 2710–8.
Labour Commissioner, Advisory Board, II, 2663.
Labour legislation, II, 2727–8.
Labour questions, administration, I, p. 23 ; II, 2658–9.
Papanasam dispute, II, 2673–9.
Royal Commission on Labour, circulation of questionnaire, II, 2705–8.

Leave and holidays, industrial workers :
Cordite Factory, Aruvankadu, recommendation, *Powell*, I, p. 259.
Government Press, *Green*, I, p. 266 ; *Basudev*, I, pp. 289, 292.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, pp. 276, 277.
Mica mines, Nellore, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 262.
with Pay, none, Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333.
without Pay, Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329, 332.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, pp. 266, 268.
Proposals, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89 ; *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 106, (*Voegeli-Arya*) II, 1316–8 ; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119 ; *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 126, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*) II, 1641–3, 1646–8 ; *Kotiswaran*, I, pp. 130, 131, II, 1758 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 173 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*) II, 4459–64 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 283 ; *Ranga*, I, pp. 326, 328.
non-Provision of, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 316.
Rules should be framed and enforced, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 316.
System advocated, Madras Port Trust and harbour workers, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128.
System, Choolai Mills, friction *re*, and over interpretation of draft agreement, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 167.
Systems, *Government*, I, p. 19 ; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111 ; *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 134, 145, 149, (*Bentley*) II, 1954 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172–3 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, pp. 208, 209 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, pp. 218, 220 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills, Co.*, I, p. 280 ; *Janaki*, I, p. 317 ; *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 334.
Kerosene oil workers, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1641–3, 1684, 1691–3.
Tramways, Madras, *Voegeli-Arya, K. Mudaliar*, II, 1346–7.
Vizagapatam harbour works, *Ash*, I, pp. 83, 86, II, 630–3, 636 ; *Welchman*, II, 630.
Work on the following Sunday instead, *Naidu*, I, p. 91.

Leave and holidays, plantations :
Legislation advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254.
with Pay, no system except one festival in year, *Sprott*, II, 4697.
no Provision for *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 254 ; *Thimmaya* I, p. 350 ; *worker*, II, 4618.
not Wanted by workers, *Sprott*, II 4697.

Legislatures, labour representation on :
Industrial labour, non-representation, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 177 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 246.
Increase advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 287.
Labourers, advocated, *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 335.
Ordnance Factories, representation, proposal, *Powell*, I, p. 260.
Present position and inadequacy of, *Shiva Rao*, I, pp. 195–6 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 318.
Reservation of seats advocated, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 178 ; *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 198.
Trade unions should have right to elect own representatives, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 178.

Leprosy, *see under* **Diseases.**

Local bodies, representation of labour on :
Increase advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 287.
Reservation of seats for labour advocated, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 178.

Lock-outs, *see under* **Industrial disputes.**

LOUISA, woman worker, Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor, II, 3342–6.

Lower Paralai Estate, conditions on, *Barker, Blackham, Foote*, II, 4215–4352.

[illegible]YER, F. G., Messrs. Addison and Co., Ltd., *see* **BROWNING, W. M.,** etc., representatives of the Employers' Federation of Southern India, II, 3088–3222.

[illegible]CHMARI, woman worker, Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mill, II, 3581–3.

MACARRISON, Colonel R., C.I.E., K.H.P., M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.C.P., I.M.S., Director, Nutritional Research, Pasteur Institute, Coonoor : I, pp. 225–238 ; II, 3305–41.
Nutritional research, particulars of, and result, I, pp. 225–38 ; II, 3305–41.

MADAPA, A. B., owner, Heroor Coffee Plantations : II, 4967–5007.
Children and women, employment, II, 4970–1.
Coorg Labour Act, II, 4982.
Education, II, 4974–5, 4995–9.
Maternity benefits, II, 4976–9.
Paddy fields, II, 5002–5.
Recruitment, II, 4967–8, 4978, 4981, 4972, 4986–8.
Wages, II, 4991, 4992, 5000–1, 5006, 5007.

MADRAS ALUMINIUM LABOUR UNION :
History of, and membership, etc., *Government*, I, p. 20 ; *Gray*, I, pp. 37, 48 ; *Union*, I, pp. 286–7.
Memorandum : I, p. 283–7
Absenteeism, I, p. 286.
Co-operative societies, I, p. 284.
Education, I, p. 285.
Employers' attitude, I, p. 287.
Fair Wages Clause, I, p. 286.
Health and medical facilities, I, pp. 284–5.
Holidays, I, p. 283.
Hours, I, pp. 285–6.
Housing, I, pp. 283–4.
Indebtedness, I, p. 286.
Labour, representation, I, p. 287.
Madras Aluminium Labour Union, I, pp. 286–7.
Recruitment, I, p. 283.
Sanitary arrangements, I, p. 285.
Sickness insurance, I, p. 285.
Unemployment, I, p. 283.
Victimisation of members and discouragement of membership by employers, I, p. 287.
Wages, I, p. 286.
Welfare, I, p. 285.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 285.

Madras City :
Factories and workshops, statistics, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 103.
Housing, *see that title.*
Population, number and numbers in different occupations, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, pp. 102, 103.

Madras Corporation Scavengers' Union, history of, *Gray*, I, p. 51.

Madras Corporation Workshop, labour conditions, *Labour Union*, I, pp. 334–5.

MADRAS CORPORATION WORKSHOP LABOUR UNION :
History of, *Gray*, I, pp. 51–2.
Memorandum : I, pp. 334–5.
Education, I, p. 335.
Franchise, I, p. 335.
Gratuity, I, p. 335.
Hours, I, p. 334.
Housing, I, p. 335.
Leave, I, p. 334.
Legislative bodies, I, p. 335.
Provident Fund, I, p. 335.
Recruitment, I, p. 334.
Wages, I, p. 334.
Welfare, I, 335.

MADRAS ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS AND SUPPLY CORPORATION EMPLOYEES' UNION :
Creed of, I, p. 105.
History, membership, etc., *Government*, I, p. 20 ; *Gray*, I, pp. 48–50 ; *Union*, I, p. 104, (*Voegeli-Arya*), II, 1291–303, 1306–9, 1356–65 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 181.
Memorandum, I, p. 104–7.
Representatives, *see* **Surendranath Voegeli-Arya, S. P. Y. ; Mudaliar, Koppaswamy ;** and **Mudaliar, Kanagasabai,** I, pp. 104–7 ; II, 1290–1365.

Madras Government Press Employees' Association :
Government attitude, *Basudev*, I, p. 293 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 317.
History and membership, *Government*, I, p. 20 ; *Gray*, I, pp. 37, 43 ; I, pp. 293–4.

Madras Government Press Labour Union :
Attitude of staff to, *Basudev*, I, p. 290.
History of, *Basudev*, I, pp. 291.

Madras Harbour and Port Trust Workmen's Union, history of, *Gray*, I, p. 53.

MADRAS, KEROSENE OIL WORKERS' UNION :
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **MUDALIAR, V. M. Ramaswamy ; MUDALIAR, T. M. Parthasmatty ; PILLAI, T. Muthuswamy,** and **CHETTY, R. Kelari Muthu :** I, pp. 124–8 ; II, 1592–1726.
History and membership etc., *Gray*, I, pp. 50–1 ; I, pp. 124–5, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1592–5, 1597–8, 1612–3, 1668–70, 1694–8, 1701–2.
Meetings, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1724–6.
Memorandum, I, p. 124.
Objects, I, p. 125.

MADRAS LABOUR UNION :
Activities of, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 151–2 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 174.
Amalgamation with Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, attempt, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 175, 186, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2580.
Attitude of Messrs. Binny and Co., *Shiva Rao*, II, 2579.
Charges by, of assault by European assistants on work-people, question of, *Bentley, Hargreaves*, II, 1925–33.
Committee, members, election method, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2545–7.
Difficulties with employers, desire for settlement, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2648–9.
Discouragement of strikes, policy, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2594.

MADRAS LABOUR UNION :—*continued.*
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **SHIVA RAO, B.; NAIDU, Ramanujulu; CHETTY, Selvapathy** : I, pp. 164–87, II, 2438–2649.
History of, and membership, *Government*, I, p. 20; *Gray*, I, pp. 37–*Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 223; *Madras Lal Union*, I, pp. 174–5, 178–81, 183–7.
Membership and number in Buckingham, Carnatic and Choolai mills respectiv *Shiva Rao*, II, 2441–8.
Memorandum, I, p. 164–87.
Objection to, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 151.
Policy of, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2643–6.
Position of witness, *Shiva Rao* II, 2548–9.
Recognition :
Refusal by Binny and Co., *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 175.
Reason, *Hargreaves, Bentley*, II, 1969, 1876–81, 1983–95, 1989–2051–60, 2117–22, 2136–7.
Struggle for, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 185–6.
Relations with, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 281.
Relations with Messrs. Binny and Co., and hostility of, *Madras Labour Un* I, pp. 178–81, 183–7, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2581–8.
Relations with Choolai Mill, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 175.
Status of, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 281.
Victimisation of members, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 184–5, 187.
Workers free to join, *Bentley, Hargreaves*, II, 1956–60.

MADRAS PANEL OF LAWYERS :
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **AYYANGAR, K. V. Sesha,** II, 1166–1231.
Memorandum, I, pp. 97–101.
Origin of, I, p. 97; *N. K. S. Ayyangar*, II, 1166–9.
Workmen's compensation work of, I, pp. 97–8; *N. K. S. Ayyangar*, II, 1166–1228–31; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172, (*Shiva Rao*) II, 2484–6; *V. M. Mudaliar* II, 1705.

Madras Planters Labour Act, *see under* **Recruitment, plantations.**

Madras Port Trust, *see* Armstrong, G. G., I, pp. 274–8.

MADRAS PORT TRUST AND HARBOUR WORKERS UNION :
Claims of, I, pp. 128–9.
Grievances of, I, pp. 128–9.
Membership, etc., *Kotiswaran*, II, 1732–7.
Registration applied for, *Kotiswaran*, II, 1754.
Representative, *see* **KOTISWARAN, M. S., B.A., B.L.**, I, pp. 128–31; II, 1717–

MADRAS PRINTERS' LABOUR UNION :
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **MUDALIAR, R. Subapathi,** I, p. 339.
History of, *Gray*, I, p. 53.

MADRAS REPRESENTATIVE CHIRSTIAN COUNCIL :
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **KRISHNASWAMY, P. A.,** and **RAMASESHAN, Re Paul,** II, 1232–1289.
Statement, I, pp. 101–4.

Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union, history of, and membership, *Government*, I, p. 20; *Gray*, I, pp. 37, 44–7; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 18.

Madras tramways, conditions of work on, *Voegeli Arya, K. Mudaliar*, II, 1316–65.

MADRAS UNITED SPINNING AND WEAVING MILLS CO., LTD. : I, pp. 278–81
Absenteeism, I, p. 281.
Apprenticeship, I, p. 278.
Attendance and time-keeping, I, p. 279.
Gratuity on retirement, I, p. 279.
Health and medical facilities, I, p. 279.
Hours, I, pp. 279–80.

MADRAS UNITED SPINNING AND WEAVING MILLS CO., LTD.,: I, pp. 278–*—continued.*
Indebtedness, I, p. 280.
Industrial disputes, I, p. 281.
Industrial relations, I, p. 281.
Industrial efficiency, I, pp. 280–1.
Leave and holidays, I, p. 280.
Madras Labour Union, I, p. 281.
Recruitment, I, p. 278.
Staff organisation, I, pp. 278–9.
Wages, I, pp. 279, 280, 281.
Welfare, I, p. 279.

Madras University :
Diploma and course in Rural and Social Economics, *P. J. Thomas*, I, p. 94, II, 1007–13, 1053–64, 1068–73.
Economic investigations by, opinion re, *Arasu*, II, 1138, 1151–6.

1929 MADRAS YOUTH LEAGUE :
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **ARASU, V. T.,** II, 1085–1165.
Investigation of conditions in *bidi* factories, I, p. 94; *Arasu*, II, 1085, 1154, 1160–5.
Memorandum, I, pp. 94–7.

Madura Mills, conditions at, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, pp. 88–90; II, 647–763; *Naidu*, I, pp. 90–3; II, 780–942; *workers*, II, 637–646.

Maistries :
Plantations :
Beating of workers, none, *mistri*, II, 4636.
Losses through men running away, *mistri*, II, 4915, 4916.
no Payments to, *worker*, II, 4627.
Recruitment through, *see under* **Recruitment.**
Wages, *see that title.*
Work by, system of, *Sampson*, II, 3700–2, 3751–7.
Textile industry :
Beating by, *Naidu*, p. 93.
Class of, and desirability of educated men as, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2599, 49.
Domestic work [illegible] *Naidu*, I, p. 92; II, 832–3.
Recruitment through, *see* through jobbers or *Maistries under* **Recruitment,** industrial workers.
Spying on workers by, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89; *Naidu*, I, p. 91; II, 907–8.
Supervision by, *workers*, II, 642–3.
Supervision of workers by, and need for restriction of powers, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89.
Treatment good except when production goes down, *women workers*, II, 638–40.
Wages, *see that title.*

MAJEED, Abdul, B.A., General Secretary, 1929 Madras Youth League, Memorandum, I, pp. 94–7.

Malabar, migration of labour from, *Menon*, I, pp. 287–8.

Malaria, *see under* **Diseases.**

Malaya :
Recruitment :
Family life, effect on, *Paul*, I, pp. 305–6.
Origin of labour, *Paddison*, I, p. 6.
Recruiter, qualifications, *Gray*, II, 2904.
Statistics, *Paddison*, I, p. 6; *Appa Avargal*, I, p. 60.
System and possible improvement, *Paul*, I, pp. 304–8.
Wages, *Paul*, I, p. 302.

Managers, industries :
Access of workers to, *Naidu*, II, 884–5.
Difficulty of obtaining, *Naidu*, I, p. 92 ; II, 784, 815–6.
Impossibility, *workers*, II, 642.
Complaints to, facilitates for, *Winter*, II, 3602.
Opportunities to workpeople to make representations, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 120.
Relations of proprietors, *A Pillai*, p. 131.
Selection, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 134.

Managing Staff, *see under* **Staff.**

Maramakkattayam, system of inheritance, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 308.

MARANNEY, worker, Pachamalai Estate, II, 3676–9,

Market outside gate of estate, *Porter*, II, 3432–3.

Markets on gardens, *Pinches*, II, 2242.

MARTIN, W. H., Anamalai Planters' Association, *see* **JONES, J. H. Ireland,** etc., II, 3869–4127

Massey and Co., Workshop Employees' Union, history of, *Gray*, I, p. 52.

MEASHAM, Dr. J. E., Anamalai Planters' Association, *see* **JONES, J. H. Ireland,** etc., II, 3869–4127.

Meenakshi Mill, conditions, *Naidu*, I, pp. 91, 92 ; II, 867–9, 891–902.

MENON, C. Gopal, and **NAIR, P. Raghavan,** representing the Southern India Chamber of Commerce : I, pp. 108–11 ; II, 1366–1453.
Apprenticeship, , p. 109.
Children, employment of, I, p. 111 ; II, 1444–6, 1451–3.
Co-operation, I, p. 108.
Education, I, pp. 108, 109 ; II, 1383.
Health, I, p. 110.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 110.
Sickness insurance, I, p. 110.
Hours, I, p. 110 ; II, 1401–7, 1440–3.
Housing, I, p. 109 ; II, 1373–81, 1389–403.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 108, 111.
Industrial disputes, I, pp. 108, 111 ; II, 1386–7, 1432–5.
Insurance, I, pp. 108, 111.
International Labour Conventions, I, p. 108, 109 ; II, [illegible] 1431.
Leave, I, p. 111.
Prohibition, I, pp. 108, 109.
Provident and Gratuity Funds, I, p. 108 ; II, 1447–50.
Recruitment, I, pp. 108, 109 ; II, 1367.
Safety, I, p. 110.
Southern Indian Chamber of Commerce, II, 1366, 1451–2.
Subordinate staff, training, I, p. 109.
Trade Unions, I, pp. 108 ; II, 1382–5, 1420–30, 1434, 1437–9.
Unemployment, I, pp. 108, 109.
Wages, I, p. 111 ; II, 1412–9, 1436.
Welfare, II, 1383.
Women, employment of, I, p. 110 ; II, 1440–3.
Workmen's compensation, I, p. 110.

MENON, Rao Sahib V. Krishna, B.A., Secretary, Malabar District Co-operative Bank, Ltd., Calicut : I, p. 287–8.
Education, I, p. 288.
Emigration of labour, I, pp. 287–8.
Health, I, p. 288.
Indebtedness, I, p. 288.
Industrial efficiency, I, p. 288.
Sanitary arrangements, I, p. 288.
Trade combinations, I, p. 288.
Unemployment, I, p. 288.
Wages, I, p. 288.
Welfare, I, p. 288.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 288.

[illegible]LLS, A. W. F., Anamalai Planters' Association, *see* **JONES, J. H. Ireland,** etc. II, 3869–4127.

[illegible]ns :
see also subject headings.
Average daily numbers employed, *Government*, I, p. 34.
Employees, number, *Government*, I, p. 30.
Number and nature of, *Government*, I, p. 31.
Rules, suitable, *Government*, I, p. 33.

[illegible]OAN, J. S. H. ; TIPPING, P. J. ; MURLAND, Colonel H. ; and **SPROTT, F. H. ;** representing the Coorg Planters' Association : I, pp. 341–3 ; II, 4736–96.
Bazaars, I, p. 342.
Cattle and land, I, p. 342.
Contract work, II, 4776–7.
Coorg Labour Act, II, 4737.
Coorg Planters' Association, I, p. 341 ; II, 4736, 4738–40.
Cost of living, I, p. 342 ; II, 4753–7.
Diseases :
Hookworm, I, p. 342 ; II, 4782.
Anti-Malarial measures, I, p. 342 ; II, 4781.
Drink, liquor shops, I, p. 342 ; II, 4783, 4794–6.
Health :
Dietary, I, p. 342 ; II, 4757.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 342 ; II, 4742–5, 4751–2, 4767–9.
Maternity cases, II, 4745, 4748–51, 4792–3.
Medical facilities, I, p. 342 ; II, 4746–51, 4774.
Hours, I, p. 342.
Housing, I, p. 342.
Managers, access of labourers to, II, 4766, 4770–1.
Recruiting, I, pp. 341–2, 343 ; II, 4760–4, 4770, 4772, 4778, 4784–91.
Wages, I, pp. 342, 343 ; II, 4741, 4759, 4765–6, 4768–9, 4779, 4790.
Advances system, I, p. 342 ; II, 4770, 4772–3a.

MUDALIAR, Kuppuswami, *see* **SURENDRANATH VOEGELI-ARYA, S. P. Y.,** etc., representing the Madras Electric Tramway and Supply Corporation Employees' Union, I, pp. 104–7 ; II, 1290–1365.

MUDALIAR, Koppaswamy, *see* **SURENDRANATH VOEGELI-ARYA, S. P. Y.,** etc., representing the Madras Electric Tramway and Supply Corporation Employees' Union, I, pp. 104–7 ; II, 1290–1365.

MUDALIAR, R. Subapathi, President, Madras Printers' Labour Union : I, p. 339.
Printing trade, labour conditions, I, p. 339.

MUDALIAR, T. M. Parthasmatty, *see* **MUDALIAR, V. N. Ramaswamy,** etc., representing the Kerosene Oil Workers' Union, I, pp. 124–8 ; II, 1592–1726.

MUDALIAR, V. M. Ramaswamy ; MUDALIAR, T. M. Parthasmatty ; PILLAI, T. Muthuswamy ; and **CHETTY, R. Kotari Muthu ;** representing the Kerosene Oil Workers' Union : I, pp. 124–8 ; II, 1592–1726.
Co-operative societies, II, 1656.
Discipline, I, p. 126 ; II, 1682–3.
Dismissals, I, p. 126 ; II, 1662–9, 1705.
Education, II, 1631, 1723.
Hours, I, pp. 126–7 ; II, 1638–40.
Housing, I, p. 127.
Indebtedness, II, 1656–8.
Industrial relations, I, pp. 125–6 ; II, 1662–81.
Kerosene oil industry, II, 1686–9.
Kerosene Oil Workers' Union, I, p. 124 ; II, 1592–5, 1597–8, 1612–3, 1668–70, 1694–8, 1701–2, 1724–6.
Leave and holidays, I, p. 126 ; II, 1641–3, 1684, 1646–8, 1671–3.
Provident Fund and gratuity, I, p. 127 ; II, 1649–52, 1660, 1690, 1696–700.
Retirement, compulsory, II, 1711–4.
Safety, I, p. 127.
Strikes, I, pp. 124–5 ; II, 1673–5, 1685.
Tiffin shed, II, 1644–5.

MUDALIAR, V. M. Ramaswamy; MUDALIAR, T. M. Parthasmatty; M. Muthuswamy; and **CHETTY, R. Ketati Muthu;** representing the K Oil Workers' Union: I, pp. 124-8; II, 1592 1726—*continued.*
Trade Unions, I, p. 125; II, 1592. 1596-7, 1604-11, 1661-5, 1672, 1676, 1
Wages, I, p. 126; II, 1614-21, 1633-7, 1659, 1706-7, 1715. 1717-21.
Welfare, I, p. 127; II, 1722-3.
Women, employment, II, 1709-10.
Workmen's Compensation, I, p. 127; II, 1624-32, 1703-4.

MUDDATHAPPA, worker, Halleri Coffee Estate, II, 4628-31.

MUKHTAR, Professor Ahmad, M.A., Ph.D.Econ. (London), Annamalai Univ Chidambaram: I, pp. 111-121; II, 1454-1547.
Apprenticeship, I, pp. 113, 116.
Breach of Contract Act, II, 1533-9.
Carpet factories and sport works, I, p. 121.
Children, employment of, I, pp. 119, 121; II, 1507.
Co-operation, I, p. 116.
Economic inquiries, II, 1463-80.
Education, I, p. 116.
Factories Act, I, p. 121.
Health and medical facilities, I, pp. 114. 115, 116; II, 1540-7.
Hours, I, pp. 118-9.
Housing, I, p. 114.
Indebtedness, I, p. 120.
Industrial efficiency, I, p. 120.
Industrial legislation, II, 1598-10.
Industrial relations, I, p. 120.
Intelligence, I, p. 121.
Leave, I, p. 119.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 115; II, 1515-9.
Mortgaging of labour, I, p. 120; II, 1507.
Pooling system in cotton ginning factories, I, pp. 118-9; II, 1505-6
Recruitment, I, pp. 111-3; II, 1485-90. 1493-8.
Safety, I, pp. 6-7.
Sickness insurance, I, p. 115; II, 1499-1504.
Staff, I, p. 113.
Standard of living, II, 1482.
Trade Boards, I, p. 119; II, 1511-4.
Trade unions, I, p. 120.
Unemployment, I, p. 112.
Wages, I, pp. 113, 119.
Welfare, I, p. 116; II, 1529-7.
Women, employment of, I, p. 119.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, pp. 117-8; 1491-2, 1529-32.
Works Committees, I, p. 113.

Mundi shops, conditions in, and proposals for improvement, *Issac*, I, pp. 338-4

MUNIANDI, worker, Madura Mills, II, 642-6.

MURLAND, Colonel H., Coorg Planters' Association, *see* **MORGAN, J. S. H.,** etc., I, pp. 343-3; II, 4736-96.

MUTHAMMAL, woman worker, Madura Mills, II, 637-41.

NAIDU, P. Audiah, late Tahsildar of Parlakumdi, I, pp. 255-6.
Assam, recruitment for, I, pp. 255-6.
Assam Labour Board, I, p. 256.

NAIDU, Ramanujulu, Madras Labour Union, *see* **SHIVA RAO, B.,** etc.; I, p. 164-203, II, 2438-2849.

NAIDU, S. R. Varadarajulu, representing the Papanasam Union:
Evidence of, I, pp. 90-3, II, 784-942.
Appointments, dismissals and promotions, I, p. 90, 92; II, 785-7, 805-11, 838-46.
Children, I, p. 93; II, 788-91.

Naidu, S. R. Varadarajula, representing the Papanasam Union :—*continued.*
Evidence of:—*continued.*
Creche, I, p. 91; II, 878-9.
Dietary, I, p. 93.
Education, I, pp. 91, 93.
Factories Act, I, p. 92.
Hours, I, p. 91; II, 902.
Housing, I, p. 91; II, 865-6, 899-900.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 91, 93.
no Intention of causing strike in Madura, II, 849-50
Maistries, I, pp. 91, 92, 93; II, 907-8, 832-3.
Managers, access of workers, I, p. 92; II, 784, 815-6, 884-5.
Maternity benefit, I, p. 91; II, 873-4.
Meals, accommodation, I, pp. 91, 93; II, 923-9.
Medical facilities, I, pp. 91, 93; II, 817-8, 863-4, 872, 887-98.
Nellikuppam Labour Union, II, 825-32.
Panchayam Union, I, pp. 91-2; II, 764-9, 867-9, 882-3, 886, 903-22.
Provident Fund, I, p. 92
Public employment agency, I, p. 90.
Sanitary arrangements, I, p. 93.
Sick leave, I, p. 91.
Strikes, II, 799-802, 819-24.
Trade Unions, recognition, II, p. 92.
Visits to Madura, II, 849-50, 930-42.
Wages, I, pp. 90-1, 92; II, 240-8, 862, 875-7.
Women, employment of, I, pp. 91, 92-3; II, 880-1.
Workmen's compensation, I, p. 91; II, 852-61.
Prohibition from attending meetings at Madura, *Naidu*, II, 940-2; *Cotbalt*, II, 947-9, 975-1005.

NAIR, P. Raghavan, *see* **MENON, C. Gopal,** representing the Southern India Chamber of Commerce, I, pp. 108-11; II, 1363-1453.

National Christian Council and provincial Councils, investigation of conditions of labour, etc., *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1253-6, 1275.

Nellikuppam Labour Union, membership, etc., and no strike since recognition of, *S. R. V. Naidu*, II, 825-32.

Nilgiris, conditions in, *Woodhouse*, I, pp. 260-2.

Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonor, conditions on, *workers*, II, 3342-59; *Elkington*, *Manager*, II, 3360-44.

NOOR MUHAMMAD, khalasi, working at Vizagapatam Harbour Works, II 517b.

Old Age Pensions, State scheme impracticability at present for workmen, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 207.

Old age and premature retirement:
Pension Funds, *see that title.*
Provident Funds, *see that title.*
Provision for, advocated, and proposals, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, pp. 242, 243, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4429-47; *Powell*, I, p. 258; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 349.
no Provision for, Public Works Department, and proposal for, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 331.

Pachamalai Estate, conditions on, *workers*, II, 3638-79; *Sampson*, II, 3680-3868.

PADDISON, Sir George, K.B.E., C.S.I., I.C.S., Labour and its movement, I, pp. 3-7.

Paddy fields, labour conditions, *Madapa*, II, 5002-5.

PALANI AMMAL, woman worker, Thaymudi Estate, II, 4135-41.

PALANIAPPAN, pruner, Nonesuch Tea Estate, Coonoor, II, 3353-6.

Panchayat system, plantations, *Barber*, II, 4345-6.

Papanasam Mill :
Conditions in, *Naidu*, I, pp. 92–3.
Export of production to Far East, *Naidu*, I, p. 93 ; II, 792.
Strike, *see under* **Industrial disputes.**

Papanasam Union :
Formation of, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, pp. 91 ; II, 784–9.
History of, and results, membership etc., *S. R. V. Naidu*, II, 903–22.
Opposition of manager of Madura Mills and attempts to prevent membership, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, pp. 91–2. II, 886, 907–8.
Propaganda against, by officer of Madura mill, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p 91 ; II, 882–3.
Recognition by employer of Meenakshi mill, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 92 ; II, 867–9.
Representative of, *see* **Naidu, S. R. Varadarajulu,** I, pp. 90–3, II. 764–942.

Pasteur Institute, Coonoor, nutritional work at, *see* **McCARRISON, Colonel R.,** I, pp. 225–38 ; II, 3305–41.

PATTAKARAN, mistri, Thaymudi Estate, II, 4160–5.

PAUL, Rajaish D., M.A., Deputy Collector on Special Duty as Forest Officer, Madras : I, pp. 297–306.
Emigration and recruitment :
Causes of, I, pp. 298–302.
Contact with villages, I, p. 303.
Family life effect on, I, pp. 305–6.
Origin of labour, I, pp. 297, 298.
Statistics, I, pp. 297, 298.
Systems and possible improvement, I, pp. 304–6.
Wages, I, pp. 301–2.

Pension Funds :
Advocated, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 216 ; *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Government Press workers, *Green*, I, p. 265.
System, *Government*, I, p. 13.

Pension or sick fund bonus, Commonwealth Trust Ltd., *Janaki*, I, p. 307.

Pensions, none, tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132.

Pensions and gratuities, connection with financial ability of forms, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 207.

PILLAI, A. M. Arokiasami, Hon. Secretary, Chingleput District Labour Guild I, pp. 131–2.
Tannery workers, conditions, I, pp. 131–2.

PILLAI, Kundaswami, *see* **RODRIGUEZ, J. P.,** etc., representing the Tuticorin Labour Union, I, pp. 88–90 ; II, 647–763.

PILLAI, Sankaranaraina, *see* **RODRIGUEZ, J. P.,** etc., representing the Tuticorin Labour Union, I, pp. 88–90 ; II, 647–763.

PILLAI, T. Muthuswamy, *see* **MUDALIAR, V. M. Ramaswamy,** etc., representing the Kerosene Oil Workers' Union, I, pp. 124–8 ; II, 1592–1726.

PILLAI, Sivashanmugan, Patron, Chingleput District Labour Guild ; II, 1775–1819.
Tannery workers, conditions, II, 1775–1819.

PILLAI AVARGAL, M. R. Ry. Diwan Bahadur A. Appadurai, M.A., Director of Industries, Madras : I, pp. 270–1.
Apprenticeship, I, p. 270.
Education, I, p. 271.
Technical and industrial, I, pp. 270–1.
Staff, selection and training, I, p. 270.
Supervision charges, I, p. 271.
Strikes, I, p. 271.

PINCHES, H. L., U.P.A.S.I., *see* **BARBER, Sir Fairless,** etc., I, pp.154–65 ; II, 2149–2437.

Plague, *see under* **Diseases.**

Plantations :
see also subject headings.
Amenities for labourers, legislation as to provision of, advocated, *Soldanha*, I, pp. 321, 322.
Complaints by workers, facilities, *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4558, 4560.
Conditions of labour, special enquiry into, advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 201.
Conditions on, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 199 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Improvement of conditions on, proposals for, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p 255.
Labourers, essentials for enlarging horizon of, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4410–6.
Non-official visitors, proposal, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 201.
Privacy of, and abolition advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4410–11.

Pneumonia, *see under* **Diseases.**

Pollibetta Coffee Estate, conditions on, *workers*, II, 4901–19 ; *Babington*, II, 4920–63.

Pooling system in cotton ginning factories, *Mukhtar*, I, pp. 118–9. II, 1505–6.

Population, problem, *Shiva Rao*, I, pp. 192–3.

PORTER, Lieut.-Colonel L. L., O.B.E., V.D., Managing Director, Nonesuch Tea Estate Co., Coonoors ; *and* **ELKINGTON, Lieut.-Commander L. G.,** Manager, Ibex Lodge Estate, Coonoor : II, 3360–3444.
Absenteeism, II, 3371.
Health and medical facilities, II, 3416–25, 3436.
Hours, II, 3377, 3383–4.
Sunday work, II, 3378–9
Housing, II, 3414.
Market, II, 3432–3.
Recruitment, II, 3366–73, 3404–6, 3427–8, 3434.
Roads, II, 3431.
Wages :
Advances to *maistries* and workers, II, 3385–93, 3415, 3441–4.
Cloth and firewood, II, 3408–12.
Earnings, II, 3436–40.
Mistris, II, 3394–3403.
Monthly payment, II, 3429–30.
Remissions to villages, 3389.
Women, employment of, II, 3380–2.

POWELL, E. G., President, Cordite Factory Labour Union, Aruvankadu : I, pp. 256–60.
All-India Trade Union Congress, I, p. 260.
Cordite Factory, Aruvankadu, conditions, I, pp. 256–60.
Cordite Factory Labour Union, I, p. 259.
Education, I, p. 258.
Health, I, pp. 257–8.
Hours, I, p. 258.
Housing, I, p. 257.
Indebtedness, I, p. 259.
Industrial disputes, I, p. 260.
Leave, I, p. 259.
Legislatures, I, p. 260.
Old age and premature retirement, I, p. 258.
Recruitment, I, p. 257.
Staff organisation, I, p. 257.
Wages, I, pp. 258–9.
Workmen's compensation, I, p. 258.

PRIESTLY, G. W., I.C.A., Commissioner ; **THORNTON, Major F. R., I.M.S.,** Civil Surgeon ; and **CHENGAPPA, Rao Bahadur K.,** District Magistrate, representing the Coorg Administration : II, 5087–5181.
Child welfare work, II, 5124.
Coorg Labour Act, II, 5090–4, 5100–4, 5143–53.
Diseases, II, 5106–9.
Drink, II, 5118–20, 5142.

PRIESTLY, G. W., I.C.A., Commissioner; **THORNTON, Major F. R., I.M.S.**, Civil Surgeon; and **CHENGAPPA, Rao Bahaduv K.**, District Magistrate, representing the Coorg Administration; II, 5087–5181—*continued*.
Education, I, p. 341; II, 5112–7, 5130–3.
Factories Act, II, 5165–73.
Factory inspection, II, 5137.
Health and medical facilities, I, p. 341; II, 5095–8, 5110–1, 5121, 5127–8, 5160–1.
Infantile mortality, II, 5123.
Inspection of plantations, II, 5089, 5174.
Recruitment, I, p. 340; II, 5101, 5154–46, 5174–6.
Vital statistics, II, 5122–3.
Wages, I, pp. 340, 341; II, 5099, 5158–9, 5177–8.
Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, II, 5105.
Workmen's Compensation Act, II, 5136, 5159–10.

Printers' Union, establishment of, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 182.

Printing industry :
Conditions in, *Green*, I, pp. 262–9.
Grievances of workers, *R. S. Mudaliar*, I, p. 339.

Prohibition, *see under* **Drinking.**

Promotions, method and system of bribes, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, pp. 90, 92, II, 81[illegible] *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 164; *Hargreaves*, II, 1934–9; *Bentley*, II, 1940.

Provident Funds :
Advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 73; *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90; *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 92; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108, (*C. G. Menon*, II, 1447–50); *Kerosene Oil Workers*, I, p. 126; *Kotiswaran*, I, pp. 129, 130, 131, II, 1774; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 312; *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 335; *Shiva Rao*, II, 2639–41.
Desired by workers, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 171.
Government press workers, *Green*, I, p. 265.
Kerosene oil workers, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1650, 1690, 1699–700.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 277.
Particulars of, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 143.
Plantations, proposal, *Saldanha*, I, p. 322.
Present position, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 312.
Started, but opposed by agitators, *Winter*, II, 3625.
Systems, *Government*, I, p. 13.
Tramways and electric supply, advocated, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, pp. 106–7. (*Veeghi Arya*), II, 1313–4.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, superior service, *Ash*, I, p. 83, II, 548–82 634–5; *Welchman*, II, 572, 634.

Public Health, percentage of total revenues devoted to, *Cousins*, I, p. 1565.

Public Health Officer, doubts as to desirability of, *Measham*, II, 4110–2.

Public Health and Welfare Board, plantations, no objection to, *Pinches*, II, 238

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WORKERS' UNION :
History of, membership, etc., *Government*, I, p. 2L; *Gray*, I, pp. 37, 43; *Union*, I, pp. 328–9.
Memorandum : I, pp. 328–34.
Absenteeism, I, p. 329.
Contract work, I, p. 329.
Contractors, employment of labour through, I, pp. 330–1, 333.
Co-operative societies, I, p. 331.
Education, I, pp. 331, 332.
Health, I, p. 331.
Hours, I, p. 332.
Housing, I, p. 331.
Indebtedness, I, p. 333.
Industrial disputes, I, pp. 331, 334.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WORKERS' UNION :—*continued*.
Memorandum : I, pp. 328–34—*continued*.
Industrial efficiency, I, p. 333.
Leave, I, p. 333.
Old age and premature retirement, I, p. 331.
Public Works Department Workers' Union, I, pp. 328–9, 334.
Recruitment, I, p. 329.
Staff organisation, I, p. 329.
Staff, supervisory, I, pp. 329, 330.
Timekeeping, I, p. 330.
Trade Combinations, I, p. 334.
Unemployment, I, p. 329.
Wages, I, pp. 329, 330, 332–3.
Welfare, I, p. 331.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 332.

Purdah, investigation of working conditions made more difficult in cases of, *Ramaseshan*, II, 1256.

RAGHAVIAH, Dr. G. P., Medical Officer, Carnatic Mill, *see* **HARGREAVES, J.,** etc., p. 132–54, II, 1820–2137.

Railway Labourers' Union, Megapatam, history of, *Gray*, I, p. 54.

Railway passes system, Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, I, p. 84.

Rajpur railway, Rayagada section, shortage of local labour, *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, I, pp. 76–7; II, 236–40.

RAJU, C. Sundarsana, Eti Koppaka, Vizagapatam District : I, pp. 295–6.
Assam, recruitment for, I, p. 296.
Vizagapatam district, recruitment from, I, pp. 295–6.

RAMASESHAN, Rev. Paul, *see* **KRISHNASWAMY, P. A.,** and **RAMASESHAN, Rev. Paul,** representing the Madras Representative Christian Council, I, pp. 101–4; II, 1232–1289.

RAMDU, *Maistry*, Pollibetta Coffee Plantations, II, 4911–9.

RANGA, Professor N. G., B.Litt.(Oxon), Pachaiyappa's College, Madras : I, pp. 322–8.
Children, employment of, I, p. 326.
Conciliation and arbitration machinery, I, p. 328.
Cost of living, I, p. 326.
Drinking, I, p. 327.
Factories Act, I, pp. 325–6, 328.
Factories Inspection, I, p. 325.
Fair Wages Clause, I, p. 328.
Health, I, p. 328.
Hours, I, p. 325.
Housing, I, pp. 324–5, 328.
Intelligence, I, pp. 327–8.
Leave, I, pp. 326, 328.
Recruitment, I, pp. 322–3.
Rural labour, representation in International Labour Office and next Assembly, I, p. 328.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, p. 325.
Technical training, I, p. 328.
Trade Boards, I, p. 328.
Unemployment insurance, I, pp. 324, 328.
Wages, I, pp. 324, 326, 328.
Welfare, I, pp. 325, 328.
Women, employment of, I, p. 326.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 325.

RANGAMMAL, woman worker, Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mill, II, 3580.

Rangoon, labour conditions in, *Raju*, I, p. 296.

Ranipet Labour Union, history of, and membership, *Government*, I, p. 20; *Gray*, I, pp. 37, 48; II, 2988–92.

RAYAPPAN, *maistry*, Singara Tea Estate, II, 3514.

READE, G. B., Anamalai Planters' Association, *see* **JONES, J. H. Ireland,** etc., II, 3869–4127.

Recruitment, agricultural labour :
Causes of, *S.I. Ch. of Comm*., I, p 108.
Migration :
to Highly irrigated tracts, normal movement, *Paddison*, I, pp. 5–6.
Nature and streams of, *Paddison*, I, pp. 5–6.
Statistics of employment, *Uthaya*, I, p. 72.

Recruitment, industrial workers :
Admission ticket, payment for, *worker*, II, 638.
from Agricultural class, *Madras Labour Union*, II, 2566.
Applicants :
Decision between, procedure, *Bentley*, II, 2024–31.
Extent of previous training, *Bentley*, II, 1996.
Register of, *Hargreaves*, II, 1844–5.
Average daily number of operatives in factories, 1928, 1927 and 1926, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 60.
Bribery :
Abolition, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union (Ubaidullah)*, II, 3282.
Attempts to eliminate, *Holden*, II, 3537.
Existence of, in spite of measures taken, *Cheshire, Winter* II, 3589–90.
Madras port and harbour, railway men, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 129; II, 1731.
not Necessary, tanneries, *S. Pillai*, II, 1793.
None, *workers*, II, 2579, 3580, 3584.
System of, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 164, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2475–9, 2515–7, 2550–3; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278.
Casual labour :
small Extent, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 133; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 205; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 274.
Printing, *Green*, I, p. 263.
de-Casualisation, need for; and proposal, *Ranga*, I, pp. 324, 328.
Causes of, *Government*, p. 7; *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 103; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 112; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 240; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 283; *Raju*, I, p. 295; *Paul*, I, pp. 298–302; *Gray*, II, 3009; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 308.
no conspicuous Changes in recent years, *Government*, I, p. 7; *Ayyar Avargal* I, p. 60.
from Chittagong, Vizagapatam Harbour works, *workers*, II, 517a, 517b, 517c.
Circulation of information as to avenues of employment and conditions of service organisation for proposal, *S.I. Chamber of Comm.*, I, p. 109, (*C. G. Memo* II, 1367.
Communal troubles in mills, none, *Bentley*, II, 2017–8.
Contact with villages :
Extent and frequency of return, *Government*, I, p. 7; *Ayyar Avargal*, p. 60; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109, *Mukhtar*, I, pp. 112–3; *Binny & Co.*, I, p. 133, (*Bentley, Hargreaves*), II, 2126–31; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 164; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, pp. 240–1; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 283; *Paul*, I, p. 303; *Ranga*, I, pp. 322–3; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329; *Gray*, II, 3028.
not Necessary or desirable if factory conditions improved, *Mukhtar*, II, 1485–90.
Contract system :
Factory in Lahore district, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 121.
None, as regards industrial labour, *Government*, I, p. 22.
through Contractors, *see* Cohtract work.
Cordite factory, Aruvankadu, *Powell*, I, p. 257.
Decrease in number of employees, explanation, *Hargreaves*, II, 2103.

Recruitment, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Direct recruitment :
Attempt to replace jobbers system by, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278.
Match factory, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 130, II, 1731.
Dismissals and removals, Government Press, *Basudev*, I, pp. 289, 293, 294.
Duration of employment, *Government*, I, p. 8; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 112; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 133; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211; *Armstrong*, I, p. 274; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278; *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 334.
better Educated class beginning to join factories, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278.
Educated men, no reluctance among, *Bentley*, II, 2003–5.
Employment department in factories, advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3258.
Exploitation by Kanganis, recruiting agents, etc., restrictions to control, advocated, *Uthaya*, I, p. 72.
Factory labour, statistics, *Paul*, I, p. 297.
Family life, disturbance of :
Extent of, slight, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211; *Madras Aluminium Union*, I, p. 283.
None, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 133.
Family system, Vizagapatam Harbour works, *Ash*, I, p. 84.
Flow of population from villages to towns, statistics since 1891, *Paul*, I, p. 297.
at Gate, system, *Holden*, II, 3536–8; *Cheshire, Winter*, II, 3588–90.
in Gunupur taluk, conditions, *Anderson*, I, p. 271.
Hereditary basis, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 132, 133, (*Bentley*), 2016.
Higher wages in agricultural areas owing to, *Raju*, I, pp. 295, 296.
Industrial population, statistics, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 60.
through Jobbers or *Maistries* :
Discontinuance, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union (Ubaidullah)*, II, 3282.
None and objection to, *Hargreaves*, II, 1891–2.
Payment to, by workers, *Rodrigues*, II, 694–6.
no Payment to, *worker*, II, 638.
System and evils of, *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p 90, II, 808–14, 836–46; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 113; *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 164, 165, (*Shiva Rao*) II, 2475–9, 2515–7, 2550–3; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 212; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278.
Local, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 132, (*Hargreaves*), II, 1878–81; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204; *Cochin Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 272; *Janaki*, I, p. 306; *Aiyar*, II, 2142.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 274.
Method of engagement, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204; *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 92, II, 785–7, 808–11.
Methods, *Government*, I, p. 7; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 112; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211; *Green*, I, p. 263, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 283.
Migration from Ganjam, statistics, 1926 to 1929, *Steele*, I, p. 81.
Migration among workpeople, decline, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 133, (*Hargreaves*), II, 1876–7.
Number of employees, Binny and Co., *Hargreaves*, II, 1843.
Number of labourers in establishment with not less than ten persons, *Government*, I, p. 7.
Number of workers, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109.
Origin of labour, *Government*, I, p. 7; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 112; *Azariah*, I, p. 122; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 164; *Green*, I, p. 263; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278; *Paul*, I, p. 297; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329; *Ash*, II, 531.
Permanence of force :
Extent of, *Government*, I, p. 7; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 133, (*Hargreaves*), II, 1842; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 283; *Ranga*, I, p. 323.
Factors affecting, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 112.

Recruitment, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Permanent factory population divorced from villages desirable, *Mukhtar*, II, 1485–90.
Preference to relatives of workers advocated, Madras port and harbour, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128.
Printing, *Green*, I, p. 263 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 289.
Public employment bureaus :
Advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 72 ; *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 90 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 164, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2518–20 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241, (*N.S.R. Ayyangar*), II, 4417–9 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 283.
Commissioner of Labour should be in charge of Department, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 319.
Consideration at different times and no need for, *Government*, I, pp. 7–8.
not Desirable at present, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211.
not Feasible, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61.
Madras City, proposal for, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 103, (*Krishnaswamy*), II, 1279–82.
not Necessary, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 133 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204 ; *Winter*, II, 3591.
not Objected to, but children of employees should be given preference, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3274–5.
not Practical or desirable until better class of labour obtainable, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 278.
Scheme for, *Mukhtar*, I, pp. 112–3, II, 1493–8.
Separate Government department with organisation covering whole country would be involved, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204.
for Skilled workmen, practicable and might be useful, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109.
State, advocated, and scheme for, *Ranga*, I, p. 323–4, 328.
Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329.
Registers of workers, extent of accuracy and proposals for improvement, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 67.
Seasonal factories :
Causes of, *Government*, I, p. 7.
Clerk in charge of registers, payment of commission to, by labourers *Azariah*, I, p. 122, II, 1551–2.
Duration of employment, *Government*, I, p. 8.
Origin of labour, *Government*, I, p. 7 ; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108 ; *Azariah* I, p. 122.
Spare men, percentage, system of, *Bentley*, II, 2009–15.
Statistics of employment, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 72.
no Systematic method, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241.
Training, printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 263, 266–7.
Tramways, Madras, recommendation, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electri Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, I, pp. 84, 85, II, 531, 594–602.

Recruitment, Mines :
Contact with villages, *Government*, I, p. 31.
through Contractors, *Government*, I, p. 31.
Duration of employment, *Government*, I, p. 31.
Method, *Government*, I, p. 31.
Mica mining, Nellore, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 260.
Origin of labour, *Government*, I, p. 31.
Permanent labour force, extent of, *Government*, I, p. 31.

Recruitment, plantations :
Advances to workers, *see under* **Wages.**
Agencies of Labour Department of U.P.A.S.I., *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 249.
Agents, supervision by, *Jones*, II, 3994–6.
through Agents, evils of system, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 309.
Agreements :
None, unless advance taken, *worker*, II, 5018.
Imprisonment for not fulfilling, no case known, *worker*, II, 4631.
Length of, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342 ; *Brock*, II, 2186, 2189–90, 219
Signing and attesting of, *K. Chengappa*, II, 5101.

Recruitment, plantations :—*continued.*
Agreements :—*continued.*
Signing of fresh agreement before leaving, *Sprott*, II, 4680–2.
System, *Government*, I, p. 22 ; *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 164 ; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342.
for 10 months : *Jones*, II, 3926, 3935–7 ; *workers*, II, 4130, 4135, 4136, 4141 ; *Schwinde*, II, 4172–3.
but Workers sometimes sent away before, *Foote*, II, 4221–2.
for 12 months, *worker*, II, 4630.
With and without, percentage, *Tipping*, *Murland*, II, 4788–9.
must be Witnessed or not valid, *Sprott*, II, 4725.
in Assam, *see* Assam.
Benefits to labourers, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 343.
Casual, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156 ; *Porter*, II, 3372.
Causes of, *Government*, I, p. 7 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 60 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204, (*Wood*), II, 3172–3 ; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, pp. 250–1 ; *Paul*, I, pp. 298–302 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 308–9 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 346 ; *Sprott*, II, 4708 ; *worker*, II, 4903.
no conspicuous Changes in recent years, *Government*, I, p. 7.
Coffee estates, low figure of labour force at certain periods, *Pinches*, II, 2204–6.
from Coimbatore, *Hawke*, II, 3448.
Competition among planters : *Babington*, II, 4965–6.
None at present, *Jones*, II, 3981.
Contact with villages, extent and frequency of return, *Government*, I, p. 7 ; *Ayyar Avargal* I, p. 60 ; *United Planters' Assn. of S.I.*, I, p. 155, (*Brock*), II, 2246 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204 ; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342 ; *workers*, II, 3343, 3355, 4615, 4616, 4619, 4626, 4908, 5018, 5019 ; *Madapa*, II, 4981.
not Controlled, *Gray*, II, 2771.
Coorg, possible means of attracting labour, *A. B. Chengappa*, II, 4839–45.
Depot on way to estates, *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4561–4.
Difficulties, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 345, II, 4836–7, 4845 ; *Subbayya*, II, 4868 ; *Madapa*, II, 4986–8.
no Difficulty, *Babington*, II, 4935.
Direct very rare, *Murland*, I, 4790.
Division into areas, *Pinches*, II, 2431–2.
average Duration of employment, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 308 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 346 ; *Subbayya*, I, p. 351 ; *Porter*, II, 3434.
Enticement between estates :
Cases under Coorg Labour Act heard of, *Babington*, II, 4947 ; *Madapa*, II, 4973.
not Common, *Babington*, II, 4966.
Control of, but takes place, *Morgan*, *Tipping*, II, 4784–5.
Rules governing, *Jones*, II, 4000–1.
Enticement of labour between suppliers, *Brock*, II, 2208–9.
Expenses of, *Pinches*, II, 2424–9, 2433–5 ; *Sprott*, II, 4650 ; *Tipping*, II, 4786, 4787.
Family life, disturbance :
Effect of, and migration of families should be encouraged, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 309.
Extent and effects of, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 68 ; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347 ; *Subbayya*, I, p. 352.
None, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 343.
Family system, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156.
Food expenses on journey, payment by Labour Department, *mistri*, 3669.
Freedom to leave garden :
A. B. Chengappa, I, p. 343 ; *Tipping*, II, 4760, 4772 ; *Morgan*, II, 4761.
only if Account settled, *workers*, II, 3642, 3651, 3675, 4145, 4159, 4616, 4630 ; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5036.
if Advance not repaid, worker must return or pay, *worker*, II, 3675.
unless under Agreement, when absence permitted if necessary, *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, pp. 342, 343.
Permission necessary, *worker*, II, 3678.
Police sent after workers leaving if owing money, *workers*, II, 3645–7, 3653–4, 3678, 4131, 4159.
Formerly but not [illegible] *mistri*, II, 3661–5.
by Government agency would be welcomed, *Ganapaiah*, II, 5032.
Government commissions and depots, proposal, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, pp. 343, 345.

Recruitment, plantations :—*continued.*
Improvement of conditions would facilitate, *Priestly*, II, 3174-8.
full Information should be given to would-be recruits, *Coorg Council*, I, p. 61; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 309.
Journey, *Ayyangar*, I, p. 280.
Labour boards advocated in place of present system, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 251.
Labour department of U.P.A.S.I., *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156, (*Brock*), II, 2400-7.
Labour force, *Coorg Commissioners*, I, p. 340; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 341.
Labour supply, *Jones*, II, 3977-8.
Local, *Babington*, II, 4925.
Local labour, agreement between members of Association re, *Jones*, II, 3999.
Madras Planters' Act, 1903: *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156.
Evils of system under, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 199.
Repeal, *Government*, p. 23, *U.P.A.S.I.*, p. 160.
Publicity, nature and extent, *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4599 f, 4681-6.
through *Maistries* or Kanganis :
Advances to *maistries* :
Defaulters :
Advance from any estate belonging to U.P.A.S.I. not possible until debt settled, *Sampson*, II, 3773-5.
Civil cases increasing owing to repeal of criminal law, and particulars of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 160, (*Brock*), II, 2777-9; *Pinches*, 2182-5, 2187.
Discontinuance of, *Hawke*, I, 3460.
no Interest charged, *mistri*, II, 3672.
Interest inserted, but never collected, *Sampson*, II, 3708.
Promissory note, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 1163.
Promissory notes taken, but not agreements now, *maistries*, II, 3660-1, 3672 *Sampson*, II, 3705-4.
Suits for recovery of, *Mills, Johnson*, II, 3989.
System and working of, *Pinches*, II, 2408-10; *Porter, Elkington, Hawke*, II, 3385-93, 3415, 3440-2, 3467, 3513; *Sampson*, II, 3703-4, 3708-27, 3732-43; *Jones*, II, 3922-5; *maistries*, II, 4161, 4165, 4633, 4912; *Schwinde*, II, 4176, 4203-5; *Foote*, II, 4260-2.
Advances to workers, *see under* Wages.
Advantages of system at its best, *Barber*, II, 4268.
no Agreements with *maistries* now, but pro-notes, *Jones*, II, 3928.
Cases by supplier against workers, *Brock*, II, 2180, 2184-5, 2210.
Contracts, forms of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, pp. 162-3, (*Brock*), II, 2161, 2166-9, 2174.
Difficulty of breaking down system of, *Barber, Blackham*, II, 4268-70; *Foote*, 4301-4.
Direct recruitment instead of, not practicable, *maistries* also foreseen, *Porter*, II, 3404-6.
Effect on *maistries*, *Brock*, II, 2165.
Evils of, *Shiva Rao*, I, pp. 199-200; *Ayyar Aswani*, I, p. 61; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 346.
Misrepresentation :
Prosecution, no cases known, *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4557.
very Rare, *Jones*, II, 3998.
Number of labourers per *maistry*, *Schwinde*, 4181-2.
Number supplying for more than one estate, *Brock*, II, 2372-3, *Pinches*
no Payment from workers, *maistry*, II 4633.
Personal experiences, *maistries*, II, 3349, 4161-5, 4632-4.
Promise by *maistry* to make recruit *cole-maistry* and non carrying out of, *worker*, II, 4153, 4155, 4159, 4166.
Denial, *maistry*, II, 4164.
Qualifications, *Schwinde*, II, 4179.
Selection of suppliers, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157, (*Pinches*), II, 2430.
System, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, pp. 155, 156, 162-3, (*Brock, Congreve, Pinches*), II, 2161, 2166-76, 2294-5; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, pp. 249-50; *Commissioner of Coorg*, I, p. 340; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 341, (*Morgan, Tipping*), II, 4763-4, 4787; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, pp. 343-4; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 346; *Jones*, II, 3918-25; *Schwinde*, II, 4175-89, 4203-13; *Porter*, II, 3373.
Workers' experience, II, 3358
Managers, visit to recruiting areas, occasional, *Murland*, II, 4791.

Recruitment, plantations :—*continued.*
Migration between estates :
no Agreement between planters that labour recruited for one garden not to be employed for another, *Pinches*, II, 2232.
Mutual agreement between estates necessary, *Brock*, II, 2170.
Misrepresentation and false promises, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 309.
Number of labourers, *Government*, I, p. 7; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109.
Number of labourers per acre, *Tipping*, II, 4787.
Origin of labour, *Government*, I, p. 7; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108; *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 155, 161, (*Pinches, Barber, Brock*), II, 2151-2; *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 251; *Paul*, I, p. 297; *Commissioner of Coorg*, I, p. 340; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 341, (*Morgan*), II, 4762; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 343; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 346; *Subbayya*, I, p. 351; *Sampson*, II, 3696; *Jones*, II, 3883; *Sprott*, II, 4693, 4699-702; *Babington*, II, 4924-7; *Madapa*, II, 4972.
Penal contracts, abolition :
little Effect anticipated, *Sprott*, II, 4689-90.
Information to labourers, *Pinches*, II, 2416-7.
Satisfactory and revival not desired, *Pinches, Brock*, II, 2159-60; *Congreve*, II, 2164.
Workers' knowledge of, *Brock*, II, 2193-7; *Jones*, II, 3938-47; *Foote*, II, 4349-50.
Penal law in Mysore, *Brock*, II, 2198-200.
Permanency of force, extent of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, pp. 155, 156, (*Pinches, Congreve, Barber*, II, 2207, 2307-11; *Ranga*, I, p. 323, *Foote*, II, 4254.
Permanent force :
Difficulty of obtaining, *Commissioner of Coorg*, I, p. 340.
None, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 308; *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 343.
practically None, Coorg, *Thimmaya*, I, p. 346.
Plenty of labour, *Hawke*, II, 3475.
Population and acreage of estate and number of workers per acre, *Elkington, Porter*, II, 3336-70; *Hawke*, II, 3449-51; *Sampson*, II, 3691; *Schwinde*, II, 4168-71; *Foote* II, 4217-9, 4223; *Sprott*, II, 4693-4; *Babington*, II, 4922; Madapa, II, 4967-8, 4978.
Protectors of plantation labour, proposal, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 201.
Public employment agencies :
Advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 309; *Thimmayya*, I, pp. 346-7.
Advocated and method of working, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241, (*N.S.R., Ayyangar*) II, 4417-30.
not Necessary, *Pinches*, II, 2293; *Brock*, II, 2299.
Objections to :
Lack of personal relationship, *Brock*, II, 2299.
Professional recruiters would be brought in, *Jones*, II, 4118.
Tahsildars and village officers could not undertake work in connection with, *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4608-9.
Register in each village advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 201.
Running away :
Cases of, and reasons, *Ganapaiah*, II, 5039-46.
while still in Debt to maistri, *Brock*, II, 2211-2.
Shortage of labour, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 343.
Special labour boards or co-operative agencies advocated, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 201.
Statistics, Coorg, *Subbayya*, I, p. 352.
Statistics and origin of labour in different districts, 1928, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 161.
no Statistics, *Gray*, II, 2902.
Strength of force, monthly variation, *Sprott*, II, 4649.
Supply, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 155, (*Pinches*), II, 2414-6.
System, *Paul*, p. 304.
System, Coorg, unsatisfactory, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 343.
Transport, bus service, *E. F. Thomas*, II, 4568-80.
Travelling allowance, increase advocated to cover bus-journey, *Saldanha*, I, p. 322.
Travelling expenses :
Payment by agent, *worker*, II, 3677.
Payment by *maistry* but to be repaid, *worker*, II, 4148.
Practice *re* payment of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 160; *Coorg Planters' Assn.*, I, p. 342. *Tipping*, II, 4779; *Martin, Jones, Sampson, Mills, Johnson*, II, 4117; *Foote*, II, 4253; *Sprott*, II, 4650.
U.P.A.S.I., only established public agency for, *Subbayya*, I, p. 352.

Recruitment, plantations :— *continued.*
Verbal agreements, no experience of, *Jones*, II, 3933-9.
Village debts, payment of, with advance from suppliers, *Brock*, II, 2213-4 ; *worker*, II, 4129.
must be Voluntary, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 347.

Recruitment of Seamen, of no importance, *Government*, I, p. 9.

Relapsing fever, *see under* **Diseases.**

Retirement, compulsory, conditions advocated for, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 126, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1711-4.

Rheumatism, *see under* **Diseases.**

Rice, supply to plantation workers, *see under* **Wages, Plantations.**

RICHARDSON, Cruddas and Co., workers, grievances and claims, I, pp. 129-30.

Richardson, Cruddas and Company Workers' Union :
Representative, *see* **KOTISWARAN M. S., B.A., L.T.,** I, pp. 128-31 ; II, 1727-74
Membership, *Kotiswaran*, II, 1737
Registration applied for, *Kotiswaran*, II, 1751.

Rickshawallas' Union, establishment of, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 182.

RODRIGUEZ, J. P. ; PILLAI Sankaranarnina ; and **PILLAI, Kandaswami,** representing the Tuticorin Labour Union : I, pp. 88-90 ; II, 647-763.
Children, employment of, II, 677.
Co-operative credit system, I, p. 90.
Creches, I, p. 89.
Dietary, I, p. 88.
Education, I, p. 90.
Franchise, I, p. 90.
Hours, I, pp. 89, 90.
Housing, I, p. 89 ; II, 664-8, 678, 708-14.
Labour meetings, II, 739-45.
Labour representation on legislatures and local bodies, I, p. 90.
Leave, I, p. 89.
Maistries, I, p. 89 ; II, 694-6.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 89 ; II, 749-51.
Meals, accommodation, I, p. 90 ; II, 680, 722-5, 737-8.
Medical facilities and treatment, I, p. 89 ; II, 715-20.
Provident fund, I, p. 90.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, II, 7268.
Sick leave, I, p. 89.
Strikes, II, 747-8.
Tuticorin Labour Union, I, p. 90 ; II, 648-53, 656-60, 681-92, 746, 730-732-63.
Wages, I, pp. 88, 89, 90 ; II, 654-5, 676, 704-7.
Women, employment of, I, p. 89 ; II, 661, 663, 669-71, 697-703.

Roads, plantations :
Government bridle path, *Sampson*, II, 3858.
Public right-of-way through estate, *Porter*, II, 3431.

Royal Commission on Labour :
Questionnaire, circulation of, *Leach*, II, 2705-8.
to Employers or workers, no steps taken, *Cobbold*, II, 971-4, 997-9.
Sub-Committee visiting plantations, invitation to give evidence, publicity to *Gray*, II, 2965-6.

Rural areas, position of villagers in, compared with cities, *Gray*, II, 3026-7.

Rural labour, representation in International Labour Office and next Assembly, recommendation, *Ranga*, I, p. 328.

SADYAN, worker, Madura Mills, II, 642-6.

ents :
Causes, *Government*, I, p. 14 ; *Cartledge*, I, p. 57 ; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110 ; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 116-7 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 144 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 217 ; *Green*, I, p. 265 ; *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Methods of ascertaining, *Cartledge*, II, 2867-8.
Coir yarn industry, no possibility of, *Cochin Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 272.
Joint investigations by employers' and employees' representatives advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Mica mines, Nellore, few, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261.
Nature of, Coorg, *Thimmaya*, I, p. 349.
Prevention measures, *Government*, I, p. 14 ; *Cartledge*, I, p. 57 ; II, 2808 ; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 117 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 144 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 171-2 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 217 ; *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Reporting of, to district magistrate, *Cobbold*, II, 961.
Statistics, *Government*, I, p. 14 ; *Cartledge*, I, pp. 56-7 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 143 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 216.
Unregistered factories :
no Information, *Government*, I, p. 14.
Numerous, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, statistics, *Ash*, I, p. 88 ; *Anderson*, II, 567.
Effect of working conditions, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 217.
Factory Act provisions observed, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 216.
First aid and ambulance facilities, etc. :
Binny and Co., II, p. 144, (*Bentley*) ; II, 2100-2 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 217.
Absence of, Nellore mica mines, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261.
Extent of provision, *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Madras Port, *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 275.
Statutory provision, suggested in amendments to Factories Act, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71.
Improvement, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242.
Labour Council should have power to make recommendations, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4438.
Oilworkers, dispensary at every tank shed advocated, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 127.
Posters and instruction of workmen, proposals, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Preventive staff, proposal, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 172.
Printing works, adequacy of regulations and enforcement, *Green*, I, p. 265.
Regulations :
Adequacy and enforcement, *Government*, I, p. 14.
Satisfactory, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 134, 144.
Safety first proposals, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 117 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 319.
special Uniform for workers in industries using power, advocated, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 102, (*Krishnaswamy*), II, 1261.

GE, Miss M., M.A., Joint Principal, Buckingham and Carnatic School, *see* **HARGREAVES, J.,** etc., I, p. 132-54 ; II, 1820-2137.

SALDANHA, J. A., Member, Madras Legislation Council, Belmont, Kankanadi, I, pp. 321-2.
Plantations, conditions of labour and proposals for improvement, I, pp. 321-2.

SAMPSON, J. E., Manager, Anamalai Planters' Association and Pachamalai Estate, II, 3586-3668.
see also **JONES, J. H. Ireland,** etc., II, 3869-4127.
Bathing arrangements, II, 3792-3.
Children, employment of, II, 3693-5.
Cost of living, II, 3808-9.
Cumbli, provision of, II, 3816, 3576-8.
Drinking, II, 3802-4.
Education, II, 3794-801.
Health, II, 3782-91, 3812-5, 3835-40.
Hours, II, 3830-30.

SAMPSON, J. E., Manager, Anamalai Planters' Association and Pachama II. 3680–3868—*continued.*
Housing, II, 3758, 3831–4.
Inspection of plantations, II, 3810–11, 3841–2.
Land and cattle, II, 3851–6.
anti-Malarial measures, II, 3836–40, 3843–4.
Maistries, work by, II, 3700–2, 3751–7.
Recruitment, II, 3691, 3696.
Roads, II, 3658.
Staff, II, 3682–7.
Trade Union II, 3860–4.
Wages: II, 3705–7, 3776–80, 3845–50, 3865–6
Advances to, and by, *maistries*, II, 3705–6, 3708–27, 3732–43, 3773–5.
Earnings, II, 3738–32, 3778–80.
Maistries, II, 3699,702, 3717, 3744–9.
Payment, II, 3763–71.
Welfare, II, 3805–7, 3859.

Sanitary Arrangements and Water Supply, industrial workers:
Bathing and washing facilities:
Madras, inadequacy, *Ranga*, I, p. 325.
Madras Port, *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Mills and villages, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137.
None in factories, *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
None in tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132; *S. Pillai*, II, 1788.
Provision in Factory Act, re, advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244.
Rare, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71.
20 to 30 taps advocated for 200 people, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4493–4.
bidi factories, *Isaac*, I, p. 339.
Lack of, *1929 Madras League of Youth*, I, pp. 95–6; (*Arasu*), II, 1088–90.
Difficulty at first in enforcing proper use of, *Employers' Federation of S.I.*, I, p. 206.
Factories, unsatisfactory sanitary conditions, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 110.
Good supply essential, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253.
Government Press, inadequacy of, *Basudev*, I, p. 291.
Grants by Government to local bodies, *Ubhaya*, II, 2757–8.
Improvement, *Menon*, I, p. 288.
Inspection, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.
Inspection in work places by local authorities assisted by labour council, proposal, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, pp. 241–2, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4434–7.
Latrines:
Arrangements and need for improvement, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union* I, p. 285.
Condition, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 70.
Extent of provision, Nellore mica mines, but reluctance to use, *Woodhouse* I, p. 261.
Inadequacy of accommodation, Madras port and harbour, *Kotiswaran* pp. 128, 129.
Mills, *Rodrigues*, II, 728.
Provision, regulation, *Government*, I, p. 11.
Reluctance to use, *Government*, I, pp. 11–12.
Madras City, conditions and inadequacy of, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213; *Basudev*, I p. 290; *Ranga*, I, p. 325.
Madras Port, *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Match factory, proposal, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 131.
Mills and villages, nature of, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137.
Mines, nature and condition, *Government*, I, p. 32.
Mundi shops, *Isaac*, I, p. 339.
Sanitation:
Education, need for, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 206.
Improvement, *Ubhaya*, II, 2761.
Sanitary Inspectors, number appointed during last five years, *Ubhaya*, II, 2759.
Sanitary staff, Vizagapatam Harbour Works, under engineering department, *Anderson*, II, 624–5.
Satisfactory, in factories, not in home, *Janaki*, I, p. 307
Seasonal factories, conditions, *Asarion*, I, pp. 122, 123.
Tanneries, none, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132.

Sanitary Arrangements and Water Supply, industrial workers:—*continued.*
at Tramway termini, advocated, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107.
Unsatisfactory conditions, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 69; *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 93; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 114.
Unsatisfactory in many cases, *Government*, I, p. 11.
Water supply, *Government*, I, p. 32; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 71; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213; *S. Pillai*, II, 726–7; *Hawke*, II, 3592–3; *Holden*, II, 3559–60.
Encouragement of introduction by grants to local bodies, *Ubhaya*, II, 2755–6.
Government Press, inadequacy of, *Basudev*, I, p. 291.
Improvement, *Paddison*, I, p. 5.
Madras City, unsatisfactory supply, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 130; *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 168, 170; *Basudev*, I, p. 291; *Ranga*, I, p. 325.
Madras Port, *Armstrong*, I, p. 275.
Match factory, inadequacy, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 130.
Mills and villages, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 137.
Nature of, *Cartledge*, I, p. 56.
Nellore mica mines, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 261.
Protected, in few cases only, *Government*, I, p. 11.
Satisfactory in factories, *Janaki*, I, p. 307.
Tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132; *S. Pillai*, II, 1787–8.
Tramway termini, advocated, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107.
at Workplaces and homes, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 214.

Sanitary Arrangements and Water Supplies, plantations:
Bathing arrangements, *Sampson*, II, 3792–3.
Bathing sheds, proposal, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 252.
Bathing and washing places necessary, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Improvement, *Commissioner of Coorg*, I, p. 340.
Latrines:
Provision necessary, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Reluctance to use but gradual overcoming of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 158, (*Hinches, Barber*), II, 2348–52; *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 200.
no Special arrangements and not necessary, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348.
Supply and extent of use, *Hawke*, II, 3501–5.
proposed Type, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 253.
Nature of *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157; *A. B. Chengeppa*, I, p. 344.
Water supply:
Drinking water, *Measham, Jones*, II, 4008–77.
None in course of day, *worker*, II, 4138–8.
through Pipes, adequate supply necessary, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Nature of, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 348; *Subbayya*, I, p. 352; *Barber*, II, 4312–5.
Nature of, and need for improvement, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 200.

Sanitary Coffee Estate, conditions on, *Sprott*, II, 4639–735.

SANJARAYANA, Dr. K., Medical Officer, Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *see* **ASH, W. C.,** etc., II, 518–636.

Savaras, recruitment for Assam from Ganjam district, *P. A. Naidu*, I, pp. 255–6.

SAVARI MUTTHU, worker, Pachamalai Estate, II, 3673–5.

SCHWINDE, F. L., Manager, Thaymudi Estate; *and* **JOHNSON, Eric,** Group Manager, Mudis Group of Estates: II, 4167–4214.
Recruitment:
Agreement, II, 4172–3.
through *Maistries* and advances system, II, 4175–89, 4203–13.
Population and acreage of estate, II, 4168–71.
Rice supply and food allowance, II, 4190–200.
Wages, II, 4201–2.

Seasonal factories :
see also subject headings.
Amendment of Factory Act as regards, proposal, *Wadia*, I, p. 337.
Conditions created by, in districts and proposals, *Azariah*, I, p. 124.
Methods of working and proposals for improvement, *Ayyar Anargal*, I, p. 68.
Provision for workers, co-operation of employers and municipalities advocate *Azariah*, I, p. 124 ; II, 1565.

SHIVA RAO, B. ; NAIDU, Ramanujalu ; and CHETTY, Selvapathy, representative of the Madras Labour Union : I, p. 187–203 ; II, 2438–2649.
Absenteeism, I, p. 165.
Agriculture, predominance of, I, p. 203.
Apprenticeship, I, p. 164.
Boards of Health, I, p. 170.
Bonus and gratuity schemes, I, p. 173.
Bribery, I, p. 164 ; II, 2475–9, 2515–7, 2550–3.
Children, employment of, I, p. 173.
Cottage industries, I, p. 203.
Creches, I, p. 171.
Diseases, I, pp. 169, 188
Dismissals, I, p. 185 ; II, 2480.
Drink, I, pp. 169, 192 ; II, 2613–6.
Education, I, pp. 171, 173, 193–5.
Industrial and technical, I, pp. 164, 171, 173, 193–5 ; II, 2543–4.
Emigration, I, p. 192.
Factories Act, I, p. 171–2.
Franchise, I, pp. 178, 198.
Gratuity system, I, p. 165 ; II, 2180.
Health :
Dietary, I, p. 169.
General conditions, I, pp. 169, 188–92.
Infantile mortality, II, 2620–2.
Maternity benefits, I, pp. 170–1 ; II, 2525–8.
Medical facilities, I, pp. 169–70.
Mortality, II, 2591.
Provincial medical service, I, p. 192.
Sick leave, I, pp. 169, 170.
Sickness insurance, I, p. 170.
State medical service, I, p. 169.
Health, Ministry of, I, pp. 201–2.
Hours, I, p. 172 ; II, 2616–9.
Housing, I, pp. 165–9, 193 ; II, 2549–74, 2576–8, 2589–90, 2624.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 165, 171, 174, 175, 195 ; II, 2478–9, 2519–4.
Indian States, I, p. 199.
Industrial disputes :
Government attitude, I, pp. 177, 178 ; II, 2601–3.
Police, attitude, I, pp. 177, 202 ; II, 2491–7.
Strikes and lock-outs, I, pp. 167, 174–8, 178, 180–2, 194–5, 202 ; II, 2491–2593, 2597–602.
Industrial efficiency, I, pp. 174, 188–9, 199.
Information to workpeople, I, p. 167.
Intelligence, I, p. 198.
Labour Commissioners, I, pp. 177, 197 ; II, 2603–12.
Labour Department, I, p. 177–8 ; II, 2606.
Labour legislation, I, p. 196–7 ; II, 2494–504.
Labour, Ministry of, I, p. 198 ; II, 2629–33.
Leave, I, pp. 167, 171–3.
Legislatures, etc., labour representation on, I, pp. 177, 178, 195–6, 198.
Madras Labour Union :
Activities, I, p. 174.
Committee, members, election, II, 2545–7.
History of, I, pp. 174–5, 178–81, 183–7.
Membership, II, 2441–8.
Policy, II, 2594, 2643, 2649.
Position of witness, II, 2548–9.
Relations with employers, I, pp. 175, 178–81, 193–7 ; II, 2579–88.
Maistries, II, 2539–42.
Plantations, conditions on, I, pp. 199–201.

SHIVA RAO, B. ; NAIDU, Ramanujalu ; and CHETTY, Selvapathy, representatives of Madras Labour Union : I, p. 187–203 ; II, 2438–2649—*continued.*
Population problem, I, pp. 192–3.
Provident Fund, I, p. 171 ; II, 2639–41.
Recruitment, textile industry, I, pp. 164, 165 ; II, 2566.
through Jobbers, I, pp. 164, 165 ; II, 2475–9, 2515–7, 2550–3.
Public employment agencies, I, p. 164 ; II, 2518–20.
Safety in factories, I, pp. 171–2.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, p. 170.
Staff :
Managing, I, p. 165.
Relations with rank and file, I, pp. 165–6, 167.
Supervising, I, pp. 165–6.
Trade Disputes Act, I, p. 177 ; II, 2643–7.
Trade Union Congress, Glasgow, memorandum to, I, pp. 182–3.
Trade unionism, popularity among workers, I, p. 174 ; II, 2592.
Trade Unions :
Employers' attitude, I, pp. 165, 174, 202.
Government attitude, I, p. 197 ; II, 2487–90, 2593.
Recognition, I, p. 175.
Registration, I, p. 175.
Two-loom system, I, pp. 170–1, 176 ; II, 2570, 2597–600.
Unemployment, I, p. 165 ; II, 2568–73.
Unemployment insurance, I, p. 165.
Wages : I, pp. 173–4.
Deductions, I, pp. 173–4.
Increase, I, p. 173.
Minimum and standardisation, I, p. 173 ; II, 2534–8.
Miscalculation, I, p. 166.
Period, II, 2531–2.
Piece work, I, p. 167.
Welfare Committee, Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, I, pp. 166, 171 ; II, 2523, 2554–8, 2562–5.
Welfare work, I, p. 171 ; II, 2505–9, 2521–4, 2554, 2626–8.
Women, employment of, I, p. 173 ; II, 2529–30.
Working men's clubs, I, pp. 169, 172 ; II, 2618.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 172 ; II, 2481–6.
Works Councils, I, p. 167.

SIBI, woman worker, Kasbur Coffee Estate, II, 5009–13.

[illegible]tate, Coonoor, conditions on, *Hanbe*, II, 3514–3515 ; *Rayappan*,

[illegible]der **Diseases.**

[illegible], Medical Superintendent, Vizagapatam Harbour works, *see* **ASH, W. C.,** 3518–636.

[illegible], **M.A., I.E.S.,** Officiating Director of Public Instruction, Madras : 3071–3087.
Children, employment in factories under age of 11, II, 3071–3.
Education :
Adult, II, 3082.
Compulsory, II, 3071–8, 3084.
Facilities, II, 3084–6.
Hygiene and physiology, II, 3079–80.
Provision by employers, II, 3081–2.

South Indian Railway Employees' Central Association, history of, and membership, *Government*, I, p. 20 ; *Gray*, I, pp. 37, 47–8.

SOUTHERN INDIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE :
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **MENON, C. Gopal,** *and* **NAIR, P. Raghavan,** I, pp. 108–11 ; II, 1366–1453.
Membership, etc., *Menon*, II, 1366, 1451–2.
Memorandum, I, pp. 108–11.

Sports work, Sialkot, unsatisfactory conditions, *Mukht*

SPROTT, J. H., Manager of Halleri and Santagurry (
see also **MORGAN, J. S. H.,** etc., I, pp. 341–3; II,
Children, employment of, II, 4658, 4685.
Coorg Labour Act, prosecutions under, II, 4663–4.
Discipline, II, 4667.
Drinking, II, 4688, 4739.
Education, II, 4698, 4712.
Health, II, 4665, 4691–2, 4695, 4703, 4705, 4717
Medical facilities, II, 4643–4, 4692, 4704.
Hours, I, 4650
Housing, II, 4689.
Inspection of plantations, II, 4661–2.
Leave, II, 4697.
Manager, relations with labourers, II, 4726–32.
Non-working children, II, 4654.
Recruitment, II, 4649–50, 4679–83, 4689–90, 4
Wages, II, 4653–4, 4656–8, 4666, 4671, 4675–8
Advances to workers, II, 4651, 4725.
Settlement of accounts, II, 4682, 4671, 4726–7.
Women, employment of, II, 4710–1.

SRI RAM, Mrs. Bhagirathi, social worker: II, 1548–1590.
Education, compulsory, II, 1570.
Indebtedness of women, II, 1584.
Maternity benefit, II, 1578, 1581–2, 1586.
Women workers, feeding of children in streets, II, 1585.
Young Women's Christian Association, investigations, II, 1587.

STAECKER, Rev. H., Jeypore, Vizagapatam: I, pp. 273–4.
Assam, recruitment for, I, pp. 273–4.

Staff organization:
Administration system, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 131; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 212.
Consultation of workers' method, *Holden*, II, 3575.
Cordite factory, Aruvankadu:
Relations with union, *Powell*, I, p. 257.
Selection and training and need for machinery for qualification of worker
Powell, I, p. 257.
Government Press, *Green*, I, p. 264; *Basudev*, I, pp. 289–9
Grievances, procedure re, Making, *Buckingham and Carn.*
Union, II, p. 212.
Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co., I, pp. 278–
Managers, *see that title.*
Managing staff:
Indianisation, obstacles, but desirability, *Employers*
p. 205, (*Wood*), II, 3183–8.
Qualifications, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 113.
Selection, *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 270; *Madras United Spin.*
Mills Co., I, p. 279.
Selection, and racial considerations re, *Mukhtar*, I p. 113; *Madras*
Union, I, p. 165.
Selection satisfactory in larger and more important concerns, *Government*
I, p. 9.
Unsuitable appointments, smaller concerns, *Government*, I, p. 9.
Mica mines, Nellore, *Woodhouse*, I, pp. 260–1.
Mines:
Managing staff, selection and qualifications, *Government*, I, p. 31.
Relations with labourers, *Government*, I, p. 31.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 264.
Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329
Qualifications not always adequate and proposal, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61.
Relations with rank and file:
see also **Industrial Relations.**
European assistants, assaults on workers, Buckingham mill, *Madras Labour*
Union, I, pp. 178, 179, 180.

Staff organization:—*continued.*
Relations with rank and file:—*continued.*
Foremen, complaints of tyranny made against, *Government*, I, p. 10.
Government Press, *Basudev*, I, p. 290.
Grievances, procedure re, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 134, 154, (*Hargreaves*), II, 1893.
Improved but room for further improvement, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 212, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3226.
Machinery for, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 134, (*Hargreaves*), II, 1824–41.
Opportunities to workers or union representatives to make representations, *Government*, I, p. 22; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 334; *Kotiswaran*, II, 1755, 1765–8.
Satisfactory, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 205; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279.
not Satisfactory, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 166, 167; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 241.
"Employers' attitude" on part of staff, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 113.
Government attitude, p. 131.
Immediate Supervising:
Promotion from workers, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 212, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3256.
Recruitment and training, *Government*, I, pp. 9, 10, 31; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 134; *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 165–6; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 205; *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 270; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills*, I, p. 279; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329.
Recommendation re, Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, pp. 329, 330.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, I, pp. 84, 85, 86.
Training, facilities, *Government*, I, p. 9.
Improvement advocated, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61.
Supervision charges, burden of, *Pillai Avargal*, I, p. 271.

Staff, plantations:
European Assistant, access of workers to, *Johnson*, II, 4199–200.
Experience of, *Sampson*, II, 3682–7.
Indians, proposal for opportunities for, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 252.
Managing staff:
Access of workers to, *Congreve*, II, 2303; *Barber*, II, 4345–7; *Morgan, M.*, II, 4766, 4770–1.

Singara Tea Estates, strike against, for ill-treatment, very infrequent, *Pinches, Brock*, II, 3514.
2–3.
labourers, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157, (*Barber, Pinches*), II, 2313–4,

Small pox, *see un*
ut advocated, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61.

SMITH, C. J. *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157, (*Pinches*), II, 2315.
etc., II, on, salaries, etc., *Ayyangar*, I, p. 251.
estates, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 156, (*Pinches*), II, 2312.

SMITH, W. labourers, *Commissioners of Coorg*, I, p. 341; *Thimmayya*, I, II, 20–3; *Sprott*, II, 4729–32; *K. Chengappa*, II, 5150, 5151; *Priestly*, II, 30–3.
ordinate:
Position of, *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 201.
Selection, *U.P.A.S.I.*, I, p. 157.

ndard of living:
Improvement, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 143.
Increase of, with increased wages, *Wood*, II, 3165–6.
Industrial workers, Punjab, *Mukhtar*, II, 1482.
Madras City, increase, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 104.
Plantations:
Higher than in home villages, *Brock*, II, 2243.
Increase, *Jones*, II, 4002–5.
Increase and means for further improvement, *Barber*, II, 4273–7.

NES, Messrs. T. and Co., Ltd., Coimbatore:
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **WIN., W. E.,** etc., II, 3585–3637.
Memorandum, I, pp. 238–9.

...aptain F. E., Local Agent of the Tea Districts Labour Associati...
...ampore, Ganjam: I, pp. 77–81; II, 241–381.
Assam Labour Board, I, p. 81; II, 361–2, 365–6.
Assam, recruitment:
Agricultural labour, II, 352–4.
Benefits to labourers, I, p. 78; II, 357, 386–7
Castes, I, p. 77.
Causes, I, p. 78; II, 286, 341.
from Ceded districts, II, 291.
Clothing outfit and advances, II, 321.
Contract absence of, II, 281.
Control, I, pp. 80–81.
Culprits, II, 277.
Debts of recruits, payment, II, 271–6, 301–2, 304–5, 313
under False names, II, 278.
Family life, I, p. 80; II, 388–90.
Freedom of return, II, 325–6, 335–6.
Intoxicants, II, 320.
Journey, II, 313.
Local agents, I, pp. 79, 80; II, 282
Medical examination, II, 268–9.
Opposition of higher castes to, I, p. 78; II, 357–9.
Professional recruits, II, 281.
Public employment agencies, I, p. 80; II, 332–5, 339, 341.
Repatriation, II, 309–10.
Sardari system, I, pp. 79–80; II, 244–547, 258, 282–3, 290, 311–2, 3
326, 328, 329, 330, 335, 337–8, 342–4, 356.
Season, I, p. 77.
Short term, II, 345–6.
Single women and minors, I, p. 80; II, 260–7, 347–9.
Statistics, I, p. 77.
Tracing of recruits, I, 279–80, 350–1.
Unauthorised trade, II, 307–8.
Voluntary, II, 283–5, 316–7.
Wages, I, p. 77; II, 321.
Burma, recruitment for, and conditions in, I, pp. 77, 78, 79; II, 373–4, 377.
Depressed classes, emigration, I, p. 78.
Dooars, recruitment for, II, 292–3.
Labour:
Khambari system, I, p. 78; II, 303–6, 319.
Vetti system, I, p. 78; II, 322–4.
Migration from Ganjam, statistics, I, p. 81.
Sowra migration, I, pp. 7–9.

Straits Settlements, emigration to:
Family life, effect on, *Paul*, I, pp. 305–6.
Misrepresentation, prosecution for, *Thomas*, II, 4557.
Recruitment system, and possible improvement, *Paul*, I, pp. 304–6.
Statistics, and numbers returning, *Paul*, I, pp. 298, 303.

Strikes, see under **Industrial disputes.**

Stuartpuram Criminal tribes settlement, employment in Cheroot tobacco ... *Gray*, II, 2993–6.

SUBBAMMAL, women worker, Madura Mills, II, 637–41.

SUBBAYYA, Rao Bahadur K., Planter, Coorg: I, pp. 351–3; II, 4863–900.
Cardamom plantations, II, 4898.
Coorg, general conditions, I, p. 351.
Coorg Labour Act, I, pp. 352, 353; II, 4864–6, 4869, 4882–3, 4896.
Education, I, p. 352; II, 4885, 4893.
Health and medical facilities, I, p. 352; II, 4873.
Hours, I, p. 353; II, 4870–5.
Housing, I, p. 352.
Industrial disputes, I, p. 353; II, 4890–2.
Inspection of plantations, II, 4874.
Recruiting, I, pp. 351–2; II, 4868, 4897–8, 4887–8.

SUBBAYYA, Rao Bahadur, K., Planter, Coorg; I, pp. 351–3; II, 4863–900. —*continued.*
Toddy shops, II, 4889.
Wages, I, p. 353; II, 4878–81, 4898.
Water supplies, I, p. 352.
Women and children, employment, II, 4894–5.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 352; II, 4876–7.

SUBU, woman worker, Kasbur Coffee Estate, II, 5008.

...igar Factories, Madras, formation of union, not desirable at present, *Wood*, II, 3154–8.

SUKANNA UKKANNA, worker, Vizagapatam Harbour works, 517e.

SUPPIAH, worker, Madura, II, 642–6.

SURENDRANATH VOEGELI-ARYA, S.P.Y., President; **MUDALIAR, Koppaswamy**, Secretary; and **MUDALIAR, Kanagasabai**, representing the Madras Electric Tramway and Supply Corporation Employees' Union, I, pp. 104–7; II, 1290–1365.
Ambulance corps, I, p. 107.
Discipline, I, p. 107; II, 1355–65.
Education, I, p. 105; II, 1304.
Hours, I, pp. 105–6; II, 1310, 1335–42, 1348.
Housing, I, p. 107; II, 1311–3, 1325–6.
Joint Council, I, p. 105; II, 1305.
Madras Electric Tramways and Electric Supply Corporation Union, I, pp. 104, 105; II, 1291–303, 1306–9, 1356–65.
Madras tramways, conditions of work, II, 1316–65.
Leave, I, pp. 106, II. 1316–8, 1346–7.
Maternity benefits, I, p. 106.
Meal sheds, I, p. 107.
Provident Fund, I, pp. 106–7; II. 1313–4.
Recruitment, I, p. 107.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, p. 107.
Sickness, no payment during, II, 1350.
Wages, I, p. 107; II, 1327–34, 1343–4.
Women, employment, II, 1319–22.

URYANARAYANA, R., Member, Servants of India Society, Calicut, I, pp. 308–321.
Commissioner of Labour, I, p. 319.
Contract work, I, p. 310.
Co-operative societies, I, p. 316.
Factory inspection, I, p. 319.
Factory legislation, I, pp. 319, 320.
Fair Wages Clause, I, p. 316.
Health:
Industrial workers, maternity benefits, I, pp. 311–2.
Plantations, I, p. 310–2.
Hours:
...ndustries, I, pp. 312–3.
Plantations, I, p. 313.
Indebtedness, I, pp. 315–6.
Indian States, I, p. 319.
Inspection of plantations, I, p. 321.
International Labour Conventions, I, p. 318.
Labour questions, Government attitude, I, pp. 318–9.
Labour representation, I, p. 318.
Land, pressure of population on, I, p. 308.
Land tenure, I, p. 308.
Leave, I, p. 316.
Provident funds and gratuity systems, I, p. 312.
Recruitment:
for Assam, I, p. 309.
Industries, I, p. 319.
from Malabar, I, p. 308.
Plantations, I, pp. 308–9.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, plantations, I, p. 310.

SURYANARAYANA, R., Member, Servants of India Society, Calicut, I, pp. 303–321. —*continued.*
Sickness insurance, I, p. 311.
Unemployment, I, pp. 309–10.
Unemployment insurance, I, p. 310.
Trade combinations, I, pp. 316–7.
Wages :
Industries, I, p. 314–6.
Plantations, I, p. 310, 314–5.
Welfare, I, p. 312.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 321.

Sweated and unorganised industries :
see also particular industries, and **Factories Act.**
Conditions in, *P. J. Thomas*, I, p. 93.
Investigation of conditions of labour in, *P. J. Thomas*, I, p. 94, II, 1009–13, 1019–27, 1053–61, 1068–9.
better Premises, compulsory provision by employers advocated, *P. J. Thomas*, II, 1039–44, 1081–3.
Regulation, need for, *P. J. Thomas*, I, p. 94, II, 1014–8.

Tanneries :
Conditions of labour in, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 131–2 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247 ; *S. Pillai*, II, 1775–1819.
special Committee of investigation advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 247.
Inclusion under Factories Act advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243, (*Ayyangar*), II, 4465.

Tea Districts Labour Association, local agents, *see* **STEELE, Capt. F. R.,** I, pp. 77–81 ; II, 241–381, and **DRIVER, L. S.,** II, 241–381.

THANGAMANI, woman worker, Pachamalai Estate, II, 3638–47.
Thaymudi Estate, conditions on, *workers*, II, 4128–66 ; *Schwinde, Johnson* II, 4167–4214.

THIMMAYYA Punja, P. R., I, pp. 346–51.
Accidents, I, p. 349.
Attendance registers, I, p. 347.
Contract work, I, p. 347.
Coorg Labour Act, I, pp. 350–1.
Coorg plantations, general particulars, I, p. 346.
Diseases, I, pp. 347, 348.
Education, I, p. 349.
Employers, relations with employed, I, p. 349.
Gambling, I, p. 349.
Health and medical facilities, I, pp. 347–8.
Hours, I, p. 350.
Housing, I, p. 347.
Indebtedness, I, p. 350.
Jumma coolies, I, p. 346.
Leave and holidays, I, p. 350.
Old age and premature retirement, I, p. 349.
Recruitment, I, pp. 346–7.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, p. 348.
Trade combinations, I, p. 350.
Wages, I, pp. 346, 350, 351.
Welfare, I, p. 349.
Workmen's Breach of Contract Act, I, p. 350.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, pp. 349–50.

THOMAS, E. F., Collector and District Magistrate, Coimbatore : II, 4535–4613.
Criminal Procedure Code, section 144, orders under, II, 4587–607, 4613.
Health, plantations, inspection, II, 4610–2.
Plantations, complaints by workers, facilities, II, 4558, 4560.
Recruitment, plantations, II, 4540–57, 4561–80, 4581–6, 4608–9.

)MAS, P. J., M.A., B.Litt., Ph.D., Professor of Economics, University of Madras :
, pp. 93–4 ; II, 1006–84.
Children, employment of, I, pp. 93–4 ; II, 1018, 1035–8 ; 1083.
Cost of living inquiry, II, 1047–52, 1075–6.
Economic inquiries, II, 1077–8, 1084.
Home work, I, pp. 93–4 ; II, 1014–8, 1031–4.
Madras University, diploma and course in Rural and Social Economics, I, p. 94 ; II, 1007–13, 1053–64, 1068–73.
Sweated and unorganised industries :
Conditions in, and proposed regulation, I, pp. 93–4 ; II, 1014–8, 1065–7, 1082.
Investigation of conditions in, I, p. 94 ; II, 1019–27, 1053–61, 1068–9.
Premises, II, 1039–44, 1081–3.

THORNTON, Major F. E., I.M.S., Civil Surgeon, Coorg, *see* **PRIESTLY, G. W., I.C.S.,** etc. : II, 5087–5181.

TIPPING, P. J., Coorg Planters' Association, *see* **MORGAN, J. S. H.,** etc., I, pp. 341–3 ; II, 4736–96.

Trade Boards :
Advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222 ; *Ranja*, I, p. 328.
Advocated in certain industries, mainly sports work and carpet factories in certain districts, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119 ; II, 1511–4.
Advocated for industries where very low wages paid, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219.

Trade combinations :
Coir yarn industry, *Cochin Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 273.
Employees, *see* **Trade Unions.**
Employers : *Government*, I, p. 20.
Activities, *Government*, I, p. 20.
Ease of, and Government encouragement, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 316.
Public Works Department, none, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 334.
Unorganised, tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 131.
Plantations :
Employees, none, *Thimmaya*, I, p. 350.
Indian planters, none, *Thimmaya*, I, p. 350.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 269 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 293.
Trade Unions, *see that title.*

Trade Disputes Act :
Amendments, probably necessary, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111.
Application by union or unorganised workers direct to local government under, possible, *Gray*, II, 2977.
Delay in passing, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 318.
Delay in putting into operation, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 177, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2634–7.
Drawbacks, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 120.
not Necessary, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 334.
Opinions re, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222.
no Rules yet framed under, *Government*, I, p. 22 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 319.
not Suitable, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 66.
probable Value of, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 154.

Trade Union Movement :
Nature of, in Southern India, *Employers' Federation of Southern India*, I, p. 210.
Popularity among workers in Southern India, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 174, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2592.
Progress, *Gray*, II, 3029–32.
Requirements for success of, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 246.

Trade Unions :
Access to records of firm to investigate alleged grievances advocated, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 125, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1599–603.
Activities, *Government*, I, p. 20 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 317.
Political propaganda the bulk of, *Employers' Federation of Southern India*, I, p. 210.

Trade Unions :—*continued.*
Advisory boards composed of outsiders, no objection to, if functions carefully laid down, *Wood*, II, 3197–203.
Beneficial to workers on the whole but injury from uncalled-for strikes, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 221.
Coimbatore :
Formerly, *Stanes and Co.*, I, p. 239.
Resuscitation, would be recognised if representative of the workpeople, *Stanes and Co.*, I, p. 239, (*Winter*), II, 3606–18.
Coir yarn industry, *Cochin Chamber of Commerce*, I, p. 273.
Desire for, but opposition of employers, *workers*, II, 664–6.
Difficulties and Government attitude *re*, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 316.
Effects, *Government*, I, p. 20.
Employers' attitude towards, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 120; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 334; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 151; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 174; *Shiva Rao*, I, p. 202; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 317; *C. G. Menon*, II, 1425–8.
Encouragement of formation of, on proper lines advocated, *Ubhaya*, I, p. 72.
Executive, outsiders on :
as Advisers advocated rather than, *Wood*, II, 3148–51.
Decrease, and factors tending to, *Employers' Federation of Southern India*, I, p. 210.
50 per cent. excessive, in case of large unions, *Wood*, II, 3103–7, 3152–3.
Large extent of, and drawback of, *Employers' Federation of Southern India*, I, p. 210.
no Objection to a few if not well known political agitators, *Employers' Federation of Southern India*, I, p. 210, (*Wood*), II, 3100–2.
no Objection to, if desired by workers, *Ubaidullah*, II, 3278–9.
Objections to, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 151, 153, (*Hargreaves, Bentley*), II, 1666–8, 1970–5, 1984, 2051–6, 2073–6; *Winter*, II, 3606–18.
Proportion of, and reduction advocated, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 120; (*Menon*), II, 1382, 1423–4, 1429–30, 1437–9.
Proportion and reduction should be considered, *Government*, I, p. 21, (*Leach*), II, 2688–9.
Government concerns, Government attitude *re*, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 317.
Government employees should be free to form, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 317.
Government servants, prohibition of becoming or continuing members of registered trade union, *Gray*, I, p. 21, II, 2877–81.
Ill-organised and ill-controlled, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108, (*C. G. Menon*), II, 1384–5, 1420–2, 1434.
non-Joining of, for fear of dismissal, *worker*, II, 3584.
Liaison between Labour Commissioner, Co-operative Department and, advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 246.
Membership :
Dissuading of workers from, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 165.
Eviction from houses owned by Binny & Co. for, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 168.
Fear of joining Unions owing to victimisation, *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, 1592, 1696–7.
Negotiations with employers, outsiders as intermediaries, *Employers' Fed. of S.I.*, I, pp. 210–1.
None, in Coorg, *Commissioner*, I, p. 340.
for Particular classes of workers desired, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4359, 4363.
Plantations :
Advocated, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, I, p. 255.
not Necessary and objection to establishment of, *Pinches*, II, 2302, 2304, 2418–20.
Organiser coming on to estate would be objected to but no objection to union run by labourers themselves, *Sampson*, II, 3860–4.
Organisation of, not considered, *Jones*, II, 4125–7.
Police attitude, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 130, II, 1758.
Recognition :
Position, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 210.
of Registered unions, compulsory, proposals, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90; *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, p. 92; *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 125; (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*), II, 1665; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 175, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 246, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4359–63, 4431; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 317; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 334.

Trade Unions :—*continued.*
Registered :
History of individual unions, *Gray*, I, pp. 37–50.
List of, with membership, *Gray*, I, pp. 20, 37.
Returns, non receipt of, proceedings *re*, *Gray*, II, 3051–2.
Registration :
Application on, procedure on receipt of, *Gray*, II, 3049.
Encouragement of, *Gray*, II, 3053–4.
Registrar should satisfy himself that union applying for, is bona fide, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 175.
Results of, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 210; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 334.
Representatives on legislatures, right to elect, advocated, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 90; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 178.
Rival bodies, practice of firms in institutions, abolition advocated, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 125; *V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1596–7, 1676.
Scope for, and possible extent, *Government*, I, p. 20.
Spirit of combination gradually developing, *Menon*, I, p. 288.
Unregistered, particulars of individual unions, *Gray*, I, pp. 50–4.
Value of, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 154.
Victimisation of members [illegible] *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 246; [illegible] *Workers' Union*, (*V. M. Mudaliar*), II, 1604–11, 1661–4, 1672; *Shiva Rao*, II, 2493.

Trade Unions Act :
Administration, staff, *Gray*, II, 2766.
Amendments, proposals, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 120.
Delay in passing, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 318.
Effects of, I, p. 21; *Gray*, II, 3048; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 317.
Extension to unregistered unions, not necessary or desirable, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 153.
Utilisation, extent of, *Government*, I, p. 21; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 222; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 334.
Working of, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 153.

Trade Union Congress, Government representation, nature of, (*Shiva Rao*), I, p. 197; II, 2487–90.

Trade Union Congress, Glasgow, Memorandum to, on behalf of labour in Madras, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 182–3.

Tuberculosis, *see under* **Diseases.**

Tuticorin Harbour Meeting, attempt to bead workers away from, *Rodriguez*, I, 739–45.

TUTICORIN LABOUR UNION :
Attitude of manager of Madura Mills, I, p. 90, (*Rodriguez*), II, 681–92, 748.
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **RODRIGUEZ, J. P.**; **PILLAI, Sankaranaraina**; and **PILLAI, Kandaswami** : II, 647–763.
Executive of, *Rodriguez, K. Pillai, S. Pillai*, II, 755–61.
Members, desire that membership should be confidential, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89, (*Rodriguez*), II, 656, 730.
Membership, *Rodriguez*, II, 648–51, 762–3.
Memorandum, I, pp. 88–90.
Objects of, *Rodriguez*, II, 652–3.
Police attempts to prevent people joining, *Rodriguez*, II, 682–92, 752–4.
Recognition, desire for, *Rodriguez*, II, 657–60, 731–4.

UBAIDULLAH, Muhammad, representative of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union : I, p. 211–24, II, 3223–3304.
Absenteeism, I, pp. 211, 219; II, 3240, 3272–3.
Apprenticeship, I, p. 218.
Attendance and time keeping, I, p. 213.
Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union, I, p. 222; II, 3231, 3238–9, 3241–8, 3276, 3292–4.
Children, employment of, I, p. 218.

UBAIDULLAH, Muhammad, representative of the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union: I, pp. 211-24; II, 3223-3304—*continued.*
Cost of living, I, p. 219; II, 3285-7.
Diseases, I, p. 214.
Education, I, p. 212, 216.
Factories Act, I, p. 218.
Factory inspection, I, p. 222.
Fair wages clause, I, p. 220.
Gratuity system, I, p. 220; II, 3283-4.
Health, I, pp. 213-5.
Sickness insurance, I, pp. 214, 259; II, 3232-3.
Hours, I, pp. 217-8, 221; II, 3234-7, 3257, 3269-70.
Housing, I, p. 213; II, 3262-3.
Indebtedness, I, p. 220; II, 3288-90.
Industrial disputes, I, pp. 211, 222, 223, 224.
Industrial efficiency, I, pp. 220-1; II, 3225.
Intelligence, I, p. 222.
Labour commissioner, I, p. 222.
Labour legislation, I, p. 222.
Madras Labour Union, I, p. 223
Mills, temperature and humi
Pension fund, I, p. 216.
Recruitment, I, pp. 211, 212; II, 3258, 3274-5, 3282.
Safety, I, pp. 216-7.
Sanitary arrangements, and water supply, I, pp. 213, 214.
Staff:
Relations with rank and file, I, p. 212; II, 3226
Selection, I, p. 212; II, 3256.
Staff organization, I, p. 212.
Trade Disputes Act, I, p. 222.
Trade Union Act, I, p. 222.
Trade Unions, I, pp. 221-2; II, 3278-9.
Unemployment insurance, I, p. 211; II, 3259.
Wages, I, pp. 213, 218-20; II, 3280-1.
Welfare Committee, I, pp. 212, 215-6; II, 3228-31, 3249-55, 3259-6
Welfare work, I, pp. 215-6; II, 3264-8, 3295-304.
Women, employment of, I, p. 215.
Workmen's Compensation Act, I, p. 217; II, 3223-4.
Workshops Act, II, 3271.
Works Committees or, Councils, I, p. 213.

UBHAYA, Captain N. R., D.P.H., I.M.S., Director of Public Health: I, pp. II, 2850-3070.
Arbitration boards, I, p. 72.
Co-operative banks, etc., I, p. 73.
Diseases, I, p. 71; II, 2802-6, 2928.
Factories Act, I, pp. 73-4.
Health:
Births and deaths, I, 69-70.
Comparative mortality among industrial and non-industrial popu investigation, I, p. 73; II, 2938-9.
Death rate, Madras, II, 2807.
Dietary, I, p. 70; II, 2929-30.
General conditions, I, p. 70.
Maternity benefits, I, pp. 71, 72.
Medical facilities, I, p. 70, 72.
Midwives and dais, II, 2932-3.
Physique, I, p. 70.
Planting areas, I, p. 71; II, 2801, 2928.
Sex ratios, I, p. 70.
Record keeping, I, pp. 73, 74.
Women doctors, I, p. 70; II, 2931.
Home work, I, p. 70.
Hours, I, p. 73.
Housing, I, pp. 69, 72; II, 2789-94.
Industrial disputes, I, p. 73.
Industrial Hygiene, Bureau of, I, pp. 71-2, 73.
Insurance Act, I, p. 72.

UBHAYA, Captain N. R., D.P.H., I.M.S., Director of Public Health; I, pp. 68-74; II, 2850-3070—*continued.*
Labour, supervision of, I, p. 71.
Land, insufficiency of, to support number of people dependent on, II, 2934-6.
Provident fund, I, p. 73.
Recruitment, I, pp. 68, 72.
Safety, I, p. 71.
Sanitary arrangements and water supply, I, pp. 69, 71.
Trade Unions, I, p. 72.
Wages, I, p. 73.
Welfare, I, pp. 71, 73.
Women, employment, I, pp. 71, 72.
Workmen Compensation Act, I, p. 72.

nployment:
ultural labour:
t Certain periods, *Menon*, I, p. 288.
tent of, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61.
Problem except in seasons of scarcity, etc., *Paddison*, I, p. 5.
isness of, and means of remedying, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 108.
ersion to work, Gunupur, *Anderson*, I, p. 272.
adras Labour Union, I, p. 165; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 204.
student class and causes, and remedy, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, 205, (*Wood*), II, 3175-6.
it of small number of efficient workers and payment of good wages to employment of greater number at lower wages, *Shiva Rao*, 73.
ated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 113; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, 283; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329.
cated but workers unable to contribute, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 165.
gricultural labour, possibility of, and scheme, *Ranga*, I, p. 324.
Difficulty, but proposal, *Ranga*, I, pp. 324, 328.
National scheme advocated, and workers would agree to contribute, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 211, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3259.
not Necessary or desirable, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 205, (*Wood*), II, 3090.
not Practicable at present, but would not be opposed if possible, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 133, (*Hargreaves*), II, 2124.
nternational Conventions, application of:
Advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 283.
Advocated as far as possible, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 310.
Unnecessary, *Government*, I, p. 8.
Manual workers, agricultural development desirable as remedy, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 205, (*Wood*), II, 3174, 3177-82.
Measures for remedying, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 61.
Nature and extent of, *Government*, I, p. 8, (*Gray*), II, 2864, 3009-11; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 109; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 112; *Binny and Co.*, p. 133, (*Hargreaves*), II, 1882-4, 2123; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 165; *Madras Aluminium Workers' Union*, I, p. 283; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 329.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 263.
tate measures re, advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, pp. 309-10.

ED PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN INDIA:
Evidence on behalf of, *see* **BARBER, Sir Fairless; PINCHES, H. L.; CONGREVE, C. R. T.; BROCK, Lt. Col. C. H.;** and **JAMES, F. E.,** II, 2149-2437.
Activities, I, p. 154.
Areas under cultivation and chief products, I, p. 155.
Conditions on gardens not belonging to, *Pinches*, II, 2377-80.
Foundation, object etc., I, p. 154.
Memorandum, I, pp. 154-164.
Policy not laid down by, *Pinches*, II, 2374-5, 2381; *Barber*, II, 2334.
Representation on Legislative Councils, I, p. 155.
Value of work, I, p. 160.

LIAMMAL, woman worker, Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Mill, II, 3579.

Venereal diseases, *see under* **Diseases.**

Vetti system of labour, *see under* **Labour.**

VIKRAMA DEO VARMA MAHASAYA, *Sriman Sree,* Vizagapatam : I, pp. 76 II, 157-240.
Assam, recruitment for, from Agency tracts, evils of, and prohibition advoca I, pp. 76–7 ; II, 170–240.
Burma, recruitment for, II, 180–1, 226.
Labour :
Goti system, II, 163–6, 169. 185–6, 227–30.
Khambari system, II, 167, 169.
Vetti system, II, 160–2, 169.
Rajpur railway, labour, I, pp. 76–7, II, 236–40.
Wages, II, 189–91, 198

Village officers, collection of information by, with organization for cher dissemination of information, proposal, *Menon,* II, 1367–72.

Vizagapatam district, recruitment of labour from, *Bracken,* I, pp. 81–2 *Raju,* I, pp. 295–6.

Vizagapatam Harbour Works, conditions of work, etc, *workers'* evider *Ash, etc.,* I, pp. 82–8; II, 518–636.

VYRAHVAN, worker, Madura Mills, II, 642–6.

WADIA, Nadirshaw Cowasjee, Manager, the New Cotton Gin and Tiruppur : I, pp. 335–7.
Clerical classes, I, p. 335.
Co-operative Societies, I, p. 335.
Factories Act, I, p. 337.
Factory inspection, I, p. 337.
Hours, seasonal factories, I, p. 337.
Indian States, I, p. 337.
Wages, I, pp. 336–7.

Wages, agricultural labour :
Chanamulu system of payment, *Ranga,* I, p. 324.
Increase, *Ranga,* I, p. 326.
Rates and earnings, *Paddison,* I, p. 4 ; *Azariah,* I, p. 124 ; *Binny &* p. 147 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union,* I, p. 219 ; *Co Labour Union,* I, p. 243 ; *Ranga,* I, p. 326 ; *Austin,* II, 6–8 ; *G* 2735–6.

Wages, industrial workers :
Adequacy, question of, *Hargreaves,* II, 2078–9 ; *Gray,* II, 2921–4.
Advances, average amounts, *Holden,* II, 356.
Attachment of, by creditors, cases, of, in clerical sta *Wood,* II, 3112.
Bidi industry, *1929 Madras League of Youth,* I, p. 97, (*Arasu*), II, 113 *Madras Representative Christian Council,* I, p. 102, (*Ramaseshan*) II, 12 *Isaac* II, p. 338.
Bonus :
during Boom periods, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mill* I, p. 280.
Madras port trust and harbour workers, advocated for, *Kotiswar* I, p. 128.
None, *Tuticorin Labour Union,* I, p. 90.
Payment when justified by profits, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.,* I, p. 209.
Production, tentative scheme, printing, *Green,* I, p. 268.
Regular attendance, *worker,* II, 3584.
Some factories, *Menon,* I, p. 288.
former System of, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union,* I, p. 286.
Vizagapatam Harbour works, system, *Ash,* I, p. 84 ; II, 544–7.
Bonus and profit sharing schemes :
Advocated, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union,* I, p. 286.
Advocated wherever possible, *Buckingham and Carnatic* *Union,* I, p. 220.
None, *Coimbatore Labour Union,* I, p. 245.
proposed Scheme, *Suryanarayana,* I, p. 316. p. 128

290

Wages, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Bonus and profit sharing schemes :—*continued.*
Strikes prevented by, and criticism of, *Madras Labour Union,* I, p. 175.
System, *Binny and Co.,* I, pp. 147, 149 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union,* I, p. 220.
Changes, labour supply not affected by, *Coimbatore Labour Union,* I, p. 244.
Coir yarn industry, *Cochin Chamber of Commerce,* I, p. 273.
Comparison with agricultural districts, *Azariah,* I, p. 124 ; II, 1558 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.,* I, p. 208 ; *V. K. Menon,* I, p. 288 ; *Paul,* I, pp. 301–2.
comparison with wages outside factories and in agricultural areas, *Suryanarayana,* I, p. 314.
Concession in addition to cash wages and value of, *Binny and Co.,* I, p. 147 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union,* I, p. 219, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3280–1.
Cordite factory, Aruvankadu, and hill allowance advocated, *Powell,* I, p. 258–9.
Decrease in weaving mills, *Coimbatore Labour Union,* I, p. 244.
Deductions :
for Absence, *P.W.D. Workers' Union,* I, p. 333 ; *Holden,* II, 3571.
for Absence or lateness, *Coimbatore Labour Union,* I, p. 244 ; *worker,* II, 641.
Excessive and proposal re, *Kotiswaran,* I, pp. 129, 130.
Carnatic mill, former system, *Madras Labour Union,* I, p. 173.
not Common, *Menon,* I, p. 288.
Fines :
Excessive, system of, and proposal, match factory, *Kotiswaran,* I, p. 13; II, 1744.
Extent of, *Government,* I, p. 19 ; *Cartledge,* I, p. 59 ; *Ayyar Avargal,* I, p. 64 ; *Binny and Co.,* I, p. 148 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.,* I, p. 209, (*Wood*), II, 3163 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employers' Union,* I, p. 219 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.,* I, p. 280 ; *P.W.D. Workers' Union,* I, p. 333 ; *Cheshire,* II, 3620 ; *Armstrong,* I, p. 277.
Government Press, *Green,* I, pp. 267–8 ; *Basudev,* I, p. 292.
Indirect methods, *Madras Labour Union,* I, 173.
for Late attendance, *worker,* II, 3584.
Proposal, Madras port and harbour, *Kotiswaran,* I, p. 128.
Legislation :
Advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union,* I, p. 219.
not Desirable, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.,* I, p. 209.
neither Desirable or practicable, *Government,* I, p. 19.
not considered Necessary, *Binny and Co.,* I, p. 148.
Limit of 0·6 of wages paid, impracticability of, *Wood,* II, 3162–4.
Necessary means of punishment, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.,* I, p. 111.
None, on daily labourers in seasonal factories, *Azariah,* I, p. 124.
Reasons for, *Cartledge,* I, p. 59 ; *Mudkhlar,* I, p. 119 ; *Binny and Co.,* I, p. 148 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union,* I, p. 244 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.,* I, p. 280 ; *workers,* II, 3583–4 ; *Holden,* II, 3541–4 ; *Cheshire,* II, 3621.
Reduction, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union,* I, p. 219.
Regulation of :
Advocated, *Madras Labour Union,* I, p. 174 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union,* I, pp. 244–5, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4469.
Consultation with workers advocated, *Suryanarayana,* I, p. 315.
Small and rare, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.,* I, p. 111.
System of, *S. R. V. Naidu,* I, p. 92, II, 875–7 ; *Cheshire,* 3619–21.
Tanneries, *S. Pillai,* II, 1793.
Utilisation :
for Benefit or workers, *Government,* I, p. 19 ; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.,* I, p. 111, (*C. G. Menon*), II, 1436 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.,* I, p. 209.
Advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union,* I, p. 245, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4470–2 ; *Madras Aluminium Workers' Union,* I, p. 286 ; *Suryanarayana,* I, p. 315 ; *P.W.D. Workers' Union,* I, p. 332.
Charity purposes, generally, *Ayyar Avargal,* I, p. 64.
put to Firm's account, *Holden,* II, 3543.
to Gratuity fund, usually, *Cartledge,* I, p. 59 ; *Binny and Co.,* I, p. 148.

Wages, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Deductions :—*continued.*
Fines :—*continued.*
Utilization :—*continued.*
Gratuity fund, said to be credited to, *Buckingham and Carna Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 277.
Treatment as part of revenue, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119.
Forms of, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.* I, p. 209.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 277.
Nature of, Government Press, *Basudev*, I, p. 292.
None, mica mines, Nellore, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 262.
Tramway conductors, for shortages, *Voegeli-Arya*, II, 1355.
Demands, Madras port and harbour, *Kotiswaran*, I, pp. 128, 129.
Earnings, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 147, (*Bentley*), II, 2082–4 ; *S. Pillai*, II, I *Aiyar*, II, 2148 ; *workers*, II. 3579, 3580, 3581, 3584.
Effect of comparative high wages, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 148.
Fixing of :
Four weeks a month and thirteen months a year, proposal, *Wadia*, pp. 336–7.
Method, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 148 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 20 *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244 ; *Madras United Spinning a Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280 ; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333
no Particular method, *Suryanarayana*, I. p. 315.
no Uniform method, *Government*, I, p. 18.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *Ash*, I, p. 93.
Fixing of, for *mundi* and *bidi* workers advocated, I, p. 339.
Full day's payment for absence due to injury in workshop advocated, *Kotiswara* I, p. 129.
Goods produced, purchase at cost price, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209.
Government Press, *Green*, I, p. 267 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 291.
Grievances, *Basudev*, I, pp. 291–2.
Grade system advocated :
Madras Port Trust and Harbour workers, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128.
Public Works Department, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333.
for Tramways, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corpor Employees' Union*, I, p. 107, (*Voegeli-Arya*), II, 1332–4.
Highest in India, *Hargreaves*, II, 1944.
Inadequacy of, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 88, (*Rodriguez*), II, 654–5, 676 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4478–9 ; *Ranga*, I, p. 326 ; *workers*, II, 638, 641.
Increase : *Government*, I, p. 18 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 64 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 147 ; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 173 ; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280 ; *Ranga*, I, p. 326.
Advocated, *Kotiswaran*, I. pp. 128, 130 ; *Basudev*, I, pp. 291–2.
Application by union, *Bentley*, II, 1856–9 ; *Hargreaves*, II, 1943.
in Excess of increase in cost of living, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 2 II, 3098–9.
no Effect on standard of living, *Madras United Spinning and Wea Mills Co.*, I, p. 281.
Printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 267.
but not Proportionate to increase in cost of living, P.W.D. Departm *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333.
as Result of introduction of automatic looms, *Bentley*, II, 2001–2.
by 75 per cent. necessary, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, pp. 88, 90.
Supply of labour in excess of demand owing to, *Buckingham and Carna Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219.
Tanneries, *S. Pillai*, II, 1818–9.
Increment system, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 146, (*Hargreaves*), II, 2080–1.
Jeypore agency, *Vikrama Deo Varma Mahasaya*, II, 189–91, 198.
Kind, payment in, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119 ; *Green*, I, p. 267.
Scheme for, *Wadia*, I, p. 336.
Loan fund, Kaleeswarai mills, *Holden*, II, 3552–5, 3565–8 ; *Coimbator Union*, I, p. 246, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4394–9.
Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union, I, p. 334.
Madras Port Trust, *Armstrong*, I, p. 277.
Madras Port trust and harbour workers, grievances, *Kotiswara*

Wages, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Maistries, S. R. V. Naidu, I. p. 92.
Minimum :
Rs. 50 advocated, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107 ; (*Voegeli-Arya*), II, 1330–1.
Advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 173 ; (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2534–8 ; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244 ; (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4468 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 286.
Advocated, with Wages Board on lines of English National Board, *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333.
Basis :
Ability of industry to pay advocated, rather than local agricultural rates, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 102 ; (*Krishnaswamy*), II, 1261, 1287.
Question of, *Gray*, II, 2871–4.
Bibi industry :
Advocated, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 102.
Possible but not necessary if brought under Factories Act, *Arasu*, II, 1129, 1133–4.
Desirable, but should be by districts and according to ability of industries and trades, *Menon*, II, 1412–5.
Desirable at present, *V. K. Menon*, I, p. 288.
for Different industries advocated and proposed machinery, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 315 ; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333.
Difficulty, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 148.
Dismissal of older and less efficient workers would follow, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209, (*Wood*), II, 3115–20.
Dock workers, advocated, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128 ; II, 1759.
Enquiries by Economic Enquiry Boards advocated with view to, *Ranga*, I, p. 326.
Groundnuts, workers with, in Madras harbour, advocated, *Madras Representative Christian Council*, I, p. 102, (*Krishnaswamy*), II, 1288–9
Impossibility of, *Government*, I, p. 19 ; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 64.
Inadvisability, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209.
Printing trade, not practicable, *Green*, I, p. 267.
Scheme, *Krishnaswamy*, II, 1284–7.
Schemes premature, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111.
Standard living wages advocated, *Madras Electric Tramway and Electric Supply Corporation Employees' Union*, I, p. 107, (*Voegeli-Arya*), II, 1327–9.
Miscalculation :
Choolai mills, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 166 ; *Aiyar*, II, 2143.
no Complaint of, Buckingham and Carnatic mills, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 166.
Monthly system advocated in place of piece work unless payment for waiting time, match factory, *Kotiswaran* I, p. 131, II, 1741–3.
Mundi shops, *Isaac*, I. p. 338.
Movements, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 314.
Night work, twice ordinary rate advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244.
Overtime and Sunday work :
Mukhtar, I, p. 119 ; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 148, (*Bentley*), II, 2110–5 ; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219 ; *Green*, I, p. 267 ; *Basudev*, I, p. 292 ; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280 ; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 286.
no Definite bases, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 315.
no Extra pay for overtime, *Madras Corporation Workshop Labour Union*, I, p. 334.
Government Press, increase advocated, *Basudev*, I, p. 292.
Payment for Sunday holiday advocated, *Ranga*, I, pp. 326, 328 ; *Kotiswaran*, I, pp. 129, 131.
Rates advocated, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128 ; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 315.
no Specific provision for, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244.
Overtime and work outside normal hours, payment in accordance with Factory Act, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209.
Payment :
in Cash by employers, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219.
in Cash by manager or cashier, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 205.

ages, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Payment :—*continued.*
by Clerical staff in many cases and bribery and corruption owing to, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 113.
Day, proposal, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 131.
Delay :
no Grievance, *Menon*, I, p. 288.
Legislation for prevention of :
Advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 315.
Considered, but volume of opinion against, *Government*, I. p. 19, (*Cartledge*), II, 2876.
Measures proposed for preventing, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 245.
Prevention advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 174.
Unnecessary, no evidence of, I, p. 209.
Fixed day for, proposal, Madras port and harbour, *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 128
Fortnightly :
Advocated, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 245, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*) II, 4473–4.
Desired by majority of workers, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2531–2.
Difficulty, *Hargreaves, Bentley*, II, 2064–9.
Legislation advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 220.
Methods, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 136, (*Hargreaves, Bentley*), II, 1885–6, 1898; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 173; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 213; *Armstrong*, I, p. 274; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 279; *Menon*, I., p. 288; *Basudev*, I, p. 290; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 330.
Monthly :
Preference of workers for, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209; *Cartledge*, II, 2875.
Suitability of, *Green*, I, p. 267.
Periods of, *Government*, I. p. 19; *Cartledge*, I. p. 59; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 64; *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111; *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119; *Azariah*, I, p. 124; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 148; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 174 *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 220; *Green*, I, p. 268; *Cochin Chamber Commerce*, I, p. 273; *Armstrong*, I, p. 277; *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280; *Madras Aluminium Labour Union* I, p. 286; *Menon*, I, p. 288; *Basudev*, I, p. 292; *P.W.D. Worker Union*, I, p. 333; *Aiyar*, II, 2143; *Wood*, II, 3170; *Holden*, II, 3539–41.
Legislation :
Advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 315.
Considerations re, *Binny and Co.*, I, pp. 148–9.
not Necessary, *Government*, I, p. 34.
Vizagapatam Harbour Works, *worker*, II, 517a.
Persons paying, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 62.
on Production basis, illegitimate adjustment of indicators, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280.
by Proprietors or Kumasthas, tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132.
Weekly, advocated, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 315.
Weekly advances and settlement of pay on first week of next mon proposal, *Wadia*, I, p. 336.
Weekly or fortnightly advocated, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 174.
Piece work rates :
Alteration without knowledge of workers, Choolai mills, *Madras Labour Union*, I. p. 167.
Fixing of, *Bentley, Hargreaves*, II, 2085–9.
Government Press, objections to, and abolition advocated, *Basudev*, I, pp. 289, 290, 291.
Introduction in all departments would increase production, *Bentley II*, 2132-5.
Kaleeswar Mills, Coimbatore, *Holden*, II, 3534.
Match factory, Kotiswaran, I, p. 131.
Preparation, etc., *Ayyar Avargal*, I, pp. 61–2.
Printing trade, Green, I, p. 267; *Mudaliar*, I, p. 339.
no Profit-sharing schemes, *Government*, I, p. 19.
no Profit-sharing or co-partnership schemes, might be advantageous but not at present, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*, I, p. 111, (*G. C. Menon*), II, 1416–9.
Profits, little relation to, *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 314.

Wages, industrial workers :—*continued.*
Quinquennial census, taking of, *Gray*, II, 2764, 2766.
Rates, *Government*, I, p. 18; *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 88; *S. R. V. Naidu*, I, pp. 90–1, 92; II, 840–8, 862; *Kotiswaran*, I, p. 130; *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 146; *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 208; *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 218; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243; *Madras Aluminium*, I, p. 286; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I., p. 332; *workers*, II, 637, p. 61; *Aiyar*, II, 2141.
Reduction, *Madras Aluminium Labour Union*, I, p. 286; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 246, (*Ayyangar*), 4519–22.
Remissions to villages, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219; *Menon*, I, p. 288; *Suryanarayana*, I, p. 314; *worker*, II, 517c.
Decreasing, *Raju*, I, p. 295.
None, *Madras Labour Union*, I., p. 173.
Retention of wages of discharged worker should not be allowed, *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 174.
Rice, etc., supply at cheap rates, *Government*, I, p. 19.
Rice supply by employers :
Abolition desired, co-operative stores advocated instead, *N. S. R. Ayyangar*, II, 4499.
Price compared with bazaar price, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 246, (*Ayyangar*), II
-y and Electric Supply Corporation
Su
Employees' Union, I, p. 107.
-dardisation :
Advocated, *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 65; *Ubhaya*, I, p. 73; *Madras Labour Union*, I, p. 173, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2534–7; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 244, (*N. S. R. Ayyangar*), II, 4466–7.
Extent of, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 219.
None, printing trade, *Green*, I, p. 267.
I, p. 111.
II, 3023–5; *Ayyar Avargal*, I,
Stores, running of, at cheap rates by employers, *Government*, I, p. 19.
Tanneries, *A. Pillai*, I, p. 132; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I p. 243.
Total amount paid to workpeople on account of wages, bonus, gratuity fund, etc., and comparison with net profit, 1922 to 1928, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 146.
Tramways, Madras, *Voegeli-Arya, K. Mudaliar*, II, 1343–4.
Two-loom system :
Choolai Mills, *Madras Labour Union*, I, pp. 170–1, 176, (*Shiva Rao*), II, 2570, 2597–600.
Reduction in production on introduction of, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280.
Two loom and 1½ looms, few on 1 loom, *Howard*, 3596.
Unclaimed :
Credited to charity funds, *Azariah*, I, p. 124.
Crediting to fund to be used for benefit of workers advocated, *Suryanarayana* I, p. 315; *P.W.D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 333.
Holding back of, for period covering legal liability, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209, (*Wood*), II, 3111.
should be Paid after any period and if not claimed utilised for benefit of workers, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 220.
varying Practice re, *Employers' Fedn. of S.I.*, I, p. 209.
Printing trade, reversion to employer, *Green*, I, p. 268.
Rare, *Madras United Spinning and Weaving Mills Co.*, I, p. 280.
Treated as charity fund, *Government*, I, p. 19; *Ayyar Avargal*, I, p. 64.
Treatment of, *Binny and Co.*, I, p. 149.
Utilisation on social and educational activities advocated, *Mukhtar*, I, p. 119.
Unskilled adult, question of adequacy, *Wood*, II, 3216–21.
Vizagapatam Harbour, *Ash*, I, p. 84, II, 540–7, 556–9, 569–71, 591–602; *Smith*, II, 543, 586–90; *workers*, II, 517g, 517h.
Women, lower than men for same work, *Tuticorin Labour Union*, I, p. 89, (*Rodrigues*), II, 704–7.

Wages, mines :
no Complaints heard, *Government*, I, p. 34.
Deductions, none, *Government*, I, p. 34.
Delay in payment, a few complaints, *Government*, I, p. 34.
Foodstuffs and clothing high and supply by a few owners at moderate prices, *Government*, I, p. 33.
Mica mines, Nellore, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 262.
Non-payment, mica mines, Nellore, complaints rare, and action in cases of, *Woodhouse*, I, p. 262.
Periods of payment, *Government*, I, p. 34; *Woodhouse*, I, p. 262.
Rates, *Government*, I, p. 34.
Unclaimed, treatment of, *Government*, I, p. 34.

Wages, Miscellaneous :
Agricultural area, manual labourer, near Coimbatore, *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 243.
Labourers, Coorg, payment in kind, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 346.
Remissions to villages, Coorg, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 345.
Rice fields, payment in kind and cash, *A. B. Chengappa*, I, p. 345.

Wages, oil industry :
Allowance, new rules advocated
Fines, two per cent.
Union, I, p. 127
Grading . . . *M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1614–21, 1706–7.
Rates and ... cas... *M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1614–21, 1706–7.
Minimum ... wage consistent with nature of work advocated, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 126, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*) II, 1659.
Overtime ... ommendations re, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 127
Payment :
on Fixed ...
I, p. 126.
Fortnightly ... II, 3170.
... *M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1717.
Piecework system :
V. M. R. Mudaliar, II, 1633–7, 1715.
Conditions advocated, *Kerosene Oil Workers' Union*, I, p. 126, (*V. M. R. Mudaliar*, II, 1633–7, 1715.
periodical Revision by joint committee, proposed provision for, *Kerosene Workers' Union*, I, p. 126.

Wages, plantations :
Accounts, position re information to labourers, *Sprott*, II, 4724, 4736.
Adequacy, question of, *Pinches*, 2291–2; *Ganapaiah*, II, 5034–5, 5073–5.
Advances :
Abolition :
Advocated, I, p. 254.
Desirable, *Subbayya*, I, p. 352.
Desirable but collective action necessary, *Jones*, II, 3982–5, 3987.
Desired but impossible, *Morgan*, II, 4772–3.
Recruitment to Ceylon etc., must be taken into consideration, *Jones*, II, 3984, 3987.
Agreements :
Abolition of, workers told of, *maistry*, II, 3664–5.
and Promissory note, doubt if workers know difference, *Thomas*, II, 4547–8.
Signed, *worker*, II, 3649, 3674.
Signed and thumb mark taken, *workers*, II, 3641, 4145.
in Some cases, but generally only pro-notes, *Jones, Martin*, II, 3929–32.
no Agreements or pro-notes now, *Hawke*, II, 3470–5, 3477.
Amount of :
Average, *Jones*, II, 3979–80.
Average increase, *Thimmayya*, I, p. 351.
Discretion of manager, *Tipping*, II, 4773a.

(*N. K. S. Ay...*
Commissioner :
Combination ...
Functions of, *Mi...*
Compensation :
Conditions governing
for Industrial disease, ...
Lump sums *v.* recurring gr...
Ayyangar), II, 1188.
Non-payment of, *S. R. V. N...*
Scales :
Inadequacy of, and proposa...
Increase advocated, *Madras ...*
I, p. 118; *Buckingham and Carna...*
p. 217; *Coimbatore Labour Union*, I, p. 242; ...
Increase for lower paid workmen, advocated, ...
I, p. 110.
Minimum scale in Schedule IV, increase proposed, *Binny*
should not Vary with extent of dependence, *Madras*
I, p. 100.
Compulsory medical examination of injured workman by practitioner as soon as possible after accident, propo... *Lawyers*, I, p. 101, (*N. K. S. Ayyangar*), II, 1180–2.
Conditions, *Gray*, II, 3012–4.

...mayya, I, pp. 349–50.
...ya, I, p. 352, II, 4876–
...9; *Priestly*, II, 5140.
...plantation, and contractor
...and Carnatic Mills Employees

...*W. D. Workers' Union*, I, p. 332.

...for determining, *S.I. Ch. of Comm.*,

Binny and Co., I, p. 144; *Buckingham and*
I, p. 217.
... to Commissioner by dependents proposal,
..., I, p. 100.
... for not paying compensation, proposal, (*Shiva Rao*), II,

...nces, *re*, Madras port and harbour, *Kotiswaran*, I, pp. 128–9, II, 1757.
Information to workers *re*:
proposed Means of, *Madras Panel of Lawyers*, I, p. 101, (*N. K. S. Ayyangar*), II, 1210–5, 1218; *Thimmayya*, I, p. 350.
Propaganda work, *Shiva Rao*, II, 2484.
Initiation of proceedings by Commissioner advocated, *Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Employees' Union*, I, p. 217, (*Ubaidullah*), II, 3223–4.
Inquiry into cases by Commissioner, proposal, *Madras Panel of Lawyers*, I, p. 100, (*N. K. S. Ayyangar*), II, 1179, 1197–9.

End