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(full report missing)

International Labour Office, New Delhi.

Summary of the Report for August, 1931.

I. Reference to the I.L.O.

In an article reproduced in the Indian press, Mr. ^{a member of the recent Royal Commission on labour in India,} John Cliff, says that beginning with the International Labour Conventions adopted in Washington in 1919, the International Labour Office has exerted a considerable and powerful influence upon labour legislation in India and urges that an Advisory Asiatic Labour Conference should be held immediately under the auspices of the International Labour Office. He also demands that propoganda regarding the International Labour Office should be strengthened in India.

In the course of a speech delivered at the ~~Third~~ quarterly general meeting of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Bombay, held on 15 August 1931, Mr. Walchand Hirachand, the President of the Chamber and the employers' delegate to the Fifteenth Labour Conference, made several references to the International Labour Organisation.

(1) He confessed ^{himself} to a sense of disappointment at the experience he had at the International Labour Conference, and expressed doubt if India should any longer usefully continue participating in these Conferences at the expense of an annual contribution of £58,000 besides the cost of sending delegates to the Conference.

(2) Industrial European countries are anxious to see that other countries, particularly the Asiatic ones, which have so far provided good markets for their manufactures, but

which are now trying to develop their own industries, do not benefit by escaping the burden of the social charges which the European industries have to bear. The purpose of the Organisation, as stated by the Treaty of Peace, is to secure common minimum standards of labour throughout the world and so remove the unfair competition which the advanced countries have to face ~~in~~ international trade. The overseas countries are often compelled to accept burdens based on European standards. The economic effects of this being far-reaching, it supplies the necessary atmosphere for suspicion and secret moves and counter-moves. Indian employers cannot any longer allow themselves to be dragged on by the Geneva Organisation.

(3) It is possible that we may be able to derive equal benefit from the work of the International Labour Conference if we have a full-time "observer" who should keep himself in close contact with the questions coming up for discussion at Geneva and report the same to us so that India may introduce them with suitable modifications and alterations. "The point I want to make" he said "is that we should have the freedom to consolidate our economic position in our own way without being in any way fettered by the so-called International Labour Conventions, primarily designed to meet the requirements of European countries."

(4) It may be mentioned that Mr. Forbes Watson, the head of the British employers' delegation, is convinced that the solution of English labour problems is not to be found at Geneva, but that they can be best solved in England itself. It is also noteworthy that two big

countries of the world, the United States of America and Russia, have all along remained outside the Organisation.

In the course of an address at the First Session of the Southern India Port Trust and Dock Workers' Conference, held at Madras on 1 August 1931, Mr. Mudaliar, Chairman of the Reception Committee, stated that in spite of Indian representation at Geneva Conferences since 1919, the conditions of the working classes in India have not improved much. If the Conventions adopted by the Geneva Conferences were brought into force in India in every department of labour, the working classes would be much better off than they were at present.

The report of the Royal Commission of Labour in India which was published early in July 1930, contains numerous references to the International Labour Organisation, regarding (1) the influence exerted by it in stimulating interest in labour matters, (2) in enacting new legislative measures and (3) in undertaking investigation on labour questions. The Commission also proposed the Indian Industrial Council on the model of the International Labour Organisation. (an analysis of the Report has already been sent to the Director).

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2. National labour legislation.

(i) ^{the} Rangoon Labour Housing Bill, 1931.

A Bill for the provision of housing accommodation for labour in Rangoon will shortly be introduced in the Burma Legislative Council. The question of housing

immigrant labourers has long been under consideration and it was examined by a Committee appointed by the local Government in 1926. It has become necessary to provide a shelter or some kind of rest-house for immigrants passing through Rangoon and also to provide barracks primarily for temporary labourers in Rangoon. One of the objects of the Bill is to raise funds for the scheme. It is proposed to utilise the Development Board for the execution of the scheme and hoped that the rest-house and barracks when built will be managed by a Social Service Committee. This Committee would be responsible for the payment of the rent of the sites and for running the buildings as far as possible on a self-supporting basis.

(pp.8-13).

Amendment of Bengal Factories Rule, 1928 (re latrines)

In exercise of the power conferred by section 37 of the Indian Factories Act of 1911, the Government of Bengal had made some amendments in the Bengal Factories Rules regarding sanitation and number of latrines in factories, and also as to separate arrangement of latrines for men and women (p.14).

3. Conditions of labour.

Factory administration in India, 1929. According to the latest statistics the total number of factories rose from 7,863 employing 1,520,315 workers in 1928 to 8,129 employing 1,533,392 workers^{in 1929} (A resumé of this report has been made for the International Labour Review) (pp.15-19)

Factory administration in Bombay, 1930. The total number of factories in Bombay rose from 1,751 to 1,785 in 1929 and the number of workers from 366,029 to 370,704. During the same period the number of women workers increased from 74,924 to 77,965, while the number of children decreased from 4,527 to 4,389. There is a tendency among the employers to replace children by women. Of the 792 perennial factories and 758 seasonal factories, only 14 of the former and 5 of the latter remained uninspected. There were 6,454 accidents as against 6,282 in the year before. 33 mills in Bombay employing 75,000 persons combined to secure a "visual

education service", the object of which was to stimulate the interest of the workers in eliminating factors that adversely affect their health, efficiency or earning capacity or interfere with their individual progress towards a higher standard of living. (pp.20-24)

Factory administration in Madras. There were in Madras 1,661 factories of which 1527 were working; they employed 142,549 workers. There was a slight decrease due to the industrial depression. The number of women workers amounted to 34,982 and of children 6,375. Of the factories working all but 38 were inspected during the year. The number of accidents amounted to 2,164

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Factory administration in C.P. and Berar, 1930. The number of factories in the Central Provinces and Berar rose from 893 to 902, but the number of workers declined from 69,191 to 68,856. The total number of accidents amounted to 303 as against 331 in the year before. (p.28)

Factory administration in Bengal, 1930. The number of registered factories in Bengal stood at 1,555 in 1930 as against 1,482 in 1929, and the number of workers at 563,877 as compared with 589,860. There was a decrease of 25,983 resulting from bad trade and the general depressed state of industry throughout all the world. The number of women declined from 77,966 in 1929 to 73,951 in 1930. During the same period the number of children declined from 23,036 to 16,630. The decline

in the number of children is due to the general tendency among jute mill owners to eliminate children. All factories, except 155 situated in outlying districts, were inspected.

The total number of accidents during the year amounted to 4,182 showing a decrease of 358 accidents as compared with the year before. (pp.29-34)

Factory administration in the Punjab, 1930. The number of factories rose from 613 to 640, but the number of workers decreased from 49,875 to 49,549. All the factories except 42 were inspected during the year. The number of accidents rose from 990 in 1929 to 1298 in 1930. The year under review shows the higher accident percentage for the last ten years, being 2.62 as against 1.99. An analysis of the accidents shows that the increase is chiefly in the minor accidents which number 1,235 as compared with 929 in the year before. (pp.35-38)

Working of the Workmen's Compensation Act in C.P. and Berar, 1930. The total number of accidents for which compensation was paid during the year was 234, of which 22 resulted in death, 26 in permanent disablement and 186 in temporary disablement, as compared with 17, 40 and 179 respectively in 1929. The compensation paid was Rs.8,965 for fatal accidents, Rs.5,830 for permanent disablement and Rs.2,400 for temporary disablement. (p.39).

Standing Board of Conciliation for Mysore. As a result of industrial disputes in Bangalore in July 1931 which culminated in shooting, the Government of Mysore appointed on 1 August 1931 a Standing Board of Conciliation for the settlement of industrial disputes in the State. This appointment may be regarded as a result of the recommendation of the Whitley Commission. The Board will consist of the Labour Commissioner in Mysore as ex officio Chairman, and two members from each group, namely, employers, employees and the public. The Board will recognise all disputes in the State on ~~the~~ representation by ~~the~~ employer or employees or on reference by Government. The purpose of the Board will be to reconcile the dispute. If not, it will send a full report on the facts of the case and its own findings to the Government. (pp.40.41)

Quarterly strike statistics: period ending 30 June 1931.

During the period under review there were 58 disputes involving 82,941 workers and entailing a loss of 623,639 working days. The largest number of disputes took place in Bengal where 20 disputes involved 45,679 workers and entailed the loss of 250,486 working days. Of all the disputes 21 were due to questions of wages, 13 each to those of personnel and those of leave and hours. Only 12 disputes were fully or partially successful. (p.42)

Retrenchment on railways. Threat of the All India Railwaymen's Federation to boycott the Court of Enquiry. As a consequence of the dispute between the All India Railwaymen's Federation and the Railway Board on the question of retrenchment and other subjects, the Government of India appointed a Court of Enquiry on 15 August 1931, and defined the terms of reference. The All India Railwaymen's Federation, which had first asked for the appointment of a Board of Conciliation, was not satisfied with the terms of reference, and demanded an additional term. The Government replied repeating its inability to refer the question of retrenchment to a Board of Conciliation, because the Government of India believed that there was little chance of an agreement on this question. The Council of Action of the All India Trades Union Federation was not pleased with the Government reply, and, at a meeting held on 19 August, recommended the General Council to consider the advisability of appearing before the Court of Enquiry for the ~~exact~~ purpose of seeking an authoritative interpretation of the scope of the terms of reference from the Court itself. Unless the interpretation was satisfactory to the railwaymen, the Council of Action would advise the immediate withdrawal from the Court and the early adoption of all proper steps to implement the resolution of the special Convention for a general strike. The General Council of the All India Railway Confederation met on 29 and 30 August, and endorsed the decision of the Council of Action. (Pp. 43-46).

All India Postal and R.M.S. Union's memorandum regarding retrenchment. The General Secretary of the

All India Postal and R.M.S. Union submitted a comprehensive memorandum embodying the views of the members of the Union on the question of retrenchment which was under discussion by one of the retrenchment committees of the Government. This memorandum showed the top-heaviness of the Administration, asked for the abolition of some superfluous posts, showed how economy could be made under several headings and revenue could be increased by such methods as the sale of old stamps, as is done in other countries. (Pp. 47-48).

4. Industrial organisation.

Thirty-eighth annual meeting of the United Planters' Association of Southern India. At the General Meeting of the Association held at Bangalore on 17 August 1931, the Chairman showed the difficulties of the industry in face of a declining market, and asked the Association to consider some of the recommendations of the Whitley Report, namely: (1) the non-recovery of all travelling expenses incurred in getting labour to estates; (2) the non-recovery of all advances except from the first payment of wages; (3) the proposed weekly payment of wages; (4) the extension of the Workmen's Compensation Act to estate labour; and (5) the extension of health and welfare work. Several resolutions were passed demanding increase of the import duty on tea from 20 to 30 per cent. ad valorem, and enactment by local governments of the Adulteration of Food Act, including tea and coffee, etc. (Pp. 49-52).

U.P. Trades Union Conference, 1931. The 1931 Session of the United Provinces Trades Union Conference was held at

Lucknow on 15 and 16 August 1931, under the chairmanship of Pt. H. Shastri. The chairman of the Reception Committee stated that trades unionism was a philosophy of class struggle based on positive action of the workers, leading finally to conquest of power by the proletariat. Reformism checked the progress of the working class movement, and so did ultra-Leftism, because it overlooked the immediate rôle of the workers, and ignored stern realities. The chairman, in his address, dwelt on the grievances of the workers, and pointed out the necessity of introducing a minimum wage Convention in India. He criticised the Whitley Commission report because it failed to recommend remedies for unemployment, and also failed to mention the fact that the great obstacle to the growth of trade unionism was dismissal by the employers of all the workers who became members of any trade union organisation. He pointed out three distinct schools of labour thought in India: (1) the school which recognised the existence of capitalism as a settled fact, and believed in compromise between capitalists and workers on an equitable basis - e.g. Mr. Gandhi and the Ahmedabad Labour Group, as well as Messrs. Joshi and Shiva Rao; (2) the school that had no faith in compromise or co-operation, and advocated a policy of class struggle, but would not ignore realities (it believed that a proletarian revolution was impossible unless the working classes were thoroughly organised and possessed strength - e.g. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Messrs. Bose and Ruikar); and (3) the school led by Messrs. Deshpande and Ranadive, who desired to fight on without any regard to realities. They wanted to make united efforts to create a strong labour class organisation.

Several resolutions were passed.

The Conference repudiated the Round Table Conference, and declared that the struggle for independence must be carried on on the fundamental principles of class war, and on the following terms: (1) transfer of all power to the proletariat; (2) abolition of the Indian States and parasitic landlords; (3) freedom of the peasantry from exploitation and exaction; (4) nationalisation of land, mineral resources and banks; (5) repudiation of debts contracted by an irresponsible government; (6) ^{an} irreducible standard of living for workers; and (7) control of the economic life of the country by the workers and peasants. (Pp. 53-55).

5. Intellectual workers.

Retrenchment in superior cadres of railways. During the recent conversation between the Railway Board and the All India Railwaymen's Federation, it has been maintained by the latter that retrenchment has been carried out mostly at the expense of the low-paid subordinate staff. It is now known that the Government of India have ordered the abolition of 78 posts of a total cadre of 1127 on the five State railways. On the company-managed lines, 52 posts out of a total cadre of about 850 have been held in abeyance. (Pp. 56 and 57).

6. Economic conditions.

Reduction of jute acreage in Bengal. The area under jute in 1931 has been estimated to be less than

that of last year by about 46 per cent. (P. 58).

The State Aid to Industries Bill (Bengal) passed.

The Bengal State Aid to Industries Bill has been passed into law. The State aid will be given mainly for the purpose of encouraging small industries, and it is proposed to set up a Board of Industries composed entirely of non-officials, with ~~the~~ business and banking experience, to advise the Government on application for such aid. (P. 58).

Proposed State Aid to Industries Bill (Punjab).

A Bill to regulate the giving of State aid to industries in the Punjab is under consideration. The forms of State aid to be given include the grant of a loan, taking of shares or debentures by the State, grant of land, raw material, firewood, water, etc., or payment of subsidy for research or purchase of machinery. No State aid is to be given to any joint stock company unless the company is registered in India with rupee capital (p. 59). ^{Prevention of Usury!} A notice has been given for moving a resolution in the Legislative Assembly recommending to the Governor General in Council that immediate legislation be introduced to control money lending and unrestricted usurious rates of interest in India.

A similar Bill was passed in the Punjab, but the consent of the Governor is still being withheld. (Pp. 59-60).

7. Social conditions.

Criminal tribes in the Punjab, 1930. According to the latest statistics, there were at the end of 1930 18,456 persons of criminal tribes. The operation of the Criminal Tribes Act has a salutary effect on crime. Education forms a most potent factor in the reclamation of the criminal tribes. All the settlements are equipped with primary schools for boys and girls. Even the young people working during the day attend night schools. Co-operative institutions have been established in most of the settlements. (Pp. 61 and 62).

8. Public health.

Reorganisation of medical service in State railways.

A recent resolution by the Government of India announces the formation of a medical department on the State managed railways. The question has been under consideration since 1925. Most of the company railways recently transferred to the control of the State their medical departments. The medical department forms a branch of the superior revenue establishment of the State railways, and rules have been framed regulating recruitment in India. (Pp. 63 and 64).

Prevention of malaria; League Commission's

recommendation. The Malaria Commission of the League of Nations spent four months in India in 1929. The report of the Commission shows that its investigations related mainly to (1) the urban malaria problem; (2) the Punjab malaria problem; (3) the Bengal Delta malaria problem; and (4) the hill malaria problem. The report discusses remedial measures (1) for the prevention of malaria - that is the treatment of malaria cases - and (2) the anti-mosquito measures. Quinine is the most effective medicine against malaria, but it is rather costly for poor people. The oiling of mosquito-breeding places is the common method of destroying the mosquito larvae, but spraying with Paris green is a cheaper method. (Pp. 64-66).

9. Education.

Compulsory adult and industrial education in Delhi Province, 1929-30. In Delhi City, five out of nine

administrative areas have introduced compulsory education. The District Board has also introduced compulsory education in six villages. Instruction is also given in manual training once every week to the children of the middle classes. (Pp. 67-68).

10. Maritime Affairs.

Southern India Port Trust and Dock Workers' Conference, Madras. The first Session of the Southern India Port Trust and Dock Workers' Conference was held at Madras on 1 August 1931, under the chairmanship of Mr. T. V. K. Mudelier. The chairman of the Reception Committee, in his address, welcomed the Whitley Commission Report, and also the resolution on fundamental rights passed by the Karachi Congress.

Mr. Shiva Rao, the President of the Congress, emphasised the need for better organisation among dock workers, and pointed out the difficulty of getting recognition by the Port Trust. Of the several resolutions passed by the Conference, the most important were on the formation of the Southern India Federation of Port Trust and Harbour Workers, disappointment at the utterly unsatisfactory nature of the reply of the Government to the deputation which waited on the member in charge to press for the ^{adequate} ~~educated~~ representation of labour on the Port Trust, and the necessity of giving effect by the Government of India to the recommendations of the Whitley Commission. (Pp. 69-71).

Bombay seamen demand enquiry into grievances. A general meeting of the National Seamen's Union of India (Bombay) was held on 14 August 1931, with Mr. N.M. Joshi, President of the Union, in the chair. Mr. Joshi advised the Union to move the Government to give immediate effect to the Whitley Commission's recommendations regarding the wider application of the Workmen's Compensation Act to seamen, stoppage of fresh recruitment, abolition of licensed brokers for the supply of seamen, and a fresh enquiry into the working conditions of seamen on board, their wages, hours of work, etc. (P. 71).

Bengal inland steamer employees' grievances:

Mariners' Union demands. The inland steamer employees of Bengal held a special meeting at Kidderpore on 30 August 1931, and passed resolutions on several matters, expressing deep regret at the failure on the part of the representatives of the steamer companies to remove the grievances of the men regarding the increment of wages and reinstatement of suspended and dismissed employees, the accommodation for the crews, and better rules for pension and gratuity. (Pp. 72-74).

Demands of the Indian Quartermasters' Union,

Calcutta. The annual general meeting of the above Union was held at Kidderpore on 29 July 1931, with Mr. Daud in the chair. A resolution was passed demanding the enforcement at an early date of the recommendations of the Seamen's Recruitment Committee, the introduction of unemployment insurance for seamen, and the limiting of hours of work to eight a day or 44 a week for Indian quartermasters on board ships, as well as when in harbour, etc. (P. 75).

11. Migration.

Indians in South Africa, 1930. During the year under review, the two important questions which agitated South African Indians were firstly the threatened passing by the South African Parliament of the Transvaal Asiatic Tenure (Amendment) Bill, and secondly the question of domicile. The Bill was introduced on the recommendation of the Select Committee appointed in February 1930 affecting some vital rights of the Indians in the Transvaal. It caused the greatest uneasiness amongst the Transvaal Indians. The Bill has remained pending since May 1930.

The question of domicile arose in connection with the Immigration and Indian Relief (Further Provision) Act, 1927. The Act provided that Indians domiciled in South Africa could return within three years to the country without losing the right of domicile. Under that regulation many Indians left for India soon after the passage of the Act, but when they returned within the prescribed period they found it difficult to get back the right of domicile. It was interpreted by the Department of the Interior that those who had lost their domicile under the provisions of the 1913 Act could not come under the regulation of the 1927 Act. (Pp. 76-81).