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✓ LABOUR INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE ✓
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



✓ REPORT

ON

AN ENQUIRY INTO CONDITIONS
OF LABOUR IN THE BIDI, CIGAR
AND CIGARETTE INDUSTRIES ✓

BY

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PUBLISHED BY THE MANAGER OF PUBLICATIONS, NEW DELHI.
PRINTED BY THE MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, SIMLA.
1946.

1023 Price : Rs 1-12-0 or 2s. 6d.

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PREFACE.

The Tripartite Labour Conference at its meeting in September 1943 recommended the setting up of a machinery to investigate questions of wages and earnings, employment and housing, and social conditions generally, with a view to provide adequate materials on which to plain a policy of social security for labour. In pursuance of that resolution, the labour Investigation Committee was appointed by the Government of India by Resolution No. L.4012, dated the 12th February 1944 to carry out the investigations. The Committee was instructed to extend its investigations generally to all industrial and semi-industrial labour covered by the Royal Commission on Labour in their Report, with the addition of certain other categories. The Committee was asked by the Government of India to decide in each case the most suitable manner of conducting the enquiry. The Government, however, considered that the method of enquiry should not merely consist of sending out questionnaires to Government agencies and Employers' and Workers' Associations, but should also comprise specific enquiries in individual concerns based on representative sampling.

2. In India, in spite of the quite comprehensive enquiries made by the Royal Commission on Labour and a few Committees appointed by the Provincial Governments, there have remained large lacunae in regard to information on labour conditions in several industries. In particular, broadly speaking, the method of direct enquiry on the spot has not been adopted on a sufficiently wide scale so as to cover the entire industrial structure. Moreover, certain industries, like cotton textiles and coal mining, have received greater attention than others, and even as regards these industries, comprehensive information on an all-India basis has not been available. With a view to making up this deficiency as well as to bringing the available information up to date, the Committee decided that *ad hoc* surveys should be carried out in various industries so as to secure a complete picture of labour conditions prevailing in each: The following industries were selected for the purpose:—

A. *Mining.* (1) Coal. (2) Manganese. (3) Gold. (4) Mica.
(5) Iron Ore. (6) Salt.

B. *Plantations.* (7) Tea. (8) Coffee. (9) Rubber.

C. *Factory industry.* (10) Cotton. (11) Jute. (12) Silk. (13) Woollen. (14) Mineral Oil. (15) Dockyard. (16) Engineering. (17) Cement. (18) Matches. (19) Paper. (20) Carpet weaving. (21) Coir matting. (22) Tanneries and Leather Goods Manufacture. (23) Potteries. (24) Printing Presses. (25) Glass. (26) Chemical and Pharmaceutical works, (27) Shellac. (28) Bidi-making, Cigar and Cigarette. (29) Mica Splitting. (30) Sugar. (31) Cotton Ginning and Baling. (32) Rice Mills.

D. *Transport.* (33) Transport Services (Tramways and Buses). (34) Non-gazetted Railway Staff.

E. Other types of labour. (35) Port Labour. (36) Municipal Labour. (37) Central P.W.D. (38) Rickshaw Pullers.

3. The main conception on which the *ad hoc* surveys have been based is that information should be collected on the spot by direct enquiry conducted with the help of the Committee's own staff and that this information should, as far as possible, conform to the sampling methods widely adopted in such work. Owing to great variations in the character of the different industries, however, there could not be a complete uniformity in regard to the methods which had to be adopted to suit the peculiarities of particular industries and centres. For instance, while there are only a few centres and units in certain industries such as potteries, mineral oil, gold, etc., in other industries, such as

textiles, engineering, transport services, plantations, tanneries, bidi-making, etc., a very large number of centres and units in different provinces (and even States) had to be covered. Moreover, some of the industries are modern industries of the large-scale type, wherein factory legislation applies more or less entirely, while others are indigenous handicrafts or small-scale industries, where factory legislation is either inapplicable or partially applicable. Thus, information has not been uniformly available in advance as regards the size, location and ownership of industrial units, such as is necessary before decisions for sampling are taken. Consequently, the technique of representative sampling had to be modified and supplemented so as to obtain whatever information of a reliable character was available. As far as possible, however, in all industries important centres were covered. In each of these centres units were chosen on a sample basis, but it was possible in a few centres to cover all units. The final lists of centres of survey and individual establishments were made out in the light of the impressions gathered during the course of the preliminary tour and in consultation with local authorities. The guiding principle in the selection of centres of survey was to make the survey regionally representative so as to discover differences in the conditions of labour in the same industry in different parts of the country. The selection of individual concerns was generally based on considerations, in order of importance, of (a) size, (b) ownership (private or limited) and (c) whether subject to statutory regulation or not. In this connection, it may be stated that the Committee were greatly handicapped in sampling the units owing to the lack of complete information regarding location and number of units in the selected industries. Unfortunately there are no all-India employers' organisations in some of the organised industries, nor are the statistics maintained by the Central and Provincial Governments at all complete. Moreover, in certain unorganised industries, such as shellac, carpet-weaving, bidi-making, etc., owing to their very nature, no such information could have been readily available in advance. In certain cases, therefore, owing to these difficulties as well as transport difficulties and other exigencies, the sampling could not be fully adhered to. Nevertheless, the Committee have been anxious to gather in the maximum possible information in the limited time at their disposal and with a view to this, they have cast their net as wide as possible. The main instruments of *ad hoc* survey were the Questionnaires. These were of two kinds :—(a) the main *ad hoc* survey questionnaire on points likely to be common to all the industries surveyed, and (b) supplementary and special questionnaires in respect of certain industries, such as plantations, mines, railways, rickshaw pullers, port labour, municipal labour, glass, shellac, mica, etc. The main questionnaire was accompanied by a tabular form for entering wage data and this was used wherever possible. In the case of certain surveys, however, such as salt, paper, cotton, woollen and jute textiles, dockyards, silk, cement and gold mining, it was possible to conduct by personal investigation of industrial establishments, examination of their collected was supplemented and checked with replies to the Questionnaires received.

4. For the purpose of conducting enquiries, a sufficiently large field staff, consisting of 16 Supervisors and 45 Investigators, was appointed. Before the commencement of field work, all the Supervisors (with the exception of those working in Bengal) were called to the Committee's headquarters at Simla and given detailed instructions on the technique and scope of the enquiries to be conducted by them, the manner in which they were to submit their data, and the centres and units which they were to investigate. In addition, both Supervisors and Investigators were provided with written instructions regarding the

use of questionnaires, sampling of concerns (where this could not be done in advance), filling of the wage forms, etc. In particular, they were asked not only to collect information on the spot but also to draw upon every other possible source of information. In doing so, they were required to distribute copies of the questionnaires in the centres assigned to them not only amongst the sampled units but also amongst Employers' and Workers' associations in the industry and such other associations and individuals as were likely to be interested in the subject. They were also asked to get into touch with officials of Central and Provincial Governments connected with labour and obtain such facilities as might be necessary in doing their work.

5. As far as the field work in Bengal was concerned, it was done by the staff of the Committee under the guidance and supervision of the Labour Commissioner, Bengal, and his subordinate officers. Members, however, paid visits to selected centres and units in Bengal to obtain first-hand knowledge of local labour conditions.

6. The Committee's survey covered all Provinces with the exception of the North-West Frontier Province where none of the industries selected for survey was sufficiently important. It extended to many of the Indian States also, such as Kashmir, Patiala, Gwalior, Baroda, Mysore, Sandur, Travancore, Cochin, Bundi, Indore and some of the States of the Eastern States Agency. No survey was undertaken in the Hyderabad State as that State preferred to appoint its own Labour Investigation Committee, with terms of reference identical to those of this Committee, for enquiry into local labour conditions.

7. In dealing with the *ad hoc* survey work, several courses were open to the Committee :—(i) the Committee, as a whole, to study each industry, (ii) the surveys to be distributed region-wise and each Member put into charge of a region, and (iii) each Member to be entrusted with a few surveys throughout India. With a view to speedy and efficient work, the third course was actually adopted. This departure from the usual procedure of the Committee as a whole dealing with the work was necessary in view of the immensity of the task and the necessity of maintaining an all-India prospective. Moreover, it was felt that this procedure would enable Members to make a specialised study of labour conditions in individual industries in different parts of the country. It was also felt that the peculiar problems of industrial labour had more an industry-wise than a region-wise dispersion and that the procedure would be helped to future legislation which has to take into consideration the diversified conditions of each industry. It will be seen, however, that in the Reports the factual material has been presented both on an all-India and on a regional basis.

8. Thanks and acknowledgments are due to Provincial Governments, State Authorities, Labour Commissioners (and particularly the Labour Commissioner, Bengal), Directors of Industries, Chief Inspectors of Factories, Port Authorities, local bodies, employers' and workers' associations, managements of the units surveyed and all others who rendered help in the collection of the data presented in these Reports.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Thanks are due to Supervisors Messrs. D. W. Gaitonde, R. V. Mathai, B. S. Rama Rao and A. K. Gupta and Investigators Messrs. L. G. Joshi, M. Sultan, J. Kadavan and Miss K. D. Mukar for their assistance in the collection of data.

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INTRODUCTION.

India is one of the principal tobacco producing countries of the world. It occupied the first rank but since the separation of Burma its position is second only to the U.S.A. India produces about one-fourth of the world tobacco. The annual value of the crop in India was estimated in 1939 at about 18 crores of rupees¹. Tobacco constitutes, therefore, an important money crop to the agriculturists.

“Tobacco is possibly the most democratic luxury and as such is a rich man’s solace and a poor man’s comfort.” It was first brought into India by the Portuguese for their *hookah* about the year 1508. The only two species cultivated in India are *nicotiana tabacum* and *nicotiana rustica*. Nearly three-fourths of the area is under the former variety which is grown all over the country. The plant is pink flowered with large sessile leaves and forms the most important source of tobacco of commerce. The latter is widely cultivated in Eastern Bengal, Assam, the United Provinces, the Punjab and Kashmir. This species differs from the other by being a smaller and hardier plant with yellowish flowers and stalked smaller leaves².

The chief tobacco growing provinces are Madras, Bengal, Bombay and Bihar. More than half the Indian production is concentrated in five clearly defined zones. The North Bengal (including Cooch Behar State) and North Bihar areas are both important for the production of *hookah* and other types of tobacco. The Charotar area in Gujerat and Nipani area in the South of the Bombay Presidency have a special reputation for their bidi tobacco whereas the remaining area, that of Guntur in the Madras Presidency, is outstanding for the production of high class cigarette leaf. The area under tobacco has of late appreciably increased in Madras due to the increased cultivation of cigarette and pipe tobacco for purposes of export. In 1941-42, the area under tobacco was 1,361,000 acres and the production was estimated at 1,055 million lbs. The tobacco produced in this country is almost entirely used for home consumption, the average annual exports from the country being only about 2 per cent. of the total production³.

“Tobacco is manufactured into many different forms for different purposes. The importance of the manufactured products can be gauged by the ex-factory value of the various products mentioned below. The figures in brackets show the value of the product in crores of rupees :—

(i) Hooka (9.60), (ii) Cheroots (9.20), (iii) Bidis (7.52),
(iv) Cigarettes (5.86), (v) Chewing (3.02) (vi) Snuff (1.53), (vii) Cigars
(0.15) (Total=36.88).

“Apart from cigarettes, the other tobacco products are prepared with little of standard machinery, leaving room for mushroom manufacturers and thus leading to a great variation in the quality of products, standardization of which is engaging attention⁴.”

The present survey deals with labour conditions in bidi, cigar and cigarette industries. There is practically no area in India where bidis are not manufactured to some extent. The Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and

¹Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and Burma, 1939, p. 69.

²Hand Book of Commercial Information for India, Third Edition, p. 372.

³Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and Burma, 1939, p. 3.

⁴The Indian Year Book, 1944-45, p. 710.

Burma, 1939, states that about $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the total production is concentrated in the Central Provinces while Madras and Bombay together contribute about 40 per cent. of the total bidi production and the remainder is distributed over the rest of the country. Cigars are made almost entirely in the Madras Province. Cigarette factories are spread all over India but the more important ones are located in Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore, Saharanpur and Monghyr. The areas selected for investigation are the Central Provinces, Bombay, Madras, Bengal and Mysore State for bidis, Madras Province for cigars and Bombay, Poona, Calcutta, Bangalore and Saharanpur towns for cigarettes.

The views embodied in this report are those of the Labour Investigation Committee and the Government of India accept no responsibility for the opinions expressed therein.

CHAPTER I.

SURVEY OF LABOUR CONDITIONS—GENERAL.

Labour Legislation and its Enforcement.

The Factories Act does not apply to bidi factories anywhere except in the Bombay Province where bidi factories employing 20 or more persons have been brought under the Act by a notification under section 5(1) of the Act and certain provisions of the Act relating to working hours, sanitation, lighting, employment of children, etc., are made applicable to them. But the notification does not cover most of the workshops in Bombay city as they employ less than 20 workers. Such workshops, however, come under the Bombay Shops and Establishments Act, 1939, which regulates hours of work and employment of children only. Sanitation, ventilation, lighting, etc., in these workshops are regulated by the conditions in the licence which every workshop has to obtain from the Bombay Municipal Corporation. The observance of these conditions is not rigorously enforced by the Municipal Sanitary Inspectors with the result that conditions in some of the workplaces are disgraceful. In other centres, in the bidi factories covered by the notification, things are only a shade better but most of the provisions of the Factories Act, especially those relating to sanitation, provision of latrines and urinals, supply of drinking water, etc., are not enforced, presumably for want of adequate inspecting staff. Even where inspections are made, they do not seem to have the desired effect in most cases, as the same defects are pointed out time and again without enquiring why the previous comments were left unheeded.

The Madras Government had applied the Factories Act in 1937 to bidi factories employing 20 or more persons, but the measure proved unsuccessful as no prosecutions could be launched for violation of the Act as branchmen gave incorrect names and workplaces were changed. When the Government of India amended Section 5 of the Factories Act in 1941, bidi factories were omitted by the Madras Government from the fresh notification issued under this Section.

C. P. Unregulated Factories Act.

A special Act, *viz.*, the C. P. Unregulated factories Act was framed in the Central Provinces in 1937 to cover un-regulated factories. It applies to all bidi factories employing 50 or more workers though power is given to the Provincial Government to extend the Act to bidi factories employing 25 or more workers. It regulates employment of women and children hours of work, rest and holidays and lays down minimum standards of health and sanitation in the factories. It was applied to the bidi factories in February 1938.

The following note about the working of this Act is furnished by the Chief Inspector of Factories, Central Provinces and Berar.

“ In 1938, there were 34 bidi factories employing 1,741 adults and 30 children coming within the purview of the Act. The number of these factories rose in 1941 to 129 employing 3,840 adults and 111 children*. In 1942 there was no increase. In 1943, there were 130 factories employing 4,314 adults and 32 children*. The increase is due to Inspectors' efforts to bring on the register all such premises as were subject to the Act. The number of such premises during 1944 showed a downward trend being 61 employing 2,976 adults and 21 children, the reason being that the occupiers of these factories, perhaps to evade the provisions of the Unregulated Factories Act, began splitting up their concerns so as to reduce the number of employees below the

*As only factories employing 50 or more come under the Act, the total number of workers employed should have been more. Factories have been breaking up to escape the Act but the Factory Department continued to retain them on the register till it was satisfied. Many of these factories have been removed from the register in 1944.

statutory limit of 50. After the Government had issued directions on the recommendations of the Bidi Industry Committee, one of the Inspectors of Factories was deputed to visit the centres of bidi manufacture and report whether the directions given were being carried on by the factories or not. Based on his report that *lattichat* and *zalchat* were being made a practice in some factories, the Chief Inspector of Factories had issued a circular warning to all the occupiers of these factories to discontinue at once such deductions. A few months later another Inspector was deputed to visit these places and report on the position. He found that bidi rolling had been mostly discontinued in the factories at the premier centres and that this was now being carried on in villages in the interior where cheap labour and housing could be available. Due to the peculiarity of the trade the premises and the volume of employment kept on changing. Only heating, bundling, labelling, packing and such sundry jobs were done at the centres and mostly these factories maintained a staff of less than 50 workers. In villages bidi rolling was done by numerous small groups or families in their own houses. The proceeds were collected by petty contractors and brought to the centres. The number of factories subject to the Act is thus declining.”

The application of the Act to the bidi factories was resisted by the factory owners who split up their factories and established workshops in villages with a view to evade the Act. The C.P. Bidi Industry Committee, 1939-41 writes : “ If circumvention of enacted legislation is allowed in such wholesale fashion, it is futile to suggest any amelioration of the working conditions by means of legislation¹”. Even in those factories where the Act applies, it has not been strictly enforced for want of adequate inspectorate. A further step was taken by the Central Provinces in 1941 by framing model bye-laws under the C. P. & Berar Municipalities Act, for the regulation of conditions in the bidi factories. These bye-laws which have been so far adopted by 18 municipalities (including Bhandara, Tumsar and Gondia) and 4 Notified Area Committees require the bidi factories within the municipal limits to be licensed and some of the conditions for granting licence are that the employer should satisfy specifications as to areas and material used for bidi factories, that the factories should be established in healthy and sanitary surroundings and that children below 10 years of age should not be employed. These bye-laws also do not seem to be properly enforced with the result that most of the bidi factories in the Central Provinces can be said to be under no regulation as regards working conditions and hours of work.

It will thus be clear that there is almost no control over working conditions, health and sanitation in bidi factories. In view of the extremely large number of bidi-making establishments employing small number of persons, it is futile to apply the Factories Act or any modified form of it to them. The only way to deal with the situation appears to be to encourage establishment of big factories by issuing licences to such factories only and bringing them under the Factories Act and similar other legislation which should then be strictly enforced. Both the manufacturers and the bidi workers in the Central Provinces favour this course. The existence of big factories will also make it easy to have Standing Orders and social security measures.

The Factories Act applies only to cigar factories in Dindigul. It applies to all the cigarette factories and its provisions are duly observed except that section 50 which prohibits employment of children who have not completed their twelfth year was found to be disregarded in certain factories in Calcutta.

¹The Report, p. 18.

The Payment of Wages Act does not apply to bidi and cigar factories except in the Central Provinces where it was applied to bidi factories coming under the Unregulated Factories Act by a notification issued on the 13th December 1938 as it was found that efforts at the stricter administration of the latter Act were obstructed by the factory owners by resorting to wage cuts and other ingenious deductions from the wages earned by the workers. The application of the Act, however, was not very successful in the absence of adequate inspectorate, and illegal deductions from wages for bad workmanship are found even in those factories to which the Act applies. These deductions were a very common feature in this industry and though they have considerably gone down as a result of increased demand for bidis and organisation among workers, it is likely that they may raise their heads again when the demand slackens. The argument of the factory owners that deductions are necessary to check bad work and the spoiling of their trade marks is untenable as the application of the Act has not led to any tendency for bad work in other industries. It is stated by the C.P. Bidi Industry Committee that no concrete evidence was brought before it to support the contention of the factory owners. There are several ways of punishing bad work and even dismissal of a chronic bad worker will not be resented by his co-workers. As the rejected bidis are sold by the factory owners, though generally at a somewhat reduced rate, it is hardly fair to refuse wages to the workers. Such bidis are comparable to 'damaged cloth' in textile mills or articles spoiled in the course of manufacture for which deduction shall not exceed the amount of the damage or loss caused to the employer, *vide* section 10 of the Payment of Wages Act. As the deductions are not treated as fines and utilised for the benefit of workers, they are only an indirect way of lowering the wage rates. The Act applies to the cigarette factories and is properly observed.

The Maternity Benefit Act applies to only one cigar factory (Spencer's) and to cigarette factories, except in Bangalore, and its provisions are duly complied with. In view of the large number of women employed in bidi factories, it is essential that the Act should be applied to bidi factories governed by the Factories Act in order that women well advanced in pregnancy may not continue to work because of their dire poverty.

The Employment of Children (Amendment) Act, 1939, applies to bidi workshops and prohibits the employment of children who have not completed their twelfth year. Employment of children in bidi making has appreciably gone down since the Report of the Royal Commission and this is admitted by union leaders in the Central Provinces and Bombay. This piece of legislation is, however, disregarded in South India, Bengal and also in some parts of the Bombay Province. Workers bring their own or their neighbours' children to help them in cutting leaves and tying thread on the bidis, etc., and pay them a pittance of a few annas per day. The children have to work as long hours as their employers. They are not, of course, shown on the registers and they make themselves scarce as soon as an Inspector comes to the factory. It may be stated here that generally the children are employed by the workers and not by the employers who, however, connive at their presence in the workshops as they are essentially a cheap labour. The only way to stop this evil is to enforce the Act vigorously. Sub-divisional Magistrates and Tahsildars have been generally appointed as Inspectors for the purposes of the Act but they hardly have any time to attend to this work. This Act does not apply to cigar factories.

Child labour is not generally pledged but cases of the infringement of the Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933 came to notice in bidi factories in some parts of South India,

Process of Manufacture.

The manufacture of bidis is a very simple process which can be learnt in about 3 months' time. The raw materials required for bidi making are tobacco mixture and wrapper leaf. The more popular and widely used tobaccos are from Gujerat (Charotar) and Nipani in the Bombay Province. Sometimes tobacco from other areas is mixed with these varieties to cheapen the cost of manufacture. The wrappers used for making bidis are the leaves of *tendu* trees which grow wild in the forests of Central India, the Central Provinces and Hyderabad State. On an average, a leaf yields two to three bidi wrappers. The implements needed are a pair of scissors and bamboo trays. The actual process of bidi making all over India is as follows: The wrapper leaves are steeped in water to make them soft. They are then cut into rectangular shapes the average dimensions of which are about 3.2 inches in length on one side, about 3 inches length on the other side and 1.8 inches and 1.5 inches in breadth on the two sides. Some of the manufacturers, particularly in the Central Provinces, provide the workers with a piece of tin of the proper shape and size to enable them to cut the leaves correctly. The workers sit in rows with a quantity of tobacco mixture in a bamboo tray and a number of cut pieces of wrapper leaves by their side. The wrapper is held by the worker in his left hand and the tobacco mixture is placed on it and evenly spread along the length. The wrapper is then rolled between the fingers and palms of hand or by a swift movement of fingers only into a conical shape. The top or broad end is then closed by bending it over the wrapper with the fingers or a wooden stick. The other end is tied with a piece of white or coloured cotton thread. It is the usual practice with the manufacturers to use threads of different colours to distinguish different brands. The whole thing is done in a few seconds. The prepared bidis are at the end of the day made up into small bundles of 25 (or 50 in Bombay) and submitted for inspection, as payment is made only for good bidis. They are then arranged in trays which are placed in a warm room for drying, after which each bundle is wrapped in thin paper and labelled. Generally there are three sizes of bidis, big, medium and small, according to their length which are about 3 inches, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches and 2 inches respectively. About $\frac{4}{5}$ ths of the bidis manufactured in the country are of medium size. The quality of a bidi depends on wrapper leaf, quality and quantity of tobacco mixture and rolling.

As regards cigar manufacture, "after the tobacco bundles are received in the factory, they are slightly moistened by spraying water on them to facilitate handling without breakage. The leaf is then sorted out into filler, wrapper and binder, which constitute the three parts of a cigar, as well as of a cheroot. The filler tobacco forms the central core of the cigar while the binder binds the filler and holds it into shape. The wrapper leaf is wrapped on the outside of the cigar and indicates the quality of the cigar, so far as the external appearance is concerned.

"The filler leaf is then again moistened and stripped by taking off the midrib. The larger manufacturers do not recommend flavouring of tobacco, but some of the smaller factories use essential oils for flavouring. The stripped leaves are then dried and kept in store for use. They are then further sorted into longer leaves used for wrappers and smaller ones for fillers. The fillers used are mainly of Trichinopoly origin and occasionally also from Guutur. The wrapper leaf which is usually imported from abroad should be thin, soft, pliable and entirely devoid of bitter taste. The filler leaves are then rolled into small cylinders over which the binders are tied. The rough cigars thus rolled are afterwards kept in a press for some time until well set. Superior wrapper which is kept ready in a rolled form is then applied on in moist condition over the rough cigar, starting at the lighting end and finishing at the

other end by fastening the edges of the wrapper with a paste. After this, they are packed in thin wooden cases to contain 25, 50 or 100 cigars. A few manufacturers stifle the cigars for some time by keeping them at a temperature of 150° to 160° in a steam chamber before packing to keep them free from insect attack¹”.

The manufacture of cigarette is an extremely elaborate and complex affair. Selection and blending of tobacco leaf is done first and the blender is often the most important person in all cigarette factories. “After the leaf is selected, the tobacco is taken to the steaming or re-conditioning room where it is passed through a series of chambers permeated with moisture which renders the leaf soft and pliable and fit for handling. Afterwards, the midrib of the leaf is removed, if this has not already been done before the leaf reaches the factory. The stripped or stemmed leaf is then built into heaps and allowed to ‘case’ or mature which is considered to sweeten and mellow the tobacco. At this point the leaf is considered ready for manufacture and taken to the cutting room where it is cut into fine shreds by the cutting machines. The cut tobacco is then passed through a machine consisting of large revolving cylinders which are heated. This has the effect of loosening the cut tobacco and making it light and fluffy. Afterwards, it is passed into revolving drums, through which cold air is circulated and over a series of sieves where particles of dust or stem are extracted. The cut tobacco is then taken to the storage room where it cools and matures for about two days after which it is considered ready for manufacture into cigarettes.

“The cigarette making machine is a fast running machine and great care is necessary to ensure that all the cigarettes that are put through are well filled and that the cigarette paper is properly printed, as the printing is done by the same machine which makes the cigarettes. The making of cigarettes is skilled work and an operator has to receive a considerable amount of training before he is able to make satisfactory cigarettes, as there are several points that have to be watched. The cut tobacco is fed into large hoppers at the back of the cigarette machine. From here it is drawn over a wide shute by fast revolving rollers. At the bottom of the shute, in a narrow trough, runs the cigarette paper in an endless stream. Before reaching the trough, the paper is printed, by a printing press attached to the machine, with the name of the brand on each cigarette length. In the case of cork-tipped cigarettes, the paper passes through a cork-tipping apparatus where the tips are securely fastened to the paper in the required position. The tobacco from the shute falls over the swiftly moving cigarette paper, one edge of which is mechanically pasted and then quickly folded over the tobacco. The pasted lap of the paper is then automatically sealed. The cigarette thus made is endless and a fast revolving circular knife cuts it to required lengths. The cigarettes are then examined and their weight tested.

“Afterwards the cigarettes are put into trays and allowed to condition for a specified time in a special room. They are then packed in cartons of tens or in vacuum tins of 50 cigarettes. Most of the bigger cigarette factories possess packing machines which pack cigarettes in cartons, at the same time placing the tin foil around the cigarettes. The cartons then go to another machine which wraps them in glaseine or moisture-proof and transparent paper which also enables the consumer to be sure that the cigarettes have not in any way been tampered with after they left the manufacturer².”

¹Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and Burma, 1939, p. 323.

²Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and Burma, 1939, pp. 321-322.

Working Conditions.

“The making of the bidi (the indigenous cigarette) is an industry widely spread over the country. It is partly carried on in the home but mainly in workshops in the bigger cities and towns. Every type of building is used but small workshops preponderate and it is here that the graver problems mainly arise. Many of these places are small airless boxes, often without any windows, where the workers are crowded so thickly on the ground that there is barely room to squeeze between them. Others are dark semi-basements with damp and mud floors unsuitable for manufacturing processes, particularly in an industry where workers sit or squat on the floor throughout the working day. Sanitary conveniences and adequate arrangements for removal of refuse are generally absent. Payment is almost universally made by piece-rates, the hours are frequently unregulated by the employers and many smaller workshops are open day and night. Regular intervals for meals and weekly holidays are generally non-existent. In the case of adults these matters are automatically regulated by individual circumstances, the worker coming and going as he pleases and often, indeed, working in more than one place in the course of the week. Nevertheless, in the case of full-time workers, *i.e.*, those not using bidi making as a supplementary source of income, the hours are too frequently unduly long, the length of the working day being determined by the worker's own poverty and the comparatively low yield of the piece-rates paid¹.”

The picture drawn by the Royal Commission of the working conditions in the bidi industry is largely true even to-day, except that working throughout the night in smaller workshops did not come to our notice. The conditions are equally bad in cigar factories but they are much better in the cigarette factories. The working conditions in the sampled areas are described in detail later.

Special Features.

The prominent features of the bidi and cigar industries are long hours and insanitary conditions of work and employment of child labour. Women are also employed in large numbers in this industry. In fact, *gharkhata* (work at home, especially by women) is a peculiar feature of the bidi industry and is prevalent over several parts of the country. The system of *gharkhata* is of long standing and is liked by women in spite of the lower wage rate as it enables them to supplement the meagre family income. The existence of *gharkhata* makes it difficult to regulate employment of women and children and working conditions but it is difficult to abolish the system at once as it provides bread to hundreds of women workers who, on account of *pardah* or other social customs, find it difficult to come to factories. Gradual abolition of the system is, however, desirable.

Rejection of bidis and, to a slight extent, of cigars on the pretext of bad workmanship is another special feature which has been mentioned before.

There are no occupational diseases in these industries, though tuberculosis is pretty common among bidi workers. This appears to be due rather to their insanitary conditions of work and the defective sitting posture which they have to maintain for hours than to their occupation. Workers beyond 50 are seldom seen in the industry as they lose suppleness of their fingers with age.

It is often contended by the factory owners that bidi and cigar industries are cottage industries and, therefore, should receive special treatment and exemption from Acts applying to organised industries. If all unorganised industries are to be considered as cottage industries, then only can these industries be regarded as cottage industries. Otherwise, except for-*gharkhata* in

¹Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, p. 96.

the bidi industry, the special features of cottage industries are absent in them. Generally a group of workers is collected in factories or workshops where manufacture is carried on either under the supervision of the employer's agent or his contractor. Even under the contract system, the workers, as a rule, do not carry on the work in their own homes. The bidi and cigar labour, however, satisfies many of the criteria of sweated labour, such as sub-contract system, long hours, insanitary working conditions, home work (in bidis), employment of women and children, irregularity of employment, low wages, and lack of bargaining power.

Employment and Future of the Industry.

The ascertainment of employment in the unorganised and far-flung bidi industry is extremely difficult. Estimates of employment in the various areas surveyed are given for what they are worth in the respective chapters. As a rough estimate, it may be stated that this industry employs about 5,00,000 persons. The employment in cigar factories is easier to estimate and is in the neighbourhood of 3,300 only. The exact number of cigarette factories and the total employment in them could not be ascertained. The Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and Burma, 1939, mentions that in 1935 there were 22 cigarette factories registered under the Indian Factories Act employing, on an average, 8,000 persons daily. Although the number of factories had fallen to 19 in 1944, employment in them has gone up due to the increased demand for cigarettes in war time, and the present employment in this industry can be safely put at 10,000.

The bidi industry is one of the biggest unorganised industries in India. Its future, however, is somewhat uncertain in view of the competition from cheap cigarettes. One way of reducing bidi prices would be for the Provincial Forest Departments to organise the collection and sale of wrapper leaves at standard rates instead of the competitive rates charged by the contractors. The war has given a fillip to all these three industries and it is very likely that at least the cigarette industry will maintain its present position even in the post-war period.

CHAPTER II.—CENTRAL PROVINCES.

The Central Provinces and Berar is the most important Province in India from the point of view of the bidi industry. It is stated in the Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and Burma, 1939, that about one-fourth of the total number of bidis manufactured in the country is made in this Province. In the opinion of the C. P. Bidi Industry Committee, manufacture of bidis was introduced in the Province in the first decade of the century by bidi merchants from Gujerat who brought with them workers from that part to train the local labour. The old connections of the industry are still seen in the large number of Gujerati merchants in the industry though the local labour has completely supplanted the skilled labour brought from Gujerat. "That the Central Provinces should be an important bidi making area may at first appear strange in view of the fact that the quantity and quality of locally grown tobacco is of little consequence. The development of bidi making in the Province has been almost entirely due to the abundant supply of bidi wrapper leaf and cheap labour, for bidis are hand made. Since it is found more economical to import bidi tobacco than to export bidi wrapper leaf, which is bulky for transport, bidi making has developed mostly at those centres in the Central Provinces where wrapper leaf is most plentiful and cheap. For example, nearly 60 per cent. of the bidis made in the Province are manufactured in the Bhandara district where bidi wrapper leaf is plentiful in the local forests. Practically all tobacco used for bidi making is imported¹."

¹Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and Burma, 1939, p. 327.

EMPLOYMENT.

It is very difficult to estimate, even approximately, the volume of employment in this unorganised and widely distributed industry. "There are about 895 bidi making shops in the Central Provinces and Berar located in 347 villages and towns. Of these 895 shops, 185 are bigger shops employing, on an average, more than 50 workers per day, while the remaining 710 are smaller concerns, which employ less than 50 workers per day. About three-fifths of the total manufacture of bidis in the Provinces are controlled by four leading bidi making firms from Jubbulpore, Gondia, Nagpur and Kamptee. The average daily output of bidis in the Province is estimated at about 5 crores. The number of persons engaged in bidi making is little over 42,000, of whom about 31,000 persons work in the Bhandara district alone¹."

The C. P. Bidi Industry Committee states : "Even on a conservative estimate workers employed at present in bidi making will well exceed 50,000 persons, while the daily output of bidis would amount to nearly 5½ crores. The bidi making establishments by this time must have passed the thousand mark²."

The C. P. and Berar Mazdur Sangh which is the biggest bidi labour union in the Province could not give any idea of employment in the industry. The Bidi Merchants' Association, Central Provinces and Berar, Gondia, puts the employment at about 1,30,000 on the grounds that about 10 crores of bidis are manufactured per day in the province and that the average daily bidi manufacture per worker is about 750, taking into consideration holidays. This estimate does not seem to be far wide of the mark. Though the number of factories employing more than 50 workers per day has gone down, as stated by the Chief Inspector of Factories, numerous small bidi making shops have sprung up recently, especially in villages to meet the increased demand for bidis in war time.

Most of the big firms have their stock and feeder factories. The stock factories are situated in towns and the feeder factories in neighbouring villages within a radius of about five miles. This system has enabled the big manufacturers to evade the C.P. Unregulated Factories Act and avoid overhead expense. Instead of maintaining labellers, packers and others in various village factories, they are now kept at the stock factories. Moreover, slightly lower rates of wages are given in the village factories.

Some of the big employers, notably Mohanlal Hargovind, manage the production of bidis through contractors. In this system, there is no direct connection between employers and the workers and the contractor gets a commission of 1 to 1-1/2 annas per thousand bidis, which is deducted from the wages of the workers. This system came widely into vogue since the application of the C.P. Unregulated Factories Act and the Payment of Wages Act. The contract system is not common in the Nagpur and Bhandara districts but is widely prevalent in the Jubbulpore district.

¹Report on the Marketing of Tobacco in India and Burma, 1939, p. 327.

²The Report, p. 5.

For our survey, the following seven representative centres were selected :

Name of centre				No. of factories investigated	No. of workers employed
Nagpur	..	Nagpur district	..	3	680
Kamptee	..		..	5	576
Bhandara	..		..	8	315
Tumsar	..	Bhandara district	..	10	200
Tirora	..		..	10	495
Gondia	..		..	13	691
Jubbulpore	..		..	18	784
Total				67	3,741

Of these factories 19 were covered by the C. P. Unregulated Factories Act. About 40 per cent. of the workers were women. The percentage of women is generally high in small factories; it is low in big factories except in Nagpur. They do only bidi making except in Jubbulpore where they are engaged on bundling and labelling work also. The vast majority of the workers are bidi makers who are piece-rated. It was difficult to obtain accurate figures about the employment of children as they are not entered in the register and run away when any Government official makes an appearance. Nevertheless, figures of employment were collected in a few factories which showed that the percentage of children, boys and girls, to the total of workers was about 7. It may be stated, however, that the children are not employed by the factory owners but are brought generally by their parents to help them in their work. Formerly bidi making was almost monopolised by the Mahars. Though now Kunbis, Telis and Muslims are coming in, the Mahars still form the large majority of the labour employed in this industry except in Jubbulpore where the Muslims predominate.

The labour employed is mostly local and no recruitment is necessary. All the workers are considered as temporary and there is no security of service. There is no regular system of increment even to the time-rated workers. There are no Standing Orders anywhere. In the Ramkrishna Ramnath factory in Nagpur, however, Bidi Merchants' Association's Standing Orders have been put up. They explain, in general, the principles which guide the management in supplying tobacco, leaves and thread and in maintaining discipline. They are completely one-sided and cannot be termed as proper Standing Orders.

Labour Turnover.

It is difficult to ascertain the labour turnover even approximately for want of reliable data. In the stock factories there is not much turnover and many workers were found working in the same factory for more than 10 or 15 years and even 20 years. But these are all time-rated workers. The greatest turnover is in village factories. Wage rates are not the same even in the same centre and workers freely migrate from factory to factory in the same centre. It is interesting to note, however, that women workers were more stable than men.

Absenteeism.

In addition to the absence of reliable data, there are certain other features which make calculation of absenteeism very difficult. Workers who quit the factory are often shown as absent for several days. The production of bidis of 2 or 3 persons are shown in the same name in some factories. From actual investigations made in some of the sampled factories where reliable data could be found, it appeared that the percentage of absenteeism varied from 6 to 32 in June 1944.

WAGES AND EARNINGS.

Wages of bidi makers are not at all stable and they fluctuate very often depending on the demand for bidis and other factors. Even if the wage rate

per 1,000 bidis is known, one cannot be sure of the actual earnings of the worker on account of the various cuts effected in his wages. Reliable information was not available in any sampled factory about wage rates prevalent in August 1939 as no records were kept; but it appears from the C.P. Bidi Industry Committee's report that the wage rates for 1,000 bidis in 1940 were 6 to 7 annas in big towns and 3 annas 6 pies in village factories. The rates were higher some years ago but had suffered gradual reduction due to the abundance of labour supply, unemployment of agricultural labour and rate-cutting by the bidi manufacturers. Various sizes of bidis are made in this Province but rates differ only slightly. The rates for 1,000 bidis of common brand prevalent in June 1944 in the various areas are shown in the following table :

TABLE 1.
Wage rates in bidi industry in June 1944.

Area	Rates.					
	Minimum			Maximum		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Nagpur town	0	15	0	1	0	0
Kamptee	0	14	0	1	0	0
Bhandara	0	15	0	0	15	0
Tumsar	0	13	6	0	13	6
Tirora	0	14	0	0	14	0
Gondia	0	14	6	0	15	0
Rural area in Bhandara district	0	13	0	0	14	0
Jubbulpore town	0	14	0	1	4	0

For work done at home (*gharkhata*), the wage rates are generally less by two annas per 1,000 bidis. This reduction is made on the ground that the work is done at the convenience of women and that the bidis made at home are inferior in quality. The hollowness of this plea is apparent from the fact that the bidis made at home by women are sold at the same price as those made by men in factories.

The increase in rates since 1940 is clearly due to the increased demand for bidis in war time. The rates underwent a change in November, 1944, to the detriment of the workers. This was attributed by them to the action of a certain Deputy Commissioner who asked the Bidi Merchants' Association in his district to reduce the rates of wages of bidi makers in rural areas to levels which would not compete with local agricultural rates or to cut down the number employed by 50 per cent. as he apprehended that the Grow More Food campaign was likely to suffer as labourers found it more profitable to make bidis than work in the fields. This action led to considerable agitation among the bidi workers and ultimately the rates were again restored to the June 1944 level.

Occupations.

The most important occupation in this industry is that of bidi makers. They form the vast majority of workers and are piece-rated. Their wage rates are given above. Wrapper cutters in Jubbulpore are also paid on piece basis. These are generally old men employed by bidi makers at the rate of 3 to 4 annas to cut leaves sufficient for 1,000 bidis.

The time-rated workers are the supervisory staff and *tandur wallas* who are in charge of ovens in which bidis are dried. The supervisory staff is paid according to the size of the factory or workshop and their salaries vary from Rs. 10 to Rs. 80 per month. The monthly salaries of *tandur wallas* vary from Rs. 13 to Rs. 48 according to the size of the factories.

The other two categories of workers are *relai wallas* who pack and label bundles and *jhal wallas* who bring bidis from the village factories to the stock factory in a *jhal* or hamper. These workers are treated as time-rated or piece-rated in different centres. On piece-basis, *relai wallas* get an average of Rs. 2 per lakh of bidi. They can pack and label about 50,000 bidis a day. Sometimes they engage boys to help them in their work and this is fairly common in Nagpur. If on time-rate, their average monthly salary is about Rs. 15. *Jhal wallas* generally get annas eight a day. They also earn by making bidis in their spare time and, where time-rated, are also engaged in sweeping the factories, etc., when they have no work.

Earnings.

The average production of a bidi maker is in the neighbourhood of about 800 bidis per day though some skilful workers may do so many as 1,200 or even 1,500 bidis per day. The average production has gone down of late probably due to increase in wage rates. On the basis that an average worker works for 21 days in a month, his monthly earnings would carry between Rs. 13-10-0 and Rs. 21. In the Bhandara district where deduction on account of various *chats* is rife, the earnings are about 5 per cent. less.

Bidi workers have now almost become a specialised class of workers in this Province and have little or no connection with agriculture. They have also generally no supplementary occupation. After working about 8 hours in a bidi factory and two to three hours in cutting wrapper leaf at home, they can scarcely have any energy for taking up extra work to supplement their income. It was, however, noticed that about 10 workers in a bidi factory at Nagpur attended the textile mills at night.

Dearness Allowances.

Dearness allowance is given only to time-rated workers by some of the concerns since June 1942. Usually the allowance is 25 per cent. of their monthly salary, though one firm in Gondia pays to the extent of 50 per cent. The employers' excuse for non-payment of dearness allowance to piece-rated workers is that their wage rates have been substantially increased.

Bonus.

Bonus is given to time-rated workers in some big concerns. The rate of payment varies. Generally, it is one month's salary and is paid in Diwali.

Deductions.

Deductions in the bidi industry are of various kinds, such as *pattichat*, *kattachat*, *jhalchat* and *pattachat*. *Patti* is the place where the worker sits and *pattichat* is done on the spot by rejecting bad bidis. *Katta* is a bundle of 25 bidis and *kattachat* is the rejection of bidis out of the bundles prepared by the workers. It is alleged that this *chat* is necessary as some bidis are hidden at the time of *pattichat* and as some bidis are prepared after *pattichat*. *Jhal* is a hamper and *jhalchat* is rejection of bad bidis out of the hamper brought to the stock factory from feeder factories and this is generally distributed equally over all the workers concerned. *Patta* means leaf and *pattachat* is rejection of bidis on account of bad leaves used in making them. These *chats* were very rife in the Province some years ago but in view of the increased demand for bidis in war time they have almost disappeared in all areas except the Bhandara district, but it is likely that when there is a fall in bidi consumption these *chats* might be revived. The extent of *chats* is more in village factories. In Gondia and Tumsar some employers have started a new system of *chat*. They take one bundle at random from a hamper, break it and weigh the tobacco and if found deficient, wages are proportionately deducted. The extent of the *chat* also varies from place to place and also from factory to factory. The average *chat* would be about 25 bidis per 1,000 though in one factory it was noticed that it was as high as 20 per cent.

In addition to the above, there were other deductions which have now disappeared, *viz.*, *Dharmadaya* or deduction for charity and *Pilai* or deduction for smoking. 25 bidis per thousand used to be taken without payment on the ground that workers smoked bidis in the factory.

Wage Period.

Piece workers are paid weekly while the time-rated are paid monthly. The date of payment varies in the case of piece workers. In some factories, the payment is made on the 1st day of the week, while in others it is made on the bazar day, which is usually a holiday, in the hope of getting work from them even on that day. There are still other factories, especially in the Bhandara district, which pay their workers a day or two after the expiry of the wage period. But no instance of longer delays in payment came to notice. Monthly paid workers who are generally found in stock factories get their wages before the 10th of the next month.

Holidays.

Piece workers who form the vast majority of the workers in this industry get no holidays with pay. Some of the time-rated workers get leave with pay, but there is no hard and fast rule and everything depends on the will of the employer.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

Hours of Work.

Though the factories which come under the C.P. Un-regulated Factories Act exhibit the hours of work on the notice boards, it may be said that there are no fixed hours of work in any of the bidi factories. The usual hours of work are 9 and the work is supposed to be done between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Workers generally come after 10 a.m. taking meals and cutting the wrapper leaves at home. The leaves are put in water during night and about two to three hours are taken in the mornings to cut leaves sufficient for making 1,000 bidis. The quantity of wrapper leaf, tobacco mixture and thread (where supplied) given to each worker is based on the requirements of 1,000 bidis. During the time of work there is no regular recess period, though workers take rest whenever they feel like it. Workers come and go as they like. Work is not generally done by artificial light, though workers are often detained for one or two hours after sunset for examination of their bidis, etc. In one factory in Jubbulpore women packers and labellers were found working during night, sometimes up to 2 a.m., for which overtime was paid. There is no shift in bidi factories.

Bidi-making is carried on in factories in towns and in small houses, sheds or verandahs in villages. Majority of the bidis are now manufactured in villages. Stock factories in towns usually are clean, spacious and, in some cases have *pucca* floors. Urinals and latrines are provided in factories coming under the C.P. Unregulated Factories Act but are not usually kept clean. Water is stored for drinking in pots which are generally not clean. The conditions are much worse in villages. The workers sit in *kutchra* houses with mud floor and no arrangement is made for urinals and latrines. Supply of drinking water is an exception. There is generally not much congestion. Floor space on an average, is 6 ft. \times 6 ft. per person in village factories, while it was hardly 3 ft \times 3 ft. in town factories.

Though bidi factories engage a large number of women who bring their infants with them, no creche or any other special arrangement for children was found anywhere. In a few cases it was noticed that women workers gave opium to their infants so that they should not disturb them in their work. In many factories separate sitting accommodation was provided for men and women but generally they do not sit separately except in Nagpur, as workers related to one another like to sit together.

Supply of Materials.

Wrapper leaves and tobacco are supplied to workers but not thread in all

cases. In this connection, the C.P. Bidi Industry Committee writes : " As regards *latti* charges it is not understood why one of the raw materials for the making of bidis has to be provided by the workers while they are hired for their labour only. It is futile to suggest that the contract of employment covers it as no such contract can be valid under the Payment of Wages Act and neither there is any justification for such terms of contract nor can it be assumed to be implied by the terms of employment. Thread must be supplied to the employees like other articles required for the manufacture of bidis. Provisions may be made to allow employers to recover wastage of thread in the same way as that of shortage of tobacco or leaves. The difficulty for maintaining account of thread cannot be considered as a valid reason, as in that case similar difficulties are likely to crop up with paper, leaves and even tobacco and once the principle is concerned, the worker will be asked to supply various other things even leaves, as a substitute for a cut in the basic wages¹." There is no doubt that thread as a necessary material should be supplied free as is done in Nagpur. In a few cases, workers purchase thread from the market but mostly they have to purchase it from the employers. The rate varies between 1-1/2 annas to 2 annas for thread sufficient to tie about 7,000 bidis. Even as regards the supply of tobacco and leaves, there were complaints that they were required to purchase the necessary tobacco and leaves out of their own pockets, if they failed to produce the number of bidis which the employer thought they should do for the quantity supplied. The employers, in their turn, complained that the workers were in the habit of stealing tobacco and leaves and selling them. It was also noticed in one factory that ash, dust, etc., were put in bidis by workers.

HOUSING.

No housing is provided by the employers anywhere. Except in Nagpur, the bidi workers usually have their own houses. They generally consist of one room and are very deficient in respect of light and ventilation. The walls are of mud, though in towns brick walls are not uncommon. The room is generally 10 ft. X 10 ft. with a verandah about 7 ft. X 10 ft. in front. In a few places, it was noticed that the workers had put up bath rooms.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

No welfare activities are undertaken by the employers in this industry.

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES.

There is only one registered trade union of bidi workers known as the C.P. and Berar Bidi Mazdoor Sangh at Nagpur. It was founded in 1932 and has branches at some of the bidi centres. The maximum membership of the union was about 12,000 in 1942 while the present membership is about 1,500 only. Membership fluctuates according to the grievances of the workers. It is low when the workers get good wages as the main object of the union seems to be to agitate for increase in wages. Another cause of the reduction in membership is the increase in the fee for membership from 2 annas to 12 annas per year. As the bidi workers are all temporary and are not properly organised, sporadic strikes take place every now and then, especially in the non-agricultural season. The usual causes for strikes are low wages and dismissal of workers. After a trial of strength for a few days, the matter is generally amicably settled. There was a general strike in several bidi centres in 1942 for increase in wages. The strike was partially successful. There was another strike in December 1944 in the Nagpur district over reduction in wage rate and it was also partially successful. It is regrettable that there is not such sympathy or good feeling between employers and employees in this industry.

CHAPTER III.—BOMBAY PROVINCE.

Bombay which is an important tobacco-growing Province is also an im-

¹The Report, p. 16.

portant bidi-manufacturing Province. It is stated that this Province is responsible for about 20 per cent. of the total production of bidis in India. For the purpose of our enquiry the following five representative centres were selected.

Name of centre	Number of factories investigated	Number of workers employed	Approximate total number employed in the centre
Bombay	74	899	20,000
Nasik	9	861	2,000
Sinnar	7	1,757	2,500
Sholapur	13	1,329	2,000
Nipani	6	510	510
Total	109	5,356	27,010

Of the centres selected, Bombay has the largest number of workshops, *viz.*, 1,700. It was easy to ascertain the exact number as every bidi manufacturer has to obtain a licence from the Corporation. The city has been divided into various wards and a five per cent. sample of both small (*i.e.* employing 20 workers or less) and big workshops was taken in each ward. About 50 per cent. sample was taken in other centres, except Nipani, where all the factories were investigated.

Due to the laxity of the hours of work, the bidi industry has absorbed many working class women who wish to supplement their husband's income. The source of labour for the industry is generally the working class family. It is not rare to come across a family where both the husband and wife and sometimes even their children work in the industry. Bidi labour in Bombay consists mostly of women from Hyderabad (Deccan) and is mixed in Nasik, Sinnar and Nipani. In Sholapur it consists entirely of women who are mostly wives of textile workers. *Gharkhata* is widely prevalent in Nipani.

EMPLOYMENT.

As in other centres, it is very difficult to estimate accurately the number of persons employed in this industry in the Bombay Province. It may, however, be broadly stated that, on the basis of production, the total figure of employment would be in the neighbourhood of one lakh.

Recruitment.

As regards recruitment, no definite system exists. The recruitment is mostly done at the gates. Whenever more men or women are wanted, the employers also inform the *Mukadams* of their need and they bring the workers along. In some factories in Sholapur there is a curious system of having to pay an "entrance fee" of Rs. 2 before a woman can get work. In Bombay there is what is called a "*Wardi*" system. It is nothing but the employer asking a slightly larger number than he actually needs to present themselves the next morning for work. When they do so, he will engage only such number as he wants and the rest have to go home. It is, therefore, usual for a worker in Bombay to move about from factory to factory till he is able to find work. Such a system does not exist in other centres where mobility is further restricted by a system of advances encouraged by the employers. The worker who borrows usually does not desert his employer before he has discharged his debt fully. Regarding recruitment of children, it is usual for the workers to bring their children to assist them in trying thread, etc. They are not shown in the registers and when questioned they say that they are just there because

they brought food for their mothers. In Sholapur the system of employing child labour seems to be rampant as the following table will show :—

TABLE 2.
Employment of children in bidi factories, 1944.

Name of centre	Number of factories covered	Total number employed	Number of children employed	Percent of total
Bombay	74	899	68	7.56
Nasik	9	861	3	.34
Sinnar	7	1,757	6	.32
Sholapur	13	1,329	285	21.44
Nipani	6	510	7	1.37
Total	109	5,356	369	6.88

In Sholapur, the woman worker usually brings along her neighbour's daughter to assist her on the promise of a feed or payment of two annas for sweets. But if they cut the leaves or roll bidis they are paid 3 and 4 annas respectively per day. The ages of children employed vary from 5 to 12 years. These poor children toil as many hours as their employers do. Some of the girls are asked by employers to attend the factory in the morning for packing and labelling work and for this work they are not paid. In one factory complaints were heard of corporal punishment of children though the charge was denied by the employer. Employment of children is not common in Nasik, Sinnar and Nipani. In most of the large factories in all centres boys are employed for packing and labelling. Invariably they are below the age limit prescribed by the law.

One bidi works at Nasik had a contract system for recruitment of labour which has been discontinued. It had four agents who were paid Rs. 1-5-0 per thousand bidis produced by the labour engaged through them. They in turn paid annas 12 to Rs. 1-4-0 to each worker for the same number of bidis.

Except the supervisory staff all the workers are temporary and mostly on piece basis.

Labour Turnover and Absenteeism.

In Bombay the labour turnover is considerable. The workers frequently go from factory to factory in search of work. The *Wardi* system and *Khadas* or compulsory leave when there is poor demand for bidis greatly encourage mobility amongst the workers. In other centres, turnover is not so pronounced. In Sinnar a dismissed or discharged worker of one factory finds it impossible to get work elsewhere as the employers have a sort of "black list" amongst them.

While in other centres the workers depend wholly on the earnings in the bidi industry, most of the workers in Sinnar have a supplementary occupation in agriculture. This leads to heavy absenteeism during the agricultural season and employers appear to experience considerable difficulty in securing labour during these months. On the whole, absenteeism is not very heavy in the industry. The following table shows percentage of absenteeism during the month of March 1944 in the various centres :—

TABLE 3.
Estimate absenteeism in bidi industry, 1944.

Name of centre	Number of working days	Average number of days worked	Percentage of absenteeism
Bombay	26	24.11	7.27
Nasik	30	24.11	19.63
Sinnar	26	24.86	4.38
Nipani	26	23.33	10.27
Sholapur	28.64	23.08	19.41

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Nipani	6	510	7	1.37
Total	109	5,356	369	6.88

In Sholapur, the woman worker usually brings along her neighbour's daughter to assist her on the promise of a feed or payment of two annas for sweets. But if they cut the leaves or roll bidis they are paid 3 and 4 annas respectively per day. The ages of children employed vary from 5 to 12 years. These poor children toil as many hours as their employers do. Some of the girls are asked by employers to attend the factory in the morning for packing and labelling work and for this work they are not paid. In one factory complaints were heard of corporal punishment of children though the charge was denied by the employer. Employment of children is not common in Nasik, Sinnar and Nipani. In most of the large factories in all centres boys are employed for packing and labelling. Invariably they are below the age limit prescribed by the law.

One bidi works at Nasik had a contract system for recruitment of labour which has been discontinued. It had four agents who were paid Rs. 1-5-0 per thousand bidis produced by the labour engaged through them. They in turn paid annas 12 to Rs. 1-4-0 to each worker for the same number of bidis.

Except the supervisory staff all the workers are temporary and mostly on piece basis.

Labour Turnover and Absenteeism.

In Bombay the labour turnover is considerable. The workers frequently go from factory to factory in search of work. The *Wardi* system and *Khadas* or compulsory leave when there is poor demand for bidis greatly encourage mobility amongst the workers. In other centres, turnover is not so pronounced. In Sinnar a dismissed or discharged worker of one factory finds it impossible to get work elsewhere as the employers have a sort of "black list" amongst them.

While in other centres the workers depend wholly on the earnings in the bidi industry, most of the workers in Sinnar have a supplementary occupation in agriculture. This leads to heavy absenteeism during the agricultural season and employers appear to experience considerable difficulty in securing labour during these months. On the whole, absenteeism is not very heavy in the industry. The following table shows percentage of absenteeism during the month of March 1944 in the various centres :—

TABLE 3.
Estimate absenteeism in bidi industry, 1944.

Name of centre	Number of working days	Average number of days worked	Percentage of absenteeism
Bombay	26	24.11	7.27
Nasik	30	24.11	19.63
Sinnar	26	24.86	4.38
Nipani	26	23.33	10.27
Sholapur	28.64	23.08	19.41

Kamathipura where again they are higher than in Byculla and Parel. The factors that seem to decide the wage rates in Bombay are the distance of the factory from the working class locality, and from the place where wrapper leaves can be bought and the transport facility available to the work-place. In other centres wage rates are uniform except that in Nasik and Sinnar women working in factories are paid an anna less than men. The wage rate also varies according to the quality of the bidi produced : quality depending not upon the worker's efficiency but upon the amount and quality of tobacco used.

The rate for home work by women is generally less by two annas though there is no substantial reason for this as admitted by one of the big manufacturers.

The time necessary for cutting wrapper leaves for 1,000 bidis is about three hours. The time required for making 1,000 bidis varies from 6 hours in Sholapur to 8 hours in Bombay. In Sholapur workers get the assistance of small girls.

Pre-war and present Wage Rates.

The following table based on information gathered at various centres is illustrative of the average wage rates per 1,000 bidis which prevailed in 1939 and 1944 :—

TABLE 4.
Average wage rates in 1939 and 1944.

Name of centre	1939				1944			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
Bombay	1	0 0	1	0 0	2	3 3*	2	3 3
Nasik	0	8 0	0	7 0	1	4 0	1	3 0
Sinnar	0	7 0	0	6 0	1	2 0	1	1 0
Nipani	0	9 0	0	8 0	1	4 0	1	2 0
Sholapur .. .. .	..	..	0	6 0	..	..	0	12 0

It will be seen that there has been a general rise in the basic wage rates in all the centres. It must, however, be remembered that no dearness allowance or bonus is paid to the worker in this industry.

Earnings.

The difficulties in arriving at a correct figure regarding earnings of bidi workers have already been explained. In addition to those cited already, amount spent on wrapper leaves has to be deducted from the worker's earnings in Bombay and this has been done in the table of earnings that follows. Again, in Sholapur deduction has to be made of the money paid to the girls who assist the workers. Taking an average of one girl assistant to two workers, a deduction has been made of Rs. 1-8-0 per worker at the rate of two annas per girl for 24 working days.

TABLE 5.
Estimated average monthly net earnings in bidi industry, 1944.

Name of centre	Average monthly earnings			
	Men		Women	
	Rs.	AS. P.	Rs.	AS. P.
Bombay	30	9 4	25	2 3
Nasik	40	8 4	32	10 0
Sinnar	30	13 8	23	7 10
Nipani	34	11 7	26	0 4
Sholapur .. .. .	..	..	16	7 5

* Cost of wrapper leaves, viz., Re. 0-14-0 for making 1,000 bidis is borne by workers.

It will be noticed that compared to Bombay the earnings of the workers in Nasik and Nipani are higher which may seem rather curious. The explanation, however, is that even though the wage rate in Bombay is higher, the average production is lower as the worker puts in less number of hours of work. Further, loitering is common in Bombay. The explanation for meagre earnings in Sholapur is that the wage rate is very low.

Deductions.

Deduction for alleged defects in the making of bidis and for charity is one of the widely prevalent evils in the industry. In Bombay employers sometimes reject on an average 15 to 20 bidis per worker per day on the ground of various defects in manufacture. They break the bidis and remove the tobacco with the result that the workers' effort and the money they have paid for the wrapper leaves are wasted. In Sinnar and Nipani too the *Tariwallas* or supervisors have the power to reject bidis which do not come to a certain standard and which they consider as spoiled. The rejection usually amounts to 25 bidis per 1,000. Though the worker is not paid for these the owner sells them at reduced prices. It is not unusual for the *Tariwallas* to abuse the powers of rejection to the advantage of their employers. Deductions for charity does not exist on any wide scale in Bombay city. Nor does it exist in Nasik, Sinnar and Nipani. It seems to exist in its worst form in Sholapur. The worker has to pay per week 2 annas for *Dharmadaya* and in case she is assisted by a small girl, she has to pay as much as 4 annas.

Advances.

Almost all the factories are in the habit of granting advances sometimes up to Rs. 200 to their workers. This concession seems to be the result of their anxiety to bind the workers to their own factories rather than to help them. The worker is thus invariably indebted to his employer. The advances are said to be free of interest and are recovered in instalments. The ignorance of the worker is exploited to the fullest extent and it is not unlikely that he will have paid more than what he actually borrowed.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

The bidi workshops in Bombay are in several ways different from those in other centres. In Bombay these workshops are situated immediately behind panshops which are sometimes on the main road but mostly in lanes. They are the places where the bidis manufactured in the workshops behind them are sold. It will thus be seen that transport and marketing are not serious problems in the case of the Bombay bidi trade. So far as the ownership is concerned, both the panshop and the workshop usually belong to the same man. It can easily be imagined that the demand for bidis being the highest in business and working class localities, most of the panshops-cum-bidi workshops exist in largest numbers in these areas. The conditions of these workshops, so far as sanitation, light and ventilation are concerned, beggar description. They are dark, dingy places with very few, if any, windows and the approaches are very insanitary. Workers are huddled together, men, women and in some cases children, and there is hardly any space to move. One can see bags of tobacco heaped in one corner and manufactured bidis in another. Most of the workshops have no lavatories and where there are, they are in a most deplorable condition. Some of the workshops have low wooden ceiling above which some workers sit and carry on their work. These are not usually reached by staircases and the workers have to go up with great difficulty.

The problem of congestion is most acute in Bombay. In one of the workshops which was situated below a pan-bidi shop, the average floor area per worker was 4 square feet, the area of the room being 24 square feet and the number employed 6. The height of the platform was only 4 feet, so that the workers could hardly sit up comfortably with their backs straight. Of the factories investigated nearly 57 per cent. had a floor area of less than 10 square

feet per worker. Most of the factories come under section 5 (1) of the Factories Act and are subject to periodic inspection by the Factory Inspectors. These inspections do not seem to have any effect, as the same deficiencies are pointed out time and again. Other centres have big factories as a rule and there is less of congestion and better lighting and ventilation arrangements than in Bombay. In one bidi works at Nipani, however, was seen one of the worst instances of congestion. Within a small enclosure 14 workers were squatting on the floor with scores of bags of wrapper leaves heaped in one corner and stock of tobacco in another. It was hardly possible to walk in the room. In Sinnar no latrines are provided for the workers. When questioned, the employers pointed out one or two latrines but it was found out that these were actually meant for the employers and not for the workers who were never permitted to use them. In centres other than Bombay and Sholapur, no urinals are provided and the workers are perhaps expected to ease themselves in the open. Drinking water facility is provided in all centres except Bombay where workers are expected to go to the nearest restaurant. In Sholapur some of the bidi factories have zinc sheet roofing which is bound to get extremely hot in summer and make working conditions very uncomfortable.

The following table shows the usual hours of work in the centres investigated :—

TABLE 6.
Hours of work in bidi factories, 1944.

Name of centre	Hours of work	Remarks
Bombay	11 a.m. to 9 p.m.	Sunday closed day
Nasik	11 a.m. to 8. p.m.	No closed day in the week
Sinnar	9 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Sunday closed day
Sholapur	10-30 a.m. to 1-30 p.m. and 2-30 p.m. to 9-30 p.m. (interval from 1-30 to 2-30 p.m.)	No regular closed day
Nipani	11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 2-30 to 9-30 p.m. (interval from 1-30 p.m. to 2-30 p.m.)	Thursday closed day

There are no fixed hours for workers who work at home. The hours of work in the factory do not, however, fully reflect the actual number of hours put in by the worker. In Bombay where the workers have to bring their own wrapper leaves, they usually cut and get the leaves ready early in the morning. These hours of home work would strictly have to be added to the hours put in the factory. Taking these hours also into consideration, the total daily spreadover on an average comes to as much as 12 hours. Even in those places where wrapper leaves are supplied by the employers as in Sholapur, they are asked to take them home and cut them there when there is a heavy demand for bidis. As regards the workers in Nipani, Nasik and Sinnar, who are permitted to take tobacco home, it is rather difficult to form a correct estimate of their real hours of work. It is usual for these workers who roll bidis at home to get the assistance of the members of their family. The possibility of employment of children in such cases cannot be discounted. It can safely be generalised that the hours of work in the bidi factory are unduly long and a certain amount of legal restriction on them is absolutely necessary. The workers, on their part, do not welcome any legislative control of hours, firstly because of the fear of shrinkage in their earnings and, secondly, because

of the great amount of laxity allowed to them at present regarding attendance in the factory. The employers too are reluctant to restrict the hours in as much as it would affect the production. Further, they fear that if the hours of work are not as convenient as they are at the moment, the labour that is being attracted now might leave the industry and they may experience difficulty in the matter of recruitment. Their fear may also be put down to their feeling that State interference in this may only be the thin end of the wedge. While the Secretary of the Bidi Workers' Union, Bombay, and the President of the Bidi Workers' Union, Nasik, stated that the workers were opposed to any restriction of hours, the Secretary of the Bidi Workers' Union in Sholapur said that it was necessary for the State to interfere. Apart from all other considerations, it is perhaps the duty of the State to do something to regulate the hours of work properly and thus allow the workers, who, due to poverty, toil day in and day out, to enjoy a certain amount of much needed leisure. If an attempt is made to assure each worker a minimum weekly or monthly earning he would not be opposed to the idea of State interference in the matter of hours of work. Legislative enactment in this behalf would not be very easy because it would have to take into consideration the question of home work both in cases where the workers cut the wrapper leaves and where they take tobacco home for making bidis. The best thing to do in the circumstances is perhaps to prohibit altogether the practice of workers bringing the wrapper leaves and tobacco home.

Leave.

None of the factories allows holidays with pay to its workers. When the worker has to go to his native place or wishes to take a holiday he just absents himself. While in all the centres at least one day in a week is a closed day, in Nasik work is done on all the days of the week. Workers in Nasik did not take kindly to the suggestion of a closed day in a week as they feared that it would result in reducing their earnings. In Sholapur, of the factories investigated, only three had regular weekly closed days, two had fortnightly holidays and the rest had no holidays at all. In Bombay there is a practice of forced *khadas* or compulsory holidays. When there has been over-production or when there is poor demand, the employer simply closes the factory. It was gathered that in the monsoon season it was not unusual for workers to go without work for weeks together which results in considerable distress and hardship.

HOUSING.

No housing is provided anywhere by the employers. In Sinnar one employer has converted a part of his warehouse into quarters for his workers. There are 24 *pucca* rooms, each 10.ft. × 7 ft. The monthly rent is one rupee. No sub-letting is permitted. Sanitation and water supply are poor and the houses do not appear to be popular, only four of them being occupied. The reason for their unpopularity, according to the employer, is that most of his workers are local. The houses where the bidi workers of Bombay live are even worse than the workshops they work in. Most of the bidi labour lives in Parel and Kamathipura. About 150 houses of these workers were visited on a random sample basis. Almost all of them are single room tenements of an average area of 100 square feet. The average number of persons living in each room varies from 4 to 6. In a few cases, more than one family were staying in a single room. They are dark dingy places where sunlight never enters. Ventilation is very bad and there is a foul smell in the air. Most of them have no electric light. The doors are low and small and windows are generally absent. The average rent per room is as high as Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per month. Usually each building consisting of several single room tenements has a common bath room which is open and has no privacy. Women could hardly bathe there. The latrines, one

or two at the most for each building, are dirty and stinking. Water taps are common for half a dozen rooms and the water supply is cut off most hours of the day. The staircases leading to upstairs rooms are rickety and dangerous. Garbage and rotten articles of food are found all over the places. Inside the rooms the conditions are none better. In the small space all sorts of articles are dumped in a heap and in a corner there is usually a large stock of wrapper leaves which is kept moist by periodic sprinkling of water

WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

There is hardly anything in the bidi industry which could be put down under the heading "welfare". Nowhere are any medical facilities provided to workers. The part played by tobacco as a contributory cause of tuberculosis is the subject of much controversy. The workers are emphatic that tobacco does not play any part in the incidence of tuberculosis. The Secretary of the Bidi Workers' Union in Bombay and the President of the Union at Nasik were, however, of the opinion that tobacco was a contributory cause. The Inspector of Factories, Dr. Rebello, who has made special enquiries on the subject, states that the reason for heavy incidence of tuberculosis amongst bidi workers was the insanitary and unhealthy atmosphere in which they live and work rather than tobacco. She, however, pointed out that working in close proximity to tobacco had an irritating effect on the lungs and the tonsils and considerably lowered the resistance of the workers to tubercular bacilli. As regards the effect of tobacco on pregnant women, she stated that while tobacco produced nausea in them, her investigations had not led her to any definite conclusion in the matter. She, however, felt that it was necessary to apply the Maternity Benefit Act to the Bidi industry in order that women well advanced in pregnancy may not continue to work because of their dire poverty.

None of the factories has any rest-sheds or suitable places where the workers could sit and eat. In Bombay the employers have an easy explanation and say that there is no need for rest-sheds or canteens, as the workers can go and eat at the Irani restaurants which are close by. In other places the employers said that the workers were always at liberty to go home, eat their meal and incidentally attend a little to their household work also. Workers are supplied with gunny bags to sit in all centres except Nasik where they have to bring their own gunny bags which is resented by them. In Nasik, Sinnar and Sholapur the employers have provided swings for children of the workers. In one of the factories in Nasik, a separate room has been provided for babies. In Bombay workers do not generally bring their children to the workshops and, in the few cases where they do, no arrangement is made for them. Considering the fact that the bidi industry employs a large number of women, the provision of creches seems to be an urgent necessity.

Very few of the bidi workers are literate. This has led to their being exploited to a considerable extent by their employers. In this connection it is interesting to note that an attempt made by the Bidi Workers' Union at Bombay to encourage literacy amongst the workers ended in a failure. The Secretary of the Union puts this down to the fact that the workers are so exhausted at the end of the day that they are hardly in a mood to attend any literacy class. They just feel like relaxing and resting. An additional reason she gave was the jealousy amongst the husbands who do not like their wives to learn reading and writing while they themselves are illiterate. The Nasik Union of bidi workers is running a literacy class. But this is not very popular as the daily attendance is only 10 to 12.

None of the factories has any Provident Fund, pension or gratuity scheme for its workers. In this connection, it is interesting to find in a Nasik factory established in 1914 that as many as 80 per cent. of the workers had put in more than 10 years of service.

INDEBTEDNESS.

Personal enquiries showed that every worker was in debt the amount of which he was reluctant to disclose. The most common figure was Rs. 300. The source was usually the Pathan and the rate of interest was very high, as much as one anna per rupee per month. Most of the male workers are addicted to drink. The Bombay workers have a novel system amongst them called the *Bhishi* system. As the payment of wages in Bombay is daily, the workers find it difficult to meet large items of expenditure like house rent, etc. They, therefore, have a kind of cooperative banking amongst small groups. Each member of the group has to contribute 8 annas per day to the common pool. At the end of every week the whole amount of the fund is taken away by one member of the group in rotation.

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES.

The labour movement in the bidi industry is generally weak. This is, firstly, because of the conservatism of the women who form the major part of labour employed in the industry and, secondly, because of the workers' backwardness in the matter of literacy and standard of living. We came across three Unions of bidi workers which may be said to be organised on fairly sound lines but are not recognised by employers.

1. The Bidi Workers' Union, Bombay.
2. Nasik Shahar Bidi Kamgar Sangh, Nasik.
3. The Bidi Kamgar Union, Sholapur.

The Bidi Workers' Union, Bombay was started in 1939. It is registered and affiliated to the All India Trade Union Congress. The monthly subscription is annas two and membership of the Union is about 1,000. A great hindrance to the activities of the Union is the paucity of funds. The collection of subscription is purely on a voluntary basis, the workers themselves calling at the office to make the payment. The Secretary (Miss Wagle) stated that she was not experiencing much difficulty in the matter of collection. Practically no women have joined the Union and the Secretary put this down to their conservatism on the one hand and want of leisure on the other. There was a general strike in February 1941 involving almost all the workers over the issue of wage rates. The strike lasted for one month and was successful as the rates were enhanced by 4 annas. Since then there has been no organised protest by the Union. The Nasik Shahar Bidi Kamgar Sangh was started in 1941 but ceased to exist after a year due to the apathy of the workers. It was again revived in 1944 and is being registered. There are 250 members, all men. The monthly subscription is one anna per head. The Bidi Kamgar Union, Sholapur, was started in November 1937. It is affiliated to the Trade Union Congress. All the members are women and membership is about 500. The Union does not conduct any welfare activities. In 1937 there was a strike when all the workers were affected. It lasted for one month and the demand for higher wages was partially satisfied.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

In Bombay the workers complained that the prevailing wage rates were not satisfactory and needed to be revised. They are worried over the insecurity of their service. They want an assurance from the employer that in case they have, out of necessity, to leave Bombay on a short visit to their native places, their services will not be terminated. They press for better working conditions and the appointment of an Inspectress for bidi factories. They further desire the seating accommodation to be improved. In Nasik and Sinnar it

was complained that the Union workers were often victimised. In Nipani, a deputation of workers from two bidi works complained of rejection of bidis and non-supply of sufficient wrapper leaves by the employers. Mrs. Meenakshi Karadkar, Secretary of the Bidi Workers' Union, Sholapur, urged the need for controlling the hours of work, introduction of card system for workers, appointment of an Inspectress of bidi factories, improvement of sanitary conditions and linking of wages with the cost of living index. In all the centres the workers pressed for the application of the Payment of Wages Act and the Maternity Benefit Act to the bidi industry.

The employers, on their side, have their grievances too. They say that owing to wagon shortage they are experiencing considerable difficulty in getting wrapper leaves in sufficient quantities and they should not, therefore, be blamed for not giving the workers sufficient work. As regards insanitary conditions they say that mostly the approaches are dirty and that it is the responsibility of the Municipality concerned to keep them clean.

CHAPTER IV.—SOUTH INDIA.

In South India, bidi manufacture is not confined to any particular locality or place but scattered throughout the Madras Province and the States. There is, however, a certain amount of localisation in and around towns where there is an abundant supply of labour and which are favourably situated as regards rail transport.

In Madras Province the important centres for bidi manufacture are : Madras city, Vellore, Salem, Trichinopoly, Tinnevely, Mukkudal, Palghat, Calicut, Tellichery, Cannanore and Mangalore. In Mysore State bidi manufacture is largely confined to Mysore city, Bangalore, Chamrajnagar, Gundlupet and Sira.

Surveys were conducted in Madras city, Salem, Vellore, Tinnevely, Mukkudal, Palghat and Mangalore in the Madras Province and Mysore and Chamrajnagar in the Mysore State. The number of sampled units in each centre are shown below.

<i>Centre</i>				<i>No. of sampled units.</i>
Madras	..	..	..	15
Salem	..	..	..	14
Vellore	17
Palghat	8
Mangalore	6
Tinnevely	5
Mukkudal	5
Mysore	5
Chamrajnagar	8

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ORGANISATION OF THE INDUSTRY.

There are two systems of organisation in this industry: direct and indirect, *i.e.*, through middlemen. Under the first system, the factory owners have direct dealings with their workers in all matters. The workers are directly employed by them and work in the factories or other workplaces provided by them under their direct supervision. The system of organisation is prevalent in Palghat, Tinnevely, Salem and Vellore and in the Mysore State. In Palghat, Salem and Vellore sometimes a slight variation of this system is also found. The proprietors run branches of their factories under the supervision of their paid agents or managers. Employment, wage payments and supply of materials are, however, direct.

The indirect system is the most widely prevalent system of organisation in the bidi industry in all the centres. The factory owners engage a number

of middlemen, supply them with raw materials and purchase the finished product from them. Employment of workers, supervision of work, payment of wages and provision of workplaces are the responsibility of the middlemen. Even in such indirect organisation three main types can be distinguished :

(1) *Buying and Selling System*.—The middlemen purchase tobacco, leaf and thread from the factory owners at a fixed price and sell the manufactured bidis to the same owners at a price previously agreed upon. The owners make profits both on the sale of raw materials to the middlemen and on the disposal of the finished product. This system is mostly prevalent in Madras city, Vellore, Tinnevely and Mangalore.

(2) *Commission System*.—Under this system the middlemen obtain raw materials from the factory owners and give them a stipulated number of bidis in return. He is paid a commission of nearly Rs. 2 for every 1,000 bidis. Out of this commission he has to pay wages of the labourers, rent of the workplace and other incidental charges. This system is common in Madras city, Vellore, Salem Palghat and Mangalore.

In Mysore State a curious combination of the above two systems is very common. The proprietors supply tobacco to the middlemen but the latter have to purchase wrapper leaves either from the proprietors or elsewhere. For every 1,000 bidis the middlemen are paid Rs. 2|11|.

In the Washermanpet area in Madras city, in Vellore and its suburbs and in one factory in Palghat there is a sub-contract system among the workers themselves. Not all the workers working in the factory are registered as regular workers and every registered worker employs under him 3 to 6 adult workers. The 'master worker' as he may be called, receives materials from the factory owner or branch manager and distributes them among his assistants who work along with him in the factory. The workers prefer this system as it saves them the trouble of direct contact with the management and as they get advances from their *mudalali*, i.e., the master-worker. The factory owners also encourage this as they have to deal only with a few workers. Further, in Vellore and its suburbs factories employing 100 workers or more have to obtain a certificate from the Sanitary Inspector about the suitability of the workplace and this can be evaded if a small number of workers is shown on the registers.

(3) *Home-Work*.—Under this system, the middlemen get the raw materials from the factory owners either on purchase or commission basis, but, instead of setting up workplaces, they distribute the materials among a number of home-workers, mostly women, and gather the finished product which they sell to the owners. This practice is common in all the centres where home-work is prevalent. In Mukkudal and its adjacent villages in Tinnevely district where nearly 20,000 home-workers are employed, the middlemen are however mostly engaged on a 'parcel commission' system. Here the factory owner gives them the necessary raw materials and undertakes to pay the wages of the workers as well. The middlemen's remuneration is a commission of Re. 1|4| to Rs. 2 for every bundle or 'parcel' of 36 000 bidis.

Tobacco is obtained chiefly from Nipani, but in war time more of Guntur and Mysore tobacco is being used. The wrapper leaf is obtained from the Central Provinces and the Hyderabad State. A slightly inferior variety of leaf grown in Cuddappah and Karnool is also largely used. Generally scissors which is the only tool that costs anything is provided by the workers themselves.

The cutting and the cleaning of the leaves is generally done by the bidi rollers themselves but in some places like Madras city, Salem and Vellore division of labour is practised in this respect. Some workers specialise in the cutting and cleaning of the leaf and they get for 1,000 such leaves a third of

the rate for 1,000 bidis. In Palghat, Tinnevely and Vellore this work is done by home-working women who are generally the relations of the workers themselves. A more common practice, however, in all the centres is to employ small children to do the work on daily rates.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour is mostly available locally in all the centres. In Tinnevely and Mysore, however, a good proportion of the bidi workers comes from South Travancore and Malabar respectively. Generally, the children of bidi workers follow in the footsteps of their parents and from an early age are apprenticed to the trade as helpers in cleaning the leaves, closing the ends, etc. Recruitment is direct. The vast majority of the bidi workers are Muslims who constitute over 80 per cent. of the total number of workers.

It is very difficult to estimate the total number of workers engaged in the bidi industry which is scattered throughout South India and is in a very unorganised state. Registers of employment are also not kept by small factories and home-workers are not included in the registers even of big factories. The present volume of employment in some of the important centres can, however, be roughly indicated. In Madras city, 7 factories have branches all over the city. Employment in these factories, excluding home-workers, in 1943 was 10,769 as reported by the Labour Commissioner, Madras. It has been roughly estimated that the number of workers in the remaining factories and home-workers would be about 10,000, so that an estimate of 2,000 workers will not be far wide of the mark. Mukkudal and the adjoining villages in the Tinnevely district employ the largest number of bidi workers in South India. The number of bidi workers employed by ten important factories in 1944 is, as shown by their registers, 19,400, and the total employment in this centre is about 20,000. In the other centres of production, the estimates of trade union workers and others who have long experience of the bidi industry are as follows:—

Centre	No. of workers
Vellore town and suburbs	6,500
Salem town and suburbs	2,000
Palghat town and suburbs	3,700
Tellicherry	2,000
Cannanore	1,000
Mangalore town and suburbs	2,400
Tinnevely town	2,000
Mysore	3,000
Bangalore	1,000
Chamrajnagar	400
Gundlupet	800
Sira	1,000
	<hr/>
	25,800

The total employment in all the above centres would, therefore, be about 65,800.

Some important centres like Trichinopoly, Erode, Karur, Coimbatore and Madura have not been included in the above estimate, while the States of Travancore and Cochin have been completely left out. Further, in almost every village in South India, a certain number of workers is employed in bidi making. It can, therefore, be safely assumed that the total volume of employment in the bidi industry in South India is in the neighbourhood of 100,000

Employment Pre-war and Present.

Many of the factories that were included in the sample were established during war time. The comparative position regarding employment, pre-war and present, is that while in some factories employment has decreased considerably in others it has increased. The tendency has been for factories employing

workers in large numbers to decrease the numbers of workers; at the same time factories employing only a few workers have increased their number. The employment position in those factories which have figures for 1939 and 1944 is as shown below :

TABLE 7.
Comparative employment in some bidi factories in 1939 and 1944.

Centre	No. of factories	Employment in	
		1939	1944
Madras	9	269	318
Salem	5	83	90
Vellore	8	647	736
Palghat	5	501	256
Mangalore	4	733	349
Mukkudal	4	6,469	10,921
Total	35	8,702	12,670

On the whole, therefore, employment in the bidi industry even in long-established factories has increased compared to the pre-war period.

Employment of Women and Children.

To estimate the number of women and children employed in the bidi industry is a more difficult task. Women are employed in the bidi industry either as home-workers for rolling the bidis or for labelling them. A number of women are also employed for cutting and preparing leaves at home. In the factories belonging to one proprietor alone, nearly 800 women are employed throughout the Madras Presidency for labelling work. Nearly all of the 20,000 workers in Mukkudal and adjacent villages are women home-workers. In Madras city women home-workers are more than 2,000. In the Mysore State the bidi industry employs nearly as many women as home-workers as men. It can, therefore, be safely assumed that there are not less than 30,000 women employed in the bidi industry in South India.

An equally large proportion of the workers employed in the bidi industry is children. The extent of child labour is largest in Vellore and its suburbs. In Madras city and the Mysore State also children are employed in large numbers. In Mangalore and Palghat employment of child labour is rare, although there is one factory each in these centres employing a large proportion of children, the one in Palghat employing 50 children out of a total of 120 workers and the one in Mangalore employing 30 children out of a total of 130 workers. In Salem and Tinnevely children are not employed to any appreciable extent.

The extent of employment of children in the sampled factories in some of the centres is shown in the table below :

TABLE 8.
Employment of children in bidi industry, 1944.

Centre	Total No. of workers	Adults	Children	Percent of children
Madras	429	350	79	18
Salem	196	184	12	6
Vellore	1,950	1,388	564	29
Palghat	355	339	16	5
Mangalore	410	410	..	0
Mysore	417	305	112	27
Chamrajnagar	250	195	55	22

The children employed in the bidi industry are between 8 and 15 years of age. Nearly half the number of the children employed are below the age of 12.

In spite of the Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933, pledging of child labour is in evidence in parts of Madras city and Vellore. It was also noticed in the Mysore State. In this case although there is no agreement signed by

the parents or the guardians of children that the children are to work under a particular person, there is an implied agreement as the parents invariably receive advances from the bidi workers who seek to employ them. The advances range from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 in Vellore and from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 in Madras city and the Mysore State. Such advances are free of interest and the parents or guardians who receive them seldom pay them back. Some workers gradually recover the advance by withholding the wages of the children but others prefer not to do so with a view to have a claim on the labour of the children. In Vellore where child labour is most widely prevalent and the advances are the highest, most of the children for whom advances are thus paid are orphans under the guardianship of their relatives.

Children have to work as long hours as adult workers and in Vellore most of the workers who employ children have a watch or time-piece for exacting work by the hour. If a child worker does not complete a stipulated amount of work in any one hour, his wages are reduced.

Unemployment and Under-employment.

Unemployment and under-employment were serious risks for the bidi workers before the war. On an average, before the war a worker was employed for about 15 days in a month, and there were many workers who were out of employment. At present, however, unemployment has vanished and under-employment considerably reduced though it has by no means totally disappeared. Under-employment is still an evil that faces the bidi workers. Three causes may be cited as responsible for under-employment or irregularity of employment at present. The most important of these is the inclemency of the weather. During the rainy season the bidis cannot be dried in the sun and only a few factories have taken to the process of artificially drying them in an oven. Whenever there is rain, therefore, the factories are closed. Another reason for the irregularity of employment is the difficulty of obtaining material at the proper time on account of difficulties of transport by rail. Sometimes also work is stopped because of accumulation of stocks in the factory owing to lack of transport facilities for marketing. The extent of under-employment suffered by the bidi workers may be gauged from the following figures which represent the average number of days in a year on which work is stopped on account of these reasons.

TABLE 9.
Extent of under-employment in bidi industry in 1944.

Centre	Due to Rain	Want of material	Over-stock	Total No. of days lost in a year
Madras	30—45	30	30	90—105
Salem	15—30	20—45	..	35—75
Vellore	15—20	15	..	30—35
Mukkudal	20—30	..	..	20—30

In Mukkudal apart from the 20 to 30 days lost on account of the rain, the workers are not given work for 5 to 10 days every month during which time the factory owners settle the accounts, receive the bidis manufactured and disburse wages.

Age distribution of Workers.

Most of the workers are illiterate and have no definite knowledge of their age. The impression gained, however, after visiting a good number of factories all over South India, is that the vast majority of the bidi workers are between the ages of 18 and 30. Men over 50 are very seldom found. Perhaps the nature of bidi work is such that after middle age, the worker's efficiency suffers. Bidi rolling requires quickness of fingers and exceptional powers of endurance are needed for working long hours.

Labour Turnover.

Although no figures are available, the indications are that labour turnover is very high in the bidi industry. In fact, in many factories the percentage of labour turnover in a year would be from 500 to 1,000. In scarcely any factory can one find the same set of workers working two consecutive months and in four months' time hardly any worker who was working in the first month will be seen. The causes of such high turnover are : (1) The advance system : when a worker requires money, he goes to a new employer and takes a higher advance and pays off the outstanding advance to his previous employer. (2) Daily payment of wages. Since the wages are paid daily there is nothing to hold him on to the factory. He can leave any day he chooses. (3) Absence of classification as permanent or temporary. A beginner is in the same boat with the worker who has put in years of service. There are no distinctive privileges for any class of workers. (4) Springing up of new bidi factories everywhere in recent years. The workers have an inexplicable mania to leave their factories to work in new factories. Very often, after a month or so, they leave the new factories also.

Absenteeism.

In South India the bidi factories do not generally keep any attendance registers where absence from work is recorded. Wages are usually settled daily and the proprietors have no need to maintain any register. In the opinion of the factory owners and the branch managers, absenteeism is about 10 to 15 per cent. in Madras. Salem, Vellore, Tinnevely and Mangalore, about 20 per cent. in Palghat and from 5 to 10 per cent. in the Mysore State. The unduly long hours of work which involves physical strain, the insanitary conditions of work that make the workers easily vulnerable to disease and, to a certain extent, the increased earnings of workers may be cited as the causes of absenteeism.

Advances.

The basis of all employment in the bidi industry, except on the west coast, is the advance. In fact, advances play no mean role even in the organisation of the industry, for the factory owners have to give advances to their intermediaries, viz., the branch managers to keep the work going. Such advances are interest-free and amount to Rs. 500 or even to Rs. 1,000. The branch managers have, however, to execute promissory notes for the advances.

Advances to workers are most common in Madras city, Salem, Vellore and Mysore State. The advances range from Rs. 5 to Rs. 20 in the Madras Province and from Rs. 30 to Rs. 150 in Mysore State. In the Madras Province most of the employers do not insist on promissory notes but in Mysore promissory notes and agreement on stamped paper are very common. The advances are recovered by the employers in daily instalments of 2 to 4 annas. The representatives of the Mysore Bidi Association and the Chamrajnagar Bidi Association strongly urged the necessity of stopping the advances to the labourers because the agreements constitute a powerful weapon in the hands of the employers.

WAGES AND EARNINGS.

Wages are paid on a piece basis. The rate for 1,000 bidis is given for the preparatory processes of cutting and cleaning the leaf, the actual rolling and the finishing process of closing the ends and tying in bundles of 25. The rates of wages have increased during the war. But there is no uniformity of wages from centre to centre nor, in some cases, from factory to factory in the same centre. The bidis manufactured can be broadly classified under two heads : the *sada* bidi and the *jadi* bidi. The *jadi* bidi is bigger than the *sada* bidi in size and generally the rate is 2 annas more for the bigger bidi.

A table showing the rates of wages for manufacturing 1,000 bidis in the various centres in 1939 and in 1944 is given below. The rates refer to adult male workers working in factories, except in the case of Mukkudal where the rates shown are for women who constitute the large majority of workers.

TABLE 10.
Wage rates in the bidi industry in 1939 and 1944.

Year	Madras		Salem & Vellore		Palghat		Mangalore		Tinnevelly		Mukkudal		Mysore		Chamrajnagar	
	Sada	Jadi	Sada	Jadi	Sada	Jadi	Sada	Jadi	Sada	Jadi	Sada	Jadi	Sada	Jadi	Sada	Jadi
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1939 ..	0 9 0	0 10 0	0 5 0	0 8 0	..	0 8 0	..	0 9 0	0 7 0	0 8 0	0 3 4	..	..	0 10 0	0 7 0	0 8 0
1944 ..	..	1 2 0	1 0 0	1 2 0	..	1 8 0	..	1 2 0	1 2 0	1 4 0	0 6 8	..	..	1 8 0	0 14 0	1 0 0

Note.—In 1945 the rates in Palghat and Mysore were raised to Rs. 1-12-0 and Rs. 1-10-0 respectively for *Jadi* bidis and in Chamrajnagar to Rs. 1-4-0 and Rs. 1-6-0 for *Sada* and *Jadi* Bidis respectively.

The rates for women home-workers are in all cases much lower. The comparative rates in force for men and women for rolling 1,000 bidis is given in the following table.

TABLE 11.
Differential wage rates for men and women, 1944.

Centre	Sada bidi				Jadi bidi			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
Madras	1	2 0	0	8 0	1	2 0	0	10 0
Tinnevely	1	2 0	0	8 0	1	4 0	0	10 0
Mysore .. .. .	..	..	..	..	1	10 0	1	0 0
Chamrajnagar ..	1	4 0	0	10 0	1	6 0	0	12 0

In Salem and Vellore women are employed to prepare and cut the leaf at home by men working in factories and are paid on a piece basis. In Salem for cutting 1,000 leaves for the *jadi bidi* 4 annas 6 pies are paid. In Vellore the rate is 3 annas for *Jadi* and 2 annas for *Sada bidi*.

Ring-labelling is done by women on an out-work system and wages are generally paid on piece basis. Not all the factories put a separate ring round each bidi; only those factories which depend largely on outside markets do so. The rate per 1,000 bidis is 1 anna 3 pies in Trichinopoly, 1 anna in Madras and 9 pies in Mukkudal. In Salem and Vellore ring-labelling is done on a time basis, the workers who are women or children being paid Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 a month.

Wages of Children.

The children employed as assistants to the bidi workers get 2 annas per day when they start work. Those who have experience of 3 or 4 years get from 4 to 10 annas. The average wage of a child worker is only from 4 to 6 annas. In pre-war days children were paid very low wages of 1 or 2 annas a week and the maximum was Re. 1 a week.

In the bidi industry, no allowances or bonuses of any kind exist. The rates of wages have been raised during the war, but there appears to be a good scope for increasing them still further. As the employers were reluctant to give reliable data about their cost of manufacture and profits, it was not possible to work out accurately the cost accounts; but from enquiries made it appears that the factory owners make a total profit of about 12 annas per 1,000 bidis. The middleman makes a profit of one to two annas per 1,000 bidis rolled in his workshop and of 8 to 10 annas per 1,000 bidis rolled by women working at home as they get about 8 annas less than the workshop wages. That the employers can well afford to pay higher rates of wages is further proved by the fact that in order to attract more bidi workers, one factory in Chamrajnagar (Adum Factory) voluntarily raised the wages from Re. 1|4|- and Rs. 1|2|- to Rs. 1|8|- and Rs. 1|6|- and all the factories in Mysore city raised the wages voluntarily to Rs. 2 in January 1945, although in both cases the wages were subsequently lowered.

Payment of Wages.

Generally in bidi factories in South India wages are paid daily. In fact, in all the centres except Salem and Mukkudal wages are paid daily. In Salem weekly settlement is the general rule. In Mukkudal wages are settled monthly and in some cases fortnightly.

Deductions from Wages.

Cash deductions from wages are not common in the bidi industry except in Palghat, Tinnevely and Salem in the Madras Province and in the Mysore State. In Palghat and the other two centres quarter anna per worker per week is deducted towards a charity fund. The proceeds are not devoted for any charity but go into the pocket of the proprietor. The practice is not, however, universal in these centres. In the Mysore State, a weekly deduction of an anna on account of incidental charges is very common. The amount deducted is generally one anna per week. But in some factories it is 1 anna 6 pies and in a few others 2 annas. Further, many factory owners in Mysore deduct one anna six pies a week as charges for getting the leaf soaked in water. In some factories in Palghat and in the Mysore State, the cost of the thread required for binding the bidis is borne by the workers and deduction is made at 1 anna 6 pies for a *chil* of thread. As one *chil* is enough for binding 4,000 to 5,000 bidis, the deduction on this account roughly works out to 4 pies per 1,000 bidis. A few factories in the Mysore State charge 2 annas and sometimes even 2 annas 6 pies for a *chil* of thread.

Apart from these cash deductions, 25 bidis per 1,000 bidis rolled are deducted when calculating wages. Ostensibly this is for making good the rejection of bad bidis by the factory owner. Such rejection, however, is at present very rare. In the Mysore State many of the factories make a deduction of 25 bidis per head per day, *i.e.*, if one worker has two boys to assist him, the deduction is 75 bidis.

In pre-war time, the rejection of bidis by the branch managers for bad workmanship led to a good deal of abuse. About 200 to 300 bidis were rejected from every 1,000 and were paid at only half the rates, though the so-called bad bidis were sold along with the rest at the same price. The practice of rejection was only a device to cheat the labourers out of a part of their earnings. This abuse has stopped now but may crop up again after the war if employment becomes scarce.

In some factories the amount of leaf to be utilised for making 1,000 bidis is fixed at 3, $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 bundles and if more leaf is utilised the cost of the excess is charged to the labourers concerned and deducted from their wages. It frequently happens, especially in the case of the inferior Cuddappah and Kur-nool leaf, that the fixed quantity does not suffice for 1,000 bidis. This practice is more common in Mysore and Chamrajnagar.

In one factory in Chamrajnagar, if a worker absents himself from work without previous intimation, 8 annas are deducted from his wage on account of damage to leaves. In the agreement entered into by the worker this deduction is provided for. The excuse for deduction is that leaves are soaked in water the previous day and if a worker absents himself from work the leaves soaked on his account go waste, as they cannot be utilised on the next day. Actually the leaves are not allowed to go waste but are distributed among the workers that are present as is done in other factories.

Earnings.

On an average a bidi worker rolls about 1,000 bidis a day. If he employs a child to help him he can roll, on an average, 1,500 bidis and, after paying the wages for the child at 4 to 8 annas, his earnings are slightly higher than the rate of wages for 1,000 bidis. Before the rates of wages were raised to the present level an average worker rolled about 1,250 bidis a day, but now the average has fallen to about 1,000, the workers choosing to work fewer hours per day.

The average monthly earnings of bidi workers in the various centres in 1939 and 1944 are given in the following table :—

TABLE 12.

Average monthly earnings of bidi workers in selected centres in 1939 and 1944.

Centre.	1939.			1944.				
	Average No. of workers	Average wage bill per month		Average monthly earnings	Average No. of workers	Average wage bill per month		Average monthly earnings
		Rs.	A. P.			Rs.	A. P.		Rs.	A. P.
Madras	78	983	6 2	12 9 8	112	2,043	1 4	18 3 10
Palghat	31*	540	11 7*	17 7 1*	31	1,363	4 2	43 15 7
Mangalore	166	2,084	14 3	12 9 0	21	439	9 0	20 15 0
Tinnevely .. ..	..	..	..	..	52	1,517	8 0	29 3 0
Mukkudal†	1,545	2,594	0 8	1 10 10	3,310	16,522	7 6	4 15 10

*Figures relate to 1942.

†In Mukkudal the workers are women out workers.

Note.—The figures relate to only one or two factories in each centre. Only very few factories keep regular accounts of wage payments throughout the year. Rates of wages and regularity of employment being generally same in each centre, the average earnings can be taken to be representative.

The Salem Bidi workers' Union in its memorandum to the Committee has mentioned the monthly income of the Salem bidi workers as being from Rs. 28 to Rs. 39. In Vellore although many factories keep accounts of wages etc., the registers record only the wages of master workers so that the computation of earnings on that basis will have no meaning. Employment is more regular in the Mysore State and the average number of bidis rolled by a worker is 1,000 per day so that the earnings of adult male workers are about Rs. 40 per month in Mysore city and about Rs. 30 in Bangalore and Chamrajnagar.

In spite of the remarkable increase in the rates of wages in the bidi industry during the last two years, the earnings of the workers have not increased proportionately. This is because before wages were increased the workers had to work for long hours and with greater intensity in order to earn a wage just sufficient for their bare maintenance. The workers' standard of living has been always very low and their outlook on life very narrow, so that most of them have no higher ambition than to make both ends meet. Now, when rates of wages were raised their general outlook did not change and they were satisfied to stick to their old standards of living. They took their work more leisurely and often reduced voluntarily the number of hours. For example, in Mysore the average daily number of bidis rolled by a worker was 1,250 to 1,500 up to 1942, but the average at present is only 1,000.

Standard of Living of the Bidi Workers.

In Madras city in 1936 the Department of Industries collected 310 family budgets from among the bidi workers and at that time the average number of persons in a bidi worker's family was 4.31 (including the worker) composed of 1.60 men, 1.34 women, 0.64 boys and 0.73 girls. The average income per family per month was only Rs. 20|5|10 and 98.08 per cent. of the income was derived from employment. Even today, the bidi worker and his family in all the centres surveyed have little or no source of subsidiary income. No similar official figures, are available for other centres, but from our enquiries it was found that the number of dependants was more or less the same in other centres also.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

Hours of work.

In the bidi industry there are no fixed hours of work. Wages being paid on a piece basis, the workers work according to their convenience and the employers are not worried as to when or how they work, so long as the workers prepare for him a fixed minimum of bidis. With all that, however, the bidi workers work very long hours. Generally, the workshops open at 8 or 9 a.m. and close at 9 or 10 p.m. All the workers take a mid-day interval of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours. A few factories in Mysore and Chamrajnagar close at 7 p.m. on account of lack of kerosene to light the workplace. It does not mean, however, that all the workers present themselves at the opening time. Some come one or two hours late. Some likewise go away earlier. On an average, the workers work for 10 hours a day. Children working in the factories and workshops have to follow the same hours as worked by the labourers who employ them. If a worker chooses to work till 11 p.m. his child-helper is also expected to work till then. The strict regulation of working hours is an imperative need in the bidi industry. If the workshops are open for fixed hours only, say 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with an hour's interval the workers will put in steady work and roll as many bidis as they are doing now, working by fits and starts over a much longer period.

Closed Days.

In all the bidi centres, one day in a week is observed as a closed day. In Madras and Mangalore, Sunday is the weekly holiday. In Palghat, Vellore, Tinnevely and in the Mysore State, Friday is observed as the weekly holiday to enable the workers, the vast majority of whom are Muslims, to attend the Juma prayer in the mosque. In Salem, however, there is no fixed rule; some factories close on Sunday, some on Friday and a few on Thursday or Saturday as may be convenient. Sometimes even on the weekly holiday although the workplaces remain closed the workers take the material home and work there. A more frequent practice among the workers is to work very late on the eve of the weekly holiday so as to make up for work lost on the holiday. Sometimes the workers work throughout the night on the eve of the holiday. Therefore, the purpose of the weekly holiday which is to give the workmen the necessary rest is defeated.

The most serious evil in the bidi industry is the highly insanitary condition of the workplaces. The workshops are generally low roofed, dark and ill ventilated places with uneven mud floors. The places are seldom swept or cleaned and are littered with the refuse of the leaves. There are rarely windows in the walls and the only entrance is often a narrow door so that light and fresh air are totally inadequate in the workplaces. The workshops themselves are situated in very dirty streets and lanes because of cheap rent. Some of the larger factories in Palghat, Mysore and Bangalore provide fairly large workplaces where overcrowding is not so great as in the smaller workshops. Nearly all the workplaces in Mangalore are housed in decent buildings and in decent surroundings. Latrines and urinals are nominally provided in the larger workshops in Madras, Salem, Palghat and in the Mysore State but are either kept locked so that the worker cannot use them or are rarely cleaned with the result that the workers would rather go a long distance or urinate in the street than make use of them. In the smaller workplaces latrines and urinals are not provided. Only in a few factories are arrangements made for providing cold water in summer for drinking. The workers have generally to go to the nearest hotel or street standpipe to quench their thirst. In no bidi factory is a rest place provided for the workers where they can rest during the midday interval.

HOUSING.

Housing is not provided by the employers anywhere. The large majority of the bidi workers live in miserable rented houses. The Report on an enquiry into the family budgets of industrial workers in Madras city describes the habitation of the bidi workers in the following words: "The rooms are almost devoid of ventilation, and the entrance, to some of these is so low that one has nearly to double oneself for entering them. The rooms have also very little light, and things inside can be seen only with the aid of a lamp even during day time. Sometimes the floor is on a lower level than the street and rain water would find its way into the house and render the floor damp and unfit for habitation. Washing and drainage facilities and latrines are scarcely provided for. Washing and bathing are done in the streets or lanes which consequently are rendered very dirty. The dimensions of the one room tenements generally vary from 8 ft. \times 5 ft. to 8 feet square*."

The housing conditions of the bidi workers in the city of Madras have in no way improved since the enquiry was made and conditions of living in other centres are equally bad.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

Medical Aid.—There is no instance in South India where the employer has provided facilities for medical treatment to the workers. The workers depend solely on the Government hospitals and dispensaries. All the workers are unanimous in their complaint that they do not get proper attention from these dispensaries. Unless they are seriously ill, they do not generally go to them.

What with the low earnings of the bidi workers and the consequent low standard of living, unhealthy and insanitary working conditions and the long hours of work, the health of the bidi workers is none too good. In fact, in this respect they may be said to be one of the most vulnerable groups among the industrial workers. Skin diseases like scabies and itches are common. Tuberculosis is also common among the bidi workers and this is nothing strange when the dirty, airless and dark workplaces in which they have to squat for long hours are taken into account. A fear was expressed by many bidi workers and labour union representatives that the brown dust-like coating on the wrapper leaves adversely affected the lungs.

Education

There is no instance again where the employers have provided schools for the workers' children. There are, however, Government or Municipal elementary schools in all the centres. But the children of the bidi workers instead of attending school proceed to the factory or workshop to add their mite to the family income. In the cities of Madras and Mysore, scheme of compulsory elementary education of children below 12 are in existence, but the enforcement of the schemes leaves much to be desired. The Corporation of Madras, for instance, first introduced in 1926 a scheme for compulsory elementary education in four divisions in the city and it was extended to the other division in 1929. But only methods of persuasion were adopted to bring children of school-going age under instruction. The Corporation of Madras in its Administration Report for the year 1935-36 mentions that economic causes forcing several poor boys of school-going age to earn a livelihood would appear to have been primarily responsible for their not going to school.† It is strange that in spite of two Acts in force, *viz.*, the Employment of Children (Amendment) Act, 1939 and the Compulsory Elementary Education Act, the number of children still employed in the bidi industry is very large.

* The Report, p. 37.

† The Report p. 40.

An attempt was made in Vellore by the Labour Union to start a night school for the benefit of the adult workers but attendance was so very discouraging that the venture was given up.

INDEBTEDNESS.

The low standard of living of the bidi worker is further corroborated by the fact that most of the workers are indebted. The family budget enquiry in Madras in 1936 showed that 58.06 per cent. of the bidi workers were indebted and that the average indebtedness per family was Rs. 41-4-8. From enquiries made from several workers selected at random, it was found that the incidence of indebtedness was still high and that in Madras city it had increased by nearly 50 per cent.

WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS.

In any industry effective organisation of workers can thwart the evils of low wages, long hours and insanitary working conditions. Such organisations may be either on lines of co-operative production or trade unions. In the bidi industry in the South both the types were noticed.

Co-operative production.

It is an encouraging sign that in the city of Mysore an effort is being made to organise labour on lines of co-operative production. The consciousness of the workers was awakened by one of the bidi factories declaring a lockout in September 1944. Some of the more enlightened workers on the advice of the local labour leaders and with the encouragement of the Assistant Labour Commissioner have set about forming a Joint Stock Co-operative Bidi Manufacturing concern. The Memorandum and Articles of Association have not been framed yet. The idea, however, is to have a company of 2,000 shares of Rs. 10 each, only bidi workers being entitled to buy the shares. Nearly 300 shares have been sold already and the manufacturing process has started. The factory is called the Lock-out Bidi Factory and at present employs 10 workers.

Trade Unions.

Although sporadic efforts were made here and there in some bidi centres to form trade unions in the pre-war period, organisation among the workers in the bidi industry is of recent origin. The class consciousness of the workers was awakened only when prices began to soar high during 1940 and 1941 and the employers appeared to be reluctant and tardy in raising the wages. At present there are two unions of labourers in Madras, one each in Salem, Vellore, Palghat, Tinnevely and Mangalore, and five in Mysore. A large percentage of the workers has joined the unions. The subscription is 2 annas per member per month in all centres.

The Mysore Labour Act does not allow workers in establishments employing less than 100 persons to form into associations (trade unions) and even in establishments employing 100 persons and more, there are to be separate unions for separate concerns. The bidi workers in smaller establishments have, however, formed into a Small Factories Bidi Association after obtaining special permission from the Labour Commissioner. The membership of this Association is 600. In Chamrajnagar efforts are being made to form a trade union.

All the unions are registered but they are not recognised by the employers and the union representatives are not allowed inside the factories and other workplaces. Victimisation of union officials is not uncommon. Most of the unions are affiliated to the All India Trade Union Congress.

Strikes.

In spite of the fact that in many centres there are trade unions with extensive membership, strikes as a weapon to force the hands of the employers have been very few. Probably this may be due to the fact that the demands of the workers for increased wages were conceded sooner or later.

In Salem the bidi workers union resorted to a strike on 16th June 1944. The union demanded an increase in wages from Re. 1 to Rs. 1|8|- per 1000 bidis and when this demand was rejected they resorted to a strike. All the workers participated in the strike which lasted for 14 days. Previous to the strike a few small factories voluntarily raised the wages to Rs. 1|8|-. On the intervention of Government officers, an increase of 2 annas was granted by the proprietors who agreed to concede in full the demand of the union in two months' time. The workers resumed work on 1st July 1944 but the union's demand still remains uncondced. In Chamrajnagar, in spite of the fact that there is no organised labour union, a strike in which all the workers participated was launched on 30th April 1945. The strike started in one factory (Adum bidi factory) the owner of which had exhibited a notice that wages were raised from Rs. 1|2|- and Rs. 1|4|- to Rs. 1|6|- and Rs. 1|8|- for the *sada* and *jadi* bidi respectively and actually paid the rates for three days. But the other factory owners prevailed upon him again to lower the rates. The strike was launched as a protest and it spread to other factories. After three days a settlement was reached by all the factory owners agreeing to raise the wages by two annas. In Mysore, the bidi factory owners, in competition with one another, raised the wages in January 1945 to Rs. 2 so as to attract more workers and paid the enhanced rate for a week. The employers then formed an association and decided to lower the wages again to Rs. 1|10|- and are paying that rate at present. Three out of the four labour associations then functioning have issued 'notice of change' to the factory owners.

Lock-outs.

In Mysore, the Gaffar factory declared a lock-out in September 1944 and was still sticking to it in May 1945. The lock-out was a sequel to the dismissal of a labour association secretary. The factory, however, now runs branches in Mysore, Gundlupet and Chamrajnagar and gets all its work done through them.

CHAPTER V.—BENGAL.

The three principal bidi making centres in Bengal in order of importance are Calcutta, Bankura and Ranigunge. The survey was confined to the first two centres only. Bidis are made in factories, big and small, and in almost all pan-bidi shops. In Calcutta the bidi making areas are Kidderpore, Behalla, Tollygunge, Park Circus, Raja Bazar and Sealdah. Three factories were selected from each of these areas except Kidderpore and Raja Bazar where five factories were taken as they have more factories than the other areas. Thus 22 factories of all sizes in Calcutta, 6 out of 11 big factories in Bankura and several pan-bidi shops were covered in our survey.

Both tobacco and wrapper leaves are imported from outside. The tobacco which is most commonly used is Nipani, Gujerathi and Hindusthani and the wrapper leaves are imported from the Central Provinces and Bihar.

EMPLOYMENT.

The Bidi Workers' Union, Calcutta, estimates that there are about 20,000 bidi makers in Calcutta and about 2,000 at Bankura. It also considers that there has been a shrinkage in the volume of employment since 1939 in Calcutta which, in its opinion, employed about 25,000 bidi workers before the War. The shrinkage is mainly attributed to the abnormal rise in the price of tobacco which compelled many owners of small bidi factories to close down. A few of the able-bodied workers who were displaced are said to be working as labourers under military contractors. At Bankura, on the other hand, the employment figures have gone up. This is due to the fact that many merchants from Calcutta and other big cities have started buying bidis from Bankura where labour is cheap. In six of the factories investigated, the number of people employed has gone up from 450 in 1939 to 825 in 1944. About 40 per

cent. of the workers in Calcutta and 80 per cent. in Bankura work in factories while the rest work in pan-bidi shops. The Factories Act does not apply to bidi factories.

Majority of the workers in Calcutta are from Bihar. More than 90 per cent. in Calcutta are Muslims and the rest are scheduled caste Hindus. At Bankura, majority of the workers are local people and over 90 per cent. are drawn from the scheduled castes. 560 people selected at random from 50 factories and pan-bidi shops in Calcutta were examined and showed the following distribution regarding communities and areas of recruitment.

TABLE 13.
Composition of sampled bidi workers in Calcutta, 1944.

Community	Bengal	Bihar	United Provinces	Total	Percent of total
Muslims	203	295	10	508	90.71
Scheduled Caste Hindus	52	..	..	52	9.29
Total	255	295	10	560	100.00

The same examination revealed the following age distribution among the 560 workers.

TABLE 14.
Age distribution of sampled bidi workers in Calcutta, 1944.

Age	No. of workers	Percent of total
Below 16	51	9.11
16 to 20	100	17.86
21 to 25	100	17.86
26 to 30	136	24.28
31 to 35	89	15.89
36 to 40	45	8.04
41 to 45	34	6.07
46 to 50	5	0.89
51 and above .. .. .	..	..
Total	560	100.00

The absence of workers above 50 is explained by the fact that a man as he becomes old loses dexterity of his fingers which is essential for high output.

In Calcutta women workers do not work in factories or shops probably because of the purdah system but quite a large number of them are engaged in this industry in their homes. These women are supplied by the factory owners with all the requisite materials such as wrapper leaves, tobacco, thread, etc., as in the case of men working in factories and shops. They are paid about 4 annas less per 1,000 bidis than men on the plea of inferior quality of bidis made by them though these bidis are sold at the same rate as those made by men. Women workers do not seem to grudge this in view of the facility afforded to them for making bidis at home and as it helps them supplement the income of their menfolk. Usually these women are wives of bidi makers working in factories. In Bankura also there is home work but not to the same extent as in Calcutta. In every factory there are one or two women workers on daily rate who do the work of sieving tobacco. In one factory 35 women were engaged on bidi making. Here also women get about 2 annas less per 1,000 bidis, whether made at home or in factories, than men. Shopkeepers and bidi merchants employ very few children directly but workers employ them as helping hands. Bidi factories generally employ 5 to 10 boys, some even below the age of 12, for labelling and packing, against the provision of the Employment of Children (Amendment) Act, 1939.

All workers are on piece-rate basis and are considered as temporary. There is no security of service and the workers can leave the service or can be discharged at any time without notice. Very few workers stay in one factory or pan-bidi shop for more than a month. As the conditions of employment are unattractive, there is no inducement of any kind to the workers to stick to one place. It is not possible to work out figures of labour turnover and absenteeism in this unorganised industry where no records are maintained.

Nearly all the beginners learn the trade at home while helping their parents in cutting wrapper leaves. Sometimes workers keep helping hands, commonly known as *Pottas* who may be considered a sort of apprentices. These helpers learn the work in two or three months after which they work on their own. During the period of learning they are paid by the workers four to six annas a day. These *Pottas* are usually adolescents and in some cases related to workers whom they help. At first they learn to tie thread on the rolled bidis, then to cut wrapper leaves and finally to roll bidis. The *Pottas* are employed for cutting leaves usually by workers who are bachelors or living away from their families. Married workers living with families get the work done through their womenfolk at home.

The only supervision over workers is to prevent theft of tobacco and wrapper leaves. In pan-bidi shops and small factories employers themselves do this work but in bigger factories this work is entrusted to old and reliable workers who are given an allowance varying from Rs. 12 to Rs. 15 per month for supervision and for taking account of the output of each worker at the end of the day. Occasionally they also make payment to other workers from the money deposited with them by the employers and render account to them at the end of the week. They are also placed in charge of limited stocks of tobacco and leaves for supplying workers in case they run short of them. These old and reliable workers who occupy a place analogous to that of sirdars in other industries also work as bidi makers in these factories.

WAGES AND EARNINGS.

Before 1939 there were three different rates in Calcutta, viz., 11 annas, 12 annas and 14 annas per thousand bidis and at Bankura the rates were 6 annas, 7 annas and 7 annas 6 pies. Since the outbreak of war the rates have gone up and at present there are three prevailing rates, viz., Rs. 1|9|- , Rs. 1|11|6 and Rs. 1|14|- in Calcutta and Rs. 1|1|- , Rs. 1|1|6 and Rs. 1|4|- in Bankura. The rates do not depend on the size or quality of bidis but on the locality or, more often, on the bargaining between the parties. Children who are mostly employed by the workers to help them get 4 to 6 annas per day. All the workers are on piece-rate basis, except a few in large factories who do labelling and packing. The number of such persons is, however, negligible and is less than 1 per cent. of the total number employed in this industry. They are usually boys and were getting 4 to 6 annas per day in 1939 and are now given 10 to 12 annas in both Calcutta and Bankura. No dearness allowance or any other allowance or bonus is given to workers. Piece-rated workers are paid daily at the end of the work when their bidis are counted. There are also no deductions in wages on account of various *Chats* or rejection of bad bidis in Calcutta, but rejection has been a source of annoyance and discord particularly at Bankura where it is reported that quite an appreciable percentage of manufactured bidis is rejected and later on sold at the same price as others.

There is no closed day except in three big factories in Calcutta where Friday is observed as a closed day. During festival days, however, practically no work is done in any factory or shop. In cases of accumulated stocks also factories are closed down for one or two days. It is perhaps needless to say that no payments of any kind are made in respect of such days and workers are obliged to seek employment in other shops.

The examination of 560 bidi workers referred to above showed that bachelors (125) earned Rs. 12|4|- and married men (435) earned Rs. 15|8|- per week. The weighted average of weekly earnings was Rs. 14|12|-. Married people were found more regular in attendance than bachelors and generally, worked for all the seven days of the week while others worked, on an average, for six days in a week. The bidi-workers are wholtime workers and have no connection with agriculture.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

Even in big and medium size factories working conditions are not satisfactory. Workers have to sit on the floor (sometimes on mats) with bamboo trays on their laps. The space allotted to each worker is generally about six square feet. Ventilation is deplorable. Ordinary amenities like supply of drinking water and latrines are absent in some of these factories. Workers themselves add to the insanitary conditions by dumping the suttings of the wrapper leaves in the open drains in front of the factories. Electric light, however is provided everywhere for night work. In every pan-bidi shop there is a section for bidi making. These shops are usually 5 ft. \times 4 ft. \times 8 ft. This space is partitioned into two decks by means of planks, the upper portion being occupied by the pan-bidi shop and the lower portion which is on the road level by the workers. The workers have to crawl into the space allotted to them for work. It is needless to point out that there are no windows but the front portion is open. This space usually accommodates three to four persons.

Hours of Work.

There are no fixed hours of work in Calcutta. The workers come and go as they like but usually do not work later than 10 p.m. The normal working hours are 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. They usually work 9 to 10 hours a day though the spreadover is 13 hours. The actual working hours are in a line with other industries but the spreadover is more than what is permitted in registered factories. Work is stopped at 10 p.m. because of the lighting restrictions and difficulties of conveyance. Before the war work used to be carried on up to 11 p.m. At Bankura out of six factories investigated one factory has fixed hours, *viz.*, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In others there are fixed hours but the workers usually come at 9 a.m. and stop work at 6 p.m. Wrapper leaves are soaked in water and cut at home by workers as well as by their wives and relatives.

HOUSING.

In Calcutta the bidi workers, in spite of their hard labour, can hardly make both ends meet. They have naturally to find out the cheapest possible accommodation for themselves and most of them live in places popularly known as *bustees* which are generally situated at some distance from the highways. They consist of huts in groups with one or two rooms often placed back to back. The huts have *kutchha* walls and floors and the roofs are of thatch, corrugated iron sheets or tiles. The height of the huts generally varies from 6 to 8 feet and the plinth is of 6 to 8 inches. The size of a room is usually 70 to 80 square feet. The house rent is reported to have increased nearly by 33 per cent. since the outbreak of the war. It used to be about Rs. 3 per room per month in 1939 and has now gone up to Rs. 4.

Ventilation in these tenements is highly unsatisfactory. The rooms are, as a general rule, very poorly lighted owing to the lack of windows and even where any small apertures exist, they are in most cases closed by the inmates in their desire to secure privacy. At Bankura the bidi workers live in *bustees* which consist of a mass of huts constructed without any plan or arrangement. Slimy stagnant ponds full of putrid matter are not uncommon in these *bustees*. The huts are huddled together and entire families consisting, on an average, of 5 to 6 members occupy a single room in which they cook,

eat and sleep together. Most of the *butees*, especially of Calcutta, are abodes of misery, vice and filth.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES

Complete absence of any welfare work for the bidi workers is a striking feature of this industry.

Out of the 560 people examined, 14 per cent. were found to be literate i.e., they could read and write their vernacular only. This is due to the fact that the workers come from the lowest strata of the society and are not anxious to educate their children, especially as education costs money.

INDEBTEDNESS.

Examination of the 560 workers revealed that as many as 390 or 70 per cent. were indebted. The table below shows that about 38 per cent. of the debtors are with five or more dependents. The number of debtors decreases with the reduction in the number of dependents.

TABLE 15.

Indebtedness among sampled bidi workers in Calcutta.

Total No. of workers examined	Dependents	No. of debtors	Percent of total	Average incidence per head
	<i>Nil.</i>	6	1.1	Rs. 10.00
	1	31	5.5	33.11
	2	35	6.2	57.80
	3	85	15.2	62.87
	4	85	15.2	50.01
	5 and above	148	26.4	98.22
560		390	69.6	60.85 (weighted).

Insufficiency of earnings due to high cost of living is the main cause for which 53 per cent. of the debtors were found to be indebted to the average extent of Rs. 71. Next came indebtedness due to sickness and funeral expenses which accounted for nearly 42 per cent of the total cases. The extent of indebtedness per debtor in this group is almost the same as in the former. The principal sources of borrowing are friends and relatives. System of taking advance from the employer is not in vogue owing to high mobility of workers in this industry.

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES.

A labour union known as "Bidi Workers' Union" has been in existence in Calcutta since 1935 and has now a strength of about 1,000 members. Fee for membership is 4 annas per year. It is not an active organisation, its main activities being the fostering of agitation among the bidi workers. The only important part played by this union in Calcutta was in organising a strike in 1944 for getting an increase in wage rates from Rs. 1|9|- to Rs. 1|14|-. The strike could not achieve any immediate result, the issue remaining still undecided. Another union was also found to be functioning at Bankura which, after a brief spell of vigorous activity in organising a strike among the workers in 1943 for increased wage rates, went out of existence on encountering stiff resistance from the employers.

Generally speaking, labour organisation has not properly developed because of the unstable economic basis of the industry and a high degree of mobility of labour which has been facilitated by the unskilled nature of the work. The women workers are, owing to their sheer conservatism, unable to take any active part in the unions and always avoid to join them.

CHAPTER VI.—CIGAR INDUSTRY. SOUTH INDIA.

Cigar is a luxurious smoke generally patronised by the rich. Indian cigars are famous throughout the world and have a good market in England and the Continent. Even though the cigars are manufactured in India, the tobacco used is to a large extent, or was at least before the present war, imported from Java and Sumatra. There is also an inferior quality of cigars, called *cheroots*, which is cheap. The lower middle class people in South India and the Burmese smoke this inferior brand. The cigar differs from the *cheroot* in that it has a double wrapping while *cheroots* generally have a single wrapping. Also all *cheroots* are tuncated at both ends while in most of the high class cigars one end is closed. In a few varieties both ends may be closed or truncated. The cigar is the rich man's smoke and the *cheroot* is the poor man's cigar.

Cigars are manufactured almost entirely in the Madras Province. Trichinopoly, Dindigul and Madras city are the important cigar manufacturing centres in South India. Woriur, a suburb of Trichinopoly, and Dindigul are the exclusive centres in South India for the manufacture of high class cigars. The largest cigar factory in the country is that of Spencer's at Dindigul. The *cheroot*, however, is manufactured in small quantities in many other towns in South India.

In Madras, 5 out of the 7 cigar factories were covered. In Trichinopoly and its suburb, Woriur, there are nearly 400 cigar factories registered with the Excise Department. This does not, however, mean that there are so many factories, as the same factory is registered under two, three and sometimes even more different names. If one factory, for some reason, loses its clientele for a particular brand of cigar, it registers under another name and puts in the market its cigars as a new brand. It also happens that the same brand of cigar manufactured in the same factory is sold under different Companies' name in different markets.

The Cigar Manufacturers' Association, Trichinopoly, has given the names of 90 factories, or rather of proprietors of factories manufacturing cigars. There are a few factories which are outside the Association. Out of these, 20 sampled at random were visited. There are 20 cigar factories in Dindigul, out of which 7, including the two under the Factories Act, *viz.*, Spencer's and Anguvilas factories, were investigated.

Generally the factories manufacturing single wrapper cigars employ workers in larger numbers than those manufacturing double wrapper cigars. In Madras only single wrapper cigars are manufactured while in Trichinopoly and Dindigul double wrappers are the most common variety manufactured. The proprietor of the factory employs workers directly, mostly on a piece-rate basis. He provides raw materials and the work-place. The workers in their turn employ children to assist them paying them wages on daily rates. This practice is more common in factories manufacturing single wrapper cigars than in others. The organisation of the industry does not involve much capital outlay. Material is also available from the local selling agents.

Co-operative Factory.

There is a Co-operative Cigar Factory in Dindigul. Membership consists of 127 out of whom 80 are cigar workers and the rest local tradesmen and well-wishers of the co-operative factory. The factory gives a dividend of 6½ per cent. and the balance of the profit, if any, is distributed as bonus among the workers actually working in the factory. The Co-operative Department of the Madras Government has lent the services of one of its staff to function as the Secretary of the Co-operative Factory.

EMPLOYMENT.

Many of the Factories do not have any records of employment in 1939. Only Spencer & Company, Dindigul, has furnished accurate figures of comparative employment in 1939 and 1944. A few factories have, however, given approximate figures of employment in 1939. Employment position, pre-war and present is shown in the following table from such data as could be obtained.

TABLE 16.
Employment in a few cigar factories in 1939 and 1944.

Centre	No. of factories	Total No. employed	
		1939	1944
Madras	1	30	33
Trichinopoly	7	95	83
Dindigul	Spencer's Anguvilas	173	437
		130	30
Total	10	428	583

Employment in the Spencer's factory has increased appreciably because it is executing war orders. But, on the whole, employment has fallen since 1939. This is due to the cutting off of the supplies of tobacco from Java and Sumatra and the difficulty of exporting cigars to the West.

The following table shows the present employment in the centres included in the survey.

TABLE 17.
Employment in sampled cigar factories in 1944.

Centre	No. of factories	No. of workers			Total	Approximate total No. employed in the centre
		Men	Women	Children		
Madras	5	206	..	199	405	500
Trichinopoly	20	331	..	81	412	1,870
Dindigul	7	508	18	68	594	932
Total	32	1,045	18	348	1,411	3,302

The division of the workers in the sampled factories between piece-rated and time-rated is shown in the following table.

TABLE 18.
Proportion of piece-rated and time-rated workers in sampled cigar factories, 1944.

Centre	No. of piece-rated workers	No. of time-rated workers	Total
Madras	200	205	405
Trichinopoly	261	151	412
Dindigul	407	187	594

Recruitment.

The cigar workers are mostly local men and have been in the trade for a long time or are the sons of workers in the cigar industry. The tradition thus built up explains the localisation of the industry, especially in Trichinopoly and Dindigul. The system of advance is, however, very common in the cigar industry. Advances range from Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 and are recovered from the monthly or weekly wages in instalments. The advances bear no interest. The main reasons why workers seek advances are to give advances to the parents of child helpers who are working under them and to tide over periods of unemployment especially in the rainy season. Majority of the workers are Hindus.

Apprenticeship.

There is no regular system of apprenticeship. But the child workers who help the rollers gradually learn the trade and when they grow up become regular workers. In the Spencer's factory, boys are taken as helpers by the workers at the age of 13 and after two years work as helpers, they are given by the Company half the amount of work usually entrusted to an adult worker. Later the amount of the worker is increased to 75 per cent. and when they reach the age of 18 or 19 they become full-fledged workers.

Length of Service.

Statistics regarding the length of service of operatives were available only in the Spencer's factory. Other factories have no reliable data but figures supplied by three factories employing 95 workers in Trichinopoly have been included in the following table for what they are worth.

TABLE 19.

Length of service in four cigar factories in 1944.

Length of service	Spencer's	Trichinopoly
Between 0 and 1 year	20 %	Nil
Between 1 and 5 years	20 %	52 %
Between 5 and 10 years	20 %	26 %
Over 10 years	40 %	22 %

Permanent and Temporary Workers.

Only in the Spencer's is there any classification of workers as permanent and temporary. About 70 workers or roughly about half of its salaried workers are permanent. All the piece workers are temporary. Only in a few factories in Madras was noticed the system of maintaining a pass book for every registered worker but not for his helpers. The book shows tobacco given, cigars received and wages paid for each worker every day.

Labour Turnover.

Accurate figures for labour turnover for 1939 and 1944 were available only in the Spencer's and are given in the following table :—

TABLE 20.

Labour Turnover in the Spencer's in 1939 and 1944.

	Average daily No. employed	Retirement	Dismissal	Voluntary	Total	Percent of total
1939	173	53	..	..	53	31
1944	344	2	50	41	93	27

Proprietors of 23 other sampled factories gave their idea of turnover in their concerns in 1944 and the figures are given below for what they are worth.

TABLE 21.

Labour turnover in other cigar factories in 1944.

Centre	No. of factories	Average No daily employed	Total separations	Percent of total
Madras	3	268	86	32
Trichinopoly	17	368	128	35
Dindigul	3	110	172	156

Absenteeism.

Although no reliable figures are available absenteeism among the cigar workers does not appear to be a great evil. Irregularity of employment is, however a serious problem except in single wrapping concerns. It is due to weather conditions and to irregular demand for cigars. In the rainy season there is no work for several days when tobacco cannot be dried after fermen

tation in jaggery water. Generally, a fortnight to a month is thus lost in the whole season. In the Spencer's an allowance of 3 annas per day is given to workers up to a maximum of 10 days in a year for loss of work due to rains. The demand for cigars falls in summer and consequently employment goes down to about 15 days in a month. Under-employment in this season is a great hardship to the cigar workers.

WAGES AND EARNINGS.

In the cigar industry wages are paid both on a piece and time basis. The cigar rollers are paid on a piece basis for 1,000 cigars. Workers engaged on labelling, packing and box making and children employed as helpers are paid on time basis. Basic wages have not virtually changed since 1939. Tobacco stripping is done on time basis in the Spencer's by separate workers while in other factories this forms part of rollers' work.

In Madras only single wrapper cigars or *cheroots* are manufactured. Generally only four varieties are made and the rates of wage are :

	Rs.	A.	P.
Manila	2 0 0
Long Subedar	1 12 0
Subedar	1 9 0
China <i>cheroot</i>	1 7 0

In Trichinopoly, a large variety of high class cigars are manufactured and they are known by a multiplicity of fancy names which have but little meaning. With slight differences from factory to factory the rates of wages in general or important brands are given below :

	Rs.	A.	P.
All Corona brands	5 0 0
Planters Special	3 0 0
Planters	2 8 0
Lady Love	2 8 0
Dawson	2 0 0
Five Minutes	1 4 0

Even though the rate of wages differs for the same brand from one factory to another, the difference is only apparent as one brand in one factory may be known by a different name in another.

In the Spencer's, the wage rates vary from Rs. 1|14| to Rs. 6|14|0. The rates in other factories in Dindigul are generally as follows :—

	Rs.	A.	P.
All Corona brands	3 8 0 to 4 8 0
Planters Special	2 8 0
English Manila	2 8 0
Dawson	2 8 0
Five Minutes	1 4 0

Time rates of wages per month in the Spencer's are shown below :—

	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
Tobacco stripping—				
Mistries	13 0	to 18 8
Strippers (adolescents)	6 0	to 10 0
Box makers—				
Mistries	18 0	to 22 0
Carpenters	11 0	to 18 0
Sand paperers	7 0	to 10 0
Label fixers	6 0	to 10 0
Packing—				
Mistries	18 8	to 20 0
Stencillers	18 0	to 18 0
Packers	10 0	to 13 0

The rates are more or less the same in Madras and Dindigul while they are a little higher in Trichinopoly. Children are paid wages varying from two annas to ten annas per day in Madras, while in the other two centres the maximum goes up to 14 annas. The most usual rate for children is from six to eight annas.

Dearness Allowance.

In Madras no dearness allowance is given. In Trichinopoly the workers were paid since 1941 a dearness allowance of three annas for every rupee earned. The rate was increased to 5 annas from December 1942. In Dindigul, Spencer & Co. started with a dearness allowance of Re. 1 p.m. for all workers in 1941 and the present rate is Rs. 7 for adults and Re. 1 and Rs. 2 p.m. to all workers. The allowance is deducted *pro rata* in these three concerns for absence.

Bonus.

The bonus scheme is in existence only in three factories in Dindigul. Spencer & Co., generally pays to all workers every year. In 1944 it paid 2½ months' pay or wages as bonus. As stated before, the co-operative factory distributes all profits after paying a dividend of 6½ per cent. to its shareholders as a bonus amongst its workers. In 1944 no bonus was paid because the factory worked at a loss. The third factory pays an annual bonus of not less than Rs. 5 to all workers. A few factories in Dindigul and Trichinopoly give odd presents in the shape of cash or clothes to their workers at Dipavali and Pongal.

Earnings.

An average cigar worker can in 10 hours generally roll 650 cigars of the single wrapper type without assistance and 1,000 to 1,250 with the help of a boy assistant. In that case of the high class cigars of the double wrapper type, he can roll only 150 without assistance and 200 to 250 with the help of an assistant. The actual earnings in January 1945 for a number of workers who had worked the same maximum number of days in the wage period were collected in the sampled factories where pay registers were maintained and the results are tabulated below :—

TABLE 21.
Monthly earnings of cigar workers in January 1945.

Centre	No. of workers covered	Actual No. of days worked	Earnings		
			Maximum	Minimum	Average
			Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Madras	6	23	43 7 6	33 1 0	36 13 5
Trichinopoly	17	24	54 4 9	16 0 0	29 12 2
Dindigul (except Spencer's)	13	24	40 12 0	17 12 10	27 12 6

It will be seen that single wrapper workers in Madras earn more than double wrapper workers in the other centres. The earnings are higher in Trichinopoly than in Dindigul because the Trichinopoly workers get a dearness allowance of five annas for every rupee of wages.

The average daily earnings of workers in the Spencer's factory are :—

	Rs. A.	P.	Rs. A.	P.
1st class rollers	0	13	0	14
2nd class rollers	0	9	6	14

Plus dearness allowance of Rs. 7 per month.

Deductions.

In Madras two out of the seven factories deduct quarter anna per day from every worker towards a charity fund. In Trichinopoly and Dindigul

slight deductions from wages are occasionally made for bad workmanship. Such deductions do not exceed 10 to 12 annas a week. Generally in the case of high class cigars, 4 annas are deducted from wages per 1,000 cigars for putting the ring round each cigar, as this work is done by persons directly employed by factories.

Wage-period.

Time-rated workers are paid every month and the payment is generally made on the 1st except in Spencer's which pays on the 5th.

Piece-rated workers are paid either daily, weekly or monthly. Out of the 32 sampled factories, 7 paid daily, 18 weekly and 7 monthly.

Closed days and holidays.

There is no regular weekly closed day in Madras although there is no compulsion for the workers to work on Sundays. Six out of the seven factories remain open on Sundays, and, in fact, many workers do work seven days in the week. In Trichinopoly and Dindigul, some factories observe a weekly closed day while others do not. Holidays with pay in the case of salaried workers and without pay in the case of piece-rated workers are granted by the Spencer's on local festivals. It also gives a fortnight's leave with pay each year to permanent workers.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

Shifts and hours of work.

Only in the Spencer's factory a double shift is worked. It cannot, however, be strictly called a double shift, because the second shift is solely for children and the hours in the shift are within the hours for general work. The shift for adult workers is from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and for children it is from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. There is no regulation of hours of work in other factories. Generally work starts at 7 or 8 a.m. and finishes by 7 or 7.30 p.m. The workers being on piece-rates take the work leisurely and avail themselves of intervals as it suits them. Very seldom is work done after dusk. Except in the Spencer's, children have to work the same number of hours as the adult workers who employ them.

Work-places.

In Madras the factories or work-places are found in semi-dark and insanitary godowns in the by-lanes of the George Town area. The workers squat on the floor with good and waste tobacco lying pell-mell round them. Overcrowding is very common. The pungent smell of fermented tobacco greets one as one enters the workshops. No drinking water or latrines or urinals are provided in or on the premises of the factories. The Trichinopoly and the Dindigul factories, except the Spencer's, employ a smaller number of workers. In Trichinopoly the work-place is generally the front verandah of the proprietor's house which is screened off from the street by gunny bags or bamboo or palmyra leaf screens. On such verandahs, the workers squat with hardly any space to stretch their legs. Other work-places are dark ill-ventilated rooms with no windows, the entrance often being only a narrow door. In Trichinopoly it is proposed by the Municipality to introduce a system of licensing the cigar and bidi factories so that sanitary conditions in them can be inspected by the Municipal Health Officer. This is a move in the right direction and deserves to be widely adopted. In Dindigul, the work-places are fairly well-ventilated and overcrowding is not so acute as in the other centres. Most of the factories have provided latrines and all supply cool drinking water in summer. Nowhere not even in the Spencer's, are shelters provided for workers for rest during intervals. Nor are there any canteens. On the whole, the working conditions are satisfactory in Spencer's factory.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

Provision of medical facilities to the workers is no concern of the employers in Madras and Trichinopoly. Two factories in Dindigul send workers, when

ill, to private doctors and pay the cost of medicines. Spencer & Company had a part-time doctor who used to visit the factory once a week but his services were discontinued as there was a government hospital nearby. It gives a sickness allowance of four annas per day up to a period of three months. There is a waiting period of seven days before the workers become eligible to it.

Education.

No special facilities are provided by any factory for the education of workers' children. Spencer & Company, however, has since December 1944 made an arrangement to provide the children employed in its factory with instruction for two hours every day.

Provident Fund.

Spencer & Company has a Provident Fund for permanent workers only. The subscriber contributes five per cent. of his salary and the Company contributes an equal amount.

In the Dindigul Co-operative Cigar Factory there is a thrift fund. Every week one anna per rupee earned is deducted from the wages of each worker and put into the fund. The amount standing to the credit of each worker is paid to him twice every year. The factory makes no contribution.

Pension.

In the Spencer's factory there is a scheme of pension which is entirely at the discretion of the Company. At present 25 retired Rollers get a pension of Rs. 3|8|- and 12 time-rated workers are receiving pensions ranging from Rs. 2|8|- to Rs. 10 per month.

INDEBTEDNESS.

From our enquiries, it appears that most of the workers in the cigar industry are indebted. The rates of interest vary from 9 per cent. in the case of large debts to 75 per cent. for small debts. Advances received from factory owners generally carry no interest. Causes of indebtedness are generally sickness, marriage and insufficiency of earnings due to irregularity of employment

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKERS.

In Madras the Cigar Workers' Union has a membership of 250 which shows that all adult workers have joined the Union as claimed by its President. The subscription is four annas per month. The Trichinopoly Cigar Workers' Union has a membership of about 1,200 which shows that 80 per cent. of the adult workers have joined the Union. The subscription is two annas per month. In Dindigul only the cigar rollers in Spencer and Company have formed a Union whose strength at present is 150. Membership fee is two annas per month. It is expected that the cigar workers in other factories will join the Union.

In Madras in one factory the workers struck work on 3rd January 1945 demanding an advance of Rs. 10 per head. The demand was not conceded and the workers resumed work on 10th January 1945. In Trichinopoly the trade union declared a strike in 1941 demanding increase in wages. On the intervention of the District Officer, the employers agreed to pay a dearness allowance of three annas in the rupee and the workers returned to work after a week. In March 1945, there was a general strike for a dearness allowance of Rs. 1|5|- per rupee of wages. The employers agreed to increase the dearness allowance from five annas to eight annas per rupee of wages. In November 1944 the cigar makers in the Spencer's factory struck work demanding that their dearness allowance and wages should be increased. The Company informed them that if they resumed work unconditionally their requests would be considered. The workers resumed work on the 5th day of the strike and the Company increased their dearness allowance from Rs. 3|8|- to Rs. 7 per month.

CHAPTER VII.—CIGARETTE INDUSTRY.

(a) BENGAL.

There are four cigarette factories in Bengal, two in Calcutta and two in the neighbouring district of 24-Parganas. All the four factories were included in the survey.

EMPLOYMENT.

The following table shows the comparative employment in August 1939 and January 1944 :—

TABLE 22.

Employment in Cigarette industry in Bengal in 1939 and 1944.

Name	1939	1944
The National Tobacco Co. of India, Ltd.	2,017	3,205
Tobacco Manufacturers (India), Ltd.	575	1,151
Godfrey Phillips, India, Ltd.	97	1,076
James Canterbury Ltd.* . . . . .	..	32
Total	2,689	5,464

It will be seen that the employment has gone up by about 103 percent. This is due to the increased demand for Indian cigarettes in war time and the virtual elimination of foreign competition. In normal times women and children were not employed in this industry, but recently, owing to shortage of male labourers brought about by war conditions, the factories have been employing women and children. The children are below 15 and in some cases even below 12 and are generally employed on a piece basis. They work in the hand packing department and are generally paid 1 anna 6 pies per thousand cigarettes while women are employed as strippers.

The following table shows the distribution of the workers on time and piece basis :—

TABLE 23.

Time and piece rated workers in Cigarette factories in Bengal, 1944.

Name.	Time	Piece
National Tobacco Company	2,743	462
Tobacco Manufacturers	1,074	77
Godfrey Phillips	734	342
James Canterbury	32	..
Total	4,583	881

There is no contract labour.

Recruitment.

None of the factories follows a well-planned system of recruitment of labour though three of them employ over 1,000 workers. Labour is recruited at the gate by the manager or departmental head and preference is usually given to those who have already worked as substitutes in the firm.

* Started 1943.

Length of service.

The following table shows the length of service of workers in Cigarette industry in Bengal in 1944.

TABLE 24.
Length of Service of Cigarette workers, 1944.

Length of service	No. of workers	Per cent of total
Between 0 and 1 year	2,586	47.3
Between 1 and 5 years	1,961	35.9
Between 5 and 10 years	504	9.2
Over 10 years	413	7.6
Total	5,464	100.00

It will be noticed that a fairly large number of workers, *i.e.*, nearly 17 per cent. have been in the same factory for over five years and nearly 8 per cent. for over 10 years. Owing to the limited number of factories in this industry, the workers of one concern tend to retain their connections with it for a longer period than in other industries.

Classification of Workers.

The National Tobacco Company and Tobacco Manufacturers have well-defined classification of workers as permanent and temporary. The remaining two factories have no such classification and the workers in them are all temporary. It is strange that Godfrey Phillips which employs over 1,000 workers should have no such classification. In the National Tobacco 75.7 per cent. of the workers were permanent whereas in the Tobacco Manufacturers only 47.4 per cent. were permanent. The Tobacco Manufacturers divides its workers into four categories: Class A, Class B probationary and temporary. Class A worker is employed on monthly basis: Class B worker is piece-rated or daily-rated, but paid monthly. A probationer is one who is engaged to fill a vacancy in Class A but has not completed 12 months' service. A temporary worker is one engaged to fill vacancy in Class B who has not completed 12 months' service. Probationers and temporary workers are made permanent in their classes after one year's service. The promotion of any Class B worker to Class A may be made at the discretion of the Company. Class A workers are given 15 days' notice or 15 days' wages in lieu of notice when their services are dispensed with. Class B workers do not enjoy this privilege. Some casual workers are also employed in all the factories. They are on daily-rate and are discharged as soon as the work for which they are engaged is finished.

Apprenticeship.

No system of apprenticeship exists in any of the factories.

Promotion.

There is no system of graded or time-scale promotion in any of the concerns. Promotion from lower to higher scale of pay, if any, depends on the discretion of managers.

Labour Turnover and Absenteeism.

No reliable data could be obtained about labour turnover or absenteeism, except in the case of Tobacco Manufacturers where turnover in November 1944 was 4.4 per cent. and absenteeism in 1943 was 12 per cent.

Standing Orders and Labour Officers.

Only the Tobacco Manufacturers has Standing Orders and Labour Officers are found only in the National Tobacco and Godfrey Phillips. It is rather surprising that two big factories have no Standing Orders and that Tobacco Manufacturers should have no Labour Officer. The Labour Officer in the National Tobacco Company is only a part-time employee and is merely a record keeper. He has practically no hand in the selection or recruitment

of labour. Moreover, he is overworked, being a labour officer of another concern under the same management. It is remarkable that, with the exception of Godfrey Phillips, none of the factories has any full-time officer to look after recruitment and welfare of labour though two of them employ more than 1,000 workers.

WAGES AND EARNINGS.

The rates of wages in this industry are rather low as the type of work demanded does not call for a high degree of skill and specialisation. There is no uniformity of scale from factory to factory. There has been an increase in the basic wage rates since August 1939. In the National Tobacco Company the men's rate has been increased from Rs. 1-8-0 in 1939 to Rs. 3-4-0 per week in 1944. The Tobacco Manufacturers has raised the daily rates from As. 10 in 1939 to As. 12 in 1944. In Godfrey Phillips boys' wages which were Rs 1-4-0 in 1939 have been raised to Rs. 3|- per week and men's maximum rate has been increased from Rs. 3|- to Rs. 5|- per week. The following table shows the rates of wages in the cigarette industry in Bengal in 1944 :—

TABLE 25.

Rates of wages in the Cigarette Industry in Bengal, 1944.

	Godfrey Phillips (per week)		National Tobacco Company (per week)		Tobacco Manufac- turers (per day)		James Canterbury (per month)	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Leaf Department—								
Operator ..	4 8 0	11 0 0	3 12 0	6 0 0	..	..	..	60 0 0
Feeder ..	4 8 0	8 0 0	3 8 0	4 0 0	..	..	..	..
Receiver ..	4 8 0	8 0 0	3 8 0	4 4 0	..	..	..	..
Cooly ..	4 0 0	6 0 0	3 12 0	4 0 0	..	..	30 0 0	45 0 0
Manufacturing Depart- ment—								
Operator ..	4 8 0	14 0 0	3 8 0	20 0 0	0 12 0	1 1 0	70 0 0	120 0 0
Feeder ..	4 0 0	6 0 0	..	3 12 0	0 12 0	0 14 0	23 0 0	40 0 0
Receiver ..	4 0 0	6 0 0	..	3 12 0	..	..	..	..
Lifter ..	..	..	3 0 0	3 8 0	..	..	20 0 0	35 0 0
Cooly ..	4 0 0	6 0 0	..	..	0 12 0	0 14 0	..	..
Packing Department—								
Operator ..	4 8 0	14 0 0	3 8 0	5 12 0	0 12 0	1 3 0	..	..
Feeder ..	3 8 0	6 0 0	..	3 4 0	0 12 0	0 14 0	15 0 0	35 0 0
Receiver ..	3 0 0	5 0 0	..	3 4 0	..	..	15 0 0	35 0 0
Cooly ..	4 0 0	6 0 0	..	3 4 0	0 12 0	0 14 0	..	40 0 0
Packer ..	..	Piece-rate	..	Piece-rate	0 12 0	1 3 0	..	..

The enquiry into wages and earnings of workers employed in all the cigarette factories was conducted for the month of January 1945. All workers were covered except persons employed in departments allied to the main factory such as saw mills (making cases for cigarettes) and tin making (manufacturing containers of cigarettes) in the National Tobacco Company. About 82 per cent. of the workers were time-rated the remaining being piece-rated. About 15 per cent. of the workers were hourly paid, 26 per cent. daily paid, 39 per cent. weekly paid while only 2 per cent. were monthly paid.

The following two tables set out frequency distribution of workers in specified groups of average daily basic wages and earnings.

TABLE 26.

Frequency distribution of cigarette factory workers in Bengal in specified groups of average daily basic wages.

Wage group	National Tobacco Co.		James Canterbury		Tobacco Manufacturers		Godfrey Phillips		Total	
	No. of workers	Percent of total	No. of workers	Percent of total	No. of workers	Percent of total	No. of workers	Percent of total	No. of workers	Percent of total
Under As. 4	7	·4	..	..	..	..	4	·5	11	·3
Between As. 4 and As. 6	37	1·9	1	1·4	..	..	5	·5	43	1·1
Between As. 6 and As. 8	76	4·1	1	1·4	..	..	138	17·1	215	5·8
Between As. 8 and As. 10	642	34·3	9	12·7	..	..	136	17·1	787	21·3
Between As. 10 and As. 12	368	19·6	3	4·2	..	..	152	18·8	523	14·1
Between As. 12 and As. 14	147	7·9	4	5·7	259	27·4	39	4·8	449	12·1
Between As. 14 and Re. 1	61	3·3	10	14·1	447	47·4	32	3·9	550	14·9
Between Re. 1 and Rs. 1-2-0	71	3·8	7	9·9	118	12·5	15	1·9	211	5·8
Between Rs. 1-2-0 and Rs. 1-4-0	39	2·1	1	1·4	40	4·2	24	2·9	104	2·8
Between Rs. 1-4-0 and Rs. 1-8-0	113	6·1	20	28·2	48	5·1	46	5·7	227	6·2
Between Rs. 1-8-0 and Rs. 1-12-0	128	6·8	6	8·4	13	1·4	65	8·1	212	5·8
Between Rs. 1-12-0 and Rs. 2	83	4·4	1	1·4	15	1·6	48	5·8	147	4·0
Rs. 2 and over	100	5·3	8	11·2	4	·4	104	12·9	216	5·8
Total	1,872	100	71	100	944	100	808	100	3,695	100

TABLE 27.

Frequency distribution of cigarette factory workers in Bengal in specified groups of average daily earnings.

Earning group	National Tobacco Co.		James Canterbury		Tobacco Manufacturers		Godfrey Phillips		Total	
	No. of workers	Percent of total	No. of workers	Percent of total	No. of workers	Percent of total	No. of workers	Percent of total	No. of workers	Percent of total
Under As. 8	34	1.9	2	2.9	..	..	11	1.4	47	1.3
Between As. 8 and As. 12	55	2.8	11	15.5	..	..	166	20.4	232	6.3
Between As. 12 and Re. 1	637	34.2	10	14.1	..	..	183	22.5	830	22.5
Between Re. 1 and Rs. 1-4-0	465	24.8	7	9.9	..	..	97	12.1	569	15.4
Between Rs. 1-4-0 and Rs. 1-8-0	185	9.8	21	29.5	1	..	58	7.2	265	7.2
Between Rs. 1-8-0 and Rs. 1-12-0	100	5.3	6	8.4	142	15.0	47	5.8	295	7.9
Between Rs. 1-12-0 and Rs. 2	112	5.9	4	5.6	422	44.8	44	5.4	582	15.8
Between Rs. 2 and Rs. 2-4-0	103	5.5	2	2.8	144	15.2	55	6.8	304	8.2
Between Rs. 2-4-0 and Rs. 2-8-0	79	4.2	5	7.1	76	8.1	48	6.0	208	5.7
Between Rs. 2-8-0 and Rs. 2-12-0	37	2.0	..	..	36	3.8	32	4.0	105	2.8
Between Rs. 2-12-0 and Rs. 3	30	1.6	..	..	35	3.8	26	3.2	91	2.4
Rs. 3 and over	35	1.9	3	4.2	88	9.3	41	5.2	167	4.5
Total	1,872	100	7	100	944	100	808	100	3,695	100

It will be seen from the first table that wages are the lowest in National Tobacco Company and the highest in James Canterbury Ltd. About 54 percent of workers in the National Tobacco Company get between annas 8 and annas 12 per day while about 75 percent of workers in Tobacco Manufacturers get between annas 12 and Re. 1 per day. The modal groups of workers in Godfrey Phillips and James Canterbury Ltd., cover about 19 percent and 28 percent of workers in the respective concerns who get between annas 10 and annas 12 and Rs. 1-4-0 and Rs. 1-8-0 per day respectively. The modal group in all concerns covers about 21 percent of the workers who get between annas 8 and annas 10 per day. On the whole, about 62 percent of workers get between annas 8 and Re. 1|- per day. An interesting feature in the Tobacco Manufacturers is that there are no workers getting below annas 12 per day.

The second table shows that the earnings are the lowest in National Tobacco Company and the highest in Tobacco Manufacturers. 59 percent of the workers employed in the former concern earn between annas 12 and Rs. 1-4-0 while 60 per cent. of workers in the latter concern earn between Rs. 1-12-0 and Rs. 2-4-0. In Tobacco Manufacturers, with the exception of one worker, no one earns below Rs. 1-8-0 per day. The modal group in all concerns covers 22.5 percent of the workers who earn between annas 12 and Re. 1|- per day.

Dearness Allowance.

All the factories except James Canterbury give dearness allowance. The scale of allowance varies from factory to factory and in most cases it is not based on the cost of living index. The National Tobacco Company pays to all its workers a dearness allowance equivalent to 10 percent of the basic wages earned plus Rs. 2|- as a war allowance. The war allowance was Rs. 1-4-0 when it was started in April 1940.

Tobacco Manufacturers introduced dearness allowance from February 1940 and extended it to all workers earning up to Rs. 50 per month. The allowance is linked to the cost of living index published by Government and the minimum and maximum rates of the allowance in August 1944 were Rs. 19-8-0 and Rs. 34-18-0 per month respectively. Godfrey Phillips gives 10 percent of total wages as dearness allowance only to time-rated workers.

Bonus.

War bonus is paid by Godfrey Phillips and James Canterbury. The former gives it at 22½ percent of the earnings to packers and wrappers and 12½ percent to other piece-rated workers only. James Canterbury pays one month's salary as bonus to all workers at Christmas. An annual bonus is, however, given by Tobacco Manufacturers to all at 1, ¾th or ½ month's earnings according to the worker's record in the year.

Overtime.

Overtime is worked in all the factories except in James Canterbury and it is compulsory in the case of Tobacco manufacturers only. It is generally paid according to the provisions of the Factories Act. Sunday work is paid at the rate of time and a half in the Tobacco Manufacturers. Wages for overtime work are paid generally along with the normal wages.

Fines.

Fines are imposed for loss or damage to Company's properties. In two concerns the amount of fine depends on the discretion of the departmental heads and managers and workers complained that it was not regulated strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Payment of Wages Act. Only the National Tobacco Company maintains a fine fund. The amount in the fund was Rs. 105|- and is utilised for sports.

Wage Period.

Wage period is a calendar month in all the factories except the National Tobacco Company which pays its workers weekly. In Tobacco Manufacturers monthly-rated workers are paid on the last day of the month, but the daily-rated employees have to wait for one week after the end of the month. The two other concerns which pay the wages monthly pay within the 7th day of the next month. The National Tobacco Company pays one week after the wage period.

Closed days and Holidays.

Sundays are weekly days of rest in all the factories. Two of the factories also do not work on Saturday afternoon. In addition, holidays on festival occasions are granted by three firms but with pay only to monthly-rated workers. Paid festival holidays in a year are six in the National Tobacco Company, 11 in Tobacco Manufacturers and 12 in James Canterbury. Godfrey Phillips is the solitary exception where no such system of paid holidays prevails. Tobacco Manufacturers alone grants privilege and sick leave to its employees. It grants 15 days' privilege to class A and 10 days' to class B workers on completion of one year's service. Sick leave with half pay for not more than 14 working days on medical certificate issued by the Company's doctor is granted to both class A and class B workers but this leave may be deducted from any privilege leave to which workers may be entitled in that year.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

The following table shows the shifts and hours of work in the cigarette factories in Bengal :—

TABLE 28.

Shift and hours of work in cigarette factories in Bengal, 1945.

Name of factory	Shift hours	Rest interval	Actual hours of work	Total spread over
National Tobacco Co.	6 a.m. to 7 p.m.	11 a.m. to 3 p.m.	9	13
	11 a.m. to 12 midnight	3 p.m. to 7 p.m.	9	11
Tobacco Manufacturers	6 a.m. to 3 p.m.	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	9
	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	9
	3 p.m. to 12 midnight	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	9
Godfrey Phillips	6 a.m. to 3 p.m.	11 a.m. to 12 noon	8	9
	8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	1 p.m. to 2 p.m.	9	10
	3 p.m. to 12 midnight	8 p.m. to 9 p.m.	8	9
James Canterbury	6 a.m. to 7 p.m.	11 a.m. to 3 p.m.	9	13
	11 a.m. to 12 midnight	3 p.m. to 7 p.m.	9	13
	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	9

It will be thus seen that the work starts from 6 a.m. and stops at 12 midnight in all the factories. Spreadover is 13 hours in two concerns which is too much. The third shift in three concerns is the general shift and is only in the engineering department. There is no third shift in the National Tobacco Company which has its engineering departments in Agarpura Jute Mills which is under the same management. The workers get full pay for half day's work on Saturdays in two concerns.

Ventilation, lighting and floor area per worker are, on the whole, satisfactory in all the factories. The first three floors of Tobacco Manufacturers which accommodate the majority of workers are air-conditioned. Only this concern has a rest shelter for the use of workers during the rest intervals. It is a pucca structure, 84 ft. X 30 ft. and has asbestos roof. There are no walls round the shed and a section of it is partitioned for the use of Muslim employees for taking meals. In this concern a gramophone is played throughout the working hours and each room is fitted with a loudspeaker so that operatives can work without feeling strain or boredom.

Sanitary latrines and urinals are provided for the use of the workers in all the factories. Their number, however, is not adequate.

Housing.

Only the National Tobacco Company houses about 30 percent of its workers. There are six lines—three *pucca* and three *kutchā* which are built just outside the factory area. *Pucca* quarters have brick walls and tiled roof. Each room is 10 ft. × 10 ft. with a door 6½ ft. × 3 ft. and a window 2½ ft. × 2 ft. It has also a verandah in front which is 4 feet wide and is partitioned and used for cooking. There are *pucca* drains all round but they are not cleaned every day. *Kutchā* quarters have mud and lime walls and tiled roof. Rooms are of the same size as in the *pucca* quarters but the door, window and the verandah are slightly smaller. Usually two to three people live in one room and Rs. 2/- are charged as rent per month for *pucca* rooms and Re. 1/- for *kutchā* rooms. Latrines and water taps are provided in the lines. Water supply is from tube wells.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

Medical Aid.

The three big factories maintain dispensaries and whole-time doctors for the benefit of their workers. James Canterbury has only a first aid box and a part-time medical officer. Medical facilities provided are, however, for minor cases only and serious cases are sent to local hospitals. Only in Tobacco Manufacturers and Godfrey Phillips workers are medically examined at the time of their first appointment. There is no system of regular periodical examination of the workers except in the Tobacco Manufacturers where all workers are examined on return from any period of annual leave exceeding 6 days.

Canteens.

The National Tobacco Company has a canteen where light refreshments and tea are available at market prices. It was started by the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board but since 1944 it is run under the supervision of the Company. In the Tobacco Manufacturers there are two hotels, one for Hindus and the other for Muslims which are run by contractors. Management does not generally interfere in the running of these hotels. It is desirable that nutrition value of the food supplied in these hotels should be occasionally examined and special attention paid to their cleanliness. There are no canteens in the other two factories.

Grain Shop.

The three big factories maintain grain shops and the remaining, *viz.*, James Canterbury, contemplates opening one. Foodstuffs such as rice, *atta* and *dal* are supplied at concession rates by National Tobacco Company and Godfrey Phillips and at controlled rate by Tobacco Manufacturers.

Provident Fund.

The Tobacco Manufacturers has a Provident Fund. Those workers who have put in at least two years of service are eligible to join it. A subscriber contributes one anna per rupee of his monthly wage and the Company contributes an equal amount. Only the National Tobacco Company has drawn up a pension scheme for its workers which it expects to introduce shortly.

Indebtedness.

It appears from our enquiry that most of the up-country workers are indebted in their villages to the extent of Rs. 50/- to Rs. 250/- per head on account of marriages, ancestral debts, funeral expenses etc. They pay interest varying from 6½ percent to 25 to the village *Mahajans* as the loans are unsecured. It was stated by the management of one factory that since the introduction of the Bengal Moneylenders Act, indebtedness of the local workers was on the decline but this Act does not cover debts incurred outside Bengal.

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES.

There are two registered trade unions in the industry at present : (1) National Tobacco Factory Workers' Union and (ii) Beliaghatta Cigarette Mazdur Union. The first union was started in 1939 and the other in 1944. Membership is 113 and 300 respectively. Tobacco Manufacturers has recognised the first union but the other firms recognise neither of the unions. There are no records giving details of strikes in any of the factories. There was a "go slow" strike in 1940 in the Tobacco Manufacturers which lasted for about a month. Some of their demands such as Provident Fund, annual bonus, abolition of Benevolent Fund, etc., were conceded by the management.

WORKING OF THE LABOUR ACTS.

Provisions of the Factories Act and the Payment of Wages Act are generally complied with except that sections 51 and 54 (i) of the Factories Act were violated in the case of children in some factories. One or two cases came to our notice in which fines were imposed in contravention of the latter Act. No inspection books are kept by the factories. It is doubtful whether the Maternity Benefit Act is observed by those factories which have engaged female labour. The Workmen's Compensation Act does not appear to have been availed of by the workers to a considerable extent. Information regarding the number of accidents in 1943 was available only from Tobacco Manufacturers and Godfrey Phillips. There were four serious and 30 minor accidents in the first concern which paid compensation in four cases amounting to Rs. 55-8-0 in all. In Godfrey Phillips the number of accidents was nine and the total compensation paid amounted to Rs. 557-11-0.

(b) BOMBAY.

There are six cigarette factories in the Bombay Province and all of them were covered in our survey. Of these three are in Bombay city, two in the suburbs of Bombay and one in Poona.

EMPLOYMENT.

The following table shows the employment in these factories in 1939 and 1944 :—

TABLE 29.

Employment in cigarette industry in Bombay, 1939 and 1944.

Name of factory	1939	1944	Remarks
Tobacco Manufacturers (India), Ltd., Bombay	..	1,099	Started in 1940.
Godfrey Phillips, India, Ltd., Andheri, Bombay.	..	500	Came under the present management in 1944.
Golden Tobacco Co. Ltd., Vile Parle, Bombay	108	101	
Deccan Tobacco Co. Ltd., Poona	20	105	Started in 1939.
Macropolo & Co. Ltd., Bombay ..	32	82	
Maple Tobacco Co. Ltd., Bombay	..	142	Started in 1943.
		2,029	

It will be seen that most of the factories have been started since the commencement of the war.

The following table shows the number of men and women employed in five of the factories.

TABLE 30.

Name of factory:	Men.	Women.	Total.
Tobacco Manufacturers	738	361	1,099
Golden Tobacco Co.	51	50	101
Deccan Tobacco Co.	20	85	105
Macropolo and Co.	61	21	82
Maple Tobacco Co.	62	80	142
Total	932	597	1,529

It will be seen that quite a considerable number of women are employed in this industry. They are chiefly employed in the packing department.

Recruitment.

All the concerns recruit their labour directly at the gates. There is no contract labour.

Length of service.

In the Tobacco Manufacturers 85 workers had put in less than one year's service while 1,014 had put in service varying from 1 to 5 years. In the Golden Tobacco Company 50 percent of the workers have less than one year's service, 30 percent between 1 and 5 years and the remaining 20 percent more than 5 years' service. The Deccan Tobacco Company stated that most of the workers who started in 1939 were still on its muster.

Classification of Workers.

None of the concerns, except the Tobacco Manufacturers, classifies its workers as temporary and permanent and almost all the workers are temporary. In the Tobacco Manufacturers 81.3 percent were permanent and the rest temporary. Normally a temporary worker can hope to be permanent at the end of one year's service.

Apprenticeship.

There is no system of apprenticeship in any of the factories. The usual practice seems to be to recruit raw unskilled labourers and gradually train them by making them work along with the trained workers.

Promotions.

There is no graded or time-scale promotion in any of the concerns. Generally unskilled workers are given opportunities to work in the several departments and, if they come up to expectation, are promoted by gradual increments to the skilled categories.

Labour Turnover.

From enquiries made it appears that labour in the cigarette industry is unstable. The percentage of turnover in the Tobacco Manufacturers in 1943 was 39. Accurate statistics of labour turnover were not available in other factories. The managements in all concerns complained that the attraction of higher wages in other industries drew away the labour from the cigarette industry. In order to stabilise its labour force, Godfrey Phillips has decided to engage, unskilled labour at Rs. 15/- per month and to increase the salary to Rs. 20/- if the man stays on more than a month.

Absenteeism.

Unlike turnover, absenteeism does not seem to be a serious problem. It is almost negligible being 3 percent in the Tobacco Manufacturers and about 10 percent in the case of Godfrey Phillips. In the Golden Tobacco Company at Vile Parte it was about 16 percent because of the highly malarial situation of the factory and considerable transport difficulty experienced by workers to go to the work spot. In other factories the percentage of absenteeism varied between 4 and 12.

Standing Orders.

None of the factories except the Tobacco Manufacturers has Standing Orders.

Labour Officer.

None of the concerns has a Labour Officer to look into the grievances of the workers. Godfrey Phillips has a Labour Master whose chief duty is to recruit the necessary labour for the factory. He is more or less akin to the common jobber.

WAGES AND EARNINGS.

Data regarding wages and earnings were collected from five cigarette factories in Bombay city for the month of March 1945. All workers were covered and no sampling was adopted. All workers were time-rated and 36 percent of them were women.

TABLE 31.

Frequency distribution of workers in Bombay cigarette factories according to average daily basic wages, 1945.

Wage group	Golden Tobacco Co.		Macropolo and Co.		Godfrey Phillips		Tobacco Manufacturers		Maple Tobacco Co.		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Under As. 4	18	78	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	18	78
Between As. 4 and As. 6	7	63	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	63
Between As. 6 and As. 8	45	35	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	45	35
Between As. 8 and As. 10	8	8	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	8	9
Between As. 10 and As. 12	16	11	7	2	85	45	..	79	..	..	168	137
Between As. 12 and As. 14	1	3	7	5	125	96	111	110	..	..	244	214
Between As. 14 and Re. 1	1	..	26	20	14	1	315	53	21	19	377	93
Between Re. 1 and Rs. 1-2-0 .. ..	..	..	7	10	50	..	65	2	29	50	151	62
Between Rs. 1-2-0 and Rs. 1-4-0	1	..	3	..	2	..	39	2	18	18	63	20
Between Rs. 1-4-0 and Rs. 1-8-0	4	..	8	1	5	..	51	1	29	1	97	3
Between Rs. 1-8-0 and Rs. 1-12-0	3	..	15	..	46	..	16	..	3	..	83	..
Between Rs. 1-12-0 and Rs. 2	3	..	1	..	7	..	11	2	4	3	26	5
Rs. 2 and over	8	..	4	..	15	..	28	1	3	..	58	1
Total	115	198	78	39	349	142	636	250	107	91	1,285	720

TABLE 32.

Frequency distribution of workers in Bombay cigarette factories according to average daily earnings, 1945.

Earning group	Golden Tobacco Co.		Macropolo and Co.		Godfrey Phillips		Tobacco Manufacturers		Maple Tobacco Co.		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Under As. 8 .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Between As. 8 and As. 12	15	74	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	74
Between As. 12 and Re. 1	34	90	1	..	16	..	..	..	..	..	51	90
Between Re. 1 and Rs. 1-4-0	31	24	13	7	92	40	..	..	51	70	287	141
Between Rs. 1-4-0 and Rs. 1-8-0	14	9	18	14	74	67	..	..	43	18	149	108
Between Rs. 1-8-0 and Rs. 1-12-0	3	..	16	15	65	21	1	..	5	..	90	37
Between Rs. 1-12-0 and Rs. 2	4	..	10	1	35	10	..	6	3	..	52	17
Between Rs. 2 and Rs. 2-4-0	3	1	6	1	42	4	176	107	3	3	230	116
Between Rs. 2-4-0 and Rs. 2-8-0	2	..	10	..	7	..	273	94	..	..	282	94
Between Rs. 2-8-0 and Rs. 2-12-0	3	..	..	..	1	..	75	16	1	..	80	16
Between Rs. 2-12-0 and Rs. 3	1	..	..	..	1	..	27	13	..	..	28	13
Rs. 3 and over	5	..	4	..	16	..	84	14	1	..	110	14
Total	115	198	78	39	349	142	636	250	107	91	1,285	720

The following two tables set out frequency distribution of workers in specified groups of average daily basic wages and earnings :

It will be seen from table 31 that wages in the Golden Tobacco Company are very low while those in Maple Tobacco Company are high as compared to these in other concerns. Attention may be drawn to the concentration of modal frequencies (except in the case of Golden Tobacco Company) in the annas 12 and Rs. 1-2-0 wage group. The Maple Tobacco Company exhibits two modals but it is obvious that the concentration is more around the Re. 1|- and Rs. 1-2-0 group than round the other. It will also be noticed that women's wages are less than those of men. Nearly 30 percent of total male workers earn between annas 14 and Re. 1|- per day while about the same percentage of female workers earn between annas 12 and annas 14 per day. On the whole, about 60 percent of men earn between annas 12 and Rs. 1-2-0 while 62 per cent. of women earn between annas 10 and Re. 1|- per day as basic wages. There are, however, only 6 percent of male workers getting below annas 10 per day as against 26 percent of female workers.

Table 32 shows that the daily earnings have risen appreciably in the Tobacco Manufacturers where the earnings level is the highest. This is so because it pays the highest allowances and also production bonus. This is also responsible for the fact that the earnings of women in this concern are higher than those of even men in other concerns.

The earnings are again lowest in the Golden Tobacco Company where about 57 percent of male workers and about 83 percent of female workers earn between annas 12 and Rs. 1-4-0 and annas 8 and Re. 1|- per day respectively. The earnings would have gone still lower but for attendance bonus which is paid in that concern. Though the basic wage level is the highest in the Maple Tobacco Company, the level of earnings is lower than in two other concerns. This is due to the fact that this factory pays the lowest dearness allowance. About 88 percent of male workers and about 77 percent of female workers earn between Re. 1|- and Rs. 1-8-0 and Re. 1|- and Rs. 1-4-0 per day respectively.

Take into consideration the workers in all factories, the modal group covers about 23 percent of male workers and about 20 percent of female workers earning between Rs. 2-4-0 and Rs. 2-8-0 and Re. 1|- and Rs. 1-4-0 per day respectively. The higher earnings of male workers is due to the fact that this group is composed largely of workers in the Tobacco Manufacturing Company which alone employs nearly half the number of male workers in all the concerns. Thus the gap between the earnings of male and female workers is widened.

Dearness Allowance.

All factories pay dearness allowance at varying rates. The Tobacco Manufacturers pays the same dearness allowance as the Millowners' Association, Bombay. Godfrey Phillips pays 7 annas per day worked or 5 annas in the rupee of worker's earnings whichever is higher. The golden Tobacco Company and the Macropolo Company pay Rs. 15|- per month. The Deccan Tobacco Company pays its workers 20 percent of their earnings with a minimum of Rs. 5|- per month and the Maple Tobacco Company gives 12½ percent of the workers' earnings as dearness allowance.

Bonus and other Allowances.

The Tobacco Manufacturers pays an annual war bonus of 1/12th of the worker's earnings, provided he has been on the muster roll for one year. The amount of the bonus is, however, likely to be reduced by 1/4th depending on the worker's conduct. The Deccan Tobacco Company paid a bonus of three months' pay or 1/4th of total earnings to all its workers in 1944. It was paid

in three monthly instalments. None of the other concerns pay any war or profit bonus. The Golden Tobacco Company, however, pays an attendance bonus to its workers on a sliding scale. The rate is Rs. 5/- for full attendance in the month and is reduced by 8 annas for half day's absence until nothing is paid for 5 days' absence in the month. There is a system of efficiency bonus in Tobacco Manufacturers and Godfrey Phillips. In the former, workers who handle the two best machines from the point of view of production in a particular month in the packing and making departments are paid Rs. 4/- and Rs. 5/- per machine. In Godfrey Phillips, in the packing department one anna extra per day is paid for every 1,000 packets prepared above 1,200 packets. In the making department there is a limit fixed for each machine and bonus is paid at the rate of Re. 1/- per 1,000 cigarettes made above that limit.

None of the concerns has a system of fine. Nor are there any deductions except those permissible under the Payment of Wages Act. Almost all the concerns give small advances of money free of interest to their workers at times of festivals or social functions at home and they are deducted from their pay by instalments.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

The following table shows the shifts and hours of work in the cigarette factories :—

TABLE 33.

Shifts and Hours of Work in Cigarette factories in Bombay, 1945.

Name of factory	Hours of work	Interval	Actual No. of hours of work
Tobacco Manufacturers	I—8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	.. 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.	.. 9
	II—7 p.m. to 5 a.m.	.. 10 p.m. to 11 p.m.	.. 9
Godfrey Phillips Making and Cutting sections.	8-30 a.m. to 6-30 p.m.	.. 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.	.. 9
	I—7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	.. 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.	.. 9
	II—5 p.m. to 3 a.m.	.. 9 p.m. to 10 p.m.	.. 9
Golden Tobacco Co.	.. 8-30 a.m. to 6-30 p.m.	.. 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.	.. 9
Deccan Tobacco Co.	.. 9 a.m. to 6-30 p.m.	.. 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.	.. 8½
Macropolo & Co.	.. 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.	.. 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.	.. 9
Maple Tobacco Co.	.. 8-30 a.m. to 6-30 p.m.	.. 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.	.. 9

It will be seen that only in two factories more than one shift is worked. In the case of Godfrey Phillips only the making and cutting sections work double shifts. In Tobacco Manufacturers there is a monthly changeover, while in Godfrey Phillips the changeover is fortnightly.

Overtime.

When overtime is worked it is paid according to the provisions of the Factories Act. The Tobacco Manufacturers works the usual hours on Saturdays also but work between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. is considered as overtime and is paid for at 1½ times the usual rates. Sunday work is paid at 1½ times the usual rates and work on festival days is paid at double the usual rate. In Godfrey Phillips packing departments work up to 7 p.m. and the work between 6-30 p.m. and 7 p.m. is considered as overtime and at 1-1/2 times the usual rates.

All these concerns satisfy the requirements of the Factories Act in the matter of sanitary arrangements. Separate latrines have been provided for men and women. Provision of drinking water is satisfactory. The Tobacco Manufacturers supplies cold drinking water to its workers all the year round. Almost all the rooms in this factory are also air conditioned.

None of the factories has rest shelters. Workers go out and eat whatever they have brought with them under the trees. The Tobacco Manufacturers will be shortly building a rest shelter for its workers.

Holidays and Leave.

Sundays are closed days in all the factories. Tobacco Manufacturers and Godfrey Phillips allow their workers 7 and 4 paid festival holidays respectively in a year. The leave facilities given by the Tobacco Manufacturers are mentioned elsewhere. Macropolo and Deccan Tobacco Companies stated that they allowed their workers one month's leave with pay each year but on enquiry it was found that very few workers actually got this benefit. There is no system of holidays with pay in the remaining two concerns.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

The Tobacco Manufacturers and Deccan Tobacco Company have dispensaries in charge of a qualified doctor. Godfrey Phillips has no dispensary but certain standard mixtures are made available to the workers free of charge. A qualified doctor is available for consultation for one hour each day. There is a temporary creche in the Tobacco Manufacturers but it leaves much to be desired. Only the Golden Tobacco Company has a grain shop where articles are sold at controlled prices. It will thus be seen that welfare work in cigarette factories is very meagre.

There is no Provident Fund, gratuity or pension in any of the factories. Tobacco Manufacturers has prepared a scheme of Provident Fund for which Government sanction is awaited.

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES.

Labour is generally weak in this industry. No union of cigarette workers came to our notice. None of the concerns reported any strike in recent years except Golden Tobacco Company where an unsuccessful strike lasting for a few days took place in 1940 in the packing department. The strike was a sequel to the dismissal of certain workers in that department.

(c) BANGALORE.

The Tobacco Manufacturers (India) Limited has a factory at Bangalore which manufactures many different brands of cigarettes. Machinery driven by electric power is used for all processes from slicing and blending of tobacco to final packing. Some brands of cigarettes, however, are packed in cartons by women workers without the aid of machinery. Before the war the factory was using solely virginia tobacco but now it mixes virginia and Indian tobacco, in varying proportions for different brands of cigarettes.

EMPLOYMENT.

The following table shows the figures of employment for August 1939 and January 1944 :—

TABLE 34.

Employment in cigarette factory, Bangalore, in 1939 and 1944.

	August 1939.		January 1944.	
Total number of workers
Number of piece-rated workers
Number of time-rated workers
		1,073		2,436
		14		..
		1,059		2,436

All workers are employed and paid directly. Out of 2,436 workers, 835 are women. No children are employed.

The length of service of the workers as on 30-11-1944 is shown in the following table :

TABLE 35.
Length of service of operatives in 1944.

Length of service	No. of workers	Percent of total
Between 0 and 1 year	809	37.4
Between 1 and 5 years	615	28.4
Over 5 years	739	34.2
	2,163	100

Classification of workers.

The workers are classified into class A workers and B workers as in other factories belonging to the Company. The percentages of permanent and temporary workers in the factory were 64.4 and 35.6 respectively in March 1945.

Promotion.

Promotion of any class B worker to class A may be made at the sole discretion of the Company at any time. Ability of the worker and length of his service are the guiding factors generally for such promotions. A yearly increment in wages or salary is, however, given to all workers until the maximum of their scale is reached.

Labour Turnover.

The following table shows the labour turnover in 1939 and 1943 :—

TABLE 36.
Labour Turnover in 1939 and 1943.

Year	Average daily No. of workers employed	Total separations							Total	Percent of total	
		Permanent			Temporary						
		Death	Dis-missal	Dis-charge	Voluntary	Death	Dis-missal	Dis-charge			Voluntary
1939	1,069	9	..	29	5	..	..	..	1	44	4.1
1943	1,865	11	..	102	97	9	108	168	268	763	40.9

It will be seen that labour turnover has increased tenfold as compared to 1939. Perhaps one reason for the increased labour turnover is that during 1943 the factory adjusted employment from month to month to suit the demand for cigarettes ; for, while employment during the months of 1939 was almost steady with a variation only from 1,064 to 1,071 during the first 11 months and to 1,089 during December 1939, in 1943 employment month by month varied from 1,678 to 2,002. This should not, however, have affected the permanent workers who also register a much higher rate of turnover as compared to 1939.

Absenteeism.

Figures of absenteeism for 1939 and 1943 are given below :

TABLE 37.
Absenteeism in 1939 and 1943.

Year	Average No. of workers employed daily	No. of working days	Estimated maximum man days	Total absenteeism	Percent of total
1939	1,069	266	2,84,244½	1,124	0.40
1943	1,865	277½	5,18,015½	2,549	0.49

Recruitment.

As and when recruitment is necessary, the fact is made known to the workers in the factory who publish it amongst their friends and the villagers

and next day candidates come to the factory gate for recruitment. The manager or some other highly placed officer selects men from the candidates. Good physique and smartness of appearance are the guiding factors in selection. The selected men are examined by the factory Medical Officer before employment.

Standing Orders.

Standing Orders have been framed and are posted at the main entrance to the factory and in all departments, both in English and vernacular. All grievances or other matters which concern labour are brought to the notice of the management who exercise their discretion on all matters not dealt with in the Standing Orders.

WAGES AND EARNINGS.

The rates of wages for different classes of workers are shown below. At present all the workers are on time rates.

Rates of wages.

Factory Department (Semi-skilled).

Class A.	Class B.
Rs. 1-1-0 to Rs. 2-10-0; efficiency bar at Rs. 2-4-0.	Rs. 0-12-0 to Rs. 1-14-0; efficiency bar at Rs. 1-4-0.
Increment one anna up to Rs. 1-14-0; then two annas.	Increment one anna.

General Workers (Unskilled)

Class A.	Class B.
Re. 0-10-0 to Rs. 1-6-0; efficiency bar at Re. 1	Re. 0-9-0 to Rs. 1-2-0; efficiency bar at Re. 0-12-0 and Re. 0-14-0.
Increment 6 pies up to Re. 1; then one anna	Increment 6 pies.

Engineering Department (Skilled workers)

Class A.	Class B.
Rs. 1-10-0 to Rs. 3-12-0; efficiency bar at Rs. 2-2-0 and Rs. 3.	Rs. 1-1-0 to Rs. 2-14-0; efficiency bar at Rs. 1-12-0 and Rs. 2-6-0.
Increment one anna six pies up to Rs. 2-2-0; then two annas.	Increment one anna up to Rs. 1-12-0; then two annas.

Semi-skilled workers.

Class A.
Re. 0-12-0 to Rs. 1-14-0; efficiency bar at Rs. 1-4-0
Increment one anna.

Unskilled workers.

Class A.	Class B.
Re. 0-10-0 to Rs. 1-8-0; efficiency bar at Re. 1.	Re. 0-9-0 to Rs. 1-2-0; efficiency bar at Re. 0-12-0 and Re. 0-14-0.
Increment 6 pies up to Re. 1; then one anna.	Increment 6 pies.

Dearness Allowance.

Dearness allowance is based on the Bangalore city cost of living index. It was started on 1st February 1941. Until the allowance was linked with cost of living index in August 1942, it was given on a sliding scale based on basic wages earned. On 1st May 1944 when the index figure was 189 (June 1936 = 100) the minimum and maximum dearness allowances were Rs. 14-8-0 and Rs. 18-12-0 respectively. From that date the principle followed is to add or deduct 1½ annas for every one point rise or fall in the cost of living index. The minimum rate of dearness allowance is paid for wages up to Rs. 60 per month. For wages between Rs. 61 and Rs. 75, four annas per rupee of wages is paid over the minimum rate and the maximum rate is given for wages over Rs. 75 per month. For absence from work dearness allowance is reduced *pro rata*. In April 1945 with the index number at 196 the minimum and maximum rates of allowance were Rs. 15-4-0 and Rs. 18-12-0 respectively.

Overtime.

A worker is expected to work overtime if he is asked to do so. In fact overtime work is a common practice in the factory. Overtime is paid for at the rate of time and a quarter. Sunday work is paid for at the rate of time and a half. Overtime is recorded in the muster roll.

Fines.

Small fines are imposed for stealing cigarettes, loss of ticket (token) or loss of Company's property. The amounts are put in a fine fund which is used for relieving special cases of hardship of unskilled workers. The amount in the fund is Rs. 145-9-0.

Bonus.

Workers who have been on the rolls for a full calendar year are paid a bonus. The maximum bonus amounts to a twelfth of the yearly gross earnings and is given at the discretion of the manager to those workers who have attended work regularly and are well behaved. Other workers are paid $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ of the above rate according to their attendance and general conduct.

Earnings.

The average basic wages earned by the workers in November 1944 were Rs. 21-5-0 for men and Rs. 15-13-0 for women; total earnings including allowances and overtime were Rs. 36-11-0 for men and Rs. 30-11-0 for women.

Wage Period.

The wage period for all workers is one month. All monthly rated workers are paid on the 1st of every month and daily-rated workers on the 7th or 8th day of each month but never later than the 10th.

Holidays and Leaves.

Sunday is observed as a closed day. Holidays and leave facilities are the same as other factories of the Tobacco manufacturers.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

The factory works two shifts. The day shift works for 9 hours and the night shift for 8 hours. The actual hours of work are :

Day shift 7.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and

1.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Night Shift 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. and

3.30 a.m. to 7.30 a.m.

The night shift starts so late in the night because after the accident in June 1944 at the Sivasamudram Power Station electric power is not available to the factory between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. The day and night shift workers are changed every week. Arrangements for lighting and ventilation in the factory are good and there is no congestion. Separate shelters are provided for male and female workers for rest during shift intervals. Their dimensions are 32 ft. \times 30 ft. and 30 ft. \times 17 ft. respectively. They have stone floors, brick walls 18 ft. high and corrugated iron roof. There are no seating arrangements.

Sanitary arrangements consist of the dry pan type lavatories and also the aqua privy system. Night soil from the dry pan type is removed four times a day by municipal sweepers. A tube well with a pump provides washing facilities for the general workers. Men working on coal, boilers etc. are, however, provided with soap and hot water. Municipal filtered water is available for drinking purposes.

WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

Workers are medically examined before they are employed and later also periodically. There is a dispensary in the factory compound and a qualified doctor attends every morning for two hours. A compounder is on duty in the dispensary during working hours. Minor injuries and illness are attended to in the dispensary. Serious cases are sent to the Government hospital.

Provident Fund and Gratuity.

The Company has a scheme of Provident Fund to which all Indian employees who have been in the service of the Company for a continuous period of at least two years are eligible to contribute. The contribution is one anna in the rupee of the subscriber's total earnings during the month and the Company contributes an equal amount. In January 1945, out of a total of 1688

men and 795 women workers, 769 men and 355 women were members of the Provident Fund.

The workers usually retire at the age of 50 and if they have served the Company without break for at least 15 years, a sum equal to half a month's salary or wage for each complete year of service is given to them as a gratuity at the time of retirement.

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES.

There is no trade union among the workers. In May 1936 there was an unsuccessful strike which lasted for two months. Since the strike the Company has conceded many benefits to the workers such as Provident Fund and annual bonus.

WORKING OF THE LABOUR ACTS.

The factory comes under the Bangalore Civil and Military Station Factory Rules and is regularly inspected by the Factory Inspector. The provisions of the Electricity Act, Payment of Wages Act and Workmen's Compensation Act are observed. During 1943 there were 91 cases of accidents which were all minor and the total amount of compensation paid was Rs. 144-15-0. The Maternity Benefit Act is not in force in the Bangalore Civil and Military Station and, is therefore, not observed in the factory though it employs a large number of women workers.

(d) SAHARANPUR.

The Saharanpur Cigarette Factory was established in 1925. As it also belongs to the Tobacco Manufacturers (India) Limited, the terms of employment and the conditions of work are generally the same as in the Bangalore factory. Only the relevant statistics are, therefore, given and distinctive features pointed out in the case of this factory.

EMPLOYMENT.

TABLE 38.

Average daily number of workers employed

Month	Piece-rated	Time-rated	Total
August 1939	186	727	913
January 1944	932	1,327	2,259
February 1945	782	1,410	2,192

All workers are adult males employed and paid directly.

TABLE 39.

Length of Service, 1945.

Length of service.	No. of workers	Percent of total
Between 0 and 1 year of service	313	14
Between 1 and 5 years of service	1,363	62
Between 5 and 10 years of service	398	18
Over 10 years of service	118	6
Total	2,192	100

TABLE 40.

Labour Turnover in 1939-1944.

Year	Average daily No. of workers employed	Total separations				Total	Percent of total
		Permanent		Temporary			
		Dismissal	Voluntary	Dismissal	Voluntary		
1939	920	16	6	9	4	35	3.8
1944	2,150	88	158	55	85	386	18.0

The percentage of absenteeism excluding authorised absence on leave was 1.2 in 1943 and 10 in 1944.

Wages.

The rates of wages for different grades are given below.

There has been no change in basic wages since August 1939.

	Grade A.	Grade B.	Grade C.	Grade D.
Supervisors (38) ..	Rs. 50-8-0 to Rs. 100 p.m.	Rs. 25-8-0 to Rs. 50 p.m.	Rs. 14 to Rs. 25 p.m.	Re. 0-11-0 to Rs. 1-2-0 per day efficiency bar at Re. 1 and Rs. 1-4-0
Skilled workers (50)	Rs. 51 to Rs. 120 p.m.	Rs. 1-4-0 to Rs. 2-8-0 effi- ciency bar at Rs. 2. Increment one anna.	..	..
Semiskilled workers (900).	Rs. 1-4-6 to Rs. 2-8-0 effi- ciency bar at Rs. 1-12-0 and Rs. 2. Incre- ment one anna.	Rs. 1-1-0 to Rs. 2 efficiency bar at Rs. 1-8-0. Increment one anna.	Re. 0-8-6 to Rs. 1-4-0 effi- ciency bar at Re. 0-12-0. Incre- ment 6 pies.	..
General workers (1204).	Re. 0-12-0 to Rs. 1-4-0 effi- ciency bar at Re. 1. Incre- ment 6 pies.	Re. 0-8-6 to Rs. 1 efficiency bar at Re. 0-12-0 and Re. 0-14-0. In- crement 6 pies.	..	..

Dearness Allowance.

Dearness allowance is given in accordance with the rates adopted by the Employers' Association of Northern India, Cawnpore, which are related to the cost of living index. The allowance per day worked in Re. 0-6-6 plus Re. 0-1-4 per point of rise in index above 200 for similar rise for those earning wages between Rs. 43 and Rs. 75 per month. For those earning above Rs. 75 per month allowance is Rs. 31-8-0 per month.

Efficiency Bonus.

In the cigarette machine department for every unit of efficiency over 69 percent on Molins Tipped and Standard Plain Machines and over 74 percent on Molins Machines the following bonuses are paid per hour :

Operators 1 pie

Sorters $\frac{1}{2}$ pie

Section men $1\frac{1}{3}$ pie.

Head Section men do not receive efficiency bonus but get a Waste Paper Bonus at the rate of two annas per decimal point of waste below 7 percent on the month's deliveries to the packing department. For wastes below 3 percent a further bonus at the rate of 8 annas per decimal point is given.

WORKING CONDITIONS.

Three shifts are worked as shown in the table below :—

TABLE 41.

Shifts and Hours of work, 1945.

Hours	Interval	Hours of work	Spread over
Early shift 6-30 a.m. to 3-30 p.m. ..	11-30 a.m. to 12 noon ..	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	9
Late shift 3-30 p.m. to 12-30 a.m. ..	8 p.m. to 8-30 p.m. ..	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	9
Common shift 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ..	1 p.m. to 2 p.m. ..	9	10

WELFARE ACTIVITIES.

A grain shop where wheat, rice and other grains are sold to the workers at concession rates fixed by the Employer's Association of Northern India is maintained.

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES.

Nearly 90 percent of the workers are members of the Cigarette Factory Workers Union. The monthly subscription for membership is two annas. The Union however, has not been recognised.

Since June 1944 there is a Works Committee called the "Factory Council" consisting of 25 elected representatives of the workers with the manager as Chairman. It was said that the Council had done no useful work so far.

On the 24th November 1939 the workers put forth before the manager certain demands such as increase in wages, reduction of hours of work and grant of casual, privilege and sick leave with full pay. As none of the demands was granted the workers struck work on 15th February 1940. The strike lasted for three months and the workers resumed work unconditionally on 15th May 1940.

In 1943, 31 accidents occurred (2 permanent and 29 temporary disablements) for which a total compensation of Rs. 279-6-6 was paid.

CHAPTER VIII.—SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

India is one of the principal tobacco producing countries of the world being second only to the United States of America in respect of production. Nearly the whole of the production in India is consumed in the country, the total export of raw and manufactured tobacco forming only about 2 percent of the total production. Tobacco is consumed in various forms but smoking may be said to be the most popular form of consumption. The *bidi*, *hookah*, cigarette, cigar and *cheroot* are the common forms in which tobacco is smoked.

The *bidi*, *hookah* and *cheroot* are the poor man's smoke while cigars and cigarettes are luxury articles, more or less. The manufacture of *bidi* is spread all over the country but the Central Provinces, Madras and Bombay are the chief *bidi* manufacturing Provinces. In these Provinces manufacturing is carried on in towns as well as in villages. Cigarette manufacture, unlike *bidi*, is confined to large cities. The important centres are Calcutta, Bombay, Bangalore, Saharanpur and Monghyr. Cigars are made solely in South India, the important centres being Trichinopoly and Dindigul in the Madras Province.

Organisation.

In the organisation of the *bidi* industry, one can distinguish three main types: direct organisation, contract system and out-work system. In the Central Provinces and South India all the three systems are prevalent but direct organisation is most common in the former Province while contract system is most common in South India. In Bombay organisation is mainly direct but in Bengal in addition to direct organisation, out-work system also widely prevails.

The organisation of the *bidi* industry does not involve any great capital outlay, nor are elaborate tools or machinery required for the manufacture of *bidis* with the result that in *bidi* industry is found a multiplicity of small units of production.

Cigar manufacture also is well suited for small scale organisation. In fact, all the cigar factories, with the exception of the Spencer's factory at Dindigul are small units. The organisation of the industry, however, is direct and not through middlemen. Cigarette manufacture is, on the other hand, an elaborate process and requires expensive machinery involving

large capital outlay. Nearly all the cigarette factories are large-scale units employing hundreds of workers and come under the Factories Act.

Employment.

The bidi industry is one of the most important unorganised industries in India in respect of employment. Though it is very difficult to estimate the exact number of workers employed in the industry, indications are that it employs nearly half a million of workers. The Central Provinces employs nearly 1,25,000 workers, South India and Bombay about 1,00,000 each, and the rest are employed in other Provinces and States.

A striking feature of the industry is the large proportion of women and children employed. In the Central Provinces, Bengal and South India women are employed mostly as home-workers but in Bombay they are regular factory workers. In the Central Provinces nearly 40 percent of the workers are women while in South India the percentage is about 30. The employment of children often of very tender years constitutes a grave industrial evil in this industry. In South India, in the more important centres for bidi manufacture like Madras city and Vellore, the percentage of children to the total of workers is 18 and 29 while in the Mysore State it is about 25. In Bombay and the Central Provinces, children are about 7 percent of the total of workers and in Bengal about 9 percent. It is to be noted, however, that the children are not employed directly by the factory owners but by the workers in their factories.

In the cigar industry women are not generally employed but, as in the bidi industry, the employment of children constitutes a grave evil, especially in those factories manufacturing the inferior quality of cigars called *cheroots*. In the cigarette factories quite a large number of women are employed in Bombay and Bangalore. Children are not usually employed but a few cases of employment of children against the provisions of the Factories Act were noticed in Calcutta.

Bidi making is a work which any one can pick up in three to six months' time. No special arrangements exist for recruitment. Generally the boys who start as helpers take to bidi making as a vocation when they grow up. Cigar making involves greater skill and the occupation is generally handed over from father to son. The cigarette factories usually recruit their workers directly, applicants presenting themselves at the factory gate. Labour turnover and absenteeism are high among workers in bidi and cigar factories.

Wages.

The bulk of the workers employed in the bidi and cigar industries are rollers who are paid on piece basis. Only packing, labelling and store work are paid at time rates although labelling in many centres is also paid for by results. The children employed in the bidi and cigar industries, however, are generally paid on daily basis. The wages of packers and labellers are from Rs. 12-0-0 to Rs. 20-0-0 a month. The children get, on an average, 4 to 6 annas daily in South India both in the bidi and the cigar industry while they get 3 to 4 annas in Bombay and the Central Provinces and 4 to 6 annas in Bengal.

The piece-rate for making 1,000 bidis varies from centre to centre and occasionally even from factory to factory in the same centre. In the Central Provinces the variation is generally from 13 annas to Re. 1-0-0. In South India the usual rate is Rs. 1-2-0 for *Sada* and Rs. 1-4-0 for *jadi* bidis although in some centres as much as Rs. 1-10-0 and Rs. 1-12-0 are paid. In the Bombay Province the rate varies from 12 annas to Rs. 1-4-0 and in Bengal from Rs. 1-1-0 to Rs. 1-14-0. Women employed in factories are generally paid the same rates as men but in the case of home-work the rate is lower by

2 annas in the Central Provinces, Bombay and the Mysore State, by 4 annas in Bengal and by 8 to 10 annas in the Madras Province. Compared to 1939 the rates have gone up 100 percent or more at present.

The rates of wages for making of 1,000 cigars vary from Rs. 1-4-0 for the inferior varieties to Rs. 5-0-0 or Rs. 6-0-0 for the superior cigars. In the cigarette industry wages are paid generally on a time basis. The average daily rate is from annas 12 to Re. 1-0-0 although skilled workers such as machine operators receive up to Rs. 3-0-0 or Rs. 3-12-0.

In the bidi industry there are all sorts of deductions from the workers' wages. The usual deductions are for bad workmanship and in some places for thread supplied. These deductions are very common in the Central Provinces, especially in the Bhandara district, and in South India.

Employment both in the bidi and the cigar industry is irregular, depending on weather, availability of material etc. Dearness allowance, bonus or any concession in kind is not given to bidi workers. But the cigar workers in South India are generally paid a dearness allowance of 5 annas in the rupee of wages earned and some cigar factories give bonuses as well. All the cigarette factories give dearness allowance and bonuses of some kind or other. In the Central Provinces the average daily production of bidis per worker is about 800 and, on the basis that the average worker works for 21 days in a month, his earnings would vary between Rs. 13-10-0 and Rs. 21-0-0 per month. In South India an average bidi worker rolls 1,000 bidis and in 1944 his earnings calculated from total wage bill and average number of workers were Rs. 18-4-0 in Madras, Rs. 44-0-0 in Palghat, Rs. 21-0-0 in Mangalore and Rs. 29-3-0 in Tinnevely. The earnings in other centres in South India were in the neighbourhood of Rs. 30-0-0 per month. In Bombay men workers were earning, on an average, Rs. 30-0-0 to Rs. 40-0-0 while women workers were getting Rs. 16-0-0 to Rs. 30-0-0 per month. In Bengal examination of 560 bidi workers showed that their average earnings were Rs. 14-12-0 a week. The average earnings of cigar makers in South India were from Rs. 27-12-0 to Rs. 36-13-0.

A wage census in cigarette factories in Bengal revealed that 30 percent of the workers were earning below Re. 1-0-0 per day, 46 percent between Re. 1-0-0 and Rs. 2-0-0 and 24 percent over Rs. 2-0-0. In Bombay the wage census showed that 5 percent of men workers were earning below Re. 1-0-0, 37 percent between Re. 1-0-0 and Rs. 2-0-0 and 58 percent over Rs. 2-0-0 per day; 23 percent of women workers were earning below Re. 1-0-0; 42 percent between Re. 1-0-0 and Rs. 2-0-0 and 35 percent over Rs. 2-0-0. In Bangalore the average monthly earnings of workers were Rs. 36-11-0 for men and Rs. 30-11-0 for women.

Working Conditions.

Long hours of work and insanitary workplace are the general rule in bidi and cigar factories. In the bidi industry work starts at 8 or 9 a.m. and continues till 9 or 10 p.m. Although there are no regular intervals for rest, the workers rest or take recess when and for as long a time as they desire. Usually one day in the week is observed as a closed day but many factories work all the day of the week. The small bidi and cigar workshops which are often situated in dirty lanes are dark ill-ventilated semi-basements with uneven mud floors. They are seldom swept and the workers squat on the floor in a congested manner amidst dust and squalor. Latrines and urinals for the use of the workers are scarcely provided. No clean drinking water is usually made available to the workers.

The cigarette factories, however, conform to the provisions laid down in the Factories Act in all these respects. Most of the cigarette factories work two shifts and some work even three shifts.

Welfare Activities.

In the bidi industry no concern has started any welfare measures for the workers. In the cigar industry two small factories meet the medical expenses of the workers and the Spencer's factory has schemes of Provident Fund, pension and sickness allowance. Most of the cigarette factories have, on the other hand, well-equipped dispensaries where the workers receive free medical attention. The Tobacco Manufacturers (India), Limited has Provident Funds in Calcutta and Bangalore and is awaiting Government sanction for its Provident Fund scheme in Bombay. It has, further, a scheme of gratuity in Bangalore. Some factories in Bengal and Bombay and the Saharanpur factory have opened grain shops for the benefit of the workers.

Trade Unions and Strikes.

There are well organised trade unions in the bidi and cigar industries in respective centres of production. A few strikes have been launched in recent years mainly with a view to get increased rates of wages. Many of the strikes have been partially successful. In the cigarette industry there are trade unions in Calcutta and Saharanpur while Bangalore and Bombay have no unions of workers.

Working of the Labour Acts.

The C.P. Unregulated Factories Act, 1937, applies to the bidi factories employing 50 persons or more in that Province. The Act regulates employment of women and children, hours of work, rest and holidays and lays down minimum standards of health and sanitation in the factories. But the Act has not been strictly enforced for want of adequate inspectorate with the result that in respect of working conditions and hours of work most of the factories are hardly better than before. In the Bombay Province bidi factories employing 20 or more persons have been brought under the Factories Act by a notification under section 5(1) of the Act. In Bengal and Madras the bidi factories do not come under the Act. Only two cigar factories in Dindigul and all the cigarette factories come under the Act. A few children were found employed in one or two cigarette factories in Calcutta against the provisions of the Act. Only in the Central Provinces has the Payment of Wages Act been applied to the bidi factories covered by the Unregulated Factories Act but it is almost a dead letter. It applies to all cigarette factories and its provisions are complied with. In spite of the Employment of Children (Amendment) Act, 1939, many children of tender years were found working in bidi and cigar factories in South India, parts of Bombay and the Central Provinces. Even cases of infringement of the Children (Pledging of Labour) Act were noticed in some parts of South India.

Conclusions.

To conclude, matters requiring immediate attention in the bidi and cigar industries are the unhealthy working conditions, long hours of work, employment of women and children, deductions from wages and the sub-contract system of organisation. It is desirable to abolish the out-work system and to encourage establishment of big factories in the bidi and cigar industries, if protective labour legislation is to be enforced with any degree of success. In view of the large number of women workers in the bidi industry, appointment of a woman Factory Inspector in the important bidi making Provinces is desirable.

SIMLA

D. V. REGE.

The 23rd July, 1945.

PRINTED AT THE SURVEY OF INDIA OFFICES (P.Z.O.).

REG. No. 2621 X D D (C) 49-300.

INDIAN LABOUR GAZETTE

*Issued Monthly by the Government of India,
Ministry of Labour, Labour Bureau, Simla (India)*

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