

No.8/4/68-NCL(C)
Government of India
National Commission on Labour
D-27, South Extension, Part-II



New Delhi, Dated the 26th April, 1968.

To

The Chairman and the Members of the Commission.

Sir,

I am directed to forward a copy each of notes on observation visits and record of informal discussions which some Members of the Commission had with parties in (i) Bombay, Sholapur and Saurashtra Area and (ii) Bhilai, Rourkela and Ranchi.

Yours faithfully,

P. D. Gaiha
(P.D. Gaiha)
Director.

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National Commission on Labour

Observation visits in Bombay, Sholapur and Saurashtra Area

(B O M B A Y)

24-1-1960

I

Visit to the office of Dock Workers' Union at Demello Bhavan, Demello Road, Bombay.

1. Mr. Manohar Kotwal and Mr. Kulkarni explained the working of the various sections into which the work of the union was divided. The union claims that the members pay union dues in this office. On days when this payment is to be made, there are long queues of members for this purpose. This is on or about the 10th of every month. The accounting procedure which is followed by the union permits them to complete the transactions for the day before the office of the union closes. They find no difficulty in presenting their annual accounts within a month or two of the closing of the financial year. This method of maintaining accounts requires to be examined. (A note on the subject will be supplied by the union.)
2. In Demello Bhavan, the union has also its own stores for selling cloth. It was mentioned that the off-takes from this shop provides an indication of changes which have taken place in the clothing habits of workers. Increasing demand for finer qualities from year to year was reported by the Manager of the stores and these finer varieties are not restricted to workers alone but for their dependents also. The change in sartorial habits was also reported.

II

Visit to BOMBAY DOCKS

1. Mr. Manohar Kotwal and I visited the Bombay Docks. The handling of grain was in progress. The earnings of persons engaged in this work have improved in the last few years. The improvement has been such that in some cases the earnings have increased three-fold. Most of this has occurred because workers are now on an incentive basis.
2. The difficult part of the handling of cargo in the docks is of fertilizer and cement. Regular workers avoid accepting this work. Contractors have to be brought in. Some suggestions are under consideration of the Port authorities in order to avoid delays in the handling of products which workers do not like to handle. Most of the work handled, which we were able to see, was hard work and the persons who handle it also appear to be capable of doing such work. The work will certainly look more arduous if it was observed in the oppressive summer months.
3. The spots in the Ports and Docks which were most susceptible to work-stoppages were then inspected. The crew in the tug boats perhaps hold the key to keeping the traffic on the docks moving. The attempt of the authorities both employers and trade unions is to keep these workers reasonably satisfied.

4. Painting and chipping work in dry docks is again an important operation for the up-keep of steamers. This work is reported to be hazardous in two senses - (i) at the time of painting - and all this appeared to be spray painting - there are risks of occupational diseases and (ii) working at different heights has the same risks as those experienced by building construction workers, perhaps more because of the way ships are built.

5. Some points arising out of delays in decisions on port expansion and the additional costs involved because of these delays also came up for discussion but these need not be recorded here.

6. Two canteens one run by port authorities and the other by Dock Labour Board were seen. Both appeared to be in indifferent up-keep. The one run by the Dock Labour Board, however, seemed to be better run and cleaner.

7. The working of the Dock Labour Board was also seen for a short time. This was immediately after the peak hour when workers came there to take instructions for work on the next day. The distribution of cards/slips to workers at the peak hours is reported to be satisfactory. Some of the earnings cards maintained in that office were inspected. Whatever be the reasons, the total earnings per day which were recorded on the cards appeared to be impressive. The card showing a figure of Rs. 90 on one day was certainly an exception. But the average can well be between Rs. 30-35. The number of days on which the worker gets away a packet of such size, however, could be 15 to 18 in a month. It is possible that when the weather is more oppressive the earnings could be lower.

8. The other welfare work done by port authorities was explained to me on the way to the Labour Welfare Centre run by the Bombay Port Trust. Since this centre was to be visited on the following day by the Welfare Committee my comments are likely to be on the generous side. These are, therefore, withheld.

9. While a large number of workers are housed by the Bombay Port Trust and they have a programme of expansion of housing activities subject to their other financial commitments a larger number of persons who have to facilitate the movement of ships will still have to share the already congested accommodation available in Bombay.

10. The chawls built by the Bombay Port Trust for housing workers were seen. The standard of accommodation was satisfactory judging from the housing which is available for that rent to persons not having the privilege of working with Bombay Port Trust.

11. The system of allotting houses was explained. It appeared to leave very little room for favouritism or corruption. On the whole, occupants of these quarters seemed to be satisfied with the way the allotments were made. A particularly good feature of this allotment was that as the accommodation falls vacant it is allotted to the persons on the list and these are made public well in advance. The allotments are made without taking into account religious, caste or community prejudices.

The cooperative consumer stores for articles of daily use was seen in these chawls. There are no special comments on it except that off-take of commodities from the shop in relation to the earnings of these workers was rather poor. It cannot be understood why such stores were unpopular with workers.

25-1-1968

Record of informal discussions with the Management of Lakshmi Vishnu Mills, Sholapur, represented by:-

1. Mr. E.A. Dodwell, General Manager.
2. Mr. K.B. Dashrath, Labour Officer, Lakshmi Mills.
3. Mr. P.G. Punde, Labour Officer, Vishnu Mills.

1. The reason for the closure of a large number of mills in the Sholapur area was ignoring by management the good and bad times which alternate in textile industry. Bad spells are short but if these are not taken into account at the time when the going is good, management can come to grief.

2. Immediately after the Second War, a fair portion of war-effort was directed to peace time production in countries affected by War. This resulted in utilising War potential for peace time use. Modernisation of machinery in many areas including areas in Lancashire, Hong Kong and Japan was the result. These countries profited thereby. Their machinery became more efficient since they used war time technology.

3. In India also major textile centres were quick to realise this change but the mofussil and up-country mills were in difficulty. Changes were coming even in these upcountry mills but they were slow.

4. Upcountry labour is always somewhat less efficient than labour in centres like Bombay, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Coimbatore, Madras etc. There is also a high rate of absenteeism.

5. Another point why Sholapur had to suffer was that in the initial stages Sholapur was chosen for location because of cheap labour and cheap food and the cotton growing areas for the cloth produced in Sholapur were near. These advantages could be turned into profitable working in the pre-War days.

6. Since the War, the pattern of consumption has distinctly changed. There is in every area a desire for finer cloth. Sholapur mills which had a local market for coarse cloth suffered in the process because of change in taste. The local cotton which produces coarse counts cannot be used now without a mixture of finer varieties, all of which have to be transported from long distances and this makes working uneconomic.

7. Local taxation is also high.

8. All these difficulties have hit most of the managements but the prudent ones have been able to keep their heads above water.

9. Even a prudent management as represented by the Lakshmi Vishnu Mills has been running down its working capital. There has been some occasional assistance from the State Bank. But this cannot continue for long.

10. In the difficulties which led to closure of mills in the Sholapur area, labour has not been the contributory factor. By and large, Sholapur labour is willing and cooperative. It is the obsolete processes in the upcountry mills that have caused the trouble.

11. Because of the more efficient working in centres like Bombay and Ahmedabad it has been possible for those mills to sell cloth in the Sholapur area on competitive rates.

12. In 1958, as a result of difficulties experienced by the mills, dearness allowance was cut. This cut continued for 30 months and it was gradually restored later.

13. Workers thrown out by one mill as a result of their financial difficulties do not like to seek employment in mills which are running. They are considerably attached to their own mill and even to looms on which they work.

14. With the same conditions in the factory next-door, workers are not attracted to change their factory. They prefer retrenchment compensation and come back when the spell of retrenchment is over. They are taken back on work because there is shortage of skilled labour.

15. Handlooms and power-looms are now on the increase. There is a fair amount of exploitation by owners in both handlooms and powerlooms. In many cases, however, handlooms are worked by self-employed in their family units; in such cases the exploitation is by the middleman.

IV

Record of discussions with Dr. K.B. Antrolikar, a local leader in Sholapur.

1. The Provident Fund dues in Sholapur mills which are now in liquidation for years have yet to be settled by the Central Provident Fund Commissioner.

2. It is not quite clear whether the C.P.F. Organisation has collected the amount due from the employer. It is possible that the employer may have deducted the workers' contribution but may not have paid it to the Fund. This point requires to be ascertained.

3. A way should be found out to expedite liquidation proceedings. In any case the value of the property in the old mills is more than the debts which the mills have. Workers desire that this matter should be settled once for all. Though many of them are working at one place or the other, they have a feeling that their unit will open some day and they will get the jobs on which they were working.

4. Where two doctors are eligible for recognition as panel practitioners under the E.S.I. and they are working together, the E.S.I.C. should examine the possibility of designating both of them against the quota registered with one. If it is necessary the quota may even be increased. This will help patients in case the panel doctor is not on the spot. (This seems to be a reasonable suggestion).

V

Visit: to Kirloskar Foundry

1. The safety standards require improvement. In many cases molten metal was taken to some distance. This necessarily meant spilling of the metal on the floor. The metal had to be taken in hurry for being poured in the moulds because it had to be

poured hot. There is every risk of a worker injuring his foot because of the metal spilt on the floor. If accidents have not taken place, as the management said, it seems to be their good fortune.

2. Workers in this factory are mostly agriculture-based. Absenteeism is on the high side, particularly at a time when the agricultural season is on.
3. The factory appeared to be well arranged.
4. It manufactures spare parts required by Kirloskar enterprises elsewhere.
5. There is an expansion programme which is currently pushed through. This will help the employer with some measure of rationalisation.
6. Incentive Scheme in the unit is working well.
7. Workers do not appear to be organised.
8. Due to shortage of employment opportunities in the last eight years - closures plaguing the textile mills - labour is hesitant to get together.

VI

Visit to a Cooperative Spinning Mill outside Sholapur.

The Unit has been started only last year.

There is nothing much to comment.

VII

Visit to Bidi Factory

The Bidi Factory which was shown to me had much better working conditions than in the units seen at Kamptee near Nagpur. Most of the workers were women and they supplemented the earnings of the male members of the family. For them it is essentially a side-business. Most of the labour belongs to the neighbouring Andhra areas.

2. The reduction in earnings as a result of rejection of bidis prepared by workers was on the low side. Even in Kamptee the point of high rejection was not established. But in this unit even the complaint was not there.
3. Workers are not unionised, they appeared to be in good humour. Rates were better, and the working conditions not being unduly harsh, it was possible for them to earn better also.

VIII

Discussions with labour unions represented by:-

1. Mr Appasahet Brahandkar .. Hospital Kamgar Union
Nasik Kamgar Sangh.
2. Mr. V.T.Kulkarni .. Lal. Bavra Hatmoy Kamgar Union,
Sholapur.

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| 3. Mr. N.S. Mysore | .. Powerlooms Kamgar Union, Sholapur. |
| 4. Mr. D.S. Torane. | .. Sholapur City Electric Kamgar Sangh. |
| 5. Mr. C.P. Patil | .. Sholapur Bidi Kamgar Union. |
| 6. Mr. Madan Dahihande. | .. Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Union. |
| 7. Mr. V.R. Madur | .. Girani Kamgar Union, Sholapur. |
| 8. Mr. J.S. Bhoite | .. -do- |
| 9. Mr. J.S. Bhoite. | .. The City Bus Kamgar Union, Sholapur. |
| 10. Mr. E.S. Gadpalli | .. Girani Kamgar Union, Sholapur. |
| 11. Mr. Baba Kusrkar | .. Industrial Estate & Sholapur City Bus Kamgar Union. |
| 12. S/
Shri Vibhute, Kanthikar,
Markandeya & Baravar | .. Rashtriya Girani Kamgar Sangh. |
| 13. Mr. Ranshringare | .. Girani Kamgar Sabha |
| 14. Mr. Ramkrishna Ud'ta | .. Theatre Kamgar Sangh. |
| 15. Mr. Ughade | .. Bharatiya Republican Paksha. |

1. Shops and Commercial Establishments Act was administered in Sholapur by the Corporation. The Corporation has its own difficulties in administering the Act. This should be accepted as its responsibility by Government. Workers were reported to suffer because some corporators had interest in the inadequate implementation of the Act.

2. The power-loom units are splitting themselves into smaller ones to evade the labour laws.

3. In many cases the powers given to officers for enforcement of minimum wages are not utilised. A part of the difficulty in exercising the powers is that even in small matters Inspectors have to go to Government to get sanction for prosecution.

4. Victimization is rampant in bidi industry. There is no permanency there. (This point appears to be doubtful because in many units in bidi industry not only in Sholapur but elsewhere workers have been doing work over a long period). The point perhaps is that there are no special permanency benefits for such workers.

5. Victimization in small units is quite common. If a worker takes his complaint to the employer direct, the latter listens to the complaint and possibly gives some satisfaction to the worker. But if the same complaint goes to him through a union the person whose cause is voiced by the union becomes a suspect.

6. Deterrent punishment should be provided in the Act for breach of minimum wage provisions.

7. Where hospitals are run by any party except on the basis of charity or no-profit-no-loss, the hospital workers should be given the protection of labour laws.
8. There is delay in settlement of disputes and further delay in implementation when disputes are settled. A quick remedy will be the setting up of a machinery which should examine such complaints of non-implementation - Labour Court type - at important industrial centres.
9. A union should be declared representative on the basis of a secret ballot. Cases in industrial establishments where Government is the owner/part-owner are not referred to Industrial Tribunals, in case the machinery for the settlement of disputes at the earlier stage does not give satisfaction.
10. Electricity workers have no retrenchment benefit or any other retirement benefit.
11. Where a union has been declared representative, there should be an arrangement by which the agreement entered into by the union with the management is published for members and non-members of the union to comment on it.
12. In many units workers are required to give an assurance in advance that they will not join any union. This is a pernicious practice.
13. Officers who are in-charge of administration of labour laws should be brought under one authority.
14. There should be a merger of dearness allowance with the basic wage.
15. The restriction of 240 days attendance for securing the benefit of privilege leave should be done away with.

IX

Visited a farm in Sholapur area. Most of the farms which have facilities for secure water supply engage themselves in the production of sugarcane. Many such farms crush their sugarcane for conversion into gur. The cane crushed in this crude manner retains a good deal of juice. Extraction is reported to be of the order of only 60% as against the mechanical crushers which can extract upto 90% of the juice. The sugarcane so crushed with the juice content left in the cane is dried and used as a fuel in the preparation of gur. Even with this loss of the cane-juice, as to say, the business seems to be quite profitable. The farmer with whom the economics of gur preparation was discussed was not averse to sending his cane to the sugar factory. But the difficulty was mainly of transport. Any cane transported beyond 40 miles for being crushed in sugar factory becomes uneconomical at the present rate given by the sugar mills to the cane-growers. The farmer had a seed-farm of his own and was trying out the seed which he raised for cultivation over a wider area. He found this to be a profitable business. He had to engage labour in peak season at almost more than factory rates. But he had no complaint on that score. Most of his family members could find work all the year round. This is because of irrigation facilities. Gur fetched good price. The economics of Gur in these days of high sugar prices was not disadvantageous to the farmer - in fact he was really better off by denying to

sell cane to the factories. He explained the advantages of hybrid jowar in terms of yields. Actually if this idea of hybrids spreads faster our dependence on foreign food will end sooner than anticipated even taking into account the adverse population factor. Agriculturist is not averse to using new techniques if he sees for himself the advantages of it. Agricultural labour has made strikes in recent years but the prices are so adverse that he does not feel that he has improved, and in all such cases the feeling is important. On many occasions he would dictate his terms. He has not yet known the advantages of organising himself; in some other areas he may have. /better organisation /His means that agricultural produce will be more expensive and public may have to pay more.

(RAJKOT)

29-1-1968

X

Visited Rajkot Spinning and Weaving Mills.

(i) This is an old mill. The working conditions appear to be somewhat difficult. Many workers who were interviewed had large families. Some of them had their relatives also working in the mill. While two persons in a family finding employment in the same unit was common, there were cases of some who had as many as four dependents working in the plant. In many cases workers had their family members one or two of them employed outside the mill. Most of the jobbers had educated their sons and daughters. One had sent his son to the U.S.A. not out of his own funds but funds which he could raise on the basis of his stability and his son's intelligence. Another worker's son had completed the medical course and was working in a hospital as a doctor. Workers in the plant were organised by an INTUC Union which had a representative status. With the cooperation of this union, the mills have been operating with a fair measure of industrial peace. Three workers belonging to the Mill have been elected as Members of Rajkot Municipality. The pattern of operation of the union from the accounts received from union workers was the same as that in the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad.

(ii) A complaint voiced by a fair section of workers was about the lack of attention paid to them by the union. Many of these workers are not union members; some of them were enlisted by other federations in the area. /Such complaints which have some truth in them but which result out of frustration in workers at not being able to upset an established union with which they do not agree, conditions in every section of the plant came in for a good bit of criticism.

/Apart
from

(iii) One complaint which appeared to be real even according to the representatives of the management was the lapsing of ration quota if workers were unable to purchase rations before the end of the month. The management had already approached the authorities in this regard but the response so far has been inadequate.

(iv) On the workers' side, it was stated, that such difficulties arose because the management had not been able to pay advances against workers' dues in time. Usually advances are made in the last week of the month but on occasions delays occur and workers have to suffer. Dates are not fixed for such payment and cases did occur when even the dates so fixed have not been kept by the employer. These difficulties have been on the increase because workers who were, at one time, getting commodities on credit are no longer able to do so.

(v) On the whole the impression which was created by visiting the mill was not happy. Working conditions were poor, machinery appeared to be old and ill-kept. This was the position in winter, in summer and rainy seasons the position could be worse. When union leaders were asked about this, their reaction was that the day-to-day problems of keeping labour managements on even keel absorbed their energies so much that it was difficult for them to persuade the management to look into these matters. Also workers are now used to work in this environment and not many complaints come to the union office about this.

XI

Visit to Patel Mavji Kanji

(i) This is an establishment which manufactures oil engines for use in agriculture. The unit was started with a small complement of 5 workers/pre-war days. During the war there was no expansion. It continued to work more or less on the same basis kept alive, so to say, upto about 1946. As against that complement the unit now engages nearly 4,000 workers and has a plan for another expansion. Over all these years the factory has expanded on its own in the sense that much of what it earned has been re-invested in the plant itself. It has been doubling its capacity almost every three years.

(ii) The demand of oil engines in Gujarat has been particularly heavy. In Rajkot itself a large number of units are engaged in this manufacture. The real profits of the units were not disclosed but briefly the impression one got was that -

- (a) Patel Mavji Kanji was a manufacturing unit under one member of a family;
- (b) It has a selling agency, the contractors for which are near relatives of the family;
- (c) Through this agency the product is sold to Batlibhoj and Co., Bombay, who are the wholesalers for the concern. (Why the selling agency has been introduced as an intermediary was not explained).
- (d) The cost of^a machine produced is about 2,500 rupees. It has an I.S.I. Mark. Machines of similar specifications but without the I.S.I. Mark are sold in the region at a rate of Rs. 1,200 only;
- (e) This is not because of out throat competition in which the whole engine manufacturers in Rajkot enter. It seems that even at Rs. 1,100 there is a small margin of profit. Assuming in building a machine which has to pass an ISI standard some more expenditure is involved, the margin between 1,100 plus this extra expenditure and the selling cost of 2,500 is substantial;
- (f) This is what probably explains the rapid strides which Patel Mavji Kanji have taken for the last twenty years. There can be no doubt that management is prudent;
- (g) The import component of this produce is negligible. Only the fuel injection jet is required to be imported. The products of this unit have a fair reputation in the Saurashtra market.

XII

Prototype Training Centre:

- (i) This has two wings - one for training and the other for production. The unit has been built up for practical training.
- (ii) The overheads seem to be comparatively large. There are about 150 trainees and 100 production workers and for this complement of 250, the supervisors and trainers number about 150.
- (iii) The work done appeared to be of a high order. The students admitted for training are drawn from boys who have completed their ITI Training and have about one year's plant experience.
- (iv) The ITI has recognised that the training provided is an improved type of training but no certificate has been prescribed. The Prototype Training Centre has no system of giving Certificates either.
- (v) So far the absence of certificates after the training in P.T.C. is completed has not caused any hardship.
- (vi) From the record of employment which was taken by the boys after completing their education in the P.T.C. it appeared that boys trained were employed in the same unit and in different scales (time scales). The range seemed to be too wide. even for those who were almost in the same age group. No explanation is available from the management of P.T.C.
- (vii) The training given in the P.T.C. appears to be thorough. The employment opportunities however, such as are available, do not yield adequate income. The general impression was that the staff in the P.T.C. was under-utilised.
- (viii) It was reported that beyond the area covered by the P.T.C. some acres of land acquired for P.T.C. will be utilised by Centre for housing the staff of the P.T.C. In view of (ii) & (vii) above expenditure on housing the staff is likely to increase overheads still further.

XIII

Rajkot Milk Processing Unit:

- (i) The unit has been set up with UNICEF collaboration.
- (ii) Working conditions appear to be excellent. It is a new unit built up to process about 34,000 of litres of milk per day but the present production is only 25,000 litres. The unit, therefore, is running at a loss.
- (iii) Since it is a Government concern and since the price at which it has to buy milk from the producers and also the price for which it has to sell it to the customers are both fixed, the loss incurred by the unit is almost a subsidy from Government to Rajkot Municipality.
- (iv) The loss arises mainly because in the summer months even 25,000 litres of milk is not available for processing.

(v) In Gujarat all such activities have to stand comparison with the 'Amul' products which on all accounts is reported to be a success. When asked whether this Government unit will reach Amul standards, the Director merely shrugged his shoulders and said "if we are allowed the same free hand which Amul has in all aspects of its business".

XIV

Visit to Welfare Centre set up at Rajkot by the Government of Gujarat.

1. The Centre is run in a place provided for it in the colony built by Gujarat Housing Board. The Colony was neat but not clean. Much work could be done to improve cleanliness in the colony but the tenants do not appear to be making any effort in this direction. They depend on the Government or the Municipality to see that the place is cleaned up. On their own, they appear to be indifferent about their environments. Most of the workers who were in these tenements had large families. This phenomenon and what has been observed in the note on Rajkot mills is somewhat disturbing.

2. Reading habits in the Welfare Centre also appeared to be poor. On an average, according to the register maintained, four books were issued to readers every day. And the issue of books is on three days in a week. This means that in a colony where there are about 100 tenements only 12 books are issued per week.

XV

Visit to Montessori School.

Montessori School conducted by the Welfare Board had about 50 students. All the material in the School was neatly arranged. Boys and girls remained in the School for about five hours and were provided snacks during School hours. The cost of the snacks had to be subsidised. This element of subsidy has to continue in order to retain the children in School. This point is not understandable because the persons staying in the colony were otherwise well off. Since the visit was announced earlier, it is possible that the School was dressed up for the occasion. But even allowing for this, the work inspected appeared to be good.

(PORBANDAR)

30-1-1968

XVI

Visit to a Bidi Factory.

On the way we stopped at a place called Kutiana and watched a Bidi factory. The unit was well organised for production. It was clean and well laid out. Some young boys were also at work. They were reported to do odd jobs. Workers were paid at about Rs. 3.50 per thousand bidis - a fairly high rate for a rural area. The rejection rate was also negligible. Most of the workers were muslims. On the whole, workers appeared to be satisfied with this rate of production and the rate of earnings. They have no organisation; nor do they want to have one.

XVII

The date happened to coincide with Gandhiji's martyrdom. After paying respects to the father of the Nation at the house where he was born we went to some places of interest including a workers' colony. Porbandar as a place looked clean.

Mr. Vaju Bhai Shukla, a veteran trade union leader met us. The points made were:

- A: (i) Contract labour is in abundance in the industrial units in Porbandar;
- (ii) Some units which engaged regular workers have now started getting some of their work done through contractors. For instance, the painting job and project work in Saurashtra Chemicals have been given over to contractors recently. The contract workers do not get any dearness allowance.
- (iii) They cannot use the canteen facilities either.
- (iv) His experience was that there were no special complaints about workers' efficiency in the Saurashtra area.
- (v) Some managements do respond to the complaints made by workers but by and large the picture is one of indifference.
- (vi) Workers could be said to have improved their position in the last twenty years but they had to go a long way yet.
- B: (i) The Saurashtra Chemicals has about 1,200 employees.
- (ii) They have no canteen facilities.
- (iii) Sickness and casual leave given to them is less than what is available in similar units in Saurashtra; one at Mithapur and the other at Dhrangara.
- (iv) Interim award of the Chemical Wage Board has not been implemented by the Factory in case of persons engaged in Salt Department. The reason is that the salt workers were a separate wing of the establishment, and their case will be considered later. (In other units in Saurashtra this discrimination is not practised.)
- (v) Workers to whom interim award is to be denied are deliberately transferred to Salt Department and made to work elsewhere.
- (vi) Complaints have not been made to the Government Labour Officer because the recommendations of the Labour Officer are not respected by the management.
- (vii) There are no gradations of work in the factory; and no conveyance allowance is provided to workers who have to go a long distance.

(viii) Workers engaged in duties on the out-posts are not provided with a helper. Such help is particularly needed in cases where they have to work on electric installations.

C: (i) About working conditions in A.C.C. which is a new unit, there were no special complaints except that there was a fatal accident recently in that factory. The cause of the accident was being investigated. Certain suggestions were made to avoid such accidents in future and these suggestions have not yet been implemented.

(ii) There are some cases of victimisation of union workers.

XVIII

Discussions with Mr. Birla in Saurashtra Chemicals:

(i) Some of the points which were mentioned by Mr. Vaju Bhai Shukla were checked up with the management. Many of the points were not refuted in Saurashtra Chemicals.

(ii) The canteen maintenance was really poor.

(iii) The management had its own difficulties about making the unit more efficient. When the Manager mentioned various factors which are acting as impediments to efficiency, a question was asked as to why a unit was set up here at all, to which the answer was not satisfactory.

(iv) By and large Saurashtra labour is not difficult to handle.

(v) In Chemical industries, wage costs do not account for much.

(vi) Labour is not a factor which is taken into account in locating an industry.

XIX

Visited the A.C.C. Unit. Working conditions appeared to be satisfactory, particularly because this is one of the new units which has been commissioned. Most of the machinery was manufactured in this country. The canteen facilities were up-to-date. The point mentioned by the union about the accident was checked up with the management. It seems the management had placed an order for getting the equipment which was recommended in the report on the fatal accident. The equipment had not yet arrived and that is why there has been a delay in installation.

VERAVAL

31-1-1968

XX

Visited the khandsari Unit about 25 miles away from Veraval. Conditions of work were primitive. So were the conditions of living of the workers. Setting up a khandsari unit in Saurashtra has been a new experiment with the proprietor. He had, what he called, a khandsari manufacturer in U.P. and the collaborator had brought the workers from there. Most of the workers, about 100 of them, were staying in huts roundabout the factory. Some were using the factory premises itself outside the working hours. On the whole, the atmosphere appeared to be depressing. There was a risk of accident at every place in the unit.

Some data on the working of the unit were collected. My interpretation of them which was discussed with the owner showed a very high margin of profit. In fact, all the capital which the proprietor had sunk in the unit would be recovered in the first year itself and even more. The Unit was even not registered as a factory. The Factory Inspector who was with us was requested to take note of it.

XXI

Visited a Cooperative Society engaged in fishing. The Unit showed what can be achieved by an enthusiastic officer who has been able to work for the Society over the last 12 years. Under his leadership, the cooperative has gone from strength to strength and it is now in a position to secure a better deal for fishermen from the merchants who used to buy their catch. The cooperative has also expanded into three other areas: (i) training fishermen's children in their traditional occupation (ii) building of country-craft with motors fitted and, (iii) setting up a small unit for extracting shark liver oil.

XXII

Visited the Indian Rayon Unit. This unit was purchased by Birlas from Mr. Morarji Vaidya about two years back. This was because the latter found it difficult to run the unit. After the unit was taken over by Birlas, there was a fire in the unit. Traces of it were still noticeable. As compared to Rayon units this one appeared to be in a very bad shape. The General Manager of the unit was with us and accepted this assessment.

2. Some workers who had been dismissed by the management as a result of enquiries against them for the fire which took place in the factory in May 1967 met me. They had a long list of complaints. It was, however, noticed that the complaints had not been taken up with the local officers. Neither the Factory Inspector of the locality nor the Government Labour Officer nor the Assistant Labour Commissioner posted at Rajkot were approached in this matter. The workers' reason for not approaching them was that such an approach would not have any effect because the management will not respect the officers' advice. It was mentioned to the workers that arising out of their complaints, if there was any general point which the Commission should take note of, they should send a memorandum to the Commission. They agreed to do so.