

have been incorporated in the report, others have been rejected as impracticable. In this connection the Committee refers more particularly to four proposals which it regards in the existing circumstances of the country as uneconomic, and therefore foredoomed to failure.

- (1) The proposal to standardise wages in the rural areas;
- (2) The proposal to resort to forced labour in any shape or form;
- (3) The proposal to prohibit the migration of indigenous natives to neighbouring territories;
- (4) The proposal to remit the tax payable by natives in the employment of Europeans.

The Committee states that it is not by the adoption of any such arbitrary measures that a remedy can be found for the existing native labour shortage. On the contrary the Committee has endeavoured to take into account the actually existing conditions and the proposals which they have put forward, and "have had for their aim the effective development of a policy of order and goodwill, directed in detail to the progressive improvement of conditions of life in the Native Reserves and to the progressive improvement and expansion of the supply of native labour throughout the country."

Agricultural "Wage Movements" and Strikes in Germany

In its latest report¹, which covers the years 1923 to 1925, the German Union of Agricultural Workers (*Deutscher Landarbeiter-Verband*, Social-Democratic) has given the history of efforts to improve the position of land workers in Germany by the help of "wage movements" and strikes².

In 1923, the last inflation year and the year of by far the most violent fluctuations of the currency, the Union was obliged to concentrate more definitely than ever before on efforts to get wages to keep pace with the constantly declining value of money. To do this proved impossible; the difficulties could only be overcome in part. When stabilisation took place towards the end of 1923 there was therefore a big work waiting, to procure "wage rates which should correspond

¹ DEUTSCHER LANDARBEITER-VERBAND: *Bericht der Verbandsvorstandes über die Verbandsarbeit in den Jahren 1923 bis 1925; Niederschrift von der 4. Generalversammlung des Deutschen Landarbeitervverbandes, 15. bis 18. März 1926.* Schriften des Deutschen Landarbeitervverbandes, No. 17. Berlin, 1926, 183 pp. Cf. in particular pp. 27-35. Of the other interesting information contained in this report reference may specially be made to the very detailed chapter on wages and working hours in German agriculture and forestry.

² The term "wage movement" (*Lohnbewegung*) is used to cover any initiative, from the side either of employers' or of workers' organisations, tending to modify labour conditions; e.g. a movement to obtain shorter hours of work, even if no change in wages is contemplated.

to the changed conditions". Though the Union does not consider this purpose yet accomplished, the consequence of more stable economic conditions has been a constant decrease in the number of wage movements, and especially of strikes, during the period reported on.

Statistics of wage movements and strikes and of the causes of wage movements from 1923 to 1925 are given below in tables I and II.

TABLE I. WAGE MOVEMENTS AND STRIKES, 1923-1925

Year	Wage movements not involving a stoppage of work			Strikes		
	Number	Undertakings concerned	Workers concerned	Number	Undertakings concerned	Workers concerned
1923	3,022	239,079	1,714,993	12	36,814	281,714
1924	492	277,798	2,371,719	9	2,227	24,319
1925	345	196,295	1,711,439	3	393	4,681

TABLE II. CAUSE OF WAGE MOVEMENTS, 1923-1925

Year	Demands of workers				Demands of employers			
	Shorter hours	Higher wages	Shorter hours and higher wages	Other demands	Longer hours	Lower wages	Longer hours and lower wages	Other demands
1923	184	2,189	634	15	—	—	—	—
1924	—	—	490	—	—	1	—	1
1925	2	248	7	61	—	2	10	15

In 1924 41 per cent., and in 1925 47 per cent., of the disputes were settled with the help of conciliation machinery; the remainder were settled by direct negotiations between employers and workers or their organisations.

TABLE III. METHODS OF SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES, 1924 and 1925

Year	Total wage movements	Direct negotiation between		Conciliation machinery
		Employers and workers	Employers' and workers' organisations	
1924	492	21	270	201
1925	345	2	182	161

The advantages obtained by the workers by means of wage movements are shown in table IV.

TABLE IV. RESULTS OF WAGE MOVEMENTS, 1924 AND 1925

Year	Shorter hours		Higher wages					
	Workers affected	Total weekly reduction	Men		Women		Total	
			Workers affected	Total weekly increase	Workers affected	Total weekly increase	Workers affected	Total weekly increase
		Hrs.		Mks.		Mks.		Mks.
1924	55,000	70,500	1,307,296	2,262,639	1,044,436	1,807,678	2,351,732	4,070,317
1925	202,973	11,603	860,051	1,707,338	719,126	110,965	1,579,177	1,818,303

In addition to the results shown in this table the report states that in 1925 the Union succeeded in preventing prolongations of working hours amounting to 486,000 hours per week for 131,000 persons and reductions of wages amounting to a weekly total of 149,000 marks for 132,000 persons.

The number of workers affected is more than ten times the average membership of the Union. It is especially interesting to see the number of women workers who have been affected by the wage movements undertaken by the Union, although, at the end of 1925, of 167,000 members only 32,000 were women.

The biggest strike during the whole period was the Silesian strike in the spring of 1923, to be attributed to the currency conditions noted above. Towards the end of May 1923 discussions were held between workers and employers in agriculture in the province of Silesia, where agricultural wages have always been the lowest. The discussions, however, did not give satisfactory results to the workers and a strike therefore began in various districts without the authorisation of the Union. On 6 June 1923 about 50,000 agricultural workers in 17 districts were on strike. The organisation, finding itself powerless to oppose the strike, took the lead of the movement and, as continued negotiations with the employers gave no results, declared a general strike for all Silesian land workers. On 14 June 90,000 workers were taking

part in the strike ; later, the employers stated the number of strikers to be 120,000.

It was not possible to give the strikers much financial support. In spite of this, however, the strike lasted four weeks ; then the arbitration award given under the chairmanship of a representative of the Federal Ministry of Labour finished the strike. The report expresses the opinion that " the strike was not lost ". This opinion is based on the fact that an addendum to the existing collective agreement was obtained, giving some advantages to the workers, and also on the fact that during the progress of the strike the employers granted the workers wage increases on three occasions. It would have been impossible under the changing economic conditions of those days to sum up a profit and loss balance for such a struggle.

The report itself calls this strike a " disorderly " strike (*ein wilder Streik*), one of the childish ailments of the organisation of land workers. In East Prussia also some " disorderly " strikes took place in 1923, caused by low wages and the demand of the employers for longer working hours without additional compensation. These strikes were followed by a big strike in 1924. During the negotiations at the beginning of this year the employers demanded a prolongation of 130 hours to the annual number of working hours as settled by collective agreement¹, and also a reduction of the wages paid in kind. Again, as in the previous year in Silesia, the workers went on strike without the authorisation of the Union, and this organisation once more found itself forced to place itself at the head of a movement it had not originated. This fight, too, was terminated by an arbitral award ; the collective agreement made between the employers and the Christian Land Workers' Union (*Zentralverband der Landarbeiter*), which had accepted the demands of the employers as described above, was declared binding for the Social-Democratic Union of Agricultural Workers. The report here stresses the importance of getting the two Unions to act together for their common interests.

In Saxony several local strikes took place during the years 1924 and 1925, and nearly always brought advantages to the workers. The organisation of agricultural employers in this State has lately affiliated to the Collective Agreements Board (*Tarifgemeinschaft*) for Mid-Germany.

¹ Within the terms of the Provisional Federal Agricultural Labour Code of 1919.