

REPORTS AND ENQUIRIES

The Second Session of the Permanent Agricultural Committee

The Permanent Agricultural Committee, which is an advisory body of the International Labour Organisation, held its second session in Geneva from 4 to 9 August 1947, under the chairmanship of Professor Lowry Nelson of the University of Minnesota (United States).¹ The vice-chairman was Mr. Francis Bouchar, Honorary President of the French General Confederation of Agriculture, and members of the Committee included representatives of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, representatives of the United Nations and of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, representatives of international agricultural organisations, and experts from all five continents. The Committee reviewed generally, in the light of the changes that have occurred and the progress made during the second World War and the immediate post-war period, questions relating to agricultural work and, in particular, the problems of security of employment and occupation in agriculture and the raising of the living standards of agricultural populations.

The following article, while not attempting to give a full account of the proceedings of this session of the Committee, gives the main features of the Committee's discussions and summarises the main points of the report that was unanimously adopted at the end of the session.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From its very early days the International Labour Organisation has been interested in the social and economic problems connected with the living and working conditions of agricultural workers. In its work in this field the Organisation has kept in close touch with other international bodies and has concentrated its own effort mainly on the human problems involved. In giving special attention to agricultural labour, it has aimed at assuring the widest practicable application to farm workers of the protective measures enjoyed by

¹ The Committee was set up by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office in November 1936, and held its first session at Geneva in 1938. See *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 6, June 1938, p. 697.

industrial workers, and so reducing the disparity in working conditions between the two main branches of economic activity. It has, however, kept in view the fact that the question is one of adaptation rather than of mere transposition of the industrial problem to agriculture, and that this adaptation involves some important differentiations in the treatment of industrial and agricultural problems.

This accounts for the somewhat slower pace that has marked the consideration of agricultural problems by the International Labour Conference during recent years. It should nevertheless be pointed out that a number of questions relating to agriculture have been discussed by the International Labour Conference and that a series of Conventions and Recommendations has been adopted concerning such questions as the freedom of association and combination of agricultural workers, protection of women and children in agriculture, night work by women and children, protection of women in agriculture before and after childbirth, the living-in conditions of agricultural workers, vocational education, unemployment, and protection against the consequences of accidents, sickness, invalidity and old age. Other important questions which the Conference has not yet examined from the agricultural point of view have been the subject of research and study by the International Labour Office.

The International Labour Organisation has constantly kept in view the special difficulties inherent in the international treatment of the social problems of the countryside and has taken into account the fact that, unlike the industrial population which may be mainly divided into employers and wage-earners, the agricultural community presents many intermediate categories between the great landowner and the agricultural day-labourer; and also that the economic and social conditions of various categories of agricultural workers (e.g. farm labourers, settlers, share-croppers, tenant farmers and small owners) are affected by the same factors. Consequently, it has not confined its interest to the agricultural wage-earner alone but has extended it to all who work on the land whatever their legal relationship to it.

The efforts of the International Labour Office to secure the co-operation of agricultural organisations had as their first result the setting up of a mixed committee of the Office and the International Institute of Agriculture, on which the collaboration of agricultural employers and workers and of other classes of the agricultural population was obtained through the participation of individual agricultural experts.

The Mixed Advisory Agricultural Committee met in eight regular sessions before the outbreak of war, and its work proved to be most valuable. In the course of time, however, it became apparent that the nature of this Committee as a liaison body between two international institutions prevented it from acting as an advisory committee proper to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office. The need for a permanent expert committee to facilitate the study of agricultural labour problems proved steadily greater. At its 19th Session the International Labour Conference therefore requested the Governing Body to set up a Permanent Agricultural Committee including representatives of the Governing Body, the International Institute of Agriculture and competent international bodies as well as persons qualified to represent all classes engaged in agriculture.

This Committee, which was to act as "the body responsible for collaboration and consultation with a view to facilitating the decisions of the Governing Body and developing the work of the Conference in connection with agricultural labour", held its first session in February 1938. It then undertook a general discussion of the question of the standard of living of agricultural workers and problems of agricultural labour with a view to determining their relative importance, with special reference to the protection of child labour, holidays with pay and hours of work in agriculture.

The second session of the Permanent Agricultural Committee, scheduled for 1939, had to be postponed owing to the outbreak of war. In its place, since the Office was anxious to ensure the continuity of the Committee's work, a meeting of those of its members who were available on the American continent was held at Havana in November 1939.¹ The aim of this meeting was to examine the American aspects of some important problems relating to agricultural work. Such an analysis, it was felt, would not only facilitate the work of the Permanent Agricultural Committee when it was able to meet again, but might also contribute to future social progress in agriculture on the American continent. At this meeting the Committee discussed the possible effects of war on the welfare and standard of living of agricultural populations and the extension of social insurance to rural workers.

The conclusions reached at the first session and at the Havana meeting were of great assistance in directing the work of the second session, which was not able to meet until several years later. By reason of circumstances arising from the war, it was not in fact possible to hold any further regular, or even partial, session of the Permanent Agricultural Committee; but as soon as hostilities ceased, it became necessary to reconstitute the Committee not only in view of the work of the International Labour Organisation itself, but also to enable the Organisation to collaborate effectively on agricultural matters with other specialised agencies.

Taking account of all the circumstances, the Governing Body found it inappropriate to take long-range decisions immediately as to the composition of the Committee, and decided instead to reconstitute it on a transitional basis with a membership composed of representatives of the three groups of the Governing Body, experts from national administrations, employers' agricultural organisations, workers' agricultural organisations, universities and the Agricultural Co-operative Movement, and representatives of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, together with *ad hoc* members invited to attend certain meetings of the Committee.

AGENDA OF THE SESSION

The Office, taking account of the discussions of the first session in 1938 and the Havana meeting in 1939, had prepared documents covering the proposed agenda and had made efforts to collect as much information as possible on recent tendencies during and since

¹ Cf. "Meeting of the American Members of the Permanent Agricultural Committee", *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLI, No. 3, Mar. 1940, pp. 269-276.

the second World War. This preparatory work made it possible to set limits to the discussions of the second session by specifying the questions to be placed on the agenda and by providing members of the Committee with a basis for discussion of the following items:

1. General survey of developments since the first session and discussion of the order of priority for consideration by the Committee of problems of agricultural labour.
2. Minimum wage regulation in agriculture.
3. Medical examination of children and young persons for fitness for employment in agriculture.
4. Security of employment and occupation in agriculture (preliminary discussion).

MAIN FEATURES OF THE GENERAL DISCUSSION

The general discussion was opened on the basis of the documents prepared by the Office; these showed clearly that in nearly all countries the living conditions of agricultural workers presented many difficult problems which should be solved with the least possible delay in order to avoid an "agricultural crisis" in the near future which might threaten the balance of world economy. In the course of the discussion each member of the Committee described the special aspects of agricultural problems in his own country or region. Details of all the ideas which were mentioned cannot be given here, but certain basic ideas were shared by all speakers. Firstly, the experts all emphasised that although the application of measures to protect agricultural workers often proves difficult in practice, it is none the less an essential step if further advances are to be made towards social progress in every country. At the same time they pointed out that living and working conditions vary from country to country and that it is therefore necessary that any international regulations should allow great flexibility in their application in each country.

The Chinese and Indian experts, among others, emphasised that conditions in agriculture in their countries are very different from those in other parts of the world. Farm units there are generally small and fragmented and labour efficiency low. There is great pressure of population on the land and wages are therefore low; in India the productivity of the land is also poor. In these countries agriculture cannot support the number working on the land and it is essential to raise their standard of living, a result which can be achieved by improvement of crops, use of fertilisers, extension of irrigation, adoption of up-to-date farm equipment, and credit and marketing facilities, all of which should be supplemented by a rapid industrialisation programme to absorb the surplus population from the land. It was pointed out that in China 80 per cent. of the population, in Egypt 75 per cent., and in India 70 per cent. is dependent for subsistence on cultivation of the land, and it would therefore be impossible to ensure agricultural prosperity unless measures were taken to reduce to an optimum level the number of workers living on the land.

On the other hand, there are many countries which are highly industrialised and where there is a drift of population from the

country to the towns, as in certain European countries. The problem in such cases is to keep workers on the land by improving their living conditions, and in certain cases to assist an influx of foreign workers. But whether it is a case of absorbing a surplus of agricultural labour into other branches of industry or, in the opposite case, of remedying a shortage of agricultural manpower, the essential aim is in each case the same: to establish a satisfactory balance between industry and agriculture and ensure sufficient agricultural production to meet the requirements of an economy of plenty and provide adequate food supplies for the world population.

The Committee next considered the problem of wages and drew attention to the relation between the profitability of agriculture and the level of wages paid to farm workers, and expressed the view that the income of farmers was a major determinant of the standard of living of all engaged in agriculture.

Some speakers referred to the case of certain countries where a combined system of guaranteed prices and markets to farmers and guaranteed minimum wages for agricultural workers had given very satisfactory results. At the same time, the Committee agreed with the view of the Mexican expert, who insisted that in the interests of the whole population the agricultural worker should be assured of a minimum basic wage sufficient for the essential needs of himself and his family, even in the absence of guaranteed prices.

Finally, the Egyptian, French, Mexican and Polish experts expressed the view that a system of social security together with agrarian reforms to allow agricultural workers to acquire ownership of the land under certain specified conditions were essential for the maintenance of satisfactory living conditions in agriculture.

This exchange of views cleared the way for the discussion of the agenda proposed by the Office.

PROBLEMS OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR

Holidays with Pay.

The report prepared by the Office on holidays with pay recalled the discussions on this question which had previously taken place in the International Labour Conference at its 1935 session and the decisions taken at the first session of the Permanent Agricultural Committee in 1938.¹ It then drew attention to the special aspects of holidays with pay in agriculture, such as the established custom in certain countries according to which several days' holiday was granted each year to agricultural workers on the occasion of a national festival or at the end of the main harvest, such as the wheat or wine harvest. The Office report finally gave an outline of legislation at present in force in more than twenty countries, referring to various measures concerning the right to holidays with pay, their length, the time of year, compensation paid, and the question of payment for work done during the holiday period. These outlines showed that holidays with pay are given, by right or in fact, in a large number of countries. The Committee, after taking note of and discussing the report, considered that the time was ripe for placing this question on the agenda of a forthcoming session of the International Labour Conference.

¹ Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 6, June 1938, p. 697.

Hours of Work.

The question of hours of work had already been brought before the International Labour Conference but its complexity had at the time prevented the taking of any decision. The Office has meanwhile continued its study of the question and has endeavoured to analyse the factors directly influencing hours of work in agriculture and to show that some of them can be controlled by the will of man. It is in fact not true to say that hours of work depend solely on climate and weather. Though the importance of these factors cannot be ruled out, there are nevertheless others which can be controlled by man, such as the size of the farm, its technical organisation, and the type of crop. On a small mixed farm worked by a single family the working day will always be long. On a large-scale, well-equipped, single-crop farm, it will be easier to shorten working hours. In areas where the labour supply is good, the working day will tend to be shorter, and where the supply of seasonal labour is plentiful, the working day for permanent workers need not be increased at times when work is heavy.

The Committee had discussed this problem at its first session, and was of the opinion that further study should be made so that the question might be brought before the International Labour Conference. The Office considered that there had been several new developments since that time and that these should be brought to the notice of the Committee before any proposed regulations were discussed. Although it had not been mentioned as a special item on the agenda of the second session, the question of working hours was debated in the general discussion on problems of agricultural work, and as a result of this discussion the Committee recommended the Governing Body to instruct the Office to present a final study relating to the form of the regulations and their scope, limitation of normal hours of work, extension of hours of work and determination of the number of normal hours of work. This study should prepare the way for the consideration of international regulations on working hours in agriculture, which the Committee considered essential in the general interests of agriculture.

Social Security.

The problem of social security had previously been studied by the Office with a view to extending the application of certain standards to agriculture, and in 1921 the International Labour Conference adopted a Convention on accident compensation¹ and a Recommendation concerning systems of insurance in agriculture against sickness, invalidity and old age.² The Havana meeting in 1939 took up the work done by the Office for the second session of the Permanent Agricultural Committee which was scheduled to take place that year but could not be held owing to the war, and considered that it was essential that the study of this question should be carried a stage further so that a social insurance system might be brought into operation at the earliest possible moment.

¹ Cf. International Labour Conference, *Conventions and Recommendations, 1919-1937* (I.L.O., Geneva, 1937), p. 61.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

In the light of these decisions the Office submitted this question to the second session of the Committee, which decided that it should be further discussed at its next meeting. The Committee also indicated that the studies to be undertaken should include systems of family allowances and methods for protecting the agricultural worker against the special risks liable to deprive him of his livelihood, such as insurance against hail, fire, death of livestock, and so on.

Vocational Education.

Considering that increased productive capacity is necessary for maintaining a high standard of living among workers on the land, the Committee was of the opinion that vocational education should be organised on an adequate scale to improve the skill and efficiency of agricultural workers. The Office was asked to continue its study of this question so that it might be placed on the agenda of the Committee at one of its coming sessions.

MINIMUM WAGE REGULATION IN AGRICULTURE

The question of minimum wage regulation in agriculture undoubtedly calls for the most careful consideration. At its first session in 1938 and at the Havana meeting in 1939, preliminary discussions were undertaken and it was decided that the Office should continue its study of the question so that a forthcoming session of the Committee might submit a resolution to the Governing Body asking them to examine the advisability of placing this question on the agenda of an early session of the International Labour Conference. The studies carried out by the Office in the light of these debates showed that considerable progress had been achieved since the first session and that wages were already regulated in a large number of countries. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the various factors which have an undoubted influence on this matter: for example, the profitability of agriculture plays an important part in determining the level of wages and thus the standard of living of the wage-earners. In countries affected by the rural exodus, the maintenance of high wages is almost automatic, while in countries where pressure of population on the land is high and productivity is low, it is difficult to pay adequate wages. On the other hand, it was pointed out that it is in the interests of agriculture itself as well as of the whole population that a basic minimum wage should be assured, sufficient to provide for the vital needs of the farm worker and his family, even in the absence of any guaranteed selling price for farm produce.

The consensus of opinion in the Committee was in favour of asking the Governing Body to place this question on the agenda of an early session of the International Labour Conference, but it was emphasised that methods of fixing minimum wages must be left to the discretion of the various States. It is not in fact possible to lay down any particular form of regulation. The conclusion of collective agreements, for example, presupposes the organisation of employers and of workers, but this has so far not been achieved in many countries, yet it is in those countries where agriculture is not organised on a trade union basis that there is most need for the

protection of wages. However, to impose State intervention would be incompatible with systems already developed in a number of other countries. For these reasons, the resolution adopted by the Committee specifies that wages may be fixed by voluntary agreement if possible or State intervention where necessary or by a combination of both methods. Finally, it is of interest to note that in spite of difficulties in applying regulations to fix minimum wages, the members of the Committee were unanimously in favour of everything possible being done to ensure the essential minimum to every agricultural worker.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS FOR FITNESS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE

The Committee noted that although it was desirable to fix standards in this matter, the question is closely bound up with other problems relating to the employment of young workers in agriculture, especially the regulation and control of admission to employment and the organisation in rural areas of health services with qualified staffs. The Committee therefore suggested that the Governing Body should instruct the Office to make a further study of these problems, taking into account the legislation and the situation existing in the various countries, with a view to determining whether the moment has come to fix international standards in the matter of medical examination of children and young persons employed in agriculture, and what these standards should be.

SECURITY OF EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION

It had not been the intention of the Committee to undertake a detailed examination of this question, and in the report prepared by the Office it was pointed out that this was only a preliminary discussion to bring out the more important points on which the Office should concentrate its study. Certain aspects of the problem were of interest to other specialised institutions and the discussion should therefore serve as a basis for collaboration with these institutions. Members of the Committee were agreed that consideration should be given to the problems of all persons concerned with work in agriculture; it was pointed out that only a relatively small percentage of the working population on the land consists of wage-earners, as the larger proportion of those producing food and other agricultural produce are small farmers, renting or owning their land, and in many cases owning only a part of the land they cultivate. In the main their holdings are small and their income does not exceed that of wage-paid workers. Only a small proportion of the total number of farmers throughout the world are substantial employers of labour.

The attention of the Committee was again drawn to the fact that in agriculture there are two groups of countries with very different living and working conditions. In the highly developed countries a comparatively small proportion of the population are engaged in agriculture and a considerable part of their production is organised on a commercial basis. In other countries, however,

up to 70 or 80 per cent. of the population is engaged in farming and the produce is very largely consumed by the family or within the country concerned. In such countries the pressure of population on the land creates problems entirely different from those prevailing in the more highly developed countries. Questions such as working hours, wage regulation, holidays with pay and similar matters that are of concern to agricultural workers in the more developed countries do not have the same meaning to workers in the less developed countries. The problem for them is one of mere daily existence, and the solution must be found in agricultural development, the application of science to agriculture, mechanisation and education; and at the same time in industrial development to absorb the surplus population of rural areas, increase incomes and raise the standard of living. There are, nevertheless, certain groups in the less developed countries to whom measures more naturally applicable to industrialised countries offer a certain interest, and efforts are being made by certain Governments in the countries of Asia to fix wages and conditions of work for plantation workers and for those in industrial establishments processing such materials as rubber.

Several members of the Committee also expressed the opinion that the unfavourable conditions existing in certain countries might be improved by means of changes in the land-holding system involving dividing up and allocation of land and facilities for workers to obtain ownership of the land they cultivate. The granting of credits, organisation of co-operatives and provision of opportunities for the migration of surplus population were mentioned as essential factors in achieving security of employment.

Finally, the Committee adopted a resolution concerning the study of certain questions which it considered of primary importance in the matter of security of employment, namely:

(a) the special problems of the agricultural populations of underdeveloped countries. In this connection it is pointed out that developed countries have a stake in raising the standards of living in underdeveloped countries, and that a basis for international assistance should be sought in collaboration and consultation with other appropriate international bodies;

(b) the problems associated with surplus farm population and rural-urban migration;

(c) the housing conditions of the employed workers, with a view to providing information that will enable improvements to be made;

(d) the effect of an unstable economy or of full employment on labour supply;

(e) the nature and extent of changes that are taking place in the newer countries in relation to farm labour, such as the creation of a permanent labour force;

(f) the problem of the organisation and administration of employment and recruitment services in agriculture, including collection of information in regard to national experiences;

(g) the problem of seasonal employment in agriculture;

(h) the problem of migratory labour in agriculture;

(i) the application and effect of social legislation in agriculture in various countries;

(j) the systems of land ownership and tenancy in various countries with reference to their effect upon the people engaged in agriculture, including opportunities to acquire ownership.

In making these recommendations the Committee considered that in the present circumstances, owing to the complexity of the problem of security of employment and occupation in agriculture, this item should be retained for further consideration. The Committee therefore requested the Governing Body to place this question on the agenda of its next session.

CONCLUSION

In the space of this short article it has not been possible to give a complete picture of the discussions which took place during the session, and there were in fact other questions brought up by the Committee. It should, however, be emphasised that certain of the decisions taken will have the effect of reinforcing and clarifying the opinions expressed at the first session in 1938. For example, resolutions were adopted for the adoption of concrete measures in relation to minimum wages and holidays with pay, and the Governing Body of the International Labour Office was requested to place these two questions on the agenda of an early session of the International Labour Conference.

Other questions were retained for further study by the Office to enable the Committee to make specific recommendations to the Governing Body at a later session or sessions. These include in particular the questions of hours of work, vocational education, and the extension of social security to workers in agriculture.

The Committee also adopted a resolution concerning security of employment and occupation in agriculture which emphasises the size of the task and points out those among the problems involved which it considers to be of the greatest importance. This selection has the double purpose of assisting the studies to be undertaken by the Office and outlining a programme of action for the future work of the Committee.

The members of the Committee indicated by the unanimity of their decisions that the solution of social problems in agriculture demands solidarity and concerted action in all countries. This, however, does not exclude either variety in methods used or special consideration of certain areas, since in some areas the need is for reconstruction while in other areas the need is mainly for development; though the essential aim is the same in both cases, to establish and maintain adequate standards of living for the workers on the land.

In the task that faces world agriculture, a branch of activity which in comparison with industry is characterised by backwardness both socially and technically, the Committee considered it essential that the work already begun should be resumed with strength and determination and an order of priority established for studying the questions involved with a view to co-ordinated international action.

In doing this, the Committee pointed out that a considerable amount of work will fall to the International Labour Office. It also took note that certain aspects of the problem concerned other specialised agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, and emphasised the need for close co-operation and co-ordination of work with other institutions active in related fields.

The results arrived at during this second session give reason to hope that the Permanent Agricultural Committee, by systematic study and discussion of the main social questions relating to agriculture which are of interest to the International Labour Organisation, may give the Organisation effective assistance in improving the condition of agricultural workers throughout the world.

Social Security Plan for Indian Seafarers

The report published in 1946 by the Department of Commerce of the Government of India on social security for Indian seafarers is of particular interest to the International Labour Organisation in view of the recent meeting of the I.L.O. Preparatory Asian Regional Conference at New Delhi (October 1947), at which social security was the first item on the agenda.¹ The scheme drawn up in the report is also interesting in view of the two Conventions and the Recommendation relating to social security for seafarers adopted by the Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference which met at Seattle in 1946.²

The report contains a discussion of the subject and a scheme prepared in 1945 by Professor B. P. Adarkar, M.A., then of the Labour Department, assisted by Mr. Ch. Pr. Srivastava, M.A., LL.B., formerly Research Officer in the Labour Department and now of the Ministry of Commerce, and a joint report on the scheme by Professor Adarkar and a member of the Social Insurance Section of the International Labour Office who was deputed at the request of the Indian Government to assist in the preparation of a social insurance scheme for Indian seafarers. The joint draft scheme contains the views of the authors and has been circulated to various interested parties for their opinion. An outline of the scheme is given below.

The social security scheme for Indian seafarers drawn up in the report published by the Department of Commerce of the Government of India covers the risks of ill-health and incapacity due to employ-

¹ Cf. Preparatory Asiatic Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation, New Delhi, 1947, Report I: *Problems of Social Security* (I.L.O., New Delhi, 1947).

² Cf. "The Twenty-Eighth (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference, Seattle, June 1946", p. 10, in *International Labour Review*, Vol. LIV, Nos. 1-2, July-Aug. 1946.

ment injury or sickness of the seafarer who is ashore in India, old age and death, and availability for employment. The provision of medical care and cash benefits during absence abroad remains the shipowners' liability as at present.

PREMISES

Indian seafarers have up to the present been employed chiefly on British and on foreign vessels. They are entitled by virtue both of law and agreement, in the event of illness or incapacity arising during their employment, to medical care, maintenance and wages at the shipowners' expense until they return to their port of recruitment, and to limited compensation in the event of employment injury.

At home, however, seafarers are not insured against sickness or unemployment, nor is provision made for their old age or for their dependants in the event of death of the breadwinner. They receive a certain amount of free medical care either from the provincial health services or at special clinics, sometimes through the agency of charitable institutions.

The main obstacle in the way of social insurance for Indian seafarers is the absence of organised recruitment. The number of persons who hold so-called discharge certificates entitling them to seek employment at sea was, at the time of writing of the present report, far in excess of the number of full-time jobs filled or even of engagements, and it is not likely that the situation has considerably improved since. Consequently, the number of applicants for jobs in the two chief ports of Calcutta and Bombay, many of whom reside in villages outside of these cities¹, is usually very much greater than the number needed to fill the available jobs. Many of these applicants stay at the "boarding houses" run either by private owners or by trade unions and incur debts in order to pay for their board and lodging, debts that have subsequently to be repaid out of the seafarer's wages if and when he finds employment. This situation has given rise to abuses.

Under these conditions, continuity of protection could not be achieved, as seafarers would pass in and out of insurance as a result of the disproportion between employment and unemployment and the excessive intervals between voyages in individual cases.

The success of an insurance scheme, the report states, will therefore largely depend on the simultaneous organisation of recruitment, involving a reduction of the number of those admitted to sea service and a system of rotation for seafarers who are not in continual employment.

It may be added that an attempt at organising recruitment of seafarers is now being made under the auspices of the Government: a maritime board representing shipowners and seafarers has recently been established in Calcutta which has undertaken to work out a system of recruitment. At the same time, the Government is taking steps to complete and reorganise the registration of seafarers, reducing their numbers.

¹ According to more recent investigations undertaken by the Government, a larger number of seafarers actually reside in the ports of registration than was assumed at the time when the report was written.