

# STATE WELFARE WORK IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Having dealt with two divisions of welfare work in the United Kingdom—welfare inside and outside the factory—in the first part of his article, the author in this his second part considers the two remaining divisions of welfare, namely Seamen's and Coalmines' Welfare. He ends by surveying the progress of welfare work in India.

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## PART II.

### SEAMEN'S WELFARE WORK

The organization of Seamen's Welfare Work, which was introduced in Great Britain in 1940, was comprehensive in conception and simple in structure. It provided, at the centre, a Seamen's Welfare Board composed of representatives of Shipowners, Officers and Seamen's Organizations and of persons interested in the welfare of Seamen, together with a medical expert and senior officials of the Government Departments principally concerned, under the Chairmanship of one of the Joint Parliamentary Secretaries to the Ministry of Labour and National Service. The function of the Board was to advise the Minister on all questions concerning the welfare of British, Allied and foreign seamen in British Ports and of the crews of British ships in ports overseas. It also provided, in the various ports, Port Welfare Committees constituted on the same lines as the Seamen's Welfare Board, with the addition of representatives of the local authorities and the Consular Corps, and a staff of full-time Seamen's Welfare Officers, appointed by the Ministry, acting as Secretaries to the Port Welfare Committees and executive officers of the Ministry. The machinery was completed by a Central Consultative Committee of Voluntary Organizations. The administrative expenses of all the above Committees were met by the Ministry. Although the work of this organization naturally began in British Ports, it was intended from the

outset that it should be extended to overseas ports and the Minister made it clear at the first meeting of the Board, held on 17th October 1940, that he regarded the schemes as destined to form part eventually of a comprehensive international scheme of Welfare for Seamen. Both Shipowners' and Seafarers' organizations have, of course, been active participants in the administration of welfare schemes of all kinds, and the National Union of Seamen has organized its own rest home.

*Organization.*—There are at present fifteen Port Welfare Committees which have been set up in the Ports of London, Bristol, Liverpool, Hull, Newcastle, Leith, Glasgow, Cardiff, Middlesbrough and the Hartlepoons, Sunderland, Southampton, New Port, Swansea and Aberdeen. The number of Seamen's Welfare Officers has also increased and the areas in which they are active have been extended to cover all ports in England, Wales and Scotland. The Central Consultative Committee functions as a corresponding committee, progress reports being issued to the members from time to time to keep them in touch with the work of the Ministry and the Seamen's Welfare Board.

*Accommodation and Recreation.*—The declared policy of the Ministry and the Seamen's Welfare Board has been to ensure that the Merchant Seaman, "when he comes ashore after a long and in most cases dangerous voyage, should be able to go to a clean and comfortable place where

he can obtain decent sleeping quarters and good food at reasonable prices." This policy has been given effect partly by encouraging and assisting the work of voluntary organizations and partly by the opening of hostels by the Ministry itself.

The provision of hostels for seamen has of course for long been a form of welfare work for seamen by voluntary organizations, but many of these hostels were old and in the course of time had become unsuitable as regards location, comforts and general amenities, to meet modern requirements. As a result of co-operation by participation in the work of the Seamen's Welfare Board and the Port Welfare Committees, the organizations have been stimulated to improve the standards of accommodation and amenities in their hostels, and in some cases to open entirely new hostels. Government encouragement has been given in many ways, principally by the provision of facilities for obtaining building materials, labour, furniture and equipment, rationed and unrationed food-stuffs, tobacco, cigarettes, etc.

*Clubs and Recreation Centres.*—Clubs and recreational facilities are in general provided by the voluntary organizations which have been encouraged to raise their standards and extend their premises and activities. In many cases, however, the existing institutions are old and their location, construction and equipment have handicapped them in catering to the needs of the Seafarer today. Recreational facilities given by the voluntary organizations were usually offered on hostel premises, but recently there has been a tendency to organize clubs in separate premises which either do not give residential accommodation at all or provide only very few beds. An innovation of special interest is the opening in Liverpool by the Mersey Mission to Seamen of a Residential and Social Club for the exclusive use of

seafaring—or would-be seafaring—boys under 18 years of age.

Clubs for Merchant Seamen have also been organized, in increasing numbers and of a high standard, by the Ministry. Such clubs, usually called Merchant Navy Clubs, have been opened in London, Glasgow, New Port, Swansea, Avonmouth, Hull, Aberdeen, Barry, Cardiff, South Shields and West Hartlepool. The management of the Clubs is entrusted to the National Service Hostels Corporation. Ordinarily a Club has a large Assembly Hall which is adopted for use for concerts and cinema shows and has a large stage and dressing rooms, a bar, a lounge, writing rooms and a library, billiard and other games' rooms, a telephone room and a bathroom. Wives and women relatives and friends of seamen are admitted to this club. Hostels and Clubs in British Ports are open also to Allied Seamen and their needs are met by providing entertainment, recreation and culture, foreign newspapers, books and periodicals.

*Arrangements for Indian Seamen.*—A very large number of Indian seamen now visit British Ports and need shore accommodation, and the problem has been made complicated owing to the fact that there are great changes in the number of Indian seamen in different ports from time to time. The Government of India have appointed three Seamen's Welfare Officers of Indian nationality in London, Liverpool and Glasgow, who work in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and National Service but are responsible to the High Commissioner for India for the welfare of Indian Seamen in British Ports. Substantial improvements have been made in finding suitable accommodation for Indian Seamen and special hostels have been set up, the initial cost and running expenses of these hostels being met by the shipping companies using the hostels for the accommodation of their crews. In London, on the advice of the

Port Welfare Committee, a committee of shipowners has made arrangements to control the Hindustan Hostel, previously a privately owned settlement for Indians, in Goodman Street, E. 1. The hostel provides sleeping accommodation for about 50 men, half of whom occupy two-bunk cubicles, while the remainder are in dormitories with six or more bunks in each ; a small dining room, a kitchen and showers. There is no separate lounge or recreation room, but in summer the men are able to sit about in a concrete yard around the building. The hostel is under the management of a former judge of Indian nationality. The men are in the charge of the shipowners while in the hostel, awaiting their assignment to ships. The standard of accommodation is below that of the typical Merchant Navy House, the rooms being small and crowded and the equipment meagre and poor. Nevertheless, it is definitely much better than the private boarding houses, which the men were accustomed to use.

A Club for Indian Seamen without sleeping accommodation was opened in Liverpool in April, 1942. The funds for this were provided by the War Purposes Fund of the Viceroy of India through King George's Fund for Sailors, and the Club is managed by the Mersey Mission to Seamen. It is intended primarily for seamen working by their ships and hence is situated close to the docks and used mainly in the evenings. The accommodation consists of a Restaurant, Lounge and Games Rooms, simply furnished but neat and comfortable with pictures of Indian scenery on the walls, and a gramophone with a selection of records of Indian music.

Special non-residential clubs for Indian seamen have also been opened in Avonmouth and Hull, and others are being set up in Glasgow, London and Swansea.

The Ministry of Information distributes newspapers in Bengali and Roman Urdu free of charge for Indian seamen in Clubs and Hostels.

*Reserve Pool Waiting Rooms.*—On the recommendation of the seamen's Welfare Board some Merchant Navy Reserve Pool Waiting Rooms have been opened for seamen waiting for their ships, and recreational and refreshment facilities are also provided either on or near the Pool premises. These have been opened at London, Liverpool, Newcastle, Blyth and Swansea. The cost of establishing them is borne in whole or in part by the Seamen's Welfare Board, and they are managed in most cases by the Voluntary Seamen's Welfare Organizations. The Liverpool Waiting Room and Canteen, which is by far the largest, is managed by the Liverpool Seamen's Welfare Centre.

*Safety in Dock Areas.*—Owing to "black-outs" and other war time difficulties, the number of accidents to seamen had increased, and steps had to be taken to reduce accidents and to ensure safety in dock areas ; the Port Welfare Committees had to pay special attention to this matter in co-operation with the port and dock authorities. The special measures taken include the painting of white lines at quay edges, the provision of shaded lights at dangerous corners, the special lighting of gangways and across dummies, dolphins and lighters lying between ship and quay, and the marking of the foot of gangways with white paint.

*Health Services, Hospital Accommodation and Rest Homes.*—The pressure of the war had called attention to the need for better organization of health services for seamen. The Ministry of Health has under consideration proposals for the co-ordination of the special hospitals run by the Seamen's Hospital Society with the other

hospitals of the country. Special measures had been taken to deal with certain diseases to which seamen are susceptible. Arrangements have been made for the publication of leaflets and of articles giving information and advice about such diseases in trade union and other journals circulating among seamen.

A special scheme for the establishment of rest homes has been introduced to meet the needs of seamen requiring rest after the strain of war service but not hospital or medical treatment. A further scheme which the National Union of Seamen has in hand at Limpsfield is the development of a cottage residential section for aged seamen and their wives.

*Clothing, Comforts, Books, etc.*—The Merchant Navy Comforts Service which is a voluntary organization consisting of shipowners and officials of Seamen's Trade Union provide a number of special services for seamen ; for instance, the supply of woollen sweaters, stockings and other garments. A hospital visiting service has also been organized which supplies seamen in hospital with clothes, toilet articles, cigarettes, magazines and books, and assists them in dealing with their personal problems. Games outfits of various kinds are supplied to ships and to clubs and rest houses.

The British Sailors' Society also supplies books to ships and hostels, and had in 1942 about 2,200 "Ocean Libraries" afloat.

Educational work is carried on by the Seafarers' Educational Service which was founded in 1919 in the belief that "a necessary step in the welfare of seamen was the provision of a central stock of current literature to serve as the basis of libraries on ships for the use of officers and men, which should be exchanged regularly in accordance with the readers' expressed

choice of books." By the end of 1942 there were 63 shipping companies having crews' libraries on 620 ships. Eleven shore libraries are also maintained and the stock of books numbered 86,700. The Service also provides a "Correspondence College of the Sea" and grants scholarships to deck boys and young seamen studying for promotion ; publishes a quarterly journal, *the Seafarer*, and organizes essay and hobby competitions.

*Finance of Welfare Work.*—The greater part of the expenditure on welfare work for seamen is met by voluntary contributions, though it is not possible to estimate the proportion of voluntary to State contributions. This is no doubt due to the fact that in war-time the whole community is made actively aware of the services rendered to it by Merchant Seamen, and this awareness finds expression in financial contributions to their welfare. But it is also clear that a very large part of the funds for welfare work is expended by organizations which are controlled neither by the State nor by the shipping industry.

*The Future of Seamen's Welfare Work.*—Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, in a speech delivered at the Merchant Navy House in Newcastle in January, 1943, said : "As to welfare work, ways and means will have to be found to finance this work on a permanent footing that will have to be worked out previously with the help of the State between the Unions and the Employers." Thus he endorsed the view taken by the representatives of shipowners and seafarers on the Joint Maritime Commission of the International Labour Office, which at its session in London in June, 1942, unanimously adopted a resolution which declared, *inter alia*, that :

- (1) The Administration of welfare schemes should be so organized

as to give effective control to representatives of industrial organizations directly concerned with ships and the sea.

- (2) The financing of such schemes should be organized on an adequate and permanent basis and should not be exclusively dependent upon so-called charitable organizations.

The administrative arrangements made by the Ministry of Labour and National Service provide a foundation for a permanent organization in accordance with these principles, but the present financial structure and many other features of the system would clearly need considerable modification to meet fully the wishes of those engaged in the industry. The necessity for a review of the administrative and financial organization of certain aspects of Seamen's Welfare Work has been recognized by the Ministers primarily concerned. In October, 1943, the Minister of Labour and National Service and the Minister of War Transport jointly appointed a Committee on Seamen's Welfare in Ports with the following terms of reference ;

"Having regard to the Government's acceptance of the Recommendation of the International Labour Conference concerning the promotion of seamen's welfare in ports, to consider the activities and functions respectively of the Government, the shipping industry and the voluntary organizations in the establishment and maintenance of hostels, hotels, clubs, recreational facilities and other amenities for Merchant Seamen in ports in Great Britain, and in that connection to consider in consultation with voluntary organizations primarily concerned with merchant seamen their appeals for funds not only for welfare but for benevolent and Samaritan purposes whether for expenditure in Great Britain or elsewhere, and to submit recommendations".

This Committee had Mr. H. Graham White as Chairman and included among others four persons drawn from the shipping industry itself.

The industry is working out its own scheme for training for sea service and for provision of suitable amenities for seamen in the post-war years. It may, therefore, be necessary for the voluntary organizations to reconsider the part they should play in the lives of merchant seamen and to concentrate their activities on catering for the religious needs of the men, with entertainment and charitable work figuring only as incidental activities. The whole system of welfare activities for British and other seamen in British Ports and for British seamen in British Ports and for British seamen in foreign Ports will have to be fitted in with an international system designed to meet the needs of seamen of all nationalities. There is thus quite a considerable programme of post-war reconstruction to be undertaken by Government and the shipping industry, even in the limited sphere of welfare work.

#### MINERS' WELFARE

It was realized that miners, by the nature of their calling, were frequently deprived of the advantages of social amenities and were exposed, whilst in the pits, to special dangers and difficulties. The growth of transport facilities and the effect of education removed, to some extent, the miners' sense of isolation and developed among them a keen appreciation of the fact that they should improve their lot and have better opportunities for their social well-being. In course of time it was discovered that part of the unrest amongst miners was due to the expression of a desire to gain national recognition of the value of their work, and as a result of this situation, Miners' Welfare originated in an Act of Parliament in 1911, dealing generally

with conditions within the coal mining industry, but touching tentatively one aspect of welfare, namely the provision of pithead baths. Following the reports of the Sankey Commission in 1920, and the Samuel Commission in 1926, two more Mining Industry Acts, more directly concerned with welfare, were passed, which helped to establish a fund and an administrative framework for the purpose of welfare for workers in and around coal mines. By the Mining Industry Act, 1920, a levy of one penny per ton of output was imposed upon all colliery owners to provide a fund for the improvement of social conditions of colliery workers. The duty of allocating this fund was placed in the hands of the Miners' Welfare Commission. Its functions are to expand the funds raised "for such purposes connected with the social well-being, recreation and conditions of living of workers in or about coal mines and with mining education and research, as the Board of Trade (Ministry of Fuel and Power) after consultation with any Government Department may approve."

*Pithead Baths.*—One of the chief objects of expenditure out of the Welfare Fund is the provision of pithead baths for miners. It needs but little imagination to appreciate the benefits conferred by these baths, which save the men from having to return from work in filthy and often wet clothes, and their wives the labour of providing baths and drying clothes in homes which too often lack proper facilities for either. Miners have now taken to pithead baths like ducks to water. Pithead baths have been provided at 362 collieries where there is accommodation for 4,42,000 miners. In terms of the numbers of men accommodated, more than one-half of this form of welfare work is done, and about 640 more collieries employing about 3,00,000 miners remain to be equipped with baths. In the pithead bath each" miner has his own

locker for his pit clothes and another one for his clean clothes. When he comes out of the pit, he takes off his pit clothes and leaves them to dry during the time he is at home. He then proceeds to the showers and removes all the dirt from his body within about six minutes. After bathing, he passes along to the clean locker room and puts on his home clothes and perhaps goes to the canteen or snack bar which is attached to the pithead bath, and gets some light refreshment. Almost all the pithead baths have power-driven boot brushes, boot-greasing apparatus, taps for drinking water, a convenient hook to hold his shirt and towel while the miner bathes and a cunningly fashioned stowage device in the lockers. All these and other small things contribute to the well-being of miners by making changing and bathing at the pit a simple and quick routine.

The capital cost of the pithead baths is met from the Miners' Welfare Fund, but no grants are made for recurring expenses. They are intended to be self-supporting, being administered by Trustees and a Managing Committee, having equal representation from employers and employees.

Where a pithead bath has been put into operation, the physical benefits to its users are quickly noticeable. A new sense of self-respect made manifest in mien and general bearing can also be discerned. The miner returns home, not in his working clothes, but better dressed than most other artisans. Many a miner, apathetic or obstinate in his attitude towards the pithead bath, has been won to the virtues of leaving dirt at the pit by peaceful persuasion at home. The many baths which have been established all over the country and the many more to come, are intended to be two-fold in their benefit: a great convenience to the miner, and an inestimable boon to his family.

*Recreation and Social Well-Being.*—

Large sums out of the Welfare Fund have been granted for the establishment or improvement of schemes for the recreation, physical culture, and amusement of the mining communities. The old miner likes to have a quiet game of dominoes or billiards or a game of bowls, and somewhere to read the newspapers and periodicals or to find a book. The young miner seeks something more active like football, cricket or tennis. The boys and children also need some place to play undisturbed. These many needs have all been met, to a greater or lesser extent, by the Miners' Welfare Institute and the recreation ground. The best types of institutes are not used merely for recreation, but also for educational and cultural activities which fulfil a particularly valuable social purpose.

Many sports and recreation grounds of varying sizes and types have been provided. The welfare ground may be only a bowling green or tennis court attached to the institute ; it may be a village cricket or football field; or it may even be extensive enough to be envied by any progressive local authority. The best type of welfare ground is that which is a happy combination of both the sports and pleasure grounds, which has a place for the old people to rest in the sun and enjoy the flowers, and a good play-ground for the children and which is planned around a good institute. On high days and holidays, in winter and in summer, the miners have appropriate seasonal festivities for all people, whether young or old, and in these recreation centres at all times are to be found most of those things which truly make for social well-being.

*Boys' Clubs.*—The value of the Boys' Club is well understood by the mining industry and consequently, many such clubs have been aided and encouraged by grants from the Welfare Fund. The

Boys' Club consists of something more than premises and provides something more than opportunities for recreation. Possessing the right atmosphere and the right leadership, it has a good influence in the development of a type of young man in whom there is a keen sense of the responsibilities of citizenship. These clubs provide in-door recreation, physical training and handicraft and first-aid instruction. Opportunities are also given for talks and discussions on subjects of general cultural interest. In addition, outdoor games, sports, hikes and week-end camps are organized. It is to be hoped that the Miners' Welfare Fund, which has already been used to aid Boys' Clubs, may prove to be influential in bringing wider social opportunities to the younger people of the mining communities in the post-war period.

*Health—M e d i c a l Treatment.*—The Miners' Welfare Fund has been utilized to a large extent in the establishment of, and for giving assistance to, institutions and schemes for the benefit of the miner and his family in times of sickness or accident. In many cases, the Commission has given grants towards capital expenditure of hospitals or health schemes likely to benefit the mining community. The services of ambulances and district nurses are secured in many districts. In some of them, arrangements are such that when a miner needs special medical treatment, for instance the loan of an invalid chair, or, following an accident, an artificial limb or a glass eye, he can get help through the Fund. After sickness or an accident, the miner, or his wife, can go to one of the Miners' Welfare Convalescent Homes. Some of these homes have been built near the sea for this purpose; others are adaptations of country houses. There is no doubt that no community has greater need of adequate medical services than the mining community. In

times of emergency, or in everyday sickness and accident, these services are easily accessible and they owe much of their efficiency to the Miners' Welfare Fund.

*Education.*—In accordance with the Mining Industry Act, 1920, provision is made for a part of the Fund to be expended for educational purposes. The Miners' Welfare Commission has sought the advice of the Ministry of Education and the Scottish Education Department in this matter. As a result of this, and largely through aid from the Fund, it can be said that the mining industry in Great Britain has facilities for instruction in its own particular technical subjects which are ample, widespread and without equal in any other industry.

There are 77 Mining Schools and Technical Institutes which are either built or equipped at the cost of the Welfare Fund, and which provide senior, advanced and university courses in mining subjects. Using the same premises at different times, there are senior courses leading to the qualifying examinations for the certificates of competency for mine managers and under-managers, and certificates for surveyors, firemen, examiners and deputies, and there are junior courses for students from 14 to 17 years of age.

The Miners' Welfare National Mining Education Scheme provides Scholarships' for part-time day courses of advanced instruction, and is intended particularly for the miner who is dependent on his own earnings, and who is released by his employer for one day (or two half-days) a week. Scholarships which help to cover fees, the cost of books and instruments, travelling expenses and compensation for loss of wages while attending school are awarded to deserving candidates after a competitive examination.

Grants are also made to miners'

dependents for degree or diploma courses which lead to recognized professional qualifications. Further opportunities are offered to those who show promise of ability to gain university degrees in mining and engineering or academic distinctions in other callings and professions. The men from the mine, their sons and daughters are not denied the wider opportunities, but are encouraged and enabled to take advantage of these to the full.

Thus, in many walks of life, in professions and academic circles, there are people who contribute more to the riches of life, because of their native experience of mines and mining men, and who owe a great deal to timely encouragement from mining people and to material aid from the Miners' Welfare Fund.

*Research.*—A grant is made from the General Fund annually for researches under the Safety in Mines Research Board into problems affecting the safety and health of mine workers, and for disseminating information regarding the application of the results of the researches into mining practice. At Sheffield the Board has its own laboratories for small-scale experiments, and near Buxton, up on the moors, there is a large field research station. Here, and also in the mines, scientists and technicians all work together, aided by the Fund, for better conditions of safety and health in the pits of Great Britain.

*Canteens.*—In order to meet the food situation in the country during war-time, the Government made efforts to popularize communal feedings by the establishment of British Restaurants and Works Canteens, through which less could be made to go further, and greater variety and a more equitable distribution of non-rationed food could be secured. The general public, even those unaccustomed to eat away from home, were given opportunities to get an extra

meal at a reasonable price. The mining industry was, therefore, called upon to set up canteens at all collieries and a Defence Regulation was made enabling the money accumulating for the building of pithead baths to be used for aiding the building of colliery canteens. Standard plans and schedules of equipment of a special type of canteen applicable to the needs of any colliery were prepared to guide colliery companies in their decisions.

Now, practically all collieries have a war-time canteen which the miner can use daily. While on night shift, he can have his breakfast before going to bed, and his wife is spared the effort of getting up to get it for him. Pit canteens do a brisk trade in "snacks" and "baits." They vary greatly in size ; some are little more than a glorified coffee-stall, others seat more than a thousand miners at a time. A few are managed by caterers, but most of them are run by the miners' womenfolk, who know well what their men like to eat and how it must be cooked.

Since 1941, about 950 war-time canteens have been provided by the Welfare Fund. Many serve hot meals daily ; others specialize in packed meals to be eaten in the pit and in tempting snacks and light refreshments.

*Rehabilitation Centres.*—In the coal-mining industry, the rate of accidents is high and many of the accidents involve the fracture of bones and the injured men cannot return to work for weeks or months. The miners now have six special rehabilitation centres, where there is special provision for a spacious gymnasium for psychotherapy, rooms for medical treatment and for occupational therapy. For out-door exercise, there are playing fields and bowling greens, and the immediate country-side invites walks and cycle rides. There is also ample provision for in-door and out-door

recreation. Behind these visible provisions of the Miners' Welfare Rehabilitation Scheme are allied modern medical methods and a well-considered system of administration. The orthopaedic surgeon does not claim that his skill alone is sufficient. To it must be allied many forms of therapy and, above all, an invocation of the patient's own determination to get well. The surgeon's work is only begun when he sets the fracture. As soon as practicable, the patient is started upon a series of exercises, gentle but effective. These exercises are designed both to keep muscles from atrophy, and to give the patient an active interest in promoting his own recovery. These exercises become progressively less passive and more vigorous. Later the patient's attention is diverted to various kinds of handicrafts for occupational therapy, which is a skilfully devised ingredient of the cure. Various kinds of psychotherapy-massage, electrical treatment, infra-red and ultra-violet rays heal injury and tone up the patient's muscles to enable him to progress in his exercises. Meanwhile, the surgeon keeps a watchful eye on each stage of the patient's progress. Remedial gymnastics, outdoor and indoor games, all fit into the scheme so that when the patient has finished treatment, he has either recovered fully and is ready to return to his job, or is as fit as possible to be trained for another job.

In the development of these centres the Commission has been assisted by a Medical Advisory Committee of Surgeons who have great experience and an enthusiasm for rehabilitation. In these centres a new purpose of social well-being is served in the restoration of the injured miner to health, to confidence and, in many cases, to his own job.

*General Administration.*—The Miners' Welfare Commission believes that success in welfare work is dependent largely on the

intensity of interest displayed by local people. Readiness to give not only subscriptions for the maintenance of welfare schemes, but personal service to welfare is the measure of success. Through it is fostered a real sense of responsibility for, and proprietorship in, the welfare scheme. The principles of democratic administration are, therefore, observed to the hilt in the deliberations of the local Committee, the District Committee and the Commission itself. The final duty of allocating the funds to particular welfare schemes is vested in the Commission, which is the statutory body appointed by the Minister of Fuel and Power, consisting of six representatives of colliery owners and of mine workers in equal numbers, and four other members, including an independent Chairman. But in the discharge of these duties, the Commission relies greatly on the counsels of the twenty-five District Committees, which guide the Commission in all matters of policy and welfare projects pertaining to particular parts of the coal-fields. In turn, District Committees gain wide knowledge of welfare through the advice and experience of practical men from both sides of the industry.

The Commission reinforces all this voluntary work by maintaining centrally an administrative staff of architects, surveyors, engineers and recreation ground specialists, who can advise upon or carry welfare projects through every stage from inception to completion. Welfare Officers, who are appointed by the Commission, live in each coal district to act as guides and counsellors on all questions of welfare. Their counsel has been inspiring and their enthusiasm invaluable.

The above is a brief description of welfare work in the Mining Industry, which can be said to be a unique social movement without a parallel in this or any other country. Welfare will continue

to expand ; it is no longer an experiment. The stage has been reached when plans for the future can be based on experience and the certainty of a proved technique. The future holds opportunities for much greater welfare work which can be done for the benefit of the mining people, with the knowledge that it will be built upon foundations of confidence and mutual respect.

#### WELFARE WORK IN INDIA

The origin of welfare work in India may be traced to the last war of 1914-1918. Till then, welfare of the worker was hardly thought of owing to the ignorance and apathy of the worker himself, the short-sightedness of employers, the neglect of the state and the indifference of the public. But since the First World War, despite continued economic depression, welfare work has been expanding steadily, purely on a voluntary basis, without any statutory obligations. The Government as well as the industrialists were constrained to take active interest in welfare work, partly through the pressure brought to bear on them by the International Labour Office, and partly due to the discontent and industrial unrest prevalent in the country. Though welfare work in India is still considerably below the standards set up in the United Kingdom, it has come to stay, and it is bound to make rapid progress in the years to come, especially in view of the post-war reconstruction schemes of Government and the industrialists.

The first fact to be faced squarely with reference to the development of welfare work in India is that traditionally trade unions eye all such schemes and programmes with suspicion and even with antagonism. Their charges in this respect are not without justifiable grounds. Labour had seen social work in India develop out of the womb of feudal charity. They

had seen the rising class of merchants and industrialists joining hands with the aristocracy, as superiors throwing crumbs to their inferiors in a patronizing spirit. The volunteer "friendly visitors," recruited largely from the well-to-do classes, increased their suspicions. But now their replacement by paid and professionally trained social welfare workers has helped, to a large extent, to break the barriers that had for long existed between labour and capital. It is gratifying to note that social work in India is coming to be recognized as labour's loyal and most valuable ally in its fight for better conditions.

Welfare work for labour employed in Indian industries has, since the advent of Provincial Autonomy, been taken over by the Government. Pioneering work in this direction was done by that great and zealous friend of Indian Labour—Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda, since 1921 the Secretary of the Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad, later (1939) Parliamentary Secretary for Labour to the Prime Minister in the Congress Ministry in the Province of Bombay, and now Minister for Labour. He knew that employers, as a whole, were doing little or nothing in the field of labour welfare, and that no amount of persuasion would yield tangible results. He also knew that legislation to enforce welfare measures would not create that personal enthusiasm, which is so vital to the success of any welfare scheme that might be launched. He persuaded his cabinet to set up in April, 1931, a special Department known as the Labour Welfare Department, which is entrusted with the work of providing suitable social amenities to labour in general, and industrial labour in particular, in cities and towns of industrial importance in the Province, through the medium of Labour Welfare Centres. In-door and out-door games, both of English and Indian type, gymnastic activities, wrestling,

shower bath facilities, play-grounds for children, nursery schools, literacy classes, medical assistance, legal aid, cinema shows, epidiastroscope and magic lantern shows are some of the features of these Government Labour Welfare Centres. Additional activities include exhibitions, folk-singing and folk-dancing, dramas, matches and competitions, picnics, excursions and outings. Women and girls receive special attention. Literacy classes, sewing classes, cooking demonstrations, games, sports, reading room and library activities are conducted exclusively for the benefit of women and girls who attend the Labour Welfare Centres.

The lead given in the organization of welfare work by the Bombay Government has been successively taken up by the Governments of the United Provinces, Bengal, Sind and the Central Provinces. The Central Government too have recognized the value and importance of governmental effort in the field of Labour Welfare and in May, 1942, they appointed Mr. R. S. Nimbkar, the prominent Labour Leader of Bombay, as Central Adviser on Labour Welfare to the Government of India. Eight Assistant Labour Welfare Officers in different Provinces were appointed under the Central Adviser, who, acting upon the advice of Mr. Nimbkar, have launched wide schemes of Labour Welfare in all Government Ordnance, Ammunition and other War Factories.

Recently Labour Welfare Officers have been appointed by the Docks' Authorities and the Port Trusts in the four major ports of India at Bombay, Karachi, Calcutta and Madras, to look after the social and general well-being of the dock labourers and the stevedore workers.

With a view to meet expenditure in connection with measures which, in the opinion of the Government of India, are necessary or expedient to promote the

welfare of labour employed in the coal mines, the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Ordinance, 1944, was promulgated on the 31st January, 1944. By virtue of this Ordinance, a Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund has been created, which will derive its revenue from a cess or a duty of excise at such rate, not less than one anna nor more than four annas per ton, as may be fixed by the Government.

The principal objects for which this Fund will be utilized are defined in the Ordinance as follows :—

- (i) The improvement of standards of living, including housing and nutrition, the amelioration of social conditions and the provision of recreational facilities for the benefit of the labour employed in the coal mining industry ;
- (ii) the provision of transport to and from work ;
- (iii) the provision of improvement of educational facilities;
- (iv) the provision of improvement of supply of water ; and
- (v) the improvement of public health and sanitation, the prevention of diseases, the provision of medical facilities, and the improvement of existing medical facilities.

The Ordinance contemplates the appointment of Welfare Administrators, Inspectors and other Officers to supervise or carry out the activities financed from the Fund. Both the cost of administration of the Fund and the salaries and allowances of the Officers appointed in connection therewith are to be defrayed from the Fund itself. An Advisory Committee consisting of an equal number of members representing colliery owners and workmen employed

in the coal mining industry, with an Officer of the Central Government as Chairman, is being constituted. At least one member of this Advisory Committee is to be a woman. The functions of the Committee will be to advise the Central Government on all matters arising out of the administration of the Ordinance and the Fund.

It may be seen from what has been stated above that welfare work in India is still in its infancy. All that has been done so far is but a drop in the ocean, because the vast majority of employers and Provincial Governments in India have no welfare schemes of any kind at all for their industrial workers. Improvement in all spheres of welfare work will have to be made, partly by the worker himself, partly by the employer and partly by the State, to bring Indian Labour on a par with the industrial workers in foreign countries. In this respect, attention should, in the first place, be given to the environment of the worker, the temperature of the factory, its ventilation, lighting, drainage and general cleanliness. Various safeguards for protecting his health should be provided. His comfort should receive utmost consideration by the provision of mess rooms, facilities for getting food and refreshment, rest rooms and other sanitary arrangements. Creches and Nurseries should be provided for the infants and children of women workers. In order to counteract the evil effects of a stuffy atmosphere and congestion within the mills and factories, the workers should be provided with amenities which will enable them to maintain good health and enjoy it. Canteens should be started in every factory and mill where wholesome meals at almost cost price should be made available. As an average Indian worker is illiterate, it is no use blaming him for his degradation, indifference and backwardness. He must be educated

first and induced to lead a better, healthier and richer life. Dramatic and Musical Clubs may be organized to stimulate his aesthetic interests. Labour in the United Kingdom is endowed with talents of a varied nature and Indian labour does not lack these potentialities in any respect. As in the United Kingdom, so also in India, Employment Exchange Service, Resettlement Advice Service and Joint Negotiations Machinery should be set up—because no amount of welfare work will compensate for low wages, dissatisfied labour and economic insecurity. Each major factory should be made to engage the services of Safety Officers, Welfare Officers and Personnel Managers.

The Government of India have realized their responsibilities and are gradually adopting the conventions prescribed by the International Labour Conference and bringing about legislation so as to be in line with the Western democracies. The theory of the greatest happiness of the greatest number applied to this problem, would mean that the government should undertake labour welfare work as one of its proper functions because workers, whether industrial or agricultural, constitute more than nine-tenths of the population of India. But legislation alone is not the sole remedy for the salvation of industry. In the words of Mr. Butler, "What is required is the realization on the part of the State, the employers and the public, that human rights of the workers to live (and not merely

to exist in hovels) have a claim upon society and that, if this claim is not conceded in time, we will have neither justice nor social peace, and the alternative will be revolution instead of evolution."

Fortunately for us, we can see signs which are favourable to the evolution of a better economic order. The rising tide of mass consciousness, the growing sympathy of the progressive employers for labour, and the increasing recognition of the rights of workers by the State, are all factors which are bound to bring about a better relationship between labour and capital. The exigencies of the present crisis, the steep rise in prices of essential commodities, and rapidly changing political and economic conditions—all demand, in unequivocal terms, the provision of suitable social amenities for the workers in a concrete form, to enable them to live a richer and more abundant life as members of an equitable society. It is to be hoped that most of the progressive measures adopted to promote the economic and social advancement of labour during the war, in the United Kingdom as well as in India, would become a permanent feature of the worker's life. In times of depression, there may be a tendency for employers to cut down on welfare expenditure and here it is that government should play its part by insisting that the maintenance of the worker in comfort and in health, is a necessary and desirable objective of social and industrial policy.

The origins of the modern Welfare State in Britain are often dated to 1906, when British politician H. H. Asquith (1852–1928) and the Liberal party gained a landslide victory and entered government. They would go on to introduce welfare reforms, but they did not campaign on a platform of doing so: in fact, they avoided the issue. But soon their politicians were making changes to Britain because there was pressure building to act. The key idea was that everyone who worked would pay a sum to the government for as long as they worked, and in return would have access to government aid for the unemployed, ill, retired or widowed, and extra payments to aid those pushed to the limit by children. Welfare Reform in the United States.