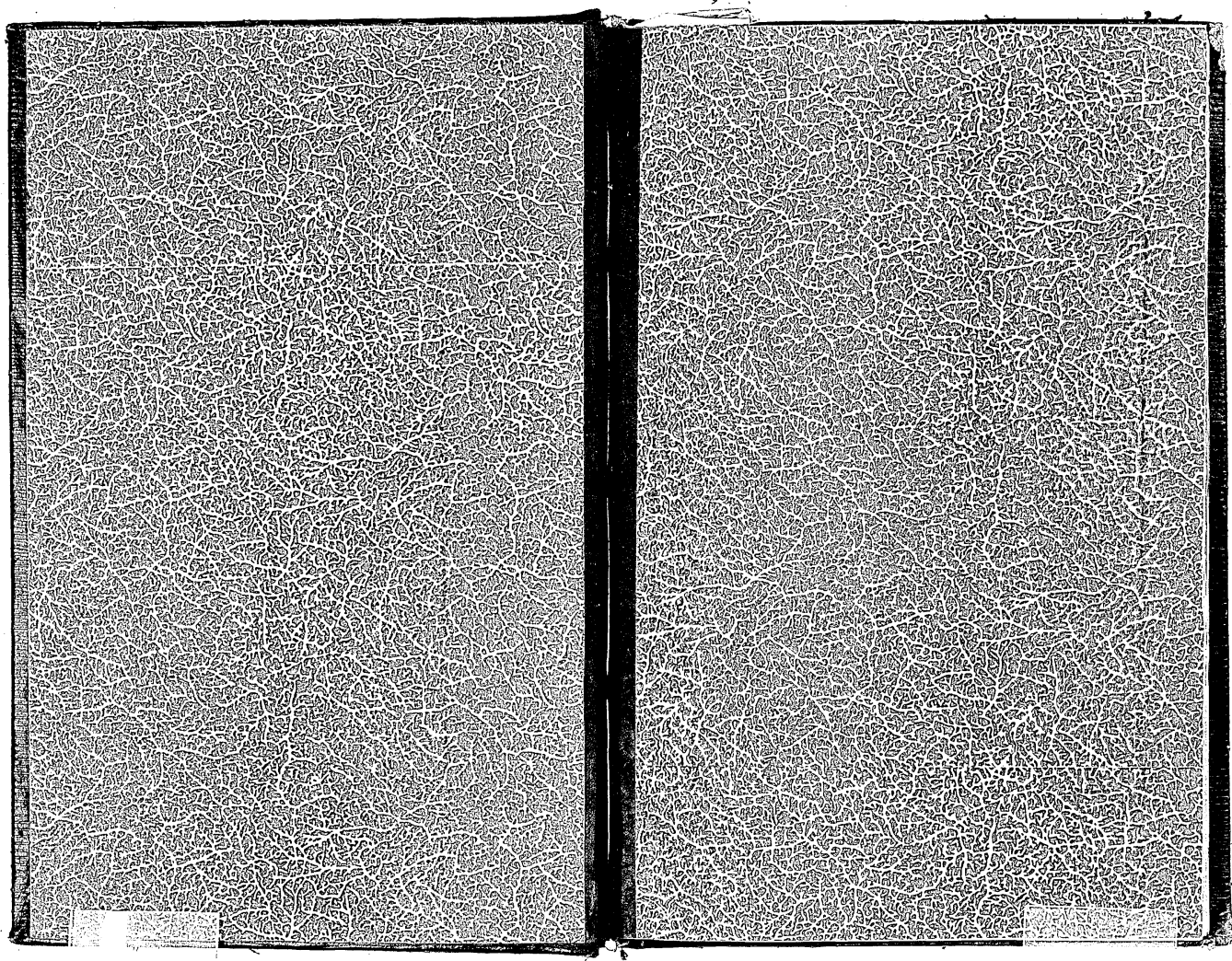
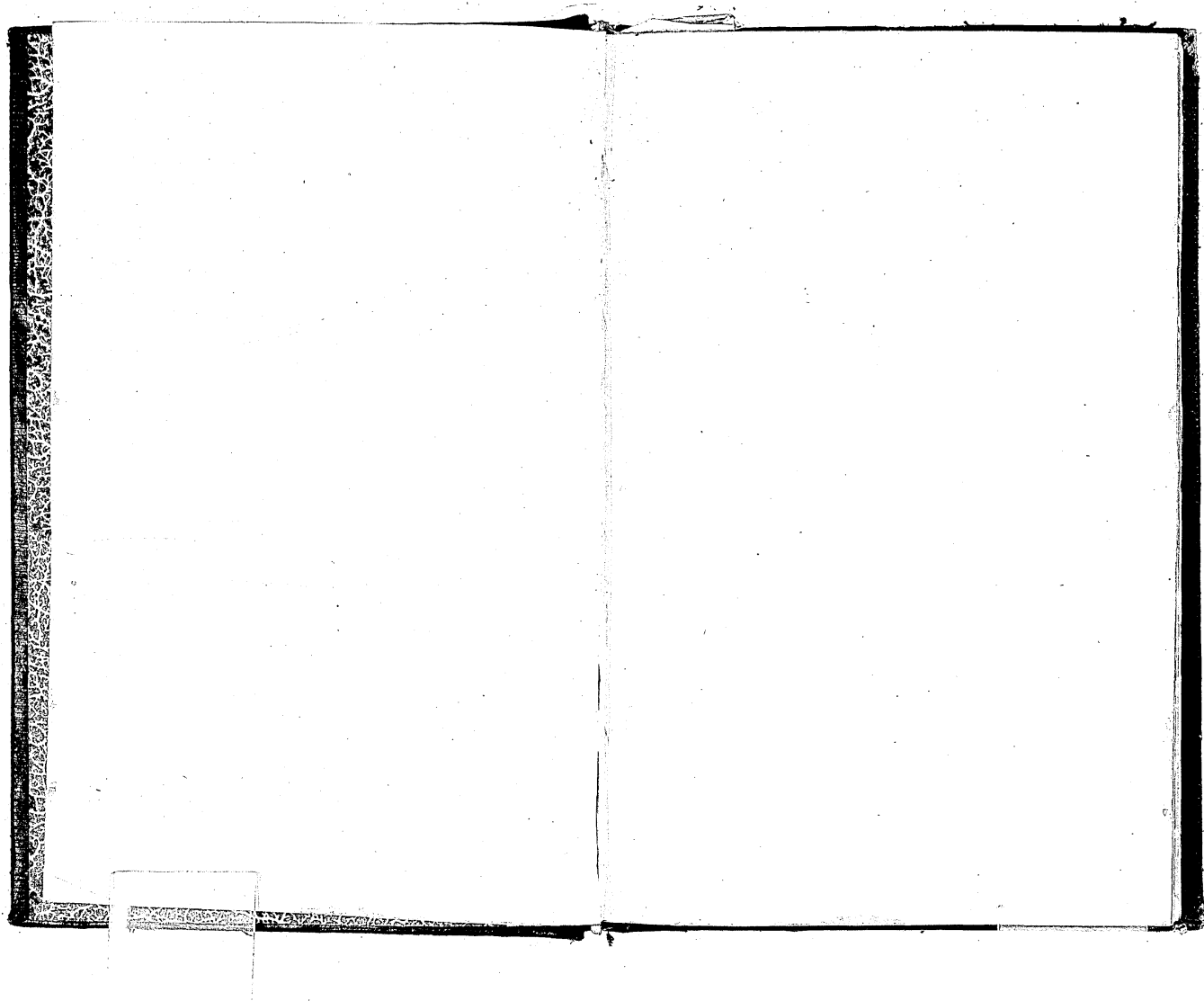


REPORT
OF
THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FOR THE YEAR 1946





PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

for the year 1946-47
HELD ON 28th FEBRUARY 1947.

CALCUTTA
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1947

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was held at the Royal Exchange, Calcutta, on Friday, the 28th February 1947 at 3 o'clock p.m. The meeting, which was presided over by the Hon'ble Mr. H. D. TOWNSEND, President of the Chamber, was addressed by His Excellency SIR FREDERICK BURROWS, Governor of Bengal.

The following were also present:—

MR. I. A. CLARK	...	Messrs. Anderson, Wright & Co.
" A. WRIGHT	...	
" P. G. THOMAS	...	Associated Instrument Manufacturers (Workshops) Ltd.
" R. L. de CHAZAL	...	Messrs. Atlantis (East) Ltd.
" A. J. THOMPSON	...	" Ballardie, Thompson & Matthews.
" B. MATTHEWS	...	
" AKSHOY BOSE	...	
" I. P. F. CAMPBELL	...	" Balmer, Lawrie & Co. Ltd.
" G. A. RAINEY	...	
" I. MORGAN	...	
" O. T. JENKINS	...	
" A. C. LLOYD	...	" Barry & Co.
" R. L. HARDS	...	" Begg, Dunlop & Co. Ltd.
" B. B. PAGE	...	
" B. N. GHOSH	...	Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works Ltd.
SIR EDWARD BENTHALL, K.C.I.E.	...	
SIR A. P. BENTHALL	...	
" A. S. OFFICER	...	
" F. S. MITCHELL	...	
" K. F. L. HARRIS	...	Messrs. Bird & Co.
" F. W. CARPENTER	...	
" J. FINDLAY	...	
" A. MUKHERJEE	...	
" W. ROBERTSON	...	
" J. P. WHITEHEAD	...	
" H. W. T. HAIN	...	" Braithwaite & Co. (India) Ltd.

(2)

MR. F. R. HUTTON	...	...
" P. J. F. PARSONS	...	...
" W. DALGARNO	...	...
" T. B. HOBSON	...	...
" A. S. TEVIOTDALE	...	...
" R. N. B. BRUNT	...	...
" J. R. C. TAYLOR	...	...
" M. HAINES	...	...
" T. GODLEY	...	...
SIR THOMAS ELDERTON, K.C.I.R.	...	...
MR. R. G. MACKENZIE	...	...
" L. O. TASKER	...	...
" W. G. HENDRY	...	...
" M. S. CHUNDER	...	...
" G. F. ELMSLIE	...	...
" N. BHATTACHARJEE	...	...
" G. A. MASON	...	...
" W. M. WHYTE	...	...
" F. H. KIDD	...	...
" T. B. NIMMO	...	...
" A. McLAREN	...	...
" F. F. M. FERGUSON	...	...
" W. J. ORANGE	...	...
" F. WATSON	...	...
" J. AITKEN	...	...
" N. D. ARMSTRONG	...	...
" H. G. MACHERSON	...	...
" W. H. BRAMWELL	...	...
" A. J. BLKINS, C.B.E.	...	...
" W. E. SKIPWITH	...	...

(3)

SIR KENNETH NICOLSON	...	...
MR. NEIL BRODIE	...	...
" J. H. WATSON	...	...
" J. BATLEN	...	...
" J. LEISK	...	...
" A. ARTHUR	...	...
" H. A. LUKE	...	...
" H. G. SALE	...	...
" E. LYNE	...	...
" B. B. BHADURY	...	...
SIR HARRY BURN	...	...
MR. J. P. GOENKA	...	...
" W. B. CARTY	...	...
" R. JOHNSON	...	...
" J. SIMPSON	...	...
SIR JOHN BURDER	...	...
MR. E. A. PATERSON	...	...
" P. F. S. WARREN	...	...
" G. J. GARDNER	...	...
" O. LANG	...	...
" R. B. STEWART	...	...
" JOHN ROSS	...	...
" D. W. LONGAIR	...	...
" A. J. ELDER	...	...
" H. P. D. SYKES	...	...
" G. FAIGT	...	...
" R. F. B. SPENCE	...	...
" K. S. FROLIKS	...	...

(4)

LORD INCHCAPE	...	
MR. A. T. OER DEAS	...	
" L. P. S. BOURNE	...	Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Co.
" A. H. FORD	...	
" G. R. DODS	...	
" W. A. HUITT	...	
" H. SHEDDEN	...	
" H. C. BANNERMAN	...	" Macneill & Co.
" A. W. TAYLOR	...	
" A. F. GLOAG	...	
" A. E. GOLLEDGE	...	" A. & J. Main & Co. Ltd.
" J. S. S. GIBSON	...	
" C. S. TAYLOR	...	
" A. H. SYME	...	" A. M. Mair & Co.
" T. S. PROSSER	...	
" J. R. WALKER, M.L.A.	...	" McLeod & Co. Ltd.
" G. ASTE	...	" Mercantile Bank of India Ltd.
" F. H. SHARPE	...	" Merz & McLellan (Indip)
" H. CHISWELL JONES	...	" Metal Box Co. of India Ltd.
" J. C. NIVEN	...	
" B. C. M. BOMFORD	...	" D. L. Millar & Co.
" R. J. MCARTHUR	...	
" R. C. COOPER	...	" Morgan, Walker & Co.
" D. H. FERGUSON	...	" Mylton, Wallace & Co.
" R. V. FARRELL	...	National Carbon Co. (India) Ltd.
" R. W. WILSON	...	Nestle & Anglo Swiss Condensed Milk (Export) Co. Ltd.
" E. SPÜHLER	...	
" R. H. MCLEOD	...	New Zealand Insurance Co. Ltd.
" S. G. SMITH	...	Northern Assurance Co. Ltd.
" T. W. LEVERETT	...	Norwich Union Life Insurance Society.
" M. KERRIDGE	...	
" J. McFARLANE, M.C.	...	
" A. H. GALLOWAY	...	Messrs. Octavius Steel & Co. Ltd.
" H. ROWAN HODGE, M.L.A.	...	" Orr, Dignam & Co.

(5)

MR. D. F. ANDERSON	...	Peninsular & Oriental Steam Nav. Co.
" D. A. REID	...	Messrs. Pigott Chapman & Co.
" W. J. YOUNIE	...	" Price, Waterhouse, Peat & Co.
" A. J. MALES	...	
" H. K. JACKSON	...	Prudential Assurance Co. Ltd.
" C. M. KEDDIE	...	
" J. J. VLASTO	...	Messrs. Ralli Brothers Ltd.
" D. P. GOENKA	...	" Ramdutt, Ramkissendass
" A. R. HOLT	...	Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation.
" H. B. SCOTT	...	Royal Insurance Co. Ltd.
" J. E. WATERFIELD	...	Messrs. Shaw, Wallace & Co.
" T. B. HILEY	...	
" W. T. MACFARLANE	...	" Sinclair, Murray & Co. Ltd.
" A. R. MACNAB	...	" S. K. F. Ball Bearing & Co. Ltd.
" W. J. B. WALKER	...	
" G. A. JOHNSON	...	The Statesman Ltd.
" N. G. SMITH	...	Messrs. R. Steel & Co. Ltd.
" S. W. KAYE	...	" Stewarts & Lloyds of India Ltd.
" H. G. WOUTERS	...	" W. H. Targett & Co. Ltd. (Capital)
" P. J. THOMAS	...	" J. Thomas & Co.
" W. E. CORN	...	" John Thompson Wolverhampton (India) Ltd.
" M. FLEMING	...	
" J. R. WALKER	...	" W. J. Walker & Co.
" T. H. STANTON	...	" Wiggins Teap & Alex Pirie (Export) Ltd.

By invitation.

THE HON'BLE MR. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED	...	Minister, Government of Bengal.
THE HON'BLE MR. TARAK NATH MUHIKHERJEE C.I.E., M.B.E., ...	...	Minister, Government of Bengal.

(6)

MR. H. S. E. STEVENS C.S.I., C.I.E., M.C., I.C.S.	...	Chief Secretary Government of Bengal.
" M. K. KIRPALANI	...	Government of Bengal. Deptt. of Commerce & Labour.
" S. N. RAY C.I.E., I.C.S.	...	Commissioner, Civil Supplies, Calcutta.
" A. S. LARKIN C.I.E., I.C.S.	...	Additional Member, Board of Revenue, Government of Bengal.
" A. C. HARTLEY, C.I.E., O. B. E., I.C.S.	...	Director General, Food.
" P. N. McWILLIAM, I.C.S.	...	Labour Commissioner, Bengal.
" S. C. MITTER, B.Sc. (Engt.) London A.M.I.E. (Ind.)	...	Director of Industries, Bengal.
" S. C. SATYAWADI, M.A.	...	Collector of Customs, Calcutta.
RAI BAHADUR J. N. GHOSH M.A.	...	Director of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics.
MAJOR GENERAL F. R. R. BUCHER, C.B., O.B.E., M.C.	...	G. O. C-in-C, Bengal & Assam Area.
MR. S. J. FLETCHER	...	American Consul General
MONSIEUR A. HÜPPERTS	...	Consul General for Belgium.
MR. K. E. MACKENZIE	...	H. M. Trade Commissioner, Calcutta.
" J. W. STOODLEY	...	
MONSIEUR CHRISTIAN FOUCHET	...	French Trade Commissioner.
MR. E. A. BENSON	...	Australian Government Trade Commissioner.
" W. P. TSAI	...	Consul General for China.
" P. N. BANERJEE	...	Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University.
" D. K. SANJAL, O.B.E.	...	Calcutta University Appointments Board.
" N. SHERRARD-SMITH	...	Post Master General, Bengal.
" W. C. G. BRODIE	...	Tonnage Co-ordinator.
SIR L. P. MISRA	...	
MR. S. G. TAYLOR, C.I.E.	...	Inspector General of Police, Bengal.
" D. R. HARDWICK	...	Commissioner of Police, Calcutta.
" R. STRAD	...	Dy. Commissioner of Police, Special Branch.
SIR ALBERT GLADSTONE, BART	...	Ogilvy Gallanders & Co. London.

(7)

SIR BIREN MUKERJEE	...	"	Martin & Co.
MR. F. J. READ	...	"	Master, Calcutta Trades Association.
" C. E. CLARKE	...	do	do
" KASSIM A. MOHOMED	...	"	Muslim Ch. of Commerce.
" A. W. ADAMJEE	...	do	do
" K. P. GOENKA	...	"	Indian Chamber of Commerce.
" KANAI LALL JATIA	...	do	do
" C. L. JATIA	...	do	do
" DARAB CURSETJI DRIVER	...	do	do
" M. P. BIRLA	...	do	do
" J. K. MITTER	...	"	Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.

The President, in opening the proceedings addressed the meeting as follows:—

Your Excellency and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasant duty to-day on behalf of the members of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to welcome Your Excellency to our Annual General Meeting. It is indeed a privilege to have the Governor of this Province as our Chief Guest and we are grateful to Your Excellency for accepting our invitation to attend our meeting and for consenting to address us.

Your Excellency's presence amongst us to-day opens a new chapter in the history of the Chamber, the oldest in the Province, and indeed in India—taking the date of its original constitution in 1834.

I am glad, Gentlemen, to have this opportunity of paying a tribute to Sir Frederick Burrows' untiring efforts on behalf of Bengal and her people in a year of exceptional difficulties. We extend to him and to his Ministers our good wishes and our fullest co-operation in the task that lies ahead of restoring to this Province tranquillity and prosperity.

To Lady Burrows also our thanks are due for her activities in charitable and other public work. (*Applause*)

To our other distinguished guests, including Ministers of this Province, we similarly extend a most warm welcome. We were hoping to have the

pleasure of welcoming the Hon. Mr. Suhrawardy, Chief Minister, but his duties in the Legislature have at the last moment prevented him from coming.

I would like also to refer to another distinguished servant of India, who, though never at the Annual General Meeting of the Bengal Chamber, was on a number of occasions a welcome guest under this roof. I refer to His Excellency the Viceroy.

I am sure you will not wish me to let this occasion pass without expressing the regret we all feel that the onrush of events has led to the impending departure from our midst of one whom we so much respect and admire for all he has done for India. Field Marshall Lord Wavell has worked unflinching, and with sincerity and high purpose, to bring to India the autonomy which she desires and for which she has now so brief an interval to prepare. History will not fail to put in its right perspective the statesmanship of a Viceroyalty which has helped India to advance so far on her path to complete self-government. (Applause)

The year under review has been, on the whole, a disappointing one. We started it in high hopes that we were on the threshold of prosperity; emerging from the depression of War, with men's hearts lighter from the threat removed of enemy hatred and killing, we plunged into hatreds presumably communal, into industrial unrest, and into the dreadful incidents of last Autumn, when men's passions were unloosed against each other and we Europeans had to stand by, powerless to aid our friends of the other communities in their mortal distress.

Without wishing to recall to mind details, best forgotten, of the dark deeds of that time, in Calcutta and elsewhere, I would be failing in my duty if I did not pay a tribute to those in authority who restored order: the Police who worked without rest, and the Military—British and Indian—who came to aid both police and public. In how many countries outside the kindly circle of the British Commonwealth would the coming of the soldiers have been so welcomed, as they were by all communities last August?

The disturbances had their direct and indirect repercussion on affairs and the index of industrial activity in this Province is now lower than at any time since we were under the threat of Japanese bombing; with the cause now deplorably man-made and not attributable to famine or flood or other super-human happening. I leave this to point its own moral.

Not that labour has not some cause for discontent however well-treated by his employer. No dearness allowance can make up to a man for inability to procure his daily wants, and one cannot condemn the factory or office worker for dissatisfaction at the difficulty of obtaining his necessities, not to mention the small luxuries to which he may reasonably consider himself entitled; and (though their scarcity is not the employer's fault) until foodstuffs and cloth are available in plenty and consumer goods in fair supply, we must, I think, still anticipate that labour will be fruitful material for agitators, especially those whose real desire is a breakdown of the existing social order.

The employer in his turn may well complain that labour is not allowed to settle down. Political slogans result in students' demonstrations, Law and Order is flouted, riots ensue, public transport workers go out on strike; when they return, another political demonstration is instigated, the Police have to take action, a general strike is called in protest, the trains go out again—in a sorry succession of unhappy and unnecessary events. What their cost is in money no one can calculate, but in terms of loss of production the cost must be immense and in these days of scarcity unpardonable.

One preventible complication is defiance by labour of the machinery of adjudication; and here the employer has a definite grievance against Government, as we have pointed out at several Labour Conferences in New Delhi, for their reluctance to take action against Labour Leaders who refuse to submit to the process of adjudication or to accept its findings, whereas the employer is compelled to do both. We are glad that the Bengal Government has now faced up to this issue in respect of the Calcutta Tramway strike.

Of particular concern to the business community has been the spread of unrest to the clerical staffs. Realising though they did that the unrest was not entirely spontaneous, your Committee recognised that with hopes of an improvement in living conditions still deferred, a move must be made to increase both dearness allowances and basic rates of pay, and a Sub-Committee was formed to advise on both points.

The Sub-Committee did an admirable, expeditious piece of work, and as a result of their findings, your Committee, as you know, sponsored a recommendation to members in respect of salary scales of clerical and subordinate office staffs; and those who followed these recommendations (and I believe most of our members have done so) have the satisfaction of knowing they have fairly met the needs of their staffs and can rebut threats from outsiders, such as we have recently been favoured with, to

call ill-advised strikes, which can only be detrimental to the interests of the clerks concerned, as more than one instance has already demonstrated.

Clerical staffs and factory workers are not the only ones who find current conditions unpalatable. At our meeting last year I voiced our pleasure in welcoming the return of staff from active service to take up civilian work again. Their welcome is to some extent marred, as is that of the newcomer to Calcutta, by the housing and transport difficulties which still obtain; and despite the Rent Control Act which our Government wisely decided to continue after the Defence of India Rules lapsed, ugly stories are heard of demands for extortionate premiums or for extravagant prices for furniture in return for leases. It is to be hoped that firm action by the Rent Controller, and full recourse to the protection of the law by the unfortunate victims, will check these abuses.

Combined with this is the urgent necessity for the de-requisitioning by Government of residential as of industrial accommodation. We all know of houses requisitioned for unsuitable purposes, or—may I say—for unsuitable people, and to us it seems very wrong to allow premises de-requisitioned by one Government Department to be promptly requisitioned by another. It is strange, too, that Finance Ministers in the Provinces and at the Centre have not yet woken up to the waste of the taxpayer's money that is entailed in the delay in de-requisitioning.

And what of the requisitioning of goods? Lack of forethought in buying the country's requirements is remedied by the easy device of requisitioning but can it be right to requisition at prices no longer current and leave the trader to bear the replacement loss? We all support India's action in supplying the Argentine with gunnies, in return for foodstuffs, but a national debt should not be liquidated by the sequestration of private interests, and of a particular section at that.

I am told that I must admire official methods as applied to administrative problems, but when Government enters the field of commerce, the regions of Profit and Loss Accounts, what a contrary picture unfolds itself. We might forgive the increasing of our telephone charges if only the system was efficient and the telephone directory legible and up to date.

Speaking for a moment to the European members of this Chamber, our community must continue to do its part in the Legislatures so long as the 1935 Act is in force, and I would remind you that the Secretary will always welcome the names of men willing to give their part-time

services both in the Legislatures and in the Calcutta Corporation as well as for other administrative and semi-secretarial posts. Many of those carrying on in these spheres, particularly in the Legislatures, have been doing this voluntary work for a long time and feel the need for the relief which only new blood can bring to them. Non-official Europeans have a proud record of voluntary public service in this country, and I am bold enough to believe our services will still be welcomed in the new India, even when we have withdrawn from the Legislatures.

A good deal is being said in the press and elsewhere on the subject of India's sterling balances and I do not wish to add anything here that might be regarded as controversial. But I think I may reasonably make the observation that, by and large, and over the fairly extensive period that will obviously be required for their liquidation, the balances will be mainly repaid through the ordinary processes of trade and commerce. It is in such a connection that I believe British business in India has a valuable role to play, forming as it does a link in the commerce between the two countries and constituting one of the chief agencies for the creation of the necessary balance of payments.

Any talk, therefore, of British business leaving India is no less harmful to this country than it is to the United Kingdom, on whose prosperity India depends for the settlement of her indebtedness.

What of the men who give their whole-time service to the administration?

We non-officials can hold no brief for men in Government service, even our own countrymen; and it ill-befits business men to comment on the controversy regarding compensation for Englishmen or Indians who may be retiring from Government service in the face of a drastic change in the method of governing India. But, when responsible Indians stress India's need of trained personnel for the purpose of developing the resources of this country, I cannot refrain from asking, why dissipate a force of men perhaps unique in its efficiency and probity and let India lose the benefit of their administrative and executive experience?

I know that men can be hired from abroad, technically qualified in perhaps any direction required, and that by making it worth these men's while (a progressively more difficult task, by the way, with taxation and prices so high) she can secure their services for a limited period; but how can such men, however conscientious, be compared with those they will be replacing? It has always been possible to criticise the Indian Civil

Service and the other services too, but at least this can be said: they may have been paid well, but no pay as such would have secured the selfless service which so many of them, European and Indian, have given to India in the past. (Applause) Unfortunately conditions have been made so bad for officials that the heart has largely gone out of them. This could surely yet be remedied. At any rate, India will be the poorer for their going.

In my speech at this Chamber Meeting a year ago I expressed regret that nothing much had been done to put into effect the many official schemes of post-war development; and even now little progress seems likely until the political problems of this country are solved.

There is another handicap, not generally recognised. Money is plentiful on paper but the necessary resources must be forthcoming before planning can be translated into actuality. And enough resources, whether in labour or material or skilled supervision, are just not available for all the schemes that are in prospect.

One scheme of local interest that promises well is the Kanchrapara Area Development Scheme which Government has now in hand. In this area industrialists are to be encouraged to build not only factories but the residential quarters needed for the housing of their labour, all in the praiseworthy effort to create garden cities in conjunction with industry and at the same time to relieve the congestion of crowded Calcutta. All will wish the project well.

It is gratifying that the terms of reference of the Calcutta Terminal Facilities Committee, which has recently been appointed, include the assumption that suburban railway passenger services in the Calcutta area, as well as the East Indian Railway main line as far as Dhanbad, will be electrified as soon as possible.

It is perhaps not too optimistic to throw one's mind forward to a day, not many years distant, when Calcutta will be an even greater port than it is at present, with ocean-going steamers coming up to the docks through a ship canal unaffected by tides or varying depths of water, to the terminus of a far-flung network of electrified railway services and no doubt with urgent and precious freight being busily ferried in and out by means of cargo planes serving Malaya, Australia and the Far East, and westward the Middle East and Europe.

In the background of this transport network will, I hope, be an improved Calcutta, clean and with wide roads cleared of animal-drawn

traffic, including the iniquitous and backbreaking form of vehicle known as the handcart, and—let us hope—with the present pall of dust and smoke that perpetually hangs over the city removed at source by a return to dustless roads and a change-over to electricity and smokeless fuel for cooking purposes.

And now, Gentlemen, for our own domestic affairs. The printed report will have told you of the matters your Committee have been busy with during the year.

One, which we hope will give progressively good results, is the starting of classes for teaching of Hindustani and Bengali to our European assistants. Though personally I believe that it will be in the interests of India for English to remain the language of culture and international intercourse and accordingly do not believe that Hindi or Urdu will replace it, yet I am sure that a knowledge of the language is a most helpful means for the European to gain an understanding of the people of this country which all will agree is so valuable and essential.

I had hoped that before my term of office was over, this Royal Exchange Building could have been remodelled so as to permit the excellent hall on the ground floor to be utilised for meetings such as this, and incidentally set free more office space for the Chamber's activities. Lack of the necessary material, however, has so far made it impossible to plan to make the hall proof against the atrocious sounds which come into us from Clive Street and Royal Exchange Place. We have negated their fury to some extent by providing loudspeakers, a boon in a large meeting to the unfortunate speaker who otherwise has to strain his vocal chords in trying to make the back rows hear. But a much greater degree of sound-proofing, such as by double-glass doors, and some measure of ventilation, will be needed to render the Royal Exchange capable of being utilised for the purpose I have mentioned. The matter is under review by architects and it will be one for the incoming Committee or their successors to prosecute to a conclusion.

The thought may occur, why do we not minimise the nuisance of the 'noises off' at their source instead of trying to neutralise them by sound-proofing and amplification? One remedy, of course, is to abolish motor horns in Clive Street and I commend to our local authorities, in replacement of the existing law, the application to Calcutta, at least from Clive Street to South Calcutta, of the rule in force in certain European countries making it an offence to sound a motor horn except in a grave emergency, such as when a pedestrian suddenly steps in front of one's

vehicle, and definitely not to allow a driver to proceed the length of Clive Street with his finger on the button of the horn—as I can hear one now as I speak—or tirelessly sound a bull-horn.

The food situation in North East India is still not assured, and perhaps will not be until all chance of speculative profit-making vanishes with the appearance of rice in quantity from Burma or Siam. It is devoutly to be hoped that this consummation will not much longer be delayed.

Meanwhile the Chamber Food Scheme continues in full swing and to the general satisfaction of participants, with notable exceptions such as when Government stocks came down to zero and the poorest quality of rice was issued to the Chamber for distribution—an occurrence which led to some most unfortunate assaults by workmen on their factory managers.

Another source of discontent amongst labour, as I have already said, is the difficulty employers have of getting supplies for them of other essential foodstuffs. Mustard oil is one example, and here our Government are justified in complaining of the difficulty they experience in getting the producing provinces to part with supplies—a grievance which I dealt with recently in my speech to the Associated Chambers.

Factory executives will indeed be glad when rationing can be discontinued and their responsibility ceases for such difficulties over which they or we can have no control.

Our sympathy goes out to them and our thanks for their co-operation in this difficult task of getting foodstuffs distributed to a million work-people and their dependants. And to Mr. McFarlane and the other members of the Foodstuffs Sub-Committee, the Chamber office, the staffs of the Chamber Depots, our gratitude is due and hereby tendered for the extremely good work they have continued to put in supervising the distribution during 1946 of foodstuffs to the value of 4½ crores of rupees.

Before I leave the subject of food I must refer to the conflicting claims of food crops versus cash crops, with particular repercussion on the supply of jute. The point has been made before, but it cannot be made too often, that the world depends on Bengal jute for bagging its foodstuffs and it behoves our Government to see that jute is produced in sufficient quantity to keep the world's essential needs satisfied, quite apart from avoiding the encouragement of substitutes. The necessary acreage of jute will not substantially interfere with the production of rice.

One word about your new Committee. It is, if I may say so, a good one. Your interests will be safe in their hands. Mr. Cumberbatch, as I know from happy experience of his aid to me as Vice-President during the past year, will make a wise and able President. Mr. Benthall will be an admirable Vice.

I want now to thank them and the remainder of the outgoing Committee for the work they have put in during the year and for the unflinching support they have given me as their President.

I take this opportunity also of thanking Mr. Fairbairn and the Staff of the Chamber for their continuous, painstaking work during a more than ordinarily busy year. Those who come into contact with Mr. Fairbairn, and these must include most of our Chamber members, will appreciate that it is no mere form of words when I say that we are all very fortunate to have him as our Secretary. He in turn would, I know, wish me to add that he is loyally supported by a most able staff.

Some of the present Committee were not available to stand for election again this year owing to their being due for Home Leave. Mr. Warren is one, Mr. McFarlane is another, and your particular thanks are due to both for their work for the Chamber, with other preoccupations to take up their time.

Sir Harry Burn, after years of public-spirited service, is about to leave India on retirement. It is he who was instrumental in the founding of the East India Fund, which raised large sums for the purchase of aeroplanes and other munitions of war and contributed largely to wartime charities, and he was its indefatigable Chairman throughout. To this and many other activities, he added the not over-thankful task of Chairman of our National Service Advisory Committee, a task he has accomplished with the thoroughness and skill he brings to everything he does. You will wish, I know, to show your appreciation of Bobby Burn's services to the community and to India by your hearty applause. *(Applause)*.

There is just one further matter I must refer to before I sit down, and that is the recent pronouncement by His Majesty's Government on the transference of power to responsible Indian hands by June 1948.

The true spirit of comradeship is going to be put to a supreme test between now and the Summer of next year. On the decisions which the communities will make between now and then depends the fate of a large part of the human race. May the people of India realise that in politics, as

in business and professional life, they are friends to one another; and may they find a friendly solution of the great political problem with which their country is now faced. (*Loud applause*)

His Excellency the Governor of Bengal:—

Mr. President and Gentlemen.

When I accepted the invitation of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to attend and address the Annual General Meeting, I realized that I was imposing on myself a task which none of my predecessors has had to face—the task of making a speech about the political and administrative situation in this Province in the afternoon instead of after a St. Andrew's Day Dinner. (*Laughter*) However, I am encouraged by the less tangible but no less real support of the good wishes to myself and my wife conveyed by Mr. Townend on your behalf, and I thank you all for those kindly words.

After nearly ten years of Provincial Autonomy you do not need to be reminded that a Governor, though the head of the Provincial Administration, is not primarily concerned with the shaping of his Government's policy, still less with its execution. This may be borne in mind when I deal with certain points raised in Mr. Townend's speech. But I should hasten to add that my relationship with the Ministry which assumed office very soon after my arrival in this country—and which subsequent events have shown to possess the steady support of the majority of the Legislature—my relationship with them, I say, has been extremely cordial.

Your President rightly gave pride of place to the problem of unrest among industrial labour, for that must be the thing which is uppermost in the minds of many of you, with over 50,000 workers on strike in the Calcutta industrial area at the moment, and probably more in the offing. It cannot be denied that the conditions under which industrial labour has to work in this country are very far from satisfactory. Apart from the special problems resulting from the dislocation of our economic life by the war—particularly the shortage of food and cloth—there are the chronic problems of ill-health and inadequate housing. I give full credit to many members of this Chamber for the welfare measures which they have undertaken for their employees, realizing as they do that the prosperity of any industry depends on a contented labour force. But you would yourselves admit that much remains to be done.

One of the most important rights of any worker is the right of association with his fellow-workers for the representation of his grievances

and the betterment of his conditions. The Trade Union movement in this country is still in its infancy, but with growing industrialization of India its power is bound to develop. What you, as nationals of a highly industrialized country with a fully developed Trade Union movement, should see is that you give a fair deal, possibly a trifle more than a fair deal, to your employees, erring on the side of generosity in your relationship with the men. In this connection, wages are not everything—amenities count for a lot too. Study the feeling of your men, and see that they are treated as human beings, as people who play an important part in the firm. Secondly, the Union leaders should be men who have themselves worked in the factory, the mine, the shipyard, or whatever it may be. (*Applause*) Unfortunately, the low standards of education generally prevailing here make it very difficult to find leaders of this type. What is very desirable to avoid is the possibility of the genuine grievances of the workers being exploited for political purposes by unscrupulous persons who are more intent on furthering their own political careers by causing industrial strife than on removing the grievances. It is also essential that there should be in existence a fair and rapid machinery for settling Trade Union disputes. I myself have always advocated that the strike weapon should be the last to be used and not the first and that it should only be resorted to when all other resources have failed. The desirability of the settlement of disputes between employer and employee by direct negotiations cannot be controverted. Nevertheless it is the duty of the Government in the last resort to ensure if possible that disputes are settled peacefully and expeditiously by the machinery of adjudication.

I pass now to a matter which affects not only your employees, particularly your clerical staffs, but also yourselves—the high level of rents and the shortage of accommodation. The provisions of the Rent Control Order under the Defence of India Rules were continued by an Ordinance, which I promulgated on the advice of my Ministers when the Defence of India Rules lapsed last September. The operation of the Ordinance is being extended temporarily to give the Legislature full time to consider the provisions on their merits. The presence of a Rent Control Act on the Statute Book, however, is not enough by itself, when the means for enforcing it are inadequate. The main reasons for the present wholesale evasion of the law are the absence of a full-time Rent Controller with the power to initiate action, and the connivance of large numbers of tenants. The Provincial Government are actively considering the appointment of a full-time Rent Controller. As regards the progress of derequisitioning we have steadfastly refused to take over requisitioned property for our own

officers or for any normal work. The sole exception to this general rule was when we were faced with the problem of providing for literally thousands of victims of communal riots in Calcutta, East Bengal and Bihar. Apart from emergency relief purposes we have not only refrained from taking over available buildings but have instructed all Departments, where possible, to vacate requisitioned buildings by the end of March. (Applause) I am glad to say that the number of requisitioned buildings is rapidly diminishing.

It would, I admit, be tempting to use our powers of requisitioning for other purposes, particularly for some of our most urgent development schemes. But such a use, or rather misuse, of power would be indefensible, and probably illegal into the bargain. Nevertheless, as Mr. Townsend rightly observed, the shortage of building material and of trained engineers is one of the main bottlenecks in Bengal's Development Plan. You would perhaps like to hear a little more about that Plan, which though still far from materializing on the ground is slowly taking shape. During the last few months a great deal of work has been done by Ministers in Committee upon the material hammered out by their departmental advisers on the Development Board. The five-year plan has been converted from a vision into a design; a definite programme has been set out making clear how much of that design we can actually aim at fulfilling in the next five years in the light of the financial resources at present reasonably within our sight. The Provincial pattern has been broken up into patterns for each district, which can be clearly seen and readjusted locally by those concerned with their local execution. A good deal of work has been done in the districts themselves to inaugurate the local organization of development and to find out in practice how the men on the spot can best work as a team. An organization of this kind cannot be put down readymade. It must be built up by experience and practice—for the task in hand is nothing less than creating what has been called the "Third Arm of Government", and I may add in passing that the "third arm" will only work if the other two arms—law and order and revenue—are strong and effective.

This is not the time for me to speak of individual projects: but there is one that I cannot pass over. Within the last two months the great project for the Damodar Valley has shown signs of coming very near to acceptance. This project represents much more than a great enterprise in engineering: it stands for an entirely new approach to the physical, economic and social problems of a considerable area of India and all who are hoping for that new approach must fervently wish success to the final

conference which is still to be held at Delhi on this matter. My Minister for Irrigation is fully alive to the great importance of this project.

The food situation in this Province is a subject of such importance and complexity that you would not thank me if I were to treat it at the length which it deserves. The situation last year was one of great anxiety to my ministers and myself, and it is gratifying that thanks to the energetic steps taken by all concerned, a crisis was averted. I shall content myself here with only two points. The first is to express my appreciation of the excellent work of the Foodstuffs Sub-committee of the Chamber: the distribution of foodstuffs worth more than three million pounds to a million people is indeed a formidable task. The second is to demur from the suggestion that the necessary acreage of jute will not substantially interfere with the production of rice. Every extra "anna" of jute acreage means 100,000 tons less of cleaned rice. The decision to fix this year's figure at eight annas called for a very careful weighing of the many conflicting factors—the world demand for jute, the threat of substitutes, the ability to control the acreage effectively, and the imperative necessity of growing as much paddy as possible—the list is not exhaustive. I trust that the decision will prove a wise one.

There are two other matters in your President's speech on which I should like to touch very briefly. Firstly, I must correct a small error about the law relating to the sounding of motor horns. Rule 191 of the Motor Vehicles Rules runs as follows:—

"*Sound Signals—restrictions on use of—*(a) No driver of a motor vehicle shall sound the horn or other device for giving audible warning with which the motor vehicle is equipped, or shall cause or allow any other person to do so, needlessly or continuously or to an extent beyond that which is reasonably necessary to ensure safety." (Laughter)

I shall not trespass on the preserves of my friends in the High Court by attempting to define the words "needlessly" and "reasonably". Secondly, I should like to associate myself most cordially with all that has been said about Sir Harry Burn. I wish that I, like you, could reckon his friendship in terms of years instead of months. But perhaps it is as well for my peace of mind that he is leaving: if he stayed much longer, even I might become a champion of artificial fertilizers! (Laughter)

Before I conclude, you will expect, and rightly expect, to hear my comments on the recent statement of His Majesty's Government, especially as it affects the European business community in Bengal. It would

not be fitting for me to refer at any length to the forthcoming change of Viceroy, but I cannot refrain from saying that with the departure of Lord Wavell I shall be losing a leader and a friend, whose wisdom and courage during the past year have helped me more than I can say. (Applause) We in Bengal have special cause to welcome Lord Mountbatten, as the leader of the Allied Forces who repelled the enemy threat to this Province.

It is 190 years since the East India Company became the Zemindar of the Twenty-four Parganas. Now the wheel is coming full circle. In sixteen short months British political power in this great sub-continent will come to an end. The fixing of a definite date has jolted us all, Indians and British alike, out of our usual lines of thought. You, as leaders of the European community in and around Calcutta, should make your future plans on the definite assumption that by the middle of next summer there may be no British troops here, no British civil servants, no British Governor. Nevertheless, I wholeheartedly endorse His Majesty's Government's belief expressed in paragraph 14 of their statement that "British commercial and industrial interests in India can look forward to a fair field for their enterprise under the new conditions." It was British enterprise that developed industry in Bengal. You have built up a reputation over many generations for honest business dealing; the hall-mark "Made in England" will continue to inspire confidence. Two centuries of commerce between India and the United Kingdom have woven a bond of such strength that it will not easily be loosened, and cannot be cut without disaster to both parties. Whatever the future may hold, I cannot believe that your difficulties will be a tithe of the difficulties experienced in the early days of the Company—and I should be reluctant to think that you fall below your forbears in vision and initiative.

You will have to stand on your own legs, without the support which you have enjoyed in the past. It is true that the safeguards in sections 111 to 117 of the Government of India Act, 1935, have scarcely been brought into operation anywhere in India during the last ten years, but they have existed in the background; their continuance cannot be expected. Nor will you have the privileged position of heavily weighted representation in the Provincial Legislature, nor that more subtle form of influence that arises from social ties with the Government. But I do not think that any future Government in this country will be so foolish or short-sighted as to pass measures so discriminatory as to deprive themselves of the goodwill and experience on which international trade depends. I am confident that, provided there is no violent break, you will adjust yourselves to the new conditions.

That proviso brings me near the end of what I want to say. Trade prosperity depends entirely on the maintenance of internal security. The lowering of the index of industrial activity in Calcutta since the riots of last August is sufficient proof of that, if indeed proof is need of such an axiom. And here I should like to stress certain passages in His Majesty's Government's statement which have received all too little publicity, though to me they seem the core of the problem. Let me read them to you:—

"It is with great regret that His Majesty's Government find that there are still differences among Indian parties which are preventing the Constituent Assembly from functioning as it was intended that it should. It is of the essence of the plan that the Assembly should be fully representative. His Majesty's Government desire to hand over their responsibility to authorities established by a constitution approved by all parties in India in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's plan. Continued peace and security are more than ever necessary to-day if the full possibilities of economic development are to be realized and a higher standard of life attained by the Indian people. His Majesty's Government are anxious to hand over their responsibilities to a Government which, resting on the sure foundation of the support of the people, is capable of maintaining peace and administering India with justice and efficiency. It is therefore essential that all parties should sink their differences in order that they may be ready to shoulder the great responsibilities which will come upon them next year."

It is only in the undesirable event of the parties not sinking their differences in the next few months, and proceeding to work out a constitution on the lines of the Cabinet Mission's Plan, that the much more hazardous alternative will arise of a transfer of power to an undefined and as yet undefinable authority or authorities.

The position of Bengal will be of special importance in the political developments of the coming year, and Calcutta itself will be a focal point of interest. One sixth of the population of India live in this Province, and though Calcutta is the biggest centre of industry in India and a port of world-wide importance, the great majority of Bengalis are still cultivators. All communities have in the past helped to build up the present fabric of the Province, and all communities should share in her future prosperity. The development of industry unaccompanied by a parallel development of agriculture will be wasted effort, for there will not be enough food for the factory workers. The interests of the two major communities in Bengal are so closely interwoven that they will stand or fall together.

What, you may ask, can we do to help that co-operation between Hindus and Muslims without which a peaceful transfer of power will be well nigh impossible? You are men of influence and I urge you all to use that influence with your Hindu and Muslim friends in the critical months—indeed I would say rather the critical weeks—that lie ahead, so that they may come together. Such action would be commendable from motives of mere self-interest, but I trust that you will be prompted by higher motives than that. It was no idle talk when a few days ago General Marshall said in Washington—"An India torn by civil strife could conceivably become a source of new international tensions in a world only now beginning to grope its way back to peace."

You, Gentlemen, stand in a key position to-day: see that you use that position wisely while you have time. *(Applause)*

MR. H. D. CUMBERBATCH: It is my pleasant privilege to propose on behalf of this Chamber of Commerce a vote of thanks to His Excellency the Governor for his presence amongst us and for his wise words to us this afternoon.

I can assure His Excellency, on the Chamber's behalf, that the advice he has given to us to-day will receive our very close attention.

We are not unmindful of the innumerable calls upon our Governor's time and sincerely appreciate seeing him with us. It is not surprising however that he is unable to remain with us while we complete our deliberations.

We have not before had the honour of our Governor's presence at our Bengal Chamber meetings. I trust therefore you will forgive me, gentlemen, if, what I am about to say might appear a glimpse of the obvious but it is to ensure that everyone understands the drill. While His Excellency withdraws, this meeting will adjourn but only for that purpose and will take up the rest of the business on the President's return to the Chair.

I now, on behalf of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, tender to you, Your Excellency, our sincere thanks.

(His Excellency then withdrew from the meeting.)

THE PRESIDENT:—

Gentlemen, I shall not detain you much longer. Members have had in their hands, for some days, the Annual Report and Accounts of the Chamber. The report, as usual, is a factual record of the business dealt with during the year and will, I hope, be regarded as satisfactory.

As regards 1946 finance, the Licensed Measurers Department has emerged with a surplus of Rs. 12,321-10-6 which reflects a close adjustment of income, and consequently of rates, to the essential expenditure of income, and consequently of rates, to the essential expenditure of the Department consisting mainly of establishment charges. In common with us all, the Chamber in both its Departments has had to adjust salary and dearness allowance scales to the still rising cost of living and this, in the case of the Licensed Measurers Department, necessitated an increase from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 30% in the surcharge on basic rates with effect from the 1st December 1946.

The Secretarial Department, for the first time for several years, has turned out on the right side with a surplus of income over expenditure amounting to Rs. 53,655-14-2 which has gone to Capital Account in partial restoration of the inroads on the Chamber's capital made by the successive deficits of the immediate past. The position is to that extent satisfactory just now; but I must point out that the effect of the adjustments made in the scales of salaries and dearness allowances, last August and subsequently, will be fully apparent only during the current year so that it will still be necessary to keep a careful watch on the state of the Chamber's finances.

Gentlemen, I now invite members to comment on the report and accounts or to address the meeting on any subjects of interest to the mercantile community.

There being no questions or comments, the President then moved Resolution I:—

"That the Report be accepted and the Accounts passed."

Mr. J. R. Walker M.L.A., seconded this resolution which was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

THE PRESIDENT:—I now move Resolution II:—

That the election by the Committee of the following Firms and Companies be, and is hereby, confirmed:—

Chamber Members

1. Alliance Assurance Co. Ltd.
2. Boots Pure Drug Co. (India) Ltd.
3. British Insulated Callenders' Cables Ltd.
4. British Metal Corporation (India) Ltd.

5. Century Insurance Co. Ltd.
6. Eagle Star Insurance Co. Ltd.
7. Employers Liability Assurance Corporation Ltd.
8. F. & C. Osler (India) Ltd.
9. General Accident Fire & Life Assurance Corporation Ltd.
10. Greaves Cotton & Crompton Parkinson Ltd.
11. Merz & McLellan (India).
12. Herbertsons Ltd.
13. London Assurance Ltd.
14. Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Ltd.
15. Norwich Union Life Insurance Society.
16. Oxford University Press.
17. Pearl Assurance Co. Ltd.
18. Phoenix Assurance Co. Ltd.
19. Stewart & Co.
20. Sun Life Assurance Co. of Canada.
21. The A. P. V. Engineering Co. Ltd.

Associate Members

- Messrs. G. & M. Fogg Co. Ltd.
 „ F. & O. Lang.
 „ Larsen & Toubro Ltd.

Mr. G. J. Gardner, seconded this resolution which on being put to the meeting was declared carried unanimously.

THE PRESIDENT. Gentlemen, it falls to me to report to you as follows the result of the voting for the election of the Committee of the Chamber for the ensuing year:—

President:

Mr. H. D. Cumberbatch

Vice-President:

Mr. A. P. Benthall

Committee Members:

Mr. W. A. Bell; Mr. H. W. T. Hain, C.B.E.; Mr. A. T. Orr Deas, M.C.; Mr. A. J. Elkins, C.B.E.; Mr. C. W. Miles, O.B.E.; Mr. E. A. Paterson; Mr. L. O. Tasker.

I must on your behalf thank Mr. W. J. Younie and Mr. C. D. Smith for their services as scrutineers of the voting papers. This is only one of

the many debts of gratitude we owe to Mr. Younie who is among those who are leaving us for good this year. To mention but one of his many services to the Chamber, he has been Chairman of the Income Tax Sub-Committee continuously since 1939 with one short break when he was on leave last year—easily a record (*Applause*). I am sure that members generally, who benefit materially from the activities of this hard-worked sub-committee, will wish to join me in conveying thanks to Mr. Younie and our best wishes to him for the future. (*Applause*)

Will the Vice-President please move Resolution No. III?

MR. H. D. CUMBERBATCH:

Gentlemen, before proposing the next resolution which stands in my name, may I take the opportunity so offered to say that I am deeply conscious of the honour you have conferred upon me in appointing me your President for the ensuing year.

I am under no illusion as to the difficulties ahead or the responsibilities involved but you have indeed give me great support with the Vice-President and Committee you have elected and I for my part undertake to give of my best.

I beg to propose:—

That Messrs Lovelock & Lewes be and are hereby re-appointed Auditors to the Chamber at the same remuneration as before.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. W. M. Whyte and carried unanimously.

MR. T. B. NIMMO:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasant duty, and my special privilege, to propose a vote of thanks to the Vice-President and Members of the retiring Committee.

Fortunately for you, Gentlemen, there is no need for me to enlarge on the sterling work performed by the Vice-President and Committee during their exacting year of office: our day-to-day experience of their activities throughout the year as well as the report which has been in your hands surely provide sufficient testimony. But, speaking as one without personal experience of the Committee work, I should like to say that I am fully conscious of the increasing amount of self-sacrificing hard work

that has been put in on our behalf, and I feel sure we all are deeply appreciative of the sacrifice of time and leisure which individual members of the Committee have had to make in our common interests. Especially under present day conditions, when one usually seems to have insufficient time to conduct one's own business affairs, it is asking a good deal of a busy man to add to his responsibilities by serving the Chamber, and we are, indeed, extremely fortunate in having men of proved capacity who willingly come forward and shoulder this additional burden.

You will observe, Gentlemen, how our Vice-President is nobly stepping into the breach to assume a still greater responsibility. Mr. Cumberbatch has just told us that he is under no illusions as to the onerous task that lies ahead of him, and whether his assumption of the President's Chair is a matter that calls for our congratulation, or our commiseration, I would prefer to leave to him to say. But I do suggest that he is as fully deserving of our grateful thanks for his ready acceptance of his new office—in which we wish him all success—as for his work throughout the past year.

And now, Gentlemen of the outgoing Committee, at the end of your arduous year, we wish to offer to you some expression of our grateful appreciation of your excellent work and our recognition of the highly efficient manner in which you have served us during your term of office.

Sir, I therefore have much pleasure in proposing that a cordial vote of thanks be accorded to the Gentlemen of the outgoing Committee for their successful management of the affairs of the Chamber during the past year.

(Loud applause).

SIR JOHN BURDER: We have accorded a very cordial vote of thanks to the outgoing Committee. I would now like to propose a special one for the retiring President, in particular.

I think I am right in saying that it is over 30 years since a President has been in the chair at our annual meetings for two years running. Mr. Townend has attained this distinction by presiding to-day for the second successive year. The days of 30 years ago, however, were times in which the weekend began at 1 p.m. every Thursday. If, Mr. Townend's weekend starts a day before he retires he will be lucky in these very difficult times.

Every President, I imagine, as soon as he has been a few weeks in the chair is quite convinced that he has a task in front of him more difficult than any predecessor has ever had. I think on this occasion you must

whole-heartedly agree that Mr. Townend's experience has borne out that conviction. The past years' tenure of the office of President must have presented more numerous and more difficult problems than any which previous Committees have had to face; and as it devolves on the President to lead the Committee, we owe Mr. Townend a very deep debt of gratitude for the care which our interests have received during the past year. I now propose and ask you to support a very sincere vote of thanks to Mr. Townend. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I thank you, Gentlemen, most cordially on behalf of the outgoing Committee and myself. It is, I know, a source of satisfaction to them—as it is to me—to receive the approbation of our efforts expressed by Mr. Nimmo and Sir John Burder. The Chamber, however, is essentially an organisation of collective effort. The thanks that have just been so generously conveyed must in large measure be passed on—as I now pass them on—to all who have laboured to frame and present the Chamber's opinion; to our hard-working representatives in the Legislatures and in the Calcutta Corporation; to all our representatives on other public bodies; to our affiliated Associations and, last but not least, to the numerous Standing Committees of the Chamber who are our mainstay on all questions of a specialised nature.

For my part, it has been a pleasure—if also a responsibility—to have served as your President and I shall for long treasure happy memories of the help I have received from my colleagues and the support you have all given me during my term of office. *(Applause)*

There being no further business, the proceedings then terminated.

D. C. FAIRBAIRN
Secretary

H. D. TOWNEND
President

REPORT
OF
THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

For the Year 1946.

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NOTE

It was customary, prior to the year 1942, for the Chamber to issue a preliminary Report in this form, for adoption at the Annual General Meeting in accordance with the provisions of the Chamber's Articles of Association; and subsequently to republish and circulate the report as a bound volume (Vol.I) inclusive of the following additional papers and appendices :—

- (1) Proceedings of the Annual General Meeting of the Chamber.
- (2) Bengal Chamber of Commerce :—
 - (a) List of members of the Chamber
 - (b) List of representatives of the Chamber on various bodies.
 - (c) Committees and Sub-Committees of the Chamber and of recognised Associations.
- (3) (a) Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Chamber
- (b) Rules and Regulations of the Chamber Provident Fund.
- (4) Tribunal of Arbitration and Survey Department :—
 - (a) Rules.
 - (b) Scale of Fees.
 - (c) List of Arbitrators and Surveyors for Piece-goods, jute and jute manufactures, Miscellaneous Goods.
- (5) Comparative statement of prices of silver : rates of exchange : remittances to Home Treasury and gold held in European Banks.
- (6) Index to Chamber rulings.
- (7) Chamber Rulings Nos 1 to 15.
- (8) Chamber forms of Boat Note.
- (9) Conversion of sterling freight into Indian currency.
- (10) Conference Bill of Lading.
- (11) Schedule of commission charges
- (12) Tonnage Schedule and measurement rules for the Port of Calcutta.
- (13) Notes on the above Schedule.
- (14) Tonnage Schedule for Port of Rangoon.
- (15) Money, weights and measures of Ceylon, China, India etc.

Though there has been an improvement recently in the paper supply position, the Chamber has not found it possible on this occasion to revert to the pre-war practice referred to above. There will accordingly this year, be no re-publication of this report with the foregoing additional papers and appendices but it is to be noted that :—

- (a) Items (1) and (3) will be issued in separate pamphlet form.
- (b) Items (3) and (4) will be made available to any member requiring and applying for copies.
- (c) The information contained in item (5) will be supplied to any interested member on application.
- (d) Items (6) to (15), which remain unchanged, are to be found in Volume I of the Chamber's Report for 1941.

Similarly there will be no publication, this year, of the former "Correspondence" and "Statistics" Volumes (II and III) of the Chamber Report the issue of which was discontinued in 1940/41.

D. C. FAIRBAIN,
Secretary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE.
Bengal Chamber of Commerce : Committee ...	1
Representation of the Chamber on public bodies ...	1—10
The Royal Exchange : ...	10
The Chamber Tribunal of Arbitration ...	11
Chamber Surveys ...	11
Licensed Measurers Department : Report ...	11
GENERAL—	
The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India : 28th Annual General Meeting ...	12—14
Tribunal of Arbitration : Arbitration under The Calcutta Baled Jute Association Contract Form ...	14
POST-WAR—	
Release of Military Personnel : "B" Release Terms ...	15—17
Resettlement & Re-employment of Ex-Service Personnel & Discharged War-Workers ...	17—18
Civilian Passages—	
(1) By Sea ...	18—20
(2) By Air ...	20—22
War-time Controls : Import Trade Control ...	22—26
Release of Premises used for Storage of Surplus U.S.A. S.S. Supplies ...	26
Post-War development of the manufacture of Electrical Machinery & Equipment ...	26—28
TAXATION—	
Taxation and Expenditure ...	28
The Budget : Indian Finance and Income Tax (Amendment) Acts, 1946 ...	29—30
Excess Profits Tax : Deposits-Refunds ...	30—31
Payment of Taxes ...	31—32

	PAGE.
Taxation of Commercial Partnerships ...	32
Income Tax Appellate Tribunal ...	32—33
Bengal Finance (Sales Tax) Act and Rules, 1941 ...	33
Protective Duties Act, 1946 and Protective Duties Continuation Act, 1946 ...	33—34
The Indian Stamp Act: Stamp Duty on Policies of Insurance covering Accidents to Passengers travelling by Air ...	34—35
Indian Oilseeds Committee Act, 1946 ...	35
BANKING—	
The Banking Companies Bill, 1946 ...	35
The Banking Companies (Restriction of Branches) Act, 1946 ...	36
The Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Act, 1946 ...	36
FINANCE—	
International Monetary Fund: Par Value of the Rupee ...	36—37
Foreign Exchange Regulation Bill ...	37—38
Indian Coinage (Amendment) Bill: Decimalisation of the Coinage ...	38
Industrial Finance Corporation Bill, 1946 ...	38—39
Proposed Legislation for the Regulation of Stock Exchanges on an All-India Basis ...	39—41
GENERAL LEGISLATION—	
Indian Companies (Amendment) Act, 1946 ...	41—42
Proposed Legislation for the Compulsory Registration of Business Names ...	42
Ownership of Shares ...	42—43
Registration of Companies formerly incorporated in Burma and Hongkong (Registration of Transferred Companies Ordinance 1942) ...	43—44
Electricity (Supply) Bill, 1946 ...	44

	PAGE.
The Essential Supplies (Temporary Powers) Act, 1946 ...	44
The Trade Marks Act, 1940 ...	44—45
The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 1946 ...	45
Draft Motor Vehicles (Second Amendment) Bill, 1946 ...	45—46
Bengal Motor Spirit Sales Taxation (Amendment) Act, 1946 ...	46
Introduction of Compulsory Third Party Insurance in India ...	46—47
Estate Duty Bill, 1946 ...	47
The Requisitioned Land (Continuance of Powers) Bill, 1946 ...	47—48
Conversion of Ordinances into Legislation ...	48—49
MARINE—	
Dredging of Lakhya River, Narayanganj ...	49—50
Calcutta Port Commissioners' Charges ...	50
Imports: Port Commissioners' Wharf Rent ...	51
Jute Bales: Inspection at the Docks ...	51—52
Permits for Boarding Vessels in Docks ...	52
Merchant Seamen (Litigation) Act, 1946 ...	52—53
RAILWAYS—	
Railway Budget 1946-47 ...	53
Indian Railways (Amendment) Bill, 1946 ...	53
The Indian Railway Enquiry Committee, 1947 ...	54—55
Participation of State Railways in Road Motor Transport ...	55
Claims against the Railway Administrations in respect of Lost or Damaged Goods ...	55—57
Demurrage due to the Postal Strike and Deliveries of Railway Goods ...	57—58
Central Collection and Delivery Service in Calcutta for E.I., B.A., & B.N. Railways ...	58

POSTS & TELEGRAPHS—

	PAGE.
Delays in Delivery of Mails ...	58—59
Mails from India to Burma, Malaya, Hongkong and China ...	59—60
Air Service to Australia ...	60
Postal Parcels from the U. K. ...	60—62
Delays and Mutilations in Transmission of Foreign and Inland Telegrams ...	62—63
Trunk Telephone Service : Calcutta/Bombay ...	63—64
Telephone Communications between Calcutta and the Surrounding Industrial Area ...	64—65
Congestion at the G. P. O. and C. T. O. ...	65
Calcutta Telephone Service : Automatic System ...	65

INDUSTRIAL—

Industrial Disputes Bill, 1946 ...	65—66
The Minimum Wages Bill, 1946 ...	66—68
Indian Factories Act, 1934, Section 47 : Overtime and Interpretation of "Ordinary Rate of Pay" ...	68—69
Continuation of Adjudication Machinery under Rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules ...	69
Standing Labour Committee : Regulation of Conditions of Employment in Business Houses and Commercial Undertakings in Urban Areas ...	69—70
Welfare Trust Funds for Industrial Employees ...	70—72
Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 ...	72—73
The Factories (Second Amendment) Bill ...	73
Collection of Employment and Unemployment Statistics in Establishments other than Factories ...	73
Control of Development and Location of Industries in Greater Calcutta ...	74
Kanchrapara Development Project : Setting up of an Advisory Committee for Allocation of Sites to Industrial Concerns ...	

Utilisation of Industrial Research ...	75
Indian Coalfields Committee ...	75—76

MISCELLANEOUS—

Decimalisation of Weights and Measures ...	77
Indian Standards Institution ...	77
Molasses ...	77—78
Petrol Rationing ...	78
Language Studies ...	79—80
Overseas Visitors to London : Honorary Membership of the London Chamber of Commerce ...	80
Claims for Riot Damages ...	80—81
Vendor Nuisance in Calcutta Business Area ...	81
Department of Industries & Supplies, Electrical Development Directorate ...	81—82
Visit of Australian Industrialists to India ...	82
British Empire Exhibition at Sydney ...	82
Proposed Australian Government Export Corporation ...	82—83
Proposed Re-establishment of the Empire Marketing Board ...	83
Montreal Board of Trade : Business Contact with Canada ...	83
Disposals Enquiry Committee ...	83—84
Malaria Scheme for the Calcutta Industrial Area ...	84
Treatment of Tubercular Employees ...	84
The Commandos' Benevolent Fund ...	85
Transport for Business Women ...	85
Business Survey & Market Reports ...	85—86
Government of Bengal Food Advisory Committee : Chamber Representation ...	86
Development of Food Industries ...	86
Prohibition on the Import of Goods from the Union of South Africa ...	86—87

	PAGE.
MEMBERSHIP: PROVISIONAL ELECTIONS—	
Chamber Members	87—88
Associate Members	88
FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS—	
Comparative Statement of Chamber and Royal Exchange Accounts	89—90
Accounts:—Secretarial Department—General	91—99
SUNDRY REFERENCES	100—102
OTHER REPORTS—	
Royal Exchange Report	103—111

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1946

The Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce have now the honour to submit to the members of the Chamber their report for the year 1946.

Committee:—The following gentlemen were elected to the Committee at the Annual General Meeting of the Chamber held on the 28th February 1946. *President*—The Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) *Vice-President*—Mr. H. D. Cumberbatch (Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.); Mr. A. P. Benthall (Messrs. Bird & Co.); Sir Harry Burn (Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Ltd.); Mr. A. J. Elkins, C.B.E. (Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.); Mr. J. McFarlane, M.C. (Messrs. Octavius Steel & Co., Ltd.); Mr. A. T. Orr Deas, M.C. (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.); Mr. P. F. S. Warren (Messrs. Jessop & Co., Ltd.); Mr. A. C. Watkins (Chartered Bank of India, Australia & China).

The only change in the personnel of the Committee which took place during the year was in July when Mr. A. C. Watkins (Chartered Bank of India, Australia & China) resigned his seat owing to his transfer from Calcutta and was succeeded by Mr. L. O. Tasker.

In February 1946 the late Sir Renwick Haddow resigned his seat as the representative of the Chamber on the Council of State owing to ill-health and Mr. H. D. Townend (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) was elected in his place.

The representatives of the Chamber in the Bengal Legislative Assembly are:—Mr. D. Gladding, C.I.E., (Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd.); Mr. R. Haywood (Messrs. Pigott Chapman & Co.); Mr. H. Rowan Hodge (Messrs. Orr, Dignam & Co.); Mr. H. A. Luke (Messrs. W. Haworth & Co.); Mr. A. W. Taylor, O.B.E., (Messrs. Macneill & Co.); Mr. J. R. Walker (Messrs. McLeod & Co., Ltd.); Mr. J. H. Methold (Messrs. J. Thomas & Co.).

The Indian Mining Association is represented in the Bengal Legislative Assembly by Mr. R. B. Whitehead (Messrs. Turner Morrison & Co., Ltd.).

The representatives of the Indian Tea Association are Mr. R. A. H. Stevenson (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.), and Mr. E. E. Corstorphine (Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co.).

Those of the Indian Jute Mills Association are: Mr. D. Inglis Duff (Messrs. Barry & Co.); and Mr. G. M. Mackinlay (Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co.)

As hitherto the European Party in the Bengal Legislature continued the practice of issuing, during the Sessions of the Legislative Assembly and Council, periodical reports surveying their proceedings and deliberations.

The representatives of the Chamber on the Calcutta Port Commissioners at the close of 1946 were:—

Calcutta Port Commissioners. Mr. Neil Brodie (Messrs. Gladstone Wyllie & Co.); Mr. H. D. Cumberbatch (Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.); Mr. A. T. Orr Deas (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.); Mr. A. J. Elkins (Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.) Mr. J. F. Elton (Messrs. Kilburn & Co.) and Mr. J. Morshead (Messrs. Turner Morrison & Co., Ltd.).

On the expiry of the terms of office of the late Sir Renwick Haddow (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.) and Mr. F. C. Guthrie (Messrs. James Finlay & Co., Ltd.) in March 1946, Mr. A. T. Orr Deas, and Mr. Neil Brodie were elected to fill the vacancies. In April on the expiry of the term of office of Mr. W. L. Gordon for whom Mr. H. Shedden (Messrs. Macneill & Co.) was acting, Mr. J. F. Elton was elected. Mr. J. Morshead and Mr. H. D. Cumberbatch have been re-elected recently for a further term of two years.

The representatives of the Chamber on the Calcutta Municipal Corporation are: Mr. J. N. Birch (Messrs. Balmer Lawrie & Co.); Mr. E. H. Edney (Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Ltd.); Mr. C. W. Tassie (Messrs. James Finlay & Co., Ltd.) Mr. W. R. Humphrey (Kilburn & Co.); Mr. A. A. Wise (Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.) and Mr. J. N. Smart (Messrs. Landale & Clark Ltd.).

The following changes took place during the year:—

On the resignation of Mr. H. F. Whitthouse (Messrs. Gladstone Wyllie & Co.) in February, Mr. J. N. Smart was elected to fill the vacancy. In March Mr. E. H. Edney and Mr. W. R. Humphrey were elected to fill the vacancies caused by the resignations of Mr. J. H. Methold (Messrs. J. Thomas & Co.) and Mr. C. W. Tassie (Messrs. James Finlay & Co., Ltd.) respectively. Mr. J. N. Birch succeeded Mr. W. F. Dines (Messrs. Turner Morrison & Co., Ltd.) in June and Mr. C. W. Tassie was re-elected in October to succeed Mr. J. B. Elias, resigned.

Mr. W. G. Cross (The Calcutta Tramways Co., Ltd.) is the representative of the Chamber on the Calcutta Improvements Trust. Board of Trustees for the Improvement of Calcutta: he succeeded Mr. T. Godley in July 1946 when the latter proceeded on leave.

The representatives of the Chamber on the Bengal Boiler Commission are:—Mr. G. P. Chestney (Messrs. Bengal Boiler Commission. Burn & Co.), Mr. J. M. Grant (Olive Jute Mills) and Mr. W. H. W. Urquhart, A.M.I. Mech. E (Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.).

Mr. A. Nicoll (Manager, Union North Jute Mill) and Mr. R. J. Oliver (Messrs. Martin & Co.) were nominated as the representatives of the Chamber on this re-constituted Commission in February.

On the expiry of the term of office of Mr. A. T. Orr Deas, M.C. (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.) in Indian Coal Grading Board. February, Mr. L. P. S. Bourne of the same firm was appointed as the Chamber's representative on the Indian Coal Grading Board.

On the retirement of Mr. R. L. Manners (Messrs. James Finlay & Co., Ltd.) from India, Mr. R. R. Hogarth of the same firm was nominated to serve as the representative of the Chamber on the Committee.

Mr. G. Troup, A.M.I.E.E. (The Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd.) has been nominated as the The Electric Licensing Board, Bengal. Chamber's representative in succession to Mr. J. W. Church, resigned.

Mr. F. F. M. Ferguson (Dunlop Rubber Co. (India) Ltd.) continued to represent the Chamber on this Board.

Owing to the resignation of Mr. J. W. E. Berry, C.B.E. (Messrs. Kilburn & Co.) in November, Mr. R. J. L. Oakley of the same firm was elected to succeed him as the Chamber's representative on this Board.

Mr. A. H. Syme (Messrs. A. M. Mair & Co.) continued to represent the Chamber on this Committee throughout the year.

Mr. W. Morrison (Manager, Angus Jute Mill) and Mr. A. Heys (Messrs. Kettlewell Bullen & Co.) are the representatives of the Chamber on the Managing Committee of the Bengal Textile Institute, Serampore.

The Chamber's representatives on the Auxiliary Force Advisory Committee are : Mr. A. J. Elkins, C.B.E., (Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.) and Col. W. H. Grice (Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Ltd.) who succeeded Sir Bernard Pratt of the same firm in April on the expiry of the latter's term of office.

The President, the Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend, is the representative of the Chamber on this Committee.

Mr. K. R. Fettes, C.A., R.A. (Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.) and Mr. A. L. Cameron (Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co. Ltd.) are the representatives of the Chamber on this Committee. The latter succeeded Mr. H. D. Cumberbatch who resigned in April, and the former took the place of Mr. A. J. Elkins, C.B.E., when he proceeded on leave.

The representatives of the Chamber on this Committee are : Mr. K. R. Fettes, C.A., R.A., (Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.) and Mr. J. R. C. Taylor, C.I.E., (Messrs. Burma Shell Oil Storage & Distributing Co. of India Ltd.).

The Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) is the representative of the Chamber on this Committee.

The representatives of the Chamber on the Commercial Panel of the Railway Rates Advisory Committee are the following : Mr. J. G. Kennedy, C.B.E., (Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co.) representing the jute trade; Mr. R. H. D. Campbell (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) representing the grain, seed and petroleum trade; Mr. H. C. Bannerman (Messrs. Macneill & Co.) representing the tea trade; Mr. D. F. Macmillan (Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co. Ltd.) representing the coal trade; and Mr. D. G. Sevastopulo (Messrs. Ralli Bros. Ltd.) representing general trade.

Sir John Burder (Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co.) and Mr. A. B. Jamieson of the National Bank of India Ltd. are the representatives of the Chamber on this Board.

Mr. D. G. Sevastopulo (Messrs. Ralli Bros., Ltd.) and Mr. J. P. Young (Messrs. Angelo Bros., Ltd.) are the representatives of the Chamber on the Governing Body of the Indian Lac Cess Committee. Mr. Young succeeded Mr. W. F. Dines in May on the latter's resignation.

Mr. J. Findlay (Messrs. Bird & Co.) was re-nominated as the representative of the Chamber on the re-constituted Campbell Hospital Visiting Committee.

The Chamber's representative on the re-constituted Visiting Committee of the Medical College Hospitals is Mr. R. J. R. Davidson of Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.

Mr. W. A. Huitt, M.B.E., (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.) succeeded Mr. F. Monk of the same firm in March as a representative of the Chamber on the Governing Body of the Mayo Hospital. The other representative is Mr. E. A. Paterson (Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co.) who served throughout the year.

Mr. G. J. Cutler (Tea Districts Labour Association) continued to serve as the representative of the Ranchi Mental Hospital Board. Chamber on this Board during the year.

The Chamber's representative on the Committee of the Bengal Branch of the Lady Minto's Indian Nursing Association is Mr. F. C. J. Steuart (Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co.)

The Chamber nominated in March Mr. Neil Brodie (Messrs. Gladstone Wyllie & Co.) as its representative on the Committee of the Calcutta Hospital Nurses Institution in the place of the late Sir Renwick Haddow. In addition to a direct nominee of the Chamber, the President, The Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend, is a member of the Committee of the Institute.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) the President, is the representative *ex-officio* of the Chamber on the Managing Body of the Bengal Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society.

The President, The Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) is also the representative, *ex-officio*, of the Chamber on the Committee of Management of this Fund.

Mr. J. Morshead (Messrs. Turner Morrison & Co., Ltd.) was re-nominated as the representative of the Chamber on the Board of Trustees of The Indian Museum.

Mr. W. A. Huitt, M.B.E. (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.) succeeded Mr. F. Monk of the same firm in May as the representative of the Chamber on the Board of Film Censors.

The President, The Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) is *ex-officio* Trustee and a member of the Executive Committee of the Victoria Memorial representing the Chamber.

Mr. W. J. Younis, C.A. (Messrs. Price, Waterhouse, Peat & Co.) and Mr. K. R. Fettes, C.A., R.A. (Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co.) are the representatives of the Chamber on the Governing Body of the Government Commercial Institute.

Mr. F. W. A. Carpenter (Messrs. Bird & Co.) is the representative of the Chamber on the Governing Body of the Calcutta Technical School.

The Chamber's representative on this Board is Mr. F. W. A. Carpenter of Messrs. Bird & Co.

Mr. K. R. Fettes, C.A., R.A. (Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.) represents the Chamber on the Board of Governors of St. Thomas' School.

The President, The Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) is an *ex-officio* member of the Board of Governors of this Institution.

Mr. K. R. Fettes, C.A., R.A., (Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.) the nominee of the Bengal Chamber is the representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India on this Board.

Mr. H. M. Molesworth (Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Ltd.) continued to represent the Chamber on the Council of this Institute.

Mr. A. J. Elkins, C.B.E., (Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co.) and Mr. A. W. Taylor, O.B.E. (Messrs. Macneill & Co.) are the representatives of the Chamber on the Committee of the District Charitable Society.

On the resignation of Mr. W. McIntyre (Messrs. Macneill & Co.) in April, Mr. A. W. Taylor of the same firm was nominated to represent the Chamber on the Committee of Management of the Government Workhouse.

Mr. J. Morshead (Messrs. Turner Morrison & Co., Ltd.) is the representative of the Chamber on this Committee.

The President, the Hon'ble Mr. H. D. Townend (Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) is the representative of the Chamber *ex-officio* on the Central Council of the Ex-Services Association.

Mr. W. J. B. Walker, C.A., (The Statesman Ltd.) continued to serve as the representative of the Chamber on the Crichton Trust throughout the year.

Mr. E. Lyne (Messrs. Hoare Miller & Co., Ltd.) was re-nominated as the representative of the Chamber on the General Committee of this Society for the year 1946-47.

Mr. L. P. S. Bourne of Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co. represented European Commerce in Calcutta on the Advisory Pilot Committee during 1946. The Chamber has recently been advised that in future the Commercial representatives on the Advisory Pilot Committee will be appointed by the Government of India from a panel of six names to be submitted annually by the Port Officer (Pilotage) Calcutta.

Mr. P. G. Knott (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.) the nominee of the Bengal Chamber is one of the representatives of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India on the Central Advisory Committee for Lighthouses, representing European Commerce in Bengal.

Mr. S. D. Gladstone (Messrs. Ogilvy, Gillanders & Co., London) is the representative of the Chamber on the Executive Council of the Federation of Chambers of commerce of the British Empire.

The representatives of the Chamber on the Committee of Management of this Association are:—Mr. P. G. Knott (Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.) and Mr. L. W. Balcombe (Messrs. Turner Morrison & Co., Ltd.); they succeeded the late Sir Renwick Haddow and Mr. J. Morshead respectively.

Sir Henry Horsman is the joint representative of the Upper India International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers Association. and Bengal Chamber of Commerce on the Committee of the Federation.

Mr. P. F. S. Warren, A.M.I.C.E., M.I.E., (Ind.) (Messrs. Jessop & Co., Ltd.) is the representative of the Chamber on this Board.

Dr. W. G. Macmillan, B.Sc., Ph. D. (Aber. & Cantab), F.C.I., is the representative of the Chamber on the Bengal Board of Scientific Research.

The representative of the Chamber on this Board is Mr. D. I. Duff of Messrs. Barry & Co.

Mr. W. Corsie (Messrs. Lyall Marshall & Co.) is the nominee of the Chamber on this Board.

Mr. D. Gladding, C.I.E. (Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd.) continued to serve as the Chamber's representative on the Provincial Transport Authority, Bengal, as provided for under the Bengal Motor Vehicles Act, 1939.

Mr. J. P. Baggs (Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.) continued to represent the Chamber on the Regional Transport Authority throughout the year.

Mr. J. B. Elias (Messrs. B. N. Elias & Co., Ltd.) represents the Chamber on this Committee.

In view of the departure on leave of Mr. A. J. Elkins (Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co.) in June, Mr. A. L. Cameron (Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.) was nominated to the Town Planning Committee as well as the Standing Quartering Board.

Mr. H. C. Bannerman (Messrs. Macneill & Co.) became the Chamber's representative on this Committee, in place of Mr. A. J. Peppercorn, resigned.

Mr. J. A. Murray (Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co.), the Bengal Chamber's nominee, is the representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India on this Council.

The Bengal Chamber's nominee, Mr. J. Aitken (Messrs. James Finlay & Co., Ltd.) is the representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India on the Coal Control Board.

Mr. C. E. J. Crawford (Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Ltd.) was re-nominated as the Chamber's representative on the re-constituted Bengal Board of Industries.

Mr. J. McIntyre (Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Ltd.), the nominee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, was elected in May as the representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India in place of Mr. R. Scherer.

Mr. H. Gibson (Messrs. Burn & Co., Ltd.) has been recommended by the Chamber to serve as its representative on the Special Advisory Committee for the Development of Technical Education to be set up by the Government of Bengal.

Mr. Bernard Mathews, F.R.I.B.A., F.S.J., M. & P. I. (Messrs. Ballardie, Thompson & Mathews), the nominee of the Bengal Chamber, is the representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India on this Board.

Mr. G. J. Gardner (Messrs. Kettlewell Bullen & Co., Ltd.) was re-nominated as the representative of the interests connected with the Chamber on this Committee.

Mr. J. Meek of the General Electric Co. (India) Ltd. is the representative of the Associated Chambers of India on the Court of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

The report of the Royal Exchange for the year 1946 is appended to this report.

Arbitrations under the auspices of the Tribunal of the Chamber are classed under three headings, jute, piece-goods and general. The heading "general arbitrations" embraces jute manufactured goods, coal, etc.; disputes in which mostly questions of law and custom are involved, and all cases in which goods other than jute and piece-goods are concerned.

The total number of arbitration cases instituted during the year 1946 was 813 and there were 47 cases pending at the close of the year 1946. Of these cases, 591 proceeded to award; 51 were withdrawn; and 218 cases were pending at the close of the year 1946. In one case 6 awards, in another 3 awards, and in 3 cases 2 awards each were issued as the disputes arose from more than one contract. The various classes of goods in cases in which awards were issued were represented as follows:—Jute 570; Hessians and Bags 7; Piecegoods 1; and Miscellaneous 13. The revenue derived by the Chamber from Institution fees paid by members and non-members, including applications for the issue of certified survey reports, referred to in the following paragraph, amounted to Rs. 36,506 as compared with Rs. 32,266 in the preceding year.

During the year under review 27 survey applications were received and 3 applications were pending at the close of 1945. These were dealt with under the rules for surveys which were introduced in 1938. Arising out of these applications 30 certified reports were issued. The various classes of goods were represented in this total to the following extent—Linsed 7; Hessian Cloth and Bags 19; Tea Chests 1; Rice 1; Cotton Yarn 1; and Silk Hose 1.

The report of the Managing Committee of the Licensed Measurers Department of the Chamber for the year ended the 31st December 1946 will be issued separately.

GENERAL

The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India : 28th Annual General Meeting—December 1946 :—Following the usual practice His Excellency the Viceroy was invited to open the 28th Annual General Meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India, but His Excellency feeling that it would be unsuitable for him now to make a speech to the Chambers in view of the altered constitutional circumstances regretfully had to decline the invitation. To maintain the tradition, the Hon'ble Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru as head of the Interim Government was invited to be present at the meeting and to address the Chambers.

Before an exceptionally large and expectant gathering Pundit Nehru, who was given a warm welcome, opened the proceedings of the Chambers' Meeting on Monday, 16th December 1946. Many Central and Provincial Government officials and other distinguished guests favoured the Chambers on this occasion and the attendance of constituent members was very large.

The following resolutions—which were severally brought forward at the instance of the Chambers specified—were unanimously adopted at the meeting :—

1. *Import Trade Control : Tariff protection.—Madras Chamber of Commerce.*

This Association draws the attention of the Government of India to their present policy whereby protection is granted to certain indigenous industries by limiting or withholding import licences granted by the Controller of Imports. This Association recommends that assistance to indigenous industries should only be given after an enquiry has been held by the Tariff Board and such assistance found to be justified and in the interests of the country.

2. *Cost of Living : Prices of essential commodities.—Punjab Chamber of Commerce.*

While recognising the magnitude of the problem and the difficulties and obstacles that stand in the way, this meeting recommends to the Government the adoption of immediate and effective steps to stabilise and, so far as is possible, gradually to reduce the prices of necessities in the country and check a further rise in the cost of living.

3. *Commercial and industrial policy.—Madras Chamber of Commerce.*

This Association draws the attention of the Government of India to the dangers inherent in (a) the present policy on the part of Provincial Government of imposing

restrictions on certain forms of industrial expansion (ii) the failure of the Central and Provincial Governments to evolve a common policy in commercial and industrial matters and (iii) the hasty and unwarranted use of powers under war-time controls.

4. *Derequisitioning.—Bengal Chamber of Commerce.*

This Association desires to impress upon the Government of India the need for accelerating (1) the release of premises still under requisition and (2) the settlement of outstanding claims in respect of properties previously or now under requisition.

5. *Trade Unions.—Bengal Chamber of Commerce.*

The Associated Chambers, while welcoming the declaration by the Government of India of its programme of labour measures of the next five years, considers that greater emphasis should be placed on the securing from labour of a much higher standard of productivity and responsibility, without which the ambitious schemes now proposed will merely mean a disproportionate increase in industrial costs with consequent adverse effects upon consumers in India and the country's export trade.

In particular the Chambers would urge, first, that Government should use their influence to improve the standard of trade unions so that they should become Associations of real tradesmen protecting the interests of their members but also ensuring that their members are properly qualified in their respective trades and prepared to give good work in return for fair wages. Secondly, the Chambers would urge that the efforts of Government Labour Departments and Conciliation Officers should not be directed, as they so often are at present, to inducing employers to accept labour's demands without considering whether the demands are reasonable or endeavouring to impress upon workers that they have obligations to discharge to their employers.

6. *The Coal Industry : Indian Coalfields Committee.—Bengal Chamber of Commerce.*

This Association notes with considerable concern the present unsatisfactory labour position in the coalfields which is due generally to irresponsible labour agitation and which, if continued, will have serious effects upon the production and the cost of coal and, therefore, on the economy of the country as a whole. The Association considers that the responsibility for dealing with the situation is essentially that of the Government of India which should take immediate steps to bring about an improvement by means of a policy which takes into consideration not only claims submitted by labour, but all aspects of industry. To that end the Association would strongly urge that there should be implemented immediately the recommendation contained in the recently published report of the Indian Coalfields Committee that a Central Department of Fuel and Power should be established and that this Department should be the only Department responsible for matters relating to the coal industry.

7. *Sales Tax Legislation.—Madras Chamber of Commerce.*

This Association stresses the desirability of the unification of Sales Tax legislation throughout British India and the Indian States wherever such taxes are in existence.

8. *Income Tax Appellate Tribunal.—Punjab Chamber of Commerce.*

As the conditions which previously prevailed no longer exist, this Association urges upon the Government of India that it restore the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal Centres to their original localities.

9. *Indian Income Tax Act : Double Income Tax Relief.—Bombay Chamber of Commerce.*

In view of the present unsatisfactory method of taxation of non-residents under Sections 4 and 42 of the Indian Income-tax Act, and the complications and delays involved in the settlement of Double Income Tax Relief under Section 49, this Association recommends that the Government of India should, at the earliest possible date, negotiate with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Governments of other countries a Convention for the avoidance of Double Taxation on the general lines of that concluded in April 1945 between His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States of America, which will specify the income to be taxed by each country and the method of avoiding double taxation in respect of such income as is not exempted from tax in one country or the other.

10. *Air mail fees.—Upper India Chamber of Commerce.*

That this Association, having regard to the importance to the economic welfare of the country, more particularly its industrial and commercial advancement, of the Air Mail Services, now, or likely to be, in operation between this and other countries, urges upon the Government the necessity of an early revision of the existing Air Mail rates with a view to bringing these nearer the levels which were in operation prior to the war.

11. *Shortcomings of the Posts & Telegraphs Services.—Upper India Chamber of Commerce.*

This Association invites the attention of Government to (a) the serious delay at present experienced in the transmission and delivery of inland telegrams, including express telegrams, and (b) the almost complete uselessness of the Trunk Telephone Service from the point of view of the commercial community aggravated by priorities allocated to Government Departments and Military Officers and requests that immediate steps should be taken towards effecting all round improvement in the Services to the public by the Posts and Telegraphs Department.

Tribunal of Arbitration: Arbitration under the Calcutta Baled Jute Association Contract Form.—A proposal to amend the Arbitration Clause in the Calcutta Baled Jute Association's Contract Form so as to provide for all arbitrations to be conducted by the Tribunal of Arbitration of the Chamber under its own Rules, was referred to the Chamber. The Chamber Committee agreed that in that event—the decision being one for the Calcutta Baled Jute Association to take—Arbitrators would be selected by the Registrar in individual cases from the "baled jute—pucca bales" section of the Tribunal's panel of arbitrators, compiled in accordance with the new procedure, and that every endeavour would be made to adopt the Tribunal procedure and speed of disposal of cases to the requirements of the trade in the event of Chamber arbitration being decided upon in preference to private arbitration.

POST-WAR

Release of Military Personnel: "B" Release Terms.—In view of numerous inquiries concerning the terms attaching to "B" Class releases the Associated Chambers of Commerce obtained through correspondence and interviews with the War Department during the year clarifications on the following points :—

- (1) The obligations sought to be imposed upon employers on the return to their former employment of "B" release personnel ;
- (2) Leave pay in the case of :
 - (a) Personnel released for work of national importance prior to the 18th June 1945; and
 - (b) Personnel released on "B" release terms under Army Instruction (India) No. 1051 of the 3rd November 1945 which has retrospective effect to the 20th June 1945.

The outcome of these enquiries was the information given below by the War Department :—

(1) *Employers' Obligations.*—These are prescribed in paragraph 8 of Army Instruction No. 1051, the relative portions of which read as follows :—

8. The prospective employer must submit along with his application a copy of the contract into which it is proposed to enter with the person or persons to be released, which will contain a provision that, in the event of their continuing in his employment for a period beyond the expiry of six months from their date of release he will guarantee to them the following minimum or equivalent benefits on their quitting his employment or on being discharged by him :—

- (a) A lump sum payment equivalent to two months' pay of the rank held by them on the day preceding their release from Army Service including lodging allowance, marriage/family allowance, separation allowance, Indian Army allowance and Corps pay of which they were in receipt on that date.
- (b) Cost of journey for themselves and their dependants in the class of accommodation and to the destination to which they would have been entitled had they remained in Army Service and been released as class "A" releases in due course. For this purpose the rank on which this entitlement will be based will be that held on the day prior to release under this Instruction.

After careful consideration it was decided to maintain the obligation on the part of the employer to pay two months pay as bonus to the employee but a time limit of five years has been fixed. In other words an employer would have no more obligation of this nature after an employee had been in service with him for five years. This period would count from 1st April 1946 in cases of individuals already released under class "B" and from the date of release in cases of future releases under class "B". It should be noted that the limitation to five years applies to the repatriation clause as well as to the bonus clause of paragraph 8 of the Army Instructions No. 1051/45. That paragraph was amended by the addition of following note after sub-paragraph 8 (b) :—

The obligation of the employer under the above two sub-clauses will lapse after he has kept the employee in his service for a period of five years. In all past cases the period of five years will be calculated from 1st of April, 1946, and in future cases from the date of release.

(2) *Leave Pay : (a) Personnel released prior to 18th June 1945.*—Such personnel were released from Army Service prior to the date which has been fixed by the War Office and adopted by the Government of India as that from which class 'B' release benefits (including 21 days release leave) would be admissible. Those released prior to 18th June 1945 were governed by the provisions of AI (I) 128/43 under which they were entitled to take any balance of war leave due to them at the time of their release. The original instructions for release under class 'B' were issued in A. I. (I) 533/45, which had since been superseded by A. I. (I) 1051/45. The intention of para 14 of A. I. (I) 1051/45 is to bring personnel released for work of national importance prior to the issue of A. I. (I) 533/45 under the provisions A. I. (I) 1051/45 as regards para 8-13 but not for purposes of para 4 which govern release benefits. Para 14 of AI (I) 1051/45 does not extend class 'B' benefits to those released prior to 18th June 1945. These individuals are entitled only to a grant in respect of any overseas service and war gratuity up to the date of release if otherwise admissible.

The question of release benefits to individuals released prior to 18th June 1945 was carefully considered and it was decided that such benefits were not admissible. Leave with pay for 21 days was granted to assist the individual during the resettlement period to taking up his civilian post.

(b) *"B" Releases under A.I.(I) 1051/45.*—The chief reason for the 56 days leave under class 'A' was to give the individual some financial

assistance during the period when he was settling down to civil life and seeking employment. So far as Class 'B' was concerned, employment is guaranteed, the individual is released before his turn and under the circumstances the loss of 35 days pay in his case would be no real hardship. The policy was identical to that followed by H.M.G. and Government of India regretted they were unable to alter it.

A further point elucidated was that of individuals serving a deferment period (e.g. past their date for Class 'A' release) who were released under Class 'B' subsequent to May 1946. Such individuals had their deferment cancelled and came under Class 'A' release benefits.

Resettlement and Re-Employment of Ex-Service Personnel and Discharged War-Workers.—The Directorate-General of Re-settlement and Employment of the Department of Labour, Government of India, set up in April an Employment Advisory Committee at Calcutta to be attached to the Directorate of Settlement and Employment, Bengal and Assam, to advise the Regional Director of Re-settlement and Employment, in all matters relating to the re-settlement, employment and training (technical and vocational) of ex-servicemen and discharged war-workers in Bengal.

The Chamber when asked to appoint a representative elected Mr. K. D. Jalan on the recommendation of the Indian Jute Mills Association, engineering interests being separately represented through the Indian Engineering Association. Mr. Jalan was later succeeded by Mr. D. P. Goenka of Messrs. Ramdutt Ramkissendass.

The inaugural meeting of the Employment Advisory Committee took place on 30th April 1946 when it was decided to form a Sub-Committee for Vocational and Technical Training to discuss a scheme drawn up by the Government of India for the technical training of demobilised service personnel with the object of (i) providing facilities of technical training to suitably qualified demobilised service personnel with a view to facilitating their re-settlement in civil life, and (ii) securing an adequate supply of skilled personnel required for post-war development schemes both Government and private.

The Chamber when asked to appoint a representative to this Sub-Committee considered it desirable to enlist the services of someone with experience of the building or engineering trades since the Sub-Committee would be primarily concerned with these trades and

nominated Mr. W. Todd of Messrs. Mackintosh Burn Ltd. as its representative.

At the meeting of the Employment Advisory Committee held in July discussion took place as to how the Employment Exchanges could be made more useful and how the difficulties with which the Exchanges were faced could be met. It was decided that the Regional Director should meet a small Committee of each Chamber of Commerce to discuss these matters. Members of the Chamber's Industrial Affairs Sub-Committee met the Regional Director on 14th August when the Regional Director of Resettlement and Employment, in emphasising the importance of the orderly and steady re-absorption into civil employment of demobilised Service men, discharged war workers and certain other categories of persons who had rendered approved war service, pointed out that the ordinary methods of recruitment followed by commercial and industrial employers were not generally assisting this aim.

To help the Regional Director and as a means of fulfilling the pledges of co-operation given by employers, the Chamber suggested to members that they might (a) in preference to advertising, place with the nearest Employment Exchange some fixed percentage of their total requirements for certain specified posts in order that ex-Service men might have a chance of being put forward for the vacancies, and (b) if possible give advance information to the Employment Exchange on their probable personnel or labour requirements for new projects and apprenticeship and training schemes with the percentage of the total requirements which they would be prepared to reserve for ex-Service men and discharged war workers.

An up-to-date list of the Employment Exchanges for Bengal and Assam was circulated by the Chamber for this purpose.

Civilian Passages (1) By Sea.—Representatives of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, the European Association and the National Service Advisory Committees attended a meeting at Delhi on the 18th March convened by the Government to discuss the working of the Priority Passage Scheme. The business dealt with can be summarised as follows:—

- (i) *General.*—It was stated that during the eight months which had elapsed since the last Civil Passage Conference, over

10,000 civilians had left India by sea and air, a monthly average of 1280.

- (ii) *Sea Passages Board.*—To allocate accommodation between civilian and service personnel according to shipping space a Sea Passages Board had been set up consisting of representatives of the three Services, the Sea Transport Department, the Civil Departments concerned, with a non-official who would in future circulate summaries of information regarding civilian passages.
- (iii) *Cabin Accommodation.*—The governing factor in the shipping problem *ex* India was the amount of cabin accommodation, particularly the amount of cabin accommodation suitable for women and children. Accommodation in commercial vessels, suitable for either sex, seldom exceeded 250 to 300 berths each month, and delegates were asked to advise their constituents to refrain from pressing for accommodation in such vessels. Considerably larger numbers of berths were usually allotted in Hired Transports. The Director of Movements mentioned that His Majesty's Government had been asked to place certain vessels having reasonably good cabin accommodation at the disposal of the Government of India for the carriage of civilians from India.
- (iv) *Registration of Families.*—Under the revised scheme for the registration of families and fiancées desiring passages from the U. K. to India, to come into effect from the 1st April 1946, applicants would be grouped according to the period of separation from the head of the family. It was expected that the old list would be cleared by the end of April, except for a few doubtful starters.
- (v) *The Key Leave Scheme.*—The Conference accepted the Government's proposal to raise the Key Leave Sea quota from 175 to 300 a month from May to comprise A and B lists of 100 and 200 respectively. It was agreed to base the sub-quotas on the relative European populations as revealed by the National Service Advisory Committee registration figures; the Civil Passage Controller would prepare a draft scheme for approval of all concerned. Key Leave Sea Passage Lists up to July 1946 have been supplied by the National Service

Advisory Committee and re-published by the Chamber to members.

- (vi) *Civil Passage Controller*.—The function of the Civil Passage Controller was to allot priority in accordance with the Government Schedule and to maintain a waiting list. When accommodation became available the Deputy Civil Passage Controller (Bombay) would be informed by the shipping agent of the number of berths available, whereupon the Deputy Civil Passage Controller would nominate the requisite number of persons from the top of this list to fill those berths. The shipping agent would then allot berths and arrange for passages. It was explained that the Deputy Civil Passage Controller (Bombay) seldom received this information more than 14 to 17 days in advance: consequently it was not possible to give passengers more than 10 to 14 days' notice. In the case of commercial vessels the notice might be even shorter.

The only solution to the problem was of course to provide more shipping for India which could be brought about only through the agency of His Majesty's Government and not the Government of India and every approach, official and non-official, had been followed to bring pressure on His Majesty's Government to effect the very necessary relief as early as possible. Similar action was taken in respect of the reduction of the Key Leave Air Quota consequent upon the extension of the air service to Australia.

As is known to members, the responsibility for the allocation of sea passages has now been restored to the Shipping Lines operating through a joint Passage Pool in Bombay. The Pool has undertaken however to fulfil priorities granted by the Civil Passage Controller.

(2) *By Air*—(a) *Key Leave Passages to the U. K.*—In reply to representations made by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India against the large reductions in key leave air passages made in May 1946, the Government of India stated that the reductions were the result of a sudden decision taken in London to withdraw the Sunderland Services from India. The Civil Aviation Department of the Government of India having appealed to the Ministry of Civil Aviation in the U. K. for an increase in the essential minimum quota of air passages for India, were promised that the York Service to India would be stepped up from its then level of two Yorks a week to a daily York Service by September.

Improvement in the situation depended on how quickly this programme progressed.

While expressing appreciation of the efforts of the Government of India in this direction, the Associated Chambers took the opportunity of (i) emphasising the extreme importance, during the period of post-war reconstruction, of adequate air travel facilities between India and the U. K., not only for key leave personnel, but also for business executives travelling on essential business under appropriate priorities, and (ii) pointing out that the restriction in the accommodation available had resulted in many development plans being held up.

The Associated Chambers urged that the Air Priorities Board should give non-official claims to priority the most careful consideration and an adequate share of the available though restricted accommodation relatively to other claimants, including officials and those travelling on services duty.

(b) *Procedure for Passengers awaiting Passages by R. A. F. Transport Command*.—The Air Booking Centre, Calcutta, expressed concern at the increasing number of passengers who for various reasons were having to be offloaded. In reply the Chamber pointed out to the Air Priorities Board that much of the misunderstanding responsible for the off-loadings had been directly attributable to—

- (i) the inadequate briefing of passengers by the Air Booking Centre;
- (ii) adherence by the Air Priorities Board, a year after the end of the war in the West and nine months after the end of the war in the East, to the inept system of settling air priorities only one day prior to the departure of the plane, thus leaving intending passengers ignorant of whether they would be allowed to travel until the late afternoon of the day prior to departure;
- (iii) failure of the R. A. F. Transport Command to maintain a regular schedule;
- (iv) unnecessarily rigid procedure in such matters as the payment of fares at the Air Booking Centre.

The Air Priorities Executive Committee, Calcutta, stated that while the passenger priority was known the day after receipt of application, this information would be of no great use to the passenger as the instructions for loading the aircraft could not be issued until the day before departure for various reasons.

A large number of routes terminating in Calcutta set down loads for onward carriage such as troops and diplomatic mail, vaccine and penicillin etc. which had over-riding priority and had to be cleared immediately on the next available aircraft.

Very few of the aircraft which operated the routes from Calcutta were based here, and therefore the operation of any day's schedule was in the majority of cases dependent on the arrival of the aircraft the day before. During the monsoon the operation of exact schedules became increasingly difficult. Loading instructions could not be given therefore until there was at least a strong possibility of the aircraft being able to depart next day.

The Air Priorities Executive Committee assured the Chamber that cancellations and offloadings were only made when absolutely essential, and asked for appreciation of the fact that Transport Command were carrying on the services under serious difficulties caused by the rapid contractions of the R. A. F. and the release of trained and experienced personnel.

(c) *Priority Passages from the U. K. to India.*—The National Service Advisory Committee advised the Chamber that as it had been accepted as the responsibility of the Committee to recommend priority passages for staff demobilised in the U. K., members need only submit applications in duplicate certifying that the request was being made in respect of a previous employee and giving the following details:—

- (a) name and address in the U. K.,
- (b) party responsible for the payment of passage,
- (c) name of agents in the U. K., and
- (d) approximate time for which passage was required.

Only under exceptional circumstances could air passages be recommended, and the Committee had no responsibility for recommending passages for wives and families; applications for the latter should continue to be made to the Civil Passage Controller, New Delhi, either by the individual concerned or by the firm.

This arrangement has now of course been superseded.

War-time Controls: Import Trade Control.—(a) *Representations to the Department of Commerce, Government of India.*—Strong protests

were made by the Chamber at the beginning of the year and at intervals throughout the year to the Department of Commerce of the Government of India against the use of the emergency powers of the import control system to afford an indiscriminate protection to indigenous industry by a virtual embargo on the importation of a wide range of goods or by the severe limitation of the quantities permitted to be imported. In reply the Government of India said that with the improvement of the shipping position they were considering the question of how far the administrative policy of the Import Trade Control could be modified. They agreed to take the views of the Chamber into account.

Notwithstanding the lapse of several months since the first approach of the Chamber and the verbal assurances made by officials of the Department of Commerce to representatives of the Chamber, no change of any consequence in the previous administrative policy was announced and none made itself evident in practice. The Chamber then wrote to the Department of Commerce, requesting early answers to the following questions which had already been put to the Department verbally:—

- (1) Was Government prepared to give an assurance that it was neither their intention nor their practice to utilise their powers under the Defence of India Act and Rules to withhold licences for the import of goods available from within the sterling area for the purpose of protecting indigenous industries?
- (2) Was Government prepared, before placing any obstacle in the way of the importation of such goods, to satisfy themselves fully that the indigenous industries concerned were in fact producing goods of the required quality in sufficient quantity to meet the demand and marketing them at a price reasonable to the consumer?

The Department of Commerce replied that the Government of India had carried out a comprehensive review of their import policy, with special reference to the licensing instructions operative during the shipping period from July to December 1946. As a result of this review, a large number of articles had been transferred to the Empire Open General Licence, while for many others larger quotas had been established than in previous licensing periods. It was found necessary in the case of a limited range of articles to continue the war-time

prohibition on imports for a further period, but the list of such articles would be subject to periodical review in which consideration would be paid to the second of the two questions posed by the Chamber above and to other equally relevant factors.

(b) *Meeting with the Director of the Indian Supply Commission in London.*—Under the auspices of the Chamber a meeting took place on the 1st June with the Director of the Indian Supply Commission in London who was paying a brief visit to Calcutta. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Industrial Associations connected with the Chamber, including the Calcutta Import Trade Association.

The Director explained the principal functions of the Indian Supply Commission and from the discussion which ensued the following main points emerged :—

- (a) the need for the organised assessment of the requirements of particular industries in India in order to facilitate an adequate production programme on the part of manufacturers in the U. K. and the sanctioning of adequate allocations ;
- (b) the need for the placing of firm orders with manufacturers or exporters in the U. K., free from doubt as to specification, price, Indian import licences, acceptable delivery date and the like ;
- (c) the measure of assistance which could be given by the Indian Supply Commission in London who would welcome from Industrial Associations, from bulk importers and groups of importers or from individual business houses particulars of their requirements, the firm orders placed by them in the U. K. and their difficulties whether in the matter of production, shipment or price—though the question of export price control was not an easy one ;
- (d) in the case of machine tools for the engineering industry, the progressive improvement in production and availability, with prospects of further improvement in the next six months, many types of first class machine tools being available from the surplus war stocks now being put on the market ;
- (e) in the case of tea machinery, a reasonably easy position though with certain difficulties connected with U. K. export licences and—as was now pointed out in this and other cases—much more serious difficulty and delay in respect of India import licences, instances of which the Director requested ;
- (f) in the case of jute textile machinery, delivery generally not until 1948 the delay being due mainly to labour shortage and in the case of wooden goods such as shuttles and bobbins to shortage of timber ;

(g) in the case of colliery plant and equipment, an extremely difficult position at the U. K. end due to the mechanisation of the industry there, labour shortage in the foundries, and the complications of nationalisation—in which connection the Director stressed the need for firm orders and adequate information to the Indian Supply Commission of the Indian industry's requirements backed by evidence of the losses in coal production caused by the delay in the supply of essential machinery ;

(h) lastly, that for individual industries or groups of importers the Indian Supply Commission, if supplied with the requisite particulars, would investigate delays and difficulties in the U. K. and would submit progress reports in such cases.

Discussion then turned to the difficulties created at this end by :—

- (i) the delay, both in New Delhi and locally, which took place in the issue of import licences which was necessary before—in most cases—manufacturers in the U. K. would undertake manufacture against orders and before exporters in U. K. could obtain export allotments ;
- (ii) the gross abuse of the Indian import licensing system to block imports from the U. K. and elsewhere of goods alleged to be of indigenous manufacture.

Instances were quoted of the complete refusal of import licences for—among other commodities—oil engines of the larger types, engine spares ; flax canvas hose which was not manufactured at all in India ; and hair belting of which the indigenous production was negligible in relation to requirements. Emphasis was laid on the following points :—

- (a) that this criticism of the abuse of the import licensing system was in no way connected with the entirely separate question of the protection of indigenous industry, whether by way of protective duties or subsidies as recommended by the Tariff Board and subsequently decided upon by the Government of India ;
- (b) that the policy of the refusal of import licences directly hampered the progress of India's industrial development and, by ignoring the important factors of qualitative and quantitative supplies and price, imposed an unnecessary burden on the consumer at this end ;
- (c) that the present policy conflicted with the objects and activities of the Indian Supply Commission in the U. K.

The Director was asked to take this matter up strongly with the Government of India, and, failing the complete withdrawal of import trade control, the following were among the remedies which it was urged should be taken :—

- (1) the immediate and wide extension of open general licences ;
- (2) the revival of the Import Advisory Panels which could assist with the technical advice so necessary to eliminate delays in the issue of licences on the part of the Chief and Deputy Import Trade Controllers and unjustifiable orders prohibiting the issue of licences, due in both cases to inadequate or misleading knowledge of the commodity involved ; and
- (3) the delegation to Deputy Controllers at the ports of authority to issue import licenses for capital goods up to Rs. 1 lakh in value compared with Rs. 25,000 as at present.

The Director stated that he would be glad to give all possible assistance in securing machinery, equipment and other goods from the U. K. and would welcome enquiries from members of the Chamber. He also agreed to take up the various questions relating to the import licensing system with the Government of India and hoped it would be possible in the near future to take the necessary steps to ensure speedy and just disposal of applications for import licences.

Release of Premises used for Storage of Surplus U.S.A.S.S. Supplies.—Strong representations were recently made by the Chamber to Government for the release at the earliest possible date of requisitioned commercial and industrial premises, particularly jute presses and jute mills being used for the storage of surplus U.S.A.S.S. supplies. The Chamber recommended that the whole question of the disposal of stores and the release of premises be considered at a high level in order to formulate some common policy between the various Government Departments involved which would facilitate the necessary clearances as soon as possible.

Post-War Development of the Manufacture of Electrical Machinery and Equipment.—In July the Government of India, Department of Planning and Development, invited the views of the Chamber on a general directive to Industrial Panels which was issued with a questionnaire to all firms engaged in the manufacture of electrical machinery and equipment. In this connection the views were intended to be given

on the application of the Directive to the electrical machinery and equipment industry.

The Chamber chose four of the questions in the directive on which to comment, *viz* :

- (i) whether the industry should be under Government ownership either on grounds of national interest or because private capital was unlikely to take it up, and if so, whether it should be wholly or partly managed by Government ?
- (ii) the nature of the assistance required from the Government in the form of protective duties, bounties, research grants, expert advice, etc. ?
- (iii) if the industry was to be under private ownership and management, what controls, if any, should be exercised by Government ?
- (iv) what should be the organisation of the different units of the industry, *e.g.* should there be any industrial association ? Would a cartel be desirable ?

and made the following observations to the Government on them respectively :—

- (i) The electrical machinery and equipment industry should neither be under Government ownership nor partly nor wholly managed by the Government. Private capital would undoubtedly take full interest in the development of the electrical industry ; and a highly technical industry such as the electrical industry with a tremendous range of products, was particularly unsuitable for Government ownership or control.
- (ii) As a general policy the industry should, if economically sound, be able to compete with imported products without protective duties or bounties, as all types of raw materials required were indigenous.
- (iii) No Government control was necessary and the industry should be allowed to grow in a healthy manner under free competition, and the forces of supply and demand. Government could assist by controlling the quality of

products by the issue of standard specifications, adequate national testing laboratories, central research, etc.

- (iv) Industrial associations should be encouraged within the electrical industry as in other industries; the existing Engineering Associations could form the beginning of such an associations.

TAXATION

Taxation and Expenditure.—At the Annual General Meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce held in December 1945 a resolution in the following terms was unanimously adopted on the proposal of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce :—

This meeting urges the setting up, immediately, of a comprehensive enquiry into the system and structure of taxation in this country in all its aspects and more specially with reference to the Central Government, with a view to the adoption at an early date, of such measures of taxation as would effectively stimulate the rapid development of the country's agriculture and industry in harmony with each other; and pending this enquiry, this Association urges Government to take early and active steps so to reduce expenditure that the excess profits tax and income-tax surcharge rates may be lowered from the next financial year.

The text of the resolution and of the debate which preceded its adoption were in due course forwarded for attention to the Finance Department of the Government of India who in their reply drew attention to the Budget Speech of the Hon'ble the Finance Member on the 28th February 1946 and to the provisions of the Indian Finance Act 1946.

In his speech the Finance Member said that he proposed (a) to set up a Taxation Enquiry Committee in the near future whose scope would extend to the whole field of taxation—Central, Provincial and Local—in an endeavour to harmonise Central and Provincial taxation where experience had shown conflict or overlap to exist in their respective spheres; (b) to discontinue the excess profits tax on earnings arising after 31st March 1946; and (c) to amalgamate surcharges on income tax and super tax with the basic rates estimated to benefit the provinces to the extent of Rs. 122 crores at the expense of the Centre.

The two latter proposals of the Finance Member were given effect in the Indian Finance Act 1946.

The Budget : Indian Finance and Income Tax (Amendment) Acts, 1946.—Immediately copies became available, the Chamber with the assistance of the Income Tax Sub-Committee exhaustively examined the 1946 Finance Bill and the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1946, giving effect to the Finance Member's Budget proposals for the ensuing year. On the advice of the Sub-Committee, the Chamber took up with the Government of India, through the European Group in the Central Legislature, a series of points on which amendments were thought to be necessary or clarification desirable. On some of these points, the Chamber's representations resulted in favourable amendments being accepted and items of doubtful interpretation being put right.

(a) Clarification was obtained on a number of points connected with the additional depreciation granted under clause 3 of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill in respect of buildings and plant. As regards colliery plant already qualifying for the special depreciation allowance of 50% announced in the Central Board of Revenue's circular No. 25 of 1944, it was ascertained that for income-tax but not for E.P.T. purposes, this would be reduced to 30% for the year of installation but that the 50% would be allowed for the second year in addition to the 20% allowable under section 3(a)(1) of the Income Tax (Amendment) Act, 1946.

(b) The Chamber's attention was drawn to the doubt of interpretation experienced by members with resultant difficulties when assessments were made, owing to the absence of any definition of the word "Reserves" in Explanation (a), Part II of the Schedule to the Indian Finance Act, 1946. The Chamber, visualising further difficulties when more assessments for 1946/47 were completed, asked the Central Board of Revenue for a clarification as the Chamber considered that an important principle was involved.

Relevant Explanation (a) reads as follows :—

"The expression 'capital of the company' shall be deemed to mean the paid-up share capital at the beginning of the previous year for the assessment for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1947 (other than capital entitled to a dividend at a fixed rate) plus any reserves other than depreciation reserves and reserves for bad or doubtful debts at the same date as diminished by the amount on deposit on the same date with the Central Government under Section 10 of the Indian Finance Act, 1942, or Section 2 of the Excess Profits Tax Ordinance, 1943."

The Central Board of Revenue in reply agreed that reserves for plant renovation (provided no depreciation reserve was disguised in it), for stock adjustment and workmen's compensation should be included in

the Capital of the company for the purpose of Super-tax assessment. The Chamber is at present seeking further clarification as to the position of certain other forms of reserve such as that created in order to provide the funds required for E.P.T. Deposits.

Excess Profits Tax : Deposits-Refunds.—(a) In reply to a request by the Chamber for advice on the matter of repayment to assesses under Sub-Section 3 of Excess Profits Tax deposits made by them under Section 2 of the Excess Profits Tax Ordinance XVI of 1943, it was stated by the Finance Department of the Government of India that deposits made under the provisions of Section 2 of the Excess Profits Tax Ordinance, 1943, up to 31st March 1945, would be repaid on 1st April while any deposits made under those provisions after 31st March, 1945 would be refunded on the expiration of two years from the date on which the deposit was made. This referred to the normal refunds, the only exceptions to which were the earlier than normal refunds authorised by Rule 8 of the Excess Profits Tax (Post-War Refunds) Rules, 1942.

(b) There was a further point on which there was some doubt and which was referred by the Chamber to the Government for clarification. Under Section 2(1A) of Ordinance No. XVI of 1943 the provisions of Section 14A(6) of the Excess Profits Tax Act applied with the effect that when a regular assessment was made under Section 14 of the Act the amount of the compulsory deposit payable thereunder was to be reduced by the amount determined as payable under the provisional assessment, so that the amount which became payable under the regular assessment was the *nett* amount. Under Section 2(1) of the Ordinance the amount of the Excess Profits Tax which became payable after regular assessment under Section 14 of the Act was only the *nett* amount and it was apparently only in respect of this *nett* amount that provision was made in sub-section 3 for any refund at all. In other words, on this reasoning, no provision appeared to exist for the refund of compulsory deposits made under Section 2(1A) of the Ordinance unless they were covered by the previous announcement of the Central Board of Revenue in regard to the refund of voluntary deposits.

In reply the Finance Department (Central Revenues) stated that the correct legal position regarding deposits made under section 2(1A) of Ordinance XVI of 1943, on the basis of provisional assessment, was that such deposits were to be regarded for the purpose of refund as prepaid instalments of the total deposit required on the basis of the

regular assessment, so that the date of refund of the "provisional" deposit would be regulated by the date of the final instalment of deposit paid on the completion of the regular assessment. To try and make the position clear the following example was given by the Finance Department :—

'Provisional' deposit Rs. 10,000 paid on 1st November 1944

Total deposit required on the basis of the full amount of excess profits tax on regular assessment (made on 15th January, 1945) ...	Rs. 35,000
Balance deposit payable ...	„ 25,000
Which is paid ...	{ „ 15,000 on 1st Feb. 1945 & „ 10,000 on 31st March 1945

The Department explained that—

- (i) the whole of the Rs. 35,000 was to be treated as a deposit made by the 31st March, 1945 and the date of its refund would be counted from that date ;
- (ii) in the exceptional case where the "provisional" deposit equalled or exceeded the total deposit required on the basis of the regular assessment, the date from which the "provisional" deposit ranked as a regular deposit for the purpose of refund, would be taken as the date of the regular assessment order ; and
- (iii) a "provisional" deposit would itself however carry interest @ 2% per annum from the date it was paid, irrespective of the date of refund of such deposit.

Payment of Taxes.—The unusual rush at the Calcutta Treasury counters and the difficulties experienced by the public in making payments caused by the introduction of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act, led the Commissioner of Income Tax, Calcutta, to engage the services of the Reserve Bank of India in June for the collection of individual payments of Rs. 1,000/- and over. While the arrangement was still in the experimental stage and there were still matters for adjustment the Chamber was asked by the Commissioner of Income

Tax to give publicity to the following routine omissions which had apparently been causing inconvenience at the Reserve Bank :

- Failure : (a) to draw cheques in favour of the Reserve Bank,
 (b) to give on the challan cheque number, date and name of bank on which cheque was drawn,
 (c) to insert signature (this objection referred to challans filled up by the payers, *e. g.* in case of deduction at source under Section 18 of the Indian Income Tax Act by employers or for payment under section 18A) ; and
 (d) to show amounts in figures and words on all parts of challans.

It was pointed out that in the case of a combined cheque for Income Tax and Super Tax when the individual sums were less than Rs. 1000/- one challan might be drawn up for both Income Tax and Super Tax showing them separately in the same challan and giving a total which would correspond to the amount shown in the cheque.

Taxation of Commercial Partnerships.—Early in the year the Chamber was pressed to take up with the Government of India the question of some concession in taxation which would allow commercial partnerships scope for the ploughing back of profits into their businesses in conformity with what appeared to be the settled policy of the Government of India in the case of limited companies, namely of taxing dividends in order to discourage the dissipation of profits and to encourage the accretion of adequate reserves.

The Chamber obtained an expression of views from members affected by this question and in the light of the majority of opinions given and the experience in the U. K. decided not to pursue the matter further.

Income Tax Appellate Tribunal.—At the Annual General Meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce held on the 10th December 1945 a resolution moved by the Chamber to the effect that (a) local Registrars for filing of applications and for facilitating communications with the local benches of the Income-tax Appellate Tribunals be established, and (b) that the decision of Benches of the Tribunal be made

available, was again carried unanimously and later forwarded to the Government of India for consideration.

The Government advised the Associated Chambers that while the first part of their resolution had been met by the appointment of Assistant Registrars to the local Benches from the 1st April 1946, the Government proposed to adhere to the view that it was neither necessary nor desirable to publish the decisions of the Tribunal. This matter is still under consideration by the Associated Chambers.

Bengal Finance (Sales Tax) Act and Rules, 1941 : (a) *List of Registered Dealers.*—On the Chamber's recommendation to the Revenue Department of the Government of Bengal that it would facilitate the enforcement of the Bengal Finance (Sales Tax) Act 1941, especially amended Rule 27A, if Section 9 provided for a revised publication of the entire list of Registered Dealers arranged alphabetically, the list of Registered Dealers was revised and corrected up to 31st March 1945 and published in an appendix to the *Calcutta Gazette* of 18th April, 1946. In addition arrangements were made to bring out the revised list in book form along with a complete reference index, and for the preparation of a supplement showing the changes in the list during the year ending 31st March 1946.

(b) *Suggestions for Improvement.*—In August the Chamber submitted to the Government of Bengal for consideration a number of suggestions for the improvement of the working of the Bengal Sales Tax Act and Rules, based on the administrative and other difficulties being experienced by members in giving effect to the existing provisions of the Act and Rules.

The experience of members revealed a wide need for amendment of the Act and Rules with the object of collecting what was due and avoiding the collection of what was not due.

The Chamber's suggestions are still under consideration by the Government.

Protective Duties Act, 1946, and Protective Duties Continuation Act, 1946.—Two Bills, complementary to each other, were introduced in the Indian Central Legislature, and both were passed on 18th April 1946.

The first was a Bill to enable through executive action the immediate imposition, in pursuance of recommendations made by the

Tariff Board, of protective Customs duties on imported goods pending the passing of the necessary legislation. It was considered that postponement might cause grave injury to the industries concerned whose cases were then before the Tariff Board.

The second was more specific in nature : it sought to extend the date to which duties characterised as protective in the first Schedule to the Indian Tariff Act 1934 should have effect and to amend the Sugar Industry (Protection) Act, 1932. Protection in both cases was extended for another year *i.e.*, to 31st March 1947.

No objection to either measure was offered by the Chamber.

The Indian Stamp Act: Stamp Duty on Policies of Insurance covering Accidents to Passengers travelling by Air.—In March the Chamber took up with the Government of Bengal the question of the stamp duty payable on instruments of insurance against accidents to passengers travelling by air.

The stamp duty on such a policy is governed by Article 47 of Schedule I of the Stamp Act which is so framed in relation to other forms of insurance as to ensure that the amount of stamp duty payable shall be but a small proportion of the total insurance premium. The Schedule itself does not, however, make any special provision for Aviation Personal Accident Policies, presumably because such policies and the need for them are of recent origin. But the existing schedule does provide for a stamp duty of one anna on policies covering railway accident valid for a single journey and the proposal which the Chamber placed before the Government of Bengal was that this item of the schedule, namely Article 47C (a) reading "against railway accident valid for a single journey only", should be extended to include policies of insurance against air accident valid for a single journey only. The Chamber pointed out to Government that on the customary Aviation Personal Accident Policy of Rs. 10,000 for a single journey occupying one day, carrying a premium of Rs. 1 (1/- per mile), the appropriate stamp duty of one anna would still be in the relatively high proportion of 6½% of the premium.

The Chamber recently learned from the Board of Revenue, Government of Bengal, that under a Notification of the Government of India No., 5-stamp dated 12th March 1938, the Government of India had already authorised remission of so much, if any, of the duty chargeable in British India under clause (a) of Article 47 (c) of Schedule I to the

Indian Stamp Act, 1899 on policies of insurance covering accidents to passengers travelling by air as exceeded one anna in each rupee of the amount of premium payable on the policy. This, it would seem, adequately met the point raised by the Chamber.

Indian Oilseeds Committee Act, 1946.—The recommendations of the Select Committee on the Indian Central Oilseeds Committee Bill—that (a) an excise of one anna per maund on oil leaving the mills and (b) an export levy of two annas per maund on oilseeds exported from British India to destinations outside India, be imposed,—were adopted and embodied in the Indian Central Oilseeds Committee Bill, 1946.

This went further than the original proposal in the Bill to levy and collect a cess on all oilseeds crushed in any mill in British India at one anna per maund and is in addition to a cess of ½% already levied on tariff value on oilseeds exported outside India which is recovered for agricultural purposes.

The Bill became law as the Indian Oilseeds Committee Act, 1946 with effect from the 18th April 1946.

BANKING

The Banking Companies Bill, 1946.—Members will recall that on 4th December 1944 the Chamber issued for opinion copies of the Banking Companies Bill 1945 and, on the basis of the replies received, subsequently prepared and submitted to the Government of India a memorandum on the Bill.

During the 1945 Budget Session of the Central Legislature the 1945 Bill was referred to a Select Committee of the Legislature but lapsed before its consideration by the Select Committee. It was reintroduced during the 1946 Budget Session of the Legislature as the Banking Companies Bill, 1946. The latter Bill was based on the 1945 one with certain modifications which had been accepted by the Government on consideration of the opinions and criticisms received in 1945. The 1946 Bill, which was published in Part V of the *Gazette of India* dated 23rd March 1946, was referred by Government to a Select Committee who commenced their sittings on the 21st November.

The Bill, as reported on and revised by the Select Committee, us now before the Central Legislature and is being carefully scrutinised by the Chamber.

The Banking Companies (Restriction of Branches) Act, 1946.—The Chamber gave its support to a Bill to restrict the opening and removal of branches by Banking Companies entitled the Banking Companies (Restriction of Branches) Bill, 1946, which was passed in the Central Assembly on 22nd November.

By bringing forward this measure for controlling the opening and removal of branches by Banking Companies, Government had in mind the speculative activities and dangers inherent in the unrestricted development of branches by certain Banking Companies.

The Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Act, 1946.—The Chamber supported the Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Bill, 1946, included in the programme for the last Session of the Central Assembly when it was passed.

An Ordinance promulgated on the 18th May 1946 made it illegal for banks to issue promissory notes payable to bearer. The Ordinance expired on the 18th November 1946, and the object of the Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Bill, 1946—now an Act—was to put on a permanent footing the ban on the issue of promissory notes payable to bearer by incorporating a suitable provision in the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

FINANCE

International Monetary Fund: Par Value of the Rupee.—The Chamber's views were sought by the Government of India on the par value of the rupee which the Government was required to communicate to the International Monetary Fund in terms of the Fund Agreement.

The Chamber strongly recommended that there be no change in the 1/6 parity which had over the past twenty years stood the test of widely varying economic and war-time circumstances.

It was, the Chamber suggested, virtually impossible at the present time to arrive at the true value of the rupee relatively to other currencies owing to the continuing restrictions and controls on trade both in India and in other countries. But it was possible to forecast in general terms the probable effect on India's economy of any appreciation or depreciation of the present established value of the rupee. The former would undoubtedly have a marked detrimental effect on the ability of India's

developing export trade to compete in world markets and would involve a huge loss to India in the rupee equivalent of the large sterling balances accumulated on the basis of a 1s. 6d. exchange during World War II. Should India's balance of trade become unfavourable to her for any reason, these balances would themselves operate as a powerful factor in maintaining the present rupee parity.

Conversely, depreciation of the value of the rupee would do little if anything to stimulate India's export trade, which already had a world market for more than she could spare, and would merely place a serious handicap on the vital programme of rehabilitation and industrialisation now being embarked upon. Long-term plans had been made and orders placed for large-scale imports of machinery and capital goods, the rupee cost of which would be proportionately enhanced by any depreciation of the value of the rupee in terms of sterling or dollars.

The Chamber found no justification for, and grave dangers in, any attempt to make a change in the present rupee/sterling rate of exchange. The wider interests of the country as a whole clearly pointed to the retention of the 1s. 6d. ratio under existing circumstances.

The Government of India decided in December not to change the par value of the rupee and informed the International Monetary Fund accordingly. The decision was arrived at after taking into consideration the relative circumstances and the opinions gathered from throughout the country which were overwhelmingly in favour of this course.

Foreign Exchange Regulation Bill.—A Bill was recently introduced in the Central Legislature to regulate certain payments in foreign exchange and securities and the import and export of currency and bullion. It is now under reference to a Select Committee of the Legislature.

During the war a system of exchange control was set up under the Defence of India Rules in order to make the best use of the limited supplies of foreign exchange. These rules expired on the 30th September 1946 but were continued for another six months. The shortage of foreign exchange however continued and was likely to continue for some time. Also India's adherence to the Bretton Woods organisations required her to take certain measures to regulate transactions in foreign exchange in order to fulfil her obligations of membership. This Bill gave the Central Government powers to continue to control transactions in foreign exchange, securities and gold. It, however, contained certain modifications

and amendments which experience over the past six years had shown to be desirable, and was drafted in such a manner that the degree of restriction on foreign exchange transactions could be relaxed or increased by executive orders in accordance with the needs of trade and finance or international agreements.

The Bill is under careful consideration by the Chamber.

The Indian Coinage (Amendment) Bill: Decimalisation of the Coinage.—Following upon the widespread support given to the Government scheme for the decimalisation of the coinage in July 1945, a Bill further to amend the Indian Coinage Act, 1906, was introduced in the Legislative Assembly in February and circulated for opinion.

The object of the Bill, which the Chamber supported subject to consideration of the detailed suggestions put forward in 1945, was to introduce a decimal system in place of the present coinage system. During the transition period when both anna and cent coins would be circulating side by side and prices might be quoted in terms of either, it would be necessary to provide for conversion involving fractions of cents. As it was not proposed to issue cent coins of a smaller denomination than a half cent, the Bill, provided for conversions involving smaller fractions to be made in respect of any one transaction to the nearest half cent, and where the amount involved was a quarter cent to the nearest half cent below.

The Bill will probably be referred to a Select Committee or considered and passed during the present Budget session.

Industrial Finance Corporation Bill, 1946.—The Chamber was invited to give an expression of views on the Industrial Finance Corporation Bill, 1946, which is coming up for consideration at the Budget Session of the Central Assembly.

The Bill is intended to establish the Industrial Finance Corporation of India for the purpose of making medium and long-term credits more readily available to industrial concerns in British India, particularly in circumstances where normal banking accommodation is inappropriate or recourse to capital issue methods is impracticable. The system has been established in several countries and in India the Corporation will have a share capital of Rs. 5 crores. The shares will be held only by the Central Government, the Reserve Bank, Scheduled Banks and Insurance Companies, Investment Trusts and other like financial institutions.

There will be no private holding of shares. The Corporation will be authorised to issue bonds and debentures under the guarantee of the Central Government and will be authorised to make long-term loans to industrial undertakings repayable within a period not exceeding 25 years.

The Bill was in general supported by the Chamber. There were two points however which the Chamber asked its representatives in the Central Legislature to raise viz (i) exemption of the Industrial Finance Corporation from taxation and (ii) the apparent exclusion of mines from among those to whom loans might be granted by the Corporation.

Proposed Legislation for the Regulation of Stock Exchanges on an All-India Basis.—Dr. P. J. Thomas, Economic Adviser to the Government of India, submitted an interim report following an enquiry into the working of stock exchanges, with reference to the Government's consideration of legislation for the regulation of stock exchanges on an All-India basis. The report, which was considered by the Chamber, on Government's invitation for suggestions and views, referred to the necessity to curb unbridled speculation on the stock exchanges with its unsatisfactory repercussion, and suggested legislation to promote for—

- (a) Licensing of stock exchanges and also brokers and firms who operate outside the stock exchanges;
- (b) Prescribing of a marginal system of trading, i.e. all dealings to be on the basis of a reasonable proportion of the value of shares being deposited with the stock exchanges; and,
- (c) Limiting the life of blank transfers to three months.

Dr. Thomas would also like (d) the loan value of securities to be fixed so that credit facilities for speculation might be curtailed; (e) the institution of a turn over tax based on the volume of trade; and (f) to limit the number of competing stock exchanges in the same city or town to one.

The Chamber observed that while it was of the opinion that the Rules and Bye-Laws of Stock Exchanges in the country should be subject to the approval of the Central Government, it did not at present favour the principle of instituting comprehensive legislation for the regulation of the Stock Exchanges on an All-India basis, believing that

the true function of Government was to assist the present controlling Committees of the Bombay, Calcutta and Madras Stock Exchanges to enforce their rules rather than to impose upon them rigid rules of conduct and procedure which, while suitable for one City, might be quite unsuitable for another.

The Chamber's view was that a Stock Exchange should be a free market for the sale and purchase of stocks and shares and Government loans, where the public were encouraged to subscribe to Government Loans and provide fresh capital for industrial development, and could turn over their holdings at any time they might please. Anything tending to detract from the freedom or resiliency of this function would be deprecated by the Chamber.

It was the duty of the Governing Bodies of Stock Exchanges to see that speculation did not become over-speculation and the Chamber suggested that this could be done by strict rules regarding deliveries, and by rigid enforcement of such rules. Generally, such rules should be framed on the principle that all purchases must be paid for in cash or delivered through a recognised Clearing House at stated intervals. "Forward Dealings" and "Dealings on Margin" should be rigidly barred by the rules of all Stock Exchanges with very heavy penalties for members who were guilty of infringements.

Licensing of Stock Exchanges.—The Chamber agreed with the proposal to allow only one Stock Exchange in any one City, that Stock Exchanges should be licensed by Government, and suggested further that no Street or unofficial Markets should be allowed under any circumstances. It was also felt that a great deal could be done to curb over-speculation by laying down clearly the hours of dealing on Stock Exchanges according to local conditions, with strict supervision by Government to ensure that rules on this subject were obeyed.

Marginal System of Trading.—On the question which had been raised by Dr. Thomas of the possible insistence by Government on Members of Stock Exchanges being required to deposit with the Stock Exchanges a reasonable proportion of the value of their dealings, the Chamber believed that such a step would tend to penalise the small broker at the expense of the larger dealer, and for this reason did not favour the proposal. At the present time every Member of the Calcutta Stock Exchange—and the Chamber understood that the same was the case in Bombay—must own a share in the Stock Exchange Association. This share, which was at present worth over Rs. 2 lacs, acted as

security for the broker concerned, in that the Stock Exchange Committee possessed a first lien on this share in the event of a Member being found to be unable to meet his commitments. This constituted in the Chamber's view an adequate safeguard against default.

Limitation of Life of Blank Transfer to Three Months.—The Chamber did not think that this proposal was practicable without a very severe curtailment in the volume of genuine business which took place on Stock Markets. The financing of genuine Stock Exchange transactions by Banks must inevitably, if such a rule were enforced, be seriously reduced by reason of the additional amount of work involved. During the past few years practically all Companies had adopted the practice of paying dividends only to registered shareholders as opposed to the procedure which hitherto prevailed of paying out on application by holders of shares on blank transfers. It therefore followed that most transfer deeds were registered within a reasonable time to enable the buyer to obtain the half-yearly dividend.

Fixation of Loan Value of Securities.—It was felt that the recommendation which Dr. Thomas had made in his Interim Report regarding the fixing of the loan value of securities for the purposes of advances by Banks and other Institutions was not one which could be carried out in practice. Sound Banks did not finance speculations. The financial standing of the borrower must, in the Chamber's view, be the determining factor in cases where Banks were asked for such credit facilities; and any attempt to fix rigidly the basis of security for such loans would be an unwise interference with one of the main functions of every Banking Institution.

Turn Over Tax.—The collection of a turnover tax, based on the volume of business which took place on Stock Exchanges would, the Chamber was informed, prove extremely difficult in practice. There was no check at present on the number of dealings which took place, for instance, on the Calcutta Stock Exchange. Were an attempt made to levy a tax on each transaction, business would be driven into other channels, i.e., unofficial and black markets, contrary to the interests both of Government and of the investing public.

GENERAL LEGISLATION

Indian Companies (Amendment) Act 1946.—Sub-section (2) of Section 282B of the Indian Companies Act 1913, which decreed that (i) monies in a provident fund constituted by a company for its em-

employees should either be invested in trust securities or deposited in a Post Office Savings Bank and (iii) any such monies kept in a Post Office Savings Bank should not exceed Rs. 5000/-, was amended by the Indian Companies (Amendment) Act 1946 to afford greater liquidity to a provident fund by allowing where necessary part of its funds being kept in deposit in a scheduled bank.

The Chamber saw no objection to this measure which sought to remove a possible disability in the existing Act and which became law on the 18th April 1946.

Proposed Legislation for the Compulsory Registration of Business Names.—The views of the Chamber were invited by the Government of India on a proposal for promoting legislation to provide for the compulsory registration of business names generally on the lines of the U. K. Registration of Business Names Act, 1916.

According to the U. K. Act all firms and persons carrying on business are required to register their business names and furnish other particulars, unless the business is carried on in the true names of the proprietors. Changes in the owners and names of firms are also required to be intimated, and every individual and firm required to be registered under the Act has to exhibit the true names of the proprietor or partner on business letters, trade circulars, catalogues, etc. Under Section 8 of the Act, the disability of persons in default is that they cannot enforce by legal action their rights arising out of any contract connected with their businesses.

The Chamber in reply stated that it was in favour of such legislation provided it was based on the experience of the corresponding U. K. Government Act and, as in the case of that Act, did not affect limited companies.

Ownership of Shares.—As the subject seemed of special interest to Chambers of Commerce, a copy of the report entitled "Ownership of Shares Admitted—Brokers' Appeal in High Court" which appeared in the *Times of India* on 11th March was sent to the Chamber by the Bombay Chamber of Commerce for information.

Briefly the facts of the case were as follows :—

The plaintiff had purchased and paid for certain shares, obtaining delivery of the share-certificates with the relative transfer forms duly signed by the defendants, who were the registered holders of these shares. The plaintiff contended that although the legal title to the shares remained in the defendants, he was the beneficial owner thereof

and as such was entitled to call upon the defendants to vote at the annual general meeting of the company in accordance with his wishes. The defendants having refused to do so, the plaintiff took out the notices of motion for a mandatory injunction against the defendants ordering them to attend the meeting in accordance with the plaintiff's wishes or in the alternative, to sign proxies in his favour.

In appeal their Lordships held that in law it was clear that the production of a share certificate with a blank transfer form was sufficient to create an equitable mortgage of the share and that if so there was no reason to doubt that such production made the holder the beneficial owner of the share.

Their Lordships, therefore held that, having regard to the facts in this particular case, the production of the share certificates and the relative transfer forms was sufficient to establish the plaintiff's title as the beneficial owner. Their Lordships therefore issued a mandatory injunction against the defendants and ordered them to sign proxies in favour of the plaintiff.

The Chamber after taking legal opinion held the view that the issue of importance lay in whether the Bombay Judgment in any way prejudiced the sanctity of the current practice that a Company recognised only those shareholders whose names appeared on the share register of the Company as the registered holders of shares. The blank system served a useful purpose and any interference with it might have unfortunate results. What was required was an examination of the effects of the Bombay judgment from the point of view of Company practice.

The Chamber placed the matter before the Associated Chambers recommending that the Association should refer the position to the Government of India, possibly after consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, and it is understood that the Associated Chambers are considering the adoption of this course of action.

Registration of Companies formerly incorporated in Burma and Hongkong (Registration of Transferred Companies Ordinance 1942).—Certain companies formerly registered in Burma or Hongkong, which in accordance with the provisions of the Registration of Transferred Companies Ordinance 1942 registered in India at the outbreak of war with Japan, found that there was no machinery in India for deregistration to allow them to resume their registration in Burma or Hongkong. Appeal was made to the Chamber to make representations to the Government of India to institute some measure which would facilitate deregistration without forcing voluntary liquidation on the companies. The Chamber suggested to the Government a procedure similar to that being used in England and Scotland whereby companies transferred from the Channel Islands, Burma and the Colonies during the emergency period were repatriated by means of Orders in Council.

It was largely at the instance of the Chamber that a Bill to amend the Registration of Transferred Companies Ordinance 1942 was introduced to the Central Legislature during the autumn session, becoming the Registration of Transferred Companies (Amendment) Act, 1946, with effect from 22nd December 1946.

Electricity (Supply) Bill 1946.—A Bill entitled the Electricity (Supply) Bill, 1946, for the rationalisation of the production and supply of electricity and generally for taking measures conducive to the electrical development of India was introduced in the Indian Central Legislature during the 1946 Budget session and circulated for further opinion.

The purpose of the Bill is to secure for the Centre the necessary legislative power to control the establishment of new systems and the operation of existing systems, dealing with the problem regionally, and ensuring that there is inter-communication and co-ordination between the regions.

The Bill was referred by the Chamber to its Electricity Sub-Committee, and following a series of meetings the Sub-Committee drafted a Memorandum of views and suggestions on this lengthy and complicated Bill, which after approval and acceptance by the Chamber Committee, was submitted in December to the Central Government and the Government of Bengal for their consideration. Copies of the Memorandum were issued to all members of the Chamber with Circular No. 203 of 1946.

The Essential Supplies (Temporary Powers) Act, 1946.—Controls in respect of certain essential commodities (foodstuffs, cotton and woollen textiles, paper, petroleum and petroleum products, spare parts of mechanically propelled vehicles, coal, iron and steel and mica) were continued beyond the first day of October, 1946, through the Essential Supplies (Temporary Powers) Ordinance, 1946. Considering it desirable to have these powers available even if it did not become necessary to use them and to convert the Ordinance into an Act, Government introduced the Essential Supplies (Temporary Powers) Bill, 1946 to the Central Legislature during the Autumn Session of 1946.

The Chamber while not opposing the measure took the opportunity of pressing for the relinquishing of control of as many commodities as possible where a satisfactory case could be established by the trade in favour of de-control.

The Trade Marks Act, 1940.—Members would note that, following the agitation by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India during

1944 and 1945, a Bill further to amend the Trade Marks Act 1940 was introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly on the 28th February 1946 and passed into law on the 18th April, 1946 (see Act No. XII 1946, in the *Gazette of India*, 27th April 1946).

The Bill, considered by the Chamber to be a very satisfactory measure, was designed with a view to avoiding conflicts of registration in various Indian States and also to make trade marks registered in any territory effective in all territories in India in which trade marks legislation had been enacted. Provision was also made for the delegation of the statutory powers of the Registrar of Trade Marks to other officers in addition to the Deputy Registrar.

Draft Rules were published in the *Gazette of India Extraordinary* of 2nd September 1946 for reciprocal arrangements on trade marks between British India and the Indian States.

The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 1946.—A Bill further to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939, was introduced by the Indian Central Legislature and was referred by them to a Select Committee to meet at Simla out of session. The views of the Chamber on the Bill were requested.

The Bill sought to remedy certain defects disclosed in the operation of the original Act, to modify it to meet the change from the era of the small owner of transport vehicles to an era of organised companies, and to give effect to the policy agreed by the Central and Provincial Governments for the better co-ordination of land transport generally and of road and rail transport in particular. The Bill in no way attempted to circumvent the decisions of the Assembly in the matter of participation of the Railways in road transport companies.

The Chamber generally supported the broad principles behind the Bill but put forward certain detailed observations after consultation with the Indian Roads and Transport Development Association and the Chambers representative on the Provincial Transport Authority, Bengal. The Bill was in due course passed by the Central Legislature.

Draft Motor Vehicles (Second Amendment) Bill, 1946.—It was not found possible in the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 1946, which came into force on 1st July 1946 to make provision for reciprocity with the Indian States in the matter of insurance of motor vehicles, a defect in Chapter VIII of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939, which assumed greater importance on account of the intention expressed by more than forty States to enact parallel legislation.

Without a scheme of reciprocity insurers would be unable to issue policies valid for the whole of India and persons owning motor vehicles would find it necessary to obtain a fresh policy for many of the territories they wished to traverse. The Motor Vehicles (Second Amendment) Bill, 1946, was drafted to overcome this difficulty so far as British India was concerned. A copy of it was sent to the Chamber for observations.

The Chamber informed Government that it approved of the Bill. A suggestion was made however for incorporating in this Bill an amendment to Sub-Section (3) of Section 95 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939, which as it stood was in the Chamber's opinion too wide in scope. Confining liability to drivers and/or conductors who found their regular and normal working stations or posts on board motor vehicles, the Chamber stated that it would prefer as an amendment to Sub-Section (3) of Section 95 the more definite and specific wording "any paid employee being a driver or a conductor engaged in driving or otherwise in attendance on a motor vehicle" in place of "any paid employee engaged in driving or otherwise in attendance on or being carried in a motor vehicle".

The Bill has been referred to a Select Committee for further consideration.

Bengal Motor Spirit Sales Taxation (Amendment) Act, 1946.—The Chamber's representatives in the Bengal Legislature strongly opposed the increase of 5½ annas in the tax on sales of petrol which the Bengal Motor Spirit Sales Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1946 sought to impose, with the result that they were successful *inter alia* in limiting the increased tax to 6 annas per gallon, an increase of 3 annas compared with the 5½ annas proposed. The Act came into force on 10th October 1946.

Introduction of Compulsory Third Party Insurance in India.—In September 1945 the Government of India intimated to the Associated Chambers of Commerce its intention of bringing into effect Chapter VIII of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939, for the enforcement of compulsory third party insurance in India on 1st July 1946, and Rules under Chapter VIII of the Act were promulgated in June and introduced in Bengal on 1st July 1946. Being concerned mainly with procedure—from which point of view they were scrutinised by insurance interests—the Chamber did not find it necessary to comment on the Rules with the exception of Rule 216. Rule 216 of the Bengal Motor Vehicles Rules

imposed the additional legal obligation of compulsory insurance against liability arising under the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act in respect of the death of or bodily injury to any paid employee engaged in driving or in attendance upon, or being carried in, a motor vehicle.

The Chamber took no exception to the enforcement of the additional obligation but asked the Government of Bengal—in view of the short time given to consider and appreciate the full significance of the draft amendment of the Rules issued on 24th June which gave effect to this new obligation—to defer the operation of Rule 216 of the Bengal Motor Vehicles Rules for an adequate period, say of three months, to enable the public to effect the necessary insurances if not already taken out and to allow insurance companies to amend existing policies to that effect. This request for three months abeyancy was in practice acceded to.

Estate Duty Bill, 1946.—A Bill to provide for the levy and collection of an estate duty in British India was introduced in the Indian Legislature and circulated for public opinion.

The Bill which was supported by the Chamber was stated to be a first step in the attempt to even out the great disparities of wealth in the Indian economy and to secure a more equitable distribution of the national income by imposing an estate duty on non-agricultural property. The accruing revenue would be used to supplement and strengthen the resources of the Provinces and so assist them in their post-war development and improvement of existing social services. In following the lines of the U.K. Death Duties Act, the Bill promised to be a lucrative source of income to Government by ensuring that death duties would be paid on properties which had hitherto passed untaxed from generation to generation.

The Bill is still at its introduction stage.

The Requisitioned Land (Continuance of Powers) Bill, 1946.—The Requisitioned Land (Continuance of Powers) Bill, 1946, which was reported on by a Select Committee in November provided for the continuance of all requisitions in force immediately before the expiry of the Defence of India Act and for the release from requisition of any requisitioned land no longer required by Government. Requisitioned lands might also be acquired permanently in certain specified circumstances as for instance, when valuable assets had been created. The

term "lands" was defined as meaning any immoveable property. The Bill also made provision for the payment of compensation in respect of requisitioning or permanent acquisition.

The Chamber's views were represented to the Select Committee who made certain recommendations. The Bill was carried forward for future examination since the Defence Secretary refused to accept the amendments made by the Select Committee.

In the meantime the same powers as were included in the original Bill are in force by Ordinance until the end of March 1947 and in particular it will be open to Government to acquire property until then at the 1933 value and not at the market value as stipulated in the report of the Select Committee.

The European Group are keeping the Chamber advised of developments.

Conversion of Ordinances into Legislation.—The ten Ordinances given below promulgated during the recess of the Bengal Legislature by H.E. the Governor will cease to operate at the end of six weeks from the re-assembly of the Legislature, and as further Ordinances are contemplated it is not considered practicable to pass all the necessary legislation replacing each Ordinance within the six weeks. In the circumstances the Bengal Government propose to introduce a short Bill at the beginning of the forthcoming Budget Session, extending the validity of the Ordinances for a period of six months. The Ordinances will be listed in a Schedule to the Bill and the Bill itself will merely consist of a clause extending the validity of the Ordinances. It is also proposed that power should be given, in the Bill, to the Provincial Government to extend the validity of the Ordinances for a further period of six months, by notification in the Official Gazette.

The European Party have indicated to Government that they agree that the proposal represents the only practical method of avoiding the lapsing of the Ordinances, but have at the same time represented to Government that the substantive legislation to replace each Ordinance should be introduced in the Budget Session and as much progress made with each Bill as may be possible. The Party have also represented to Government that no further extension of the validity of the Ordinance should be undertaken without the approval of the legislature to be signified by a resolution passed by both Houses.

The Ordinances promulgated and referred to above are :—

NO. OF ORDINANCE	TITLE OF ORDINANCE
II	The Bengal Civic Guards and Collective Fines Continuance Ordinance, 1946.
III	The Bengal Molasses Control Ordinance, 1946.
IV	The Bengal Control Continuance Ordinance, 1946.
V	The Calcutta Rent Ordinance, 1946.
VI	The Bengal Special Powers Ordinance, 1946.
VII	The Bengal Consumer Goods Control Ordinance 1946.
VIII	The Dacca Area Security Ordinance, 1946.
IX	The Noakhali and Tippera Emergency Harvesting Ordinance, 1946.
X	The Noakhali and Tippera Area Security Ordinance, 1946.
XI	The Bengal Jute Mills (Temporary Provision) Ordinance, 1946.

The Chamber advised the European Group Corporation that it supported the Government of Bengal's proposal and in particular stressed that there was much to be said for extending the validity of Ordinance V and XI.

MARINE

Dredging of Lakhyia River, Narayanganj.—The Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce invited the support of the Chamber in emphasising to the Government the great need at present for dredging the Lakhyia River near Narayanganj.

The Chamber in supporting the suggestion made by the Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and after consulting the Inland Steamer

Companies, pointed out that no effective dredging in the area could take place before an accurate survey of the whole area was produced by competent surveyors, and suggested that this could probably be undertaken at the close of the Monsoon.

Apparently a rough survey of the port of Narayanganj and its approach channels taken at the beginning of the year had disclosed that several major changes in the river courses had taken place during the past few years and were still developing, making it more necessary for a detailed survey of the whole area covering the rivers which flowed past Dacca, Taltala, Mirkadim, Munshiganj, the port of Narayanganj and the Lakhya River up to and above Sonachora.

Calcutta Port Commissioners' Charges.—As a result of the continuing fall in the volume of service stores and traffic passing through the port of Calcutta and in order to balance revenue against expenditure, the Port Commissioners announced at the beginning of the year further increases in their charges.

The increased rates were accepted by the commercial and industrial interests represented by the Chamber as a necessary consequence of the actual and anticipated reductions in the traffic of the port. But in addition to putting to the Commissioners certain queries raised by members on the details of the charges, the Chamber again emphasised on behalf of exporting interests the importance of giving the longest possible notice of increased port charges to prevent substantial losses being experienced by shippers under forward contracts.

The Chamber also considered it opportune to bring to the notice of the Port Commissioners a matter which although not directly connected with the increase in port charges was widely commented on by members, viz. the high rate of pilferage and damage which imported goods were suffering. The need for a much stricter supervision over the storage and assortment of imported goods and for a much more accurate record of the sheds into which goods were landed or transferred, was urged by the Chamber, who suggested that the reduced volume of traffic responsible for the imposition of the increased charges should itself admit of the improvements now looked for.

The Commissioners assured the Chamber that they were taking stringent measures in collaboration with the police to eliminate or reduce the pilferage of cargo.

Imports: Port Commissioners' Wharf Rent.—According to the last part of paragraph 2 of Section 5 of the Port Commissioners' Schedule of Charges, rent on imported goods was charged up to the date of acceptance of complete papers, and any period intervening between the submission of papers and their acceptance was charged for at the rates given in the Schedule. Representations were received by the Chamber in respect of imported goods for despatch to up-country destinations by rail in which it was alleged that when the Commissioners refused to accept Forwarding Notes owing to operational restrictions or because the consignments were "small" for immediate despatch, they continued to charge rent at the normal rate constituting a levy over which the importer had no control and adding substantially to the heavy landing charges.

On enquiry the Chamber learned that for foreign railway despatches concessional rates could on request be applied in genuine cases of rent being incurred solely on account of railway operational restrictions. The Commissioners also advised that in genuine cases of delay in delivery covered by the late receipt of documents due to the Postal Strike the same concessions would be granted, as were given during the war, when documents were being received late.

When goods were booked however to private depots served by the Port Trust Railway, the Commissioners would only accept each day the quantity which could be handled at the delivery point in a day and any balance incurred rent at the Schedule rates. For the sake of quick clearance merchants must be induced to use carts or lorries when the quantities to be despatched were in excess of their siding capacity.

Jute Bales: Inspection at the Docks.—The Calcutta Baled Jute Association complained to the Chamber that their members had been experiencing serious losses of jute at the docks ever since the scarcity of lighters had made it necessary for transport of bales to the docks to be undertaken by wagons. Certain of the bales in a consignment of jute were opened for the customary 3% inspection by shippers and it was thereafter that pilfering appeared to occur, before the jute was returned to the presshouses. With jute at the prices now ruling, these shortages—it was stated—were involving balers in heavy losses.

The Chamber took this matter up with the Calcutta Port Commissioners who agreed to instruct their staff to load up opened bales immediately on the receipt of disposal orders. The Commissioners

pointed out however that it was important for shippers to rebundle the jute and give immediate disposal orders, and a number of cases were quoted where the loose bales were not rebundled and/or considerable delay had taken place in giving the necessary disposal orders. The Chamber asked the Commissioners to refer all cases of this kind to the Associations concerned for action ; and it was hoped by cooperation between the Commissioners and the Associations that the losses would be eliminated or considerably reduced.

Permits for Boarding Vessels in Docks—Following numerous complaints from ships' personnel the Port Police, Calcutta, proposed instituting an official pass system in an attempt to thwart the thieving, cheating, and pilfering of certain petty traders such as hawkers, photographers, tailors, dhobis, who board ships in port without and with all kinds of printed and written passes. At first the Chamber was inclined to object to the scheme on the grounds that there did not appear to be any justification after the war for the inconvenience of an official pass system and that the Shipping Companies were really responsible for taking such measures as they considered necessary to prevent unauthorised persons boarding their ships while in dock. Evidence was given by the Police that the Shipping Companies were not always in a position to judge the good faith and honesty of the numerous small traders involved. The issue of official passes by the Port Police to petty traders would ensure that there would be an adequate control of this traffic and that if any dishonesty on the part of petty traders did take place, the Police records would be available to help trace offenders. Since it was only to apply to petty traders and hawkers, the Chamber accepted the scheme.

Merchant Seamen (Litigation) Act, 1946.—A Bill to provide for the special protection in respect of civil and revenue litigation of serving seamen, and entitled the Merchant Seamen (Litigation) Bill, 1946, was introduced in the Indian Central Legislature on 9th April 1946.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons attached to the Bill explained that while Indian soldiers received special protection in respect of civil and revenue litigation by the Indian Soldiers (Litigation) Act, 1925, and subsequent amendments to the Act covered Indian sailors in the service of His Majesty, there was no legislation available to meet the needs of Indian merchant seamen ; and it was with the object of meeting this deficiency that the proposed Bill was framed and introduced.

The Chamber, on the advice of its Shipping Sub-Committee, supported the Bill which after being referred to a Select Committee of the Legislature was passed as an Act on 23rd April 1946.

RAILWAYS

Railway Budget 1946-1947.—In February the Chamber registered its approval of the Railway Budget proposals for 1946-47.

The views of the Chamber were particularly requested firstly, on the proposal to set up a Wages Commission, predominantly non-official in character, to go into the whole question of scales of pay for all Government servants, and secondly, on the suggestion that the complex structure of rates should be examined to see what revisions could be made to unify and simplify it.

On the first point the Chamber saw no objection to the proposed Wages Commission and expressed the hope that the Commission when set up would bear in mind the importance of taking into account repercussions on the wages of industrial and commercial employees of any revisions they might recommend in those of Government servants. Accordingly the need for having a non-official representative of industrial and commercial employers on this Commission was emphasised if the Commission were appointed from Assembly members.

An enquiry into the revision of the railway freights structure was welcomed by the Chamber.

Indian Railways (Amendment) Bill, 1946.—A Bill further to amend the Indian Railways Act of 1890 entitled the Indian Railways (Amendment) Bill, 1946, was supported by the Chamber.

Section 75 of the Indian Railways Act, 1890, protected railways from liability for loss, destruction or deterioration of any package or parcel containing articles mentioned in the Second Schedule, the value of which exceeded Rs. 100/-, unless its contents and value were declared and an arrangement made for the payment of a percentage of the value so declared by way of compensation for increased risk. In recent years the price of such articles, in common with others carried by rail, had increased and a higher level of Rs. 300/- was now considered a more reasonable basis, for which purpose the present Bill was introduced to the Central Legislature.

The Bill has recently been passed.

The Indian Railway Enquiry Committee, 1947.—In pursuance of a recommendation by the Railway Standing Finance Committee that a high-power Committee should be appointed to ascertain the extent of Railway staff surplus to requirements and to suggest practical methods of absorbing them and further to suggest ways and means of effecting economy in all branches of the Railway Administration, the Government of India appointed a Committee entitled "The Indian Railways Enquiry Committee—1947" (1) to suggest ways and means of securing improvement in net earnings by—

- (a) economies in all branches of railway administration, and
 - (b) any other means;
- and (2) to ascertain the extent of staff surplus to requirements and to suggest practical methods of absorbing them in railway service.

Members of the Committee were :—

(i) Mr. K. C. Neogy, M.L.A., (Central)	..	Chairman
(ii) Mr. I. S. Puri, C.L.E., Additional Financial Commissioner, Railways	...	Member
(iii) Mr. J. N. Nanda, General Manager, His Exalted Highness the Nizam's State Railway	...	Member
(iv) Khan Mohammed Yamin Khan, Deputy President, Central Legislative Assembly	...	Member
(v) Professor Humayon Kabir, Vice-President, All India Railwaymen's Federation	...	Member
(vi) Mr. M. N. Chakravarti, an Officer of the Transportation (Traffic) and Commercial Department of N. W. Railway	...	Secretary

There would be two more Members of whom one would probably be a railway expert from U.S.A. and the other a high ranking railway officer on Indian Railways.

The Committee was expected to assemble early in April, 1947 and the Government have decided that in the meantime one of the Members of the Committee, Mr. Puri, should collect the data germane to the enquiry. For this purpose he was at present visiting headquarters of Railways to study the organisation of different Railways and to discuss with the administrations the character of the data required.

The Chamber through the Associated Chambers had been asked for their views and had been offered an opportunity of meeting Mr. Puri to discuss the exact requirements of the Committee if so desired, before submitting suggestions. The matter was under consideration by the Chamber.

Participation of State Railways in Road Motor Transport.—A White Paper on the policy of the Central Government in respect of the participation of State Railways in road motor transport was issued by Government early in 1946 and was considered by the Chamber.

Briefly the aim of the policy in the White Paper was to ensure the best use of the dual means of rail and road transport so that each was used to its best inherent advantage complementary to the other, so that wasteful duplication of services might be avoided. In the opinion of the Government of India the most promising and comprehensive means of attaining the necessary working agreements between the road and railway interests and of achieving close co-ordination would be found in some fusion of financial interests under the control of transport authorities. It was considered that this fusion would lead to healthy rivalry on the basis of service to the community rather than to mere competition for selfish gain.

The Chamber generally endorsed this policy of the Government provided the execution of that policy did not in practice operate to stifle the legitimate development of road transport and construction.

Claims against the Railway Administrations in respect of Lost or Damaged Goods.—Members will recollect that in 1944 and again in 1945 the Chamber at the instance of a wide range of consignors and consignees pressed the Railway Board to take steps to remedy the following complaints on the part of the commercial community :—

- (a) Failure, for months on end, to extract from the Railways anything more than a stereotyped acknowledgment (if any) of an enquiry or claim.
- (b) Delays of up to a year, in some cases more, between the submission of the claim and its disposal by the Railways even in cases where there was no legal or other complication to justify the delay.
- (c) Prolonged delays—said to be due to "accounts certification"—in actual payment after admission of the claim.

- (d) Failure of the Railways to take adequate steps to trace consignments lost or misdelivered in transit after enquiry and correspondence regarding them on the part of the consignor or consignee.
- (e) Even in cases where the loss of or damage to goods had been the subject of very prolonged correspondence with and enquiry through the Claims Sections of the Railways and/or inconclusive endeavours to obtain the requisite short certificate in support of the claim, an increasing tendency on the part of the Railways ultimately to repudiate the claim months afterwards on technical grounds under section 77 of the Indian Railways Act.
- (f) Reported non-receipt or loss by the Railway Claims Sections of the relative papers notwithstanding previous acknowledgment of the forwarding letter—leading to unnecessary correspondence, delay and argument regarding the time-bar under section 77.
- (g) Lack of co-ordination between the different State Railways in following up goods reported to be lost in transit and in dealing with the relative claims.

This year the Chamber undertook a survey among its members and affiliated Associations to ascertain their recent experience with regard to the list of complaints already submitted to the Railway Board during the previous year. Only three concerns reported any material improvement and then only in the cases of certain of the Railways and with reference only to certain of the complaints made in 1944/45. The others—representing a substantial section of railway users in this part of the Country—submitted evidence which showed that :—

- (a) it was still the general experience that repeated inquiries and reminders addressed to the Claims Department elicited either no response or a stereotyped acknowledgment stating that the matter was under investigation ;
- (b) the most serious dissatisfaction was still expressed regarding the delays that continued to take place between the submission of claims and their disposal even in cases where there were no legal or other complications to justify delay ;

- (c) the interval between the admission by the Railways of a claim and its payment was frequently from three to five months ;
- (d) there was a further, though, a reducing, volume of evidence concerning the failure of the Railways to take adequate steps to trace consignments lost or misdelivered in transit after enquiry regarding them on the part of the consignor or consignee ;
- (e) and (f) there were still numerous reports of the alleged non-receipt by the railways of claim papers sometimes leading to repudiation under section 77 of the Act ; and
- (g) there was still stray evidence that where more than one railway was concerned, great difficulty and delay were experienced in tracing missing goods and in the disposal of the relative claims.

Further representations were made by the Chamber to the Railway Board who, appreciating the grounds for complaint, claimed to be vigorously pressing their efforts to effect improvements. The General Managers of the Calcutta Railways were asked to take steps to arrange periodical meetings with trade interests, and the Chamber was requested to draw the attention of its members to the desirability of improving standards of packing and of a more rigid observance of the rules relating to the marking of goods tendered for despatch by rail.

The Chamber's Railways Sub-Committee agreed to review the position quarterly to note what progress was being made and what further action, if any, was advisable.

In particular and with special regard to the question of packing, the General Manager, Bengal Nagpur Railway, wrote to the Chamber intimating what steps were being taken by his Administration to prevent or reduce the increasing losses of goods in transit by rail, and inviting the co-operation of the Chamber in securing an improvement in the packing of goods for rail carriage. The Railway's letter was issued to all members of the Chamber for attention.

Demurrage due to the Postal Strike and Deliveries of Railway Goods.—It was not possible for the Railways to issue a general order waiving the payment of demurrage and wharfage during the postal strike, but assurances were received by the Chamber that the Railways in

dealing with claims for demurrage or wharfage would take into account the difficulties caused by the postal strike in delaying railway receipts and consequently deliveries of consignments.

Prior to termination of the postal strike, arrangements were made for an adequate supply of Indemnity Bonds at stations in order to enable consignments to be collected, and instructions were issued to the Railway Staff to render every possible assistance to consignees in taking deliveries according to the prescribed procedure.

The Railways also arranged to try as far as practicable to notify the arrival of consignments through the transmission of arrival notices by cycle peons or runners, using where possible Trade Associations for the purpose of circulating these notices among constituents.

Central Collection and Delivery Service in Calcutta for E. I., B. A. & B. N. Railways.—The views of the Chamber were invited by the East Indian Railway on a scheme prepared by the E. I. in consultation with the B. A. & B. N. Railways for introducing a collection and delivery service for luggage, parcels and goods traffic for the three Calcutta Railways under a Central Organisation which would be co-ordinated by the East Indian Railway. The proposed new arrangements, it was hoped would constitute a considerable improvement on the existing one and would result in greater facilities to the public at a minimum cost.

The Chamber generally endorsed the scheme making a few detailed comments and stressing that the success of the scheme would depend on the speed and precision with which collection, transportation and delivery could be carried out.

POST & TELEGRAPHS

Delays in the Delivery of Mails.—In September the Chamber approached the Presidency Postmaster, G.P.O., Calcutta, unofficially about the continued delay in, and haphazard delivery of, inland mails and enquired whether an early return to normal conditions could be expected by the commercial community.

In reply the Presidency Postmaster emphasised that (a) the disruption of the postal strike which was very widespread and general

and (b) the dislocation caused by the riots in Calcutta and Bombay which followed before the arrears of the strike could be cleared, were still felt at the G.P.O. resulting in the continuance of abnormal conditions.

Working over a period of 12 hours a day instead of the normal 20 hours on account of the curfew and restricted transport, the post office shifts were attempting to cope with the delayed traffic as well as the normal traffic; and with the uncertainty and lack of confidence prevailing for some time after the riots, workers could not be induced to leave their families and attend office for night work.

The Presidency Postmaster reported that by the beginning of October extra staff working overtime were able to clear the congestion at the Calcutta G.P.O. in respect of first class letter mail and packets. Delayed mail was then still being received however from other parts of India with current mail, and it was apparently not possible to ascertain at which office or section of the service the delays had occurred. The recrudescence of the disturbances towards the end of September caused a further set back.

Mails from India to Burma, Malaya, Hongkong and China.—While mails from Burma, Malaya, China and Hongkong to India were taking a comparatively short time in transit presumably being carried by air, the corresponding service in the reverse direction was the subject of numerous complaints by members.

Evidence showed generally that inadequate use was made of transport facilities from India to Burma, Malaya and the Far East. Transport of mails by sea was restricted to the occasional, slow and irregular cargo ship: one consignment for Rangoon actually took three weeks on the way and no sailings from Calcutta to Rangoon were made between the 4th February and 21st March.

Following representations by the Chamber, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs explained that the local postal authorities were taken by surprise when the Army Postal Service ceased to function; and before new arrangements could be made a considerable back-log accumulated during February and March. It was pointed out also that arrangements at the receiving end in Burma and Malaya were not always satisfactory. The assurance was given however that mails would go by any steamer without restriction, provided there were sailings.

A particular complaint made by the Burma Chamber of Commerce about the length of time taken by mails from India to Burma, was taken up by the Associated Chambers with the Presidency Postmaster G.P.O. Calcutta, who stated that arrangements had been made for a gazetted Postmaster to examine the contents of Burma mail bags closed at Calcutta, in an endeavour to ascertain whether postal articles had suffered detention prior to their despatch from Calcutta. He suggested to the Associated Chambers that it would greatly assist if arrangements could be made at Rangoon for the return to him of covers received late by the public in Rangoon. This suggestion was passed to the Burma Chamber of Commerce.

When the urgent necessity of resuming an air mail service from Calcutta to Burma, Malaya, China and Hongkong was stressed by the Chamber, the Postmaster General replied that an air mail service had been available (i) to China, all along, (ii) to Burma since December 1945, and (iii) to Malaya since April 1946, and one to Hongkong would shortly be resumed.

Air Service to Australia.—At the beginning of the year only air letter cards were accepted in India for transmission by air to Australia. In response to an enquiry by the Chamber in January on whether it was possible to institute an air service to Australia, which would cater for correspondence and papers other than air letter cards, particularly shipping documents which should reach destination prior to the arrival of relative cargo, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs advised that it was hoped to establish a service of this nature shortly. An announcement to this effect would be duly made in the Press and by means of a Postal Notice.

Postal Parcels from the U.K.—At the instigation of the Chamber an informal meeting was called in June to discuss with the Postal and Customs Authorities ways and means of improving the procedure for dealing with postal parcels from the U.K. and of expediting the clearance of large accumulations of parcels at the G. P. O., Calcutta.

The Presidency Postmaster said that the staff at the G. P. O. had been increased and hours for collection of parcels by the public had been extended from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with no appreciable effect as all efforts to expedite clearance were being nullified by factors outwith his control.

It was alleged that the chief reason for the hold-up was due (a) to the failure to tender the appropriate documents promptly viz. invoices, certificates of origin and import licences required for Customs appraisal and identification of the parcels with their addressees, and (b) to the delay in collecting the parcels by the public after Customs examination.

Many parcels addressed to the Banks gave no indication of ultimate consignees and the Banks apparently could not accept the parcels until they could be identified with their clients on the receipt of the relevant documents. Certain Calcutta trading concerns were in the habit of importing some of their goods through the Post Office, and allowing them to accumulate at the G. P. O. until they were ready to collect.

Failure to produce the relevant documents promptly seemed to be the chief difficulty and in an endeavour to expedite delivery of these documents from the U.K., H.M. Trade Commissioner in Calcutta agreed to arrange :—

- (i) through the Board of Trade for the Post Office authorities in the U.K. to accept and transmit to India by air mail, ten days in advance of the arrival of parcels if possible, the duplicate Customs' declarations accompanied by copies of the relative invoices and certificates of origin in respect of all parcels for India; and
- (ii) for the insertion of a notice in the Board of Trade Journal requesting all senders of trade parcels to India to submit duplicate copies of invoices and certificates of origin together with Customs declarations to the Post Office at the despatching end at the time of handing in the parcels, so that the documents could be transmitted by air mail to India in advance.

To facilitate identification of parcels by large merchant houses importing through different departments, it was agreed that C.B.R. Customs Form No. 68 issued by the Customs Appraising Staff in all cases should contain brief particulars, taken from the Customs declaration affixed to the parcels, of the type of goods contained in the parcels.

From the angle of the addressee the Chamber, as possibilities for speeding up the procedure, suggested (a) to the Banks that in an endeavour to effect quicker identification they might request senders of

parcels to address labels "to the A/c of the Consignee" without giving a second address, and (b) to the Calcutta Trades Association that they might with the object of securing earlier submission of documents arrange with their members to instruct senders of parcels in the U. K. or overseas to transmit by air mail a week or ten days in advance of despatching parcels, copies of those documents required by the Customs.

In response to a complaint made in November about the continued delay in the delivery of parcels from the U. K., a representative of the Chamber visited the G.P.O., and inspected with the Presidency Postmaster the various departments including the Customs section, where parcels from overseas were sorted for delivery. A vast improvement in the clearance of arrears was reported: in June there were arrears of 3000 unopened bags from overseas against 400 at the end of November which were all received within ten days. There were no arrears in the Customs section where the number of postal appraisers had been increased.

Through the co-operation of the postal and customs authorities with the banks and traders, who were responsible for a considerable volume of the traffic in parcels, there had been an all round speeding up of procedure and delivery.

The Appraising Department of the Customs recently proposed, as an experimental measure for six months, to introduce a change in procedure with the object of simplifying and speeding up the Customs clearance of postal parcels. Instead of calling for the receipt of the relative documents (e.g. invoices, import licences etc.) after the arrival of the parcels at the G.P.O. the Customs suggested asking for the documents to be forwarded to the Postal Appraising Department in advance of the parcels by importers and others concerned. The Chamber, in supporting such a trial, invited members to give their co-operation.

Delays and Mutilations in Transmission of Foreign and Inland Telegrams.—(a) Early in May the Chamber took up with the Director-General of Posts & Telegraphs two defects in the telegraph service which at the time were very marked, namely (i) the transit times of foreign telegrams via Bombay and (ii) the excessive number of mutilations in and careless transcriptions of telegrams, both inland and foreign.

The Chamber was assured that steps had been taken to ensure greater accuracy and that disciplinary action would be taken against

those responsible for cases of mutilations which could be shown to be the result of carelessness. It was pointed out, however, that only when specific cases were submitted to the Postmaster-General or the Director of Telegraphs could it be established whether the mutilations had occurred within India or beyond.

In the matter of transit times, the Chamber was informed that the main cause was the incessant intermittent line disturbances experienced between Bombay and Calcutta and in a less degree between New Delhi and Calcutta. These disturbances, which were of a technical and somewhat unique nature, arose from the use in India of modern high speed equipment which, though of proved value elsewhere was yet to be adapted to the long distances and atmospheric and electrical conditions of India. The Chamber's information was that a thorough investigation into these matters was being undertaken by two specialists, that their findings so far were encouraging, and that everything possible was being done to improve the service.

(b) During August and September breakdowns of a more complete character were added to the technical difficulties, and resulted in a severe setback. The interruptions were due to various causes which followed one another with hardly any appreciable pause between the end of July and the middle of September, and were distributed throughout most of the districts between here and Bombay.

One particular cause of serious trouble was the repeated cutting and theft of wires, and proposals for dealing with this nuisance were put forward for consideration on a high level.

Large accumulations of traffic occurred at this end during the strike and again still more during the riots. Every means to deliver the messages were adopted whether these means were orthodox or not, resulting in telegrams being delivered in batches and sometimes out of sequence. In the Calcutta Central Telegraph Office very large amounts of traffic were handled during the riots and from the 16th August until 26th August several records were established in the volume of traffic dealt with in spite of depleted staff and curtailed times of duty.

Trunk Telephone Service: Calcutta/Bombay.—The Chamber approached the Director of Posts and Telegraphs, New Delhi, in June to enquire what prospects there were of an improvement in the trunk telephone service between Calcutta and Bombay. The continued recognition of priorities granted to meet war-time emergency was

strongly deprecated by the Chamber who urged an immediate return to the normal conditions under which the trunk telephone service was formerly open to the public.

The Director of Posts & Telegraphs stated in reply that everything possible was being done to reduce the difficulties mentioned by the Chamber and was fully alive to the need for improving the trunk telephone facilities.

Priority calls had been restricted to a minimum, and they then hardly exceeded 5% of the total calls on the Bombay/Calcutta circuits. Arrangements had been made for the installation of additional channels between Bombay and Calcutta and it was hoped that as these new channels were brought into commission delays would be considerably reduced. It was stated in this connection that ordinary and urgent calls could under existing rules be extended up to six minutes provided there was no accumulation and no priority call pending.

The Postmaster-General, Bengal Circle, reported in October that three additional channels had been opened and that six more were expected soon to meet the increased demand for calls between Calcutta and Bombay during office hours. It was hoped that the service would improve appreciably as these additional channels were brought into use.

Telephone Communications between Calcutta and the Surrounding Industrial Area.—During the war the Chamber refrained from taking any official action about the unsatisfactory telephone service between Calcutta and the surrounding industrial areas in recognition of the strain on the service and the overloading imposed by military priorities. It was now reasonable to expect some improvement in telephone communications, and when in February of this year no improvement was evident in the service between Calcutta and Barrackpore, Bhatpara and Budge Budge Exchanges, the Chamber enquired of the Postmaster General, Bengal and Assam Circle, what steps he proposed to take to improve these communications.

Actually a number of technical improvements had been carried out in Barrackpore, Bhatpara and Budge Budge districts. According to the Postmaster General the prevailing bad service was due to overloading but it was hoped that the position would improve progressively when it became possible, through releases from military and war time organiza-

tions to recruit more experienced operators, particularly at the Calcutta Exchange where new positions had been opened to relieve congestion.

Congestion at the G.P.O. and C.T.O.—The Report for the year 1945 recorded the approach made by the Chamber to the Postmaster General, Bengal and Assam Circle, about delays experienced by members in the acceptance of postal articles and telegrams at the General Post Office and the Central Telegraph Office as a result of which the staff for the acceptance of "deposit" account telegrams was augmented.

To avoid congestion at Calcutta G. P. O. it was suggested by the Chamber that the number of counters might be increased. The Chamber was informed by the Postmaster General, that three additional counters were opened at the G. P. O. on the 19th February 1946 and it was hoped this would considerably relieve the situation.

Calcutta Telephone Service: Automatic System.—The General Manager, Telephones, Calcutta, in anticipation of the Government replacing the present manual telephone system in Calcutta by an automatic system, invited the views of the Chamber on:—

- (a) The adoption of an "Exchange Code" based on either the letter system of two or three letters plus the number or the numerical system of a two figure code plus the number; and
- (b) A suggested list of names for the new exchange areas in Calcutta.

After consulting all members on the alternative exchange code systems, the Chamber replied that the consensus of opinion was strongly in favour of the "letter code" i.e., the system of prefixing the number by two or three distinctive letters indicating the exchange to be called (e.g. DUM for DumDum). With the object of avoiding any possible confusion it was suggested by the Chamber on the second point that it might prove desirable to select exchange names in which at least two of the three initial letters were different.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial Disputes Bill, 1946.—The Chamber has under consideration the Industrial Disputes Bill, 1946 which makes provision for the investigation and settlement of industrial disputes and for certain other purposes.

Experience of the working of the Trade Disputes Act, 1929, revealed that its main defect was that while restraints had been imposed on the rights of strike and lock-out in public utility services, no provision had been made to render proceedings institutable under the Act for the settlement of an industrial dispute either by reference to a Board of Conciliation or to a Court of Inquiry. Emergency regulations during the war made it possible for the Central Government to refer industrial disputes to adjudicators and to enforce their awards, but this emergency legislation which has been continued as from the 1st October 1946 will lapse on the 1st April 1947. The intention of the Bill is to replace this emergency legislation by a permanent statute. The Bill also empowers the appropriate Government to declare by notification in the official Gazette any industry to be a public utility service for such period as may be specified.

The report of the Select Committee on the Bill is now before the Legislature.

The Minimum Wages Bill, 1946.—Members will recall from the 1945 Report that many of the points mooted by the Chamber were accepted and embodied in a new Minimum Wages Bill, now entitled the Minimum Wages Bill, 1946, although unfortunately the principle of compulsion was still maintained.

In the course of the year the Chamber submitted observations to Government on the new Bill, firstly from the general industrial angle and secondly from the point of view of plantation labour and the tea industry in particular.

(1) *General Labour.*—The Chamber, while agreeing that the object of this measure was commendable in that it sought to deal with industries where wages were sub-normal, feared that unless similar legislation was passed in the Indian States this Bill would provide an incentive to industries to migrate to the States with disadvantages to the evacuated districts; the Bill should not be passed without some assurance that most of the States would fall into line.

The constitutional position made the proposed administrative machinery for applying the Act weak and possibly inadequate. Firstly, it was doubtful if the directions of the Central Government would be carried out by the Provinces, secondly, a Provincial Government need not accept the advice tendered by an Advisory Committee, and thirdly there was no provision for (a) Permanent Wage Boards whose recommendations would subject to safeguards be binding on both employers and

workers and (b) an All-India Board to co-ordinate the work of the various Provincial Boards and to give directions to such Boards with regard to industries spread all over the country.

The Chamber felt that consultation with the Advisory Committee or Board was most important before the initial fixing of the minimum wage, and pointed out that in addition the Bill laid down no basic principles or criteria for determining wages in an occupation or in an area. This was regarded as a serious omission.

- (i) If wage fixing was to be anything but dangerous guess work, it must be based on a sound statistical foundation. At present Government had no adequate statistical data regarding the cost of living, the family budget or other relevant factors. Before the Bill was enacted the Chamber considered it essential that Government should set up an adequate labour statistical department.
- (ii) It was important for the satisfactory representation of labour on the wage boards, that the labour should be mainly represented by Government officials. Special Government Labour Officers should be appointed for this purpose, and each wage board should have one of these officers as its secretary. It should be possible for one labour officer to deal with a number of Boards.
- (iii) In practice the introduction of Minimum Wage Boards might mean the abandonment of the system of concession foodstuffs and the Chamber suggested that the Bill should not become operative until circumstances make it possible to discontinue supplies of rice at concession rates.

Certain detailed amendments to the clauses and phraseology of the Bill were suggested.

(2) *Plantation and Tea Labour.*—As special and complicated considerations were raised by the application of the Bill to the tea industry, the Chamber in a further letter treated it separately from this particular angle.

While there was no objection to the application of the minimum wage principle to plantation labour, it was considered that the Bill, as drafted, was in certain important respects defective, and in view of this and the difference between conditions on tea estates and in other

industries the Chamber considered it preferable to see the subject dealt with in a separate Plantation Minimum Wage Bill framed along somewhat different lines from the present Bill. The Indian Tea Association advised the Chamber that it would be prepared to put up such a draft Bill for the consideration of Government, if Government would agree to consider this.

Firstly Minimum Wages could be fixed on piece work or a daily fixed wage, but it was suggested that neither of these systems were applicable to the tea estates; a time rate for a worker of ordinary skill and diligence fixed by the garden authorities under delegation by the wage boards, would represent in the Chamber's opinion the fairest principle for the tea gardens.

Secondly, attention was directed to what would almost inevitably be the long term effect of the proposed legislation. Although wages might be paid according to the hours of work, the extra administrative difficulties involved in such variation would undoubtedly tend towards the greater regimentation of labour, and the approximation of conditions on the tea estates towards those in factories. The present system under which, on many estates, a man worked as much or as little as he liked would gradually give way to regular daily and weekly periods of work. It was for Government to consider the sociological implications of this change. It was, however, right that the attention of Government should be called to one aspect of this probable development. If labourers in due course changed their habits, under the influence of minimum wage fixation and did a full day's work on six days in the week, the industry would require a far smaller labour force than it at present employed. Government would then be faced with the problem of what to do with these surplus labourers and moreover the existence of unemployment on such a scale might well have serious effects, not only on the labour world, but also in the sphere of law and order. These probable consequences should, in the Chamber's view, be borne in mind in deciding whether or not to apply to plantation labour a system which was almost bound to lead, in the long run, to greater regimentation.

Indian Factories Act, 1934, Section 47 : Overtime and Interpretation of "Ordinary Rate of Pay".—Doubt arose regarding the correct interpretation of the term "ordinary rate of pay" for the purpose of calculating overtime under section 47 of the Factories Act 1934. The question raised was whether "War" or "Dearness Allowance" should be included as "wages" for the purpose of the Section. The Factories Act

did not contain any definition of wages or ordinary rate of pay, but in the opinion of the Government of India expressed in the February issue of the *Indian Labour Gazette*, dearness allowance or war allowance should be treated as part of the "ordinary rate of pay" for the purpose of calculating overtime pay under Section 47 of the Factories Act.

The Chamber, in disagreement with this interpretation of the Government of India, referred the matter to the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India who advised the Department of Labour, Government of India, that industrial employers did not accept this "ex parte" interpretation, namely, that dearness or war allowance should be treated as part of "ordinary rate of pay" for the purpose of calculating overtime pay under Section 47 of the Factories Act 1934 and that until the matter was otherwise decided by a competent court, they held and would act upon, the view that an employee's ordinary rate of pay did not include emergency allowances or other emoluments which were temporary in nature and not based upon the actual rate of pay.

Continuation of Adjudication Machinery under Rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules.—Rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules, of which liberal use was made by both the Central and Provincial Governments, expired on the 30th September 1946. As it was then difficult to know when the next session of the Central Legislature would be convened, some temporary legislative measure had to be enacted meanwhile. Accordingly, the Central Government issued an Ordinance which contained substantially all the provisions of Rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules, except that the executive authority under the Ordinance would vest in the Central or the appropriate Provincial Government according as the dispute fell within the Central or the Provincial sphere.

The Ordinance would be in force for a period of six months from its promulgation and before the expiry of that period permanent legislation was expected to be enacted.

The Chamber circulated a copy of the Ordinance for the information of members on 21st October 1946.

Standing Labour Committee : Regulation of Conditions of Employment in Business Houses and Commercial Undertakings in Urban Areas.—A memorandum by the Government of India on the Regulation of Conditions of Employment etc. in Business Houses and Commercial

Undertakings in Urban Areas, which was placed on the agenda of the Ninth Meeting of the Standing Labour Committee, was considered by the Chamber.

By accepting in 1940 the Bengal Shops and Establishments Act, the Chamber had already approved of the principles of the legislation outlined by the Central Government in their memorandum. While agreeing in general with the expression of views in the note the Chamber felt obliged to advise the Calcutta delegate on the Standing Labour Committee of certain fundamental and important differences between the Bengal Act and the proposed Central Legislation to guide him in his attitude towards the proposed legislation.

Welfare Trust Funds for Industrial Employees.—The views of the Chamber were invited on a circular letter addressed to all provincial Governments by the Government of India, Department of Labour, proposing comprehensive amendments to the Factories Act requiring employers to set up Welfare Funds for the purpose of introducing a number of welfare schemes for their workers. Government suggested that the funds might be expended on the following appropriate objects:—

- (a) Education of the workers and their dependents;
- (b) Health of the workers and their dependents;
- (c) Recreation and entertainment for workers and their dependents;
- (d) Other general amenities; and
- (e) Administration of the Trust Fund.

The Chamber was opposed to the Government proposal that employers should set up Welfare Funds of the type visualised for the education, health and other general amenities of the workers and their dependents.

It was strongly felt that education and health were primarily the responsibility of Government and that the transfer of the financial burden for such purposes to industry would have a detrimental effect on existing industries and the development of new industries. The threat of legislative compulsion was inappropriate since there was no justification for compelling employers to institute Welfare Funds especially as most if not all of whom, and at any rate all the progressive firms, were already spending considerable sums of money on welfare and amenities. On the whole it was considered that legislation would have the effect

of restricting welfare schemes to defined purposes without giving employers sufficient latitude, thereby discouraging the voluntary efforts of all progressive employers.

In the Chamber's opinion the time seemed inopportune to consider or introduce such a scheme when the reactions of the various welfare measures already passed were still to be assessed and the considerations of the Rege Committee had not yet appeared, and any attempt on Government's part to define which particular aspect of labour welfare should receive employers attention and the manner in which funds for the purpose should be disbursed were considered quite premature.

Relatively speaking welfare measures did serve to promote the well being and productive efficiency of workers—and apart from what was primarily state responsibility—certain of these measures might consequently be regarded as a legitimate and direct charge on the fruits of industry or the firms who had benefited. From time to time, however, experience showed that stages or optima were reached beyond which it was uneconomic to increase expenditure on welfare until the productive efficiency of labour improved or until profits were either maintained or increased. The general experience at present was that labour in India was not giving the "quid pro quo" of increased productivity and the Chamber's view was that until the efficiency of labour here equalled approximately the level of efficiency in other countries they had no claim to benefits similar to those enjoyed by labour in those countries.

Certain employers, such as stevedores, might not always be in a position to contribute consistently to Welfare Funds owing to intermittent work, the employment of seasonal and casual labour, and consequently fluctuating profits, which would limit the usefulness of the scheme and might possibly also lead to trouble with labour.

On the other hand and according to the experience of the Chamber, labour preferred and appreciated money wages which they could spend in any way they pleased, and the setting up of Welfare Funds might easily tend to cut across the present tendency towards awarding increased wages and bonuses.

In particular and quite apart from the question of responsibility there were difficulties which combined to make the purposes of education and health under the proposed scheme so unattractive to employers.

Education—Administered by so many trusts the education system would become chaotic and co-ordination would become an impossible task. Not only would a mixed labour force necessitate two or more schools at each factory with prohibitive initial and running expenses to employers but differences of opinion on the Boards of Management between workers' and employers' representatives might lead to strikes, and moreover most firms would find that their management and staff were too fully occupied to devote the necessary time on the Boards of Administration.

Health—Larger staffs of doctors would be required if medical benefits were to be extended to dependents of workers in their houses. The problem of finding the necessary number of doctors aside, the health objective in the proposed scheme seemed to the Chamber quite superfluous in view of the Government's larger and wider proposals for national health insurance legislation.

Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.—The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, which came into effect on 23rd April 1946, applied to a wide range of individual enterprises, including factories, railways, mills, quarries or oil fields, plantations, inland steamer vessels, docks, wharves or jetties, and tramway or motor omnibus services, where a hundred or more workmen were employed in any day of the twelve months preceding the 23rd April 1946. The Act would be administered in the case of federal railways, major ports, mines and oil-fields by the Central Government and in all other cases by the Provincial Government concerned.

Its main provision was to require the owner of the establishment to submit, within six months from the date on which the Act became applicable, copies of draft Standing Orders prepared by him for adoption in his establishment and relating to the terms of service governing the employment of the workers there.

The Government of Bengal's Rules were published and issued to members by the Chamber in Circular No. 169-1946 on 5th November. No Model Standing Orders were appended to the Rules made by the Government of Bengal, but later the Government of India published Rules to which they appended Model Standing Orders. The Government of India Rules and Orders, which appeared in the *Gazette of India* on October 15th, were applicable only to industrial establishments under the Central Government, federal railways, major ports, mines and oil-

fields throughout British India. All other establishments were governed by the Provincial Rules.

The Factories (Second Amendment) Bill.—The Factories (Second Amendment) Bill, 1946, was framed (a) to enable Provincial Governments to make rules requiring specified factories employing more than 250 persons to set up canteens in conformity with prescribed standards and (b) to rectify an omission in the Factories (Amendment) Act, 1946, regarding the working hours in seasonal and non-seasonal factories.

The Chamber, while not generally opposing the Bill which would be introduced in the Central Assembly at the next Budget Session, registered its objection to the principle of attempting to compel employers to set up elaborate food canteens as experience had shown that in many cases such canteens were neither desired by the employees nor patronised by them when provided.

Collection of Employment and Unemployment Statistics in Establishments other than Factories.—For the purpose of post-war development and planning, figures of employment and unemployment in factories, Government offices, and all commercial and trading concerns were required by the Government of India and the Provincial Governments. In Bengal the Labour Commissioner had been entrusted with the task of collecting the necessary statistics from all trading concerns, the shops and establishments, excluding all factories registered under the Factories Act which were the responsibility of the Chief Inspector of Factories.

The co-operation of the Chamber was invited by the Labour Commissioner. On his behalf the Chamber circulated all members and associate members requesting them to assist the Commissioner to the full by rendering to him initial returns of all persons employed in their establishments other than factories, together with figures for the months of January to March 1946. These returns were required regularly thereafter and would be submitted for each month by the 15th of the succeeding month. Particulars on the official forms covered all personnel employed, whether officers, clerks or other staff such as durwans, peons or labourers regardless of salary or rank. The figures sent to the Labour Commissioner would exclude those given to the Chief Inspector of Factories for persons employed in factories registered under the Factories Act.

Control of Development and Location of Industries in Greater Calcutta.—The Chamber was asked by the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bengal, in May for suggestions concerning the organisation and methods which could be adopted in order to collect and collate information which would be useful to assist industrialists in the choice and location of new plants and in the problems of industrial development generally in the Greater Calcutta area.

The Chamber, being of the opinion that the subject raised was primarily one for a Provincial Post-War Planning Committee supported by an expert staff of planners, confined itself to making only a few general comments for the guidance of whoever was ultimately responsible for the planning of Greater Calcutta. The Chamber assumed however that, either through the Chamber or directly, the planning authority would keep in close touch with the industrial or commercial interests affected while the surveys and the draft schemes were being prepared.

From the transport angle the Chamber emphasised the importance of planning a road system for Greater Calcutta to form the skeleton of the plan, linking it up with the other district plans and the transport system of the rest of the country; and stressed how fundamental to any plan for the district was the need for a Government decision on either (a) whether it was intended to proceed with the construction of a ship canal from Kidderpore to Diamond Harbour or alternatively (b) whether it was worth while and possible to establish another port on the Hooghly nearer the sea.

Improvement of the existing slum industrial areas was highly desirable and, in stressing this, the Chamber recommended the clearance of those areas of worker's dwellings and their removal to the peripheries of the factory areas to new sites where healthier communities could develop along planned lines. While the new communities should not be mixed up in the factory areas, they should be in close proximity to them in order to avoid the fatigue and waste of time caused by long journeys to and from work.

Similarly, established industries should be re-planned. Where there was congestion, factories like homes should be removed and settled elsewhere on suitable sites. New factories and new industries should be prevented from entering the old crowded districts and should be directed to fresh areas where their layout was planned and they were not allowed to develop haphazardly.

Kanchrapara Development Project: Setting up of an Advisory Committee for Allocation of Sites to Industrial Concerns.—In connection with their Kanchrapara Area Development Scheme, the Government of Bengal decided to set up an Advisory Committee for the purpose of considering and tendering its advice on all applications for the allotment of sites to individual industrial concerns, and invited the Chamber to appoint a representative to the Committee.

The Kanchrapara District which is approximately 22 sq. miles in area was occupied during the war by the American Army for use as a stores and ammunition depot, hospital and billets. It was taken over by the Government of Bengal for further development to accommodate (a) a modern hospital and adequate accommodation for hospital staff, (b) a modern residential area for middle class people, (c) land for agricultural development, (d) a site for the proposed Central Government locomotive construction works together with adequate accommodation for workers and their families and (e) a site for modern industries. The proposed Advisory Committee for the allocation of industrial sites is with reference to item (e) and the site is to be developed on lines similar to those of Welwyn Garden City, Trafford Park, Slough, Port Sunlight etc. in the U.K.

Mr. A. J. Elkins, O.B.E., of Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co. has been appointed as the Chamber's representative on the Advisory Committee.

Utilisation of Industrial Research.—Notes of a non-technical nature on (i) the manufacture of sintered glass filters and mosquito repellent cream and (ii) the utilisation of Nim oil and its bitter constituents (Nimbidin Series) in the Pharmaceutical Industry, prepared by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, were sent to the Chamber for information. Those interested in the commercial exploitation of these processes should apply for a lease of each process separately to the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

Indian Coalfields Committee.—The appointment of the Indian Coalfields Committee was announced in the Press on 7th December 1945. Its terms of reference dealt with a number of most important considerations affecting the mining of Indian coal, from the conservation of coal, the fragmentation of holdings, to the opening of new fields, and other essential problems. A review of the recommendations of previous Enquiry Committees was included.

For the purpose of eliciting opinion the Indian Coalfields Committee issued in February 1946 two questionnaires for the attention of the industry and those in a position to give evidence on points coming within the Committee's terms of reference.

The questionnaires being mainly technical and to that extent addressed primarily to the coal industry the Chamber confined its attention initially to the section of the second questionnaire dealing with constitutional matters where opinion was requested on (1) whether it was considered satisfactory that there should be a division of responsibility between the Centre and the Provinces on the lapse of emergency powers and (2) the advisability of the Central Government enacting legislation to vest in itself the power to regulate mines and mineral development and to control the production and distribution of coal.

On the first of these questions, the Chamber was strongly of the opinion that any division of responsibility between the Centre and Provinces in respect of the natural mineral wealth of India could not be satisfactory; and since it was felt that the development of minerals should be treated on an all-India basis, the Chamber supported the view that the Central Government should enact legislation to vest in itself power to regulate mines and mineral development.

The Chamber was not prepared to admit at present that there was any necessity for permanent Government control over the production and distribution of coal, but if, as appeared to be the case, these subjects fell within the Provincial sphere unless the Centre took action by legislation to appropriate them to itself, the Chamber considered that such legislation should be undertaken rather from the view-point of preventing unilateral action by individual Provinces in this important matter than with any intention that the Centre should take active steps towards permanent control of the production and distribution of coal.

As regards the second of the two questions mentioned above, the Chamber was in agreement with the proposal that there should be one Central Government Department dealing with all questions pertaining to the coal industry, and considered that minerals and mines should constitute a separate portfolio of Government, the Geological Survey of India to be included in this portfolio.

MISCELLANEOUS

Decimalisation of Weights and Measures.—The Central Government have under consideration the need for introducing some measure of order into the chaotic number and nomenclature of weights and measures in use in this country and whether simultaneously with the proposals for the decimalisation of the coinage, an endeavour should be made to decimalise weights and measures also. The Chamber's views were requested on (a) whether the metric system would be preferred or (b) which of the existing weights should be adopted as the unit with suggested multiples and sub-divisions.

The Chamber, after consulting a large range of commercial and industrial interests, informed the Government that while agreeing that it would ultimately be desirable to have the sub-division of weights and measures on a decimal basis, the Chamber strongly advocated standardisation and the adequate enforcement of the standards as the first prerequisite. With some reluctance because of the natural appeal of the decimalised system to trade and commerce, the Chamber was forced to the conclusion that under present conditions the metric system or a wholly decimalised basis of Indian weights and measures was beyond the adaptability of the country at one step. The Chamber's view accordingly was that action for the time being should be restricted to the standardisation of weights on the basis of the maund of 80 lbs., which would not preclude decimalisation at a later stage, and of the British measures which already had wide currency in India.

Indian Standards Institution.—In the Report for 1945 mention was made of the observations offered by the Chamber on the scheme for a proposed Indian Standards Institution.

The Indian Standards Institution came into being during the year under review, and in token of support, the Chamber became a Sustaining Member of it on the basis of an annual subscription of Rs. 250/-

The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India are represented on the General Council of the Institution by Mr. C. J. L. Stokoe of Messrs Bird & Co., Lahore.

Molasses.—The Chamber was informed that the Bihar Government had decided to stop supplying molasses to Bengal in 1947 and that the Government of the United Provinces had advised the Bengal distilleries

that molasses could only be supplied to them henceforth from the U.P. metre gauge instead of from the usual broad gauge line with the exception of one mill producing from the broad gauge line. The curtailment of supplies from the U.P. which the reversion from the broad gauge to the U.P. metre gauge would inevitably mean and the stoppage from Bihar, would not only gravely affect the distilling industry in Bengal, which had for years drawn the most of its requirements of molasses from Bihar and the U.P. owing to the shortage in Bengal, but would have adverse repercussions on the Bengal pharmaceutical trade consuming rectified spirit and the shellac, paint, varnish and shoe industries taking denatured spirit prepared by the Bengal distilleries.

In the interests of the Bengal industries affected the Chamber urged the Government of Bengal (a) to press the Bihar Government to grant at least a quota of molasses to Bengal if normal supply could not be maintained and (b) to request the U.P. Government to give molasses to Bengal from the broad gauge line.

The matter is at present receiving the consideration of the Government of Bengal who have addressed the Bihar and U.P. Governments on the subject.

Petrol Rationing.—The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India drew the attention of the Government to the general dissatisfaction felt by the commercial and industrial interests in India at the continuance of the system of petrol rationing which was having a restrictive effect on their development and reconstruction schemes. Now that the petrol consumption of the Services must surely have been greatly reduced the Association considered that there was no reason why the Provincial quotas and the restricted supplementary allowances to essential commercial and industrial concerns should not be increased substantially, even if rationing was still to continue.

The Government in reply stated that they were anxious to see the end of petrol rationing, but that the position was governed by world-wide requirements which necessitated a strict rationing of the limited supplies available: the position was complicated by currency consideration and until such time as more dollars were available there could be little easing of the petrol position in the sterling area, which included India.

Recently progressive increases in the Provincial and State quotas were announced, and the Transport Department hoped that rationing would be unnecessary after August 1947.

Language Studies.—In the Report for 1945 reference was made to two separate though inter-connected projects for the improvement of the cultural and practical knowledge of India on the part of those taking up appointments in this country. The first, emanating from the Scarborough Commission, was the inauguration of special courses of instruction in London by the School of Oriental and African Studies and the second was the proposed establishment of language classes in Calcutta where men could start such studies or continue those begun in London prior to their coming out to India. Both schemes, it will be recalled, met with a cordial reception when members were consulted on them in August 1945.

The Chamber Committee early in 1946 discussed these matters with the Examiner in Languages, G.H.Q. India, who had had the advantage of recent personal contacts with the Director of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. He strongly commended participation in the London scheme and offered to place his advice and experience at the disposal of the Chamber in organising language classes in Calcutta.

(a) In consequence of these discussions, the Chamber Committee endorsed their previous recommendation that, where the need for quick recruitment from the United Kingdom did not rule out such a course, members should give their fullest support to the short courses organised by the School of Oriental and African Studies. They brought to the attention of members in this connection an appeal issued by the India-Burma Association with reference to the course commencing in London at the end of April and asked for an indication, where it was possible to give one, of the numbers likely to be interested in a further course starting in September/October 1946.

(b) As regards the proposed Calcutta Language classes, an approximate idea of the likely number of entries was sought to enable the Chamber Committee to consider the appointment of a Senior Tutor who would draw up a complete scheme, syllabus and study schedule. The response from members afforded sufficient evidence of support to justify the Chamber proceeding with the scheme. Some delay was experienced in obtaining the services of a suitable Senior Tutor but on the recommendation of the Adviser in Languages, G.H.Q., a satisfactory appointment was made. Two Assistant Tutors were subsequently appointed and after the necessary books were obtained a preliminary series of courses of four months duration for men only was arranged; the class in Colloquial Hindustani for assistants in jute mills and the class in Colloquial Hindustani for fourteen students, and the classes in workshops for which there were fourteen students, and the classes in

Lower Hindustani for which there were thirty-nine students, commenced on the 14th October 1946; on the 28th October a class in Lower Bengali with eight students started. Owing to insufficient entries it was not possible to include in this course classes in Higher Hindustani and Higher Bengali but a further opportunity is being afforded when the second course opens on 3rd February 1947.

Progress and attendance are reported to be good, and it is anticipated that candidates will be ready to sit the first of the examinations towards the end of March 1947.

A second series of courses commenced on 3rd February 1947 with an encouraging number of entries.

Overseas Visitors to London : Honorary Membership of the London Chamber of Commerce.—The easier travel facilities which make it possible again for business men from overseas to visit London more freely prompted the London Chamber of Commerce to reintroduce the offer of honorary membership to members of British Chambers of Commerce visiting the United Kingdom.

Honorary members are entitled to the use of the information departments, the members' room, telephone and library. They may also be invited to attend meetings of sections in which they are interested, and a copy of the Chamber of Commerce Journal will be sent to them during their stay.

This facility has been extended to members of the Bengal Chamber and the Secretary has been given cards of introduction for those desirous of taking advantage of the privilege.

Claims for Riot Damages.—The Chamber, in support of the representations made by the Calcutta Trades Association, requested from the Government of Bengal a declaration of policy in the matter of compensation for losses sustained by the trading and commercial public during the disturbances which took place in Calcutta and in the surrounding districts in February 1946. The Chamber expressed disappointment at the absence of action by the Government appropriate to such circumstances, *viz.* the issue of a Proclamation under Section 15 of the Police Act, 1861, appointing a Special Officer to consider claims, and in this connection drew attention to the prompt action taken by the Government of Bombay to direct that all claims for compensation resulting from the Bombay riots should be submitted to the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Bombay.

The Government of Bengal, while they agreed that awards of compensation could be made by Magistrates against the inhabitants in general or a particular section of them under Section 15A of the Indian Police Act, 1861, disclaimed all legal liability to pay compensation in this case in view of the absence of a Proclamation issued and in force when the riots were committed, and pointed out that a Proclamation made after the disturbances could have no retrospective effect.

During the August Riots a Proclamation under Section 15 of the Police Act was issued. It made provision for the award of rehabilitation grants to those who had suffered during the riots. This Proclamation did not cover the February riots however where the position still remains unsatisfactory.

Vendor Nuisance in Calcutta Business Area.—Complaints were received by the Chamber from time to time of the nuisance caused by the street vendors in the Clive Street area, and several times the Chamber approached the Police to take action, pointing out that not only is the noise made by these vendors of annoyance to those working in adjacent offices, but the extent to which their wares were allowed to occupy the pavements tended to obstruct the passage of pedestrians and to result in layers of filth and litter.

The Police had always been good enough to answer the appeals of the Chamber and to remove the hawkers; but the recurring tendency and persistence of this nuisance would appear to require more drastic measures to defeat it than were being adopted. In May the question was raised at a meeting of the Calcutta Corporation, when the Corporation and the Police agreed to take immediate action which it was hoped would lead to a more lasting improvement. Following this action there was a marked improvement in the position—which has since, however, again greatly deteriorated.

Department of Industries & Supplies, Electrical Development Directorate.—The Development Directorate of Electrical Engineering which assumed the functions of the late Directorate of Electrical Engineering, D.G.M.P., was as an essential step in assisting the expansion and consolidation of the electrical industry collecting particulars of all the important manufactures of electrical stores in India. Many of these were already on record with the Development Directorate but to ensure that all important manufactures were included, the Directorate asked the Chamber for the names and addresses etc., of all the firms

known to the Chamber who manufactured electric fans, lamps, batteries, dry cells, motors and generators, transformers, insulating materials, cables and wires, component parts of radio receivers and transmitters, electrical domestic appliances such as heaters, kettles, stoves etc., and any other electrical goods not enumerated here.

The Chamber asked all members who were manufacturers of electrical stores to advise the Development Officer (Electrical) direct at the Department of Industries & Supplies, Electrical Development Directorate, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi,

Visit of Australian Industrialists to India.—Members of the Australian Industrial Delegation to India, who recently toured India at the invitation of the Government of India for the purpose of developing and fostering industrial contacts and commercial relations met representatives of the Chambers of Commerce in Calcutta on Wednesday, 11th December, to discuss the general promotion of trade between the two countries. The Bengal Chamber was represented at the meeting by the President and Vice-President.

Informal opportunities of meeting the Delegation were also given to those members of the Chamber who had intimated a desire to discuss with them individual points of business.

British Empire Exhibition at Sydney.—A British Empire Exhibition will be held at Sydney from 31st March to 9th April 1947. The Government of India has been allotted an area of 4350 square feet in the Main Exhibition hall and plans are being prepared for the construction of two attractive pavilions for displaying the exhibits collected from India. The Chamber has been asked to advise those of its members who may be interested that a list of the representative exhibits which they desire to donate with a short description of each article and its approximate weight should be submitted immediately to the Officer on Special Duty in charge of Exhibitions, Government of India, Department of Commerce, Commercial Exhibition Section. Officers of the Department of Commerce were proceeding on tour towards the middle of January 1947 to contact Chambers of Commerce and individual firms through them with a view to selecting exhibits.

Proposed Australian Government Export Corporation.—The question of Government versus private enterprise trading was raised when the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce sought the opinion of the Chamber

on a proposal by the Australian Government to form a Government Export Corporation which would undertake the marketing of Australian exports throughout the world.

After consulting trading interests here the Chamber replied that it would oppose such a scheme on two grounds—firstly on the general principle that State intervention in the field of private enterprise was to be deprecated and secondly, that such an organisation would clash with existing agency arrangements of importers of Australian goods and would cut across the inherent right of private trading. It is understood that the proposal has since been dropped.

Proposed Re-establishment of the Empire Marketing Board.—A resolution of the Association of Chambers of Commerce of East Africa to the effect that "the Empire Marketing Board, which functioned so effectively before the war, should now be re-established with the object of again rendering its valuable assistance to Empire trade", was being considered by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire. The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India were asked for their views and in turn referred the matter to their constituent members. After consulting the export and import Associations the Chamber advised the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India that while trade and commercial interests in India did not apparently benefit from the Board's activities while it was in existence, they would not oppose its re-establishment if other parts of the Empire were in favour.

Montreal Board of Trade : Business Contact with Canada.—The Montreal Board of Trade has offered its services to business interests in India in the furtherance of trade between Canada and India and in particular is in a position to place facilities and business contacts at the disposal of members of the Chamber who carry letters of introduction with them when they visit the Montreal District.

Disposals Enquiry Committee.—Towards the end of the year under review the Government of India appointed a small Committee, known as the Disposals Enquiry Committee:—

- (i) To review the problems of the Disposals Department and to advise whether the organisations, personnel, and class of officer and staff were adequate and suitable for handling these problems ;

- (ii) to advise whether the methods of disposals in themselves are suited to producing results which are in the interests of the public, and expeditious ;
- (iii) to advise whether, in their view, there are definite indications of corruption ; and
- (iv) in general to suggest methods of improving the performance and standards.

The Chamber met representatives of the Disposals Enquiry Committee in January 1947 and placed before them the experience and views of members as ascertained by circular.

Malaria Scheme for the Calcutta Industrial Area—The Chamber considered in consultation with its Industrial Associations an anti-malaria scheme for the Calcutta Industrial Area proposed and outlined by the Director of Public Health, Bengal.

The Chamber while generally commending the proposals as making a good start at tackling a difficult problem expressed the hope that the Director of Public Health would consider developing his scheme more fully and giving it a much wider scope. The Chamber, after making some detailed criticism of the scheme, requested if and when the scheme was revised on the suggestions made that the Chamber be given a further opportunity of considering it.

Treatment of Tubercular Employees—In May 1945 the Director of Public Health, Bengal, invited members of the Chamber to participate in a scheme for the treatment of members' employees suffering from tuberculosis in beds subsidised at the rate of Rs. 3,000/- per bed in recognised T. B. Hospitals and Sanatoria.

On the point being put to them by a member the Chamber Committee did not think the Chamber as such should be called upon to finance or run any "pooling" scheme, but with a view to collective action among members, the Chamber expressed willingness to put those interested in touch with each other so that they could jointly approach the Director of Public Health, Bengal.

The Chamber pointed out that on a "pooling" basis not only might costs be reduced, but those participating in the pool would be reasonably assured of securing accommodation for any of their employees afflicted by tuberculosis.

The Commandos' Benevolent Fund—A small Committee was formed in Calcutta with the object of publicising and promoting the cause of the Commandos Benevolent Fund created to afford some measure of relief to those dependants of deceased or wounded commandos who were finding it impossible to live on their meagre allowances.

The appeal, which was sympathetically regarded by the Chamber, was essentially one for individual response and had been addressed to firms and others direct. Donations were to be forwarded to Capt. A. H. d'A Willis, Commandos' Benevolent Fund, C/o. Messrs. Place Siddons & Gough, 6, Lyons Range, Calcutta.

Transport for Business Women—In view of the increasing difficulties of transport to and from work experienced by ladies employed in the business area, consideration was given by the Chamber to the possibility of arranging for a morning, evening and possibly a lunchhour bus service exclusively for the use of ladies, provided sufficient support was forthcoming. If the scheme was inaugurated a bus company and not the Chamber would be responsible for running it with the support of a guaranteed number of passengers at a guaranteed monthly figure.

From the replies to a Chamber circular to members requesting information on (a) the most suitable routes, (b) the most appropriate timings and (c) the numbers likely to make use of the service, it was evident that a real demand existed.

The Chamber is at present negotiating for a transport company to undertake the organisation and running of a service under this scheme.

Business Survey & Market Reports: (a) *'Business Survey'*—The Commercial Publicity Section of the Commerce Department, Government of India, commenced sending copies of its weekly survey of business conditions in India to the Chamber in November inviting suggestions for the improvement of the service, coupled with a request that the Editor would welcome receiving reliable information regularly from the Chamber on trends and prices in respect of commodities constituting the main items of India's foreign trade.

The survey, which had so far gone primarily to the Government of India Trade Commissioners abroad covered the markets of money, exchange, gilt-edged, equities, gold, silver, hides and skins, tea and rubber.

The Chamber is awaiting observations on it which members may care to make.

(b) "*Foreign Markets*".—The Chamber was also consulted by the Government of India, Department of Commerce, about the weekly summary of commodity prices entitled "*Foreign Markets*" prepared and issued by the Department of Commerce in response to a desire by certain commercial bodies for such information.

The Chamber stated that while some members whose requirements were already adequately met by existing newspapers and trade journals, felt that the Government publication would not be of much value to them others regarded it as fulfilling a useful purpose. The Chamber made a few detailed suggestions intended to increase the usefulness of the report to members.

Government of Bengal Food Advisory Committee: Chamber Representation.—In June the Chamber was invited by the Government of Bengal to nominate a representative to the Food Advisory Committee which had been set up to advise the Government on matters of policy in regard to the procurement, storage and distribution of foodstuffs.

Mr. R.H.D. Campbell of Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co. was appointed to serve on this Committee as the Chamber's representative.

Development of Food Industries.—With the object of building up a factual background the Department of Food, Government of India, who are interested in the establishment of food industries in this country and the maintenance and extension of the developments in this direction made during the war, issued a questionnaire. The Chamber was requested for its co-operation in gaining the facts, for its views on what the future development of the industry should be, and what assistance and safeguards would be necessary for the purpose.

The Chamber circulated the questionnaire to its members and asked those firms interested in the production of processed foods and who would be willing and able to supply the information and data requested, to complete and return the forms direct to the Department of Food, New Delhi.

Prohibition on the Import of Goods from the Union of South Africa.—The Chamber drew the attention of Government to certain

difficulties being experienced by importers with reference to the Government of India's Notification No.2-C(6)/46 dated 17th July 1946 prohibiting the import of all goods into India from South Africa.

(a) Thenotification exempted from the prohibition those goods from South Africa which had been paid for wholly before the 17th July, and the import of which had been specially authorised by the Central Government. In confirmation of this understanding the Collector of Customs, Calcutta, stated that importers would have to apply for the requisite authorisation to an Import Trade Controller with evidence of payment for the goods on or before the 17th July 1946. If the Import Trade Controller was satisfied that the full payment had actually been made, he would recommend the application to the Commerce Department for necessary orders.

(b) On the question of importing goods from South America which happened either because of restricted shipping or other reasons to be transhipped at Capetown "en route" to India, the Collector of Customs affirmed that the prohibition did not apply in this case, assuming that the goods were not grown, produced or manufactured in the Union of South Africa even though they had been transhipped "en route" at a South African port.

MEMBERSHIP

The following have been provisionally elected to membership subject to confirmation at the next Annual General Meeting :—

CHAMBER MEMBERS

1. A. P. V. Engineering Co. Ltd.
2. Alliance Assurance Co. Ltd.
3. Boots Pure Drug Co. (India) Ltd.
4. British Insulated Callenders' Cables Ltd.
5. British Metal Corporation (India) Ltd.
6. Century Insurance Co. Ltd.
7. Eagle Star Insurance Co. Ltd.
8. Employers Liability Assurance Corporation Ltd.

9. F. & C. Osler (India) Ltd.
10. General Accident Fire & Life Assurance Corporation Ltd.
11. Greaves Cotton & Crompton Parkinson Ltd.
12. Merz & McLellan (India).
13. Herbertsons Ltd.
14. London Assurance Ltd.
15. Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Ltd.
16. Norwich Union Life Insurance Society.
17. Oxford University Press.
18. Pearl Assurance Co. Ltd.
19. Phoenix Assurance Co. Ltd.
20. Stewart & Co.
21. Sun Life Assurance Co. of Canada.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

Messrs. G. & M. Fogt. Co. Ltd.

" F. & O. Lang.

" Larsen & Toubro Ltd.

The number of members of the Chamber on the 31st December 1946, was : Chamber members—270, Associate members—23.

FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS.

Chamber.—The addition to the Capital of the Chamber in 1946 amounts to Rs. 41,711-9-8.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce surplus	...	Rs.	53,655	14	2
Royal Exchange Deficit	...	"	11,944	4	6
Addition	...	Rs.	41,711	9	8

The corresponding figures for 1945 were :—					
Bengal Chamber of Commerce Deficit	...	Rs.	48,849	1	4
Royal exchange Deficit	...	"	11,639	11	0

Deduction	...	Rs.	60,488	12	4
------------------	-----	-----	--------	----	---

The Income and Expenditure for 1945 and 1946 were as follows :—

Income :—	1945	1946
Members' Subscriptions	Rs. 1,10,100	1,14,200
Monthly Contributions	" 4,08,985	5,68,107
Arbitration Fees	" 33,266	36,506
Certificates of Origin	" 6,176	10,136
Interest and Rent received less paid for taxes, repairs and electric charges	" 16,018	679
Strike Certificate Fees	" 80	30
Profit on sale of Royal Exchange Restaurant Equipment	" ...	4,171
Profit on revaluation of Investments	" 653	5,696
	Rs. 5,74,278	7,39,525

Expenditure :—	1945	1946
Establishment	Rs. 4,45,290	3,92,449
(a) Current	" ...	92,579
(b) Dearness Allowance	" 26,433	25,370
(c) Pensions	" 10,089	12,632
Printing and Stationery	" 20,719	20,685
Depreciation	" ...	...
Other Account Heads (See Income and Expenditure Account)	" 47,629	69,893
Legal Charges	" 1,678	348
Prices Current	" 759	365
Contribution to Provident Fund	" 29,675	31,537
Reserve for Income-tax on Chamber Revenue	" 34,409	33,961
Loss on Sale of Food-Stuffs	" 6,446	6,050
	" 6,23,127	6,85,869
Deficit	" 48,849	...
Surplus	" ...	53,656
	Rs. 5,74,278	7,39,525

(90)

Royal Exchange.—The deficit for 1946 is Rs. 11,944-4-6 against the deficit of Rs. 11,639-11-0 for 1945.

<i>Income :—</i>		1945	1946
Entrance Fees	... .. Rs.	42	...
Subscriptions	... .. "	25,172	26,237
Sale of Telephone Ticket Books	... .. "	435	355
	...	25,649	26,592

<i>Expenditure :—</i>		1945	1946
Rent	... .. "	12,000	12,000
Contribution to Chamber	... .. "	6,000	6,000
Establishment	... .. "	12,626	13,992
Restaurant License	... .. "	100	...
Books and Newspapers	... .. "	1,418	1,536
Sundries	... .. "	5,145	5,008
Deficit	... .. "	37,289	38,536
	...	11,640	11,944
	Ra.	25,649	26,592

CALCUTTA,
The 14th February 1947.

H. D. TOWNEND,
President.
D. C. FAIRBAIRN,
Secretary.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Secretarial Department—General.

- (1) Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1946.
- (2) Revenue Account for the year ended 31st December 1946.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF

(SECRETARIAL

Incorporated as a Company under section 26

BALANCE SHEET as

CAPITAL AND LIABILITIES.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
Capital Account—				
Balance at 1st January 1946	...	5,62,668	2	0
Add—Surplus from Income and Expenditure Account	...	53,655	14	2
	...	6,16,324	0	2
Less—Royal Exchange Deficit	...	11,944	4	6
			6,04,379	11 8
Liabilities—				
For Expenses—				
Stationery	...	2,205	4	0
Commercial Education Prizes	...	450	0	0
Electric Fans, Light, Lifts etc.	...	1,778	1	0
Petty Charges	...	1,084	12	6
Audit Fee	...	1,100	0	0
Publication	...	304	13	0
Telephone	...	375	1	0
Telegrams	...	668	0	6
Subscription to Associated Chamber of Commerce for India	...	1,200	0	0
Charges General	...	963	9	0
Foodstuffs (recoverable)	...	8,558	10	0
Current Repairs	...	1,125	11	0
Law Charges	...	570	0	0
Printing	...	205	4	0
Motor Car Expenses	...	244	9	0
Sundries	...	895	5	0
Provision for Taxation	...			
Less—Advance payment of Tax under section 18A	...	64,051	0	0
	...	50,511	0	0
			13,540	0 0
Carried over Rs.	6,39,658	11 8

COMMERCE, CALCUTTA.

DEPARTMENT).

of the Indian Companies Act 1882.

at 31st December 1946.

PROPERTY AND ASSETS.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
Land No. 2, Clive Street, at cost	3,11,912	8 0
Royal Exchange Building at cost	...	6,02,166	12	9
Less—Depreciation to date	...	4,34,378	7	7
			1,67,788	5 2
Furniture and Fittings at cost to 31-12-45	...	1,84,774	2	2
Additions during the year at cost	...	1,403	9	0
			1,26,177	11 2
Less—Depreciation to date	...	1,26,077	11	2
			100	0 0
Library and Pictures at cost	...	42,820	1	5
Less—Depreciation to date	...	42,720	1	5
			100	0 0
Standard Weights, Measures and Test Appliances at cost	...	4,577	5	0
Less—Depreciation to date	...	4,477	5	0
			100	0 0
Installation of Electric and Sanitary Works at cost	...	1,20,997	8	9
Less—Depreciation to date	...	1,20,897	8	9
			100	0 0
Air Conditioning Plant at cost	...	26,137	8	0
Less—Depreciation to date	...	17,732	12	1
			8,404	11 11
New Royal Exchange Restaurant at cost	...	9,288	1	0
Add—Profit on Sale	...	4,170	13	6
			13,458	14 6
Less - Depreciation to 31st Dec. '45 Rs. 9,188 1 0	...			
Sale Proceeds " 4,270 13 6	...			
			13,458	14 6
Motor Car at cost	...	5,000	0	0
Less—Depreciation to date	...	4,900	0	0
			100	0 0
Debts due to Chamber (unsecured)—				
Considered Good	...	46,730	12	3
Due by Royal Exchange—Contribution, Rent and Expenses	...	14,975	12	0
			61,706	8 3
Carried over Rs.	5,50,312	1 4

(94)

BENGAL CHAMBER OF
SECRETARIAL

Incorporated as a Company under section 26

BALANCE SHEET as

	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
Brought Forward Rs. ...	...	6,39,658 11 8
Other Finance—		
Deposits for Arbitration cases ...	1,56,627 10 0	
Bengal Food Relief Fund ...	826 0 0	
Income Tax Deductions s/c Staff ...	13,174 9 0	
Deposit for Foodstuffs Supply ...	6,686 0 0	
Red Cross Appeal Fund ...	47,250 0 0	
Royal Exchange Deficit ...	11,944 4 6	
		2,35,508 7 6

TOTAL Rs. 8,75,167 3 2

(95)

COMMERCE, CALCUTTA

DEPARTMENT)

of the Indian Companies Act 1882,

at 31st December 1946.

	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
Brought Forward Rs. ...	...	5,50,312 1 4
Advances—		20,168 11 9
Investments in Government Securities at Market Valuation		
Rs. 63,600/- 3% Loan 1963/65 @ Rs. 103/6/-% ...	65,746 8 0	
„ 55,100/- 3% Loan 1951/54 @ Rs. 103/11/-% ...	57,131 13 0	
„ 88,000/- 4% Loan 1960/70 @ Rs. 115/12/ % ...	92,600 0 0	
		2,15,478 5 0
Interest Accrued on Investments ...	...	4,968 7 0
Cash and other Balances—		
Unused Stamps in hand ...	308 14 9	
Cash with Imperial Bank of India ...	52,343 0 5	
Cash with Imperial Bank of India, Bengal Flood Relief Fund ...	826 0 0	
Cash in hand ...	30,761 10 11	
		84,239 10 1

TOTAL Rs. 8,75,167 3 2

BENGAL CHAMBER OF
(SECRETARIAL

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the

EXPENDITURE.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
To Establishment	...	...	...	5,10,388	7	0
„ Municipal Taxes	...	...	...	11,751	6	0
„ Current Repairs	...	...	...	14,596	3	0
„ Electric Fans, Lights, Lifts, and Pumps including cost of current and upkeep	16,856	7	0			
Less—Received for the use of Lights & Fans	3,514	4	0	13,342	3	0
„ Depreciation on Buildings	15,054	2	8			
„ do. on Standard Weights, Measures and Test appliances	46	10	1			
„ do. on Air Conditioning Plant	2,613	12	0			
„ do. on Furniture & Fittings	1,403	9	0			
„ do. on Motor Car	1,566	10	8	20,684	12	5
„ Fire Insurance	...	...	...	1,850	0	0
„ Contribution to Provident Fund	...	...	...	31,537	5	0
„ Printing Reports	...	...	...	865	15	0
„ Printing, General	7,527	4	3			
Less—Sundry Receipts	360	7	0	7,166	13	3
„ Charges General	...	...	...	11,458	14	0
„ Petty Charges	...	...	...	12,656	8	0
„ Stamps	...	...	...	2,034	3	0
„ Telegram	...	...	...	1,225	5	6
„ Book-Binding	...	...	...	204	1	0
„ Govt. Gazettes etc.	...	...	...	177	3	0
„ Audit Fee	4,800	0	0			
„ do. re: Income Tax Assessment 1946-47	150	0	0	4,950	0	0
„ Stationery	...	...	...	4,598	14	0
„ Carried over Rupees	...	...	...	6,49,498	1	2

COMMERCE, CALCUTTA.
DEPARTMENT)

year ended 31st December, 1946.

INCOME.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
By Members' Subscriptions	...	...	...	1,14,200	0	0
„ Monthly contributions from the Associations recognised by the Chamber	4,54,106	15	0			
„ do. Licensed Measurers Dept.	30,000	0	0			
„ do. Royal Exchange	6,000	0	0			
„ do. Indian Tea Market Expansion Board	30,000	0	0			
„ do. Indian Tea Licensing Committee	30,000	0	0			
„ do. Calcutta Liners Conference	18,000	0	0	5,68,106	15	0
„ Arbitration Fees	...	...	...	36,506	0	0
„ Fees for Certificates of Origin	...	...	...	10,136	0	0
„ Fees for Strike Certificates	...	...	...	30	0	0
„ Interest on Investments and other sources	...	...	...	6,768	8	0
„ Profit on sale of Royal Exchange Restaurant Equipment	...	...	...	4,170	0	0
„ Rent of No. 2 Clive Street—						
Royal Exchange	...	12,000	0	0		
Licensed Measurers Department	...	11,100	0	0		
Blackor & Co.	...	3,000	0	0		
„ Indian Jute Mills Association—						
A/c. Priority Assistance Advisory Panel 3000/-	...					
A/c. Cool Dump 900/-	...					
A/c. Requisitioned Department 1800/-	...					
A/c. Industrial Pool 1800/-	...					
	7,500	0	0	33,600	0	0
„ Profit on revaluation of Investments	...	...	...	5,696	0	0
Carried over Rupees	...	...	...	7,79,214	4	6

BENGAL CHAMBER OF
(SECRETARIAL

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the

EXPENDITURE—(Contd.)	Rs.	As. P.	Rs.	As. P.
Brought forward	6,49,498	1 2
To Telephone Charges	2,264	13 0
„ Publications	1,580	13 0
„ Commercial Education Prizes	225	0 0
„ Medical Attendance	875	0 0
„ Sundry Subscriptions
(a) Associated Chambers of Commerce of India ...	1,200	0 0	...	...
(b) Indian Standards Institution	250	0 0
(c) Indian Institute of Art in Industry	250	0 0
(d) East India Clinic Ltd. (Hospital Scheme) ...	3,200	0 0	...	...
„ Legal Charges	348	0 0
„ Provision for Taxation	33,961	2 0
„ Foodstuffs Subsidies	6,049	15 0
„ Passages	22,492	7 8
„ Prices Current	365	6 6
„ Motor Car Expenses	2,718	7 0
„ Motor Car Insurance	249	5 0
„ Tax under Bengal Finance Act 1939 for 1946-47	30	0 0
„ Surplus for the year carried to Capital Account	53,655	14 2
TOTAL Rs.	7,79,214	4 6

AUDITORS' REPORT TO MEMBERS.

We beg to report that we have audited the foregoing Balance sheet of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Secretarial Department, as at 31st December 1946 and Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date. We have obtained all the information and explanations we have required and in our opinion the Balance Sheet, is properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and correct view of the state of the Department's affairs according to the best of our information and the explanations given to us and as shown by the books of the Department. The Balance Sheet and the Income and Expenditure Account do not include the Accounts of Licensed Measures' Department nor of the Foodstuffs Section.

Calcutta,
The February 1947.

LOVELOCK & LEWES,
Chartered Accountants,
Registered Accountants, } Auditors.

COMMERCE, CALCUTTA.
DEPARTMENT).

year ended 31st December 1946.

INCOME - (Contd.)	Rs.	As. P.	Rs.	As. P.
Brought forward	7,79,214	4 6
TOTAL Rs.	7,79,214	4 6

H. D. TOWNEND, *President.*

H. D. CUMBERBATCH,
Vice-President.

D. C. FAIRBAIRN,
Secretary.

A. P. BENTHALL
H. H. BURN
A. J. ELKINS
J. MCFARLANE
A. T. ORR DEAS
P. F. S. WARREN
L. O. TASKER

Members of the
Committee.

SUNDRY REFERENCES

Air Port for Calcutta.

Air Travel in India for Civilians.

Annual Revision of the Import Tariff Schedule.

Act : Agricultural Produce Cess, 1945 : Proposed Changes in Tariff Classification.

" Bombay Industrial Disputes : Amendment of the (Bombay Industrial Relation Bill).

" Calcutta Improvement, 1911 : Amendment.

" Indian Factories, 1934—Amendment Bill : Reduction of Working Hours.

" Madras City Municipal : Tax on Companies.

" The Pharmacy 1945.

Bill :—The Coffee Market Expansion (Amendment), 1946.

" Indian Boilers (Amendment), 1946.

" Indian Tea Control (Amendment), 1946.

" The Insurance (Amendment), 1946.

" Insurance (Second Amendment), 1946.

" The Prevention of Corruption, 1946.

" Transfer of Property and Succession (Amendment), 1946.

Bill to amend the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926 : Compulsory Recognition of Trade unions.

Bretton Woods Agreement.

Brokerage on Bills of Exchange.

Calcutta House Rent Control Order, 1943.

Code for Regulation of Road Transport.

Despatch of "Smalls" from Docks and Jetties.

Double Taxation Relief : Indian States.

Disposal of Surplus Government Stores.

Drugs Control Order, 1945.

Export Advisory Council.

Exports to Canada.

Exports of Raw Cotton.

Government of India Ports Technical Committee.

Hoarding and Profiteering Prevention Ordinance 1943.

Hospital Benefits Scheme.

Income Tax Assessments : Collection of Taxes from Sources in Burma, Malaya and other Countries in the Far East.

Income Tax : Depreciation Allowances for Plants and machinery.

Income Tax : Obsolescence Allowances on Buildings erected for business purposes on account of Government Contracts.

Indian Institute of Art in Industry.

Industrial Housing.

Khoraki for Boat Crews Working Explosives and Dangerous Cargo.

Lay Days under Salt Charters : Discharge of Salt Steamers.

Mobile Exhibition to Iran and Middle East Countries.

Motor Traffic : Excessive Noise.

Periodical Meetings between Heads of Railway Administration and Representatives of Commercial Community.

Pilferage at Shalimar Goods Sheds.

Pilferage from Spirits, Wine and Liquor Consignments.

Postal Deliveries in Calcutta : Zone Symbols.

Railway Priorities for Commodities.

Registrar of Joint Stock Companies—Return to Calcutta of the Office of the

Rules: Bengal Factories Exemption, 1946, Draft.

„ Defence of India—Rule 81A: Illegal Strikes.

„ Indian Electricity, 1937: Draft Amendment.

Security of Cargo in Calcutta Port.

Tariff Board Enquiry.

Termination of War (Definition) Ordinance 1946.

Terms of Payment with Supply Department, Government of India.

Visit to Calcutta of Mr. R. K. Tandon—Indian Trade Commissioner Designate in Ceylon.

REPORT ROYAL EXCHANGE.



ROYAL EXCHANGE.
CALCUTTA.

Report of the Committee for the year ended 31st December, 1946.

THE PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE,

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Gentlemen,

In accordance with the provisions of Rule 7 of the Rules of the Royal Exchange, we have the honour to submit a report on its working for the year ended 31st December 1946.

As a measure of economy, we have again decided to issue the Annual Report of the Royal Exchange this year in its present form, with the omission of the following appendices, copies of which however can be supplied to or inspected by any interested member at the Royal Exchange on application to the Secretary :—

1. List of members as on 31st December 1946.
2. Royal Exchange : Rules & Bye-Laws.

Committee.—As already announced—in Circular No. 12 RE.—the following gentlemen have been elected to form the Committee of Management for the year 1947-48 :—

- (1) The President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce *ex-officio*.
- (2) The Vice-President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce *ex-officio*.
- (3) Mr. A. Caiger-Watson (Broker) Messrs. H. D. Cartwright & Co.
- (4) „ L. O. Tasker (Banker), Chartered Bank of India, Australia & China.
- (5) „ C. H. Heape (Stock Broker), Messrs. Place Siddons & Gough.
- (6) „ E. C. A. Miles (Exchange Broker) Messrs. Thos. Seth Apcar & Co.
- (7) „ R. E. Birtwistle (Produce Broker) Messrs. Landale & Morgan.

(8) Mr. H. E. F. Taylor (Freight Broker) Messrs. Blacker & Co.

(9) „ R. W. Plummer (Merchant), Messrs. Plummer Bros & Co.

Membership.—During the year two firm members ceased their membership: at the end of the year there were upon the Exchange Register 106 firms and 6 individual members.

Accounts.—We submit a balance sheet and revenue account for the year ended the 31st December 1946 audited by Messrs. Lovelock & Lewes Auditors of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. The revenue accounts again show a deficit of Rs. 11,944/- on the year's working. This amount has been transferred to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce contribution account.

The comparative figures of income and expenditure in 1945 and 1946 are given below :—

Income—

		1945		1946
Subscription	...	Rs. 25,172	Rs.	26,237
Entrance Fees	...	Rs. —	Rs.	—
		Rs. 25,172	Rs.	26,237

Expenditure—

General charges	...	Rs. —	Rs.	—
Rent	...	12,000	Rs.	12,000
Contribution to Chamber	...	6,000	Rs.	6,000
Establishment	...	12,626	Rs.	13,992
Books and Newspapers	...	1,418	Rs.	1,536
Telephone subscription less received from members for use	...	527	Rs.	587
Tickets for Members	...	157	Rs.	—
Stationery	...	176	Rs.	151
Printing	...	75	Rs.	41
Stamps	...	23	Rs.	29
Electric Fans, Lights and Lifts	...	3,000	Rs.	3,000
Petty charges	...	709	Rs.	845
Depreciation on Furniture	...	—	Rs.	—
Restaurant Licence and Excise	...	—	Rs.	—
Taxes	...	100	Rs.	—
Carried over	Rs.	36,811	Rs.	38,181

	1945	1946
Brought Forward	Rs. 36,811	38,181
Less—		
Deficit transferred to Chamber	Rs. 11,639	Rs. 11,944
	Rs. 25,172	Rs. 26,237

D. C. FAIRBAIRN,
Secretary

We are, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servants,
H. D. TOWNEND, (President)
H. D. CUMBERBATCH,
(Vice-President)

J. R. JACOB
L. O. TASKER
C. H. HEAPE
E. C. A. MILES
R. E. BIRTWISTLE
H. E. F. TAYLOR
R. W. PLUMMER

Members.

Calcutta, 14th February 1947.

(108)

ROYAL
BALANCE SHEET

LIABILITIES.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
SUNDRY CREDITORS		
Sundries		3,018 5 0
CONTRIBUTION AND RENT		
Bengal Chamber of Commerce from May to December 1916.		12,000 0 0

TOTAL ... 15,018 5 0

Calcutta, 12th February, 1917.

Examined and found correct.
Sd/- LOVELOCK & LEWES
Chartered Accountants.
Registered Accountants.

(109)

EXCHANGE

as at 31st December 1916.

ASSETS.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
OUTSTANDINGS		
Subscriptions		1,290 0 0
BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS		
Subscriptions paid in advance		295 15 0
FURNITURE AND FITTINGS.		
WATER COOLER		
Expenses to-date	1,090 0 0	
Less Depreciation to-date	1,090 0 0	
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE		
CONTRIBUTION ACCOUNT		
Deficit for the year		11,944 4 6
CASH		
With Imperial Bank of India	1,424 0 6	
In hand	64 1 0	1,488 1 6

TOTAL ... 15,018 5 0

Sd/- D. C. FAIRBAIRN
Secretary.

Sd/- H. D. TOWNEND,
President.

ROYAL
REVENUE ACCOUNT

EXPENDITURE.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
To Monthly contribution to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce	6,000	0	0
" Books and Newspapers	1,535	12	6
" Establishment	13,991	15	0
" Electric Light, Fans & Lift	3,000	0	0
" Petty Charges	844	10	0
" Printing	41	1	0
" Rent	12,000	0	0
" Stationery	151	5	0
" Stamps	29	0	0
" Telephone	942	9	0
Less recovered from members for use	355	0	0
				587	9	0

TOTAL ... 38,181 4 6

Examined and found correct.

Sd/- LOVELOCK & LEWES,

Chartered Accountants.

Registered Accountants.

Calcutta, 12th February, 1947.

EXCHANGE

for the year ended 31st December 1946.

INCOME.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
By Subscriptions	26,237	0	0
" Bengal Chamber of Commerce Contribution a/c.	11,944	4	6

TOTAL ... 38,181 4 6

Sd/- D. C. FAIRBAIRN,

Secretary.

Sd/- H. D. TOWNEND,

President,

